

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

STEPS

PROCEDURES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS DEFENDING THESES OR DISSERTATIONS

The Graduate Certification Office
107 STEELE HALL SYRACUSE, NY 13244

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* A Sample of the Request for Exam is Attached to this procedures booklet

* Contact Information for the Graduate Enrollement Management Center appears on the last page

I Preparing for Your Oral Examination

Consult the Graduation Dates and *Deadlines*, by The Graduate School and Graduate Certification Office. Graduate Deadlines may be found on the Graduate School Website at:

http://gradsch.syr.edu/student/download_docs.htm

and a copy may be obtained from the Graduate Certification Office 107 Steele Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244.

The *Dates and Deadlines* publication summarizes procedures and deadlines that must followed to receive a degree for each of the four gradation dates in May, June, August, and December.

1 Request your Expected Graduation Date

Enter your requested expected graduation date on My Slice by the date indicated on the *Dates and Deadlines* in order to receive commencement information for the May commencement and be eligible for graduation for a specific date. Master's candidates who expect to receive degrees in June or August may participate in the preceding May commencement, but will be mailed information only if they have entered the information onto My Slice by the specified deadline.

No doctoral candidates may participate in May commencement unless all degree requirements have been met by the May deadline. This includes submitting the final dissertation with all required documents with the Graduate Certification Office by the published date.

2 File A Program of Study

All graduate students must file one copy of the *Program of Study* form with the Graduate Certification Office. The program of study must be approved and signed by your department chair and advisor and then forwarded to the Graduate Certification Office for review. If your department requires, please make sure that they have received a copy also.

3 Consult your Advisor

Consult your thesis/dissertation advisor to begin preparation for your defense. Be sure that you are aware of all departmental procedures and regulations that pertain to your thesis/dissertation and oral examination.

4 *Submit Request for Examination*

The Graduate Certification Office must be notified of your intention to proceed with your defense. This is done by submitting a *Request for Examination* form at least three full weeks prior to the defense. The Graduate Certification Office publishes deadlines for each graduation date and are available at 107 Steele Hall or at http://gradsch.syr.edu/student/download_docs.htm

The *Request for Examination* requires the signatures of your advisor and academic unit or departmental chair. It provides formal notification to the Graduate School and Graduate Certification Office that your department supports your request to proceed with your defense. In addition, the form records the names of your committee members, your advisor, the Oral Chair along with their contact information. The Request for Exam also lists the time, place, and date of your oral examination. The Graduate Certification Office must receive the *Request for Examination* by the published deadlines so that you will be able to move forward with your defense.

5 *Obtain Graduate School Clearance*

The following documents must be on file and approved by the Graduate Certification Office to be cleared for defense:

1. *Program of Study*

The final, accurate copy with appropriate signatures must be on file with Graduate Certification Office.

2. *Transcripts*

Very Important: Documentation for all post-secondary coursework should be on file in the Graduate Certification Office: This includes courses being used for transfer credit. Degree-bearing transcripts are required for all prior degrees received. For degrees obtained outside the U.S., students must provide acceptable documentation of the degree, such as a certificate or diploma.

3. *Coursework*

The Graduate Certification Office will verify that all coursework and thesis/dissertation credits have been completed and recorded accurately on the students' Syracuse University transcripts. All coursework must be registered for and have grades posted before the defense takes place. All thesis/dissertation credits must be registered for before the defense takes place. The oral defense of the thesis/dissertation is the last step for graduation.

4. *Additional Degree Requirements*

The Graduate Certification Office Center will check to confirm that all other requirements for your degree have been completed and all required supporting documentation has been properly filed. This includes the results of your qualifying exam and tool requirements if applicable. The Graduate Certification Office will also make sure that all Syracuse University, Graduate School, and department rules have been followed (i.e. time limits, number of credits, GPA's etc.)

6 Select and Schedule Committee

Work with your advisor and department to assemble an oral examination committee appropriate for your academic work. **Many academic units have specific procedures, which must be followed.** Select your committee and schedule your defense. Neither the Graduate School nor the Graduate Certification Office seeks members for defense committees.

7 Formal Defense Notification

The Graduate Certification Office sends confirmation to all committee members that the defense will proceed. The defense is listed in *The Record* and posted at the Graduate School/ Graduate Certification Office. The Graduate Certification Office generates a Committee Approval page that lists the members of your Oral Examination Committee. This is sent to the Oral Chair of your Examination for signatures at the conclusion of your defense.

