

Planning for the Final Oral Defense/Examination

All Food Science students—campus-based and distance—must complete a final oral examination (also called a “defense”) during which they display competency in appropriate areas of expertise. The final oral examination for all students—including distance students—takes place on the K-State campus; you should plan accordingly and be prepared to make appropriate travel arrangements. Following are guidelines intended to help you, as a distance student seeking the THESIS/REPORT OPTION, plan for your defense.

The final oral examination (i.e., defense) will require approximately 3 hours and will consist of the following:

- a. **Seminar** | 30-35 minute seminar on your thesis/report topic
- b. **Oral Exam** | a comprehensive oral examination administered by your supervisory committee members

14-16 weeks prior to defense

- Begin planning for your defense well in advance to facilitate travel arrangements and other preparations. When considering travel options and defense dates, plan to spend two days on campus (i.e., an overnight stay).
- Submit a draft copy of your thesis/report to your advisor early. Keep in mind that there will be multiple drafts before one is suitable for submission to your committee. Solicit feedback and work with your advisor to optimize your presentation.
- Work with your major advisor and committee members to identify a date and time for your defense that is mutually agreeable to all, and does not conflict with another defense (Elsa Toburen keeps track of the calendar). Once a date is selected, your major advisor can assist you in selecting and reserving a room/venue.
- To help you prepare for the final oral exam, a study aid is available for the coursework material (based largely on a take-home assignment that Dr. Aramouni uses in FDSCI 740, Research & Development of Food Products).

At least 12 business days prior to defense (much earlier is better)

- Submit the "Approval to Schedule Final Examination" form - signed by your major professor, program chairperson, and all committee members—to the program office (Elsa Toburen) at least 12 business days prior to your defense. See: <http://www.k-state.edu/grad/forms/>. At this time you are also required to submit the title page and abstract. Your major advisor can assist you in obtaining the necessary signatures and the program office will forward to the Graduate School. Note: Deadlines to graduate are published for each semester on the Graduate School website. You must be enrolled the semester you take your final examination and graduate. Follow up with the Graduate School to ensure that you have completed all necessary diploma information, etc.

1 day prior to your defense

- Travel to Manhattan; plan to arrive on campus at least a day before your defense so that you can practice your presentation with your major advisor.

Day of defense

- On the day of your defense, you will deliver your presentation in front of faculty and other students and answer questions from the audience. It is customary for the student to provide light snacks and refreshments for those attending the defense.
- Following your presentation, the audience is dismissed and everyone leaves the room except your committee members. The oral examination then begins and usually lasts about 1 to 1.5 hours. Committee members will ask you questions related to your thesis/report seminar presentation as well as general food science questions derived from the core courses and study aid mentioned above.
- At the conclusion of the oral exam, you will leave the room while your committee members discuss your performance. Each committee member registers a vote of either *pass* or *fail* on the “Final Examination Ballot” form. Approval of the thesis/report is via a different ballot and may be submitted later if significant changes are required.
- At the conclusion of the deliberations, the committee will call you back in (hopefully with good news!) and will give you the signed “Final Examination Ballot” form. Make copies of the form for you and your advisor and deliver the original to the Graduate School in 103 Fairchild Hall.

After your defense

- Revise your thesis/report according to the committee’s and advisor’s suggestions. The final thesis/report must be approved by your advisor and submitted by the graduate school deadlines which are usually a week before classes end.
 - Travel home, basking in the glory of a job well done!
 - If your travel schedule allows, you are eligible—and welcome—to participate in the Graduate School commencement ceremony that takes place at the end of each semester (though this may not be feasible for distance students). Coordinate in advance with your major advisor if you wish to do this.
 - Respond in a timely fashion to any correspondence you receive from the Graduate School or other university offices.
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