

## Zoom or Skype for Business: Best Practices for Virtual Dissertation Defense

WUSTL supports several platforms for conferencing. You are encouraged to use one of the WUSTL licensed platforms:

- Zoom (<https://wustl.zoom.us/>)
- Skype for Business (<https://it.wustl.edu/home/how-to/office-2016/office-for-home/skype-for-business/>).

As you prepare for your virtual defense, please do the following:

- Determine which platform you want to use. Download it early and take some time to learn about the capabilities.
  - Zoom Training: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/201146643>
  - Skype for Business Training: <https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.wustl.edu/dist/1/251/files/2018/03/SFB-Meetings-20ht10e.pdf>
- Communicate with your committee before the defense. Talk through questions related to the flow of the dissertation. These discussions will help you set up your meeting with the correct functionality to minimize distractions or technical issues.
  - When should questions be asked? (e.g. in the middle of the defense, at the end, etc.)
  - Does your committee want to type in questions? Would they rather ask them over audio? Should you mute microphones at certain points during the defense?
  - Should certain people have different abilities during the defense? Does your chair want to be able to chime in with audio at any point?
  - Are other people outside of your committee permitted to listen? Can they ask questions?
  - Ask your chair to outline these decisions with the committee before you begin the defense.
- Scheduling your defense.
  - Are all members of your committee in the same time zone?
- Pick a place for you to defend physically.
  - Be aware of your surroundings. Identify a quiet place with minimal background noise and distractions.
  - Check to make sure the internet connection is consistent.
  - Practice your defense with a friend or family member who is using a different internet connection to make sure the platform will work as expected. Check to make sure that all presentation materials, videos, and other visuals are appearing for your test audience.
- Create a backup plan. Think about solutions that you might need if you have technical issues.
  - What will you do if a member of your committee thought their laptop had a microphone but doesn't?
  - Share the plan with the committee for what will happen if you suddenly lose internet access.
- Search WUSTL websites for the most recent resources available. As a starting point, you can contact WU IT (<https://it.wustl.edu/>). The Writing Center can also help you plan to prepare to defend remotely (Steve Pijut, [sapijut@wustl.edu](mailto:sapijut@wustl.edu))