JHGC Guide: Preparing to Graduate

All graduate students must schedule and take a final exam in order to graduate. Your cumulative GPA and the GPA on your Program of Study coursework must both be at least 3.0. You must be registered for a minimum of 2 research credits in order to apply for your degree and take your final exam. Exams must be formally scheduled.

1. **In the semester prior to your last**, review your Program of Study (POS) and ensure that all courses on your POS are completed. If you need a copy, please contact your Academic Coordinator (Deb or Lisa). Review your committee to be sure it is accurate. If changes need to be made to your POS, please complete and submit a ‘Program Change’ or ‘Committee Change’ form. Consult with your Academic Coordinator (Deb or Lisa) regarding your proposed changes in advance to ensure they do not cause problems.

2. **Review your graduate student program handbook** for special procedures and deadlines regarding thesis/dissertation and final exams.

   Crop and Soils, Entomology, and Plant Pathology students should review their non-credit exit seminar/presentation requirements. *Details are provided in your Graduate Student Handbook:*

   [Crop & Soil Sciences, Horticulture, Plant Pathology, Entomology, Food Science, MS in Agriculture](#)

3. **Send an ‘intent to graduate’ message to your committee and your Academic Coordinator (Deb or Lisa)** in the first week of the term, to outline status of chapters, target dates for drafts and final draft, as well as proposed defense date and due date of the scheduling form. Not doing this exercise may impact your ability to finish as planned. You will likely find your target deadlines are sooner than later.

   *NOTE: Students planning to defend early in the term should contact Deb Marsh prior to term starts in order to discuss alternate arrangements for employment since assistantships are half-time term (Aug 16-Dec 31 or Jan 1-May 15) appointments and require full-time enrollment; there are no partial term appointments.*

4. **You must be enrolled for a minimum of 2 credits of research** (700/702/800) in the semester (or summer) you take your final exam.

   *International Students: Reduced Credit Load (RCL) status allows an international student to enroll part-time (if not on assistantship) for the purpose of defense, i.e. less than 10 credits in the Fall or Spring, or less than 3 credits in the Summer. Contact the [International Programs office](#) in advance for details and application. All coursework must be finished to be eligible for RCL (unless your final defense seminar is for credit). International students will still be required to pay health insurance.*

   *F-1 international students should also investigate/apply for [Optional Practical Training (OPT)](#) at least 3 months in advance; likewise, J-1 international students interested in post [Academic Training](#) should investigate/apply at least 3 months in advance too. Contact the International Programs office for details.*

5. **Review the [Thesis and Dissertation Formatting and Submission Guidelines](#) document provided by the Graduate School, and pay particular attention to formatting. Download and use the ‘[Thesis and Dissertation Word Template](#)’ to ensure your formatting is acceptable.*
6. **Apply for your degree at your earliest opportunity** (in myWSU). Instructions are [here](#). You must apply by the initial* deadline noted below in order for your name to appear in the Commencement Program for that semester. Eligible students will receive an email with instructions at the beginning of each semester. Students will be directed to complete a “Task List” item known as an “Activity Guide”. This activity guide is called the “Graduate School Application for Graduation Checklist” and it is accessed by going to your myWSU Student Center and clicking on the item in their WSU ‘General’ box. This checklist guides students through the process of verifying their diploma name and address as they apply to graduate. The application for degree will also trigger the Graduate School to perform a degree audit. Once that is completed, they will email the student a To-Do checklist for careful review/action.

*Initial deadlines for degree applications (without late fee):
- **Fall 2020**: October 9, 2020 (application opens 6/8/2020)
- **Spring 2021**: March 6, 2021 (application opens 10/12/2020)
- **Summer 2021**: May 28, 2021 (application opens 1/1/2021)

**NOTE:** If you already applied for your degree for a previous term but did not complete your degree requirements, you may request the Graduate School to update your application for degree to a new term without additional charge (fee valid for one year). Contact the Graduate School at [gradschool@wsu.edu](mailto:gradschool@wsu.edu) by the aforementioned deadlines. Be sure to include your name, ID#, MS or PhD in ________, and new semester and term for graduation in your message.

