

Doctoral Defense Frequently Asked Questions (Updated 8/31/2023)

Can I hold my doctoral defense remotely?

Yes, doctoral Final Oral Examinations can be held either remotely or in person. For in person defenses, the student, the Supervising Professor, and Examining Committee Chair must be physically present, and no more than one committee member can be remote or absent. If more than one committee member cannot attend in person, the defense must be held remotely and all committee members will attend remotely. Please see FAQs below for more details about requesting remote and in-person defenses.

For master's defenses, please contact your individual program for the current procedures. Master's defenses are scheduled and managed by the department or program, and not by the Office of Graduate Education.

How do I request a Final Oral Examination?

The procedure is the same for both remote and in-person defenses. You need to complete the Request for Final Oral Examination Form and submit it to the Office of Graduate Education through the [Thesis and Dissertation Submission website](#). The form has been changed to account for remote defenses, so please make sure you use the most recent form: <https://graduate.utdallas.edu/docs/PhDReqFinalOral.pdf>. The remote defense URL must be included on your Request for Final Oral Examination Form in your initial submission, at least 2 weeks prior to the date of your requested defense. If you are holding an in-person defense, you must reserve a room through your program.

How do I set up a Video Conference for a remote defense?

Once you have decided on the time and day of your defense, please work with your program/department to setup a Video Conference for your remote defense. Final Oral Examinations have been successfully conducted using a variety of conferencing platforms such as MS Teams, Blackboard Collaborate, and Zoom. You should talk to your Supervising Professor and committee members about which platform will work best for you.

MS Teams has no restrictions for students, making it a popular option for those who want to host their own meeting. The Office of Information Technology has helpful [guides](#) on how to set up a meeting in Teams whether you are setting it up through Outlook or Teams directly.

Zoom meetings will need to be hosted on paid subscription accounts as the free version only allows for a 40-minute meeting. Please contact your department to see if they have a paid Zoom account that you can use. Alternatively, our office can help schedule with one of our Zoom accounts, if necessary. Please contact gradeducation@utdallas.edu with your defense date and time, and we will create a Zoom meeting for you.

It will be necessary for someone to host the remote defense. You and/or your Supervising Professor will need to decide who this will be. The host can be anyone of the committee or may be another faculty member or member of staff. You are strongly encouraged to hold a trial run. If you need help or run into any difficulty during the date/time of your defense, please contact Allison Nepomnick (Allison.Nepomnick@utdallas.edu) or Bradley Samore (Bradley.Samore@utdallas.edu) for assistance.

Do I need to submit a Committee Member Remote Form?

No, if the defense will be remote. As everyone will be attending remotely, you do not need to submit Committee Member Remote Forms.

Yes, if the defense will be in person. If one committee member is unable to attend you need to submit a Memo - [Committee Member Remote Form](#). If more than one committee member cannot attend in person, the defense will be held remotely and all committee members will attend remotely.

Do I need to submit a Committee Member Absent Form?

Yes, if one of your committee members is unable to attend the defense, you need to submit a Memo - [Committee Member Absent Form](#) whether the defense is remote or in person.

What if a committee member is unable to sign a Committee Member Remote or Committee Member Absent Form?

If for any reason it is not possible for the committee member to sign a form, we will accept an email from the committee member sent to dissertations@utdallas.edu. The email should state the reason for the absence, or for the request to attend remotely. If the committee member will be absent they must state that they agree to vote with the rest of the committee.

Who is the Examining Committee Chair of my doctoral Final Oral Examination and how will I receive an assignment?

The Examining Committee Chair is a non-voting representative appointed by the Dean of Graduate Education to ensure that university policies and procedures are being followed during the Final Oral Examination. It is your responsibility to work with the Examining Committee Chair and members of your Supervising Committee to find a time and date for your examination, and to collect their signature on the Request for Final Oral Examination Form: <https://graduate.utdallas.edu/docs/PhDReqFinalOral.pdf>.

The process to assign an Examining Committee Chair begins after you apply to graduate. You will receive the assignment via email from gradededucation@utdallas.edu, and the assignment will remain in effect until you graduate.

Am I responsible for collecting the signatures on the Report of Final Oral Examination?

No, the Examining Committee Chair will circulate the form to the other committee members and submit it to the Office of Graduate Education directly.