

From JCMG&G Handbook:

The Thesis Defense - Year 5

At least two months in advance of a student's Thesis Defense, the Thesis Advisor(s), after consultation with the student, should recommend to JCMG&G, the Chair of the Thesis Defense. The Chair of the Thesis Defense is an individual who is not a member of the Thesis Committee, but who is cognizant of the student's research field. The Chair reads the thesis and acts as a full committee participant in the Thesis Defense.

Prior to the student's submission of the defendable draft and the advisor's scheduling of the defense, all committee members, including the Chair, must receive a complete draft of the thesis. The committee must be given the opportunity to provide comments and suggestions to the student, which the student can then incorporate into their defendable draft. Before the submittal and scheduling may take place, the student and advisor must certify on the Doctoral Dissertation Defense Notice form that each committee member has approved submittal of the defendable draft and scheduling of the defense.

At least three weeks prior to a student's Thesis Defense, the student, in consultation with the Advisor and the Thesis Committee, will schedule the defense and inform the Academic Programs Office at WHOI and the Joint Program Office at MIT of the date, time and meeting facility for the defense, the thesis title, and the composition of the Thesis Committee and the Chair of the Defense. The Academic Programs Office and Joint Program Office will then advertise the defense.

At least three weeks prior to the Defense, the student must submit a defendable draft of the final thesis, which will then be available to interested members of the faculty at MIT and WHOI. The student should submit copies of his/her defendable draft to the Academic Programs Office at WHOI and the EAPS departmental office at MIT, and to each member of the Thesis Committee. The Joint Program Offices will invite the staff and faculty of the two institutions to the Thesis Defense via public notice.

In some rare instances, it may not be possible for all members of a student's Thesis Committee to be present for the Thesis Defense. These individuals should be provided with a copy of the final thesis at the same time as other committee members (i.e. at least three weeks before the Thesis Defense), and they should submit written comments on the thesis for consideration by the full committee at the time of the Thesis Defense.

The Thesis Defense consists of two parts: (1) a public presentation (normally about 45-50 minutes long) of the results of part or all of the thesis research, with a brief public question and answer period (10-15 minutes long) presided over by the Thesis Defense Chair, and (2) a private defense of the research results, also presided over by the Thesis Defense Chair (normally 1-2 hours long). Interested MIT faculty and WHOI Education Assembly members who have read the thesis may attend the private defense and ask questions of the student and participate in discussions following the examination. However, these individuals have no voting rights at the time that the Thesis Committee

finalizes its decision.

Following the period of questioning in the private defense, the student will retire from the room and the Thesis Committee will consider its recommendation. Each committee member will first write down his or her recommendation (pass, conditional pass, fail) and give it to the Chair. The Chair will record these results, make them known to the full Committee, and lead a discussion on Committee recommendations. Following this discussion, each Committee member will give the Chair his/her final vote. The Chair will record the final vote, together with comments, qualifications, and Committee recommendations, on the form "Thesis Defense Form" (Appendix V), and obtain the signatures of all Committee members on the form. Successful defense of the thesis is signified by unanimous approval of the Thesis Committee.

Following a successful defense, the Chair of the Thesis Defense will transmit the Committee's approval in writing to JCMG&G and to the Education Offices at WHOI and MIT, requesting that the student be recommended to the Faculty and Staff of the Joint Program for conferral of the doctoral degree. The Chair of the Defense should also transmit an account of this recommendation to the student.

If the student does not defend his/her thesis successfully, the Thesis Defense Chair will similarly transmit this result in writing. If the Thesis Defense results in a conditional pass, the student will be required to correct deficiencies in his/her dissertation research and/or thesis and then obtain final approval from the Thesis Committee. The method and schedule whereby the deficiencies are to be corrected will be specified by the Thesis Defense Chair in writing to the student, to JCMG&G, and to the Education Offices at WHOI (the Student Affairs Officer and the Budget Manager) and MIT. When the deficiencies are corrected to the satisfaction of the entire Thesis Committee, that Committee will so specify in a written memorandum from the Chair of the Committee to JCMG&G (with copies to the student and Education Offices), recommending the candidate for conferral of the doctoral degree. The memorandum of final approval must be signed by all members of the Thesis Committee.