

UCLA GRADUATE DIVISION

March 28, 2005

TO: Graduate Departments and Programs

FROM: John V. Richardson Jr., Associate Dean

RE: Policy to Allow One Member of a Doctoral Committee to Participate in an Examination Via Videoconferencing through an Exception Process

The following policy and procedure were approved by the Graduate Council on March 4, 2005

Under special circumstances and only by petition for an exception to the Graduate Division, one member (not the chair or co-chairs) of a previously-appointed doctoral committee may participate in a doctoral oral qualifying or, in limited circumstances (see last bullet), a final oral examination (defense of the dissertation) via videoconferencing. Because these petitions must be individually reviewed by the Graduate Division, they must be submitted well in advance of the scheduled date of the examination.

The following conditions or items must pertain and be included with the petition for an exception:

- The exception must involve a current member (one only) of an appointed doctoral committee from the UCLA faculty who is unable to be physically present during the examination due to extenuating circumstances. The member cannot be a chair or co-chair of the committee.
- The committee member cannot be a member from outside of UCLA who was appointed by special petition. These members are appointed as exceptions at the outset with the understanding that they will be physically present at all examinations.
- **Required** is a statement that the exception is based on the financial cost and/or hardship involved in making it possible for the committee member to be physically present at the examination and explaining the reasons.
- **Required** is a statement that the student and committee chair have explored the option of reconstituting the committee and an explanation of why reconstitution is not feasible.
- **Required** is a statement that the participation will involve both audio and video technology (required) and identification of the places where the videoconference on each end will occur and the type of equipment to be used.
- The technology involved may not distract from the presentation. For example, if PowerPoint slides are to be used by the student and are not visible to the videoconferencing participant, s/he must be provided with a copy of the slides in advance of the examination.
- **Required** is a statement that the department or faculty member has made arrangements to finance the videoconferencing and technology involved. The student is not allowed to cover any of the costs involved.

In addition to the above:

- If the exception involves the final oral examination (defense of the dissertation), **required** is a statement as to why it is not feasible or preferable to just formally waive the examination, and hold an informal examination with the members who can be present.

If an exception is approved, the committee chair is responsible for signing the name of the member who is participating by videoconference on the examination form and countersigning his/her own name as well as obtaining an email or fax confirmation from this individual confirming that the student has passed the examination which is to be attached to the examination report form before it is sent to the Graduate Division.

We caution graduate departments and programs that an exception request must meet all of the criteria and circumstances outlined above or it will be returned without consideration. Also, in all instances except where such an exception is approved, all members of committees must be physically present during these examinations.