

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

Minutes of the Graduate Council Meeting  
April 22, 2021  
1:30 p.m.

Seventh Meeting

Via Zoom - No face to face meeting due to COVID-19

PRESENT: Linda J. Mason, chair, Council Members, Dulcy M. Abraham, Christopher R. Agnew, Thomas W. Atkinson, Janice S. Blum, Steven J. Burdick, David S. Cochran, Joy Colwell, G. Jonathan Day, Eric D. Deemer, Bryan DeWitt, Duane D. Dunlap, Emad Elwakil, Keith B. Gehres, Margaret Gitau, Richard H. Grant, Chong Gu, Patricia Hart, Timothy B. Lescun James L. Mohler John A. Morgan, Melanie Morgan, Madelina Nuñez, Zhan Pang, Tina L. Payne, Paul Salama, Abraham Schwab, Ann Shanahan, David G. Skalnik, John A. Springer, Jill Sutor, Candiss B. Vibbert (Provost's Representative), Eric Waltenburg, Nicole J. Widmar, Yoon Yeo

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED FROM: Christopher K. Belous, Levon Esters, Mitchell L. Springer, Joseph D. Thomas

ABSENCES: Raida Abuizam, Suzanne C. Bart, Rita A. Burrell, Erla Heyns, Paul F. Muzikar, Anson Soderberry, Chenn Zhou, Daoguo Zhou

GUESTS: Ramya Ambikapatha, Debbie Fellure, Savannah Forese, Mark Haugen, Yumary Ruiz, Sharry Vahed, Korena Vawter, Cristiana Verissimo

I. **MINUTES**

**The March 2021 Graduate Council meeting minutes were approved via the Qualtrics Survey.**

II. **DEANS REMARKS AND REPORTS**

**Dean Linda Mason**

- Graduate Council meetings will continue to be held via Zoom next year. Advantage for many, especially for the representatives from the regional campuses travel time.
- May meet face-to-face once or twice a year.

- The intention is to grow the number of Council members so every department will be represented allowing information to flow to each department. Zoom would allow an opportunity to do this, as it is difficult to reserve space for large meetings at the university.
- Business will be done online and the Zoom meeting will allow the council to learn about graduate education each month.
- Graduate Council meeting times may change for the Regional Campuses meeting to 1:00 pm and the Graduate Council meeting time to 2:30 pm - 4:00 pm.
- Several changes made due to COVID will continue. 1) Online exams. 2) Deferrals for International students for one year with permission of departments as to deferring a student for one more year for admission. 3) The funding model for offers made to students that had financial offers had the availability for those students to move to online that could not get here and not pay the stipend. If departments had funding to create tuition waivers for those individuals, they were able to keep their progress going and not lose that one year. We do not have an online cohort for Fall, so there will be no online pricing as last year.
- Melanie Morgan will be leading a campus wide discussion this next year on mentoring, workshops, and training modules that will open discussions on: 1) What does mentoring look like from the faculty perspective and the graduate student perspective. 2) What does mastery look like for staff who work with graduate students? 3) How to help faculty mentor underrepresented minority students for success. How will that differ among the various populations that exist on this campus so that everyone has the ability to be successful? 4) How to mentor online students? 5) Have the graduate handbooks been updated on what the current policies are? 6) Does the handbook give information that is clear and concise?
- Will be looking for people to work with the Graduate School within the departments and colleges to work on implementing some of the strategic plans and mentoring.
- The stackable degree was approved for the Masters of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Graduate School. Departments should discuss the opportunities in the stackable degree in what might those degrees look like. Where is the opportunity for growth in departments?
- Task Force presented information on stipends last spring. Melanie Morgan is pulling the data on each college of what each student is paid, the range of what students are paid by the disciplines and how that affects student pay. The goal is to increase the minimum stipend. The report will be presented to the Provost this summer.

### III. AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS (Area Committee Chairs)

*Graduate Council Document 21E*, Graduate Council Documents Recommended for Approval. See Appendix B. Voted via Qualtrics survey.