The committee approval page is to be returned to the Graduate Certification Office by the defense chair along with a written report of the defense which is referred to as a Report of Examination.

8 Distribute Your Thesis/Dissertation

You must submit copies of your thesis/ dissertation in appropriate form to all members of the examination committee, including the chair of the oral examination, at least **two full weeks** before the scheduled date of the examination. **This deadline is strictly enforced.** If the full committee does not receive copies in time, the candidate is required to petition the committee and the Graduate Certification Office for permission to proceed with the scheduled defense. **Your defense may be canceled if all committee members do not have a copy of your thesis in time.** It is required that an additional copy of the thesis/dissertation be deposited with your department two weeks before the defense. This may be reviewed by anyone who wishes to attend the defense.

9 Hold Your Defense

Consult your advisor about planning for your final oral examination. For example, in many disciplines it is traditional for the candidate to prepare a 20-30 minute presentation on the research before questioning by the committee begins.
Good luck!

***II* The Oral Examination**

10 The Master's Examination

In many fields, the thesis is required for the master's degree. The thesis is regarded as a test of the student's ability to do investigative work and to present the results in a clear, accurate, and logical form. A good command of literary expression is required.

The student must pass an oral examination on the thesis and related fields. The oral examination is conducted by a committee consisting of specialists in the field of the thesis or in closely related fields. Each department may conduct the oral exam in a manner that it considers being effective. Check with your academic unit for specific procedures and guidelines. The Examining Committee consists of four voting members, including the chair of the oral examination committee and your thesis advisor.

The chair of the oral examination presides over the exam and ensures that regulations and declared policies of the Graduate School, Graduate Certification Office and your department are followed. An endeavor should be made to obtain a chair who has an affinity to your field.

In addition to participating in the questioning of the candidate and voting, the oral chair secures a vote of the committee and submits this to the Dean of the Graduate School. The voting reflects the committee's judgment as to the quality of the thesis and the performance of the candidate at the examination. The relative importance of these areas varies across disciplines. The voting on the acceptability of the oral examination is done in executive session of the committee. A majority of the committee must vote favorably for the candidate to pass the examination. All members of the committee, including the chair of the oral examination, vote equally.

Members of the committee may make their approval conditional upon certain alterations to the thesis being completed by the candidate. For editorial changes, the committee may refer final approval to your advisor. If approval hinges upon making substantive changes, committee members will withhold their signatures of approval until such changes have been made. When substantive revisions are required, the chair and the advisor, on behalf of the committee, should ensure that revisions are successfully completed. At the discretion of the committee, other members of the committee may participate in the oversight of the revisions as well. When the revisions have been satisfactorily made he/she will sign and date the candidate's title page. This verifies that all modifications and revisions have been made by the student and that the advisor and or committee have accepted the final draft of the thesis.

When approved by the committee, each member records his or her approval by signing the *Committee Approval Page*. It is the responsibility of the chair to return the *Committee Approval Page* to the Dean of the Graduate School to 107 Steele Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244. The candidate is entitled to an explanation from the committee concerning the disposition of the defense.

After the thesis has been modified and approved by your advisor and/or oral examination committee as ready for final submission to the Graduate Enrollment Management Center, your advisor should sign and date the title page of both copies of the thesis. The Graduate Certification Office will insert the committee approval page after the theses have been submitted.

11 The Doctoral Examination

The oral examination, based on the dissertation, is intended to judge the quality of the dissertation, explore the dissertation's substantive and methodological quality, demonstrate the ability of the candidate to defend the dissertation and show competence in the chosen field and related areas. In different disciplines, one or another aspect may be emphasized. Some academic units have additional specific rules or procedures for the conduct of oral examinations. Check with your academic unit for this information.

Selection of the Examining Committee

The Graduate Certification Office approves an oral examination committee at the recommendation of the dissertation advisor and the candidate's academic unit that indicated on the Request for Examination form. The *Request for Examination* form should include the name of a oral chair that has been chosen by the student with the assistance of their department. The Graduate Certification Office does not assign defense oral chairs.

The Committee Composition

The Examining Committee consists of six voting members, including the chair of the oral examination committee and your dissertation advisor. All committee members should be *tenured* or *tenure-track* members of the SU faculty. Other members of the academic community or others with expertise in your field may serve as committee members when appropriate, including faculty from other institutions. Only SU tenured or tenure-track faculty members outside your department or program may chair the defense. This includes faculty emeriti and Law School faculty. An endeavor should be made to obtain a chair that has an affinity to your field.

