Policy Changes in Effect During Remote Learning

Please note the following policy changes, which will remain in place throughout the period for which the University has suspended face-to-face instruction.

Effective immediately, GSAS is making the following adjustments to our academic policy/practice, which will remain in place throughout the period for which the University has suspended face-to-face instruction:

- Doctoral dissertation, master's thesis, and capstone defenses will be held remotely—through video/web conferencing—for the remainder of the spring 2020 semester, and must include the student and all committee members participating.

- All students and committee members participating in a defense by web conferencing must be able, at a minimum, to hear each other at the same time. The University has acquired an enterprise-wide license for Zoom. If you have not received an invitation from Fordham IT to sign up for your Zoom account, please contact Fordham IT as soon as possible at 718-817-3999 to activate and utilize your account.

- While GSAS is recommending that all defenses be conducted through Zoom, other web conferencing options for a defense include WebEx, Skype, GoToMeeting, and Adobe Connect.

- The dissertation defense shall take place on the date and at the time indicated on the defense notification submitted by the department to the dean's office. Exceptions to this must be requested in advance and will be subject to the dean's approval.

- For the remainder of the spring 2020 semester, when a dissertation defense notification is received by the dean's office, the notification will be shared with all GSAS department chairs and DGSs/program directors for dissemination to their faculty and staff. This procedure will temporarily replace the dissertation notification posting on the GSAS dean's bulletin board, located outside of Keating Hall, Room 222.

- The department administrator/secretary, student, or mentor can schedule the defense meeting on Zoom, select a host, and send defense meeting invitations to the student and each member of the committee. When arranging the defense via web conferencing/Zoom, please proceed in the same manner and roles as currently used by the department when scheduling an in-person defense meeting. The invitation/link to a defense that is open to public viewing should be shared with those who wish to view the defense.

- Documents and other materials that would normally need to be signed or submitted in writing may be submitted by electronic mail. If a document requires a signature, it must be submitted in an email sent from the sender’s fordham.edu account. The defense paperwork will be made available on the GSAS website as writable pdfs with the ability to add electronic signatures. Select the signature area to receive instructions regarding how to set up an electronic signature.

- The doctoral dissertation defense paperwork shall be signed by the mentor and department chair at a minimum, and the master's thesis and capstone shall be signed by the department chair at a minimum.

- If, due to technical issues, a committee member is not able to electronically sign the forms and email the form to the next committee member for signature, an email indicating your defense decision should be sent to the mentor and department chair, and will be accepted in lieu of a signature. All email decisions and paperwork should be submitted to adgsas@fordham.edu for final processing and graduation clearance. The form will be signed on the committee member’s behalf by the dean’s office.

- If, due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the student or committee member finds that it will be impossible to participate in the defense, an extension to the defense date may be requested by emailing adgsas@fordham.edu. In other instances, the graduation date may need to be moved to a future semester.

If you have any questions, please contact Dean Schwind or Carmela Menta (adgsas@fordham.edu; 718-817-4415). Full details of this policy and all related forms will be uploaded to the GSAS website by Monday, March 16, 2020.