

Conducting Master's and Doctoral Oral Thesis Examinations:

Absence of Examiners

Issue

A great deal of planning by students and at the departmental and program levels and School of Graduate Studies occurs to ensure the smooth conduct of Oral Thesis Examinations.

Rescheduling an oral thesis examination may compromise the student's academic deadlines, or future employment and impose the financial penalty of having to register and pay tuition for another term of study.

The guiding principle of planning for Master's and Doctoral Oral Thesis Examinations is that all reasonable efforts should be taken to ensure that the oral thesis examination is held as scheduled.

Procedures

In the event that a faculty member of an Examination Committee cannot attend the Oral Thesis Examination in person owing to illness, one of the following alternate arrangements should be made by the Department Head/Program Director, or the Graduate Coordinator, or other delegated departmental faculty member:

- Determine if another faculty member can serve on the committee and attend the oral thesis examination at the scheduled meeting time (in the case of the Chair, any internal departmental member, or the internal-external).
- Determine if the examiner who cannot attend in person could participate in the oral thesis examination via teleconference or videoconference or other interactive process (i.e.: Skype). If so, these arrangements must be made by the Department or Program.
- If the above two alternative modes of participation are not possible by the examiner, a comprehensive report including questions for the candidate and an indication of which outcome category the examiner would place the thesis in must be provided by that examiner to the Chairperson. The Chairperson will ask another member of the committee to read the report and pose the questions at the oral examination on the missing examiner's behalf.

For a Master's oral thesis examination, one of these appropriate steps can almost always be implemented entirely by the department. There may be cases where additional constraints may require the approval of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), such as, if it is proposed that a faculty member who is not also a member of the

SGS serve on the committee so that the examination may proceed as scheduled. For a Doctoral oral thesis examination, any changes to the committee structure or timing of the exam must be approved by the SGS.

In the case where none of these alternatives work, or if more than one member of the examination committee is ill or if the student is ill, the oral thesis examination must be rescheduled. The examination must be rescheduled without delay and must be held as soon as possible.

Contact

For further information about these guidelines or assistance, please contact the appropriate Associate Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.