Department of Psychology  
Procedures for Scheduling Final Dissertation Oral Exams

The Psychology Department adopts the procedure of holding a public defense for graduate students who are defending their dissertation projects. The defense should be scheduled for a two-hour period.

The first hour consists of a public presentation by the candidate and questions from the audience. Committee members must be in attendance but are discouraged from asking questions during this portion of the meeting. After questions from the audience are addressed, all but the candidate and examining committee members are dismissed from the room. The Committee uses the second hour to ask additional questions and to vote on the defense. Here are the procedures to be followed:

1. At least two (preferably more) weeks prior to the oral exam, the student must inform the area of the defense date and time. The student must provide a thesis title and brief abstract and the names of his/her adviser(s). A good time to do this is when the dissertation is distributed to the major adviser for final approval.

2. The relevant area representative (*see below) is responsible for communicating with the department to schedule the room for the defense (preferably N219) and committee review (N219a). Please use the form below for conveying the relevant details to the department:

   http://psych.umn.edu/intranet/chair/dissertation.html

Missy Jones (jonesmk@umn.edu) will schedule the room and distribute an announcement to the full department.

3. Students may also invite family members and friends outside of the department.

4. The student must prepare a 40-45-minute Powerpoint presentation to present his/her project to the public audience.

5. Following the presentation, the student will take questions from the audience with the caveat that the public presentation will end ~55 minutes into the first hour. The examining committee members should refrain from asking their questions during this time.

6. During the second hour, the examining committee will ask questions and vote on the student’s defense.

*Area representatives: Heidi Wolff:  CAB, Quant, Social, I/O; Amanda Suchy:  CSPR, PIB; Amy Kranz:  Counseling