

GUIDELINES FOR THE ORAL EXAMINATION for Thesis and Research Paper Students

Scheduling the Final Oral Examination: Before a candidate is permitted to schedule the oral examination, you and the School of Graduate Studies must be able to check “yes” for each of the following items:

- Form 1: the Application for Admission to Graduate Studies has been approved,
- Form 2: the Application for Admission to Candidacy has been approved,
- Form 3: the Culminating Project Committee Approval has been approved,
- Form 4: the Application for Graduation has been approved,
- Form 4b: Notice of Oral Defense (for Thesis and Research Papers only)
- a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher has been achieved,
- all "I" and "IP" grades have been changed to letter grades,
- Form 5: the Confirmation of Degree Requirements has been approved following the defense and final submission of thesis or research in hard copy.

The candidate must be within the final semester before scheduling the oral examination. The time, date, and location of the examination shall be determined by the candidate in consultation with the advisor, committee members and appointed Graduate Faculty Representative (GFR). The student is responsible for initiating the scheduling process with their advisor and all committee members including the graduate faculty representative. If the student will be graduating during the summer, contact committee members six to eight weeks in advance of the anticipated oral examination date. Do not schedule the oral examination during the last week of classes or during the final examination period if at all possible.

Nature of the Final Oral Examination: The oral examination typically focuses on the research topic. It generally consists of a presentation of the research topic, followed by a discussion during which the student is asked to expand, defend or explain the research and the findings.

The examination is to be scheduled for a minimum of one (1) hour and not more than two (2) hours.

Oral examinations are open to the university community. The examinations of the upcoming week are announced on the Faculty List Serve no later than Friday of the week prior to the examinations. At the discretion of the examination committee chair, visitors may ask the candidate questions regarding the topic. The evaluation of the examination by the committee is closed to the public.

The Final Oral Examination Committee: The oral examination committee must consist of at least two (2) members of the graduate faculty. A graduate faculty representative, is appointed by the Director, School of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Faculty Representative is responsible for monitoring the final oral to insure the examination is conducted in a manner consistent with the goals of the University's Graduate Program. The Graduate Faculty Representative is permitted to ask the candidate questions of a substantive nature, however, he/she does not have a vote in the final outcome. A majority vote is required for the determination of the examination outcome. It is the responsibility of the graduate faculty representative to provide the Graduate Studies Office with the examination outcome and evaluation.

Grading of the Final Comprehensive Oral Examination: The examining committee has the option of assigning a pass, fail, or conditional recommendation. Appropriate observations and comments will be recorded on the Graduate Faculty Representative electronic reporting form which is provided directly to the graduate faculty representative from the School of Graduate Studies. The candidate will be rated in the following areas on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being lowest and 7 being highest on how well prepared the Master's candidate is on:

- a. Knowledge and skills necessary to conduct research in the disciplinary area.
- b. Ability to evaluate and apply other's research to issues in the disciplinary area.
- c. Ability to present results of one's own research orally to other scholars and the lay community.
- d. Ability to present results of one's own research in writing to other scholars and the lay community.

A candidate who does not pass or receives a conditional recommendation will have one additional opportunity to retake the oral examination. However, all conditions set forth by the committee must be satisfied prior to the scheduling of a second examination. Conditions may include: additional course work, thesis/research paper revisions, research, readings, special problems and projects. It is the responsibility of the candidate's advisor to notify the College Dean and Director, School of Graduate Studies when all conditions have been satisfied. All conditions stipulated by the oral committee will be provided to the College Dean and Director, School of Graduate Studies by the graduate faculty representative.

The Thesis/Research Paper Requirement: Candidates must provide each committee member and the Graduate Studies Office with a completed copy of the Pre-Defense Signature Form and a draft of the thesis/ research paper at least three weeks in advance of the final oral examination. The committee and the College Dean representing the department reserve the right to request revisions in the final draft. All requested changes must be completed to the satisfaction of the committee chair and the College Dean prior to the candidate's approval for graduation. Once all requested revisions have been completed and approved and all necessary signatures secured, the candidate must submit two (2) approved manuscripts (thesis) or one (1) approved manuscript (research paper) to the Director, School of Graduate Studies.