

Academic Continuity for Final Oral Examinations (FOEs)

The Final Oral Examination (FOE) is an important culminating experience and celebratory milestone for doctoral students. As U of T engages in the process of academic continuity planning, SGS remains committed to providing the best possible experience for the candidate while ensuring that the candidate and members of the examining committee remain safe and healthy.

To enable doctoral candidates to complete their degrees in a timely manner, SGS will be waiving the current SGS guidelines for FOEs that prohibit the remote participation of the candidate and limit the remote participation of members of the examination committee to two per exam. **As of March 18, 2020:**

- **All examinations must be held remotely:**
- **If the student chooses an in-person FOE, it must be postponed until a later date.**

Please note that this is a temporary arrangement, which has been put in place as a response to building closures at the university, travel disruptions, and the need for social distancing and/or isolation. Running a FOE will require slightly different processes, which are identified below.

FOE Remote Participation Guidelines

Remote participation may take place via Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Quercus or teleconference. Please ensure the following guidelines are followed while this exception is in place.

The Graduate Department will:

1. Notify the SGS Completion Office (sgs.doctoral@utoronto.ca) when an exam is going forward remotely and which technology will be used.
2. Provide SGS with the email addresses of all participating members, including the candidate.
3. Ensure that all participating members and the candidate understand the closed nature of the FOE; the candidate should sign a [form](#) stating that they have access to and will be using private and controlled space during the exam.
4. Notify the SGS Completion Office when an exam is being postponed. SGS will work with the candidate and the Graduate Department regarding final year academic fees if the exam is postponed. Fees will be assessed based on the original defence date and the time the student takes to submit the final thesis, and pro-rated academic fees schedule will remain in place.

SGS will ensure the following:

1. SGS will provide Chairs of exams a Chair Summary Form and some additional guidelines for managing voting procedures, post-exam submission of the form, etc.
2. SGS will provide the Chair, candidate, and members of the examination committee with guidelines for holding a defence remotely.



March 20th, 2020

3. SGS will provide Chairs with the email addresses of all examination committee members and the candidate. The emails for exam committee members are needed for voting purposes (see below).
4. SGS will contact the student via email regarding thesis submission and various deadlines.

Additional Guidelines for Chairs

1. All participants, including the candidate, are to join the group 5 minutes early to ensure the communication technologies are working smoothly and everyone can be heard.
2. Review with the candidate and committee the requirement for closed examinations.
3. At the beginning of the FOE, when the committee has an initial discussion of the dissertation, reviews the external appraisal, and determines order of questioning, the candidate will need to hang up or be disconnected (If using Zoom, the student will be placed on hold). The Chair (or a member of the voting committee) can call the student or re-connect the student, or invite the student to call in, once these preliminary procedures are complete.
4. For the voting process, the student will need to hang up, or be placed on hold, or be disconnected. The Chair (or a member of the voting committee) can call or re-connect the student, or invite the student to call in, once the voting process is complete and the Chair has tallied the votes.
5. Adopt the following method for obtaining votes:
 - a. Provide your email to the voting members at the start of the exam, and let the committee members know that this is how they will be submitting their votes;
 - b. Prior to the voting period, read the exam result options to the committee (i.e., as stands, minor corrections, minor modifications, major modifications);
 - c. Invite the voting members to submit their vote via email;
 - d. Fill out the Chair summary form and ascertain the exam result;
 - e. Share the result with the committee and candidate;
 - f. Email the Chair Summary Form to the Program Completion Office and Graduate Administrator (scan, picture, etc.).