

U-M Mathematics Department Ph.D. Defense Information and Timeline

Updated: 9/24/2020

All students who are planning on defending a thesis this year should review the Rackham dissertation handbook <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/downloads/oard-dissertation-handbook.pdf>. You can get a hard copy from the OARD Office located in the Rackham Building at 915 East Washington Street.

You might find it helpful to use the Rackham Thesis Template available at URL:

<http://dept.math.lsa.umich.edu/graduate/templates/thesisTemplate.html>

Students are responsible for completing all the necessary paperwork by the required deadlines and satisfying any other Rackham requirements (check your dissertation handbook for requirements and for all thesis deadlines). In particular, you will need to take a draft of your thesis to Rackham for a format check. It is important to complete your thesis and secure all necessary Departmental approvals by the deadlines to avoid an additional term of registration. Note that you must be registered and enrolled full-time as a student at the time of your defense. For Spring/Summer, you must enroll in the full term (not just Spring half or Summer half). The oral defense should take place by the last day of classes in a term. In order to graduate in a given term, ALL requirements must be completed by the requirement deadline associated with that term. Requirement deadlines can be found here:

http://www.rackham.umich.edu/help/graduating/doctoral_degree_deadlines/

Students should decide on an approximate date for their thesis defense after discussion with their advisor. Below is a list of important time constraints, labeled by the approximate time before the expected defense date.

4-6 months before defense - Selection of Dissertation Committee

This is done in consultation with their Thesis Advisor, who will serve as Chair of the Dissertation Committee, and according to the [rules prescribed by Rackham](#). Students should complete the Dissertation Committee Form and submit it to the math Graduate Office. The Math Graduate Office will then submit the formal petition for approval to Rackham.

The Dissertation Committee consists of at least four but typically five members. One of these, the “cognate member,” must be a graduate faculty member from a University of Michigan department other than mathematics, and at least two should be from the math department, though typically all remaining members are. Mathematicians from outside the University of Michigan can also serve with special permission from Rackham. (See the math Graduate Office for details on Special Members.) The Dissertation Committee is usually chaired by the Thesis Advisor and includes both readers of the thesis.

When you have selected your committee, come into the Graduate Office and fill out a “Nomination of Dissertation Committee” form. Rackham asks that this be done approximately 6 months before the date of defense.

Review Rackham’s timetable: <https://rackham.umich.edu/navigating-your-degree/dissertation-timeline/>

10 Weeks before defense - Scheduling your Defense

Schedule a date and time with the Math Graduate Office. Students need to make sure that the date and time meet with the approval of all the members of the Dissertation Committee prior to scheduling with the Graduate Office.

9 Weeks before defense – Copies of Thesis to ALL Committee Members (Department Requirement)

The Dissertation Committee Members need to have your readable and complete thesis in advance in order to read it and prepare their reports. Additionally, you will choose two primary readers to write and submit a report of your Thesis to Rackham. Allow time for corrections and modifications. Tell your readers that the reports are due via email to math-grad-office@umich.edu no later than 2 weeks before your defense.

3 Weeks before defense - Pre-Defense Meeting

The Pre-Defense meeting (also known as the format check) must be scheduled with Rackham at least three weeks before the defense. This meeting can be scheduled online here <https://rackham.umich.edu/navigating-your-degree/completing-doctoral-degree-requirements/> and should take place at least 10 working days prior to the defense. Students will receive the committee member evaluation forms as well as detailed instructions regarding the final paperwork necessary to complete before and after the defense.

2 Weeks before defense - Doctoral Committee Approval of Readers' Reports (Department Requirement)

Please remind your Readers that their Reader Reports must be turned into the Math Graduate Office at least two weeks before the defense. They should be submitted directly from the Readers by email to the Graduate Office (math-grad-office@umich.edu) and they should not be seen by the student. If the Reader Reports are not turned in two weeks before the defense, the student must change the date of defense. The Doctoral Committee examines the two primary Readers' Reports and must give its approval before an oral exam can be held.

3 Days before defense - Committee Member Forms

Rackham requires that its Evaluation Forms be turned in three working days before the oral exam, indicating approval to Rackham. The information on how the committee submits forms is obtained from Rackham during the Pre-Defense meeting. The student is responsible for making sure the Dissertation Committee members have the forms and turn them in to Rackham on time.

0 Days – Defense Day

Advisors should receive an email from Rackham with the required forms for your examiners to sign. Be sure your Advisor prints the Pass/Fail form for your defense and brings it to your defense.

Post Defense Day

Be sure to leave adequate time after your defense date to make any necessary corrections prior to [Rackham's deadline](#).

Sample Timing

Selection of Committee Members: November 5, 2020 (4-6 months before Defense Date)

Schedule Defense Date: Dec. 25, 2020 (10 weeks before Defense Date)

Copies of Thesis to Committee Members: Jan. 1, 2021 (9 weeks before Defense Date)

Pre-Defense Meeting at Rackham: Feb. 12, 2021 (3 weeks before Defense Date)

Readers' Reports & Doctoral Committee Approval Due: Feb. 18, 2021 (2 weeks before Defense Date)

Committee Members' Dissertation Evaluations Turned In: March 2, 2021 (3 days before Defense Date)

Recommended Defense Date: March 5, 2021 (4-6 weeks before Rackham deadline)

Rackham Defense Deadline for April 30, 2021 Conferral: April 2, 2021