

Thesis Defense Process

Here are some helpful guidelines for chairs/directors of thesis projects.

The chair should outline the main features of the meeting for everyone. Normally, the defense meeting takes this form:

- Chair: opening remarks; thanks to the readers, etc.
- Chair invites candidate to speak for about 15 minutes on the thesis.
- Candidates should explain how the project developed, what challenges they faced, what they feel other people (readers) can learn from the written study, and what they learned from the thesis process. Candidates should briefly discuss future plans for the text.
- Q &A: Committee members ask questions based on the presentation and on other elements of the project, including reactions to specific parts of the text, if appropriate. They may make evaluative comments.
- The chair asks the candidate to step outside the room for a few minutes.
 - a. The committee makes its decision (including awarding a grade);
 - b. If further revisions are needed, the committee should come to an agreement about whether the grade is conditional in some way.
 - c. If further corrections/edits are required, the committee should agree on the extent of those revisions and deadlines.
 - d. The committee should discuss further advice to give to the candidate.
- The chair invites the candidate to return. Congratulations are given (on a pass). The chair awards the grade or explaining any conditions for the awarding of a grade.
- Final advice and discussion. Discussion of future plans.
- Notes on how to prepare the manuscript for printing; getting signatures for the thesis approval page.
- The chair reports the grade and/or conditional grade to the MLS director in an email.