# 4.7.2 Doctoral Degrees, University Oral Examinations & Committees: Implementation

Last updated on:

Jump To:

1. Scheduling the Oral Examination  
2. Conducting the Examination and Reporting the Results  
3. If the Committee Votes to Fail a Student

## 1. Scheduling the Oral Examination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS STEPS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identifies the examiners, a date and time for the oral examination.</td>
<td>Department, Student and Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ensures the appointment of University chair. The department should not require the student to solicit the out-of-department chair, although the student may participate in selecting and contacting potential chairs. (See July 2012 memo from Richard Roberts [1].)</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Submits the University Oral Examination form [2] to the department graduate studies administrator at least two weeks prior to the examination date.</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Reviews committee composition for compliance with University requirements.</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Reviews student status:**

- Will the student be registered in the term the oral examination is to be taken?
- Does the student have valid candidacy?
- Has the student submitted supporting documents (e.g., Doctoral Dissertation Reading Committee form [3]; abstract for a dissertation proposal or defense, if applicable; reading list for field examination, if applicable)?
- If the oral examination is a defense of the dissertation, has the Doctoral Dissertation Reading Committee form [4] been submitted to and recorded by the department prior to the scheduling of the examination?

**If the oral examination is a presentation of a dissertation proposal or defense of a partially or fully completed dissertation, provides copies of the dissertation or proposal to all members of the committee in advance of the examination in accordance with departmental procedures. Provide an abstract of the dissertation for the out-of-department chairperson.**

**Secures a location for the examination.**

**Enters information about the committee and date in PeopleSoft Student Administration, including preliminary dissertation title if not yet entered.**

**Notifies Stanford Report if a public notice of the examination is desired (publishing this notice is optional). The deadline for submitting Ph.D. orals is 5 p.m. Wednesday for the following issue.**

**Prepares a folder for the chair which includes:**

- copy of student's University Oral Examination form [2],
- statement on department policy for oral examinations, and
- paper to be used as ballots.

**Prepares a copy of University Oral Examination form [2] for each examiner.**

---

**2. Conducting the Examination and Reporting the Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS STEPS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Arranges for the chair's folder and copies of each examiner's form to be delivered in time to ensure that each member of the committee has written confirmation of the date, time, and location of the examination.</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ensures that the examination is conducted within University and department/school guidelines.

Procedural concerns, such as committee membership or insufficient number of voting members, should be raised as soon as possible by asking for a review of the departmental handbook or Stanford Bulletin as appropriate. (Note that the University policy takes precedence). Unresolved violations of University policy should be reported by the chair to the school dean’s office for review.

When the out-of-department chair believes that university or department regulations and guidelines are not being fairly applied, the chair should take immediate and appropriate action. For example, if during orals or the dissertation defense the student is badgered, questioned for an overly long time, or subject to overzealous questioning, the chair should stop the examination, excuse the student and counsel the committee members.

### 3. If the Committee Votes to Fail a Student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS STEPS</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remains convened to formulate a recommendation for the department. The committee may recommend the length of time that should intervene before the student retakes the examination and conditions to be met before it may be retaken. The committee may recommend that the student not be permitted to repeat the oral examination, but only if this action has been preceded by a written warning to the student from the department that the student has not been making satisfactory progress. In effect, this is a recommendation that the department should terminate the candidate. If the candidate is to be terminated, the guidelines for dismissal of graduate students must be followed (see GAP 5.6, Dismissal for Academic and Professional Reasons [5]).</td>
<td>The committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sends within five days a written evaluation of the candidate’s performance to the major department and the student. Copies of the University Oral Examination form [2] and this evaluation should also be sent to the School Dean.</td>
<td>Examination chair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within 30 days and after review of the examining committee’s evaluation and recommendation, sends the student a written statement indicating the final action of the department.

Department chair