#### IV. PRESENTATION

Dr. Nilupa Gunaratna, Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Health presented *FORGE Purdue* for Graduate Student Health, Basic Needs and Success at Purdue: Challenges, Disparities, and The Way Forward

##### Goals

- Report findings of the FORGE-Purdue Survey to the campus community
- Solicit recommendations for actionable steps
- Three broad topics:
  - Health
  - Food security
  - Institutional environment and culture

##### Rationale

- Graduate students struggle with basic needs and mental health – at American universities and at Purdue
- The COVID-19 pandemic is worsening food security and mental health globally

##### **Questions:**

1. How are Purdue graduate students doing?
2. How does their well-being affect their academic success?
3. What specific actions can Purdue take to improve student well-being and success?

##### The FORGE-Purdue Survey

- Online survey implemented Nov 30 – Dec 21, 2020
- Target: Residential and online Purdue graduate students affiliated with the West Lafayette campus (N=9975)
- Disseminated by the Graduate School
- Outreach through the Graduate School, Purdue Graduate Student Government, Cultural Centers, Purdue Today, departmental graduate secretaries and administrative assistants, student organizations, and others
- Open-and close-ended questions: demographics self-perceived academic performance, physical and mental health, food security and diet, sources of stress, coping strategies, and resilience
- Compare to the Graduate Student Experience in the Research University Survey (gradSERU), implemented at Purdue in 2019

## Key Findings

- A significant number of Purdue graduate students struggle to meet their basic needs for food and housing
- There is a mental health crisis on campus, with some students reporting negative coping mechanisms such as substance abuse, self-harm, and suicidal ideation
- Changes since the pandemic have made things worse
- Disparities have grown
- Purdue students' struggles affect their academic performance
- There are concrete actions we can take
- Which needs will persist after the pandemic?

## Survey Participation

- Overall, 2057 graduate students (21%) participated
  - Men - 16%
  - Women - 24%
  - International - 17%
  - Domestic/PR - 22%
  - Fellowship/TA/RA - 54%
  - External Funding - 23%
  - Other Purdue Income - 3%
  - Personal Funds - 21%

## Survey Participation By College

- Agriculture - 25%
- Education - 21%
- Engineering - 16%
- Health and Human Science - 29%
- Liberal Arts - 24%
- Management – 12%
- Pharmacy – 27%
- Polytechnic Institute – 14%
- Science – 15%
- Special/Interdisciplinary – 10%
- Veterinary Medicine – 44%

## Mental, Emotional, and Physical Health Worsened

### Students' Rating of Their Health

- Good mental health

- gradSERU 2019 – 63% (Overall rates)
- FORGE 2020 – 34% (Overall rates)
- Good emotional health
  - gradSERU 2019 – 58% (Overall rates)
  - FORGE 2020 – 33% (Overall rates)
- Good physical health
  - gradSERU 2019 – 73% (Overall rates)
  - FORGE 2020 – 49% (Overall rates)

### Depression Doubled

- gradSERU 2019 – 16% (Overall rates)
- FORGE 2020 – 34% (Overall rates)

### Mental, Emotional, and Physical Health

- Need for expanded mental health services
- Desire for more connection on campus: peers, staff, faculty
- Poor access to exercise facilities

### **DISCUSSION**

- What are concrete actions that Purdue should take?
- Who will take the lead on these actions?

### Food Insecurity Doubled

- gradSERU 2019 – 17% (Overall rates)
- FORGE 2020 – 36% (Overall rates)

### Food Insecurity

- Poor access to affordable, healthy, & culturally appropriate food
- Inadequate options for socially distanced eating

### **DISCUSSION**

- What are concrete actions that Purdue should take?
- Who will take the lead on these actions?

