



## 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:

- **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 as a result of COVID-19. Running a FOE will require slightly different processes, which are identified below.

### FOE Remote Participation Guidelines

The Student and Supervisor will schedule the meeting date/ time with the members of the Examination Committee and contact RSI for the meeting setup. RSI will setup a Zoom meeting using an RSI account and send the invite to all exam committee members.

RSI will then:

1. Notify the SGS Completion Office ([sgs.doctoral@utoronto.ca](mailto: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 will be asked to sign a [form](#) stating that they have access to and will be using a 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 examination Chairs with 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.
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 (please see below).
4. SGS will contact the student via email regarding thesis submission and various deadlines.

### **Additional Guidelines for Chairs**

1. The examination Chair will log in 10 min before the meeting so that an RSI representative can assign them to be a host of the meeting. The RSI representative will briefly review with the host procedures for using Zoom Waiting Room (see instructions [HERE](#)) and screen sharing (see instructions [HERE](#)).
2. All participants, including the candidate, are to join the group at least 5 minutes prior to ensure that the communication technologies are working smoothly for everyone and that everyone can be heard. Screen sharing should also be tested with the candidate.
3. In the beginning of the meeting, the Chair will review with the candidate and committee the requirements for closed examinations.
4. The Chair then will place the Student in the Zoom Waiting Room to complete preliminary procedures, confirm familiarity with the thesis and external appraisal, and discuss the order of questioning and voting procedures. The Chair will communicate their email address to the committee members for voting later in the process. Once these preliminary procedures are completed, the Student will then be re-admitted into the meeting and proceed with the exam.
5. Following the exam, the Chair will again ask the Student to be placed in the Zoom Waiting Room for the committee's deliberations and voting process. Voting will be by email. Committee members will email their votes to the examination Chair. The Chair will tally the votes and share results with the committee. 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 Report of MSc Defense Form and ascertain the exam result;
  - e. Share the result with the committee
6. In culmination, the Chair will invite the Student back into the meeting and communicated the results. Please email the Report Form to the RSI Graduate Office ([rsi.admin@utoronto.ca](mailto:rsi.admin@utoronto.ca)) (via scan, picture, etc.).