



University of Hawaii at Manoa

Graduate Division

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October 23, 1989

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Graduate Chairs

FROM: Peter V. Garrod
Associate Dean

RE: Use and Role of Proxy Members in Thesis/Dissertation Defenses

As a general rule, the Graduate Division discourages the use of proxies for Thesis or Dissertation defenses. The preferred alternatives are:

1. Postpone the defense;
2. Use teleconferencing;
3. Video tape the defense, having one of the members present ask previously prepared questions on behalf of the absent member;
4. Restructure the committee.

However, we recognize that occasionally the use of a proxy member may be the only practicable solution that does not unduly penalize the student.

When Graduate Division gives permission for a faculty member to serve as a proxy for a committee member, the proxy is expected to officially replace the regular committee member until he or she returns. That is, the proxy is expected to ask any question he or she deems appropriate; the proxy may require the student to revise, modify, add or delete portions of the thesis or dissertation; and the proxy must indicate on Graduate Division's Form VI whether or not, in his or her judgment, the student successfully defended the thesis or dissertation. Committee members who do not participate in the defense should not sign Form VI.

Assuming that the absent committee member has read the thesis or dissertation, the absent member should indicate his or her approval (or disapproval) on Form VII. Only members approving the paper should sign the signature page. If the absent member has not read the thesis or dissertation, the committee should be restructured.

Note: It is expected that the chairperson of the dissertation committee be present at the defense. If this is not possible, the first option should be "postpone the defense."