

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY**

**PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED FOR DEFENSE  
OF  
M.S. THESIS AND PH.D. DISSERTATION**

**FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION OF**

*(Student's Name Here)*

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1. The defense will be announced publicly.
2. The thesis/dissertation examining committee (which includes readers for the Ph.D. defense) will be chaired by the student's committee chair.
3. The major advisor will welcome the candidate and guests, thank the committee and readers and introduce the candidate. **(All committee members and reader must be in attendance or be rescheduled.)**
4. The candidate will make a 40-45 minute presentation of the thesis/dissertation research, generally with no interruptions. The presentation will be in the standard format of a scientific research seminar utilizing appropriate visual aids.
5. Following the presentation, the major advisor will open the floor to questions from the general audience. S/he also will moderate the question/answer session to allow for as many questions as are feasible, and to prevent excessive follow-up on questions for which the candidate is unable to provide a satisfactory answer. Members of the examining committee may take note of such questions and reopen discussion and reopen discussion during the committee's rounds of questioning if the subject is deemed essential to the defense.

This public presentation and question/answer session should last no more than 1-hour. The moderator will end the questions at the appropriate time and thank the candidate for the presentation (applause). The moderator will announce that the general session is adjourned, and that the committee will begin its examination of the candidate after a short (10-15 minutes) break.

6. If the presentation has been held in a large venue, the candidate and committee may adjourn to a pre-designated conference room for the remainder of the proceedings. The candidate may be seated at the table along with the committee members, but should be prepared to move to the board if illustration is required to answer particular questions.
7. **It is the responsibility of the examining committee, including reader, to prepare several questions in advance.** The questions should relate to the thesis/dissertation to generate discussion from the candidate to defend statements, graphs, tables, statistics, techniques used, and conclusions. The committee chair will moderate the session. After 10-minutes or so, the questioning will be moved to the next committee member. Generally, two or three rounds of questioning will take place. The candidate has the right at any time to seek clarification of any question and will be aided by the committee chair to clarify the question if necessary. This session should last no more than 60-minutes for a Masters Candidate and no longer than 90-minutes for a "PhD Candidate".

8. The candidate is permitted a reasonable time to gather his/her thoughts before answering questions. The candidate is permitted at any time to leave the room to attend to personal functions.
9. Following consensus that questioning by the committee is complete, the candidate will be asked to leave the room.
10. The closed committee meeting will be called to order by the committee chair. The candidate's major advisor will provide the committee with the candidate's background and course of study and attest to the completion of all requirements.
11. The committee chair will conduct a discussion of the candidate's performance. Each committee member and reader should discuss the performance and the thesis/dissertation itself in the following terms:

- A. **Pass (Includes Minor Revisions)**
- B. **Pass (Pending Major Revisions)**
- C. **Fail**

A formal vote will be taken and a plurality will be taken as to the consensus of the committee.

In the case of *minor revisions*, the candidate's major advisor will assume responsibility for seeing that the revisions are in place before the final thesis/dissertation is submitted electronically to The Graduate School.

In case of *major revisions*, the committee chair with the assistance of The Graduate School will appoint a committee of at least two to supervise the revisions and a deadline for completion of the revisions will be established.

12. In the case of the PhD Degree, if there is a unanimous consensus of the advisory committee for a "Pass with Distinction", the dean will indicate in the student's record that the student passed with distinction. A ballot will be sent separately to advisory committee members (reader is not included) for such a vote. ***Voting for distinction should be on entire performance.***
13. The candidate will be invited into the room by the committee chair and informed of the consensus of the examining committee.
14. The Graduate School will circulate these procedures to all committee persons.