

# Defending Your Thesis or Internship on Zoom

## Suggestions on Running Your Zoom Defense

- Assign a co-host
  - Help with administrative tasks
  - Allows you to focus on the primary content and delivery
  - Designate after the meeting has started (so start early)
- Use a Breakout Room for closed Q/A and thesis committee deliberations
  - Committee members can be pre-assigned to a breakout room in the web interface or assigned after the meeting starts and they join
  - How this works:
    - Main defense and Q/A with guests in the main meeting
    - Candidate and committee members leave main meeting and enter breakout room for closed Q/A session
    - Candidate returns to main meeting after closed Q/A session for committee to deliberate in private
    - Once committee deliberation is over, candidate returns to breakout room to receive comments, or, if everyone else has left the main meeting room, the committee can return to the main meeting with the candidate for final comments

# Best Practices for a Professional Presentation

## Stage your platform

- Do all preparation, configuration, and testing ahead of time
- Reduce competition on your network
- Stage your background simply - you are the focus!
- Set a comfortable speaking position - non-slouch seating or even stand up
- Eliminate ambient noises and distractions
- Leverage lighting to improve your appearance; use lamps to help
- Dress professionally (pastel colors, no patterns)
- Position the camera to show your head and shoulders
- Position cues and notes around and behind the screen
- Place markers (e.g. masking tape, painters tape) to guide your focus to the camera rather than the computer screen

## Deliver for engagement

- You are not just the presenter; you are the host
- Have a co-host handle participant management/chat for you
- Keeping an audience engaged online is harder than in person
- Smile, but be serious
- Speak clearly at a slow to moderate pace; avoid monotone voice
- Elaborate verbally on slide content; use images as cues
- Drink fluid only as necessary - it's more distracting online
- Enjoy telling your audience about what you've contributed to/learned from environmental studies

Contact the EVSS office with additional questions about hosting your thesis / internship defense online.