

Graduate Handbook
Department of Engineering Education
University of Florida

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About the Department

Program Goal

Prepare our graduate students to become researchers, practitioners, future leaders, and agents of positive change in engineering education.

Policies and Procedures

Deadlines

Courses

Registration: Students must register for at least one course by the regular registration deadline, which is generally 1-3 days before classes start. Students who register after the deadline will be assessed a late fee as stipulated by the university

Drop/Add period: Students who registered for at least one course during the Registration period, may drop and add courses for no fee and without dropped courses appearing on their transcript. The drop/add period typically occurs during the first five days of classes during semesters and first two days during summers.

Drops and Withdrawals: Students may drop a single course or withdraw from the semester by the drop/withdrawal deadline. Either will result in a W appearing on the student's transcript for the respective course(s). Students will still be liable for paying all fees associated with dropped courses. The drop/withdrawal deadline typically occurs around the 14th week of the semester.

Drops and Withdrawals after Deadline: Students may submit a petition to the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering for drops and withdrawals after the deadline. Petitions are typically due by the last day of classes (before Reading Days). Please contact the EED graduate advisor or Graduate Coordinator for help on the necessary steps for this petition.

Admission to Candidacy

Qualifying Exam: The qualifying exam typically occurs in the semester after all required core EED coursework has been completed, but can be taken earlier or later as determined by the student and their faculty advisor.

Proposal: The proposal defense typically occurs in the semester after the qualifying exam is completed, but can be done later as determined by the student and their faculty advisor.

Graduate School deadline: Students must be admitted to candidacy no later than the mid-point of the semester prior to the semester of graduation.

Final Semester

Degree Application: You must apply for graduation through ONE.UF by the deadline. All Graduate School Electronic Thesis and Dissertation deadlines are listed at <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/editorial/deadlines>.

The Graduate School final semester checklist provides guidelines for applying for graduation and helps verify that all required information: <http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/media/graduate-school/pdf-files/graduation-checklist.pdf>.

Dissertation Initial Submission: You must submit the initial version of your dissertation by the deadline along with the Transmittal Letter signed by your committee chair. These documents are submitted through the Graduate Information Management Systems ([GIMS](#)). This initial version should be complete, although it may be revised after initial submission.

Dissertation Final Submission: You must complete your dissertation defense, make all final revisions to the dissertation, and upload the final dissertation to GIMS by the deadline. Note that the dissertation cannot be uploaded to GIMS until the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) form has been signed by all committee members and uploaded to GIMS. **It is strongly recommended that students make their final submission two weeks before the published deadline to ensure time for Graduate School review.**

Final Clearance (Approval): This is the last day that the Grad School can provide final approval and acceptance for graduation in the current semester.

Clear Prior (to the upcoming term): Clear Prior allows students to complete all degree requirements but graduate in the following semester, without having to register for classes in that following semester. Clear Prior students must have met all the deadlines listed above, except for Final Submission and/or Final Clearance. The Clear Prior deadline is the deadline for final approval and acceptance by the Graduate School. Students planning to Clear Prior should complete their final defense and submit their final dissertation at least 5 business days in advance of the published deadline.

[International Student Requirements](#)

F-1 international students must be registered full time (9 credits in fall and spring semesters, each) in order to fulfill registration requirements of their visa. In addition, international students may take a maximum of 3 credits of 100% online credits per semester.

F-1 international Students: please read the following pertaining to:

- [MAINTAINING F-1 STATUS](#)
- [REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS](#)
- [EMPLOYMENT or TRAINING](#)

International students have special requirements for EGS6949, Research to Practice Experience in Engineering Education. Please contact your international student advisor in the UFIC prior to engaging in any field experiences, training activities, employment, volunteering, etc. Field experiences/training activities may include and are not limited to: alternate work/study, internships, externships, shadowing, cooperative education, practicums, clerkships, clinicals, rotations, etc., whether required or optional, paid or unpaid/volunteer, part-time or full-time, on-campus or off-campus, on-site or remote.

If you hold an F-1 visa, you may be required to apply for [Curricular Practical Training \(CPT\)](#) in order to engage in any field experiences, training activities, employment, etc. Click on [CPT](#) to read the detailed information. If eligible, failure to apply for and obtain CPT authorization from your [F-1 International Student Advisor](#) to engage in the field experience/training activity or employment prior to starting the field experience/training activity or employment may result in a violation of your F-1 visa status. Should you have any questions, you may attend your [F-1 International Student Advisor's Virtual Office Hours](#) (VOH) to discuss eligibility and any

questions you may have. Having your offer or placement letter during VOH will greatly help in your F-1 Advisor's ability to assist you.

