

Pitt Public Health

Tips for Using Zoom for Essay, Thesis, Dissertation Meetings and Defenses

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Setting up Zoom with your Pitt account & getting started help

Pitt IT has numerous resources online for setting up your Zoom account, scheduling a meeting, and specifics for special features (sharing screens, whiteboards, breakout rooms, polls) at www.technology.pitt.edu/services/zoom-video-conferencing.

Before the meeting or defense

Designate someone, not the student, as the meeting organizer, perhaps the committee chair, to set up and initiate the Zoom call. This will allow portions of the meeting to occur without the student.

Set up the connection at least 15 minutes early.

Ask committee members to join the room 10 minutes prior to the start of the meeting, to ensure that all are connected to have the meeting/ defense start on time.

Alert participants that they can use the chat feature before you begin and invite questions from the audience.

Arrange before the meeting/ defense for the best experience

When joining, have audience participants mute audio but keep video on (bandwidth permitting).

Keep video on so that audience participants exaggerate positive feedback through facial expressions and/or gestures to help the presenter's motivation.

Instruct anyone experiencing connection issues to turn off their video.

During the meeting/ defense

Have the meeting organizer troubleshoot Zoom logistics and connection questions and/or issues via the chat feature in Zoom, which can be found by viewing Zoom in full screen at the bottom in the features window.

Note: when a chat is entered the chat icon flashes orange.

Have the student share their screen while presenting slides, but turn off screen sharing during discussion for a larger facial view and better interaction.

After the meeting/ defense

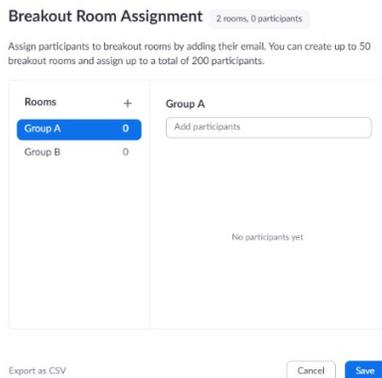
So that the committee can discuss next steps, final recommendation, or defense presentation, pre-assign the committee members to a deliberation breakout room (a feature in Zoom). Alternatively, the student can be asked to get off the call and then rejoin.

To set up a breakout room:

1. Sign in to the Zoom web portal.
2. Click Meetings and [schedule a meeting](#).
Note: Make sure to enable [join before host](#).
3. In the Meeting Options section, select Breakout Room pre-assign and click Create Rooms.



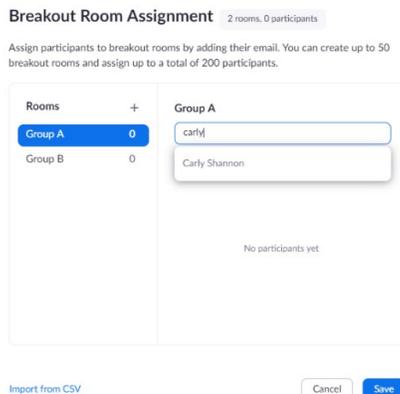
4. Click the plus icon beside Rooms to add breakout rooms.



5. Hover over the default breakout room name and click the pencil icon to rename it.

Breakout Room 1 

6. In the Add participants text box, search for participants' name or email address to add them to the breakout room.



7. Click Save.

Note: It is recommended that video be turned on at this point for the breakout room session

Once the meeting/ defense concludes

Provide to the student:

- extra encouragement when giving notes
- realistic notes taking turnaround time into consideration.

Complete any forms. For the updated Pitt Public Health electronic signature forms, please go to www.publichealth.pitt.edu/forms.

Additional help

The Pitt IT Help Desk is available 24/7 to answer calls at 412-624-HELP (4357) or [live chat](#).