Guidelines for Confirmation Event via Videoconferencing

In addition to the process guidelines for confirmation events provided by the Graduate Research School, the following additional guidance has been developed to support schools, research centres and institutes in the facilitation of confirmation events using videoconferencing. The purpose, expectations of candidates, panel and outcomes remain the same, but there will be a need for some process variations for videoconferencing confirmation events.

Prior to the confirmation
- The Chair together with and supervisors decide whether the candidate will attend the confirmation event in person or virtually based on initial assessment of the candidate's written report and the candidate's preparedness to proceed to videoconference.
- If the panel agree that the event can proceed using video conferencing technology, the candidate must complete the 'Candidate Consent to Proceed with Doctoral Confirmation of Registration Event By Video Conference' form
- The Chair will confirm date and time, seeking agreement from all participants, including the independent panel member.
- Confirmations will be conducted using Zoom or Skype for Business. The academic unit will be responsible for creating two secure Zoom meeting links; one for the public confirmation presentation and a second link for the private panel meeting. The links and secure passwords should be sent to the Chair of the confirmation committee.
- The Chair will ensure all participants receive meeting invitations with the links and secure passwords.
- The confirmation event will be advertised so that other staff and students may hear the presentation and join in a brief discussion following the presentation. The Chair will ensure that the members of the public who wish to attend the presentation, are provided with the link and secure password for the public presentation.
- Mobile or land line phone numbers will be provided to the Chair for all participants in the private panel meeting.
- Agreement means that participants have access to the appropriate technology (software and hardware) and are comfortable with its use.
- Having agreed to a confirmation using videoconferencing, the candidate will not be permitted to use this as grounds for appeal, unless the circumstances of technical failure or other unforeseen eventualities beyond the control of the panel were deemed to have adversely affected the candidate's performance.

Prior to the confirmation – Chair
- The Chair will meet with the candidate via Zoom or Skype for Business to explain the protocols and format, and to ensure the candidate is familiar with and able to access zoom.
- Alert the main supervisor to any potential concerns about the candidate's preparedness and readiness for confirmation by video, as well as their wellbeing, that might jeopardise their performance in the confirmation.

Prior to the confirmation – Supervisors
- A practice confirmation using video is strongly encouraged to ensure the candidate is able to access the technology and use it appropriately. Provide guidance and feedback on their presentation and communication skills.
- Alert the Chair to any potential concerns about the candidate's preparedness and readiness for confirmation by video, as well as their wellbeing, that might jeopardise their performance in the confirmation.

Prior to the confirmation – Candidates
- Read the confirmation guidance provided by the Graduate Research School.
- Prepare a substantial report and 20-30 minute presentation. Discuss your confirmation presentation with your supervisors to ensure you are well prepared.
- Send your presentation (e.g., PowerPoint) to the Chair 24 hours in advance of the confirmation.
- Ensure technology works and practice your confirmation with your supervisors and, perhaps, your doctoral research peers.
- Be sure that you have a quiet, uninterrupted space for your confirmation. Set up the room, remembering things like the wall/image behind you, having paper and pen, and a glass or bottle of water.

During the confirmation event
- The confirmation event will be set up by the Chair or Academic Unit using the secure meeting password.
- The public confirmation presentation and private panel meeting will be attended by the panel, which includes the Chair, supervisors and at least one independent member. Other researchers, including doctoral students, should also attend the public presentation followed by questions and discussion.
- Candidates may request to have a support person in the room with them. The support person does not have a speaking role and should not intervene verbally or physically at any time during the confirmation.
- The panel and candidate will meet in the zoom room 5-10 minutes prior to the commencement of the confirmation. This will enable a brief discussion of process and preparation for the public presentation. Introductions will be made, and the supervisor will confirm the candidate in the videoconference is in fact the student. Members of the public audience will be assigned to the Waiting Room via the 'manage participants' tab.

- When the candidate is ready, the Chair will allow members of the public audience to join the public presentation by releasing them out of the Waiting Room. The candidate will commence with their presentation. The presentation will be shared using screenshare, and the candidate's video must remain on throughout the presentation.
- During the confirmation, microphones should be muted unless speaking and members should raise their hands to speak. The chat functionality should not be used during the confirmation unless initiated by the Chair to advise participants to start the meeting again due to technological difficulties.
- If technology fails at any point, the Chair will instruct all participants to exit the meeting and attempt to re-join the meeting.
- During the confirmation, the candidate's camera should remain on at all times, but the panel or audience members may need to turn their cameras off to improve quality, if the Chair deems this appropriate. All participants may use headphones which can assist in avoiding echo effects.
- If the technology fails, then the confirmation may be suspended, and a new meeting date and time will be agreed. The confirmation will not proceed nor be conducted via phone.
- It is the Chair's responsibility to suspend the confirmation and to decide whether it is possible for the confirmation to continue or whether it should be rescheduled.
- Following the public presentation, the audience leave the meeting and the panel discussion with the candidate will take place.
- The candidate will be placed in the Waiting Room at the end of the confirmation and then invited back by the Chair once the panel have completed their discussion.
- During the discussion with the panel, the Chair will invite comment on the conduct of the confirmation and should refer explicitly to the use of videoconferencing in the report to the DRC. The Chair should comment on the technical performance of the exam, including any difficulties, in their report.
- The panel should be asked to confirm at the conclusion of the confirmation that the holding of the confirmation by videoconference has had no substantive bearing on the confirmation to registration process.

Following the confirmation, the supervisors and candidate may plan for another discussion and a virtual celebration of having completed this important milestone. Think about sharing a cup of tea or coffee – or even a celebratory toast of bubbles! A screenshot of the Chair, candidate, supervisors and others at the end of the confirmation might be taken and shared on social media, if all parties are agreeable. A discussion about the panel's feedback and ongoing supervisory support and advice will need to follow in due course.

Videoconferencing Protocols (using Zoom)

All participants will be given a password to access the Zoom meeting.

It is important to join with video so that, when you speak, other participants can see you. It is easier to interact with a live picture than simply a name. The video of the person speaking should appear in the middle of your screen larger than non-speaking participants. The "participants" tab along the bottom of the screen shows you the list of participants. You can click on the tab and edit your name so that it shows as your preferred name, rather than initials or sign-in name.

Please ensure you mute your microphone when you join the meeting. If you wish to speak during the meeting, please click on the "participants" tab. This opens a side panel, with the option at the bottom of that panel to "raise hand". The Chair will signal who is to speak next. Please do not just speak without signalling your wish to speak first. Remember that supervisors do not have a speaking role in the examination, unless invited to do so by the Chair or an examiner. Anyone supporting the candidate may introduce themselves, but also does not have an active speaking role.

Please unmute yourself when it is your turn to speak, select mute again when you have finished speaking, and then click "lower hand". If you follow these protocols, and be courteous, kind and patient, this will ensure the exam works well with a good level of discussion.

More information on Zoom is available on Massey's [website](#).
Zoom's Help Centre provides [instructions](#) on screen sharing a PowerPoint presentation.

Information on joining a Skype for Business meeting is available [here](#).
Advice on presenting PowerPoint slides in a Skype for Business meeting is available on their [website](#).

Videoconferencing Etiquette and Presentation Advice

Just Google and you will find lots of advice and support; these are a few good pages:

- https://www.owllabs.com/blog/video-conferencing-etiquette
- https://highfive.com/blog/video-presentation-tipshttps://www.genardmethod.com/blog/video-conferencing-how-to-speak-dynamically-in-front-of-the-camera