



## **Guide to the MS Thesis Defense**

### **Cal Poly Dept of Civil & Environmental Engineering**

Follow the steps below to arrange for your Thesis Defense:

1. Once your research and thesis writing has reached “near completion” it is time to plan for your thesis defense. See grad ed for templates and guidelines on thesis writing (<https://grad.calpoly.edu/masters-thesis/masters-thesis.html>). [“Near completion” is best identified by your research advisor and participating committee members.]
2. Schedule your defense. The defense should be scheduled after a complete draft of your thesis is ready for review by your committee. A defense should be done during dead week or finals week. Coordinate a date/time that works with your committee and keep an email record of this. Summer term defense is allowed in principle, but the committee may not be available. Feel free to invite students, mentors, and others to the oral presentation portion of your defense.
3. Prepare to deliver a 20 min presentation on your research followed by a question-and-answer session. A thesis defense typically lasts 90 to 120 minutes in total.
4. After successful completion of your defense submit the Master's Thesis Approval Form found here (<https://grad.calpoly.edu/checklist-forms/forms.html>). Follow up with Grad Ed on submission of your Thesis per the same website guidelines and forms.

### CE/ENVE Thesis Defense Process

“A thesis is the written product of a systematic study of a significant problem. It identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product evidences originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis is required.” (Title 5, Article 7, 40510 b.3.A.)

The following are requirements for a thesis committee: 1) that the graduate student have a thesis advisor who is a permanent full-time faculty member from the student's program; 2) that the thesis advisor and the student recommend, for approval by the graduate coordinator and/or department head, a thesis committee comprising of at least three faculty members; 3) that two of



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these members, one of which is the committee chair, be from the student's program. Exceptions to the thesis committee composition must be approved by the College Dean.

If a thesis report is required in a Master's degree program, a committee-approved copy must be completed in accordance with University specifications. Guidelines to be followed in preparing a final copy for filing with the University can be obtained from Graduate Education, or online at <https://grad.calpoly.edu/checklist-forms/forms.html>.

All Master's theses must go through Graduate Education's Thesis Formatting Review Process wherein an Editor reviews and provides the student with needed corrections. Upon completion of any corrections required by the Editor or thesis committee, the student submits the electronic thesis report to the DigitalCommons@CalPoly, a digital archive for the University. The thesis formatting review process does not impact a student's degree completion." -- Cal Poly Catalog

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