

Students' Remote Participation in Examination Temporary Accommodations Effective March 12, 2020

Definitions

In this document:

- FGS/Faculty refers to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
- Students refers to thesis-based graduate students registered in FGS.
- Examination refers to oral thesis defense or oral Candidacy examination including Field of Study (FoS) and Thesis Proposal (TP).

Purpose

FGS normally expects that oral examinations related to thesis defense or Candidacy are attended physically by the student, examiners and Chair. In particular, the physical presence of the student and supervisor (or co-supervisor) is required and the number of examiners participating remotely is limited. Normally, only under special circumstances, students may be allowed to participate remotely in the examination (<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/services/faculty-and-staff/gpdgpa-resources/policies-and-guidelines/distant-oral-exams>).

This document, prompted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, outlines temporary accommodations for situations in which a student, supervisor and/or multiple examiners are expected to participate remotely in an FGS oral examination. This document does not constitute a permanent change in FGS's regulations regarding oral examinations. It is intended to provide a temporary arrangement during the COVID-19 period and will lapse once these exceptional circumstances are resolved. FGS will inform programs when these exceptional measures are no longer in effect.

Temporary Regulations for Scheduling and Scheduled Oral Exams

Programs should proceed with scheduling new exams and with already scheduled exams as usual. However, for all exams scheduled starting March 16, 2020, a contingency plan must be formulated, submitted and approved [use the **contingency form** [available here](#)]. Submission of the contingency form is the responsibility of the supervisor. Contingency plans must be submitted **no later than 2 weeks before the exam**.

Approval of Contingency Plans and Alternate Formats

All contingency plans and requests for altered format for all thesis defences and candidacy exams conducted under the old rules must be submitted no later than 2 weeks before an exam and approved by FGS. Contingency plans and requests for altered format for all oral candidacy examinations under the new rules should be submitted and approved at the program level as appropriate

Information Required for Contingency and Alternative Oral Exam Formats

1. The date and time of the examination taking into consideration possible time-zone differences.
2. The nature of the examination (Defense/Candidacy/FoS/TP) identifying if it is a re-take or not.
3. The composition of the examining committee and Chair.
4. Documented acceptance of the student to take the exam remotely on the specified date and time.
5. Evidence that all examiners and the Chair are aware that the examination will be conducted with remote participation of the student.
6. Evidence of arrangements put in place to run the exam remotely. It is expected that each person participating remotely have access to a web-conference tool (e.g. Zoom) and have a back-up telephone number or tele-conferencing communication tool. All back-up telephone numbers or tele-conferencing communication information will be communicated to the Chair ahead of the examination.
7. The programme has communicated to the Chair a number to contact (GPD, FGS) in case of an emergency or an unanticipated situation.
8. The program has communicated to the Neutral Chair the phone number of another contact person (e.g., a roommate, friend or family member of the student) who can be contacted in case of emergency.

Process of running a remote examination

1. The programme must make all necessary arrangements for setting up the remote communications and send the appropriate links or login information to the student and examiners participating remotely.
2. Without prior approval from FGS, exams must be scheduled during normal business hours of the University of Calgary (8:30am-4:30pm MDT M-F).
3. All members of the examining committee, the Chair and student must be available at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time for the start of the exam to test the communication tool and trouble-shoot any possible issues.
4. All members of the examining committee, the Chair and student must be present continuously during the exam. Any short interruption if required, must be approved by the Chair and noted in the Chair report.
5. Communications are expected to be both audio and video. If not possible, audio communications may be acceptable only for persons other than the student.
6. If applicable, it is strongly advised to have a copy of the presentation distributed to all members ahead of the examination.
7. In the case of a thesis defense, all examiners' reports must be in the possession of the Neutral Chair at least one day before the examination (electronic copies emailed directly to the Neutral Chair are acceptable).
8. [FOR THESIS DEFENCES AND CANDIDACY EXAMS UNDER OLD RULES] Should communication with one or more persons break down and cannot be resolved within **60 minutes**, the Neutral Chair (or if the Neutral Chair is not available another member of the supervisory committee) must contact FGS directly [403 220 4938: option 3, option 5] [In the case of University closure or "work-from-home" period only, please contact an Associate Dean directly on 403-681-2138 or 403-863-4033]. The examination may still proceed conditional to FGS Associate Dean approval and documented student consent.
9. [FOR CANDIDACY EXAMS UNDER NEW RULES] Should communication with one or more persons break down and cannot be resolved within **60 minutes**, the Neutral Chair (or if the Neutral Chair is

not available another member of the supervisory committee) must contact the GPD or Associate Dean Graduate Education (as appropriate). The examination may still proceed conditional to GPD/Associate Dean approval and documented student consent.

10. The post-examination in-camera deliberations are confidential, and the Neutral Chair must ensure that arrangements are made to protect the confidentiality of the deliberations.
11. At the end of the deliberation and once the outcome of the examination is reached, the Neutral Chair will inform the student that deliberations have ended.
12. The Neutral Chair will inform the student of the outcome of the examination.
13. In the case of an unsuccessful examination, the Neutral Chair must in their written report comment on the conditions of the exam including any unusual events such as interruption of communication or requested pauses.