



Berkeley
Graduate Division

Updated: Dec. 14, 2020 and April 15, 2020; Original: March 11, 2020

Dear Graduate Students, Graduate Student Affairs Officers, Head Graduate Advisors, Deans and Department Chairs,

Due to concerns and mitigation efforts related to the coronavirus (COVID-19), I write to announce a temporary blanket exception to the policy that only one member of a Qualifying Exam (QE) committee may participate via Zoom or other video conferencing software, and only with advance approval by the Graduate Division (see [Absence of Committee Members](#) for policy). This exception will be in place for **through summer 2021** and applies retroactively to March 9, 2020.

We know how stressful QEs are under the best of circumstances. So during this period of time, the Graduate Council has agreed that all members may participate remotely in QEs. Zoom is the preferred platform since many faculty will be offering instruction via Zoom and obtaining [Zoom Pro](#) accounts. A best practice would be for the QE committee chair or another faculty member to host the Zoom meeting. Another best practice would be for students and QE committee chairs to discuss the logistics and dynamics of a remote QE beforehand, particularly if there may be need to use a white board or chalkboard. Please note all other policies related to the exam apply, i.e. all members must attend the entire exam and the Chair (or GSAO) must submit results to the student and the Graduate Division in a timely matter, etc.

If a graduate student has a QE during this period, for administrative recordkeeping, their GSAO must attach a memo within the **Degrees Exceptions eForm** system documenting how the exam will be conducted, i.e., where members will be physically located and any other relevant information about the logistics of the exam. Please note that students who might need accommodations to be able to sit for a QE remotely should consult with the [Disabled Students' Program](#).

Students are encouraged to contact their department Graduate Student Affairs Officers (GSAO) or their [Degrees Advisor](#) if they have questions.

With best wishes,

Lisa García Bedolla
Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate Division