

Completing and Documenting Your Thesis/Dissertation Prospectus Approval

The dissertation prospectus describes the aims and rationale for the proposed epidemiology research and outlines proposed design and analytical methods. It should address the significance of the proposed program of research in epidemiology. It should be no more than 25 pages (single-spaced). The prospectus is submitted to the committee members prior to initiation of the research and at least one week prior to oral presentation to the committee for evaluation and approval of the prospectus.

Students are advised to meet with committee members to discuss their research plan prior to this meeting to increase the likelihood that the prospectus will be approved. Prospectus development is typically an iterative process involving several rounds of feedback from the committee; it is not uncommon to hold two or three committee meetings prior to the final approval meeting. Unanimous approval of the prospectus is required through the [Thesis/Dissertation Proposal workflow form](#) after a special meeting of the student's committee to evaluate the prospectus.

The Dissertation Prospectus Defense Meeting milestone may be completed before the comprehensive examinations but should ideally be held within one year of comps.

Instructions for Completing the Workflow Approval Form

1. Students will schedule their prospectus approval meeting with the committee members (see Laura Hefley, laura-hefley@uiowa.edu, for assistance with scheduling if needed),
2. **After the prospectus draft is approved by the committee, the student will initiate the [Thesis/Dissertation Proposal workflow form](#).**
3. **Fields that the student will fill out:**
 - a. Student Name
 - b. Dissertation Chair/Advisor
 - c. Date of Prospectus Meeting
 - d. Anticipated Graduation Date
 - e. Prospectus Title
 - f. Committee Members, including non-UI committee member contact information if applicable
 - g. Attachment type: Thesis/Prospectus Draft that will be discussed during the meeting with the committee for approval
 - i. The student will not enter the *Prospectus Result* – this is to be filled in by the chair
4. When the form is uploaded to workflow, it will first route to the Graduate Program Coordinator to review for completion and to flag any committee members that need Graduate College approval.
5. On the date of the exam, the Graduate Program Coordinator will route this to the Dissertation Chair/Advisor.

6. Instructions for committee chair/advisor:

- a. In the workflow form, the chair will click the [Edit Submitted Data blue box](#).
 - b. Under the Prospectus Result, the Chair will enter the committee's decision.
 - i. Approved as Outlined in the Prospectus
 1. Optional comment box: if the chair has additional feedback for the student from the committee on the approval, it can be documented here.
 - c. After the decision has been entered and comments, if appropriate, the chair will hit the [green Approve Package](#) button.
7. After the committee chair has entered the result, the other committee members will receive the package and review the package to approve (assuming that the decision from the chair is entered as agreed). Committee members should approve using the [green Approve Package](#) button.