

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
POLITICAL SCIENCE & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Checklist: Doctoral Dissertation

The Semester Before Your Defense

1. If the makeup of your advisory committee has changed since your comprehensive exams, notify the Graduate Advisor of the names, roles, and email addresses of your new committee. The Graduate Advisor will submit this form online to the Graduate School.
2. Start finishing up your dissertation! Next semester, you will be required to allow your major professor two weeks to work with you on a complete draft, your committee three weeks to read the final dissertation, and the Graduate Advisor will need a window of time in which to schedule the defense before the Graduate School deadline, which means *you will not have the entire semester to finish your dissertation*. To avoid a last-minute rush, finish now.

The Semester in Which You Defend Your Dissertation

1. [Apply for graduation](#) on Athena. The deadline to do so comes shortly after the beginning of the semester. You can find this semester's deadlines [here](#). If you have previously applied for graduation and need only to change your graduation date, email Graduate School Enrolled Student Services at [gradinfo@uga.edu](mailto:gradinfo@uga.edu) to request a change to the current semester.
2. Follow departmental deadlines for distributing and defending your dissertation. The Graduate Advisor will have sent these dates out shortly after the midpoint of the previous semester.
3. Submit an electronic copy of your dissertation to the Graduate School for a format check. For format check information and submission guidelines see [this page](#). To find this semester's submission deadline, please see the [Graduate School deadlines](#).
4. When your major professor has approved your dissertation for distribution to the committee, bring four hard copies directly to the Graduate Advisor's Office. You will then be able to officially distribute your dissertation. If you would prefer a different method of distribution, please speak to your major professor and committee. PDF copies of your dissertation are acceptable if one or more committee members specifically request them. The Graduate Advisor will schedule a dissertation defense no less than three weeks after the official distribution date.

5. At the defense, you may be asked by your committee to make changes to your dissertation before final approval. You will need to make these changes and submit them to your major professor, who will need to sign off on them before the Graduate School deadline. You will also need to [submit a final electronic copy of your dissertation](#) to the Graduate School by this date. Again, see the [Graduate School deadlines](#) for your specific semester.