

## General/Experimental Master's Thesis Project Defense Guidelines

**Preamble:** The Master's Thesis defense is an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate her/his knowledge of the study she/he has conducted. In the defense presentation, the candidate should be fully versed in the empirical and theoretical basis for the study, the methods used, the data analytic procedures used, whether the hypotheses were or were not supported, and the limitations, strengths, and implications of the study.

The final Master's Thesis should be submitted to the committee two weeks before the defense date unless all committee members agree to waive the two week period. The document should consist of the following: (a) an abstract; (b) an introduction, including the rationale and hypotheses; (c) a methods section, including data analyses, (d) results, and (e) a scholarly discussion. Serious concerns about the readiness of the written Master's thesis for a committee meeting must be shared, via email, with the committee at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting. The meeting may be rescheduled at the discretion of the committee chair.

1. The defense meeting should be scheduled for a two-hour block, but may end early at the discretion of the committee.
2. The defense consists of two parts: (1) a 15 to 20 minute presentation, and (2) a question and answer part. Others beside the committee are welcome to attend the presentation but should leave before the second part of the defense.
3. The oral defense of the Master's thesis is the task of the candidate, not the primary faculty mentor.
4. Following the question and answer period, the committee will meet without the candidate to decide one of the following:
  - a. Pass with no revisions to the document.
  - b. Pass with minor revisions to the document.
  - c. Orals and/or question and answer section not passed.
  - d. Document is not acceptable.
5. Students must use and follow the timeline on the Department Intent to Defend form for the Master's Thesis defense as well as all Graduate College timelines and requirements.
6. Students must submit a Defense Notice to the Graduate College at least three weeks prior to their defense date (also submit to Cyndi Snyder). Please go to <http://www.uvm.edu/graduate/resources> to get the Defense Notice Template (see section on "Thesis/Dissertation Forms").

Approved by GE faculty 10/10/2018.