PhD General Exams and MS Private Defenses by students in the Department of Earth, Atmospheric & Planetary Sciences will be conducted online starting March 30, 2020 and continuing until further notice. It is recommended that students use Zoom Meetings. For conciseness, both PhD general exams and MS Private Defenses are referred to as “exams” in this document.

Student Instructions:
Before the exam:

- Communicate about the Zoom meeting
  - General exams in Planetary/Geophysics/G3 and all MS Private defenses: Recruit your exam chair to run the exam and report the results to the EAPS Education Office. Notify the Education Office that you have selected a committee chair who can serve as host for the Zoom meeting. Once a date and time have been selected, expect communication from the Education Office about the Zoom Meeting for your exam. Plan on your exam lasting for up to three hours.
  - General exams in PAOC: Expect communication from Prof. Mick Follows and Daisy Caban about the schedule and Zoom Meeting for your exam (contact them if you have any questions).
- Think about your setup for the exam.
  - Identify a location that is as quiet as possible and will be free of distraction for up to three hours.
  - It's fine to use headphones or earbuds to help with sound quality.
  - Be aware of what is in the background while you are presenting.
  - Dress professionally, as you would in an in-person exam.
- Plan and conduct a rehearsal with a friend or colleague.
  - Make sure the sound quality is adequate
  - Practice sharing your screen
  - Practice using Zoom's annotation tools to draw or highlight features on your slides
- If you would like to have a virtual celebration after your defense, see some possible options below. Some of them require advanced planning.

During the exam:

- Focus on giving your presentation and answering questions.
- At the end of the exam, your committee will ask you to leave the meeting while they deliberate.
- Wait to be invited back to the meeting to discuss the results of their deliberations. Do not rejoin until you are invited. The defense chair will provide instructions on how to rejoin the meeting.

Exam Chair Instructions:
Before the exam:

- Obtain an electronic version of the exam form.
- The EAPS Education Office or PAOC administrative office will create a scheduled Zoom Meeting and send an invitation to the committee members and the student. The
committee chair will be designated as a host.

- Get contact info (ideally phone numbers) for the student and committee members to use in the event of dropped connections during the defense.

During the exam:

- Host the Zoom meeting.
- Instruct the student when to leave (and, if applicable, rejoin) the exam
  - General exams in Planetary/Geophysics/G3 and all MS Private defenses:
    - When it is time to ask the student to leave the meeting so the committee members can discuss in private, establish clearly how the student will be notified when it is time to rejoin the meeting (for example, an email or a mobile phone call or text message).
    - After the committee has finished discussing in private, invite the student back to the Zoom Meeting and present the committee’s decision.
    - Email Brandon Milardo in the Education Office with the exam result.
  - General exams in PAOC:
    - Ask the student to leave the meeting prior to deliberations of the committee, with final decisions to be made at a PAOC faculty meeting.

**Education Office/PAOC Administrator Instructions:**

Before the exam:

- Set up the exam Zoom Meeting:
  - Set participant video to ON
  - Allow audio from both phone and computer
  - Under “Advanced Options”, select “Enable join before host”, “Only authenticated users can join: MIT Touchstone”, and designate the committee chair as an alternative host by entering his/her MIT email address.
  - (If there are non-MIT exam committee members: Instead of requiring MIT Touchstone authentication, set “Require meeting password” and send the password to attendees along with the invitation.)
  - DO NOT record the exam.
- Send invitations to the Zoom meeting to the exam committee and the student.

**Post-Exam Party Options for Students** (not exhaustive or mutually exclusive)

- Host a post-exam Zoom party yourself.
- Talk to your supervisor or a close friend about having a “virtual toast” via an agreed-upon platform of choice.
- Craft an announcement to send yourself to the community.
- Ask a friend or colleague to send an announcement to the community.