

Guidelines for Virtual Oral Comprehensive Exams Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability

Due to social distancing requirements in response to the COVID-19 virus, we are providing the following departmental guidelines for virtual oral comprehensive exams. These guidelines have been adapted from the G+PS guidelines for virtual PhD defences.

These guidelines apply to all exams held on or after March 23, 2020 and until further notice.

Virtual Oral Comprehensive Exam

The format of the exam will follow the common departmental procedures and will therefore not be repeated here. An outline of the exam procedure can be found on the forms section of our website: <http://ires2015.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2016/01/RES-Comprehensive-Exam-Guidelines.pdf>

Virtual oral comprehensive exams should be arranged through the supervisor's Zoom account. **It will be the responsibility of the supervisor to set up the meeting.** If a supervisor is unfamiliar with Zoom, they will be required to familiarize themselves with the software prior to setting up and running the exam. **In no circumstances should the Zoom meeting be created by the student.**

One week before the exam, the supervisor should send an exam reminder to the examining committee and student with the Zoom contact information. The Zoom URL should be password protected and should not be circulated to anyone but the chair, the examination committee, and the candidate. For any in-camera discussion conducted by the Examining Committee, the student must be removed from the connection for the entirety of the in-camera discussion.

All required participants must agree to participate in a virtual exam. Any questions should be directed to Kelsey Robertson or Jiaying Zhao.

It is important to note that the quality of both the audio and visual components will depend greatly on the quality of each participant's internet connection. We recommend connecting from a location with a reliable internet connection (hard-wired if possible). Zoom does allow testing the connection prior to the exam, and all participants should take the opportunity to do so at least 15 min prior to the scheduled exam time. Ideally, testing of connectivity, and audio/video connectivity could be performed a day prior to avoid postponement of the exam as a result of technical difficulties. It will be the responsibility of the supervisor to communicate these testing requirements. As it is not possible to control the quality of each participant's internet connection, participants should be prepared for technical issues (e.g. poor audio or visual quality, dropped connections).

Important note: The examination chair has the authority to discontinue a remote connection at any time if they judge that it is interfering with the proper conduct of the examination. If one or more participants drop from the connection or lose audio, the exam must be halted until the participants' connection or audio is restored. If the connection or audio cannot be restored after 30 minutes or if the total amount of time lost exceeds 60 minutes, the examination chair **must**

suspend the exam. It will be the responsibility of the supervisor, in coordination with the graduate student, to reschedule the exam which will be subject to the same guidelines as outlined above.

All procedures after the exam will follow normal departmental guidelines for the completion of oral comprehensive exams. All subsequent communication can be done via e-mail and all signatures can be collected electronically.