



The University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Graduate Health Sciences College Policies

Document Name: Oral Defense
Effective Date: January 22, 2008
Document Status: Approved

Purpose

The granting of M.S. and Ph.D. degrees is symbolic of the intellectual atmosphere of a university, and, as such, the events associated with their defense are of particular importance to our College and University. This policy defines the requirement for an oral defense of the student's research as partial completion of degree requirements.

Policy Details

All oral thesis, project, and dissertation defenses will either take place on the campus of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center or be conducted electronically by UTHSC-accessible means; in the latter case, the means of delivery must have audio and video interactive capability and must follow the [guidelines](#). The College must be notified at least 2 weeks prior to an oral defense of the location, date and time, title, and url with access instructions, if applicable, so that a public announcement may be made. The examination will be conducted by the student's Faculty Committee.

The Program Director or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs can assist in locating an appropriate space for the oral defense. Videoconferencing technology will be provided on the UTHSC campus if requested.

Master's degree

Prior to the examination, the Program Chair must certify to the Dean that all program requirements have been met. In special cases, a written exam may be substituted for the oral exam. In the case of failure, the candidate may not appear for reexamination until at least one semester has elapsed and permission is granted by the Faculty Committee. The result of the second examination is final.



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Ph.D. degree

A final examination (oral or oral and written) on the student's dissertation special field and other fields that the student's Faculty Committee may specify will be administered after all course requirements have been completed and the student has been certified by the Program Chair that requirements have been met. It is the student's responsibility to see that an essentially complete copy of the dissertation in a form approved by the Research Advisor is distributed to the Faculty Committee for their examination and comments at least four weeks before the examination. An ostensibly final copy of the dissertation must be submitted to the committee at least two weeks before the final examination. Programs may designate another committee member to serve as Chair of the Final Examination.

Policy Scope

Applies to all Master's and Doctoral students.

Related Policies

Research and Thesis - Masters

Research and Dissertation - Doctor of Philosophy

Definitions

Associate Dean for Student Affairs. The College administrator responsible for student affairs, or their designee.

Program Director. The listed director of the student's academic program.



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Document History

Approved by Graduate Studies Council November 8, 2004.

Administratively revised May 14, 2013 to include the videoconferencing option.

Revised by Graduate Studies Council November 24, 2015, to require the dissertation to be submitted to the faculty committee two weeks prior to the oral defense.

Revised by Graduate Studies Council January 26, 2016 to allow electronic dissemination of oral defense through UTHSC-accessible interactive means.