

Thesis/Dissertation Defense Checklist

Review the [Graduation Deadlines](#)

Submit a [Program of Study](#) by the appropriate graduation term deadline.

Graduate School Clearance

The Graduate School will confirm that all Syracuse University Graduate School and departmental rules have been followed (i.e. time limits, number of credits, GPA's etc.) and all degree requirements have been met before the notice of your defense is sent out. The following documents must be on file and approved by the Graduate School for a student to be cleared for their defense:

1. *Program of Study*: The final, accurate copy with appropriate signatures.
2. *Transcripts*: Documentation for all post-secondary coursework. This includes courses being used for transfer credit. Degree-bearing transcripts are required for all prior degrees received. Please check with your program coordinator to confirm your transcripts are recorded (in MySlice).
3. *Coursework*: All coursework must be registered for and have grades posted before the defense takes place.
4. *Additional Degree Requirements*: The Graduate School will 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(s) and ABD requirements (if applicable).

File a Diploma Request

Graduating students notify the University that they intend to graduate through the File Diploma Request process on [MySlice](#).

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.

Form your Defense Committee

Master's students (and Doctoral of Professional Studies (DPS)) –

Your defense committee consists of **four** voting members (including your advisor and oral defense chair). The chair of the oral examination presides over the exam and ensures that the regulations and declared policies of the Graduate School and your department are followed.

Doctoral students (excluding DPS)-

Your defense committee consists of **six** voting members (including your advisor and oral defense chair). The chair of the oral examination presides over the exam and ensures that the regulations and declared policies of the Graduate School and your department are followed. One external member can be included, based on subject-matter expertise; however, this committee member cannot be a personal acquaintance. You must petition to include more than one external committee member.

Submit a Request for Exam

A request form exam must be submitted **at least three weeks prior** to the proposed defense date. The [Request for Examination \(ROE\) form](#) is submitted electronically. Once you have successfully submitted this form you will receive a confirmation email with a pdf document of your ROE form. You must print the pdf and obtain the signatures of your advisor and academic unit chair. The signed ROE form must be submitted to the Graduate School in 207 Bowne Hall. Your request will not be processed until the signed form is received. The signed form provides formal notification to the Graduate School that your department supports your request to proceed with your defense.

Formal Defense Notification

Once a student is cleared to defend their thesis/dissertation, the Graduate School will send email confirmation to all committee members that the defense will proceed as requested. The email will include a committee approval page that lists the members of your oral examination as an attachment. This document is sent to the oral chair of your examination for signatures at the conclusion of your defense.

Doctoral defenses notices are posted on the Syracuse University Calendar at <http://www.syr.edu/news>

Distribute your Thesis/Dissertation

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

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. Please check with your advisor about any defense requirements the department may have. Your defense will take place at the time, place and on the date requested. At the conclusion of your defense you will be informed of the status of your defense. You will proceed from there. Good luck!