

Procedure for Conducting the Oral Defense

1. The oral defense should be conducted to allow for the student to make any necessary corrections following the defense and still meet the final copy deadline for turning in the dissertation to the Office of Graduate Studies.
2. All members of the Dissertation Committee must be present for the examination unless an absence is approved by the Graduate Dean. *No one-on-one examinations are allowed.*
3. The presentation should be considered an important function in the department and all graduate students and faculty are urged to attend.
4. The presentation and defense are open to the public and as such, must meet the requirements of the Sunshine Laws for the State of Florida. The voting is not public.
5. The room selected for the examination should have adequate seating with an alternate room selected in case of problems.
6. The Outside Chair should open the proceedings by introducing the Candidate and the Dissertation Committee.
7. The examination should begin with a presentation by the Candidate designed to summarize the dissertation.
8. Following the Candidate's summary of the dissertation, the Outside Chair will open the questioning to the general audience (the Outside Chair and the Committee may also ask general questions at that time). After all general questions have been asked, the candidate will be given the opportunity to take a 5 minute break before proceeding with the Defense. Following the break, the Outside Chair and the Committee will again be given an opportunity to follow up with additional questions to the candidate. This portion of the defense is also open to the public. It is suggested that questioning should be limited to about 15-20 minutes for each person with subsequent rounds of questioning as necessary.
9. The length of the examination will generally not exceed three hours. Throughout this time the Outside Chair is to be in charge of all proceedings and, ideally, is expected to play a balancing role between advocacy and contention. The Outside Chair, at any time during the course of the examination, may request all visitors to leave.
10. Following the completion of these proceedings, the Outside Chair will ask all visitors and the Candidate to leave and will reconvene the Dissertation Committee only. The Outside Chair may share his/her impressions and opinions of the Candidate and the dissertation. The Outside Chair will preside over the deliberations and voting of the committee, but is not to participate in the voting. The voting is to be limited to "pass" and "fail" votes. The Outside Chair has the responsibility of tallying votes and informing the candidate of the final decision. *The vote of the Dissertation Committee must be unanimous and recorded on the Successful Defense form.* Substitutions and disagreements within the committee will be resolved by the College Graduate Dean.
11. The Outside Chair will convey the decision of the Dissertation Committee (Successful Defense form) to the Department/College Graduate office to be kept in the student's file.

Summary of Dissertation Defense Proceedings

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduction of Candidate and Committee Members2. Presentation by the Candidate3. Initial questions by general audience, Outside Chair and Committee Members.4. Follow-up questions from the committee.5. Candidate and observers leave the examination room6. Deliberation and voting by the committee, only. Sign documentation (to be determined by the College/Department) if defense is successful7. The Candidate shall be informed of the vote8. The record of the successful defense is forwarded to the College/Department for the student's file |
|--|