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

1. The Council of the Institute of Estonian and General Linguistics follows the current Procedure for Awarding Doctorates of the University of Tartu, together with supplementary conditions detailed in these Guidelines, when awarding doctoral degrees.

2. Doctoral candidates must submit to the Council the documents named in pt. 19 in the Procedure for Awarding Doctorates (including the manuscript of the dissertation), both electronically and as one hard copy. The documents must be submitted to the secretary of the Council of the Institute.

3. The Council will make a decision within a period of six weeks from the submission of documents, regarding whom to send the dissertation to for preliminary review, separately for each dissertation. The Council will seek one internal review from an employee of the Institute in order to assess the readiness of the dissertation to be sent for preliminary review. The Council will invite the candidate and supervisor(s) to the relevant meeting in which the decision is to be taken, so that they can participate in the discussion regarding readiness for preliminary review and potential reviewers. Each dissertation is sent to two preliminary reviewers, of whom at least one must be affiliated with an institution outside Estonia.

4. During the review process (beginning with the submission of the dissertation for review until the reviewer’s evaluation is submitted), the preliminary reviewer and the opponent are not to communicate or consult with the doctoral candidate or his/her supervisor on topics related to the dissertation. The preliminary reviewer and the opponent shall communicate only with the Head of the Institute or his/her appointed representative.

5. The meeting at which the decision is made to allow the dissertation to be defended includes the following:
   5.1. Introduction of the doctoral candidate;
   5.2. Comments by the doctoral candidate’s supervisor;
   5.3. The Council of the Institute may invite the doctoral candidate to the meeting in order to respond to the Council’s questions.
   5.4. Presentation of the reviews. In the event that the Council has invited the doctoral candidate to the meeting, the candidate may explain how s/he has incorporated or considered the reviewers’ comments.
   5.5. Discussion;
   5.6. Decision by the Council. If the doctoral candidate has been invited to the meeting, s/he leaves the room during discussion of the decision.
   5.7. If the council decides to allow a dissertation to be defended, it also appoints (an) opponent(s) for the dissertation, additional members of the council, and the time and place of the defense. The Council decides the print run (number of copies to be printed) separately in each case.

6. After the decision is made to allow the dissertation to proceed to the defense, the doctoral candidate must submit to the Council the dissertation, published in the University’s dissertations series in a print run (number of copies) to be determined by
the Council, in addition to the electronic version of the dissertation, at least one month before the defense of the dissertation.

7. 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 must be suitably dressed (formal or business attire). Minutes are taken of the defense.

8. 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. 9.9) 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.

9. The doctoral defense proceeds as follows:
   9.1. The chair of the meeting opens the doctoral defense meeting.
   9.2. The chair of the meeting determines that a quorum of the Council is present.
   9.3. The chair of the meeting introduces the candidate (briefly, from a CV).
   9.4. The floor is given to the candidate for his or her presentation (lectio praecursoria, 20 minutes), in which the main research questions, methods, and results are presented.
   9.5. The floor is given to opponent A for presenting a review and discussion. Suggested duration of the academic discussion between the doctoral candidate and the opponent is about one hour altogether. The discussion begins with a short introduction by the opponent to the general background of the dissertation and an evaluation of the topicality of the research questions; this is followed by the opponent’s comments and questions, to which the candidate may respond immediately; the discussion ends 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.
   9.6. The floor is given to opponent B for presenting a review and discussion (if s/he is not present in person or via Skype, then a member of the Council reads his or her review to those present).
   9.7. The floor is given to members of the Council for questions.
   9.8. The floor is opened to questions from others present.
   9.9. Closed meeting of the Council: the Council leaves the room, making the decision (open ballot, minutes taken). The defense committee makes one of the following decisions: 1) The dissertation defense was successful (evaluation of “defended”): decision to award a PhD degree to the candidate. 2) The dissertation defense was not successful (evaluation of “not defended”): decision not to award a PhD degree to the candidate. 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.
   9.10. Announcement of the decision.
   9.11. The floor is given to the doctoral candidate for a final speech.

10. After the defense, the opponent presents his/her written introductory text and summary to the defense committee.
11. Guidelines for Preliminary Reviewers and Guidelines for Opponents, available in both Estonian and English, are attached as appendices to these Guidelines.