

ENSC 800: The Secrets of the Thesis Defence

How to Prevent a Major ReWrite with your Written Thesis

- Properly format your document
- Use consistent fonts for equations, figure/table captions
- Spell Check your document
- Use good grammar
- Never just copy somebody's figures
- More than one line of unquoted copying and you **FAIL**
- Make certain your references are properly done
- Make certain you cite the important papers
- Never use terms like the best, ultimate, superior unless you can prove it
- Never use terms like “big”, “large” without giving the number
- Always have error measurements eg 50 ± 1 micron
- Always compare results to the expected error.
- Give goodness of fit on curves
 - (eg. regression analysis, statistical errors etc)
- Summarize your results

Your Oral Defence

- Must have complete 2nd draft of thesis before booking
- Set committee, external examiner, chair with supervisor
- Submit thesis for Library review
- Book the defence
 - MASc 4 weeks before
 - PhD 6 weeks
- Thesis must fully distributed (email confirming this)
 - MASc 2 weeks before
 - PhD 4 weeks before

At the Defence

- Keep it Short 20-25 minutes MSc, 25-30 min Phd
- Give for a general audience
- Use the KISS principle: Keep It Simple Stupid

Answer these questions in thesis and at Oral

- Who did this
- What was the problem you were looking at?
- Why is it important to solve that?
- How did you do the work?
- When/where did you do this (if needed)?
- How does your results compare to others
- What did you do that was important/new?

What Happens at the Thesis Defence

- Your Oral Lecture
- Questions from the Committee
Be prepared to answer any background in your research area
- Questions from the audience
- Closed session –
more detailed questions from the committee
- PhD defence: watch for the external examiner
- PhD: never talk to your external before the defence
 - That can get your defence cancelled
- Closed session discussion

Structure of Your Lecture

- Title page (name, thesis title, what degree)
- Outline
- Introduce the topic
- What is the problem you want to solve?
- Why is it important to solve that?
- How did you do the work?
- How does your results compare to others
- What did you do that was important/new?
- Do not leave unanswered questions unstated
- Always summarize your work
- Future work – what should follow on your thesis

After the Defence

- Minor Corrections: make corrections to supervisor's liking.
- Supervisor signs off on thesis
- Get Library approval thesis
- Submit 4 copies of thesis for binding

Major Corrections:

- Review corrections with all committee members
- Each signs off when done to their agreement