

## DOCTORAL DEGREE GUIDELINES FOR THE FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION

### Scheduling and Announcement

The final oral examination is required of all candidates for doctoral degrees. Scheduling must be:

- at least four months after the student has been admitted to candidacy
- at a suitable time after the dissertation (not necessarily the final version) has been read by the advisory committee.

The examination is a formal public affair and as such, the examination:

- must be held during weekday business hours, not during academic break periods.
- must begin no later than 4:30 p.m. in the afternoon.
- must be held in a university room so it can be attended by faculty and students.

For the examination, the student is required to:

- submit the signed Notification Form and the Defense Abstract **no later than three weeks** before the date of the examination
- provide a copy of the dissertation to the dean's representative **at least a week** before the defense.

### Graduate Dean's Representative

- must be a member of the Graduate Faculty appointed by the Graduate School
- observes and reports on the conduct of the final examination
- has access to the dissertation and may participate in questioning the candidate.
- is chosen from an area related to the student's program.

### Conduct of the Examination

1. The chairperson of the advisory committee convenes the examination and introduces the candidate, his/her background, and indicates the general format of the proceedings to follow, (departmental procedures may vary).
2. The candidate gives an overview of his/her study for the benefit of those who have not read the dissertation (15 to 30 minutes).
3. The candidate (guided by the chairperson) is questioned by members of the committee, the representative, and other audience members.
4. A copy of the dissertation (not necessarily in final form) must be available for reference during the examination.
5. Sufficient opportunity is given for discussion then the non-doctoral committee members are excused
6. The committee and the representative ask further, more detailed, questions about both the dissertation and its research procedures.
7. The candidate is then dismissed from the room while the committee comes to a decision concerning the results of the examination.
8. The chairperson informs the candidate of the outcome and forwards a short report of the examination to the Dissertation Supervisor for the record.

### Committee Approval

All members of the dissertation committee must approve and sign the document before it is submitted to the Graduate School for the approval of the Graduate Dean.

The Dissertation Supervisor and the Dean's representative should be notified as soon as possible if a doctoral examination must be postponed.

If a majority of the members of a student's examining committee vote to pass the student's examination, but there is a dissenting vote:

1. The members may all agree on appropriate changes in the final form of the dissertation that resolve the objections of the dissenting member.
2. The dissenting member may accept the majority vote as a committee decision and agree to sign the dissertation.
3. A member voting against approval, and refusing to sign the dissertation as a matter of principle, may resign from the committee, in which case another member may be appointed as a replacement (if needed to make the minimum of three), and the dissertation may be approved. The chairperson must notify the Graduate Dean by letter of the replacement member, who must be approved by the Dean.
4. The dissenting member may refuse to sign the dissertation and not be willing to resign. In such a case, the matter should be referred to the Graduate School.

It is stressed that occasions when committee members vote against approval rarely occur when all of the committee members work closely with the student throughout the preparation of his or her dissertation.