REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN A THESIS OR DISSERTATION DEFENSE

ASK A QUESTION OR SUBMIT FEEDBACK ON THIS POLICY
Date Effective: August 27, 2020

Policy Statement

Under normal circumstances, all members of a dissertation committee must be physically present in the examination room during the entire dissertation defense and during the committee's private deliberations following the examination. In most cases, the chair of the dissertation committee and the graduate faculty representative are expected to be physically present in the examination room.

Students enrolled in a fully online degree program are not required to be physically present for their dissertation defense.

For on-ground and hybrid (online/on-ground) degree programs, remote participation by web conferencing is permitted only if the student and/or committee member has obtained permission in advance from the chair of the thesis/dissertation committee in consultation with committee members. They must provide a compelling reason and/or explanation as to why they cannot be physically present.

With any dissertation defense that is approved to be conducted with remote participation, the following rules must be enforced:

- The web-conferencing software to be used allows all participants to see and hear each other during the defense.
- The defense remains open and available to the university community.
- The program pays for any costs associated with the remote participation.
- The chair of the dissertation committee is responsible for ensuring that all requirements for remote participation are met, that the remote participation was uninterrupted and, if interrupted, that the defense was paused until all remote participations were fully restored.
- Participation by telephone only is not permitted under any circumstances.

Reason for Policy

To establish consistent practices when a student and/or a committee member are not able to be physically present for the student's defense of a thesis or dissertation.

Procedures

There are no procedures associated with this policy.

Forms/Instructions

There are no forms associated with this policy.

Additional Resources

- IT Support - Get Help
- One Stop for Student Service

Frequently Asked Questions

There is no FAQ associated with this policy.

Definitions

Defense: refers to students presenting, explaining and defending their ideas submitted in their thesis or dissertation. The defense is designed so that faculty members can ask questions to ensure that students understand their chosen field and focus area.

Dissertation: a highly individualized investigative study that results in the development and writing of a scholarly, comprehensive paper and fulfills the culminating requirement for a Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must demonstrate that the student has acquired the ability to conduct research in a discriminating and original manner. The dissertation should make a significant enough contribution to the field in which it is written that at least one scholarly article suitable for publication in a professional journal may be derived from it or that the findings of the dissertation would be otherwise publishable.

Thesis: a highly individualized investigative study that results in the development and writing of a scholarly, comprehensive paper and fulfills the culminating requirement for a master's degree. The thesis topic is formulated by the student in consultation with the advisor and should be one that will further the student's educational development by developing research or other skills that will help the student keep abreast of the field and enable the student to pursue independent work.

Web-conferencing software: allows participants to conduct or attend meetings via the internet. The software allows participants in different locations to connect to each other for voice and video chat, instant messaging and file and screen sharing. Examples of software include Skype, Zoom, Webex Meetings, GoToMeeting and Blackboard Collaborate.

Related Information

- Candidacy for Doctoral Degree
- Dissertation for Doctoral Degree
- Eligibility for a Doctoral Degree
- Guidelines for Submission of Electronic Theses and Dissertations
- Qualifying Examination for Master's Degree
- Thesis for Master's Degree

Revision History

Effective August 2020: Establishes a formal policy for graduate students to defend their thesis or dissertation through remote participation.