

Ph.D. in Computing and Information Sciences

Dissertation Process Policy

The doctoral dissertation is one of the final steps leading to the award of a Ph.D. degree. A dissertation manuscript is a scholarly presentation and publication of the original research results students conducted demonstrating their research capabilities. The faculty in the Ph.D. program of the Computing and Information Sciences have developed a set of guidelines that students should follow as they prepare their dissertation manuscript and defense.

It is the prerogative of the student's advisor and dissertation committee to tailor these guidelines to suit a particular situation and it is the responsibility of the student to follow these requirements.

1. Content and Format of the Dissertation

A dissertation manuscript typically has three main components: (1) "front matter": everything before the main text (Sample pages is included in section 2 below); (2) the main text; and (3) everything after the main text (the "back matter"). While the cover page, copyright page/dissertation release, abstract page and other optional pages form the front matter, the main text of the dissertation should be divided into chapters that cover the main research, analysis, results, and future directions. The back matter should contain the references, author's biography and the appendices.

Follow the Ph.D. Proposal & Dissertation Template for the suggested Dissertation Content and Format Guidelines.

2. The Ph.D. Dissertation Defense

The dissertation defense can be scheduled only after all course and research requirements for the degree have been successfully fulfilled. The procedure for dissertation defense is as follows.

Step 1. Submit dissertation manuscript

Once the manuscript has been completed and the advisor agrees that the dissertation is ready to defend, student submits his/her dissertation manuscript to the dissertation committee members and the program director, allowing them at least **four weeks** to read and comment the manuscript before the dissertation.

Step 2. Scheduling the Defense

After addressing all the comments from the dissertation committee members and program director, student can schedule the dissertation defense. It is the student's responsibility to contact his/her committee and inform them of the arrangements. The email broadcast announcement of the dissertation defense including the dissertation title, abstract, student's bio and defense time and location, should be coordinated with the program office. The dissertation advisor, on behalf of the student and the student's dissertation committee, should notify the program director of the scheduling of the dissertation defense by forwarding the title and abstract of the dissertation along with the scheduled date, time, and location of the examination.

Step 3. The Defense

A defense chair, a non-voting committee member, will be assigned by the Ph.D. Director before the defense. The chair must be a tenured member of the RIT faculty who holds a Ph.D. and is not currently affiliated with the Ph.D. program. The chair's main responsibility is to ensure that a fair and appropriate defense procedure is followed.

The defense is comprised of two parts: 1) a 50-minute presentation defending the dissertation research that is open to the public in the form of a seminar, followed by an open Q&A session.

2) a closed-door Q&A afterwards that is only attended by the student, the committee members, and optionally the program director.

After the questioning is completed, the student is asked to leave the room while the committee deliberates. Committee members discuss the merits of both the dissertation and the defense to decide whether the dissertation is adequate and what revisions are required.

A *Report on Dissertation Examination Result for Ph.D. Degree* form will be given to the committee chair before the defense. The final result of the dissertation will be 1) passed, or 2) passed subject to minor revision, or 3) passed subject to major revision, or 4) failed. The form must be signed by each member of the dissertation committee upon completion of the oral examination.

It is the responsibility of the advisor to communicate with the student about required revisions and other requirements. If the dissertation is *passed subject to minor revision*, the final dissertation must be submitted within 3 months from the date of the dissertation examination. After receiving the revised final dissertation, the program director and the advisor will determine whether the revisions are acceptable, and sign the *revision satisfactory* section in the *Report on Dissertation Examination Result for Ph.D. Degree*. In the case of dissertation is *passed subject to major revision*, the final dissertation must be submitted within 12 months from the date of the dissertation examination. Depending on the level of revision needed, the advisor and the committee will review the revised dissertation and determine whether the revisions are acceptable. The *revision satisfactory* section in the *Report on Dissertation Examination Result for Ph.D. Degree* will be signed by the program director and the committee members. While the examination is primarily concerned with the research dissertation work, it is also of the nature of a final certification of the student's overall knowledge for the degree.

Step 4. Program Objective Assessment by dissertation committee members

After the dissertation defense, each dissertation committee member will complete the *GCCIS PhD Program Objective Assessment Form* anonymously and submit it to the PhD Program Director. This form is mainly used to evaluate students' academic and research skills according to the four program objectives of the PhD program for program quality control and assessment purposes. This information is not to be shared with the student without approval of the PhD Director.

3. Dissertation Archiving

After the committee members have approved the final dissertation, student will prepare for dissertation archive to fulfill the degree requirements. RIT requires student to submit a hard copy (on one side the page) of the final dissertation to the RIT Archive, and an electronic copy to UMI/ProQuest and the RIT Digital Media Library. One electronic copy of student's work will be submitted to the RIT Digital Media Library by Wallace Center staff.

Please check *RIT Thesis & Dissertation Preparation Specifications.pdf* for the detailed information on dissertation bindery preparation, publishing thesis/dissertation in ProQuest/UMI and **RIT Digital Media Library (DML)**.

Step 1. Preparation of the Dissertation for Binding

Student is required to provide the following for dissertation binding:

(Sample pages are included in *Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal Template*)

- Title Page:
 - Title
 - Author's name
 - Type of degree
 - Name of college
 - Date approved: month, day, year
- Committee Signature Page
 - Must be signed and dated by the Ph.D. program director, your dissertation advisor and committee members.
 - An unsigned thesis/dissertation will not be accepted.
- Abstract
 - The abstract summarizes the entire manuscript and its arguments for readers. It should be one typed page, no more than 350 words.
 - A thesis/dissertation without an abstract will not be accepted.

Step 2. Publishing Dissertation in ProQuest/UMI

It is required that all RIT theses and dissertations be submitted to ProQuest/UMI. This database includes citations for materials ranging from the first U.S. dissertation accepted since 1861. RIT offers this database to members of the RIT community through a paid subscription each year.

Embargoes: Any student who desires an embargoed thesis/dissertation must make a request through the Graduate Studies' office.

Step 3. RIT Digital Media Library (DML)

The Publishing and Scholarship Support Center will automatically provide open access for student's thesis/dissertation in the RIT Digital Media Library (DML) at no cost to the student.