

# Pitt Public Health

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

Updated April 2020 (ver 2) | Compiled March 2020 | Effective Spring Term 2020

### ***Setting up Zoom with your Pitt account & getting started help***

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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](http://www.technology.pitt.edu/services/zoom-video-conferencing).

### ***Best practices for security & privacy***

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- Distribute the Zoom meeting link privately to attendees and ask them not to share it.
- [Set a meeting password](#) or use a waiting room.
- Lock the meeting once everyone has entered.
- Restrict screen sharing so only the host can share content (organizers can [lock screen sharing during a meeting](#), or [lock screen sharing by default](#) for all meetings).
- Understand in advance how to [remove disruptive participants](#).

See more tips from [Pitt IT](#).

### ***Allowing for Public Defense – Best Security Practices***

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If the defense will be open publicly there are a few ways to ensure that the Zoom link is not made public on a webpage or web calendar entry.

In the announcement, name a person for individuals to contact to gain access to the Zoom defense. This contact person can send out the Zoom link once the message is received. Or set-up an online registration form to have outside individuals complete, and then send the Zoom link to them. If using Qualtrics, an automatic reply can be set-up which includes the Zoom link. External individuals should still be vetted in some way (i.e. the student's aunt would like to view the public presentation, send the list of names & e-mails to the student for confirmation).

### ***Before the meeting or defense***

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Designate someone, not the student, as the meeting host (or 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 to allow for questions from the audience.

## Arrange before the meeting/ defense for the best experience

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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

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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 oranges.

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

*Note:* the meeting host or co-host will need to provide the student access to share their screen. See Pitt IT step by step instructions [here](#).

## After the meeting/ defense

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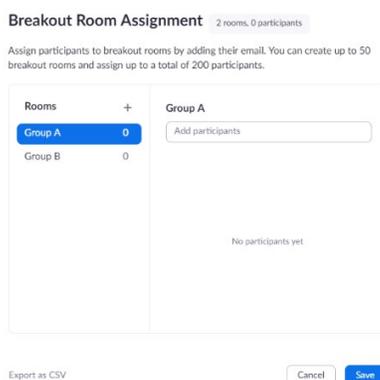
So that the committee can discuss next steps, final recommendation, or defense presentation, pre-assign the committee members to a deliberation breakout room (a feature in Zoom). Alternatively, the student can be asked to get off the call and then rejoin.

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.

**Breakout Room Assignment** 2 rooms, 0 participants

Assign participants to breakout rooms by adding their email. You can create up to 50 breakout rooms and assign up to a total of 200 participants.

Rooms	+	Group A
Group A	0	<input type="text" value="carly"/>
Group B	0	Carly Shannon

No participants yet

Import from CSV

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***

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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](http://www.publichealth.pitt.edu/forms).

### ***Additional help***

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