

Conducting a Remote (Zoom) Proposal Hearing or Dissertation Defense
Best Practices and Etiquette
[Zoom Support](#)

Committee Chair – the dissertation chair is responsible for “hosting” the meeting.

Before the hearing/defense

- Schedule meeting using Zoom and share the invitation (meeting link) with the student and the committee members.
- Determine how you will have the student “step out of the room”, along with other non-committee members. A breakout room works well. The committee all move to the breakout room and return to the main room when they are finished with their discussion.
- Determine how and if you want to use the chat feature. To prevent misuse of this feature you may want to consider *disabling* all chat, at least until hearing/defense result has been determined. Another chat option is “host only.” This option permits the host to send messages to everyone and participants can send messages to the host only. This can be helpful in allowing attendees to alert the host to technology problems.
- Be sure to have a back-up phone number for all required participants in case there is a technology problem.

At the hearing/defense

- Open the meeting room 10-15 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- If you do not want participants to join the meeting after the presentation has started, consider “locking” the meeting. [click Participants at bottom of window, then click Lock Meeting button in pop-up window]
- Begin the hearing/defense as you would with an in-person meeting and include any Zoom related announcements, i.e. suggesting everyone mute their microphones during the presentation.
- If the student wants to record the hearing, check whether committee members are ok with this.

During the committee-only session

Turn off Zoom recording, if this was previously turned on.

Student

Before the hearing/defense

- Follow instructions on website for scheduling a [hearing](#).
- Make sure you know how to use [Zoom](#). Practice presenting in video conference environment.
- Share any slides with your Chair before the start of the hearing/defense.
- Check with your Chair about the process for you “stepping out” of the room during committee discussion.
- Please follow Dissertation Standards and Procedures for audience/invitees for the Proposal Hearing: “Remember that hearings are educational, not social, events. It is usually inappropriate to bring family members to proposal hearings as they are educational, not social events.” Check with Chair with regard to list of invitees for dissertation defenses.

Invited Guests

- Guests should mute and turn off their video as appropriate.
- Arrive before the hearing/defense is scheduled to begin. Meeting link is not shared by program staff if hearing/defense is in progress (5 minutes after scheduled start time).

PhD Staff

- PhD staff will share the Zoom link with members of the Heller community.