### Institutional Environment & Culture

- Low stipends
- Increasing workload and demands
- Need for supportive services and faculty

- Competing needs and responsibilities

### Inability to Pay Rent Doubled

Unable to pay

- gradSERU 2019 – 9% (Overall rates)
- FORGE 2020 – 22% (Overall rates)

### Cumulative Effects

- Cumulative effects of low stipends: lack of basic needs, seeking additional income through off-campus work, negative coping behaviors
- Cumulative effects of various stressors occurring at the same time and at various levels; individual, family, community, and national

### Graduate Students Feel Unheard

*“I understand undergrads get in the most money for the university. However grad students are overworked and underpaid.”*

*“Short answer: Purdue ONLY [about] undergrads. All thing the University did for dining are entirely focused on undergrads. The hours of operations are based on undergraduates only.”*

*“If it’s unsafe for undergrads to work, then why is it safe for graduate students and research staff to work?”*

*“I’m tired of these surveys that never do anything. I’m tired of the results of these surveys being interpreted with the most cognitive dissonance that I have even seen.”*

### Academic Performance

*“It is much more difficult to achieve learning outcomes entirely online, so there should be some flexibility and understanding expected from professors if we are forced to attend online-only.”*

Performance This Semester

- Able to achieve research goals
  - 42% - Overall
  - 32% - Depressed
  - 38% - Food insecure
- Able to achieve teaching goals
  - 68% - Overall
  - 62% - Depressed

- 66% - Food insecure
- Satisfied with academic performance
  - 55% - Overall
  - 38% - Depressed
  - 44% - Food insecure
- On track to get degree
  - 68% - Overall
  - 58% - Depressed
  - 60% - Food insecure

### What Did Purdue Do Right?

**“What is the most helpful thing that Purdue University did to improve your experience during the COVID-19 pandemic?”**

- Online classes & class flexibility
- Free, accessible COVID-19 testing
- Keeping university open during pandemic
- Enforcing Protect Purdue (53% said Purdue is doing a good job)
- Providing bonus (for students on Fellowship/TA/RA)

### Suggested Actions

- Increase stipends
  - Be competitive with other universities
  - Adjust for cost of living
- Time burden
  - Clarity about working hours
  - More undergrad graders and TAs
- Mechanism for providing feedback on faculty
- Programs and services
  - Professional development and other workshops
  - Working groups for graduate students (e.g., writing accountability groups)
  - Networking and mentoring opportunities (peers, faculty, outside university/alumni)
- Expand mental health services
  - CAPS...and beyond
  - Access to care within colleges
  - Workshops, peer groups, etc.
- Support and connection
  - Regular check-ins by faculty and staff
  - Create more opportunities for socializing
- Access to physical activity opportunities

- Healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate cooked meals on campus
  - Expanded hours
- Departmental scheduling to allow lunch break
- Microwaves, fridges, and places to eat
- Healthy, affordable groceries on campus
- Increased bus service to grocery stores
- Safety net: campus food pantry
  - Healthy foods
  - Stigma

### Key Findings

- A significant number of Purdue graduate students struggle to meet their basic needs for food and housing.
- There is a mental health crisis on campus, with some students reporting negative coping mechanisms such as substance abuse, self-harm, and suicidal ideation
- Changes since the pandemic have made things worse
- Disparities have grown
- Purdue students' struggles affect their academic performance
- There are concrete actions we can take
- **Which needs will persist after the pandemic?**

### V. PURDUE GRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT -- PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Madelina Nuñez, President of the Purdue Graduate Student Government (PGSG)

- Madelina will be serving as the President for PGSG next year.
- Final session with the Immigration Attorney session will be held on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 5:00 pm.
- The Wednesday and Thursday consultations are booked. This has been a successful initiative this year.

### VI. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Dr. Tom Atkinson presented GCdoc 21-F, Resolution: English Proficiency. (See Appendix C).
- b. Dr. James Mohler presented GCdoc 21-G, Guidelines for Conducting Remote Thesis And Dissertation Defenses. The Graduate Council will need to consider



adopting permanent distance capability for conducting remote thesis and dissertation defenses in the Fall. (See Appendix D).

