

QUICK REFERENCE • RESEARCH DOCTORAL STUDIES

Prospectus Submission and Defense

PhD Supervisors guide students through the Advanced and Candidate phases, oversee prospectus development, direct dissertation writing, and conduct oral defenses.

Supervisor Expectations

- Mentor the student in selecting and refining a dissertation topic.
- Guide the student's preliminary literature review and methodology.
- Ensure the project is sufficiently focused and achievable.
- Review and approve the prospectus before it is submitted to the RDS Office.
- Recommend second and third readers in consultation with the department chair.

Prospectus Components

- Finalized title
- Research problem and thesis
- Significance of the study
- Review of relevant scholarship
- Proposed methodology
- Tentative chapter outline
- Substantial bibliography

Submission Process

- Student develops the prospectus under the supervisor's direction.
- Supervisor approves the prospectus for a defense hearing.
- The RDS Office coordinates the prospectus defense and distributes materials to the committee.
- Student submits the revised prospectus to the RDS Office via Canvas course 81910 (by November 1 for fall faculty meeting or March 1 for spring faculty meeting).

Defense Hearing

The purpose of the defense is to evaluate the proposed dissertation before significant research and writing begin. During the defense, the committee should assess:

- The significance and originality of the project.
- The clarity of the thesis and research question.
- The appropriateness of the methodology.
- The scope and feasibility of the proposed dissertation.

Following the defense, the committee may:

- Approve the prospectus.
- Approve the prospectus with required revisions.
- Request substantial revisions and a subsequent defense.

Once the prospectus is approved, the student may proceed with dissertation research under the direction of the supervisor and dissertation committee.

Research Doctoral Studies Office | Norton Hall, Room 157 | rds@sbts.edu | 502-897-4119