**Best Practices for Preliminary and Final Oral Defenses**

If a synchronous, remote meeting arrangement for the student and committee members is selected as the chosen examination modality, the following points detail recommended best practices for these meetings:

1. Choose videoconference software that best meets the student’s goals and needs and is monitored by the university’s [Information Technology Services such as Zoom or WebEx](https://www.digitalaccess.iastate.edu/meetings).

2. Videoconference technology must allow the student and committee members to communicate throughout the examination and access or view all materials presented.

3. Assign the student and committee chair(s) as co-hosts to promote optimal remote meeting room management (e.g., breakout rooms, muting/unmuting, share screen, enable closed captioning).

4. Students and committee chairs(s) are encouraged to login to the meeting room 10 minutes early to troubleshoot any meeting challenges (e.g., screen share).

5. For final oral defenses, observers beyond the POSC may be invited to the final presentation that precedes the defense per the norms of the discipline or department/school. As with in-person public defenses, the student should communicate meeting arrangements at least two weeks in advance. This plan should describe:

* the meeting location/link/room identification number and password (if applicable)
* observer expectations (e.g., enable waiting room, muted upon meeting room entry, video off, remain muted, hide all non-video participants, refrain from using the chat until invited by the committee chair(s), prevent removed participants from rejoining the meeting)
* communicate that observers (as well as the student) will not be permitted to hear the committee’s private deliberations about the student’s performance or meeting outcome. Committee members will move to a breakout room or a separate remote meeting room to deliberate confidentially.

6. In the event of technical difficulties, the student and committee chair(s) should proactively provide the affected committee member(s) with information about how to join the meeting room via phone. In rare cases, it may necessary for student or committee chair(s) to setup a new meeting link/address and reconvene and continue in a different room. If none of the options resolve the technological difficulties and allow full participation of a committee member, the committee chair(s) are responsible for making the decision to delay the examination without prejudice to the student and/or resume the examination as promptly as possible.