## VII. CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Linda Mason

- Summer Committee will be working on business to keep proposals moving.

The council meeting was adjourned by Dean Mason at 2:52 p.m.

Linda J. Mason, Chair

Tina L. Payne, Secretary

## APPENDIX A

### PENDING DOCUMENTS

(April 2021)

#### **BOLDED ITEMS ARE IN REVIEW WITH AN AREA COMMITTEE**

Area Committee A, Behavioral Sciences (G. Jonathan Day, chair; gjday@purdue.edu):  
*Graduate Council Document 21-1c, **EDPS 50800, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Special Education Programs (PWL)***

Area Committee B, Engineering, Sciences, and Technology (Dulcy M. Abraham, chair; dulcy@purdue.edu):  
*Graduate Council Document 21-18a, **ENGT 50900, Applied Computational Methods (PWL)***  
*Graduate Council Document 21-17a, **MFET 55700, Smart Manufacturing Enterprise: Exploring The Applied Technologies (PWL)***  
*Graduate Council Document 21-17b, **MFET 64200, Programming Robotics And Cyber-Physical Systems With The Robotics Commons (PWL)***  
*Graduate Council Document 21-, **MSE 52400, Mechanical Behavior Of Polymers (PWL)***

Area Committee C: Chemistry, Engineering, and Physical Sciences, John Morgan; chair, jamorgan@purdue.edu):  
*Graduate Council Document 21-20a, **CHE 52100, Principles Of Tissue Engineering (PWL)***  
*Graduate Council Document 21-20b, **CHE 55400, Smart Manufacturing In Process Industries (PWL)***  
*Graduate Council Document 21-20c, **CHE 56200, Battery Systems (PWL)***

Area Committee D, Humanities and Social Sciences (Jill Sutor, chair; jsutor@purdue.edu):  
**Graduate Council Document 21-16a, AMST 60600, American Studies Methods (PWL)**  
**Graduate Council Document 21-15c, POL 68600, Career And Placement Practicum (PWL)**

Area Committee E: Life Sciences, (Timothy Lescun, chair; tlescun@purdue.edu):  
**Graduate Council Document 21-3e, BIOL 57501, Systematic Biology (PNW)**  
**Graduate Council Document 21-3f, BIOL 59001, Mammalogy (PNW)**

Area Committee F, Management Sciences (Nicole J. Widmar; chair, nwidmar@purdue.edu):  
**Graduate Council Document 21-4b, MGMT 52020, Analytics for Marketing Managers (PWL)**  
**Graduate Council Document 21-4c, MGMT 53900, Analytics for Social Media Marketing (PWL)**

**CERTIFICATE(S):**

Area Committee A, Behavioral Sciences (G. Jonathan Day, chair; gjday@purdue.edu):

**Graduate Council Document 21-22a, Graduate Certificate in Intercultural Competence Mentorship, Department of Graduate School Administration, PWL**

**MAJOR(S):**

Area Committee B, Engineering, Sciences, and Technology (Dulcy M. Abraham, chair; dulcy@purdue.edu):

**Graduate Council Document 21- 23a, Major in Information Security, Department of Graduate School Administration, PWL**

## APPENDIX B

GC Document 21-E

### DOCUMENTS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL BY THE GRADUATE COUNCIL APRIL 2021

#### GRADUATE COURSE PROPOSALS:

Area Committee A, Behavioral Sciences (G. Jonathan Day, chair; [gjday@purdue.edu](mailto:gjday@purdue.edu)):

*Graduate Council Document 21-1c, EDPS 50800, Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in Special Education Programs* (PWL) Sem. 1 and 2. SS. Lecture 1 time per week for 150 minutes. Distance. Credit 3.

