

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Procedure for Graduation Paperwork

Are you ready to graduate?

Meet with your committee and obtain their permission to write. There is no formal document required. Agree on who your readers will be. You need two in addition to your mentor.

Write your dissertation. There are many dissertations available to review in helping you to get started. Check with your mentor or Program Director to borrow copies. Visit the Electronic Dissertations Website (<http://www.gwu.edu/~etds/>) before you start writing to see a template. On the left side of the website, there is a link called "manuscript standards and template." You can either follow the template as a formatting guide, or download the template and use it to write your dissertation.

I encourage students to work with mentors during the writing process. Most mentors are happy to receive sections and provide feedback as you progress. After the mentor has seen the dissertation, distribute to your readers. The mentor and both readers must sign off on the document before it is given to the rest of the committee. The form for this is called "*Dissertation Research Committee Sign-Off*" and is on the advisors' webpage. This form should be returned to the Academic Advisor BEFORE the defense is scheduled. The committee consists of the mentor (who will not participate in the questioning), the two readers, and at least two additional examiners, one of whom should not have been on the Dissertation Advisory Committee. This is to allow a person with a fresh perspective to evaluate the work. This "outside" examiner must be outside your program, and may be outside the institution. A CV of the outside examiner must be provided to the Program Director to ensure the outside person is appropriate. Give them ample time to review. Obtain the sign-off form from your Program Director. Distribute the revised (if necessary) dissertation to your whole committee. Your Program Director may also want a copy. When you distribute, you can inquire about defense dates. If the committee is willing to permit you to schedule a date before they read, you may do so. It is their prerogative, however, to have time to finish reading the dissertation before the scheduling of a defense.

When you have chosen a defense date acceptable to your committee, you must identify and schedule a chair to officiate at the defense. This should be a Program Director, Chair, or other senior faculty member.

All information for the defense should be submitted to the IBS office at least a week prior to the defense to allow time for the generation of a program. IBS staff have a template for this document; however if you do not turn it in to the IBS Office in a timely manner they may not have time to prepare and format the program – please do not submit it at the last minute! The information that they will need includes: your name, prior degrees, abstract, committee members, and a list of your publications. They can provide you with an example for reference.

A seminar should be given prior to the defense. It is best if the seminar can immediately precede the defense, but not required. Your Program Director will provide information to the IBS office for advertising the seminar. Plan on an hour for the seminar and about three hours for the defense.

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At the defense, the chair should have a form indicating the results of the examination. It is called the *"Final Examination Committee Sign-off"* and is located on the advisors' webpage. If revisions are required, there is also a space on the form that indicates who need to see revisions before the dissertation is accepted. Once those revisions are made, each person who wishes to see the revised version must sign off on the form entitled *"Final Dissertation Approval."* Again, this is available on the advisors' webpage. When the student gets the required signatures, the form is returned to the Program Director, who files the *"Graduation Clearance"* form at the Graduate School. This must be submitted by the PD and not the student.

The seminar is open to the public. The defense is open to the GWU Academic Community. Students are welcome and encouraged to attend so they can be prepared when their time comes!

Please contact your Program Director with any unanswered questions or concerns.