

Mathematics Department Policy on Graduate Examination Format September 2022

Graduate examinations in our department include the advancement to Ph.D. candidacy and final thesis defense of mathematics Ph.D. students conducted by their Ph.D. committees.

Effective Fall 2022, the default format of a graduate examination in our department is in person, i.e., all the committee members and the student are physically present in the same room for a scheduled examination. (This is set by the Division of GEPA.) However, when an unexpected situation arises and affects a committee member's ability to participate in the examination synchronously, and when the student agrees, a remote or hybrid examination is allowed and can be decided by the committee chair or co-chairs.

The following guidelines should be followed to arrange a remote or hybrid, synchronous examination:

1. In forming the committee, the student needs to provide different examination options, in-person, remote, or hybrid, to potential faculty committee members, and based on the conversation, the student can decide whether or not they want the faculty member on their committee. If such conversation did not take place, and if an unexpected situation arises, the faculty committee member can request remote examination, and can be released from the committee duty should the student refuse the request.
2. In general, the graduate student is not allowed to opt for a remote examination unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as illness, travel difficulties related to visa problems, or a graduation deadline. Under such circumstances, the committee chair can decide to reschedule an in-person examination, or have a remote or hybrid examination.
3. According to the Division of GEPA, 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.