Dissertation

An approved dissertation, unless otherwise stated by the degree program, is required of all candidates for the award of a doctorate degree. Its purpose is to demonstrate the candidate’s ability to conduct significant original research of a type appropriate to the academic discipline, to analyze the information obtained from the research, and to present the results in a form acceptable to the dissertation committee. A dissertation must be written in a form appropriate to the discipline.

When the student is admitted to candidacy and the Dissertation Committee Chair is satisfied with the completed dissertation, he/she will inform the candidate that the dissertation is ready to be read by all members of the Dissertation Committee. Per the preference of the Dissertation Committee, the student will then distribute dissertation copies in electronic file or hard copy format to the committee members. The candidate must provide a copy of the dissertation to each member of the final examining committee at least two weeks (in some programs three weeks) before the scheduled defense. The candidate, in consultation with the Committee Chair (Major Professor) and committee members, will then schedule the dissertation defense. The dissertation defense must be scheduled by the semester deadline stated in the university academic calendar to conduct the defense. The College of Graduate Studies must receive written or electronic notification of the dissertation defense date at least three (3) weeks prior to the defense date. The dissertation defense will be held in a forum open to the public.

The chairperson also has the right and the responsibility to evaluate the candidate’s performance and to cast a vote. The Dissertation Committee has a variety of responsibilities in the final defense process.

- The chair (and/or the committee) informs the student they are ready to schedule the dissertation defense. Agreeing to the dissertation defense scheduling does not imply that the dissertation is approved.
- Once the defense is scheduled, the committee will thoroughly review the candidates dissertation to make an assessment of the total dissertation as to presentation, methodology, and reporting. It is best practice in the time between the confirmation of the defense date and the defense date, that committee members not engage in discussion around matters pertaining to the dissertation document. Questions about the student's work should be saved for the oral defense so that the student can defend their work in this designated forum.
- The committee also agrees to hold a public, oral dissertation defense, after the dissertation is deemed acceptable in form, at which the candidate presents and defends the dissertation.
- All members of the examining committee (or substitutes appointed by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies) are expected to be present throughout the examination. At the conclusion of the dissertation defense, there can only be one dissenting vote of the examining committee including substitutes appointed by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies before the candidate is deemed to have passed. A refusal to vote by the chairperson or any other member of the examining committee shall be recorded as a negative vote. With the permission of the majority of the committee, a failed defense may be retaken only one time and scheduled no earlier than three months from the date of the failure. The defense must be given on the Statesboro campus.
- Following the defense, the committee will report the results (for both failed and passed) of this examination to the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.
- When the dissertation has been approved, the dissertation defense passed, and all other requirements have been met, the candidate is recommended to be awarded the degree by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies.