

## Dissertation Committees

In most cases, your Prospectus Committee will be your Dissertation Committee. An early step in your prospectus preparation will be to choose a dissertation advisor. That step taken, you and your advisor should give serious thought to assembling your Dissertation Committee. The Graduate Dean's Office has published advice about committees in its document, "Dissertation/Thesis Committees & Graduate Faculty Status". These excerpts seem especially relevant:

### ***Dissertation/Thesis Committees:***

#### *Doctoral – (Dissertation Committee)*

- *one chair from the student's major department/program*
- *one member from the student's major department/program*
- *one member from outside the student's major department/program who is a graduate faculty member from the UMass system or one of the Five Colleges*
- *three to six (not recommended) members*

### ***Outside Members***

*The required Outside Member (required only for doctoral committees, not master's committees) must be a member of the UMass Graduate Faculty from some program other than that of the student.*

*The role of that member has been somewhat fuzzy over the years, but most statements of that role make it clear that it is important that this person be familiar with UMass procedures, and the operations of dissertation committees in some other part of the University.*

*The position has been characterized as:*

- *the Grad School representative on the committee --- in some universities the grad school appoints this person without any required consultation from the student or chair*
- *the resource on the committee which the student can turn to if he/she is experiencing problems which are originating in the student's department --- an external point of view on such issues and a link to the Grad School regarding such issues*
- *a procedure for maintaining some uniformity across the university in the way committees operate -- the assumption being that good practices will be spread by requiring out-of-department representation, and poor practices will be replaced by better ones.*

*We do allow grad faculty members from the other colleges of the 5-college system to serve as outside members.*

For UMass faculty, eligibility to be Outside Member is determined by the primary departmental appointment. For example: a faculty member has joint appointments in History and Economics. If that person's *primary* appointment is in History, that person may chair committees in Economics or History, serve as a Member on committees in Economics or History, or serve as Outside Member on Economics committees (but may not be Outside Member for a History committee). Faculty with *primary* appointments in Resource Economics are eligible to be Outside Members on Economics committees.

PERI economists and research associates may be nominated by the Economics Department for graduate faculty status and may serve on committees. In these cases their graduate faculty appointments will be in Economics--they will be eligible to be Members, not Outside Members.

For faculty from Amherst, Smith, Mt. Holyoke, or Hampshire, eligibility to be Outside Member is determined from their CV. Their current appointment must be outside the *field* of Economics. For example, an Economics professor from Amherst College may be a Member on an Economics Committee, but may not be the Outside Member.

Qualified faculty from outside the 5-college system may be allowed to serve as Members. They may serve as Outside Members if their field is outside Economics and if the GPD offers justification. The Graduate School prefers that Outside Members be recruited from within the UMass faculty.

Bear in mind that large committees and out-of-town members can make defenses difficult to schedule.

If you would like to have someone from outside of UMass serve on your committee, the GPD will need to petition the Graduate Dean's office for a courtesy faculty appointment. The GPD will need a current copy of their CV, and their date of birth. This applies to faculty from Amherst, Smith, Mt. Holyoke, and Hampshire as well.

Don't hesitate to speak to the GPD if you have questions about assembling your committee.

## Prospectus Defense

From the beginning of the pandemic in spring 2020 defenses were held by videoconference. Now that the pandemic has wound down, defenses can, once again, return to their traditional in-person format. But the option to hold defenses entirely remotely, or in a hybrid form, remains available.

Contact the Graduate Program Assistant (GPA, *Mark Landeryou*, [gradinfo@econs.umass.edu](mailto:gradinfo@econs.umass.edu))

**at least two weeks before** your defense with the...

- **Official title** of your prospectus
- **Date** of the defense
- **Time** of the defense
- **Committee members'** names, departments, and roles (i.e., chair, member, outside member). In most instances, this will be your Dissertation Committee. The GPA will send this information to the Graduate Student Service Center.
- **Format:** in-person (provide location), hybrid (provide location), or remote. Crotty Hall rooms 308, 209, or 114 are all good choices for in-person or hybrid defenses.
- **Guests:** Welcome or not welcome

