



PhD Departmental Oral Examination Rules of Procedure (Remote Examinations due to COVID-19)

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, examinations are being held remotely using a variety of modalities (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, etc). Where possible, IMS will book the exam using Zoom.

Additional Considerations for Remote Examinations:

- IMS will work with the Supervisor to confirm the appropriate platform. Instructions for joining the examination meeting will be pre-circulated to the Examination Committee by the IMS Office
- All participants are expected to join the meeting 5 minutes early to ensure their technologies are working smoothly, so that the exam can proceed on time
- Exams are strictly confidential and cannot be recorded
- The Supervisor will manage/host the exam technology (i.e. Zoom Meeting Host) however, in some cases, this role may be delegated to a PAC member

Examination Committee Member Checklist:

- ✓ The Examination Chair receives the electronic examination file from the IMS Office
- ✓ The Examiner/Appraiser has submitted their appraisal to the IMS Office
- ✓ Only the pre-approved examination committee members may attend
- ✓ ALL members (except the Chair) must have read the thesis and prepared questions and feedback

Start of the Examination:

1. The Examination Chair introduces the members and the candidate and ensures that all approved examiners are present. If members are missing, the Chair advises the IMS Office and discusses action to be taken. **The examination will be cancelled if quorum is not met.**

Quorum is as follows:

- Supervisor
 - One Program Advisory Committee member
 - Examiner
 - Examiner/Appraiser
2. The Chair instructs the supervisor of their responsibility to carefully document items for revision and modification (if necessary) during the examination.
 3. The Chair will ask the student to withdraw from the examination. The student will either completely disconnect from the meeting or, if using Zoom, be placed in the Zoom Waiting Room by the meeting host. It is not sufficient for the student to simply be on mute.

4. The Chair advises the Examination Committee members of the exam procedures and what is expected of them. This is particularly important if there are members from other departments or universities who are not familiar with IMS exam procedures.
5. The Chair advises the examiners whether the student has completed all PhD course requirements and inquires whether there are any major concerns about the upcoming examination.
6. The Examiner/Appraiser summarizes their appraisal with focus on the most pressing points. Discussion may follow the summary of the appraisal.
7. The Chair provides the supervisor with a soft copy of the appraisal.
8. The Chair clarifies the order of questioning. Order of questions is from the most-to-least distant i.e., Examiner/Appraiser, Examiner, PAC members, and Supervisor (if necessary).

Presentation by candidate:

9. The Chair will invite the student back into the examination to give their presentation (if not using Zoom the Chair will ask the Supervisor to call/email the student to reconnect).
10. The student will give a 20-minute (uninterrupted) presentation. **This is a strict time limit.**
11. A PowerPoint presentation usually accompanies the presentation. The student will have already distributed their slides to the examination committee ahead of the exam. During the exam, the student can simply share their presentation screen when using Zoom.

Question period:

12. Following the student's presentation, the examiners will ask the student questions in the pre-determined order. These are presented as a round of questions, with 10 minutes allotted to each examiner per round.
13. The Chair allows only one examiner at a time to ask questions at a time (discussion by examiners among themselves will only detract from the 10-minute time period) **and will intervene if another examiner, or the supervisor, starts to join in the discussion.**
14. A second round of questions along the same format is typical. Some examiners may choose not to ask additional questions, or not to take up the full 10 minutes on the second round.
15. The Chair should keep informal notes about the content of questions that may lead to

proposal revisions for reference during the analysis of the defense.

16. Following questioning, the Chair will ask the student to withdraw from the examination (either completely disconnect from the meeting or be placed in the Zoom Waiting Room by the Meeting Host).

Committee discusses the examination and votes:

17. The Chair will remind the Committee of the thesis and voting options. All examiners must address the following questions on the voting ballot:

Is the thesis and defense acceptable?

- Yes
- No

Is the written thesis acceptable?

- As it Stands (acceptable in its present form)
- With minor or organizational corrections (typographical errors, errors in punctuation, change in format, or minor clarification of textual material, as indicated by the examining committee) to be corrected within one month
- With minor modifications (i.e. more extensive clarification of textual material or qualification of research findings or conclusions). Modifications must be feasibly completed within three months.
- Not acceptable

Was the Oral Defense:

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Acceptable
- Not acceptable

18. The Chair asks each voting member to email them directly with the responses to the above questions.
19. The Chair collects the e-mailed responses and reads aloud the vote of each Committee member. They then record the result in the Chair's Summary Form.
20. More than one negative vote (or abstention) causes the examination to be adjourned.
21. If minor modifications are required, the Chair appoints a Modifications Subcommittee (see [After the Examination](#)).

Outcome:

22. The student is invited back into the examination and the Chair advises the student about the outcome of the examination (see [After the Examination](#))
23. A clear statement about who will review the revised thesis is given to the student and supervisor, and the examination is adjourned.

After the Examination:

24. Within 24 hours of the examination, the Chair will submit the Chair's Summary Form to the IMS office.
25. IMS will send next steps instructions to the student.

a) If Minor or Organizational Corrections are recommended

- Student will consult with supervisor and PAC members about changes
- Supervisor confirms completion of revisions via email to IMS within 1 month of the examination and before a Final Oral Examination can be booked

b) If Minor Modifications are recommended

- Chair will appoint a subcommittee
 - The subcommittee must include the Examiner/Appraiser and 2 Examiners
 - The Subcommittee Chair cannot be the supervisor
- **The designated Chair of the Thesis Subcommittee must prepare a brief report within one week of the exam, indicating required changes, and ensure that the Candidate, Supervisor(s), and IMS Thesis and Examinations Officer receives a copy of the this report**
- Student will consult with the subcommittee members about changes, revises thesis and submits it to the subcommittee
- Subcommittee Chair confirms completion of revisions via email to IMS within 3 months of the examination and before a Final Oral Examination can be booked

c) A repeat PhD Departmental Oral Examination is absolutely required if:

- The thesis is deemed not acceptable
- Student does not pass the oral defense. This may occur when a vote is required (i.e., examiners disagree about the recommendations) and there is a negative outcome.
- Corrections are not submitted within the required timeline (above)

The student is allowed one repeat of the PhD Departmental Examination within 3 months of the original examination, or the student can choose to reclassify into the MSc program.