

Nutrition and Exercise Science Master's Program Oral Examination Guidelines

The Master's Oral Examination is a formal, professional meeting designed to give the graduate student the opportunity to present the research study and findings to professionals who have expertise in the topic of research. These guidelines will apply to the Proposal and Final Defense. **Only students completing a thesis will participate in the Master's Oral Examination.**

1. After the completion of the thesis and two weeks in advance of the scheduled Master's Oral Examination, copies of the thesis should be submitted to each of the thesis committee members. Please refer to the University semester schedule of classes for applicable deadlines.
2. Along with the thesis advisor, you should select a **day, time and place** for the Master's Oral Examination. Be sure to check with each of the faculty members to determine availability for the meeting. Prepare and send a memo containing all necessary information regarding the Master's Oral Exam for each committee member allowing adequate lead time for the meeting. Be sure the room has been reserved through the appropriate process.
3. Adequate time and attention should be given to room and space arrangement. Consider:
 - a. utilization of audio/visual equipment or computer technology
 - b. adequate seating and work space for a minimum of five people (additional people can attend the meeting with approval from the thesis advisor and committee members)
 - c. giving details of the meeting to the departmental secretary
 - d. privacy and minimizing distraction potential during the meeting
 - e. practice using any equipment prior to the meeting
4. Presentation format is very important in the Master's Oral Exam. An appropriate format should be determined by you and the thesis advisor. The format for the meeting should formally, professionally and efficiently convey significant data. PowerPoint presentations, overhead projections, videos, lectures and story board formats are commonly used.
5. The thesis advisor will open the meeting and explain the agenda for the meeting. Typically, the first item on the agenda will be the graduate student's presentation. The presentation should contain the following items:
 - a. purpose of the research study
 - b. research question(s)
 - c. brief overview of methodology
 - d. findings
 - e. recommendations and impact

The order and depth of the information presented will vary with each student. Additional aspects of the research can be included. This part of the meeting will take approximately 30 minutes. You should be prepared to present all information with a minimum of notes. **Do not read your presentation.**

6. Following the presentation of the research study, typically, the thesis advisor will open the floor for questions from the thesis committee regarding the study. The graduate student is expected to provide reasonable answers to the questions posed by the committee. Also, at this time, faculty will make comments or recommendations regarding further study, editorial suggestions, and/or related research in the field.
7. At the completion of the question-answer and commenting session, the thesis advisor will excuse the student for a brief period. The committee will determine if the thesis is acceptable. The student is then asked to return to the room and the results are shared with the student. The second part of the meeting, including the question-answer session and the approval decision, will take approximately 30 minutes. Generally, the Master's Oral Examination will take about one hour.
8. Each of the thesis committee faculty must then sign 3 copies of the THESIS ACCEPTANCE FORM.
9. Expectations of the graduate student during the Master's Oral Exam are decidedly at a high level. The graduate student should be:
 - a. fully knowledgeable of the research study and the background literature
professional in appearance, communication, demeanor, attitude
 - b. fully prepared and rehearsed
 - c. enthusiastic and impressive
 - d. appreciative of the input and assistance of the thesis committee
 - e. open to suggestion or recommendations
10. The Master's Oral Examination meeting is not intended to be intimidating. It is, on the other hand, a formal academic process and is not to be taken lightly by the graduate student. It should be a rich learning experience in which the graduate student realizes the significance of their time, work and advancement in the field of knowledge. The faculty are there to guide the student through this unique process.