



Record of Dissertation Defense

Instructions to Committee Chair and Moderator

1. Preliminary Procedures

- a. Once assembled, the committee chair (“chair”- this is normally the thesis advisor) should introduce the committee and the candidate.
- b. The chair should explain the purpose of the decisions to be made.
- c. The chair should introduce the candidate giving brief details of prior degrees, research experience, and other relevant personal and professional information.
- d. Next, the moderator should introduce him/herself and note his/her role. In a few words, the moderator should describe the open and closed sessions, note the candidate’s allotted presentation time and question and answer time for the public, and the conditions under which the candidate can be interrupted during the presentation. Normally, to allow for smooth progression of the defense presentation, interruptions are permitted for clarification purposes only. The examination should not exceed three (3) hours in duration and the formal presentation should not exceed one (1) hour in duration.
- e. The formal presentation will be open to guests and the public. After the formal presentation, the moderator will excuse all non-committee members from the proceedings. In addition, the UniT recording of the defense will be terminated at this point, since no recording is allowed for the closed session.

2. Dissertation Defense Procedures and Results

- a. After the formal presentation, the committee members should individually take turns in examining the candidate. ***It is the candidate’s responsibility to respond to the questions with a minimum of prompting from the committee or advisor.***
- b. Committee members will discuss and vote (see below) on the pass/fail status of (1) oral defense and (2) the written dissertation. The decision to pass a candidate in either category must be a unanimous vote. After the decisions have been made, the chair

should call the candidate back into the room to privately discuss the decision(s) with the committee.

- c. Signatures should be obtained on the Dissertation Defense Report Form (COE-PHD-09.2). If editing of the written dissertation is required of the candidate (which is normal) in the category *Acceptable with changes to be approved by all committee members*, committee members must withhold their signatures pending the required changes. If *Acceptable with changes to be approved by the advisor*, the members will sign to approve the written dissertation, while the chair withholds his/her signature pending final approval of the corrected dissertation.
 - d. In the event that the committee votes to fail the student on either or both the written dissertation and the oral defense, the committee is under no obligation to permit the candidate to repeat either portion of the defense (*Failure with retake*). A decision to allow another defense must be made by the committee and should be documented in writing to the student and to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research. Specific requirements should be clearly delineated.
 - e. A second opportunity to present a dissertation defense may occur no sooner than one month after the first attempt and no later than two semesters (including summer) after the first attempt. Failure to pass the second defense will result in the termination of the student's enrollment in the Doctoral Program.
3. After a successful defense, the student should work with his/her advisor to prepare the document for publication.