



In response to the growing concerns surrounding the COVID-19 virus, G+PS in consultation with UBC IT has developed a process to support total virtual participation in a doctoral defense.

This remote protocol applies for defences held on or after March 19, 2020 until further notice.

Virtual Defense

Virtual defenses will be supported by UBC's Virtual Meeting Room (VMR); Doctoral Exams staff can also set up Zoom meetings if the committee prefers. Requests for a virtual defense, whether partial or total, must be submitted to graduate.doctoral@ubc.ca at least 48 hours before the scheduled defense.

Before sending a request for a virtual defense, please ensure all required participants, outlined below, have agreed to participate in a virtual defense. UBC IT and the Doctoral Exams team will be experiencing a higher than normal workload as the University responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, and sufficient notice must be provided in order to schedule the virtual defense. Confirmations of the virtual defense will include specific instructions on joining the defense. Due to technical capacity, virtual defenses will support quorum only, meaning that attendees will be restricted to a maximum of six participants as follows:

- The Doctoral Candidate
- The Examination Chair
- Two Supervisory Committee Members (supervisors, co-supervisors or committee members)
- Two G+PS-approved University Examiners

If any participants are joining from an international location, this must be indicated at the time the request for a virtual defense is submitted. It is important to note that while UBC's VMR is capable of supporting a virtual defense with six participants, the quality of both the audio and visual components will depend greatly on the quality of each participant's internet connection. We recommend connecting from a computer that is hard-wired into an internet connection and if you must connect via wifi, try to test the connection prior to the defence. As we cannot control the quality of each participant's internet connection, participants should be prepared for technical issues (eg. poor audio or visual quality, dropped connections) and the Chair should be prepared to uphold the responsibilities as outlined below.

Although the doctoral defense is normally a public event, virtual defenses cannot accommodate more than six participants and, therefore, cannot be open to members other than those stated above. This is a temporary measure approved by the Dean of G+PS in order to facilitate virtual doctoral defenses, and is applicable only to total virtual participation in a doctoral defense (ie. does not apply to in-person defenses or partial virtual defenses at this time).

Responsibilities of the Chair

1. Represent the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
2. Moderate the defense proceedings; ensure fairness.
 - a. Outline the potential technical issues that may occur, encourage patience and kindness towards each other, and describe the Chair's responsibility to suspend the defense if there are technical difficulties that compromise the defense
3. Ensure that any questions posed in the External Examiner's Report are addressed by the Candidate during the question period.
4. Chair the *in camera* discussion of the Examining Committee and convey the outcome to the Candidate.
 - a. Ensure the Candidate is removed from the connection for the entirety of the *in camera* discussion.
5. Submit a report on the Final Doctoral Examination to the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies using the form provided.

Important note: the Chair has the authority to discontinue a remote connection at any time they judge that it is interfering with the proper conduct of the examination. If one or more participants drop from the connection or lose audio, the defense must be halted until the participant's connection or audio is restored. If the connection or audio cannot be restored after 30 minutes or if the total amount of time lost exceeds 60 minutes, the Chair **must** suspend the defense and notify graduate.doctoral@ubc.ca immediately. The Doctoral Exams team will communicate with the Candidate and their Supervisor regarding rescheduling the defense.