ZOOM QUALIFYING EXAM POLICY AND BEST PRACTICES

This document outlines policies and best practices for Zoom QEs and aims for a successful and effective Zoom Meeting. Please carefully review this document before your exam and address any questions/concerns with your QE Committee members, if needed. All members of the QE Committee including Chair and General Examiner will employ flexibility and creativity for the best exam possible.

As of May 18, 2020, all GSBS students must have a confirmed negative COVID test in order to be on campus.

Please refer to the General​ ​Qualifying Exam Requirements in the GSBS Student Handbook.

SCHEDULING QUALIFYING EXAMS

* Students should schedule the Oral Proposal Defense of their QE by Zoom, since it is unclear when face to face meetings will be allowed to resume on campus.
* The GSBS has secured a dedicated room on campus for use by the student for the Zoom meeting. This room will provide a reliable wired internet connection, a whiteboard that is visible by video to all participants, and quiet space. The room will be professionally cleaned after each use.
* The GSBS-approved rooms are available from 8AM-noon, and then from 1PM-4PM, starting June 1, 2020. Please schedule your three-hour exam within one of those blocks. The room is unavailable from noon-1PM.
* Once you have arranged your QE Date and Time with your committee, please enter scheduling information into Blackboard. The room will be reserved for you upon receipt of this information.
* Students may opt to conduct the exam at home. However, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure internet stability, audiovisual sufficiency, and maintain a distraction-free environment for the exam.
* Students who are unable to come to campus for a scheduled exam, due to health concerns or quarantine, should consult with Assistant Dean Morgan Thompson.
* As with an in-person QE, three hours should be scheduled for the exam, although it is anticipated that the exam will last 1.5-2 hours.
* Previously scheduled exams may proceed as scheduled, provided that the student confirms availability and full attention of committee members, and assumes the risks and responsibilities of conducting the exam from home.
* New exams in designated on-campus rooms may be scheduled for any date after **June 1**. Please be aware that many faculty and students will be primarily focused on the ongoing research ramp-up, and may not be available for exams before mid-June.
* Once a date and time are agreed upon, the General Examiner will set up the Zoom meeting as the Host. It is recommended that the chair be made a co-host for the meeting.
* It is the responsibility of the student to inform Mindy Donovan via Blackboard of their QE date, regardless of where the exam will be conducted.

BASIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR VISUAL AIDS AND SETTING UP ZOOM

* Video participation is required for the student and for all members of the QEC. Ensure that your laptop or desktop computer has a working webcam and microphone.
* Check your internet connection in the room you plan to use prior to the exam, and if possible plan to practice connecting with your General Examiner at least a day prior to the exam.
* Headphones are recommended but not required. They will help to avoid audio feedback and/or echoes.
* Please ensure all devices and wireless headphones are fully charged before the meeting and, if possible, stay plugged in during the meeting.
* Please arrange the lighting in the room to properly light your face and work area during the exam and minimize back-lighting (lights or windows behind you).
* If you do not have a whiteboard available to you, practice using the whiteboard feature in Zoom in advance, in case you need to illustrate and answer by drawing. If there are difficulties, consult with your GE/Chair in advance.
* If participating from a room with a whiteboard, test in advance to determine if it can be well visualized by the laptop camera and used in a chalk talk style presentation.
* The Chair of your committee/General Examiner will place you in the “Waiting room” anytime the committee members need to deliberate in private. This may occur 2-3 times during the exam.
* At the end of exam, the Chair will inform the student of the outcome with some brief comments.
* The Exam will not be recorded.

EXAM LOGISTICS FOR QE COMMITTEE

* All QE member responsibilities will be the same as described in the GSBS guidelines with a few adjustments:
  + The General Examiner should establish the rules of communication at the start of each exam.
  + While chairs should encourage extensive questioning, similar to an in-person QE, the chair should facilitate effective communication in the context of the Zoom environment. For example, the chair may call attention to the question, or ask for the question to be rephrased, to draw the student’s attention to the questioner.
  + Committee members should unmute one at a time to avoid talking over each other.
  + Given the possible limitations of technology, faculty are encouraged to focus on questions that can be answered orally.
  + All QE Committee members are required to give their full attention to the exam and use their video, rather than a still image or their name. This will ensure that the student knows they are giving their full attention to the exam. Students will understandably seek non-verbal cues to know if the exam is going well, or if anything is unclear.

OUTCOMES

* In case repeated technical difficulties result in consistent disruptions during the Zoom QE, the General Examiner along with input from the Committee members will make the decision of re-scheduling the QE until another date. Recommendations to alleviate any technical problem will be communicated to the student.
* Given the challenges of the virtual QE, a single retest will be automatically granted for any exam with an outcome of Not Passed. Retests via Zoom must take place in GSBS-designated campus rooms.
* If the committee determines that the student has not performed well enough to pass, they will be given one opportunity to do a retest and repeat the oral defense.
* If a retest is necessary, the student **must** participate from an on-campus room arranged by the GSBS, to ensure that environmental factors do not contribute to a negative outcome.
* It is preferable for all retests to be completed within four weeks of the original oral defense. However the committee may allow up to eight weeks to accommodate scheduling disruptions caused by the research ramp up or health concerns.
* Committees may also request that portions of the written exam be rewritten or expanded upon, in lieu of an oral retest. Rewrites should also be completed in 4 weeks or less, as determined by the committee.