Graduate Defense Guidelines

Master's Thesis Proposal Defense

1. The thesis proposal defense is scheduled with the Departmental Administrator at least two weeks ahead of time to secure the room at a specific time on a specific day.

2. The candidate distributes the thesis proposal document to committee members at least two weeks prior to the defense date. The document will be distributed in paper form unless committee members request otherwise.

3. The candidate brings to the defense a copy of the departmental reporting form.

4. The master's thesis proposal defense may be open or closed (restricted to the candidate and the committee). The proposal defense may also be open for part of the time and then closed for the remainder of the defense. When the defense is closed, and during all closed portions of proposal defenses, faculty and students other than the candidate and the committee do not attend.

5. If the defense is open the advisor announces the proposal defense to the faculty and graduate students via e-mail at least one week ahead of time. At the proposal defense the advisor insures that committee members are introduced.

6. Normally the defense begins with the student presenting a short (approximately 10 minute) summary of the proposal. The defense proceeds as a discussion with questions, answers, and debate about the proposal. Recommendations for improvement of the proposal may relate to background development, research questions, and methodology.

7. The candidate and anyone other than committee members are then excused, and the committee deliberates its approval or disapproval of the thesis proposal document. Committee members may require changes, additions, or other refinements to the proposal. The committee may require a revised document before approval.

8. The candidate is then recalled for final resolution, including discussion of revisions to the proposal.

9. If the candidate passes the defense, the committee members sign the departmental report form, or they may wait until a revised document is complete.

Dissertation Proposal Defense

1. The dissertation proposal defense is scheduled with the Departmental Administrator at least two weeks ahead of time to secure the room at a specific time on a specific day.

2. The candidate distributes the dissertation proposal document to committee members at least two weeks prior to the defense date. The document will be distributed in paper form unless committee members request otherwise.

3. The advisor announces the proposal defense to the faculty and graduate students via e-mail at least one week ahead of time.
4. The proposal to be defended is available for public review in the departmental office at least one week prior to the defense.

5. The candidate brings to the defense a copy of the departmental reporting form.

6. The proposal defense will be open to faculty and students. The advisor begins the defense by introducing the committee members, especially important if an outside member is present.

7. The candidate follows with a presentation of up to 15 minutes outlining the basic background research questions, and methods of the work.

8. The members of the audience ask questions.

9. Members of the committee follow with one or two questions each, while the audience is present.

10. The audience is excused, and the committee continues with the candidate, with questions and follow-up discussion.

11. The candidate is excused, and the committee deliberates its approval or disapproval of the proposal document. Committee members may require changes, additions, or other refinements to the proposal.

12. The candidate is then recalled for final resolution, including discussion of revisions to the proposal.

13. If the candidate passes the defense, the committee members sign the departmental report form. The advisor and/or other committee members may withhold their signatures pending revisions.

Dissertation or Thesis Defense

1. The defense is scheduled with the Departmental Administrator at least two weeks ahead of time to secure the room at a specific time on a specific day.

2. The dissertation or thesis is distributed to the committee members at least two weeks before the scheduled defense. The document will be distributed in paper form unless committee members request otherwise.

3. The advisor announces the defense to the faculty and graduate students via e-mail at least one week ahead of time.

4. The document to be defended is available for public review in the departmental office at least one week prior to the defense.

5. The candidate brings to the defense a copy of the departmental reporting form and the relevant Graduate School reporting form.
6. The defense will be open to faculty and graduate students. The advisor begins the defense by introducing the committee members, especially important if an outside member is present.

7. The candidate follows with a presentation of 15-30 minutes outlining the basics of the work.

8. The members of the audience ask questions.

9. Members of the committee follow with one or two questions each, while the audience is present.

10. The audience is excused, and the committee continues with the candidate, with questions and follow-up discussion.

11. The candidate is excused, and the committee deliberates its approval or disapproval of the document.

12. The candidate is then recalled for final resolution.

13. If the candidate passes the defense, the committee members sign the departmental report form and title signature pages. The advisor and/or other committee members may withhold their signatures pending revisions.