

## CLSC MEMO

### **Topic: New procedures and guidance for Student Oral Examinations (MSCS Final Examination, PhD Comprehensive Examination, Thesis Dissertation Final Examination)**

#### **Background**

Due to COVID-19 and the necessary precautions being taken to protect one another and our community, the university is against holding in-person student oral examinations (MSCS Final Examination, PhD Comprehensive Examination, Thesis Dissertation Final Examination). Instead of in-person meetings the examinations should use online options, such as Zoom or Skype. Examinations may proceed as scheduled but the student and committee members must be in agreement regarding the format of the examination. All committee members and the student **MUST AGREE** to join the examination by Zoom (or Skype) and must have synchronous audio and video access. The student and committee may decide that it is best to cancel and reschedule the examination to a later date. As you can appreciate the situation is rapidly changing so new guidelines may be forthcoming. Additionally, we are not certain when things will return to normal. These guidelines may continue to be in effect through the fall term. Guidance and instructions are provided below.

The Clinical Science Program and the Graduate School will remain accessible electronically during working hours. The Clinical Science Program is very aware that this is a stressful, disruptive and uncertain time. Together we will figure it out. We are here to support, trouble shoot and assist you. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Galit Mankin ([galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu)) and/or Lisa Cicutto ([lisa.cicutto@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:lisa.cicutto@cuanschutz.edu)).

Apologies for the lengthy document but it is a one stop shop for information for the student and all members of the student examination committee (MSCS Final Examination, PhD Comprehensive Examination, Thesis Dissertation Final Examination). The document is organized below for chairs of the committees and organized according to type of examination (MSCS Final Examination, PhD Comprehensive Examination, Thesis Dissertation Final Examination).

#### **Student Responsibilities**

##### **Organizing and Communicating Examination Date Details**

- The student is responsible for identifying the mutually agreeable date and time that all committee members are able to attend the examination. This information must be provided to the Chair at least 4 weeks in advance of the examination date. Once the date and time are identified, the student will request the Chair book/set-up the Zoom audio-video teleconference (Zoom: <https://www1.ucdenver.edu/offices/office-of-information-technology/software/how-do-i-use/zoom>). The zoom session must be set-up with a password to ensure security with a minimum of 3 hour duration. The Chair must be the host in order to control the environment and keep the conference operational during open and closed portions of the exam. The student is not permitted in closed portions of the meeting. The Chair will provide all of the details for the Zoom teleconference. It is the student's responsibility to encourage and prompt the Chair to set-up the online audio and video environment.
- The student is responsible for communicating all of the meeting details (url, password and accompanying meeting details) to Ms. Mankin ([galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu)) and all committee members. It is suggested that electronic calendar invitations are sent with all of the Zoom examination details. **Ms. Galit Mankin must be informed of the online examination**

**details at least 3 weeks before the exam date.** If this does not occur, your examination date may need to be canceled with a new examination date.

- We appreciate that some of you are very competent Skype users. You can use Skype but you will need to ensure that the examination can be advertised with connecting information for public participation.

#### **Continued Need for Student Submission of Forms for Holding the Exam**

- Additionally, you still need to complete all of the forms in the requested timeframe as outlined in the CLSC Handbooks (MSCS and PhD). Please contact Galit Mankin **immediately** if you are planning to schedule an exam and have not yet informed her. Graduate School forms are located on the [Graduate School website](#) and CLSC forms are located in the MSCS/PhD Resources sections on the [CLSC website](#).

#### **Practice your presentation in the online environment you will be using**

##### **Anticipate Issues**

- Send your presentation and any other materials you intend to share during the examination to all committee members at least 12 hours in advance of your examination, in the event that technological difficulties occur. Given the high demand on the internet and Zoom, technological difficulties are expected to be higher than usual. Everyone will be working together to have the examination proceed.

