

May 26, 2022

PROFESSOR JAMES ANTONY, Dean
Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs

SUBJECT: Telepresence Rules for Master's and Doctoral Examinations

Dear Jim,

At its March 14, 2022 meeting, the Graduate Council reviewed the request from the Graduate Division to consider permanent changes to the rules surrounding remote participation in Master's and Doctoral examinations. While the Council affirms that defenses and exams are most effective when all committee members are physically present, we also agree that retaining the flexibility for remote participation that was temporarily authorized due to COVID-19 should be permanently retained. Therefore, the Council approved the following updated provisions to facilitate the scheduling and administration of Master's and Doctoral qualifying exams and defenses:

San Diego Senate Regulation 715, Requirements for the PhD Degree at San Diego, requires that the doctoral committee conduct the qualifying examination and final oral examination (the dissertation defense). Therefore, the Council approves the following updated rules for conducting PhD qualifying exams and defenses:

*The default method for the doctoral and master's committee to conduct graduate examinations (doctoral qualifying examination and final dissertation/thesis defense) is **when the student and all members of the committee are physically present in the same room**. The Graduate Council recognizes, however, that practical exigencies do not always make this possible. Therefore, the Graduate Council will defer to the graduate programs (Department Chair or Program Director) to review requests for exceptions and to make decisions to allow remote participation. The graduate program must ensure that when an exam is approved to be held entirely remote or in a hybrid format (i.e., some members are physically present and some are remote) that the student has agreed to this format. It is expected that there will be synchronous participation by all committee members in the scheduled exam. If an unavoidable situation arises that affects a committee member's ability to participate synchronously, the committee chair (or co-chairs) may decide how to proceed. There must be sufficient expertise among present members to examine the student. If a committee member must be absent for the scheduled exam, it is permissible for one absent committee member to examine the candidate on a separate date. The committee chair, or one co-chair, must participate synchronously in the scheduled exam.*

The updated rules are intended to replace the rules approved by Graduate Council on October 8, 2018, effective Fall 2022. The Council requests that the Division of Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs notify all departments and programs about the revised requirements and update any places stating the rules for conducting qualifying exams and thesis or dissertation defenses.

Sincerely,

Arshad Desai, Chair
Graduate Council

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