F-2 visa holders may not engage in any field experiences, training activities, or employment. If you hold a J-1 or J-2 visa, please contact your [J Advisor](#) regarding obtaining authorization to engage in any field experiences, training activities, or employment. If you hold any other immigration status, please contact an immigration attorney to determine eligibility to register for EGS6949.

All F-1 students must apply for CPT authorization after registering for EGS6949. Evidence of authorization to take EGS6949 must be provided to the EED graduate staff advisor by the start of the semester in which EGS6949 is intended to be taken. Failure to provide that authorization will result in EGS6949 being dropped from the student's schedule. Note that approval may take 4-6 weeks, so course registration and application for CPT authorization should be done as soon as advance registration opens.

Testing Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Delays in the PhD qualifying exam, PhD proposal, PhD dissertation defense, and MS thesis defense, due to extenuating circumstances can be approved by the supervisory committee. Delays in the MS non-thesis project can be approved by the EED graduate coordinator.

Academic Misconduct

The University of Florida takes academic dishonesty very seriously. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/> ([Links to an external site.](#))) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the faculty advisor or supervisory committee.

Guidelines for Research and Publications

All research must be conducted in an ethical manner. Ethics of research include protection of human subjects, protection of copyrightable and patentable material, appropriate inclusion of co-authors, and selection of publication venues. Some resources for guidance on these topics are:

- [A Guide to Responsible Conduct in Research](#)
- [The responsible conduct of research, including responsible authorship and publication practices](#)

- [Tips for determining authorship credit \(apa.org\)](#)
- [Caught in the Trap: The Allure of Deceptive Publishers, Predatory Publishing](#)

Determining who should be included as co-authors on publications and the authorship order can be especially difficult. In general, co-authorship should be restricted to those who have made an intellectual contribution to the publication. However, different disciplines have different expectations as to what counts as a contribution. For example, in some disciplines a person who only collected data would not be included as a co-author, while in other disciplines they would. Best practice is to discuss what counts towards co-authorship with your faculty advisor at the beginning of any project, not at the time of publication preparation, to ensure expectations are clear to all members of the research team. In all cases, courtesy authorships should be avoided for all circumstances of your time in your program. For example, members of a PhD or MS supervisory committee should not be listed as co-authors as a part of serving on that committee.

Petitions

Petitions for exceptions to rules or policies may be submitted to the EED graduate advisor, who will forward them to the Graduate Affairs Committee. Petition decisions may be appealed to the EED graduate coordinator. The graduate coordinator's decision on petitions regarding EED policies is final.

Reporting of Harassment, Unfair Treatment, etc.

Students who feel they have been treated unfairly may discuss their concerns with the EED graduate coordinator, EED department chair, or Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Other offices that concerns can be reported to are:

- The [UF Ombuds](#) can serve as a neutral party find solutions to concerns.
- Cases of gender discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, should be reported to the [UF Title IX Office](#).
- Grievances over working conditions as specified in your letter of appointment or the [graduate student contract](#) can be submitted to [Graduate Assistants United](#), the graduate student union.

PhD Requirements

Course Requirements

For the Ph.D. degree, at least 90 credit hours beyond the bachelor's degree are required. These hours include EED master's degree work taken at the University of Florida or, if approved, up to 30 hours of master's degree work earned at another approved university outside UF. Course substitutions must be petitioned and are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Required courses are in the following areas:

- EED Core Courses: 15 credit hours
- Experiential Learning: 5 credit hours
- Elective Requirement: 6 credit hours
- Disciplinary Concentration: 15 credits of graduate work in computer science or a single engineering discipline outside of EED. This requirement is waived if a student is admitted with a master's degree in an engineering or computer science discipline.

