

ENGLISH MA ORAL THESIS DEFENSE

EVALUATION RUBRIC

Having submitted her or his thesis to the reading committee for approval, a thesis student sits for a one-hour oral defense of thesis. The thesis director and two readers serve as the examining committee.

Examiners judge the student's performance on the oral defense according to the following rubric:

(A) PASS

A grade of Pass is awarded to the student who demonstrates a clear understanding of the genesis of the thesis, can clearly explain the methods and rationale for the project, and is able to discuss competently the relationship of the thesis to other relevant research and creative work in the field.

(B) FAIL

A grade of Fail is given to a candidate who obviously does not have a critical perspective on his or her own work, is unable to defend methods and rationale, has little idea of how the thesis relates to other work in the field, and cannot verbally articulate ideas clearly and coherently. A candidate who fails the thesis defense is given one opportunity to retake the examination.

(C) HIGH PASS

A grade of High Pass is awarded to the candidate who can convincingly defend the methods and rationale for the thesis, has a sophisticated critical understanding of how the project relates to other scholarly and creative work, and has impressive command of spoken English.