

You need to send your committee members a draft of your thesis two weeks before the defense. You should already have incorporated comments from your mentor before you send the draft to your committee members. Discuss this part of the timeline with your mentor, because it depends on how long it will take them to read and comment on the draft, and how long it will take you to revise. But perhaps you would want to submit a draft to your mentor at least one month before the defense. It's often helpful to work backwards, and determine a timeline for completing the various tasks or sections for the draft.

There are no formal guidelines for the thesis itself, other than it should be in the format of a submittable scientific paper. It does not need not be submitted, but should include all of the sections: Cover Page, Abstract, Introduction (with hypotheses or objectives), Methods, Results (with and tables and figures), Discussion, Acknowledgements, Literature Citations. Pages and lines should be numbered. Your introduction should provide the context for your research, and the discussion integrates your findings into the body of literature. You might ask your mentor to show you examples of other Master's theses, if available. If you do intend to publish yourself, it is useful to select a target journal up front, so that you can follow their instructions for formatting. (In EEB, we encourage students to publish. In other areas, faculty may integrate student findings into a larger paper). Regardless, the thesis will eventually be available online, so you want to produce work that makes you proud!

After a successful thesis defense, students have two weeks to complete additional revisions, have them approved by the advisor, and upload the pdf to Academic Works.