PhD Defenses at the
Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics, University of Tartu
Guidelines for Opponents of PhD Defenses

1. Defenses take place in either Estonian or English, unless the defense committee has agreed otherwise. The use of other languages shall be decided by the defense committee. Both the doctoral candidate and the opponent (‘external examiner’), must be suitably dressed (formal or business attire). Minutes are taken of the defense.

2. The main stages of the defense procedure are the following:
   2.1. Introduction by the Chair of the meeting, who introduces the doctoral candidate;
   2.2. Presentation by the doctoral candidate (lectio praecursoria) (20 min), in which the main research questions, methods, and results are presented;
   2.3. Academic discussion between the doctoral candidate and the opponent (suggested duration: about one hour altogether):

       beginning with a short introduction by the opponent on the general background of the dissertation and an evaluation of the topicality of the research questions;

       followed by the opponent’s comments and questions, to which the candidate may respond immediately;

       and ending with the opponent’s summary of the dissertation and the discussion, in which the opponent clearly expresses his/her opinion regarding whether the dissertation meets the requirements of a PhD;

   2.4. Discussion open to the members of the defense committee and other members of the audience;
   2.5. Agreement on and announcement of decision on awarding the degree: the defense committee leaves the room for discussion of the decision and returns after the decision has been made;
   2.6. Optionally, the PhD candidate (awardee) may make a final, brief speech.

3. The defense committee consists of the members of the Council of the Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics who are in possession of a PhD degree (with the exception of the supervisor(s) of the dissertation in question). A quorum is over half of the members. The Council may, with prior agreement, also include other experts with appropriate qualifications, such as the opponent(s). The defense committee discusses the dissertation in a closed meeting (see pt. 2.5 above) and makes a decision on whether the dissertation meets the requirements, based on an open-ballot vote. A positive decision requires a simple majority of the votes.

4. The defense committee makes one of the following decisions:
   4.1. The dissertation defense was successful (evaluation of “defended”): decision to award a PhD degree to the candidate.
   4.2. The dissertation defense was not successful (evaluation of “not defended”): decision not to award a PhD degree to the candidate.
   4.3. Not to make a decision in connection with a submitted suspicion of plagiarism or academic fraud, or for any other reason emerging at the defense: dissertation to be sent to experts for evaluation.
5. After the defense, the opponent presents his/her written introductory text and summary to the defense committee.

6. The fee for serving as opponent is 200 euros (bruto). Additionally, all travel and accommodation expenses incurred in connection with the defense are compensated.