

Sent: Friday, August 19, 2022 11:52 PM

Subject: Fall 2022 Graduate Student Policy Updates



Graduate Division Graduate Council

What you need to know:

- Graduate students who apply and meet the eligibility criteria may register *In Absentia* if they are doing research that requires them to be 100 miles or more away from UCLA, without need of an exception from the Graduate Division.
- Only one doctoral committee member (never the student or chair or co-chair) may participate remotely in an oral qualifying examination or final defense.
- Effective Fall 2022, the Graduate Council has authorized the Dean of Graduate Education to review exceptions for the remote participation of the student and multiple committee members (including chairs or co-chairs) in extraordinary circumstances.

Dear Deans, Department Chairs and Vice-Chairs, Directors and Student Affairs Officers:

In Spring 2022, the Graduate Council passed a change to the university policy on remote participation of a doctoral committee member in oral qualifying examinations and final defenses. In addition, the Dean of Graduate Education has established UCLA's geographical limit on *In Absentia* registration. The details of these policy changes can be found below:

In Absentia

The [University of California Fee Policy for Graduate Student *In Absentia* Registration \(PDF\)](#) allows eligible graduate students working away from their home campus to continue to make progress toward their degree while maintaining access to certain University programs and services such as health insurance. Students registered *In Absentia* pay 15% of the combined Tuition and the Student Services Fee.

In December 2021, UCOP approved a policy change to permit Graduate Deans on each campus to establish a geographical limit outside of which *In Absentia* registration will be permitted without requiring an exception. Previous versions of the policy restricted eligibility for *In Absentia* registration to students undertaking research or coursework outside of California only, although Deans were allowed to grant exceptions to this requirement in special cases.

The purpose of this change was to formalize practices that had previously been taking place by exception and enable the UC to be more explicit about the circumstances under which *In Absentia* registration is granted, so that the policy can be well advertised and more equitably applied.

Following this change, the Dean of Graduate Education, in consultation with the Graduate Council, established UCLA's geographical limit on *In Absentia* registration as 100 miles or more away from UCLA. Please note: In all other respects, the eligibility criteria for *In Absentia* registration

are unchanged. More information on full eligibility criteria for *In Absentia* registration can be found on the [Graduate Division website](#).

Remote participation in oral qualifying examinations and final defenses

As per Academic Senate policy, only one doctoral committee member (never the chair or co-chair) may participate remotely in an oral qualifying examination or final oral examination (defense of the dissertation).

Students must petition the committee chair in advance of the examination to allow one committee member to participate remotely. The committee must provide written approval to the student ahead of the examination.

Effective Fall 2022, the Graduate Council voted to allow the Dean of Graduate Education to consider exceptions, in extraordinary circumstances, for the student and multiple committee members (including the chair or co-chairs) to participate remotely in oral qualifying examinations and final defenses. Previous versions of the policy only permitted the Graduate Dean to grant exceptions for a maximum of two committee members (never the student or chair/co-chair) to participate remotely.

The purpose of this change was to allow greater flexibility on remote participation in oral qualifying examinations and final defenses in special cases following the expiration of temporary COVID-19 policies at the end of Summer 2022.

Committee chairs must notify the Graduate Division of the remote participation on the [Remote Participation Notification & Exception Request Form \(PDF\)](#). Exception requests to allow the student and multiple committee members (including the chair or co-chair) to participate remotely must be made using the same form and authorized by the Chair of the student's department or program. ***In both cases, remote participation must be a matter of necessity rather than convenience.***

During 2022-23 academic year, the Graduate Division will be collecting data on remote participation in oral qualifying examinations and final

defenses. The Graduate Council will use these data and feedback gathered from faculty, staff and students to review the impact of the Remote Participation policy in Spring 2023 and make further adjustments as needed.

The Graduate Division is mapping out processes to implement these changes and will provide further guidance shortly. If you have questions, please email: academicservices@grad.ucla.edu

Best regards,

Susan L. Ettner

Dean of Graduate Education

Leah Lievrouw

Chair, Graduate Council

The UCLA logo is centered within a solid blue horizontal bar. The letters "UCLA" are rendered in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

UCLA
10889 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1400
Los Angeles, CA 90024-6971