

## General Stages of a Creative Component or Thesis Oral Presentation in Political Science

The Program of Study Committee will meet with you once you have had your creative component or thesis approved and requested an oral defense from the Graduate College. The forms for this are located at:

- Application for Graduation (Diploma Slip)
  - <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/common/forms/form.php?id=1&type=1>

Deadlines for this and other activities related to graduating are available at:

- <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/deadlines/>

Once your Diploma Slip has been approved by the Graduate College, you are responsible for initiating the “Request for Final Oral Examination” form, which must be submitted to the Graduate College at least three weeks before the final oral examination. This form can be obtained at:

- <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/common/forms/form.php?id=56&type=2>

Once your Request for Final Oral Examination has been approved by the Graduate College, the department will receive a Report of Final Oral Examination form; you can’t get that one online either. This is the form that summarizes the result of the final oral exam:

- **PASS:** Be granted the degree sought.
- **CONDITIONAL PASS:** Be granted the degree sought upon satisfying the conditions listed below. **THESE CONDITIONS WILL REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL WRITTEN NOTIFICATION BY MEMO TO THE GRADUATE COLLEGE SIGNED BY:** (check one)
  - ☐ Major professor(s)
  - ☐ All members of the examining committee
  - ☐ Other (specify)**CONDITIONS:** \_\_\_\_\_
- **NOT PASS:** Degree denied, but be given the opportunity to retake the examination. **Two months** must elapse before the examination may be retaken. A **WRITTEN EXPLANATION** should be provided with the report form.
- **NOT PASS:** Degree denied. The exam **MAY NOT BE RETAKEN** at a future date. A **WRITTEN EXPLANATION** should be provided with the report form.

The outcome of this decision rests entirely on your performance during the final oral exam.

Make sure you get a hard copy or electronic copy of your thesis/creative component to your committee members well in advance of your oral defense date.

The meeting for the final oral exam will be scheduled for 2 hours, but often is shorter. You should prepare PowerPoint slides for your oral presentation, and providing the committee members with a printed copy of the PowerPoint slides (preferably ahead of the oral date) is a good idea.

Here is what usually happens at the final oral examination:

- Brief introduction of the candidate for the degree (you, in other words). We may ask you to tell us a little bit about your background.
- What is the topic of your project?
- Why did you choose the specific topic of your thesis/creative component? Why is it interesting or important?
- How was the research done? In other words, what research methodology did you use, and why?
- What are your major findings?
- Conclusion and Recommendations for future research on this topic. That is, what else should be studied on this topic that you were not able to do yourself?
- The committee will ask you questions about your research and may ask questions about your class work.
- When we are done questioning, we will ask you to leave the room briefly (please don't go too far away).
- The committee will then discuss your case and vote one of the following: pass (usually with minor revisions), conditional pass requiring major changes, not pass with the opportunity to try again, or not pass with no second chance.
- You will be invited back into the room and told the results. Usually in consultation with your major professor, you will be informed about additional work on the thesis/creative component that may be needed.

For a thesis (not a creative component), you also will need to submit a:

- Thesis/Dissertation Submission Form
  - <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/common/forms/form.php?id=6>
    - Your thesis needs to be uploaded in final form to ProQuest.
- Thesis Checklist
  - <http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/common/forms/form.php?id=7>

So, what does a thesis look like?

- There are no minimum or maximum length limits, but usually about 50-100 pages should get the job done. The main point is to do a good job—worry about that way more than about length.
- A “standard” thesis frequently consists of 5 chapters (although that number of chapters is not mandatory)
  - Introduction
  - Literature review and development of your research question(s)
  - Research methods and data analysis procedures
  - Results
  - Conclusions and recommendations for future research
- It is possible to do an “alternate format” thesis that can consist of linked journal article-type papers that may be suitable for immediate submission for publication review.

How, exactly, is a creative component different?

- Usually shorter than a thesis
- Written more like an extended research paper, maybe with sections rather than chapters
- Has more the look and feel of what might turn into a journal article
- Does not count as an official university document, so does not get submitted to the Parks Library in hard copy or uploaded to ProQuest