

DEFENSE VOTE POLICIES

All dissertation defense **outcomes are determined by a minimum of three votes in one category** (*Approved as Submitted, Approved Pending Revisions, Referred, or Fail*). Members of the defense committee should consider themselves independent examiners, and should therefore not feel pressured — or be pressured — to join the majority opinion of the committee. While respecting disciplinary differences, the PhD degree should only be awarded to research that represents an original contribution to the field, no matter the field. If a dissertation receives two votes in the *Referred* and/or *Fail* categories, the Voting Sheet and dissertation must be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences for review. In such instances, the candidate should be informed that the committee's vote was not conclusive, and that to await further communication from the Office of the Dean.

<p style="text-align: center;">Approved as Submitted</p> <p>The committee may ask that minor revisions or corrections be made before the dissertation is deposited. The committee should convey an account of those minor revisions to the candidate at the defense. These minor revisions should be completed to the satisfaction of the advisor within one month after the defense. If for exceptional reasons more time is needed, the candidate may apply for an additional one-month extension by submitting a letter to gsas-dissertations@columbia.edu with the request.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Approved Pending Revisions</p> <p>The committee may ask that revisions be made before the dissertation is deposited. The Defense Moderator of the defense committee will ensure that a written description of those revisions be provided to the candidate typically by the advisor— at the defense or shortly thereafter. Care should be taken to distinguish between revisions requested and recommendations given for future thought or research beyond the dissertation. These revisions should be completed to the satisfaction of the advisor within six months after the date of the defense. Any member of the committee may ask to review a copy of the revised version of the dissertation.</p>
<p>Referred</p> <p>The committee believes that substantial work must be undertaken on the dissertation by the candidate before it can reach a recommendation to award the degree. A detailed written description of the reservations about the examined dissertation as well as of the revisions required should be provided to the candidate by the advisor at the defense or shortly afterward. At the time of the defense, a subcommittee composed of at least three unanimously agreed upon members of the original committee (and including the advisor) will be formed. The specified revisions should be completed to the satisfaction of the subcommittee within one year after the date of the defense. A statement from the candidate indicating the specific changes made in response to the committee's request for revision must accompany the revised version, and both be sent to the advisor. The advisor will share the statement and the revised version with the members of the defense subcommittee, each of whom must communicate explicitly to the advisor their appraisal of the revisions undertaken. A majority of the subcommittee must approve the revised version for the candidate to be recommended for the degree. The dissertation will then be recommended for award of the degree.</p>	
<p>Fail</p> <p>The committee believes that the dissertation is not acceptable, and the candidate will not be recommended for the degree. No candidate may have a second defense unless the Dean of GSAS concludes, upon evidence provided either by the candidate or by a member of the committee, that procedural irregularities occurred during the defense.</p>	