

# THESIS DEFENSE CHECKLIST

## Make Initial Arrangements

- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit a [Petition to Defend](#) to Dr. Olivia Martinez and arrange to meet with her in person. Once the Petition to Defend is approved, students may proceed with the dissertation defense process.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure that you have a first-author manuscript that has been submitted, is in press, or has been published.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule the orals at least two months prior to the anticipated date to accommodate the committee members' schedule. Inform the Program Administrator and Dr. Martinez of the date. You should plan on one hour for a public presentation, including time for questions from the audience, followed by 30-90 minutes of closed session with your committee, leading to a vote.
  - Reserve rooms for 2.5-3 hours
  - Clark Center: <https://biox.stanford.edu/about/building-services/room-scheduling>
  - Alway, CCSR, LKSC, or MSOB: <http://med.stanford.edu/irt/edtech/classrooms/features.html>
  - BMI: Contact a Program Administrator
  - Contact the Program Administrators if assistance is needed
  - If Stanford is enforcing restrictions for in-person gatherings to limit the spread of COVID-19, schedule your exam virtually via Zoom.

## Oral Examination Chair

Students should confirm the Orals Examination chair no later than three weeks prior to the defense date.

The role of the Oral Exam (Thesis Defense) chair is similar to that of the qualifying exam chair; s/he oversees the proceedings. The chair sets the tone and organization of the oral exam, i.e., order of questioning, timing of questioning, leads the discussion when student has left the room, provides ballots for a secret vote, signs the Oral Examination Form at the end of the meeting, and may write up a brief report for the program director and administrator stating that the student has passed. The chair is allowed to participate in the scientific discussion but is not required to do so.

Things to note when selecting your oral examination chair:

1. The responsibility of selecting a chairperson for your oral exam falls on the student, with advice from the mentor.
2. The orals chair cannot be someone who is already part of your committee.
3. The orals chair must be a member of the Academic Council; faculty with University Medical Line (UML) appointments cannot serve as Oral Exam chairs.
4. The Oral Exam chair cannot have a primary appointment in the same department as the thesis advisor/mentor(s). A courtesy appointment in that department is fine.
5. In the end, the orals committee will consist of: The mentor (or co-mentors), 3 Readers, and 1 Committee Chair..

**(No later than) Three Weeks Prior to Defense Day**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Send program administrators the following information:
  1. Defense Information: Date, Time, Location, and Title of the thesis (for publicity purposes).
  2. Flyer to be distributed and posted on the Immunology website
  3. Name of the oral examination chair
  4. Completed University Oral Examination Form (without signatures)  
<https://stanford.app.box.com/v/doc-orals>
  5. One-page abstract of the thesis
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send a reminder to all members of your committee and confirm that they will be present; Program Administrators will send the first announcement of your defense to Immunology List.

### **Two Weeks Prior to Defense Day**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Submit your complete thesis to the entire orals committee (including the chair). The student's thesis advisor should read and approve the thesis document before it is sent to the committee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Program Administrators will email all related documents to your oral examination chair that including your abstract, Oral Examination Form, voting ballots (done via Google Forms for virtual defenses), instructions on how to lead the defense/meeting, and what to do with the Oral Examination Form after the defense.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Practice presentation;
- \_\_\_\_\_ Only one slide (and 2-3 minutes of comments) should be included for acknowledgements
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check audiovisual setup for the defense room or for Zoom defense
- \_\_\_\_\_ Send email announcement of defense

### **One Week Prior to Defense Day**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Program Administrators will send the second announcement of your defense to Immunology List.

### **On Defense Day**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Orals committee chair brings the packet (with Orals Form) to the defense
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bring your (properly formatted) dissertation Signature Page so you can get the signature of all your committee members while they are in the same room. Refer to the Registrar's Office for the [Dissertation and Thesis Submission guidelines](#).

Due to COVID, the Registrar's Office created a new Reading Committee Page eForm. This new procedure should be used by PhD, JSD, DMA, and Engineer students who need to virtually gather signatures from each reading committee member, and will enable them to fully satisfy both the title page and reading committee signature page requirements. Students will need to provide documentation of an email to each individual reader, asking for approval of their signature page, and then upload the email approval from each reader to the eForm platform.

Before the eForm is submitted, students must first confirm the departmentally approved reading committee members are correctly listed in Item 2 "Confirm Reading Committee" as shown on the eDissertation/eThesis Center.

If the committee is not correctly listed, such as a missing committee member or a committee member that should be removed or simply no reading committee members are listed in Axess, students contact their department Student Services Officer to have the information updated before beginning the eForm process. Without successful completion of the eForm, students will not be able to clear Item 3, "Signature Page Submitted," as shown on the Axess eDissertation/eThesis Center pages.

- \_\_\_\_\_ All members of your committee must be physically or virtually present for the entire public portion, and the private portion, of your defense. If a committee member is not present, you will not be able to graduate and will need to reschedule your defense.

### **After Thesis Defense**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Have your orals chair sign the University Oral Examination Form and return the form and chair packet to the Program Administrators by the next business day. They will enter the Oral Examination Milestone as completed in [Axess](#).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Due to COVID, the Registrar's Office created a new Reading Committee Page eForm. This new procedure should be used by PhD, JSD, DMA, and Engineer students who need to virtually gather signatures from each reading committee member, and will enable them to fully satisfy both the title page and reading committee signature page requirements. Students will need to provide documentation of an email to each individual reader, asking for approval of their signature page, and then upload the email approval from each reader to the eForm platform.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finish thesis, obtain reading committee members' signatures, and submit to the Registrar. Instructions may be found on: <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/registrar/students/dissertation-thesis>
- \_\_\_\_\_ Apply to graduate (or for a Graduation Quarter) by the Registrar's deadline
- \_\_\_\_\_ Celebrate!

*Updated 05/16/2023*