

**The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth  
Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences**

**Guidelines for the MS/PhD Defense**

- The purpose of the defense is to facilitate a thorough evaluation of the thesis/dissertation and the student's understanding of the research, as well as the student's ability to report information to the scientific community in a well-organized and interesting form.
- The defense consists of two parts: a public seminar and an examination. In the public seminar, the student will make a 45 to 60 minute oral presentation, including a detailed description of the background, rationale, materials and methods, results and conclusions appropriate to the research. Following the presentation, the student will respond to questions from the audience.
- Immediately thereafter, and at a location announced at the end of the seminar, the Advisory Committee will examine the student on the thesis/dissertation. Any member of the GSBS Faculty who attends the public presentation may participate in the examination to the extent described below. Others wishing to attend must be approved by the Advisory Committee.
- The student's Advisor will serve as moderator of the examination. The student will be expected to respond to questions from those attending on any aspect of the written thesis/dissertation or the material presented at the seminar.
- After the defense, the student will meet privately with the Advisory Committee to discuss the results. Finally, the Advisory Committee (in executive session, if desired) will determine what recommendation to make to the Dean and the Academic Standards Committee.
- **The Committee may conclude that the student has passed, or it may require additional research, modifications to the thesis/dissertation, and/or another defense.**
- Following the defense, the results of this meeting will be communicated through the Office of Academic Affairs to the Dean and the Academic Standards Committee for their information and approval.
- Within one week of the defense, any GSBS faculty member who has read the student's thesis/dissertation and has attended the defense may write directly to the Dean to provide an evaluation of the student's performance. In reaching a final decision on whether to award the MS/PhD or require further work and/or another defense, the Dean will take into consideration the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and other comments received from GSBS Faculty. In particular cases, the Dean may solicit additional evaluations of the thesis/ dissertation from experts in the field either within or outside the GSBS Faculty.
- The decision of the Dean will be communicated to the student and the Advisory Committee within one month of the defense.

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Request for Defense of the M.S. Thesis / Ph.D. Dissertation

This form is to be submitted when the student's MS thesis/PhD dissertation has been completed and the Advisory Committee has determined that the student is ready to stand for the defense. This form should be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs, GSBS, BSRB 3.8344, **two weeks** prior to the scheduled examination. The signature of the student's advisor on this form certifies that the advisor has seen and agrees with the content, form, and grammar of the one-page abstract submitted to the GSBS. **With this form, also include:**

1. An electronic version of a one-page abstract (in Microsoft Word) of the thesis/dissertation
2. An electronic version (in Microsoft Word), of the dissertation/thesis for submission to the anti-plagiarism software, Turnitin. This version should include the complete thesis/dissertation without the references. The results of this analysis will be forwarded to the student and the members of the Advisory Committee prior to the defense.
3. A PDF of your dissertation/thesis draft for a formatting check. This version should include all front pages, acknowledgements, tables of contents, figures and tables, all figures, figure legends, references and vita.
4. Submit all of the above to [gsbs.gradteam@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:gsbs.gradteam@uth.tmc.edu).

The Advisory Committee for \_\_\_\_\_ has accepted the Masters Thesis/Doctoral Dissertation for the purpose of the defense and now requests this presentation to be set for:

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis / Dissertation title: \_\_\_\_\_

The student has submitted a final draft of the thesis/dissertation to each member of the Advisory Committee, and is prepared to make a public presentation of the thesis/dissertation and to be examined on it. The Committee may require additional research, modifications to the thesis/dissertation, and/or another defense, or may recommend to the Dean that the student be awarded the MS/PhD degree. By the signature below, each member of the Advisory Committee (and any additional members requested) agrees to be present at this examination unless otherwise indicated.

*(Please type each committee member's name under the signature line.)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Advisory Committee (Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of member

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Print name

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Signature of member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

The student has completed all Program requirements for the degree.

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

.....  
(for office use only)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Dean for Graduate Education  
(will sign after submission to Office of Academic Affairs)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**TERM OF ENTRY \_\_\_\_\_ (MS) \_\_\_\_\_ (PhD)**  
rev 07/2018