*Note – Make sure you and your committee members are comfortable using whatever technology you'll need for your defense. Contact the GPA several days prior to your defense date if you feel you need advice or instruction, if you have questions about hardware and software compatibilities, or if you need help in securing needed equipment or accessories. It may be a good idea to run a practice meeting to be sure everyone is able to participate fully in the defense.*

### **One week before your defense:**

If you are giving a videoconference or hybrid defense, you or your committee chair should create, in Zoom, a New Meeting for the defense. Whether or not you intend to allow guests to attend the defense, you should send a copy of your Zoom invitation to the GPA. Regardless of who creates the meeting, the committee chair should be 'host' during the defense. If you created the meeting you should transfer the host role to your chair when the defense begins. This will allow the committee chair to create breakout rooms during the defense at times when the committee wishes to adjourn for private discussion.

Distribute to any committee members who will attend your defense remotely all presentation materials you'll be using during your defense—slides, charts, illustrations, etc. OneDrive or Google Drive may be good options for this.

The GPA will announce your defense to the Economics community with a general email and a small number of printed posters. If you are willing to allow guests to attend, the emailed announcement will include your location or your Zoom invitation. If you are uncomfortable with that, let the GPA know and the location or Zoom invitation can be omitted.

The GPA will prepare a pdf of your signature page and ask you to proofread it. A day or two before your defense the GPA will create a DocuSign Envelope for your signature page. That will be routed to your committee chair who will e-sign it only after your committee is satisfied with your defense and with any prospectus revisions they've asked you to make. After your chair e-signs, the DocuSign envelope will be routed to the remaining committee members and the department chair, with completed copies going, finally, to the Graduate School ([gradrec@grad.umass.edu](mailto:gradrec@grad.umass.edu)) and you.

**After your defense**, email the GPA (at [gradinfo@econs.umass.edu](mailto:gradinfo@econs.umass.edu)) a **pdf of your prospectus** to be kept on file in the department.

From time to time students ask to see examples of prospectuses. The department keeps a library of its doctoral prospectuses as a resource for faculty, but we ask faculty to seek the author's permission before sharing a prospectus with other students. After your defense the GPA will ask you to complete a brief Google form to give, or withhold, permission to share your prospectus.

## **Between your Prospectus Defense and your Dissertation Defense**

If you have not already done so, **consider applying for an MA on the way to the PhD**. If you have satisfied the Economics PhD course requirement, you have almost certainly qualified for the MA. (See <http://www.umass.edu/economics/graduate/requirements>.) Economics does not require a Master's Thesis. The process is simple, and costs nothing. See the documents "Master's Degree Eligibility Form for Non-Thesis Students)" and "Master's Degree Checklist" on the Graduate School's web site,

<https://www.umass.edu/graduate/handbook/degree-requirements/masters-degree-requirements>

As a practical note, the GPA can probably fill out this form faster and more accurately than you can, and is happy to do it for you. Contact the GPA to start the process.

**The Grad School recommends at least 7 months between the two defense dates.**

If you have made **changes to your Dissertation Committee** you must contact the GPA so that notice of these changes may be sent to the Graduate School.

## Dissertation Defense

From the beginning of the pandemic in spring 2020 defenses were held by videoconference. Now that the pandemic has wound down, defenses can, once again, return to their traditional in-person format. But the option to hold defenses entirely remotely, or in a hybrid form, remains available.

Review the Graduate School's [Doctoral Degree Requirements](#), including the [Checklist for Doctoral Oral Examinations](#) and the [Checklist for Doctoral Degrees](#).

The Graduate School needs time to review your academic record and make an official public announcement of your dissertation defense in the [Weekly Bulletin](#), so the extra advance time matters.

**At least five weeks in advance** of your defense date, please provide the Graduate Program Assistant with the following information:

- **Official title** of your dissertation
- **Date** of the defense (including the day of the week)
- **Time** of the defense
- **Committee members'** names, departments, and roles (i.e., chair, member, outside member)
- **Abstract** (*To be included in the announcement to students and faculty within the department. You can send this to the GPA a couple weeks before the defense. Note the 350-word limit: [Guidelines for Masters Theses and Doctoral Dissertations](#), p. 8*)
- **Format:** in-person (provide location), hybrid (provide location), or remote

If your defense is held outside of regular business hours (i.e. during the weekend or after 5pm), you will need to justify why it needs to be held on that day and/or at that time.

