

School of Industrial Engineering and Management

Dissertation and Final Defense

Dissertation Draft Submission

With the Advisory Committee Chair's (and Advisor's, if different) approval, the dissertation copies should be provided to all Advisory Committee members at least two full weeks prior to the defense day. Holidays and breaks when the University is closed should not be counted in this two-week minimum requirement. Ideally, Advisory Committee members should inform the Advisory Committee Chair (and Advisor, if different) at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled defense time if they find the document indefensible in its current state. An explanation should be provided about the concerns so that a substantive discussion can occur and appropriate measures can be taken.

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense should be publicized at least one week prior to the event. The defense should take place during the standard semesters and sessions (Fall, Spring and Summer). Given Advisory Committee members' extensive obligations, the defense should be scheduled well in advance to ensure Advisory Committee members will be available and present.

As part of the final oral defense, the student will give a presentation summarizing the dissertation results in a public presentation (open to all interested faculty and students) followed by an oral examination with the Advisory Committee in a closed session. After successful completion of the dissertation defense, the student prepares the dissertation document for submission to the graduate college.

Defense Scheduling

Given the nature of faculty work, it is best to obtain Advisory Committee Members' general availability at the beginning of the term in which the defense will take place. Defenses should be scheduled in such a manner to ensure enough time is allowed for the presentation and examination. The length of the questioning generally does not go beyond two to three hours. If it does extend beyond two hours, a break is expected. It would be highly unusual for the examination portion of the defense to last more than three hours or to extend into another day.

Advisory Committee Attendance

All required Advisory Committee members (Chair, Advisor, Expert Member(s) and Outside Member) and the graduate student are expected to be physically present at the same location for the dissertation defense. However, there may be scheduling challenges due to unexpected or unplanned travel. Technology, such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing, may be used for a physically absent Advisor or Expert Member(s); the student, Chair and Outside Member are expected to be physically present. In exceedingly rare cases where scheduling is particularly challenging, the Graduate College must approve alternative attendance formats. A change of Advisory Committee member may also be necessary for defenses where a member cannot be available in any format for an extended period of time. Submission of questions via another Advisory Committee member is not an acceptable way to participate in the final dissertation defense or other Advisory Committee activities.

Advisory Committee Members' Signatures

There are two aspects of the dissertation defense that require signatures – the oral defense and the written dissertation.

Oral Defense Outcomes: At the close of the defense, after the candidate has been excused, the members of the Advisory Committee should discuss the student's defense of the research associated with the dissertation. There are two possible outcomes of a dissertation defense: *Pass* – Student has satisfactorily

completed the final defense and *Fail* – Student has not satisfactorily completed the final defense. Each member of the Advisory Committee must sign under one of the above statements recommending either a satisfactory or unsatisfactory defense. To be considered a passing dissertation defense, the dissertation Advisor must vote in the affirmative and no more than one member of the Advisory Committee may cast a dissenting vote on the Oral Defense Results Form. The form must be signed and returned to the Graduate College immediately following the defense, irrespective of the outcome. If the oral defense is judged inadequate, a re-examination decision will be made by the Advisory Committee in accordance with Graduate College requirements. Only a single re-examination is permissible. The result of the dissertation defense does not indicate approval of the dissertation document, but only the oral defense of the student's work.

Dissertation Document Outcomes: Ideally, signatures may be obtained at the defense for the dissertation signatory pages. If extensive corrections are necessary, the Advisory Committee Chair can hold the signed forms until members have given their approval of the final document. This will prevent the difficulties of obtaining signatures at a later date. However, Advisory Committee members may choose to wait to sign the dissertation signature page until after the corrections are deemed satisfactory. To be considered an approved document, the dissertation Advisor must sign the dissertation signatory page and no more than one member of the Advisory Committee may decline to sign the signatory page. It is rare not to have all Advisory Committee members' signatures, indicating approval of the document.

Sometimes, scheduling challenges may make it difficult to obtain signatures. If another person is signing for an absent Advisory Committee member with his or her written permission and permission of the Advisory Committee Chair, the signature should include clear initials of the individual signing for the Advisory Committee Member.