

**Message to PhD Candidates:
Final Oral Examinations**

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 you while ensuring that you and members of the examining committee remain safe and healthy.

To enable you to complete your degree in a timely manner, SGS will be waiving the current SGS guidelines for FOEs that prohibit the remote participation of the candidate and limit the remote participation of members of the examination committee to two per exam. **As of March 18, 2020:**

- **All examinations must be held remotely;**
- **If you choose 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. Running a FOE will require slightly different processes, which are identified below.

FOE Remote Participation Guidelines

Remote participation may take place via Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Quercus or teleconference. Here are the guidelines to follow while this exception is in place.

Your Graduate Department will:

1. Notify the SGS Completion Office (sgs.doctoral@utoronto.ca) when an exam is going forward and which technology will be used.
2. Provide SGS with the email addresses of all participating members.
3. Ensure that you and all who are participating remotely acknowledge their understanding of the closed nature of the FOE; as the candidate, you will be asked to sign a [form](#) stating that you have access to and will be using 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 Chairs of exams a Chair Summary Form and some additional guidelines for managing voting procedures, post-exam submission of the form, etc.



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2. 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 (see below).
3. SGS will contact you via email regarding thesis submission and various deadlines.

Main Steps in the FOE

1. All participants, including the candidate are to join the group 5 minutes early to ensure the communication technologies are working smoothly and everyone can be heard.
2. Chair will review with the candidate and committee the requirements for closed examinations.
3. At the beginning of the FOE, the committee will have an initial discussion of the dissertation, review the external appraisal, and determine order of questioning. During this stage, you will need to hang up or be disconnected (in the case of Zoom, you will be put on hold). The Chair (or a member of the voting committee) will call or re-connect you, or invite you to call in, once these preliminary procedures are complete.
4. For the voting process, you will need to hang up, be disconnected (or placed on hold if using Zoom). The Chair (or a member of the voting committee) will call or re-connect you, or invite you to call in, once the voting process is complete and the Chair has tallied the votes.