Role of the Oral Examination Chair

The chair of the oral examination presides over the oral defense and ensures that regulations and declared policies of the Graduate School, Graduate Certification Office and your department are followed. Each department may conduct the oral examination in a manner that it considers to be effective.

In addition to participating in the questioning of the candidate and voting, the

responsibilities of the chair include advising the committee of general examination and questioning procedures. The chair secures a vote of the committee and submits a written report of the committee disposition and recommendations to the Dean of the Graduate School. The chair may offer suggestions for the improvement of the examination procedure or even offer criticism, but it is expected that the chair will submit a written report to the Dean of the Graduate School giving the chair's judgment as to the quality of the examination and any suggestions for improvement of procedures.

This report should appear on department letterhead and is referred to as the Report of Examination.

The Examination

Dissertation oral examinations, but not committee voting, are open to all members of the University community. Times and places of examinations are publicly announced, and attendance and participation of graduate students and faculty are encouraged. The notice appears at the Graduate Certification Office and in the *Syracuse Record*. The defense usually lasts approximately two hours.

The voting reflects the committee's judgment as to the quality and originality of the research, the quality of the dissertation, and the performance of the candidate at the examination. The relative importances of these areas vary across disciplines. Check with your department for clarification on this.

It is recognized that there are circumstances that might cause the absence of a committee member. ***No examination will be conducted unless at least five committee members, including the chair of the defense and dissertation advisor, are present.*** The Graduate Certification Office must be informed of any committee members who are unable to attend the defense. Committee members who cannot attend the oral examination must submit questions and comments in writing to the chair of the oral examination prior to the defense. Committee substitutions occurring after the oral examination has been scheduled must be requested on a Petition to Faculty form approved by the department and then by the Graduate Certification Office.

The voting on the acceptability of the oral examination is done in executive session of the committee. A majority of the committee must vote favorably for the candidate to pass the examination. All members of the committee, including the chair of the oral examination, vote equally. The chair reports the result of the vote, with signatures of approval, to the Dean of the Graduate School, Ben Ware, together with appropriate comments

Members of the committee may make their approval conditional upon certain changes in the dissertation being made by the candidate. The report of the examining committee indicates one of the following results:

- Pass
- Pass with minor revisions (generally editorial)
- Pass with major revisions (substantive)
- Not Pass

For editorial changes, the committee may refer final approval of the dissertation

to your dissertation advisor. If approval hinges upon making substantive changes, committee members may withhold their signatures of approval until the required changes have been made. In cases where substantive revisions are required, the chair and the advisor, on behalf of the committee, should ensure that revisions are successfully completed. At the discretion of the committee, other members of the committee may participate in the oversight of the revisions as well. When all revisions have been made the advisor will sign and date the candidate's title page and submit it to the Graduate Certification Office. This documents determines the students certification.

The chair of the oral examination must report the disposition of the oral examination to the Dean of the Graduate School, Ben Ware. When approved by the committee, each member records this by signing the *Committee Approval Page*. It is the responsibility of the oral *chair* to return the *Committee Approval Page* to the Dean of the Graduate School/ Graduate Certification Office.

Under no circumstances should the signature page be given to the student for submittal to the Graduate Certification Office.

In addition, the chair may submit a confidential report to the dean that reflects the opinions of the chair and the committee regarding the dissertation and oral examination. The report is expected to be direct and candid. If further action is necessary, the chair of the oral examination and the Dean of the Graduate School or the Dean's representative should meet and agree on a course of action. The candidate is entitled to an explanation from the committee concerning the disposition of the defense. If the candidate does not pass the examination, he or she may be invited to schedule a subsequent examination.

Sign and Date Title Page

After the dissertation has been corrected and approved by the candidate's committee as ready for final submission to the Graduate School/ Graduate Certification Office and for publication to ProQuest UMI publishing Co., the candidate's advisor should sign and date the title page of the dissertation.

