



# DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

## FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

### **GUIDELINES FOR CHAIRS OF REMOTE PHD DEFENCES**

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1. If you are not familiar with Microsoft Teams, we strongly recommend that, ahead of time, you download the Teams desktop App from MyDal. Click on the small grid in the upper left corner of the screen and select Teams from the options.
2. Join the scheduled defence “meeting” in Teams at least 15 minutes ahead of the scheduled start time. Informally greet the Candidate, Examining Committee members and the Departmental Representative as they join. Introduce yourself, indicating that you are the Chair and, as such, acting on behalf of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS). The defence may be “closed” – that is with no audience. However, FGS may have facilitated participation by an audience. As Chair, you will be informed of this well ahead of the defence.
3. Introduce the Candidate, the Examining Committee members and the Departmental Representative.
4. Review the technological protocol first:
  - a. With the exception of the Candidate, unless speaking, it is helpful to turn off video and to mute one’s microphone. Do this by clicking anywhere on the screen and a short bar will appear which provides the options for doing so.
  - b. When speaking, Examining Committee members are invited to turn on both video and audio.
  - c. As Chair, you will promptly remind participants if they are still muted when trying to speak.
  - d. Allow time, if needed, for technological queries. In case of any glitches during the defence explain that the FGS Representative (usually Helena Martel) will be available the entire time to provide aid.
5. Review the defence process:
  - a. Candidate begins with a brief (20 min) uninterrupted summary of work. Recording of the presentation is only allowed with the permission of all members of the Examining Committee.
  - b. Examining Committee typically has two rounds of uninterrupted questions. Each round begins with the External Examiner, who may take the time they need (within reason—up to 20 minutes is recommended). Each round then proceeds in the order set out in the Defence Notice with a maximum of 10 minutes for each internal examiner. A third round may be undertaken at the Committee’s discretion.
  - c. The Departmental Representative observes the process on behalf of the department. They are permitted to ask questions and, as Chair, you may choose to ask them at the beginning of the process if they plan to ask any questions.
  - d. When the Committee has completed its examination, any audience members are invited to participate with questions.
  - e. Monitor the time as the maximum time for a doctoral defence at Dalhousie is 3 hours.
6. Conduct the examination.
7. Thank any audience members for attending. The FGS Representative will ensure that everyone except the Examining Committee and Departmental Representative, and the Chair, have left the defence meeting.

8. *In Camera* Session:

- a. Review Committee options.
  - i. Approved — accepted as submitted or accepted on condition that additions, changes or corrections, to be specified by the Committee be completed within a time period specified by the Committee.
  - ii. Rejected — the committee can make a recommendation that the student should be encouraged to submit a revised thesis for re-examination. In the case of rejection, FGS will meet with the student, supervisor, and Graduate Coordinator to discuss options.
- b. The External Examiner begins the discussion. When each member of the committee has had the opportunity to express his/her initial assessment.
- c. The Departmental Representative may express an opinion but does not vote. The thesis cannot be approved without the agreement of the External Examiner.
- d. If changes are required, they should be specified and oversight is normally left with the Supervisor. If substantive changes are required, the category of “approved” should not be used.

9. The FGS Representative invites the Candidate to return to the defence meeting and the results are discussed with the Candidate.

10. After the defence:

- a. Each member of the Examining Committee signs and returns their copy of the Thesis Approval Form (TAF). The Supervisor’s signature is withheld until all required revisions have been made to the thesis.
- b. The FGS Representative emails a copy of the External Examiner’s Report to both the Supervisor and the Candidate.

11. The PhD Defence Report is filled out by the Chair of the Defence and returned by email to the Faculty of Graduate Studies ([thesis@dal.ca](mailto:thesis@dal.ca)).