

PROCESS FOR DEFENDING PROPOSALS AND FINAL RESEARCH PRODUCTS

M.S. students pursuing the research track (both Project & Report and Thesis options) and all Ph.D. students must prepare and defend a written document (report, thesis, or dissertation) describing their research study and its outcomes before their advisory committee. In most cases, students will undergo a closed pre-defense presentation with members of their committee, followed by a revision period during which they will address any concerns raised by their committee about the scope or quality of their work. Students should plan to provide their committees with a complete draft of their written work no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled pre-defense to allow time for review. Following the pre-defense, the committee will make recommendations regarding how much time should be allowed before scheduling the final defense. The final defense occurs no sooner than two weeks following the pre-defense and only when all committee members agree that the student is ready to proceed.

All research students are required to conduct a final defense presentation before their committee that is advertised and open to the public. The final defense must be formally scheduled with the Graduate School using the online VT Graduate School Approval System (<https://ess.graduateschool.vt.edu/pages/login.php>) at least two weeks in advance of the planned defense date. Scheduling the exam requires approval by all members of the student's committee, who may require submission of a revised document plus review time prior to approving the exam. Students should consult with their committee members and agree on a timeline for the final defense before scheduling the final exam with the Graduate School.

After the final defense has been scheduled with the Graduate School, students should reserve a room (link to reserve room form/process) and prepare a brief announcement of the defense including date, time, location, title, name, and a short abstract. The announcement should be submitted via email to [Lisa Cash](#) for distribution to the faculty and graduate listservs in the department.