Online Thesis/Dissertation Defense Tips & Tricks

• Be sure your background is clear of clutter, and you are not in an area where you may be interrupted by family members walking through, opening a door into your space, etc.

• Be aware of your surroundings and remove as much background noise as possible. Make sure you are away from street noises or potential outdoor interruptions such as sirens, trains, etc.

• Check the lighting. Is there too much lighting behind you, in front of you, or even from the side? Can your audience clearly see you and your facial expressions?

• Check the angle of your audience's view. You don't want them looking up your nose or down your shirt. You want a perspective where they can clearly see you and your presentation.

• Place an object near the camera to draw your focus there (a picture, stuffed animal, clothing clip) to remind you of your virtual audience. It's easy to forget that there are others on the other side of your camera. It's not the same as making eye contact.

• Check your microphone volume. Use a hard-wired connection or a blue tooth microphone, so as you move, your sound volume stays constant.

• Sign in early, so you are the first to sign in and be the coordinator of the meeting.

• Ensure you have alternative hosts in case there are technical problems so someone else can step in as "host."

• Make sure you are using an education account; some private accounts only allow for 45 minutes and will end at that time. Sign up for more time than you think you need.

• Practice with your technology. Be sure you know how to screen share your Powerpoint or other presentation platforms.

• Print out any notes or outline to help keep you on track.

• Have paper and pen available so you can take notes.

• Dress the part. Make sure you are professionally dressed.

• Set up your meeting with "break out rooms," which will enable your committee to deliberate easily and then return to the main meeting space.
  • To enable Video Breakout Rooms, visit zoom.us/profile and log-in. Click Settings, then edit your settings to include "Breakout Sessions."
  • https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093-Getting-Started-with-Video-Breakout-Rooms
  • https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2015/12/01/new-feature-zoom-video-breakout-rooms/