

MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Supervisory Committee Chairpersons
FR: Maria T. Allison, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
RE: **Procedures for Thesis/Practicum/Dissertation Oral Defenses**

With faculty and department support, oral defenses of theses and dissertations can be occasions for significant intellectual exchanges, for recognizing students' research accomplishments, and for providing opportunities for other students and members of the university community to observe students' research. Policies and guidelines established by the Graduate Council help facilitate the openness of oral defenses. These are provided below, for your information, with procedures listed to aid in meeting each policy or guideline.

Planning the thesis/dissertation oral defense - As oral defenses are public events and publicized throughout the university community, the Division of Graduate Studies is reluctant to change the date, time or place of a defense.

1. Thus, when planning a defense, the chair of the committee and the student should consult with all members of the graduate supervisory committee to clear the date and time.
2. In general, it is expected that oral defenses will be held on an ASU campus during regular business hours in order to facilitate student, faculty, and public accessibility. When there are sound educational reasons for holding a defense under different circumstances, please contact the Division of Graduate Studies for approval prior to scheduling the defense.
3. Please notify the Division of Graduate Studies immediately if there are any changes to the defense time or location.

Committee member absence and substitution policy - All members of a student's supervisory committee must attend the defense of a thesis or dissertation; if more than one member must be absent, the defense should be rescheduled.

1. If the chair of the committee cannot attend, one of the other committee members should be appointed to serve as a co-chair by submitting a *Graduate Supervisory Committee Change* form to the Division of Graduate Studies. This form is available at <http://www.asu.edu/graduate/forms/index.html>.
2. An absent member should be replaced either by providing a substitute (approved by the committee chair and head of academic unit) for the defense only, or by filing an official *Graduate Supervisory Committee Change* form available at <http://www.asu.edu/graduate/forms/index.html>.
3. The absent committee member should provide the substitute questions to be asked at the defense. **The substitute should sign the committee member's name, but add his/her initials to all relevant documents.**
4. If it is crucial for a committee member to participate via teleconferencing, the student must submit a *Petition to the Division of Graduate Studies*. These petitions will be reviewed by the Dean of the Division of Graduate Studies and are only approved on an exception basis. The petition form is available at <http://www.asu.edu/graduate/forms/index.html>.

Reporting the results of the defense – Within 10 working days after the defense, a copy of the *Report for Master's Thesis/Practicum Defense* or *Announcement and Report for Doctoral Dissertation Defense* must be submitted to the Division of Graduate Studies.

1. Mark the appropriate level of pass or fail and include a brief description of the corrections that need to be made, if necessary.
2. After the final results have been reported and signed by all committee members, the original form must be signed by the head of the academic unit.
3. Please have the signed form **hand-delivered** to the Division of Graduate Studies within 10 working days after the defense.
4. Graduate students must complete the revisions and present the finished document to the ASU Bookstore for binding by the submission deadline for the semester following their oral defense.

If you have any questions, please contact Student Academic Services in the Division of Graduate Studies at (480) 965-3521.