Living in a diverse society provides special education teachers and support personnel the opportunity to encounter a wide array of cultures in their educational settings. The course, designed for special education stakeholders (i.e., teachers, staff, support personnel, administrators), considers issues of human diversity, broadly defined to include ability, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, linguistic background, race, religion, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. This course challenges biased assumptions that influence the provision of educational services, and examines issues related to promoting equal learning opportunities in the classroom and other educational settings. It is designed to facilitate student examination of how diversity and diverse experiences shape systems that affect individuals, families, communities, and society. It allows students to explore their own cultures and the biases and internalized messages about those who are different from themselves. Students will be introduced to specific approaches to practice, and frameworks for equity, advocacy, and empowerment to support students who receive special education and/or applied behavior analysis (ABA) service, as well as their families. The course also includes information and discussion topics pertaining to the culturo-behavior science (CBS) specialization of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) and to interpersonal communication skills – to include speaking, listening, reading, and writing - and their effect on students and families. Permission of instructor required.

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:16305/form>

Area Committee C: Chemistry, Engineering, and Physical Sciences, John Morgan; chair, [jamorgan@purdue.edu](mailto:jamorgan@purdue.edu)):

*Graduate Council Document 21-20a, CHE 52100, Principles Of Tissue Engineering* (PWL) Sem. 1 and 2. Lecture 2 times per week for 75 minutes. Credit 3.

This course is designed to provide background for the application of engineering principles with the life sciences to facilitate understanding of normal and pathological mammalian tissues. Applications of drug delivery, tissue and cell transplantation, bioartificial organs, tissue regeneration, disease models, and applications in clinical practice will be explored. Typically offered Fall Spring.

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:16285/form>

*Graduate Council Document 21-20b*, **CHE 55400, Smart Manufacturing In Process Industries** (PWL) Sem. 1 and 2. Lecture 2 times per week for 75 minutes. Credit 3.

This course surveys the tools and techniques, which are relevant to support the multiple levels of technical decisions that arise in modern integrated operation of manufacturing facilities in the chemical and related process industries. The linkage of these decisions levels and sharing of associated data and knowledge via effective IT methodology is currently termed Smart Manufacturing in the US and Industry 4.0 in Europe. The topics covered in the course include the structure of the operations decision hierarchy, role of online process measurements, elements of sensor network design, information systems to support process operations, plant data reconciliation, detection and diagnosis of process faults, plant wide control, real time process optimization, production planning and scheduling, and supply chain management. Each topic will be addressed by first summarizing the basic role and scope of that component, then discussing the structure of the decision problem, and then will outlining some representative tools available to address that decision problem. Each major topic will include a lecture given by an industrial practitioner who will offer a perspective on the state of industrial practice.

Permission of instructor required.

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:16110/form>

*Graduate Council Document 21-20c*, **CHE 56200, Battery Systems** (PWL) Sem. 1 and 2. Lecture 2 times per week for 75 minutes. Credit 3.

This course is designed to introduce fundamentals of electrochemistry and electrochemical engineering of primary and rechargeable lithium ion batteries (LIBs) to undergraduate and graduate students. The course will be reviewing working principles of LIBs. Strong emphasis will be given on the Li-ion battery technology, primary batteries, nanotechnology implementation and the materials design. Beyond conventional Li-ion systems and Pb-acid batteries, next generation Na-ion, K-ion and Li-S batteries will be discussed. Students will be understanding energy density calculations, fabrication, and testing mechanism of batteries utilizing engineered electrodes, electrolytes, and separators. Broader perspectives on sustainable, cost effective, longer lasting battery manufacturing will be provided. Typically offered Fall Spring.

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:16290/form>

Area Committee D, Humanities and Social Sciences (Jill Suitor, chair; [jsuitor@purdue.edu](mailto:jsuitor@purdue.edu)):

*Graduate Council Document 21-15c*, **POL 68600, Career And Placement Practicum** (PWL) Sem. 1 and 2. Lecture 1 time per week for 100 minutes for 8 weeks and Individual Study. Credit 2.

Provide practical guidance and workshops to help students plan job searches, prepare application materials, and develop skills in public presentations such as video interviews, in-person interviews, job talks, teaching talks, and other public talks. Permission of department required. Typically offered Fall Spring.

