

What happens in an Organization Studies honors defense meeting?

An honors thesis defense is a meeting including the honors candidate, and the review committee including the faculty mentor, the OS Honors Coordinator (or OS Director if the coordinator is also the mentor), and the independent third reader. This is a chance for the candidate to present his or her thesis formally to a faculty audience and to discuss the work from beginning to end.

By the time the honors defense is actually scheduled, the thesis deadline has passed, the faculty mentor has approved a final draft of the honors thesis, and it has been distributed to all parties mentioned above. In the meeting itself, after preliminary introductions, it is often helpful to ask the candidate to leave the room so the committee members can briefly confer about their impressions of the thesis.

The candidate is then invited back into the room, and he or she gives a 15 - 20 minute informal presentation of the honors thesis. The candidate describes what led him/her to the topic, what theoretical and practical questions were addressed, the research question, the data collected and analyzed, what was found, the conclusions drawn, and what the candidate thinks it all means. The candidate may decide to use PowerPoint slides or some other visual aids in making the presentation. This also is a useful opportunity for rehearsal before the public presentation in the later OS honors symposium. After the initial presentation, committee members will have a number of questions for the candidate. The question-and-answer session may go on for approximately half an hour.

Following this, the candidate is usually asked to leave the room again and the committee discusses the defense and typically makes a decision about the honors designation for the thesis (honors, high honors, or highest honors). The candidate is then invited back for hearty congratulations on her/his efforts, and any suggestions for revision are communicated. The honors designation agreed to by the defense committee will appear on both the diploma and the transcript of the honors student.