Advancement to candidacy and dissertation defense – Department of Economics

To advance to candidacy, students must demonstrate that they have identified a novel and feasible research question that has the potential to be shaped into a dissertation thesis. The judgment (and willingness to serve as advisor) is at the dissertation chair’s discretion, and different faculty members have different ways of assessing readiness. Methods of determining readiness may also differ between different types of research.

No later than the end of the Fall quarter of the fourth year, students will be required to

- Form a dissertation committee.
- Submit an official dissertation proposal. The proposal is expected to include a completed draft of a research paper
- Defend their proposal in their assigned research seminar, with their dissertation committee present.
  - Meeting must be open to all faculty members and graduate students.
  - At least two faculty who are not members of the dissertation committee must be present at the defense. When necessary, because of overlap between the dissertation committee and the faculty leading a seminar, the graduate office will arrange for additional faculty to be present. Participation of the two additional faculty members is intended to enhance transparency and uniformity of standards across fields.
  - The paper must be available at least one week before the defense and must be provided at that time to the department Graduate office to be publicly posted.
  - Following the presentation the dissertation committee will either recommend advancing to candidacy or require a further defense at a future date.

Dissertation defense. Each student will give a public defense of their dissertation and answer such questions as attending faculty may have. Following the presentation, the dissertation committee will either recommend awarding the degree, require minor revisions not requiring a further defense, or require further work and another defense.

- The dissertation must be available at least one week before the defense and must be provided at that time to the department Graduate office to be publicly posted.
- Two faculty members from outside the dissertation committee and outside the student’s research seminar (picked at random) will attend the defense and advise the dissertation committee on the suitability of granting the PhD. Participation of the two additional faculty members is intended to enhance transparency and uniformity of standards across fields.
- The dissertation committee, if unanimously agreed, may under special circumstances waive the requirements for a public defense and the participation of outside faculty members.