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:15154/form>

Area Committee E: Life Sciences, (Timothy Lescun, chair; [tllescun@purdue.edu](mailto:tllescun@purdue.edu)):

*Graduate Council Document 21-3e*, **BIOL 57501, Systematic Biology** (PNW) Sem. 1 and 2. SS. Lecture 2 times per week for 75 minutes. Distance. Credit 3. Prerequisites: A minimum of a grade of C- in Cell Biology (BIOL 24300) and Genetics (BIOL 24400). Evolution (BIOL 31100/58000) highly recommended

Systematic biology is the study of how life is classified in order to best study and understand biodiversity. This course is both a historical course and a research methods course. The history of classification systems (such as how Linnaean ranks came to be, and the weakness of using these ranks) will be discussed, leading into how modern phylogenetic methods were developed that have given rise to reliable methods to test hypotheses of evolutionary relationships. The course will go into detail for modern systematic methods, and will incorporate short exercises in how to use these methods - including model-based methods of studying genomic data - to reconstruct evolutionary relationships. Students complete several systematic research projects, including one they design and implement. Typically offered Fall Spring Summer.

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:14341/form>

*Graduate Council Document 21-3f*, **BIOL 59001, Mammalogy** (PNW) Sem. 1. Lecture 1 time per week for 110 minutes and Laboratory 1 time per week for 170 minutes. Lecture portion may be offered online (DIS)). Credit 4. Prerequisites: A minimum of a grade of C- in Cell Biology (BIOL 24300) and Genetics (BIOL 24400). Evolution (BIOL 31100/58000) highly recommended.

This course will cover mammalian evolutionary history from the first basal synapsids over 300 million years ago, when the mammalian lineage split from the reptile lineage. The series of transformations that occurred leading to modern living mammals will be studied by examining the fossil record. Living mammalian biodiversity will be explored at the family level. For all extant groups the course will examine evolutionary history, life history traits, and ecological aspects – including conservation issues. Current ‘hot button’ issues regarding conservation will be highlighted, such as the plight of the white rhino and cases where mammals are invasive species. Anatomy of mammals will be examined in lab, with dissections and study of osteological specimens. Typically offered Fall.

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:14510/form>

Area Committee F, Management Sciences (Nicole J. Widmar; chair, [nwidmar@purdue.edu](mailto:nwidmar@purdue.edu)):

*Graduate Council Document 21-4b*, **MGMT 52020, Analytics for Marketing Managers** (PWL) Sem. 1. SS. Lecture 2 times per week for 90 minutes for 8 weeks. Distance. Variable Credit 2 or 3.

The purpose of this course is to learn tools, technologies, applications and practices used to collect, integrate, analyze, and present raw data in order to create insightful visualization and actionable marketing information. It will cover conceptual understanding of marketing performance based on data and statistical methods. Once conceptual understanding is familiarized, students will learn common tools and techniques for marketing managers in today's industry.

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:15829/form>

*Graduate Council Document 21-4c, MGMT 53900, Analytics for Social Media Marketing (PWL) Sem. 1 and 2. Lecture 2 times per week for 90 minutes for 8 weeks. Distance. Variable Credit 2 or 3.*

The objective of this course is to equip students with tools and develop marketing skills required to address current marketing problems. The approach is to learn R software for conducting basic scraping on social media sites to understand user behavior and sentiment. In addition, Python will be used for web-scraping data from various websites and websites with dynamic content. The goal is to become familiar with such qualitative techniques as: word clouds, cluster dendrograms, sentiment analysis, and other methods. Occasional homework assignments or check points will be given to gain deeper understanding of the materials covered in class.

