

Dissertation/Thesis Defense Preparation Checklist

Research and Writing

- ☐ Complete all research and data analysis.
- ☐ Write your dissertation/thesis following SGS style guidelines.
- ☐ **Meet regularly with your faculty advisor** to review progress and receive feedback.
- ☐ Share drafts with your committee early to allow time for feedback and revisions.
- ☐ Use citation management tools (e.g., Zotero, EndNote, Mendeley) to organize references.
- ☐ Proofread carefully or consider using a professional editing service.

Scheduling Your Defense

- ☐ Coordinate with your committee to confirm a defense date and time.
- ☐ Speak with the Seminar Coordinator at least one semester in advance to schedule your dissertation/thesis seminar if during the regular graduate seminar.
- ☐ If not part of the Friday Seminar Series:
 - ☐ Contact the Program Coordinator to reserve a room for your seminar presentation.
 - ☐ Ask to have a separate room reserved for your private committee defense.
- ☐ Distribute your dissertation/thesis to all committee members **at least two weeks before the defense**.
- ☐ Confirm any technology needs (e.g., projector, Zoom link, laptop adapters).

Defense Preparation

- ☐ Prepare and practice your seminar presentation multiple times, utilize labmates, roommates, friends, **and your faculty advisor** to assist in critique of your seminar.
- ☐ Review your dissertation/thesis thoroughly—be ready to explain your research rationale, methods, and findings.
- ☐ Anticipate and prepare for potential questions from your committee.
- ☐ Create clear, professional slides with visuals (graphs, tables, images) that are easy to read from the back of the room.
- ☐ Time your presentation to fit within the expected duration (typically 30–45 minutes).
- ☐ Bring required materials:
 - ☐ Printed dissertation/thesis copies (if requested)
 - ☐ Notepad for feedback
- ☐ Dress professionally and arrive early to test equipment.
- ☐ Prepare a brief summary of your research for non-specialist attendees.
- ☐ Practice answering questions calmly and concisely.
- ☐ Bring water and take a few deep breaths before starting.

Post-Defense Requirements

- ☐ Make all required revisions to your dissertation/thesis.

- ☐ Email a PDF of your revised dissertation/thesis to SGS for formatting review.
- ☐ Submit your final dissertation/thesis electronically via the SGS portal.
- ☐ Confirm that your advisor and committee have approved the final version.

Documentation and Forms

- ☐ Submit to SGS:
 - ☐ Completed candidacy form with all signatures (now on DocuSign)
 - ☐ One original title page with signatures (now on DocuSign)
 - ☐ Provide the final copy of your signed forms to the EAB Program Coordinator.

Graduation and Final Steps

- ☐ Submit the Graduate Diploma Application online via the Graduate Registrar.
- ☐ Review and complete all items on the SGS Graduation Submission Instructions.
- ☐ Confirm all deadlines and submission dates are met.
- ☐ Check your transcript to ensure all coursework and grades are posted.

Additional Tips

- ☐ Begin planning your defense **at least one semester in advance**.
- ☐ Attend other dissertation/thesis defenses to understand the format and expectations.
- ☐ Stay in **close communication with your advisor** throughout the process.
- ☐ Use a calendar or project management tool to track deadlines and tasks.
- ☐ Back up your dissertation/thesis and presentation files in multiple locations.
- ☐ **Take care of your well-being**—rest, eat well, and manage stress.
- ☐ **Celebrate** your progress—you're almost there!