Dissertation and Thesis Submission Process Flowchart

Use this flowchart to stay on track with thesis and dissertation requirements that all Penn State graduate students must meet to graduate on time.

Tip: Know Your Deadlines!
Familiarize yourself with the four major and mandatory deadlines:

1. Apply to graduate
2. Submit initial format review
3. Defend your thesis
4. Submit final thesis/dissertation

Find upcoming deadlines:

1. Format Review

Upload your thesis or dissertation to the Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) website. Make sure your file has the following:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Committee page
- At least three chapters

Within 2-3 weeks, the Office of Theses and Dissertations (OTD) will email you a PDF with comments for you to address. Students only need to do a format review once. **Please remember to "Apply to graduate" in LionPATH by the specified deadline.** If you have not applied, your final thesis or dissertation cannot be approved.

2. Defense

Doctoral students: If you have not done so already, schedule your doctoral defense.

Master's students: Please direct all questions concerning master's theses defenses to your program.

3. Upload Final Submission

To upload your final submission:

1. Pay the fee through the payment portal.
2. Use comments from OTD and your committee to make all necessary corrections.
3. Submit your final submission to ETD.

No changes can be made after the final is submitted.

4. Committee Approval

This is a separate process from committee approval of your defense.

After uploading your final submission, the ETD website will indicate that it is in "Pending Status." When this happens, a series of approvals will need to take place in the order below. **Each approver will receive an email when it is their turn to review and approve**. The student also gets notified.

1. Advisor
2. Committee members
3. Graduate program head or professor in charge

Committee approval is not final approval for your thesis or dissertation.

5. Final Graduate School Approval

After the committee approves, OTD will review one final time. If further corrections are needed, your dissertation will be rejected and sent back. Once it is free of errors, OTD will mark your dissertation as approved, and you will receive an email confirming this.

When you receive email confirmation, you will know your thesis or dissertation is complete.

The End!

Now that you have finished your submission, you have completed your thesis/dissertation requirements. If not, contact your program immediately. Theses and dissertations are released to the University Libraries approximately one week after your degree is awarded depending on your embargo status. If you chose a restricted embargo your work will be on hold for two years.