



# EASY TIPS FOR ONLINE DEFENSE



Conducting an online defense may seem daunting and difficult to manage. To help you, our dear faculty and students, we would like to share some tips in preparing and facilitating a structured, moderated, and productive online defense.

After reading the ***Guidelines on Online Defenses (effective May 2, 2020)***, here are some suggestions that you may consider to help you make your online defense run more seamlessly:

01

***Before the Online Defense***

02

***During the Online Defense***

03

***After the Online Defense***

## BEFORE THE ONLINE DEFENSE

- 1) Talk to all the people concerned and **agree on the platform** you're going to use. Some articles that could help inform your decision:
  - a. Zoom vs Google Hangouts: <https://it.umn.edu/services-technologies/how-tos/compare-zoom-google-hangouts-meet>
  - b. Skype vs Google Hangouts vs Microsoft Teams: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2020/03/21/zoom-hot-but-then-so-skype-hangouts-and-teams-how-they-compare/2878125001/>
  - c. Facebook Messenger vs Facetime vs Google Hangouts vs Houseparty vs Microsoft Teams vs Skype vs Whatsapp: <https://www.pcmag.com/products/zoom-alternatives-best-free-services-for-group-video-chatting-during-the>
- 2) Please note that for some platforms like Zoom, the person hosting cannot leave the video conference without ending the entire session. Thus, in using these platforms, **the adviser is encouraged to be the host** of the online defense. This is to ensure the continuity of the session when students are asked to leave or “step out” of the online meeting room during the panel’s deliberation.
- 3) Explore the possibility of having the **student as co-host** of the online defense. This is to ensure that the meeting continues even if the adviser is disconnected. Each platform has its own way of doing this, so check for them in the Settings or Preferences menu.



- 4) Have the **active phone numbers of the panel members on hand**. These might be handy in reaching them in case they get disconnected during the online defense.
- 5) Using the chosen online platform, **schedule the online defense in advance** and save it to a calendar (on paper or digital) with a reminder.
- 6) For some platforms, you may see the option to **send an invitation that contains the meeting ID and password**. You can send these to the panel members in advance.

## BEFORE THE ONLINE DEFENSE

6) To minimize the likelihood of distractions that may lead to miscommunication:

- a) Set up an area at your home that is **conducive for the online defense**.
  - i) Choose a location that is as **quiet** as possible where you won't be interrupted.
  - ii) Choose a **well-illuminated room with a neutral or uncluttered background**.
  - iii) Find an **appropriate camera angle**. If possible, try to focus yourself within the frame from shoulders up.
- b) **Prepare your system in advance**. Consider using headphones with a collar mic instead of your laptop's mic to ensure clear communication. Make sure to test these in the platform of your choice.
- c) Do a **dry run** video conferencing to check your setup. **Test the following:**
  - [x] Video
  - [x] Sound
  - [x] Feedback
  - [x] Background noise
  - [x] Screen Sharing



7) In order to maximize everyone's time and keep the online defense running efficiently:

- a) **Presentation slides with annotations** may be emailed to the panel members **in advance**.
- b) Set time limits. Fix the number of minutes for each segment of the online defense. Ideally, the duration of the entire online defense (including the panel's deliberation) must not exceed **two (2) hours**.
- c) Detailed comments of panel members may be emailed beforehand so focus could be given to **major comments** during the online defense.

## DURING THE ONLINE DEFENSE

- 1) To ensure clear communication, the host (adviser) may ***mute everyone by default***. Panel members may unmute themselves when it is their turn to talk or they are called on by the host.
- 2) The host (adviser) can also enable the ***screen sharing function*** by default so that the student can easily share his/her presentation slides.
- 3) In the event that online defense lags because of unstable Internet connection, members of the panel may ***disable their camera*** to improve bandwidth.
- 4) If panel members get disconnected or are experiencing difficulty with their Internet connection, they can (re)join the online defense through ***phone patch or conference call***. This is where having their numbers becomes useful.
- 5) When the panel members are about to decide the result of the defense, the host (adviser) will ***remove the student*** from the online meeting room while panel members discuss and make their decision.
- 6) Once the deliberation is done, the host (adviser) ***reinvites the student*** to return to the online meeting room to inform him/her of the panel's decision.



## AFTER THE ONLINE DEFENSE

- 1) The adviser *consolidates the comments* of the panel members and *emails the file to the student, panel members, and Office of the College Secretary.*
- 2) The student and the adviser are expected to communicate further after the defense, regardless of outcome.

Here are some quick video tutorials and other resources on using video conferencing platforms such as Zoom:

**Teach Online with Zoom - Beginners Tutorial:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIRfIUH8ENw>

**3 Tips to Get More Out of Zoom:**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=To4Sa\\_NO2Sk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=To4Sa_NO2Sk)

We hope these tips can help you have a good online defense experience.

Good luck to all of you and we wish you all the best on your road to finishing your research!

