

All Ph.D. students are required to complete a Ph.D. dissertation defense to obtain the degree. The defense should take place on-campus. In special cases, defenses can be conducted remotely.

Plan of Study

An approved Plan of Study should be in GradPath. All of the coursework must be complete on the plan by graduation. Details how to update your Plan of Study can be found on the Program Requirements tab.

Summer or Winter Defenses

Ph.D. students who have enrolled in at least 1 unit in the fall or spring semester can extend graduation to winter or summer without enrolling in extra units for that term (i.e. a student enrolled in 1 unit of OPTI 920 in Spring 2019 can also graduate in Summer 2019).

Selecting Your Ph.D. Exam Committee

You will work with your faculty advisor to determine at least two other members to serve on your Ph.D. dissertation defense committee. A Ph.D. [committee](#) must consist of three members; at least two must be current tenured, tenure-track, or tenure-equivalent UA faculty members. If the third member is not a current tenure-track UA faculty member, that individual must be approved by the Graduate College as a special member. A member who is not a current tenure-track faculty member will not be eligible to serve as sole chair of the committee but can serve as co-chair if approved to do so by the Graduate College. If you would like to request a special member, email the OSC [Graduate Advisor](#) with the special member's name along with an electronic version of that person's latest CV. The Graduate Advisor will submit the request to the Graduate College.

Once your committee has been selected, you will contact them to confirm that they are willing to take part. After confirmation, you will fill out the Doctoral Dissertation Committee Appointment Form in GradPath. Assign your faculty advisor as the *Chair*. If you have two faculty advisors, you will assign the two as *Co-Chair*. The other members of your committee will be assigned as *Member*. Special members will be assigned as *Special Member*.

Dissertation Proposal Form

The next GradPath form to complete is the [Dissertation Proposal](#) form.

New Exam Method: You will need to fill out the form and get it signed by your faculty advisor. Once it is complete, turn it in to the Graduate Advisor.

Old Exam Method: You will coordinate with your committee to have the dissertation proposal examination. Please see [Previous Exam Method](#) for more information. After the exam, turn in the signed proposal form to the Graduate Advisor.

Dissertation Format

Formatting should follow the Graduate College's guidelines, which can be found at: <https://grad.arizona.edu/gsas/dissertations-theses/dissertation-and-thesis-formatting-guides>. You can also reference the [OSC Alumni Directory](#) to view examples past dissertations.

Scheduling Your Defense

You should refer to the Graduate College's [Important Dates and Deadlines](#) to ensure you defend by the appropriate date. Note that dissertation submission dates are earlier than the end of the semester. If you

defend or submit your dissertation to the Graduate College after the deadline, you will be considered a graduate of the following semester and may have to enroll in additional units.

You are responsible for organizing a date and time for your defense. Generally, dissertation defenses are scheduled in three hour blocks. Many students find it useful to use a scheduling tool like [Doodle](#) to find a time that works for the whole committee.

Reserving a Conference Room

The Graduate Advisor can help you reserve an OSC conference room for your defense. You can email the [Graduate Advisor](#) with the date and time of your exam. Please try to request a room no later than two weeks before your defense if possible. This ensure that a space will be available for you. The room will be reserved for the three hours of the exam along with a half an hour for setup.

Announcement of Final Oral Defense

Once the day, time, and room has been established for the defense, complete the Announcement of Final Oral Defense in GradPath.

Submit Your Abstract

After submitting the Announcement of Final Oral Defense, you will write a short abstract (1-3 paragraphs long) describing your dissertation topic. Email the abstract to the [Graduate Advisor](#). The Graduate Advisor will include your abstract in the OSC Campus announcement for your dissertation defense. The abstract should be emailed to the Graduate Advisor ideally at least two weeks before the defense.

Conference Room Setup

OSC conference rooms are all equipped with white boards, table space for your committee, additional seating for audience members, and a projector. The rooms do not have a computer, so you will need to bring your own. Academic Programs has a laptop for loan if needed. Please make sure to request to borrow it before the exam. The projectors are equipped with a VGA plug. If your computer does not have a VGA input, you will want to bring an adapter with you. Academic Programs does not have an adapter to borrow, but you can check with the [IT Systems Manager](#). The UA Libraries also have [technology to borrow](#).

Attire

You will want to look presentable while defending to your committee. Dress in business casual attire for your exam. You do not need to wear a full business suit unless you desire.

The Defense

At the defense, you will prepare a 30 minute presentation about your dissertation. You should check with your advisor to confirm the length and expectations of the presentation. During or after the presentation, questions can be asked by audience members. After audience questions, everyone but the committee and student will leave the room and the committee will ask follow up questions and may also ask questions regarding the courses that the student took throughout the graduate program. At the end of the defense, the committee will decide if you receives a pass, pass with revisions, or fail.

AFTER PASSING THE DEFENSE

After the defense, an approved committee draft of the dissertation must be archived with the [Graduate College](#). The Graduate College will then check the dissertation's format. Formatting corrections can be completed after the submission deadline as long as the initial committee approved dissertation is submitted by the deadline.

Complete the [Student Clearance Form](#).

Complete the [College of Optical Sciences Exit Survey](#).

Complete the [Graduate College Exit Survey](#).

After the Graduate College has approved your dissertation, email a PDF of the final draft to the Graduate Advisor.

GRADUATION AND DIPLOMA

Commencement

OSC hosts a graduation ceremony for optics graduates after the fall and spring semester. Summer and winter graduates may also participate in these ceremonies. At the OSC event, you will have the opportunity to have your name called, walk across the stage, and be hooded by your faculty advisor or the dean. An email with commencement details will be sent out toward the end of the semester with more details.

University of Arizona offers a commencement ceremony in the spring for all UA graduates. Information for the event can be found on the [Commencement](#) webpage.

Graduation Attire

Cap, gown and hood can be purchased directly from the [UA Bookstore](#), either in person or online. Stoles of gratitude are optional. OSC will provide a college-specific tassel for your cap when you check in on the day of the commencement ceremony. The most important piece is the regalia hood, where the dean or your faculty advisor will ceremonially put it on you. Since Optical Sciences does not have a designated hood color, students usually select orange (for engineering) or gold (for science).

Diplomas

Diplomas are printed and sent from a third party. They will be mailed to your Permanent Address in UAccess. You have the option to create a Diploma address. To learn more about the diploma process, check the website of the [Office of the Registrar](#).