

Statistics & Actuarial Science Procedure for Completely Remote Defences

Info for Candidates and Supervisors

Jay Young 17 November 2020

- On advice from Grad Studies, please note, **all signatures on forms must be either physical signatures subsequently scanned or digital signatures (not cursive script)**, emails stating approval in writing are not acceptable.
- **Candidates, things you need to remember to do in your final semester.**
 - Make sure you are enrolled in either the MSc Project or PhD Thesis (Stat 898 or 899) course for your final semester, this can be done online.
 - You need to apply to graduate. This should be done sooner rather than later in the semester but you should check the Grad Studies 'Dates & Deadlines' webpage (<https://www.sfu.ca/gradstudies/graduate-students/managing-your-program/deadlines.html>) for the deadline you must apply by.
 - This page may also be useful: <https://www.sfu.ca/gradstudies/graduate-students/completing-graduation.html>.
- Preparation for Exam/Defence
 - An **exam/defence date should not be agreed upon**, between the supervisor and the candidate, **until the project/thesis is substantially written and in the required format**. See the following link for details on formatting, <https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/publish/thesis/format>.
- The Graduate Program Assistant (GPA) will update the department website to show defence details, as soon as possible after the date and time have been confirmed. **Candidates should check the website to confirm that the details of their defence are correct** (<http://stat.sfu.ca/research/defences.html>). Note the website will request that anyone who wants to attend the defence remotely should send their email address to the GPA.

Timeline for Defences

- 7 weeks before defence:
 - **For PhD Candidates, Supervisor informs GPA of defence info** including date, time, full name of candidate (including student ID if possible), title of thesis and full committee details (including who will chair the defence) and the external's CV, covering at least 6 years, if the external examiner is non-SFU.
 - Supervisors please note, the external must have previously supervised at least one PhD student through to completion of their degree. The minimum rank is usually associate professor, but if you wanted to recruit an assistant professor to the role, the CV would need to be submitted to the GPA 8 weeks ahead of the defence, to allow time for pre-approval by Grad Studies.
 - GPA completes and emails the Exam Committee form to Exam Committee Members for signature. **Each Committee Member signs their own form and returns it to the GPA**, who forwards them to Grad Studies.
 - **PhD Candidate to submit the final draft of their thesis** (the one that will be defended) **to the GPA**, for forwarding to Grad Studies, by 6 weeks and 1 day before the defence, at the latest.
 - The Exam Committee form, external's CV and thesis has to be received by Grad Studies at the latest, 6 weeks before the defence.
- 5 weeks before defence:
 - **For MSc Candidates, Supervisor informs GPA of defence info** including date, time, full name of candidate (including student ID if possible), title of project and full committee details (including who will chair the defence).
 - GPA completes and emails the Exam Committee form to Exam Committee Members for signature. **Each Committee Member signs their own form and returns it to the GPA** who forwards them to Grad Studies.
 - The Exam Committee form has to be received by Grad Studies at the latest, 4 weeks before the defence.

- **Candidate emails the final version of their abstract**, as soon as it is available, to the GPA for inclusion on the website.
- Between 4 weeks and 7 days before defence:
 - **MSc Candidate to submit a digital copy of the written project to the Committee, copied to the GPA**, at the very latest 2 weeks before the date of the defence. However, it is **highly recommended to send this out before then, say in week 3 before the defence**, to ensure that all members of the Committee have sufficient time to read the project thoroughly.
 - GPA emails the department, including Grad Students, details of the defence and requests email address of anyone who wants to remotely attend.
 - **The Candidate or Exam Committee Members can inform GPA of name and email address for any audience members from outside of the department who want to remotely attend the defence.**
- 7 days before defence:
 - GPA sets up the defence as a meeting on the Zoom platform. **GPA emails the Zoom meeting ID and other information to the Candidate and Committee** and informs the department of the date and time of the defence.
 - If link not received within a few days, the Candidate can email GPA to check on it. The Candidate can also inform the GPA of anyone outside of the department who wants to attend the defence via Zoom.
- Sometime during the week before the defence:
 - The Candidate and their Supervisor agree a date and time to **test Zoom by holding a short meeting** to test speed of connections and to familiarize themselves with Zoom, if necessary.
 - The Candidate and Exam Committee Members may also want to share Skype users as a backup. Also **mobile phone numbers should be shared to help resolve any technical issues** that may arise during the defence.
 - **Two days before the defence, PhD Candidates only should forward the slides they will be using for their defence presentation to the GPA**, so they are available to the committee as a backup, if required.
- Day before defence:
 - **GPA will email the Exam Committee the RAD form for signature.**
 - **The GPA will email the Zoom meeting ID and other information to the department.**
- The defence:
 - The chair sets up a breakout room, for the in camera discussion, that only the committee members can access.
 - As per instructions from Grad Studies, the general public is only allowed to attend the open portion of the examination via video-conference, which includes the candidate's presentation and the round of questions from the examining committee. The audience should also be given the opportunity to ask questions.
 - Once the questions have been completed, the chair should move the committee and themselves, into the breakout room for the in camera discussion. The committee then makes the decision according to [GGR 1.10.2](#).
 - The chair should invite the Candidate into the committee breakout room, to inform them of the decision. Afterwards the breakout room can be closed which will return everyone to the main room for final remarks and general conversation.
 - If the exam result is:
 - Passed, Conditional on Revisions – **the entire Exam Committee, EXCEPT the supervisor, to each sign** their copy of the RAD form, check the relevant exam results box and email it to the GPA.
 - Any other outcome – **the entire Exam Committee to each sign** their copy of the RAD form, check the relevant exam results box and email it to the GPA.
- After the defence:
 - If the supervisor did not sign the RAD form (conditional pass) they retain their copy and **only check the exam result box and sign it, once the student has completed their revisions to the supervisor's**

satisfaction. The signed RAD form is then emailed to the GPA for subsequent submission to Grad Studies, with a fully signed copy going to the student and supervisor.

- The student can go ahead with submission of their project/thesis to the library (<https://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/publish/thesis/submission>), which includes submitting a copy of the fully signed RAD form.