Final Oral Defense

You must pass your final oral examination before your dissertation will be accepted by the graduate school. You should begin to schedule your final oral at least two months in advance to ensure all of your committee members can attend. No less than four weeks before the date on which you intend to defend the dissertation, a copy of the final draft of the dissertation, reviewed for technical and grammatical correctness, should be submitted to each member of the dissertation committee, after receiving approval from your supervisor. Two weeks prior to the defense date, a written request to hold the final oral examination must be submitted to the Graduate School. This request signifies the receipt of the doctoral dissertation for the purpose of administering the examination. The committee's decision to hold the examination must be unanimous. After all of the committee members have signed the document, the graduate advisor must sign the form before you submit it to the Graduate School. In the event that you cannot get the signatures from one of the committee members, the graduate advisor or your supervisor may sign by proxy on their behalf, provided that you produce documentation from this committee member indicating that 1) they have received your dissertation and 2) they will attend your oral defense at the prescribed time. In addition, you must reserve a room for the defense. Students usually hold their defense at their primary research location.

Be sure to send your EID, date, time, location, and abstract to the graduate coordinator so a public notice of your defense can be posted as is required by the Office of Graduate Studies ten (10) working days prior to the defense date.

At the final defense, you will begin by making a short public seminar presentation about your research (30-45 minutes). Remember that since the committee members have already read your dissertation, you need to highlight the importance, significance, and originality of your work. Following your presentation, the public and committee members will ask you questions during the final oral examination concerning your research and results.