##### **Examination Structure**

- Ensure that all committee members are in attendance for the examination.
- If technical difficulties arise, committee members are able to participant by phoning into the examination and follow the presentation using the presentation file sent to committee members prior to the examination.
- The Chair serves as the host and moderator and is responsible for orienting attendees to the process and structure of the examination. The examination will continue to have open and closed sessions. The examination will begin with the student providing their oral presentation that is open to the public and will entertain questions. The duration will be about 60 minutes (40-45 mins for the student presentation and 15-20 minutes for questions). The examination will then move to a closed session. During this time, the Chair will request that all attendees, with the exception of committee members, leave the meeting. The Chair will request the student to exit the meeting as well but to return in 5-7 minutes. The Chair should request the student's phone number so s/he can be contacted to return to the exam. Once the student returns, the closed questioning portion of the meeting will occur and last for an approximate duration of 1 hour. The student will then be asked to exit the meeting again for about 15-20 minutes, while the committee deliberates. The student will then return/connect to the meeting/examination. The chair has the option to use Zoom's breakout room feature to facilitate the exit and return of the student to the main Zoom session. Breakout rooms must be enabled in advance of the meeting in the Zoom meeting set-up and are controlled by the zoom host only. More information about breakout rooms can be found in this tutorial: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093>
- **The process of obtaining committee members' digital signatures on the exam report form has proved to be challenging. The CLSC program administrator will generate signatures on behalf of committee members as long as each committee member documents the result of the exam via an e-mail chain, allowing Ms. Mankin to sign the exam form on their behalf.**

### Chair's Duties and Responsibilities

- Ensure that student and committee are comfortable with the online format.
- It is paramount that all parties feel comfortable proceeding in an online format and that all parties can participate/access an online environment that includes video and audio. If this is not the case, then the exam should be postponed.
- Serve as host and moderator
- Follow the Graduate School requirements for holding the examination and completion of forms

### PhD Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form Thesis Defense Examination and Completion of Required Forms

- The PhD student is responsible for thesis committee members' approval of the Graduate School's **Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form** at least 12 hours in advance of the PhD thesis defense. This form needs to be completed by the student and sent to all committee members and Ms. Galit Mankin ([galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu)) at least 12 hours prior to the defense. This form will be reviewed and discussed at the examination. This form can be downloaded from the Graduate School website at: <https://graduateschool.ucdenver.edu/forms-resources/resources> (choose the *Forms* tab, scroll down and click on the *Thesis Approval Form*)

### COVID-19 Signature Accommodations for Graduate School's Examination Report Form

- The Chair is responsible for documenting the results of the examination status (Pass, Pass with Conditions, Fail) and informing Ms. Galit Mankin ([galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu)). The Graduate School has revised their process to allow digital signatures. **The student is not included in the email chain.** Described below is the process for documenting the examination status and indicating the individual committee member's approval of the CLSC to digitally sign the form on their behalf.

### MSCS Final Examination

- The **chair initiates an e-mail chain** from their official university email address to all committee members and Ms. Galit Mankin ([galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu)). **The student is not included in the email chain.** The subject/title of the email chain should be the student's last name and Examination Results, for instance "Cicutto- Examination Results".
- The **body of the email** should include text that identifies the student's name, student identification (SID) number, date, type of examination, exam results, and permission to generate electronic signatures. For instance, "The committee appointed to examine Lisa Cicutto (SID#112233445) on March 17, 2020 for the MSCS Final Examination reports the results of Pass-No conditions. Permission is granted to Ms. Mankin, Program Administrator, to generate an electronic signature." The other result options would be Pass with Stated Conditions and the conditions would be explained in the email or Fail with the reasons detailed in the email.
- **Each committee member/approver uses REPLY ALL to the thread with their decision** so that everyone involved can see everyone's decision, and all decisions are linked together in a single thread for archiving.