Submitting Dissertation and Materials

One copy of the dissertation on CD should be submitted to the Graduate Certification Office with other required paper documents; e.g. signed and dated title page, ProQuest publishing agreement with copy of title page and abstract attached, the original signed title page, and a Survey of Earned Doctorates

III Final Steps

12 Filing Final Theses and Dissertations

Dissertation and Thesis Submittal

The final version of the thesis/dissertation, including all required revisions, must be completed and approved by the suggested deadline for the specific graduation date. Syracuse University has four annual degree granting dates (May, June, August, and December). Check the Graduate Certification Office for posted annual graduation *Dates and Deadlines*. After the oral examination is passed one final copy of your dissertation on CD in PDF format only (*doctoral*) and two final copies on paper (*master's*) with title pages signed and dated by the thesis advisor, must be deposited at the Graduate Certification Office. ***Please note that signatures in felt-tip pens are not acceptable.***

Dissertation Submittal

Doctoral students must submit one final copy of the dissertation on CD in PDF format with a signed and dated title page on paper. ***Doctoral students must provide one extra paper copy of the abstract and title page stapled to the publishing contract.*** A dissertation submittal form should be filled out at the Graduate Certification Office at the time of the dissertation is submitted.

Master's Theses Submittal

Master's students must submit two unbound boxed copies of their theses to the Graduate Certification Office. Included in there theses should be two signed title pages. A thesis submittal form should be filled out at the Graduate Certification Office at the time of the the thesis is presented.

ALL FINAL THESES AND DISSERTATIONS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE CERTIFICATION OFFICE. PAPER THESES MUST BE SUBMITTED UNBOUND AND IN A BOX OF APPROPRIATE SIZE TO ACCOMMODATE THE DOCUMENT AND PROTECT IT DURING MAILING.

13 Microfilming Agreement/Contract (Doctoral Students)

Microfilming

Syracuse University requires the doctoral dissertations be microfilmed. All doctoral candidates must complete and file a University Microfilms International (ProQuest UMI) microfilming publishing agreement with the Graduate School/ Graduate Certification Office. This grants UMI the right to reproduce and distribute your manuscript and abstract.

Publication

There are now four options available for publishing your dissertation. The Graduate School, Graduate Certification Office and UMI suggest the Traditional Publishing Options (page 3) The Graduate School and Graduate Certification Office pay the publishing fee incurred by the ProQuest UMI company. However, if you decide to opt for the Open Access options (page 3) than

you must pay the additional \$95.00 publishing fee.

Bound Copies

If you wish to place an order with UMI to obtain the pre-publication discount for bound copies of your dissertation, you may do so on page 6 of your agreement. There you must provide a credit card number, enclose a separate cashier's check, certified check or money order payable to Proquest Company and we will forward this to UMI with your order form. **UMI does not accept person checks.**

Copyright

Copyrighting is optional. Discuss this with your advisor. After you have done this, make sure have completed this section (page 5) of your UMI Agreement Form. Please be aware that the Graduate School and Graduate Certification Office pay the \$65.00 copyright fee for the student.

Please note that an extra copy of the abstract and title page must be submitted to the Graduate Certification Office attached to the University Microfilming Agreement.

Summary

You should go over pages 3-6 in your publishing agreement from ProQuest UMI. These four pages should be completed and signed. The Graduate School Pays for all copyright and traditional publishing fees. The only fees that the student will incur is for bound copies of the dissertation and fees for Open Access Publication.

14 The Microfilming Process (Doctoral Students)

The Graduate Certification Office merges your committee approval page and signed title page into your dissertation on CD-ROM. We then forward the dissertation to UMI to be microfilmed. Your microfilmed dissertation will be retained permanently in the Syracuse University Library. It is stored in University Archives on the sixth floor of Bird Library. This process may take up to eight months. One positive microfilm copy of your dissertation and abstract is forwarded to the Library of Congress and the microfilm negative is maintained in the vault of UMI, Ann Arbor, MI.

15 Survey of Earned Doctorates (Doctoral Students)

This applies to doctoral candidates only. When you submit your final dissertation to the Graduate Certification Office you should also submit the *Survey of Earned Doctorates*. This information is held in strict confidence and is extremely important for the national profile of doctoral degree recipient database. We appreciate you taking the time to complete and submit this survey to The Graduate Certification Office Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244 when you submit your final dissertation or anytime following your defense.

IV Additional Information

16 Graduate Prizes

Since 1983, the Graduate Prize Program has annually recognized students who best exemplify scholarship and research at the graduate level. Each year, a faculty committee selects three to four doctoral prize recipients. Check with your department to determine if your college participates in this program. To qualify, you must be nominated by your college dean and have submitted a final, approved dissertation to the Graduate Certification Office by a deadline to be specified by the Graduate Certification Office.

Students who submit dissertations after this date will be considered for the following year's prize. The Doctoral Prize Recipients are honored each year at the Doctoral Dinner.

