



Everything You Need to Know to Defend....And OTHER Useful Information

The Graduate School, SUNY ESF
227 Bray Hall
esfgrad@esf.edu



Committee
Structure: MPS,
MF, MLA Degrees

- Major professor, plus at least one other member
- No examiners needed
- No chair assignment needed



Defense Committee Structure

- Minimum 5 or 6 members
 - Major professor(s)
 - Steering Committee
 - Examiners
 - 1 for M.S.
 - 2 for Ph.D.
 - Chair





Thesis/Dissertation Defense: Purpose

- Demonstrate knowledge and skills to carry out research that provides new information on a significant problem
- Exam covers material in the thesis or dissertation, as well as literature and information relating to it
- Objectives:
 - probe the validity and significance of the data and information presented
 - assess student as a critical thinker and data analyst
 - Evaluate student's scientific creativity, including the student's ability to relate research results to scientific theory within the chosen field



Examiner's Role

- Examiners read the thesis/dissertation and participate fully in the oral exam but are not involved in the actual supervision of the thesis/dissertation.
- Examiner information must be included in the **5B** chair request form.



Chair Appointment

- Finishing MS/PhD students submit 5B form requesting appointment of an exam committee about three to four weeks into the semester
 - Must have approved 2A and program of study 3B forms on file
- The Grad School will appoint an exam chair



Chair's Role

- The role of the chair is to:
 - manage the defense
 - ensure its integrity
 - represent the interests of both the student and faculty



Defense Scheduling

- Once the chair is assigned, student must coordinate a *mutually convenient* defense date with the chair and the rest of the committee members.
- Chair's participation is essential - do not select defense date before talking to your chairperson.
- Student must notify The Graduate School of date, time, and location two weeks in advance



Defense Logistics

- Defense usually lasts two hours, and it is expected that all committee members stay through its entirety
- Students may invite one other student to serve as a silent observer
- Within five days of oral defense, the major professor confirms with committee that oral defense should proceed as scheduled
- Thesis or dissertation must be submitted to all committee members at least 14 days prior to the defense

Capstone Information

- Capstone seminar is required for all MS and PhD degrees and **usually** for MPS, MF, and MLA degrees
 - Usually lasts one hour
 - Student must arrange date, time, and location with their **department**
 - Send only the date and time of the **defense** to The Grad School (not capstone information is required)





Formatting Theses/Dissertations

- The style manual for the College is **Council of Science Editors Scientific Style Manual** (Latest Edition)
 - Consistency is King
- Instructions and Guidelines for Formatting a Thesis or Dissertation:
<http://www.esf.edu/graduate/graddegreq.htm>

Formatting Review

- Send a pdf copy of thesis or dissertation to esfgrad@esf.edu for formatting review no later than five days before the defense
- Do not submit the final copy of the document to Google Drive until it has cleared format review





Completion Requirements

- **All students:** Graduation and Key Return Form
- **MS and PhD Students:**
 - Thesis/Dissertation processing fee receipt showing proof of payment (Cashier in 102 Bray)
 - Signed Thesis/Dissertation Approval Form (8A)
 - Upload PDF of final thesis or dissertation to Google Drive
- **PhD Students:** [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#)

Forms are available online:

<http://www.esf.edu/graduate/graddegreq.htm>

General Guidelines

- Last day to defend - 2 weeks before commencement
- Final, revised version of document and associated paperwork (e.g., 8A) must be submitted by no later than the Friday before the start of the next semester
- MPS, MF, and MLA students should notify OIGS of their intent to complete the degree one month before the last day of classes to be included in the commencement program





Want Commencement Information?

- Latest updates are found online at <https://www.esf.edu/students/graduation/>