7. **Students seeking a graduate certificate** (i.e., Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Agriculture) must also apply for their certificate by the following absolute deadlines, or an exception to policy is required.
- **Fall 2020**: October 9, 2020
- **Spring 2021**: March 6, 2021
- **Summer 2021**: May 28, 2021

8. **Be sure to make arrangements for participating in commencement** [here](#) by the deadline (you must register for commencement, cap/gown ordering). Master’s students may participate in commencement the semester before or after their final exam if they wish. Doctoral candidates must have all degree requirements met in order to participate in commencement. Pullman holds a graduation fair in late March – information on the website above, as well as the latest with regard to adjustments related to COVID/safety.

9. **Schedule your exam.** Once your thesis(non-thesis)/dissertation has received preliminary approval by your committee, you may [schedule your exam](#), gather signatures and submit your form to Deb or Lisa, for Chair/Director signature and submission to the Graduate School.

**Your scheduling form is due no less than 10 working days in advance of the proposed exam date.** Please work ahead of schedule to collect signatures, and reserve rooms. Entomology students must provide a hard copy to the Department Chair with the scheduling form. MSAG students should consult with Lisa regarding distance exam arrangements via ZOOM.

**Last date to conduct final exam in graduation term:**
- **Fall 2020**: November 20, 2020
- **Spring 2021**: April 23, 2021
- **Summer**: July 30, 2021
- **Fall 2021**: November 19, 2021
- **Spring 2022**: April 22, 2022
- **Summer 2022**: July 29, 2022
Note: An interim exam may be requested in extenuating circumstances. Contact Deb or Lisa in advance.

10. Provide a PDF final draft of your thesis or dissertation to the Graduate School no later than 10 working days in advance of the exam date.
   - Thesis: submit PDF of draft to gradschool@wsu.edu (include your name/WSU ID# in email).
   - Non-thesis reports: Reports are not submitted to the Graduate School.
   - Dissertation: Submit PDF of draft to www.dissertations.wsu.edu.

11. In addition, please email a PDF final draft of your thesis, non-thesis report, or dissertation to Deb or Lisa. This copy will be posted to Sharepoint for faculty preview no less than 10 working days in advance of your exam date. Some departments will request a hard copy for preview as well (Food Science, Entomology).

12. Within 5 working days after your successful defense you need to submit your title page, signature page, and abstract on 100% cotton paper to the Graduate School as well as the Hold Harmless/Copyright Agreement Form. Doctoral students must also submit the Survey of Earned Doctorate Pamphlet (or the confirmation certificate from the Survey online form).

   You will also need to upload the final electronic copy of your thesis to the library in .pdf format within the 5 working days. The 5 day deadline begins the day after your defense. (For example, if you defend on a Monday, your final paperwork will be due the following Monday.) More details here.

   Non-thesis: The final version of the non-thesis report are also due to the Academic Coordinator, for program records.

13. Also upon successful completion of the exam, please complete the departmental exit requirements posted here (departure checklist, exit interview, exit survey, post-grad info and effort certification, information on thesis binding, etc.) – preferably within 10 working days.

14. Stay in touch with your WSU email account. If the Graduate School encounters any problems, they will contact you at your WSU email address. Students will retain their NIDUsername@wsu.edu email address in perpetuity. To access your student email account, go to http://office365.wsu.edu and sign in using your WSU NetworkID and password. This is the same login and password used to access MyWSU and Blackboard. For WSU security, everyone is required to reset their password every 180 days. Your NIDUsername can be renamed to first.lastname if you desire. To do so contact CougTech at 509-335-4357 or cougtech@wsu.edu.

15. Diplomas are usually available ~10 weeks after the semester in which you graduate. You should have provided a diploma mailing address upon applying for your degree. To add or edit your diploma mailing address, go to myWSU. Directions are provided here. Your diploma will be mailed to this address within 3 months of the official graduation date.