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:15830/form>

#### **CERTIFICATE(S):**

Area Committee A, Behavioral Sciences (G. Jonathan Day, chair; [gjday@purdue.edu](mailto:gjday@purdue.edu)):

*Graduate Council Document 21-22a, Graduate Certificate in Intercultural Competence Mentorship, Department of Graduate School Administration, PWL*

<https://purdue.curriculog.com/proposal:15358/form>

## APPENDIX C

*Resolution Number: GCdoc 21-F*

Approved by the Graduate Council \_\_\_\_\_

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COUNCIL,**

**Title: A Resolution to Expand Options for Demonstration of English Proficiency: Adding TOEFL Essentials for Use by International Applicants Starting in August 2021**

**Authors: Tom Atkinson, Associate Dean of the Graduate School; April Ginther, Professor of English and Director of the Office of Oral English Proficiency**

**Date: April 22, 2021**

WHEREAS

The Educational Testing Service has developed a shorter, faster-paced, less expensive test to meet the changing needs of international applicants; and

NOTING

That the TOEFL Essentials test reports both total and Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing subscores, like the TOEFL iBT; and

OBSERVING

There are additional features with TOEFL Essentials, including a “virtual interview” (as part of the Speaking section) and a five-minute personal video statement (not scored); and

RECOGNIZING

That TOEFL Essentials test may be completed from home or “almost anywhere with a reliable internet connection” and around the clock one to (eventually) three days each week and as soon as twenty-four hours after registration; and

UNDERSTANDING

Rigorous human proctoring, security measures, and video recording, supported by artificial intelligence, are in place;

BE IT RESOLVED

That the Purdue University Graduate School shall accept the TOEFL Essentials test for demonstration of English proficiency when beginning in August 2021.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

That, while a concordance table has not yet been established (expected Summer 2021), acceptable section and total scores comparable to those established by the Graduate Council for the TOEFL iBT and IELTS, will be provided to Purdue language proficiency score users.

Graduate Council Document No. 21-G  
Remote Defense Guidelines - 1

## APPENDIX D

**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY®

**The Graduate School**  
ADVANCE TO A HIGHER DEGREE

# Guidelines for Conducting Remote Thesis and Dissertation Defenses

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Purdue University Graduate School modified the policy requiring thesis and dissertation defenses to be conducted in a face-to-face modality. After surveying faculty and students in the fall of 2020 on the effectiveness and convenience of this approach, the Graduate School is planning to extend this exception, possibly permanently, pending approval by the Graduate Council. Likely a decision concerning the permanence of this practice will be decided in the fall of 2021.

In the meantime, the guidelines in this document are being provided to create a set of shared expectations and guidance across campus. It is our hope that the information contained herein assists faculty advisors/chairs, graduate students and committees as plans are made for upcoming defenses.

### Faculty Advisors/Chairs

#### *Before the defense*

- Work with the student to determine the best video conference software to use (Zoom, WebEx or Teams). Zoom is recommended. It is best if the faculty advisor creates the invitation and sends it out via Outlook to the student and all committee members.
- The faculty advisor/chair should be the host of the meeting and if possible, set up a “waiting room” or similar feature to facilitate private discussions amongst the committee



members and to manage who can get into the meeting. You may need to set preferences in the software to enable this.

- Consider making at least one other committee member a host or co-host at the meeting.
- Ensure you know how to permit the student to share their slides and/or control the screen.
- Consider offering a practice run with your student to ensure the technology works and create a backup plan for how you might communicate if the technology fails (for example, texting or a voice call).
- A day before the defense, check in with committee members to ensure they have the information they need to access the meeting. Encourage them to wear headphones in the meeting to reduce noise, feedback and echoes.
- Ask the candidate if they plan to invite guests; have them provide you a list of names ahead of time.
- With the increased security concerns of video conferencing, you may want to check the latest information provided by ITaP:
  - Zoom: <https://www.itap.purdue.edu/zoom/>
  - WebEx: <https://itap.purdue.edu/services/webex.html>
  - Teams: <https://www.itap.purdue.edu/services/microsoft-teams.html>