### PhD Comprehensive Examination

- The **chair initiates an e-mail chain** from their official university email address to all committee members and Ms. Galit Mankin ([galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu)). **The student is not included in the email chain.** The subject/title of the email chain should be the student's last name and Examination Results, for instance "Cicutto- Examination Results".
- The **body of the email** includes text that identifies the student's name, student identification (SID) number, date, type of exam and results, and permission to generate electronic signatures. For instance, "The committee appointed to examine Lisa Cicutto (SID#112233445) on March 17, 2020 for the PhD Comprehensive Examination reports the results of Pass- No conditions. Permission is granted to Ms. Mankin, Program Administrator, to generate an electronic signature." The other result options would be Pass with Stated Conditions and the conditions would be explained in the email or Fail with the reasons detailed in the email.
- **Each committee member/approver uses REPLY ALL to the thread with their decision** so that everyone involved can see everyone's decision, and all decisions are linked together in a single thread for archiving.

### PhD Thesis Defense Examination-Pass

- The **chair initiates an e-mail chain** from their official university email address to all committee members and Ms. Galit Mankin ([galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu)). **The student is not included in the email chain.** The subject/title of the email chain should be the student's last name and Examination Results and Thesis Approval, for instance "Cicutto- Examination Results and Thesis Approval".
- The **body of the email reads:**  
"The committee appointed to examine [insert student's name and student identification number] on [Insert exam date] for the PhD Thesis Defense reports the results of Pass- No conditions. The final copy of [insert student's name] PhD thesis/dissertation has been examined by the following committee members (included on this email chain) and we find that both the content and form meet scholarly and presentation standards. Permission is granted to Ms. Mankin, Program Administrator, to generate an electronic signature. We approve its publication. Please use the reply all option when responding to this email indicating your approval (or not) so that all responses are linked together in a single thread for archiving."
- **Each committee member/approver uses REPLY ALL to the thread with their decision** so that everyone involved can see everyone's decision, and all decisions are linked together in a single thread for archiving.

### PhD Thesis Defense Examination-Pass with Conditions or Fail

- The **chair initiates an e-mail chain** from their official university email address to all committee members and Ms. Galit Mankin ([galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu)). **The student is not included in the email chain.** The subject/title of the email chain should be the student's last name and examination, for instance "Cicutto- Examination Results".
- The **body of the email** includes text that identifies the student's name, student identification (SID) number, date, type of examination and the results (Pass with Stated Conditions or Fail). For instance, "The committee appointed to examine Lisa Cicutto (SID#112233445) on March 17, 2020 for the PhD Thesis Defense Examination reports the results of Pass with Stated Conditions. Permission is granted to Ms. Mankin, Program Administrator, to generate an electronic

signature.” The conditions would be explained in the body of the email. For a result of Fail, the reasons for the Fail would be detailed in the email. Add to the body of the email, “Please use the reply all option when responding to this email indicating your approval (or not) so that all responses are linked together in a single thread for archiving”.

- For the exam result of Pass with Conditions, once stated conditions are met and the thesis is approved by the Chair/committee members, the **student downloads and completes** the Graduate School’s **Thesis/Dissertation Approval** Form. This form can be downloaded from the Graduate School website at: <https://graduateschool.ucdenver.edu/forms-resources/resources> (choose the *Forms* tab, scroll down and click on the *Thesis Approval Form*)
- The **student is responsible for starting a common email** thread demonstrating approval of the thesis/dissertation that includes all of the PhD thesis committee members and Ms. Galit Mankin ([galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:galit.mankin@cuanschutz.edu)). Ensure that the email has the Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form attached.
- The subject/title of the email chain should be the student’s last name and Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form, for instance “Cicutto- Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form”. The email chain needs to include the completed Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form as a pdf attachment. The body of the email message should read: “The final copy of [insert student’s name] PhD thesis/dissertation has been examined by the following committee members (included on this email chain) and we find that both the content and form meet scholarly and presentation standards. We approve its publication. Permission is granted to Ms. Mankin, Program Administrator, to generate an electronic signature. Please use the reply all option when responding to this email indicating your approval (or not) so that all responses are linked together in a single thread for archiving”
- The student is responsible for ensuring that all committee members have used the respond all option and that all committee members have approved the form.