

University of Victoria
Faculty of Graduate Studies

Memorandum

To: Chairs, Graduate Advisors, Graduate Secretaries
From: Gweneth Doane, Acting Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Date: August 7, 2009
Re: Supervisory Committee Member Absence at Oral Examinations

We have received a number of questions concerning what to do in the event of a supervisory committee member being unable to attend a student's oral examination. This memo is meant to clarify our expectations. Please contact us if you have any further questions.

All supervisory committee members are normally expected to be present for their students' oral examinations. Faculty members must note that their signature on the "Request for Oral Examination" form constitutes an agreement to attend the oral examination at the scheduled time. In the event that a faculty member is unable to attend, the member is expected to provide questions for the examination, and is responsible for finding an "alternate" to attend the oral and ask these questions of the candidate. The alternate must be a member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. It is advisable that the alternate have some substantive knowledge of the area or is knowledgeable in the research methodology. The alternate is expected to assess the student's responses; however, the alternate does not vote on the outcome of the examination. The alternate does not replace the absent member on the committee but merely represents the absent member at the oral examination. Therefore, the faculty member on the committee is still expected to sign the title and abstract pages.