

## MSS Thesis Defense Process

Updated December 2020

1. **Thesis Committee:** MSS Students will have a *Thesis* committee, which includes three (3) faculty members - two (2) must be Departmental Primary Faculty and the third **could** be from an External department in an applied area of the student's interest, who must be a graduate faculty with a secondary appointment with the Department of Statistical Science. If a student is working with a faculty outside of the department, the faculty could be a member of the thesis committee.
  - a. The student must provide a thesis proposal (not more than 2 pages) and the names of the Advisor, Chair and Committee members by October 15 of their second year to the Department. The Committee Chair must be Departmental Primary Faculty. By default, the Advisor is the Committee Chair; in the case that the Advisor is not a primary member of the Department, the student shall seek a Departmental Primary Faculty to serve as the administrative Chair.
  - b. All Committee members must be familiar with the Student's work. If there is an External member, the Student must check and ask if he/she requires a Parking Permit. Department will provide Parking Permit if the Student requests one.
  - c. Department coordinates Committee approval. Note that the thesis defense Committee must be approved at least 30 days prior to Defense Date. There is no timeline when making revisions to an existing Committee.
2. **Intent to Graduate:** Student must file Intent to Graduate in ACES. See Graduation Deadlines at <https://gradschool.duke.edu/academics/preparing-graduate>. Note: Student should indicate "Thesis Defense" when applying for graduation.
3. **Scheduling Thesis Defense:** Student coordinates with the Committee to set Date & Time for the defense, then provides that information to Department along with their Title of Thesis. Thesis Defense must be scheduled while classes are in session. Please note the thesis defense and submission deadlines at <https://gradschool.duke.edu/academics/preparing-graduate/graduation-deadline>. The Department makes Room Reservation and sends room confirmation information to the student who must notify the committee members of the location.
4. **Defense Announcement:** Department creates Defense Announcement – sends copy to Student & Chair - after approval, DGS signs, then Department sends it to the Graduate School and posts copies to department bulletin boards.
5. Student submits Initial Thesis to Committee and Grad School 2 weeks prior to Defense. See thesis formatting details at <https://gradschool.duke.edu/academics/theses-and-dissertations>.

6. Student requests Advisor send email, indicating candidate is ready to defend, to [gradacademics@duke.edu](mailto:gradacademics@duke.edu). This must be done before Exam Card Appointment.
7. Grad School contacts Student to make Appointment regarding Format Check one week before Defense. Once approved, Grad School gives Student Master's Exam Card. Student can then send copy of Revised Thesis to Committee Members.
8. Department provides Student MSS Annual Report Form to take to Defense.
9. **Post Defense:**
  - a. The committee chair communicates the outcome of the defense to the student, with any comments about follow-up in cases of failure.
  - b. In case a student does not pass the thesis defense, the committee's Fail judgement *must* be accompanied by explicit and clear comments from the chair indicating deficiencies and areas for specific attention for remedy.
  - c. The student must have the Title Page, Abstract Page & Exam Card signed by the committee. The committee chair also completes Annual Report Form. The DGS must sign Exam Card. Finally, the committee chair returns all completed and signed forms to the Department.
10. Student submits final version of Thesis to Grad School via ProQuest by the deadline to meet Graduate School requirement. <https://gradschool.duke.edu/academics/preparing-graduate>.
11. **Alumni Data:** Student fills out Alumni Data Sheets & returns to Grad School. S/he must then send new contact information plus future plans to Department so that status can be updated on website from student to alumni.
12. **Exit Interview:** Students will schedule an exit interview with the MS Director at least two weeks prior to graduation. Prior to exit interview each student should submit a copy of their professional photo and a final resume to the MS Director.