- Research for Doctoral Dissertation: 49 credits in EED 7979 & 7980

The courses associated with each of these areas is given below. Course descriptions are available in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

EED Core Courses (15 credits)

- EGS 6050: Foundations in Engineering Education (3 credits)
- EGS 6054: Cognition, Learning, and Pedagogy in Engineering Education (3 credits)
- EGS 6051: Instructional Design in Engineering Education (3 credits)
- EGS 6020: Research Design in Engineering Education (3 credits)
- EGS 6012: Research Methods in Engineering Education (3 credits)

Experience (5 credits)

- EGS 6940: Preparation for Engineering Education Research to Practice Experience. (1 credit)
- EGS 6949: Research to Practice Experience in Engineering Education (3 credits)
- EGS 6930: Engineering Education Seminar - required registration for one semester, attendance required for entire program (1 credit)

Elective Requirement (6 credits)

Students must take 6 credits of graduate courses related to their dissertation research topic and/or career goals. The courses must be approved by the student’s advisor.

Disciplinary Concentration (15 credits)

Students must take 15 credits of graduate courses in a single engineering or computer science discipline. At least 9 credits must be at the 6000 level. This requirement is waived if a student is admitted with a master’s in an engineering discipline or computer science.

Suggested course schedule

	Fall	Spring	Summer
Year 1	EGS 6050 (3 cr) EGS 6020 (3 cr) EGS 6054 (3 cr)	EGS 6051 (3 cr) EGS 6012 (3 cr) Disciplinary (3 cr)	Disciplinary (3 cr) Research (3 cr)
Year 2	Disciplinary (3 cr) Elective (3 cr) Research (3 cr)	Research Credits (9 cr)	Elective (3 cr) Research (3 cr)
Year 3	EGS 6940 (1 cr) Disciplinary (3 cr) Seminar (1 cr) Research (4 cr)	EGS 6949 (3 cr) Disciplinary (3 cr) Research (3 cr)	Research (6 cr)
Year 4	Research Credits (9 cr)	Research Credits (9 cr)	

Supervisory Committee

All graduate degrees must have graduate faculty oversee a student's program of study and progress. This oversight authority is accomplished by a formal supervisory committee, which is monitored by the Graduate School as part of degree certification using information entered the Graduate Information Management System (GIMS).

Doctoral degree-seeking students are required to establish a supervisory committee by the end of their second semester in the program. Students must complete the EED Supervisory Committee Form and submit it to the department graduate advisor. The following section describes who is eligible to serve on supervisory committees, adapted from UF's Graduate Catalog ([Grad-Catalog-2020-2021.pdf \(ufl.edu\)](#)).

The supervisory committee for a doctoral candidate comprises at least four members selected from the approved Graduate Faculty:

- A chair (who must have graduate faculty status in the Department of Engineering Education)
- A co-chair or member (who must have graduate faculty status in the Department of Engineering Education)
- A member (who must have graduate faculty status in any UF unit, including the Department of Engineering Education)
- An external member (who must have graduate faculty status in any UF unit except for the Department of Engineering Education)

Special appointments enable qualified individuals who do not have graduate faculty status at UF to serve as guest experts on supervisory committees. They are made individually, on a case-by-case basis, per approval of the EED Graduate Affairs Committee. Special appointments do not count toward the required minimum of members for a valid supervisory committee (which must be filled by current UF graduate faculty), and they cannot serve as chairs, co-chairs, or externals on supervisory committees (only as members).

Changes to the supervisory committee must be made in consultation with the committee chair and/or graduate coordinator and are allowed to make such changes up to the midpoint deadline of the semester when the student plans on graduating, so long as their final defense has not taken place. No changes are allowed after the defense.

If pursuing a minor, one of the members on the supervisory committee must have graduate faculty status in that minor's home unit. If pursuing more than one minor, the supervisory committee must have a graduate faculty member from each minor's home unit.

Research to Practice Experience

Similar to a capstone course, the research to practice experience allows students to apply what they have learned in class to a real engineering education environment. During the experience, students are expected to apply the course material to a structured application of engineering and educational theory through practical experiences (e.g., classroom, industry, government/ policy, or consulting experiences). The experience can occur at UF, or it can occur at an external site (industry, government agency, non-profit, etc.). This experience should allow the student to gain many skills, such as effective communication, collaboration, professional etiquette, and project/time management.

If the experience will occur at UF (hired and paid by UF), and up to 20 hours per week maximum, the student may not need CPT unless they are engaged in other work which is already 20 hours per week or when also engaged in the practicum, and it exceeds 20 hours per week total. Some examples of these can be if you are working on a campus GatorDining job of 15 hours/week and on-campus UF practicum of 10 hours/week = 25 hours/ week, which will require CPT authorization. If the experience occurs outside of UF in an external site, these external field experiences will require CPT application and approval prior to engaging in said experience/practicum.

