

Steps for Completing a Thesis or Dissertation

1. **Form a committee.** Student with the Chair¹ and committee members complete the approval of committee form. The size of the committee may vary by program and degree. The form is approved by the department chair, academic dean, and College of Graduate and Professional Studies.
2. **Proposal.** The student works closely with the Chair and committee on the development of a research proposal. Once the project has been developed, the student prepares a full written proposal for a formal presentation (sometimes called a “defense”). The time and date of the defense is selected in consultation with the chairperson and committee. Student proposes a thesis or dissertation and the proposed research is approved, or not approved, by signature of the committee, department chairperson/program coordinator, academic dean, and College of Graduate and Professional Studies. The full proposal is not required to be submitted to the College of Graduate and Professional Studies—just the proposal approval form. If a student’s research project requires human/animal subject approval, the student is strongly encouraged to begin the IRB approval process immediately following approval. Once a student has proposed the thesis or dissertation, continuous enrollment is required (i.e., 699/799/899).
3. **Establish a Defense Date.** The student in consultation with the Chair and committee sets the time and location for a defense (also known as an oral examination). The student (or Chair) must notify the College of Graduate and Professional Studies one week prior to the event. The notification must include the time and place of the examination, together with the names of the student, the doctoral committee and chair or dissertation director, and the title of the dissertation. The contact for the College of Graduate and Professional Studies is the Student Service Associate for Graduation and/or Assistant Dean. Please visit the College of Graduate and Professional Studies website to locate the proper contact information (i.e., email).
4. **Defense & Approval of Defense.** The student defends the dissertation before the full committee, attending graduate faculty, and other attendees. The committee approves (i.e., signs the approval form), or does not approve, the defense and may request specific revisions. The student completes edits and submits to the Chair for approval. Once edits have been approved, the Chair of the committee signs the approval form and the final draft can be forwarded to the department chair/program coordinator, academic dean, and College of Graduate and Professional Studies. The full thesis or dissertation must be forwarded to the College of Graduate and Professional Studies for final review and approval.⁴ The Chair submits all final grades and the student arranges for all requirements for incomplete coursework to be fulfilled.
5. **Final Copy & Deadlines.** The student has primary responsibility for meeting all required submission deadlines. Critical dates are published on the College of Graduate and Professional Studies website [<http://www.indstate.edu/sogs>] prior to the beginning of each semester and on ISU’s global email.

¹The “Chair” is defined as the dissertation/thesis committee chair. The “Chair” is synonymous with the student’s “advisor”, “research director”, or “dissertation director” as the terminology may vary between programs.

²All forms are available on line at the College of Graduate and Professional Studies website [<http://www.indstate.edu/sogs>].

³Doctoral students can not propose a dissertation prior to being admitted to candidacy. Candidacy requires completion of preliminary examinations and specific course work required by the program.

⁴Instructions for submission of electronic theses and dissertations beginning in Spring 2010 will be available on the College of Graduate and Professional Studies website by July1, 2009.