

Master of Humanities and Master of Social Science

Oral Exam Instructions

1. **Meet with your Master of Humanities/Master of Social Science Program Adviser** to discuss required paperwork and deadlines.
2. **Be certain you have finished all necessary coursework** or are in the process of completing all necessary coursework before beginning thesis or project hours.
3. **Your Committee:**
 - a. Every student who wishes to graduate must have three (3) faculty members on his/her examination committee: a Chair of the examination and two (2) other members (Readers). The majority of committee members must have Graduate Faculty Status at CU Denver (for example, 2 of 3 if a three-member committee; 3 of 5 if a five-member committee). Otherwise, there is a graduate faculty appointment process required. If you are in doubt, see your MHMSS program advisor or Program Administrator.
 - b. The Chair must be a full-time faculty member in CLAS at the University of Colorado Denver or approved by the Graduate School Dean if in another CU Denver college/school.
 - c. The two (2) other members (Readers) may be full- or part-time but must have “graduate faculty status.”
 - One (1) member can be from outside the University of Colorado system but must have expertise in the student’s research topic. The member must be able to provide feedback, mentor, and attend the student’s defense.
4. **Notify all committee members of their role in your exam and provide each member of the committee with a copy of this document.**
5. **As you begin your thesis or project, it is required that you meet with each of your committee members to establish clear expectations for the process.** This includes clarifying the role of each committee member (finding out how often various members want to see your work, or when they can expect your submission). NB: normally only your Chair will provide edits and suggestions to your draft, unless you have worked out an arrangement with another of your Readers (who generally only receive your thesis or project when it is ready for submission before the defense). Students can request extra reading support from their Reader(s) but it is at the discretion of those Readers. Make clear how often you intend to submit work to the members, what sort of turnaround time members will need to return comments to you during the writing phase and discuss with your committee members your timetable for completion. Discuss what you will do if you cannot meet your desired time frame (e.g., one committee member will be on leave when you want to defend, or your work isn’t up to committee’s expectations, and you must revise before defending). It is a good idea to take clear notes during these meetings.
6. **The editing and revision process takes considerable time.** You will submit chapters or sections to your Chair as you write them. Your Chair will require time to read and offer suggestions and edits to your drafts. In turn, you

will require time to input these. Prewriting, writing, Chair edits, and the input of revisions takes significant time so plan accordingly.

7. **Complete your final draft of the thesis or project and provide a copy to your committee Chair at least 4 weeks in advance of the date of your oral examination (or by an agreed upon time).** After the committee Chair/Director has approved the final draft, you may distribute copies to your other committee members **no later than three (3) weeks before the exam.**
8. **Arrange a Time and Place for your exam.**
 - a. At least one (1) month in advance of your exam, select a date and time convenient for all committee members.
 - b. You can contact the MHMSS Program Administrator to book the conference room in the MHMSS office at: 303-315-3565.
 - c. Re-confirm these arrangements with each member of your committee once your date, time, and place have been booked.
9. **Submit the Request for Examination form to the Graduate School Office for the final project or thesis defense 2 weeks before the exam. For information on form deadlines, please see the Graduate school website, the MHMSS Graduation Process Worksheet, and consult with your advisor.**
10. **Prepare for your Oral Exam. Your Chair can go over this with you pre-defense.**
 - a. Prepare a **10–15-minute presentation** based on your thesis or project topic. Your Chair/Director may designate a 10 min. max. Aim to stay within the time limit.
 - b. Be prepared to engage in a discussion about your work, including answering any questions posed by your committee regarding your work and presentation.
11. **It is a good idea to keep all your email correspondence regarding your work for reference.**
12. **You will need to bring the Thesis Approval Form to your exam (defense). Your Chair can help you to collect signatures.** Please note that the form can be signed electronically, or in cases where that is not an option, an e-mail to the program director from the signee will be accepted.
13. In the post-exam process, student and Chair/Director will work out required revisions if necessary. **The student has 90 days to complete revisions** post-defense according to Graduate School rules. The student does not receive a final grade until the Chair has approved of any revisions and the final document has been turned into the graduate school (theses only) or the program (projects only).

Please also consult the MHMSS Graduation Process Worksheet.

Information on the master's writing, oral exam, and overall process is available on our MHMSS website, the Graduate School website, and in the Graduate Student Handbook. **The student is responsible for checking current Graduate School deadlines and updates.**