

From: Vice Provost and Dean Robin L. Garrell and Graduate Council Chair Andrea Kasko

Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 11:47 AM

Subject: Exceptions to Remote Participation for Dissertation Defense



Graduate Division Graduate Council

To: Faculty

Dear Colleagues,

To ensure that graduate students are impacted as little as possible by the rapidly changing events associated with COVID-19, we want to assure graduate students that planned dissertation defenses will proceed as scheduled whenever possible. Current policy specifies that only one committee member can be absent or online for a dissertation event, however, we recognize that this policy may be disruptive in the event of individual quarantine or isolation, or a campus closure or suspension of in-person instruction. In the event that more than one committee member is unable to attend a dissertation defense due to COVID-19 quarantine or isolation, or campus closure or suspension of in-person instruction, exceptions will be granted automatically to allow the defense to proceed with more than one member online. Students defending a dissertation may also present virtually. This automatic exception will be granted for defenses scheduled through the second week of Spring Quarter. The Graduate Council will re-evaluate this policy in early Spring in accordance with campus recommendations regarding COVID-19.

Virtual dissertation defenses may be scheduled via [GoogleHangouts](#), Skype, or [Zoom](#) sessions. If the evolving COVID-19 situation affects a student's dissertation defense plans, please have the Committee Chair send an email to Academic Services, Graduate Division (academicservices@grad.ucla.edu), copying the Department/Program Chair, Graduate Student Advisor and Co-Chair (if applicable) with a student's plans for virtual defense. Please include the student's name, student ID number, department, name(s) of individual(s) to participate remotely, and the date of the dissertation defense.

While Departments individually regulate comprehensive, preliminary and qualifying exams, we encourage them to consider alternative modes of assessment. For in-person written exams, we encourage departments to consider online examinations, take-home exams, or other evaluations that do not require physical presence. For in-person oral examinations, we encourage departments to allow virtual presentations and committee attendance as described above.

As always, please be mindful of students or committee members who may require special accommodations to participate in online meetings. The [Center for Accessible Education](#) can assist in setting up desired accommodations.

Please forward this information to the students, staff and/or faculty in your department.

With best wishes,

Robin L. Garrell

Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate Division

Andrea M. Kasko

Chair of the Graduate Council