This research to practice experience must be completed after completion of the first academic year and prior to graduation. The experience can be done after all EED core coursework has been completed. Before doing the experience, students must take EGS6940, Preparation for Engineering Education Practicum. It is strongly recommended that students have identified the site and sponsor for the experience prior to taking EGS6940.

During the semester that the experience occurs, students must be registered in EGS6949, Research to Practice Experience in Engineering Education. Students must obtain a placement letter from the sponsor prior to registering for this course. Students are expected to devote an equivalent of three hours a week of time to the experience for each credit in which they are enrolled over a 15 week semester.

Further details of the requirements and assessments for the research to practice experience are provided in the EGS6949 syllabus. International students have special requirements for this course. Details are provided in the Policies and Procedures section of this handbook and in the course syllabus.

Qualifying Exam

Purpose of Exam

The purpose of the qualifying exam is to assess the level of preparedness of the student for their dissertation research. This examination assesses student's understanding of the field of engineering education, major theoretical concepts, use of theoretical or conceptual frameworks, methods to inquire about the research of interest, and overall research design and quality. The exam will also allow the student to incorporate their research interest, prepare for the dissertation exam in the future, and afford multiple means to contribute to the intellectual merit and knowledge base of engineering education.

Eligibility Requirements

Students enrolled in the EED Ph.D. program with a supervisory committee chair are eligible to take the qualifying exam. Their faculty advisor must agree that the student is prepared for their qualifying exam.

The qualifying exam typically occurs in the semester after all EED core courses have been completed, but can be taken earlier or later as determined by the student and their faculty advisor. The student should consult with their faculty advisor to schedule the exam and devise a plan to prepare for it.

Qualifying Exam Process

The qualifying exam consists of a set of questions created by the student's supervisory committee, one question provided by each supervisory committee member. Questions are broad

and open-ended, requiring the student to demonstrate knowledge of the literature and a holistic understanding of engineering education theory, methodology, methods, and topics. Typically, question topics are connected to or can expand beyond the scope of the dissertation topic.

Questions are submitted to the dissertation committee chair, who reviews them for appropriateness. After the questions have been finalized and approved by the dissertation committee chair, they are sent to the student for review. Within 3 days after the student receives the questions, the student will meet with the supervisory committee to ask any clarifying questions. The student then has three weeks from the date of this meeting to submit written answers to the committee. The student may consult books, the literature, and other written sources, but may not collaborate with other people. Please note that students are not expected to only work on the qualifying exam during this time and they are still expected to participate in their classes, attend meetings, or continue with their other responsibilities.

Written answers will be submitted to the dissertation chair and supervisory committee by the exam's due date. APA Citation style is expected throughout the written portion of the exam and it is recommended that a citation manager is used (e.g., Zotero, Mendeley) to ensure that the citation style has been appropriately used. Each response should be 3-4 pages per question, not including the list of references.

The student will then meet with the committee as a panel to orally discuss those written answers. The supervisory committee will ask questions to clarify or expand on the student's answers in order to assess the student's depth of knowledge. The exam meeting typically takes 60-90 minutes. The committee will then decide if the student has passed, conditionally passed, or failed.

- Pass: The student has successfully passed the qualifying exam
- Conditional: Answers require revisions to be satisfactory. The committee has discretion to determine the scope and timeline for revisions.
- Fail: The committee has deemed the answers sufficiently lacking to fail the student. If this is the first attempt at the qualifying exam, the student will have a second opportunity to take the qualifying exam in the next semester. In this case the qualifying exam questions may be different from the first attempt. If the student fails the second attempt, they will not be admitted to candidacy and will no longer be in the Ph.D. program.

Withdrawal Policy

Students who have begun the qualifying exam may withdraw their attempt up until one week before the submission deadline. The withdrawal does not count against the student as one of their attempts at the qualifying exam, but a student may only employ the withdrawal option once and must wait until the following semester to take the exam again.

