Guidelines for Remote Thesis and Dissertation Defenses and Comprehensive Examinations

Starting Spring Semester 2020

Please note that these are temporary measures that are effective immediately. If face-to-face instruction resumes, these measures will be suspended.

Guiding Principle: Given the suspension of face-to-face instruction and mitigation efforts to break the cycle of contagion of the COVID-19 virus, thesis and dissertation defenses and pre-defenses may be held with remote participation by all members of the committee, the candidate, and any additional audience members. Note that defenses should be open to the public unless this is technically unfeasible. Colleges should be flexible in ensuring that the candidate is allowed to defend on time and that technical resources be provided to ensure that all members of the committee and the candidate be virtually present. Oral comprehensive examinations may be held in the same manner. Written comprehensive examinations should be held remotely utilizing technology to proctor the examination if necessary (the University has access to Honorlock, https://kb.uc.edu/Pages/Honorlock-Faculty.aspx).

- Any dissertation and thesis defenses that are already scheduled may be rescheduled to give the committee chair time to arrange for remote participation. Colleges should work to honor the semester deadlines for degree completion. Extension within reason may be requested to the Graduate School upon recommendation of the Dissertation Committee Chair and the College (Graduate Associate Dean or Dean).

- The Dissertation/Thesis chair is responsible for ensuring that all members of the committee and the candidate have the technology to participate in the defense. Please check with your IT personnel for assistance.

- The Dissertation/Thesis chair should consult with Student Accessibility Services if assistance is needed to meet accommodations (https://www.uc.edu/cetl/remoteteach/Tips.html).

- The chair of the dissertation committee is responsible for ensuring
  - that all requirements for remote participation are met,
  - that the remote technology is sufficiently tested prior to the defense,
  - that the remote participation is uninterrupted and, if interrupted, that the defense is paused until all remote participations are fully restored.

- If audio conferencing is the only option available, arrangements must be made by the candidate to distribute all visual materials to the committee in advance of the defense.

- Departments/Schools should be flexible in the technology to be used. It may include, but not be limited to web conferencing software, Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and phone conferencing. You may use Blackboard and the proctoring tools available in that software for examinations or similar technology. See https://www.uc.edu/cetl/remoteteach/DigitalTools.html for remote audio and video options. **Note:** Faculty can call IT at 513-556-4357 to setup a webex conference room. All faculty and staff have access and only a computer and wifi are needed.

- For thesis, dissertation and exam documents, both ink and electronic signatures are valid. When multiple signatures have usually been obtained on a single form, we advise that each committee member be sent a copy of the form and simply collect one signature per form: they can be combined into a single multi-page PDF. If students need help combining forms, they can contact gradhelpdesk@uc.edu