Dissertation Defense Instructions

General

- Be sure that you have officially set up your Reading Committee through the Graduate Program Advisor (GPA) (Lani Phillips).
- Inform the GPA of the exact title of your dissertation for the Final Exam request form. Once this form is turned in to the Graduate School, your dissertation title cannot change. At the same time inform the GPA of how you would like your name to appear on your degree.
- Print or save a copy of the Doctoral Student Graduation Checklist.

Scheduling the Final Exam (Dissertation Defense)

- Select a week in which you would like the defense to be held. Note: the defense may not be held during the University's official Exams Week. Contact each of the readers and the Graduate School Representative about his/her schedule for that week. A faculty member's class schedule alone is not always an accurate indication of his/her weekly schedule: s/he will also have office hours and may have departmental or other meetings to take into consideration.
- Members of the Supervisory Committee who are not on the Reading Committee are invited to attend the dissertation defense, but their attendance is optional. Normally, these faculty are not consulted in scheduling the day and time of the Final Exam unless they have indicated to you that they want to attend the defense.
- All members of the Supervisory Committee are required to sign the Final Exam Request Form submitted to the Graduate School.
- When you have your committee members' schedules, select a day and time convenient for all. The Final Exam requires an uninterrupted two-hour block of time. Final Exams may be held between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Faculty members often like to have a lunch hour and sometimes prefer not to have the defense scheduled immediately before or after a class, especially if the examination room is located some distance from where they teach. The Slavic Department's faculty meetings are held periodically, on a particular week-day afternoon that may vary from quarter to quarter, so this time may not be feasible for the week you have in mind. Contact the Slavic Department to check whether any meetings are scheduled for the day you are considering.
- Inform the GPA of the day and time chosen for the defense before it is to be held (preferably 2-3 weeks ahead of time). Obtain emails from committee members and GSR acknowledging that they agree to hold the exam on the specified day at the specified time.
- Please forward to the GPA any email messages from faculty in which they specifically agree to scheduling the Final Exam on the day and time selected. Email messages and faxes from individual committee members are acceptable to the Graduate School in lieu of signatures on the Final Exam Request Form only if they clearly agree to hold the exam on the selected day and time.
- Schedule your final exam at the Graduate School student portal MyGrad.
- Submit a complete draft of the dissertation to your readers well in advance of scheduling your Defense. This will give them time to comment on the draft and give you time to make any changes to the dissertation before the defense. You should have kept in touch with the Graduate School Representative (GSR) since the General Examination; ask the GSR whether s/he wants to read the entire dissertation or any part of it. YOUR READING COMMITTEE MUST HAVE READ AND APPROVED THE DRAFT OF THE DISSERTATION BEFORE YOU CAN SCHEDULE THE FINAL EXAM. YOU MUST INFORM THE GPA OF THE DAY AND TIME OF THE FINAL EXAM IN ADVANCE. AT THE SAME TIME YOU WILL PROVIDE THE GPA WITH THE TITLE OF YOUR DISSERTATION. This will give the GPA time to fill out the Final Examination Request Form and to get the form signed by all members of the student's Supervisory Committee. The GPA must submit this form to the Graduate School before the defense is scheduled. Therefore, you should begin scheduling your defense as soon as possible to give yourself adequate time to contact your readers and the GSR to find a day and time convenient for all.
- According to Graduate School policy, any member of the University of Washington's graduate faculty may attend a Final Examination, but it is not open to the general public. If you have friends or family who wish to attend your defense, they must...
have your permission as well as the permission of the Chair of the Supervisory Committee in advance of the Final Exam. Please be advised that not all Chairs allow guests to attend the Final Exam.

- CONTACT THE GPA IMMEDIATELY IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS SCHEDULING YOUR FINAL EXAM

Preparing for the Defense

- Be sure to read carefully the information available at the Graduate School’s website about submitting a thesis/dissertation.

- Supervisory Committee Chairs often like to have the student give a 15-20 minute presentation about the dissertation as a way to begin the Final Exam. Be prepared to talk about how you chose your dissertation topic, the nature of your research, significant findings, how your dissertation fits into the literature of the field, etc.

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