



**Division of Graduate Studies**  
**Oral Dissertation Defense Checklist and Sample Script**

*Checklist for the Dissertation Defense*

**Prior to the Day of Defense:**

Has the candidate prepared a complete document to the satisfaction of the chair and set a defense date?

Has the student met with the dissertation chair and committee for final recommendations up to one month prior to the defense?

Has the student provided the committee members the complete document two weeks prior to the requested date?

Is the room for the defense scheduled, along with all needed equipment (computer, projector, screen, and camera and microphone for virtual defenses)?

Has the Public Announcement of Dissertation Defense been shared with Academic Affairs, the College Dean, Department Chairperson, Graduate Studies, Committee, and College Community?

**Overview of the Day of Defense:**

- Welcome the committee and guests to the dissertation defense.
- Introduce members of the committee.
- Introduce the candidate to the guests. Introduce guests, if appropriate.
- Explain the process of the defense:
  - The candidate's presentation
  - Question and answers from the committee and guests
  - Committee meets privately to make decisions
  - Candidate returns to meet privately with the committee.

Proceed with defense. Note: the chairperson is “in charge” of the defense and should take the leading role in ensuring the smooth completion of the process.

## Sample Defense Script for Dissertation Chairperson

Good afternoon (morning), and welcome to the doctoral defense of (*Candidate's Name*).

Today, we will be hearing the presentation of the research study, and the committee will discuss the written document, which we have in hand.

(*The candidate's*) committee members are with us today. They are... (*introduce members by name with committee role, department assignment, or other information, as appropriate*).

We are also glad to have with us today members of the JSU community, family and friends who are here in support of (*the candidate*).

Now, I'd like to introduce you to (*Candidate's Name*), a candidate for the doctoral degree in the College of (*Name*) in (*Program Name*) program, with an area of emphasis in (*Emphasis if appropriate*).

(*The candidate*) has previous degrees in (*state degrees, majors, and institutions for previous degrees*) and currently is working as (*position and company*).

After (*the candidate*) spends the next (20-30) minutes presenting his/her research, the committee members will ask questions and discuss the information and research. At the conclusion of the committee members' questions, the candidate may take questions from the guests. Questions and comments from the guests should be held until this time. After this, the candidate and all those not on the committee will be excused, while the committee meets to discuss the outcome of the defense.

(*The candidate*), we are ready for your presentation. (Candidate makes the oral presentation).

Thank you! At this time, the committee will pose (*1 or more*) rounds of questions to you, followed by questions from the audience.

(After the question session is over)

Thank you to (*the candidate*) for your presentation and responses to the questions from the committee and guests.

We will now ask the candidate and guests to be dismissed while the committee deliberates.

*This script was adapted from Marshall University.*

*Oral Defense of the Dissertation - Marshall University. (n.d.). Retrieved October 5, 2022, from [https://www.marshall.edu/edd/files/2012/08/Defense\\_protocol.pdf](https://www.marshall.edu/edd/files/2012/08/Defense_protocol.pdf)*