*Note – Make sure you and your committee members are comfortable using whatever technology you'll need for your defense. Contact the GPA several days prior to your defense date if you feel you need advice or instruction, if you have questions about hardware and software compatibilities, or if you need help in securing needed equipment or accessories. It may be a good idea to run a practice meeting to be sure everyone is able to participate fully in the defense.*

Bear in mind the Graduate School's instructions to the committee at the time of their appointment:

*"...the audience must be able to hear the defense, see any slides or other visual aids, and address each other with questions or comments."*

### One week before your defense:

If you are giving a videoconference or hybrid defense, you or your committee chair should create, in Zoom, a New Meeting for the defense. Send a copy of your Zoom invitation to the GPA. Regardless of who creates the meeting, the committee chair should be 'host' during the defense. If you created the meeting you should transfer the host role to your chair when the defense begins. This will allow the committee chair to create breakout rooms during the defense at times when the committee wishes to adjourn for private discussion

Distribute to any committee members who will attend your defense remotely all presentation materials you'll be using during your defense—slides, charts, illustrations, etc. OneDrive or Google Drive may be good options for this.

The GPA will announce your defense to the Economics community with a general email and a small number of printed posters. Your defense, whether conducted in-person or remotely, is a public event. The Graduate School announces it to the public and invites all graduate faculty to attend. The GPA will share your Zoom invitation or defense room location with anyone who requests it.

The GPA will prepare a pdf of your signature page and ask you to proofread it. A day or two before your defense the GPA will create a DocuSign Envelope for your signature page. That will be routed to your committee chair who will e-sign it only after your committee is satisfied with your defense and with any dissertation revisions they've asked you to make. After your chair e-signs, the DocuSign envelope will be routed to the remaining committee members and the department chair, with completed copies going, finally, to the Graduate School ([gradrec@grad.umass.edu](mailto:gradrec@grad.umass.edu)) and you.

### **After your defense**

- **The GPA will complete the Doctoral Degree Eligibility form for you** and create a DocuSign Envelope for it. It will be routed, first, to you for your signature, then to the GPD and the department chair. A copy of the completed form will be sent to the Graduate School and you.
- **The GPA will announce your successful defense** with a memo to the Graduate School after your committee chair signs your signature page.
- **Complete the [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#).** The Graduate School automatically receives a copy of your completion certificate after you submit.
- **Dissertations are submitted electronically through [ScholarWorks@UMassAmherst](mailto:ScholarWorks@UMassAmherst).** Review the Graduate School's [Doctoral Dissertation Submission](#) instructions, paying special attention to the links,  
[The Electronic Dissertation Submission Process](#)  
[Guidelines for Masters Theses and Doctoral Dissertations](#)
- **Return your office key(s)** to Nicole Dunham or the GPA

### **Degree submission deadlines**

Degrees are awarded three times a year: September 1, February 1, and at Commencement in May. To qualify for the degree, all degree materials (defense memo from the GPA/GPD, signature page, degree eligibility form, Survey of Earned Doctorates, and electronic submission of the dissertation) must be received by the deadlines given in the [Graduate School's Academic Calendar](#) and the [Doctoral Degree Checklist](#). Our department does not need or enforce the separate, earlier review deadlines given in the Doctoral Degree Checklist, but you will be well-advised not to try to schedule your defense too near the submission deadline.

DISSERTATION TITLE (IN ALL CAP'S)

A Doctoral Prospectus Presented

By

FULL NAME (IN ALL CAP'S)

on

(Date)

Approved as to style and content by:

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Name, Chair

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Name, Member

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Name, Member

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James Heintz, Department Chair  
Economics

DISSERTATION TITLE (IN ALL CAP'S)

A Dissertation Presented

By

FULL NAME (IN ALL CAP'S)

Approved as to style and content by:

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Name, Chair

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Name, Member

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Name, Member

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James Heintz, Department Chair  
Economics