

## Planning for the MS non-theses Final Seminar and Oral Exam (i.e., Defense)

All Food Science Graduate students must complete a final oral seminar and examination (also called a “defense”) during which they display competency in appropriate areas of expertise. The final oral seminar and examination for all students—including online students—takes place on the K-State campus (optional); you should plan accordingly and be prepared to make appropriate travel arrangements if relevant. Following are guidelines for online students seeking the Non-Thesis/Report (i.e., course work-only) option.

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

**a. Seminar** | 30-35 minute scientific seminar on a food science topic of your choosing.

The topic should be relevant to food science, familiar and of interest to you and, ideally, related to your professional experience. The topic must be approved by your major advisor and the seminar content should provide strong evidence that you have consulted and drawn from relevant peer-reviewed scientific literature (ie journal articles).

**b. Oral Exam** | a comprehensive oral examination administered by your supervisory committee members.

The oral exam takes place in closed session with your major advisor and supervisory committee members immediately following your seminar. You will be asked questions related to your seminar topic as well as general food science questions derived from the program courses.

**At least 12-15 weeks prior to defense**

- You must be enrolled in at least one credit hour during the semester in which you plan to graduate.
- Propose a topic for your seminar; solicit feedback and seek approval from your major advisor.
  - Work with your major advisor and committee members to identify a date and time for your seminar & exam that is mutually agreeable to all and does not conflict with another defense (Nicole Marple, nmarple@ksu.edu, keeps the official calendar). Once a date is selected, your major advisor will reserve a room/venue.
- Begin to make travel arrangements; plan to spend at least one day on campus (i.e., an overnight stay)-currently optional.
- Become familiar with Graduate School graduation deadlines: (<https://www.k-state.edu/grad/student-success/graduation/>).

**Once defense date is determined**  
(see Graduate School deadlines)

- Complete the online Graduation Application in KSIS and submit the “Approval to Schedule Final Examination” (ASFE) form two weeks before the exam. This is online at: <https://www.k-state.edu/grad/about/forms/>. This will go to all the committee members for approval electronically. Along with the ASFE form you must also submit the title of your seminar presentation to the FSI office, Nicole Marple, nmarpl@ksu.edu (your major professor will help). See the Graduate School website for applicable deadlines. Follow up with the Graduate School to ensure that you have completed all necessary diploma information, etc.

**1 day prior to your defense**

- Optional - Travel to Manhattan; plan to arrive a day before your seminar so that you may practice your presentation with your major advisor (if needed). A permit is required to park on campus and we will provide a one-day pass (See Nicole Marple).

**Day of defense**

- If relevant, plan to login to Zoom about 10-15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. Your advisor will send you the meeting link.
- You will present your seminar to an audience of food science faculty and, campus and online graduate students; following the seminar, you will field questions from the audience. After your presentation, the general audience will be dismissed. You will then convene in closed session with your committee members for the oral examination, which usually lasts 1.5 to 2 hours.
- At the conclusion of the oral exam, you will leave the meeting briefly while your committee members discuss your performance. Each committee member registers a vote of either *pass* or *fail* on the “Final Examination Ballot” form. At the conclusion of the deliberations, the committee will bring you back in. Your ballot will be processed electronically.

**After the seminar**

- If your schedule allows, you are eligible—and welcome—to participate in the Graduate School commencement ceremony that takes place at the conclusion of the semester. (This typically requires a separate visit to Manhattan, so isn’t always feasible for online students though there may be a Zoom option.)
- Respond promptly to any follow-up correspondence you receive from the Graduate School or other university offices.