Proposal

Purpose of Proposal

The dissertation proposal serves two purposes, as preparation for conducting dissertation research and as the final exam leading to Ph.D. candidacy. The written proposal document describes the background, purpose, methodology, and methods of the research, the outcomes

anticipated, and the expected contribution to the field. It provides students the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities to:

1. Identify a relevant research question
2. Place their research in the context of existing literature and theory
3. Create a plan to address the research question

Written Proposal

The structure of the written proposal is flexible and can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the student's proposed research. In general, however, it should address the following:

- Motivation – Why is the research project important? How might it contribute to engineering and computing education?
- Literature argument – What work has previously been done in this area? Where will the project be situated in the literature once completed? How will the project enhance and/or shape the literature?
- Theoretical framework (as appropriate) – How does a particular theory or combination of theories help the student frame and conduct the project?
- Preliminary work (as appropriate) – What preliminary work has been conducted to support the research plan? How does this work guide the research design?
- Research design – How will the study be conducted? What are the sampling, data collection, and data analysis plans? How will the student ensure research quality, validity, and/or reliability as appropriate? What is the project timeline?

There is no required length for the proposal. Students should work with their advisors and dissertation committee to determine the exact format and length. The proposal defense typically occurs in the semester after the qualifying exam is completed but can be done later as determined by the student and their faculty advisor. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with their advisor and supervisory committee throughout the process of writing the proposal.

Oral Proposal Defense

It is the student's responsibility to schedule the time and location of the oral defense. The defense should be scheduled for 90 minutes. All members of the supervisory committee must be present. The defense may take place either in person or virtually on a platform such as Zoom or Teams.

The written proposal should be provided to the supervisory committee no less than two weeks before the oral proposal defense. For the oral defense, the student should prepare a short presentation that reviews the motivation, background, and research plan for the proposal. Students should consult with their advisor to determine the length of the presentation. The presentation is followed by a general question and answer session for all attendees. After the general session, there is a closed question and answer session limited to the student candidate and the supervisory committee. In this session, the committee members will ask additional questions that are intended to ensure the research plan is appropriate and that the student has the background and knowledge to complete the research and contribute to the discipline.

Once the supervisory committee has finished asking questions, the student will be asked to leave the room while the committee discusses the results of the defense, including the written proposal document. Possible results are:

- Pass: The student has successfully passed the proposal defense and is admitted to Ph.D. candidacy
- Conditional: The written proposal requires revisions to be satisfactory. The committee has discretion to determine the scope and timeline for revisions.
- Fail: The committee has deemed the oral defense and/or written proposal sufficiently lacking to not admit the student to Ph.D. candidacy. In this case, the student will have a second opportunity to write the proposal and orally defend it in the next semester.

Once the committee has made a determination that the student has passed the proposal, the committee will complete the admission to candidacy form and submit it to the department staff member responsible for filing it with the Graduate School.

Portfolio

The Engineering Education Portfolio is a required program document that provides concrete evidence of development of knowledge and skills in the following outcomes throughout a student's graduate work:

- Synthesize the literature to identify research topics;
- Create relevant research question(s);
- Conduct independent research in engineering education to address the research question(s);
- Conduct an analysis of needs and context to identify gaps between research and practice;
- Collaborate with others in academia, industry, and other organizations to conduct research and develop evidence-based best practices;
- Apply engineering education research findings, methodologies, concepts, and frameworks to real-world contexts such as industry or academic training experiences, professional development, classroom innovation, or assessment.

The purpose of this Engineering Education Portfolio is for the graduate student to document academic and professional growth and development in an organized, coherent, and selective record to facilitate evaluation by the student's PhD Dissertation Committee. The portfolio expectations should be discussed with the student's PhD Committee.

The portfolio will demonstrate a mastery of engineering education teaching, research, and practice through a compilation of work that the student has completed. The portfolio should represent the scope and depth of a student's goals, plans, and accomplishments in coursework, independent study, research experiences, internships, and other advanced learning activities. The portfolio must describe notable activities or academic accomplishments that illustrate the evolution and advancement of expertise and mastery of the field of engineering education achieved by the student. It consists of example documents in various areas (e.g., teaching materials, projects, conference presentations, publications, creative works, etc.), as well as summaries of student growth and achievement in each of those areas. The portfolio will be reviewed and evaluated for technical content and quality of presentation. The portfolio will serve as a formative and summative assessment tool. The review and evaluation process will be conducted by the student's committee over the course of the program. The summative evaluation of the portfolio will occur prior to the completion of the student's degree program completion.