The individual colleges and schools select Master's graduate prize recipients. Master's students should check directly with their academic unit for procedures. All recipients receive a cash award and a certificate of distinction.

17 The Doctoral Dinner (Doctoral Students)

The Doctoral Dinner has been a tradition at Syracuse University since 1982. This formal event, presided over by the Dean of the Graduate School Ben Ware, incorporates the traditional hooding ceremony, the roots of which can be traced back to Middle Ages. The dinner and festivities are usually held in Goldstein Auditorium on the Friday preceding May commencement. Invitations are extended to all students who have received a doctoral degree in the previous June, August, December, or current May. Candidates are invited to bring two guests and their academic advisor to participate in this occasion.

18 Commencement

Commencement takes place only once per year, during May. All master's students who have received degrees the preceding December, or who expect to receive degrees the current May or following June or August may participate in the Syracuse University Commencement. Only doctoral students, who have received degrees during the preceding June, August, December, or the current May, can participate in Commencement. To participate in Commencement, a doctoral candidate must have completed all degree requirements by the May deadline including the submission of the final dissertation to the Graduate Certification Office / Graduate School. The Graduate School may petition the Vice Chancellor for an exception to this policy under extenuating circumstances. To receive commencement information in May, you must enter your Diploma Request information onto My Slice by the deadlines indicated on the published "Graduate Dates and Deadlines." This deadline also applies to June and August Master's graduates. If you have any questions about Commencement Mailings please contact Special Events at 315-443-4631.

V Checklist & Appendix

- Enter you diploma request information on My Slice for the date you expect to graduate;
- File one Program of Study with the Graduate Certification Office;
- Consult Advisor about defending your thesis/dissertation;
- Select Committee;
- Schedule Defense;
- Retrieve signatures of your Department Chair and Advisor on your Request for Exam;
- File Request for Examination three full weeks prior to the defense with the Graduate Certification Office;
- Distribute Theses/Dissertations to committee members at least two weeks prior to defense;
- Attend your scheduled Defense;
- Complete revisions as directed by your defense Committee *(If required)*;
- Obtain Signature of Advisor and date on Title Page(s);
- Masters**—Submit two final paper documents to the Graduate Certification Office. One thesis on archival paper and one on regular copy paper;
- Doctoral**—Submit one dissertation in *one file* on CD-ROM in *PDF format only* to the Graduate Certification Office ***along with:***
 - Your advisor has signed and dated your original title page;
 - One (1) additional copy the title page and a copy of your abstract stapled to the UMI publishing agreement;
 - Completed *ProQuest UMI Microfilming Agreement*. *There are four (4) pages that need to be Publishing Agreement ;*
 - Payment for any bound copies that you have ordered;
 - Payment for Open Access Publishing a \$95.00 fee;
 - Completed *Survey of Earned Doctorates*

A Request for Examination must be submitted to the Graduate Certification Office located at 107 Steele Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244 at least three full weeks prior to the defense.

Graduate Certification Office
Syracuse University
315-443-2422

REQUEST FOR EXAMINATION

Author: _____ SUID: _____ Phone _____

Address: _____ E-Mail _____
[indicated address defense notices should be mailed to] [Current Email Address]

Degree: _____ Program of Study: _____

Thesis/Dissertation Title: _____

The undersigned hereby recommended that the Graduate Certification Office approve the following committee to examine the candidate's thesis/dissertation and to conduct the final oral examination.

Advisor (please print or type clearly)

Signature and date

Academic unit chair (please print or type clearly)

Signature and date

We approve and recommend the following committee (with applicable campus/email addresses) to conduct the final oral examination:

Member (please print or type clearly)

Email Address

Member (please print or type clearly)

Email Address

Member (please print or type clearly)

Email Address

Member (please print or type clearly)

Email Address

Advisor (please print or type clearly)

Email Address

Oral Examination Chair (please print or type clearly) Email and Campus Address

Examination Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Examination Place: _____

• Please submit a copy of your program of study and any other required clearance documents with your request for exam; e.g. transcript of previous universities, transcripts for transfer credits.

For additional information contact:

**PLEASE CONTACT THE GRADUATE ENTROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
CENTER @ 107 STEELE HALL, SYRACUSE, NY 13244 315-443-2422**

**Cathleen Kennedy
Graduate Recorder
Graduate Certification Office
107 Steele Hall, Syracuse New York 13244
Graduate Degree Certification**