#### *At the defense*

- If possible, start the virtual defense at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time and check with the candidate to ensure that the audio and video are working correctly.
- At the beginning of the meeting, have the members of the committee introduce themselves, which provides an opportunity to test microphones, speakers and cameras.
- Introduce the candidate as you would in a face-to-face meeting.
- To begin the defense, provide instructions to the candidate, committee and any guests as to the order, etiquette and expectations of the meeting:
  - Microphones and cameras – Committee mics muted (recommended)? Cameras on or off?
  - Order of events – presentation, questions, deliberation, etc.
  - Questions - can they be provided during the presentation? Via audio, chat or handraising?
  - Public guests - Dismissed at some point or placed in a waiting room?
  - How will the committee privately deliberate?
  - How will results be communicated to the candidate?
  - What is the plan if a committee member or the candidate momentarily drop off the meeting?
  - If "board" work is expected of the candidate, make sure plans are made to accommodate this option.
  - If part of the committee is virtual and part is in the room, how will discussion occur?

- At the end of the meeting, remind committee members that they will receive electronic forms to complete in the Graduate School Database.

### **Committee Members**

- All committee members are responsible for ensuring that they know how to use the chosen conferencing platform (Zoom, WebEx, or Teams) in advance of the defense.
- As with all video conference meetings, please ensure you remain muted and are in a distraction-free location.
- If needed, contact the faculty advisor/chair to do a practice run of the meeting to ensure your technology is functioning correctly.

### **Candidate Defending**

#### *Before the defense*

- Work with your graduate coordinator to complete the Graduate School Form 8: Request for Appointment of Examining Committee at least two weeks before the defense.
- Coordinate with your major advisor/chair on the video conference software being used (Zoom, WebEx, or Teams) and make sure you know how to use the software.
- Conduct a practice run with another graduate student to make sure your technology works and that you are prepared for the presentation.
- Consider requesting a practice run with your major advisor/chair.
- Talk with your advisor about how questions will be handled: Chat? Raise hand? Vocaly? During the presentation or at the end of the presentation?
- Share your slides with at least your advisor so that they can run them from their computer if something goes wrong on your end.
- Ask your major advisor/chair about the agenda for the meeting and how you will “step out” of the meeting during the committee deliberation period.
- Inform your major advisor/chair about any guests you are expecting to attend the meeting. If you plan to share a URL for the meeting (such as with Zoom or WebEx) do not post it broadly (for example, on Facebook) because it may increase the odds of a “Zoom bomber” or other such event.
- Plan your environment for the defense:
  - Reduce visual distractions (avoid glare, shadow, or an overly cluttered backdrop).
  - Make sure you are properly illuminated and can be seen without a shadow (use a ringlight if possible).
  - Make sure you are in a quiet area that will not have distractions.
  - If possible, use a computer that has two monitors so that you may see your

slides and your committee at the same time.

- If board work is expected, make sure you have the ability to accomplish this – ask and plan in advance

#### *At the defense*

- Log onto the meeting at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- When delivering your presentation, make sure there is a good view of you in the camera from the shoulders up. The camera should be at eye level (not above looking down nor below looking up).
- If possible, stand as you present to enable better gestures and non-verbal cues. Even if sitting, remember to use gesture and non-verbals.
- Remember to look at the camera when speaking rather than a computer screen or other area away from the camera.
- When sharing your screen, it is best to share a specific application window (such as PowerPoint) rather than the entire screen to avoid inadvertently sharing something you don't intend to.

#### **For all participants (including “public” participants)**

- Respect your colleagues and don't multitask during the defense.
- Latency creates delays in response; pause before speaking and yield conversational right of way.
- Reduce visual distractions (avoid glare, shadow, or an overly cluttered backdrop).
- Use headphones, if possible, to reduce any potential background noise, feedback or echoes.
- Facial expressions and gestures are often more effective than audio. Use these more frequently.

This guidance has been adapted from The University of Maryland Graduate School's [“Advice for Remote Dissertation/Thesis Defenses”](#).