Publication Requirement

Ph.D. students are required to submit proof of at least one accepted, first-author, peer-reviewed journal article and one conference proceedings paper. The venues and authorship ordering for both forms of dissemination must be generated and approved by the students' supervisory committee chair. Publications to meet this requirement must be approved by the committee chair. Proof of acceptance should be submitted to the graduate coordinator or EED graduate advisor.

For a graduate student to be listed as an author on any disseminated work, they must make a significant, identifiable, original intellectual contribution to the research and not just participate in collecting, cleaning, or analyzing data. The student should also be involved in the research design, interpretation of results, writing, and editing process as well.

Dissertation

Format

The format of the dissertation may be in either the traditional (chapter) or journal article format. The traditional format considers dissertation research as a single study that may include multiple phases or parts. The chapters would capture the motivation, literature argument, research design and theory, results and discussion, future work, implications, and general conclusions. The exact chapter titles and the number of chapters should be defined by the student and their advisor, in collaboration with the committee. The journal article format consists of several chapters that each describe a complete study. If using the journal article format the dissertation must describe a set of connected studies, and will typically include an introduction chapter that describes the goals of the entire dissertation and a conclusion chapter that develops conclusions from the entire dissertation. The final document at the time of the submission should follow the stylistic guidelines defined by Graduate School. Students must submit their dissertation documents within GIMS, the Graduate Information Management System.

For guidance on preparing the dissertation, see:

- [Electronic Theses and Dissertations](#)
- [UF Graduate School Editorial Office](#)
- [UF Computing Thesis and Dissertation Support](#)

Evaluation of Final Dissertation

At least two weeks prior to your scheduled dissertation defense date, the student should submit their dissertation to their Supervisory Committee members. The Supervisory Committee will evaluate the quality of the dissertation by examining the extent to which the student has achieved mastery of knowledge and/or skills in the program objectives.

Copyrights

If a manuscript or conference paper was peer-reviewed and published and it contains significant detail that will be used in the written dissertation, the student is primarily responsible for obtaining the required copyright release from the publisher and understanding copyright rules and restrictions put in place by the publisher, with confirmation by the graduate faculty advisor. The student will need to acknowledge and cross-reference the original published work and outline the differences or adaptation into the dissertation document. For more information on copyrights see <https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/copyright/copyrightgradstudents>.

Dissertation Publication

In general, the dissertation will be published by UF through the [UF Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository](#) and by [ProQuest](#). As part of this process the student completes two publishing agreement forms. The UF publishing agreement specifies any embargo period on releasing the dissertation. This form is completed through GIMS. The ProQuest publishing agreement provides permission for ProQuest to provide access to the dissertation after the embargo period. This form is completed by going to <https://www.etsadmin.com/login>.

Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense serves as the final oral exam of the Ph.D. program during which the student presents and defends their dissertation document. The oral exam includes, but is not limited to a discussion of the dissertation document, i.e., objectives, research design, and analytical procedures. The exam tests originality, independence of thought, the ability to synthesize and interpret, and the quality of research presented.

Scheduling

Prior to scheduling the defense, the student must receive approval from the supervisory committee chair. The chair will determine if the dissertation draft is of merit to proceed with scheduling the defense. To schedule the defense, the student completes the EED dissertation defense form and submits the draft dissertation to the supervisory committee at least 2 weeks prior to the requested defense date.

Format

The typical duration of a final defense is at most two hours. The public presentation of dissertation research (including questions) may be attended by faculty outside of the supervisory committee, students, and guests as approved by the supervisory committee chair. This portion of the defense is recommended to last 45-60 minutes with the remainder for questions. The public will be asked to leave for a closed questioning period. The closed questioning period is limited to the supervisory committee and the student. Once complete, the student will be asked to leave while the committee deliberates. The student will then return to be informed of the decision to pass/fail.

Attendance

All members of the supervisory committee are required to be present and fully participate in questioning during the defense. In-person attendance by the student and the supervisory committee — or by the student and the supervisory committee chair, while the rest of the committee attends remotely at the same time via electronic media — is the norm for on-campus graduate degree programs. However, final defenses via Zoom, Microsoft TEAMS, or other electronic media, are acceptable so long as the student and the entire supervisory committee are present at the same time, either electronically or physically, so that all have access to the presentation, all questions, and all answers in “real time.”

After the defense, all committee members sign the Final Examination form. Unanimous approval is required. This examination must be given within six months of the date of graduation per UF Graduate School policy.