

## Defense Procedure for Graduate Committees

Major professors should encourage students to verify well in advance that committee members are available for the defense and to sign the title page after revisions. *Please review the [Graduate Education Deadlines](#) for the current academic year for information on when each step should be completed.*

	Steps and notes
<b>Step 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Major professor approves student’s final semester DegreeWorks audit</b></li> <li>• The Grad Office sends heads a list of students needing audits each semester.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The major professor reviews the thesis/dissertation.</b></li> <li>• The major professor informs the student whether the document may proceed to the committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The graduate committee reviews the thesis/dissertation and determines if it is defensible.</b></li> <li>• The committee evaluates whether the document is defensible: that it is an acceptable manuscript in terms of technical quality and proper expression in American Standard English, and that the revisions can reasonably be completed by the end of finals week. The committee may discuss their assessments in person or by email if needed.</li> <li>• During this time, the Grad Office also conducts a preliminary formatting and content check and notifies the student and major professor of any issues.</li> <li>• Committee members should <u>immediately</u> notify the major professor if their reviews reveal any substantial issues that might prevent a successful defense.</li> <li>• If the document is not deemed defensible, the major professor discusses the deficiencies with the student and notifies the Grad Office that the defense will be delayed.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The committee approves the scheduling of the defense.</b></li> <li>• The student formally schedules the defense with the Grad Office using the <i>Defense Approval and Scheduling</i> form. <b><i>By signing the form, the committee is certifying that the thesis/dissertation is defensible as defined above.</i></b></li> <li>• The signed form must be submitted no later than 5 working days before the defense.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The committee, chaired by the major professor, conducts the defense.</b></li> <li>• The committee signs the <i>Defense Results Report</i> and delivers it to the Grad Office within two working days after the defense. Submit to gradoffice@sdsmt.edu. The form will NOT be accepted from students.</li> <li>• Required revisions should be summarized by the GDR, attached to the <i>Defense Results Report</i>, and given to the student in writing.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The committee certifies acceptance of the thesis/dissertation, after the student completes the required revisions, by signing the title page.</b></li> <li>• The major professor notifies the Grad Office when the committee is ready to sign the title page.</li> <li>• The Grad Office routes the title page through DocuSign to gather committee signatures.</li> <li>• The major professor fills out and signs the <i>Checkout Sheet for Graduate Students</i> so the student can begin collecting signatures if necessary. Signing this document will also authorize the Registrar to convert all prior NP thesis/dissertation grades to S.</li> </ul>
<b>Step 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Graduate Office coordinates the final document production and degree audit.</b></li> <li>• The document undergoes a proofreading check*, an abstract review, and a final formatting check.</li> <li>• Major professors and department heads must sign the library order form if not done earlier.</li> <li>• The student makes any last corrections and submits the final electronic copy to the Library.</li> <li>• The student returns the completed <i>Checkout Sheet for Graduate Students</i> to the Grad Office.</li> </ul>

\* Students who cannot pass the proofreading check in two attempts must receive advisor permission to continue graduation process.