



LAMAR UNIVERSITY  
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Academic Affairs

MAPP 02.03.13

AREA: Students

**Audio/Video Recording of Thesis and Dissertation Defenses**

I. POLICY

- A. This Lamar University policy establishes rules for the recording by audio and/or video of thesis and dissertation defenses.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. This policy falls under the authority of all applicable federal, State, and Texas State University System (TSUS) statutes, rules, and regulations, including, but not limited to, the TSUS *Rules & Regulations*; Texas Education Code, Title 3, Higher Education; and Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Education.
- B. This policy allows for candidate-initiated recording of thesis and dissertation defenses to enable appropriate scholarly dissemination when desired, while protecting academic integrity, privacy, and accessibility. The University regards the recording of thesis and dissertation defenses as a candidate-initiated process that must be approved beforehand by the candidate **and** committee chair.
- C. This policy applies to all master's thesis and doctoral defenses overseen by the College of Graduate Studies, including defenses that take place in person and in remote or hybrid formats.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Candidate.** A student who is pursuing a master's or doctoral degree and who is ready to undergo a defense of his/her thesis or dissertation before a committee made up of faculty members, one of whom serves as committee chair.
- B. **Committee Deliberations.** The private discussion of a thesis or dissertation committee following public presentation and questioning. These deliberations are not part of the public portion of a defense and shall never be recorded.
- C. **Defense.** The formal examination for a graduate degree program in which the candidate presents and answers questions on his/her thesis or dissertation before an approved faculty committee.

- D. **Recording.** Any audio and/or video capture of the proceedings of a thesis or dissertation defense, regardless of which technologies are used to record and whether the recording is stored locally, in the cloud, or in another format.

#### IV. POLICY STATEMENTS

- A. A thesis or dissertation defense is an academic examination. Recording is permitted only under the conditions of this policy and is not a right.
- B. Recording is permitted if (a) the candidate requests it in advance during defense scheduling, **and** (b) the committee chair approves the plan and the location/technology. (Note. Committee chairs should discuss recording with all members of the committee before the defense takes place, to allow time to answer any questions and/or address any concerns.)
- C. Committee members, departments, programs, attendees, and guests may not independently record unless authorized to do so by the candidate **and** the committee chair.
- D. Recording must occur in University-managed spaces (in-person defenses) or on approved platforms (remote and hybrid defenses) that allow the candidate or committee chair to start/stop recording and avoid capturing private deliberations.
- E. The candidate may manage the recording process or may request University assistance to record the proceedings. For remote or hybrid defenses, approved platforms (e.g., institutionally licensed video conferencing) must be used to protect the academic integrity and security of the defense.
- F. Committee deliberations are strictly confidential and shall not be recorded under any circumstances. The committee chair will confirm that recording has stopped before deliberations begin.
- G. The College of Graduate Studies' defense scheduling process will allow for a Recording Request and Disclosure\* that will (1) indicate that the candidate has requested recording and the committee chair has approved the request, and (2) list who will record, what technologies will be used, where the recording will be stored, and who will have access. (\*Recording Request and Disclosure can be made via time-stamped Lamar University email. The email Subject Line should be "Recording Request and Disclosure," and the email's body should include the information listed in this point.)
1. **Appeals.** If a committee chair denies a recording request or if a committee chair or a committee member objects to the recording, a candidate may submit a written appeal to the College of Graduate Studies. Appeals should be submitted no later than two weeks (14 calendar days) before the scheduled defense. The Dean of the College of Graduate Studies will hear appeals and attempt to reach a resolution satisfactory to both the committee and candidate.
- H. For in-person defenses, signage must be posted in the room indicating "Recording in Progress" or, for remote and hybrid defenses, a digital notice (e.g., slide) must be posted on-screen indicating "Recording in Progress."

- I. If an approved disability accommodation requires recording (or remote participation), the College of Graduate Studies will coordinate with the appropriate office(s) on campus to arrange the accommodation. Disability accommodations supersede the general restrictions in this policy but remain subject to the provision that no recording of committee deliberations shall occur.
- J. **Use, Sharing, and Distribution.** The following limitations apply to the use, sharing, and distribution of recorded defenses:
  - 1. Default access to any recording is limited to the candidate, the committee, and the College of Graduate Studies for quality assurance and/or academic integrity review.
  - 2. Public sharing (e.g., posting on public websites) requires written permission from the candidate **and** committee chair.
- K. **Intellectual Property (IP) and Copyright.** The thesis or dissertation text and candidate's recorded presentation are typically owned by the candidate unless other IP agreements apply. Inclusion of third-party content requires permission consistent with University copyright guidance.
- L. If the College of Graduate Studies, department, and/or program retains a copy of the recording, the recording must be stored on approved University systems with access logs and retention consistent with the University's records retention schedule. (Questions about the University's records retention schedule should be directed to the University Library.)
- M. Candidates controlling their own recording are responsible for secure storage and deleting any copies they do not intend to keep or share.
- N. Candidates are responsible for the recording of their defenses. Lamar University is not responsible for any technical issues that occur during or after recording and is not responsible for any missing or lost recordings.
- O. Unauthorized recording or distribution, or failure to stop recording before committee deliberations, may lead to disciplinary action under University policies, including but not limited to invalidation of the defense and rescheduling.

## V. PROCEDURES

### A. Before the Defense

1. **Candidate** requests permission to record during the defense scheduling process; indicates platform/location and intended disposition (personal archive, distribution to committee, etc.).
2. **Committee Chair** reviews and approves/denies recording request; confirms that technology supports start/stop control to exclude committee deliberations.
3. **College of Graduate Studies** reviews compliance with the terms and requirements of this policy; documents the candidate's recording request and the committee chair's decision; the Dean also hears any appeals submitted (see IV.G.1).

**B. During the Defense**

1. **Signage/Notice:** Candidate posts “Recording in Progress” sign (for in-person defenses) or digital notice (for remote and hybrid defenses).
2. **Control:** Candidate or committee chair starts recording only for the presentation and question and answer portion of the defense.
3. **Committee Deliberations:** Committee chair confirms that recording has stopped before deliberations begin.

**C. After the Defense**

1. **Use, Sharing, and Distribution:** If the defense is recorded, candidate determines use, sharing, and distribution of the recording, subject to the terms of this policy and University policies regarding IP, copyright, and technology use.
2. **Copies:** If applicable, any College of Graduate Studies, department, and/or program copies are stored and retained in keeping with the University’s records retention schedule.

**VI. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Review Schedule: Every three years on or before the date the policy was last revised and/or approved.

Responsible Party: Academic Policy Advisory Council

**VII. APPROVAL**

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 Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Date

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 Lamar University President Date

**POLICY LOG**

Version	Date	Description of Changes
1		Policy draft completed.
		Reviews by constituency groups completed.
		Review by campus community completed.
		Policy approved by President.