

Defense Exam and Attendance Policy
Department of Health Outcomes and Biomedical Informatics
February 2023

General Policy

The Department of Health Outcomes & Biomedical Informatics has the expectation that committees will meet in person with their students for defenses, qualifying exams, and non-thesis presentations. These are referred to as “examinations” by the Graduate School. We refer to them as *culminating events* in the following policy.

Scheduling

Given that there are external deadlines (set by the Graduate School or university) for milestone progress, students should schedule their culminating events in order to meet scheduled deadlines (these are recorded at <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/about-us/offices/editorial/editorial-deadlines/>). Students are expected to schedule culminating events in advance to ensure that all members can be present at the event. Scheduling conflicts will not guarantee that an exception to the default preference will be granted.

To allow for scheduling and other contingencies, culminating events should be scheduled to occur at least **a week prior** to a deadline (internal or university-wide) for that milestone.

Exception Requests

The department recognizes that there may be reason to consider exceptions to the expectation of in-person meetings or emergency contingencies. In cases of illness, injury, or other emergency situations, a committee member may need to participate in a hybrid defense, via Zoom.

When the potential need for an exception is identified, the student or supervisory committee chair should contact one of the Education Office directors (Bylund, Liu, or Mitterko). Any exceptions requested should be as close as possible to the default expectation of a full committee and student being in the same location. The exception request will be taken to the Curriculum Committee for approval except in cases of extreme urgency.

The minimum requirement, for the Graduate School, is to ensure the committee chair and student are in the same physical location. If the conflict limits the ability of the chair and the student to physically be present together, an alternative remedy should be to reschedule. For unique circumstances (e.g., for committee members no longer employed at UF, students/committee members with an approved remote location), exceptions will also be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If the exception is approved, the Education Office will work with the student and supervisory committee chair to determine any available options for a potential hybrid culminating event and arrange logistics.

Public Portion of Defenses

For the public portion of the events (i.e., the presentation portion of a thesis or dissertation defense), the department will continue to host events in-person, as a part of our students’ professional

development. If needed, The Education Office will facilitate with the student the attendance of out-of-town guests to the participate via Zoom for the public portion.