



English Department

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Steps

Procedures for M.A. Graduate Students preparing for their Dossier: Dossier Proposal and Dossier Hearing

(2017)

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1.2b The Dossier

The Dossier Hearing is the culminating intellectual experience for students in the M.A. program. It is the moment when work in specific courses enters into broader debates within the department and the discipline. The dossier is composed of three papers initially written for courses taken with three different faculty members and revised in light of their presentation as a culminative work. The student selects papers that will produce a dossier that locates the student's range of intellectual projects within the disciplines of literary and cultural studies and critical theory.

In the semester prior to the proposed Dossier Hearing, the student selects three course papers for revision and inclusion in the dossier. Each paper must be sponsored by a different faculty member. At least two of these faculty must be from the English Department. The student asks each faculty member to sponsor the paper (typically written for that faculty member, but not always) and to serve on the dossier committee. The student also asks one of the faculty to serve as convenor. The student then works with these three faculty members to revise course papers for inclusion in the dossier.

When all three committee members have agreed to serve on the dossier committee, the student petitions the Graduate Committee to approve or deny (and resubmit) the plan for the dossier. The *Dossier Proposal Cover Sheet* requests a brief rationale for selecting three particular papers, a summary or abstract of each paper's critical and/or theoretical content, a projected date for the hearing, and the signature of the faculty convenor, who will chair the defense and also make certain that the entire dossier proposal is in order.

Students may request the Graduate Committee for a change in the composition of the dossier committee at any time prior to the submission of the completed dossier.

Under the supervision of the dossier committee, the student revises the three course papers and prepares a brief critical comment (about 4-8 pages) that introduces the dossier and that defines and critiques the intellectual project represented by these three papers. This introduction is designed as a way for the student to analyze the intellectual framework(s) governing the papers and his or her M.A. work as a whole. All dossiers are expected to conform to the current MLA style manual.

Dossier Hearings may be held at any time during the semester within the following guidelines:

a. Students may expect that the full-time faculty in the department will be available for advising and sponsorship of dossier papers within the limits of their expertise and taking into account their other commitments. Students working with a faculty member scheduled to go on leave must plan the revision and scheduling of the dossier with that future leave in mind.

b. Students are expected to present drafts of the dossier papers early enough in the semester to allow for responses and revisions. Faculty members will read and comment on up to two revisions of papers they are sponsoring, not counting any revisions done in the course for which the paper was originally due. Students are responsible for working out a viable revision schedule with each faculty sponsor and for all final revisions of their dossier papers.

c. The Dossier Proposal must be submitted to the committee for its approval or disapproval no later than the week after Spring Break, although the hearing itself may be any time before the end of the semester.

d. The completed dossier is typically submitted to the committee for its approval or disapproval at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled hearing date in order to give the committee ample time to read and respond to it.

Dossier Hearings are normally not held after classes end. If the final dossier is not acceptable to the committee and the committee refuses to schedule the oral defense, the student has one opportunity to resubmit, but only within the following two semesters.

1.2c The Dossier Hearing

The hearing, chaired by the convenor, is a conversation about the strengths, weaknesses, implications, assumptions, problems, and prospects of the work in an accepted dossier.

The candidate opens the hearing with a 10-minute presentation of the dossier and the issues the candidate sees for discussion in it from which the examining committee can draw additional questions and responses. The hearing normally lasts 45 minutes to an hour.

1.2d Scheduling the Dossier Hearing

The Dossier Hearing will NOT be scheduled unless the student's Dossier Proposal has been approved by the Graduate Committee. Once the student's Dossier Proposal has been approved by the Graduate Committee, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will distribute Time Worksheets to the student's convenor and committee members. The student's Dossier Committee will be instructed not to submit their Time Worksheets until the student has met all final revisions. Upon receipt of the committee's Time Worksheets, the student's hearing date will be determined and the student and his/her committee members will be notified.

1.2e Results of Hearing

The voting reflects the Dossier Committee's judgment as to the quality of the dossier and the performance of the candidate at the Dossier Hearing. The voting on the acceptability of the oral examination is done in executive session of the committee. The committee must be unanimous in its approval for the candidate to pass the examination; otherwise the dossier is not accepted.

When approved by the committee, each member records his or her approval by signing the *Dossier Hearing Form*. The committee convenor returns the *Dossier Hearing Form* to the Graduate Studies Coordinator.

The examining committee reports one of the following results:

- HIGH PASS
- PASS
- LOW PASS
- NOT PASS

A high pass is not a pre-requisite to further graduate study in the department at Ph.D. level, but an unsatisfactory performance may lead the Graduate Committee to deny a Ph.D. application or to accept it only provisionally. If a student fails the

Dossier Hearing, he or she has one more opportunity to pass the hearing. Under certain circumstances, the second attempt may be premised on condition that the student first satisfactorily revise the dossier according to the committee's recommendations after that failed hearing.

Dossier Notes:

If one of your committee members is currently on-leave and you are unable to obtain their signature on the dossier proposal cover sheet, they can send their approval to the Graduate Studies Coordinator via e-mail and for the GSC to sign in lieu of them.

Finally, please remember that prior to defending your dossier, the finished hard copy of the entire document should be ready to circulate amongst your committee members two weeks before the scheduled date so that everyone has time to read it. This is the typical procedure, and any variations should be cleared with your entire committee in advance of the defense date to make sure that their schedules can accommodate a shorter time period between receiving the text and preparing for the defense.

RV DEC2016

DOSSIER PROPOSAL FORM _____

DATE: _____/_____/_____

Name: _____
(Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Initial)

ESSAYS: Provide a brief rationale (500 words) for presenting these three particular papers. The rationale should situate the dossier both within the student's individual intellectual development and within the critical and theoretical discourses pertinent to the essays. Also include a summary or abstract of each paper's content (in paragraphs of about 200 words each) in which you outline the argument of each paper.

1) _____
(Title)

(Faculty Sponsor) (Signature required)

2) _____
(Title)

(Faculty Sponsor) (Signature required)

3) _____
(Title)

(Faculty Sponsor) (Signature required)

PROJECTED DATE OF HEARING: _____

Examining Committee: All committee members must agree to serve before the proposal is submitted for approval.

The undersigned hereby approves the attached rationale and abstracts.

(Convenor's signature) (Date)

Date: _____

Graduate Committee's Decision: Approve: _____ Deny/Resubmit: _____ Vote: _____

Comments: _____

DOSSIER HEARING FORM _____

NAME: _____
(Last) *(First)* *(Middle)*

PROGRAM OF STUDY: M.A./ENGLISH SUID # _____

ESSAYS:

(Title)

(Faculty Sponsor)

(Title)

(Faculty Sponsor)

(Title)

(Faculty Sponsor)

DATE OF HEARING:

TIME:

ROOM:

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

1) _____
(Faculty Sponsor) *(Signature)*

2) _____
(Faculty Sponsor) *(Signature)*

3) _____
(Convenor)

RESULTS: _____
(Convenor's Signature)

RESULT OPTIONS: High Pass
Pass
Low Pass
Not Pass

If the examining committee, or convenor, wishes to submit a brief report to the Director of Graduate Studies, they may do so on the reverse side of this form or on a separate sheet. Please bring this form (completed) to your dossier hearing and return it to Terri after the hearing.