

## STUDENTS REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN EXAMINATION

### TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATIONS EFFECTIVE MARCH 16, —AUGUST 31, 2020

#### DEFINITIONS

In this document:

- “FGS/Faculty” refers to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
- “Students” refers to thesis-based graduate students registered in FGS.
- “Examination” refers to oral thesis defense or oral Candidacy examination including Field of Study (FoS) and Thesis Proposal (TP).

#### PURPOSE

FGS normally expects that oral examinations related to thesis defense or Candidacy are attended by the student, examiners and Chair. In particular, the physical presence of the student and supervisor (or co-supervisor) is required and the number of examiners participating remotely is limited. Normally, only under special circumstances, students may be allowed to participate remotely in the examination, in the presence of a Proctor (<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/services/faculty-and-staff/gpdgpa-resources/policies-and-guidelines/distant-oral-exams>).

This document, prompted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, outlines temporary accommodations for situations where a student, supervisor and/or multiple examiners are allowed to participate remotely in an FGS oral examination. This document does not constitute a permanent change in FGS’ regulations regarding oral examinations. It is intended to provide a temporary arrangement during the COVID-19 period and will lapse once these exceptional circumstances are resolved or by August 31, 2020, whichever occurs first. If necessary, these special arrangements may be extended beyond August 31, 2020 by written communication from FGS.

#### TEMPORARY REGULATIONS FOR SCHEDULING AND SCHEDULED ORAL EXAMS

Programs should proceed with scheduling new exams and with already scheduled exams as usual. However for **all** FGS-controlled oral exams scheduled, or to be scheduled between March 16 and August 31, 2020, a **contingency plan must be formulated, submitted and approved** in the case of university closure or restricted physical availability of students or examiners (use the **contingency plan template** here: <https://grad.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/3/Form-Oral%20Examination-Remote%20Attendance%20Contingency%20Arrangement%20Mar-Sept%202020.docx>). Submission of the contingency plan is the responsibility of the supervisor and must be approved by the student in writing (email acknowledgment is acceptable).

In instances where it is **already known** that student, supervisor, and/or multiple examiners are unable or unwilling to be participate in person at the examination as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation students should be offered two options:

1-Defer the examination date. The students must be aware that such deferral may result in additional tuition and fees if the new exam date falls in a different term.

2- Proceed with the examination as originally scheduled. In this situation the program must make all necessary arrangements for the examination and submit a request for an oral examination with remote participation of the student/supervisor/multiple examiners (use the **altered format request** template here: <https://grad.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/3/Form-Oral%20Examination-Remote%20Attendance%20Alternative%20Arrangement%20Mar-Sept%202020.docx>).

Normally, a Proctor is required for Students to participate in an oral examination from a remote location. If arrangements for a Proctor can be made, then the programme must follow FGS guidelines (<https://grad.ucalgary.ca/services/faculty-and-staff/gpdgpa-resources/policies-and-guidelines/distant-oral-exams> and <https://live-grad.ucalgary.ca/services/faculty-and-staff/gpdgpa-resources/policies-and-guidelines/guidelines-proctors>). Given the special circumstances, FGS will accommodate shorter times for approval of a Proctor, than that specified in the above links. However given the current COVID-19 situation, **FGS will waive the requirement for a Proctor for remote examination of students for exams scheduled between March 16 and August 31, 2020**. In such cases, the student should be reminded of the materials available to the student that are permitted in the exam and the [Statement of Intellectual Honesty](#) of the University of Calgary. The remote examination of students in the absence of a Proctor should be performed through video conferencing technologies.

### **APPROVAL OF CONTINGENCY PLANS AND ALTERED FORMATS**

All contingency plans and requests for altered format for all thesis defences and candidacy exams conducted under the old rules must be submitted and approved by FGS. Contingency plans and requests for altered format for all oral candidacy examinations under the new rules should be submitted and approved at the program level as appropriate.

### **INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR CONTINGENCY AND ALTERNATIVE ORAL EXAM FORMATS**

- 1- The date and time of the examination taking into consideration possible time-zone differences.
- 2- The nature of the examination (Defense/Candidacy/FoS/TP) identifying if it is a re-take or not.
- 3- The composition of the examining committee and Chair, identifying individuals who are likely to be participating remotely.
- 4- Documented acceptance of the student to take the exam remotely on the specified date and time. (E-mail messages are acceptable)
- 5- Evidence that all examiners and the Chair are aware that the examination will/may be conducted with remote participation of the student.
- 6- Evidence of arrangements put in place to run the exam remotely. It is expected that each person participating remotely have access to a web-conference tool (e.g. Zoom, Skype for Business) and have a back-up telephone number or tele-conferencing communication tool. All back-up telephone numbers or tele-conferencing communication information will be communicated to the Neutral Chair ahead of the examination.
- 7- The programme has communicated to the Neutral Chair a number to contact (GPD, FGS) in case of an emergency or an unanticipated situation.

## **PROCESS OF RUNNING A REMOTE EXAMINATION**

- 1- The programme must make all necessary arrangements for setting up the remote communications and send the appropriate links or login information to the student and examiners participating remotely.
- 2- Without prior approval from FGS, exams must be scheduled during normal business hours of the University of Calgary (8:30am-4:30pm MDT M-F).
- 3- All members of the examining committee, the Neutral Chair and student must be available at least **15 minutes** before the scheduled time for the start of the exam to test the communication tool and trouble-shoot any possible issues.
- 4- All members of the examining committee, the Neutral Chair and student must be present continuously during the exam. Any short interruption if required, must be approved by the Neutral Chair and noted in the Neutral Chair report.
- 5- Communications are expected to be both audio and video. If not possible, audio communications may be acceptable only for persons other than the student (unless an approved Proctor is present).
- 6- If applicable, it is strongly advised to have a copy of the presentation distributed to all members ahead of the examination.
- 7- In the case of a thesis defense, all examiners reports must be in the possession of the Neutral Chair before the start of the examination (electronic copies emailed directly to the Neutral Chair are acceptable).
- 8- [FOR THESIS DEFENCES AND CANDIDACY EXAMS UNDER OLD RULES] Should communication with one or more persons break down and cannot be resolved within **60 minutes**, the Neutral Chair (or if the Neutral Chair is not available another member of the supervisory committee) must contact FGS directly [403 220 4938: option 3, option 5] [In the case of University closure or “work-from-home” period only, please contact an Associate Dean directly on 403-681-2138 or 403-863-4033]. The examination may still proceed conditional to FGS Associate Dean approval and documented student consent.
- 9- [FOR CANDIDACY EXAMS UNDER NEW RULES] Should communication with one or more persons break down and cannot be resolved within **60 minutes**, the Neutral Chair (or if the Neutral Chair is not available another member of the supervisory committee) must contact the GPD or Associate Dean Graduate Education (as appropriate). The examination may still proceed conditional to GPD/Associate Dean approval and documented student consent.
- 10- The post-examination in-camera deliberations are confidential and the Proctor (or Neutral Chair in the absence of a Proctor) must ensure that the student is disconnected during the deliberations.
- 11- At the end of the deliberation and once the outcome of the examination is reached, the Proctor (or Neutral Chair in the absence of a Proctor) will inform the student of the end of the deliberation.
- 12- The Neutral Chair will inform the student of the outcome of the examination.
- 13- Regardless of the outcome of the examination, the Proctor (or Neutral Chair in the absence of a Proctor) must write a report on the conditions of the exam, compliance with FGS regulations and any unusual events such as interruption of communication or requested pauses.