BEFORE THE DEFENSE

1. **Apply to graduate** within the semester you intend to finish

2. Visit the **GW Electronic Dissertations** website for information on formatting requirements. Upon acceptance, your dissertation will be published electronically—take some time to understand the copyright and patent implications!!

3. Identify your **Examination Committee**, which often consists of your thesis advisory committee members. This committee must consist of:
   - Two readers (other than your mentor/co-mentor; they read the dissertation, and provide comments before defense, then participate in examination)
   - Two others

This will total of at least four examiners, remembering that the mentor and co-mentor cannot be examiners. One examiner must be outside the program in which the student is earning the degree. The outside examiner may be at GW, at another university, or at another institution. The student may be required to submit the outside examiner’s CV. For NIH students, at least half examiners must be faculty from a GW campus (Foggy Bottom or CNHS).

4. Select a defense date. Confirm the date and time with all committee members. It is SAFEST not to schedule this date until your readers have signed off on the “Dissertation Research Committee Sign-Off” sheet (available from your Program Director) but a date may be scheduled before that if the student can extract from the readers and other examiners an estimated length of time they will need to read the dissertation and plan accordingly.

5. Distribute dissertation to readers. Have them sign “Dissertation Research Committee Sign-Off” when they are satisfied with the document.

6. Make their suggested changes. Then distribute dissertation to rest of committee.

7. Email the IBS office (gwibs@gwu.edu) to schedule a room for your defense. Plan about 3 hours. You will first present a 1-hour public seminar, and then defend your dissertation.

8. Identify a Chair for your defense. This is a person NOT on your examination committee and not your mentor or co-mentor who will preside at the defense. It should be the IBS Director, your Program Director, or other senior faculty member.

9. **AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR DEFENSE** you should email the IBS Office (gwibs@gwu.edu) with your program information and your current CV so we can create programs and flyers for your presentation.
AFTER THE DEFENSE

1. Make any required changes to the dissertation. Get advisor’s and other required signatures on revision (if any). The sign-off form for corrections is available from your Program Director.

2. Register for and complete the online Survey of Earned Doctorates. Forward the confirmation email to Nicole Davidson in the CCAS office after you have completed this requirement.

3. Submit your dissertation with all corrections made as instructed at GW Electronic Dissertations website. Also complete the UMI Dissertation Publishing Agreement form at the time of submission. The Electronic Dissertation form must be provided as a hard copy, certifying that the form of the dissertation submitted electronically is the final, corrected version. This form must be signed by the student and the Program Director and submitted to Nicole Davidson.

   • Make hard copies of your dissertation for your mentor and others as they have requested. The Graduate School no longer needs hard copies.

4. Commencement ceremonies are optional and happen only once per year [in late May]. You must have all required forms and documents submitted and approved by April 1 in order to participate in that year’s commencement ceremony. Keep in mind that it can take up to 5 business days to approve your electronic dissertation once it has been uploaded, so plan to submit it at least a week before the deadline.

   • If completion of all required elements occurs after April 1, you will have the option to take part in commencement the following May.

   • Eligibility details: Students who complete degree requirements from 4/2/18-4/1/19 are eligible to participate in Commencement on May 19, 2019. Students who complete degree requirements from 4/2/19-4/1/20 are eligible to participate in Commencement in May 2020.

   • If you intend to participate in commencement ceremonies, please ask your research advisor to participate and hood you.

updated 8/31/18