

Temporary Guidelines for Thesis and Dissertation Defenses and Comprehensive Examinations Monday, March 16 through July 4, 2020

Please note that these are temporary measures to apply through July 4, 2020. If face-to-face instruction resumes after July 4, these temporary measures will be suspended.

Guiding Principle: Given the suspension of face-to-face instruction and mitigation efforts to break the cycle of contagion of the COVID-19 virus, thesis and dissertation defenses and pre-defenses may be held with all members of the committee and the candidate participating remotely. Colleges should be flexible in ensuring that the candidate is allowed to defend on time and that technical resources be provided to ensure that all members of the committee and the candidate be virtually present. Oral comprehensive examinations may be held in the same manner. Written comprehensive examinations should be held remotely utilizing technology to proctor the examination if necessary.

- The Dissertation/Thesis chair is responsible for ensuring that all members of the committee and the candidate have the technology to participate in the defense. Please check with your IT personnel for assistance.
- The Dissertation/Thesis chair should consult with Student Accessibility Services if assistance is needed to meet accommodations.
- The chair of the dissertation committee is responsible for ensuring
 - that all requirements for remote participation are met,
 - that the remote technology is sufficiently tested prior to the defense,
 - that the remote participation is uninterrupted and, if interrupted, that the defense is paused until all remote participations are fully restored.
- If audio conferencing is the only option available, arrangements must be made by the candidate to distribute all visual materials to the committee in advance of the defense.
- Departments/Schools should be flexible in the technology to be used. It may include, but not be limited to web conferencing software, Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and phone conferencing. You may use Blackboard and the proctoring tools available in that software for examinations or similar technology.
- The program pays for any costs associated with the remote participation. Units should track all expenses incurred due to COVID-19.
- Colleges have agreed to honor the deadlines for Dissertation Defenses. Extension within limits may be requested upon recommendation of the Dissertation Committee Chair and the approval of the College Graduate Associate Dean with notification to the Registrar and the Interim Dean of Graduate Studies.
- Colleges have agreed that electronic signatures are acceptable for thesis, dissertation and exam documents.