

Instructions for running oral examinations using Zoom

Until further notice, all graduate oral examinations will be conducted remotely using either the Zoom or BlueJeans videoconference platforms. Should technical difficulties arise during the exam, please contact UVic Media Services at 250-721-7687 or by email at helpdesk@uvic.ca, noting “Urgent” in the subject line.

Please note that the Chair is responsible for the integrity of the examination and if insoluble technical difficulties compromise it (e.g., committee members cannot join the Zoom call, or if questions or answers are inaudible) they should adjourn the exam and notify FGS in their report so that the exam can be rescheduled.

For the purpose of these instructions, the student’s Supervisor is the “Host” of the Zoom meeting. If the host is not familiar with Zoom, additional assistance is available at the [UVic Media Services website](#), including a weekly Zoom Basics Boot Camp.

Before the oral exam begins the Supervisor must ask the student for a phone number and/or email address where they can be reached once the Committee has made its decision after the questioning phase of the exam (see point 6 below).

With the exception of the student, the supervisory committee, the external examiner, and the Chair, all “guests” (e.g., other students, friends, and family of the student) must keep their video cameras and microphones muted throughout the oral exam.

Steps for running the oral exam:

1. Host initiates the Zoom videoconference using the link provided by their unit’s grad secretary. This should be done at least 30 minutes before the scheduled start time to allow other participants time to sign in and check their audio and video feeds.
2. Other participants should be instructed to join the conference at least 20-30 minutes in advance. The Host can see who is connected to the meeting and can manage individual participants using the “Participants” tab on the bottom of the screen. All participants (including guests) should use their real names when joining the meeting. Depending on how they connect, some participants may initially be placed into a Zoom “Waiting Room” and will need to be admitted by the Host.
3. To reduce echoes and feedback during the exam the Host should instruct committee members to keep their microphones muted unless they are speaking.

4. The exam starts and proceeds as per usual – beginning with a brief summary of the oral exam procedures by the Chair. If the student will be giving a presentation (e.g. PowerPoint, etc.), the Host will first need to allow participants to share their screens. This option is found in the “Security” tab on the bottom of the Zoom screen.

5. After the question phase of the exam has ended, the Chair instructs the student and all guests to exit from the videoconference. Once the Host can see that only the committee members remain connected, the committee then undertakes its deliberations, as per usual. Alternatively, if the Host is an experienced Zoom user, the student may be placed in a Zoom breakout room during the committee’s deliberations.

6. After deliberations have ended, the Host contacts the student via text, phone, or email and invites them to rejoin the videoconference. If the student was placed in a breakout room, the Host returns the student to the main room.

7. Once the student has reconnected, the Chair announces the result of the Committee’s deliberations to the student.

Post-exam paperwork

Chair’s Report: FGS will have already provided a fillable form with a signature spot for the Chair. No other signatures are needed.

Thesis/Dissertation approval forms: The student’s home unit is responsible for collecting committee and external examiner signatures on these, post-exam. Note that Graduate Admissions and Records accepts either scanned/electronic signatures, or emails in lieu thereof.

August 17, 2020 JD

