

Doctoral Degree Policies

Examinations

A **preliminary examination** consists of a written portion and an oral portion. Passing the preliminary examination allows the student to be formally admitted to candidacy for the doctoral degree.

- The Plan of Study must be approved at least 30 calendar days prior to scheduling the oral portion.
- A student may not attempt the final defense in the same semester in which they complete the preliminary examination.

The **final defense** is an oral examination in which the author of the dissertation demonstrates to the supervisory committee a satisfactory command of both the focus area of their project and the broader field.

Notification and Report

The Notification of Scheduled Preliminary Examination form is required for the oral portion of the preliminary examination. The Notification of Scheduled Final Defense is required for the oral final defense. This form must be submitted to the Graduate College at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the examination date.

- A *successful* submission requires all signatures, not only that the graduate student has initiated the form.
- If the form is not filed seven (7) calendar days prior, it will not be approved by the Graduate College.
- An oral preliminary examination or final defense takes place without an approved notification form is considered void. A new examination or defense date must be scheduled and the Notification of Scheduled Examination (<https://powerforms.docusign.net/0abb6387-c124-45e6-bc80-337a7635ffb0/?env=na3&acct=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655-d64cf8f1c2d7&accountId=1ceb9a57-b6a3-4df7-b655-d64cf8f1c2d7>) filed seven days prior to the new date.

Pre-defense Document Distribution (Final Defense only)

The dissertation work must be distributed to the committee members for review at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the defense.

- If this seven-day stipulation cannot be met, the student's committee holds the right to cancel the defense. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Graduate College if their defense does not take place as scheduled and to complete a new Notification of Scheduled Examination.

Examination Attendee Policy

- Due to the role of the GSR, they are required to attend each examination.
- If another supervisory committee member cannot participate in an examination, the defense may be held; however, their absence is considered a "Disapproval" of the student's examination.
 - If more than one supervisory committee member cannot participate in an examination, the defense must be rescheduled.
- It is the student's responsibility to notify the Graduate College if their examination does not take place as scheduled and to complete a new notification form.

Outcomes

It is the student's responsibility to initiate the appropriate report (https://www.ndsu.edu/gradschool/current_students/forms/#~:text=Examination%20and%20Degree%20Completion), ensure it is signed by all committee members, and submit it to the Graduate College within 14 calendar days following the defense.

- A *successful* submission requires all signatures, not only that the graduate student has initiated the form.
- If the completed form is not submitted within 14 calendar days following the examination, the examination is considered void and must be rescheduled.

The student must pass each examination as part of earning the doctoral degree.

- A negative vote by two or more members of the student's committee will signify failure of the defense.
- The student may repeat the examination only upon permission from a majority of the supervisory committee.
 - The committee will set a date at least one month after the failed examination and a new Notification of Scheduled Examination must be submitted 14 calendar days prior to the defense date. Exceptions to this time limit will be considered by the graduate dean upon presentation of written justification from the chair of the committee in consultation with the committee.
- Should the examination be failed twice, the student cannot continue in their graduate program.
 - The student will not be given a third examination except by recommendation of the examining committee, program coordinator, and special approval of the Dean of the Graduate College following consultation with the Graduate Council.

Filing the Dissertation

After the final defense, the student incorporates all revisions into the dissertation as required by the supervisory committee. Once a student makes the corrections, submit the following items to the Graduate College:

- Signed approval page
- IRB/IACUC/IBC Compliance Notification
- Dissertation
- Dissertation processing fee

The student will have one (1) year from the date of the final defense to complete the Graduate College dissertation format review process and all other degree requirements. Should the dissertation not receive final approval or any other degree requirements not be completed within this time limit, the student must repeat the final defense. If a period of time two (2) years or greater lapses before the final copies are submitted, the student must reapply to the Graduate College, retake the final defense, and register for a minimum of two (2) credits.

A degree posts at the end of the semester in which the dissertation is approved and other degree requirements are completed.