Procedures and Requirements of Ph.D. Dissertation and Defense at Tsinghua-Berkeley Shenzhen Institute (TBSI)

1. Doctoral Dissertation Review Process and Requirements

1.1 Basic Requirement

At the beginning of the last year, Ph.D. candidates should carefully check whether they have completed all coursework, Prelim, Quals, and other requirements. Students should check with the Student Education Office (SEO) to see if the credits obtained meet the requirements of Ph.D. program. See TBSI relevant rules for details or contact SEO.

1.2 Dissertation Writing

Students should follow the "Guidelines for Graduate Dissertation Writing at Tsinghua-Berkeley Shenzhen Institute" in writing their dissertations. Advisors (advisor group) should carefully examine the structure, content, quality, format, and academic norms of the dissertation. If classified materials are involved, the dissertation shall meet the special requirements of "Tsinghua University Graduate Dissertation Confidential Management Procedure."

1.3 Dissertation Review

Major Timeline:

(1) At least 8 weeks before the defense, a Ph.D. candidate should submit to the advisors 1) a complete version of the dissertation and 2) an "Academic Achievement Report", which lists all publications, awards, attendance of conferences or seminars, research outcomes, patents, and other academic achievements obtained during the Ph.D. study. At the same time, the candidate should consult with his/her advisors and prepare for the required materials for dissertation review (including a list of reviewers) and defense. A secretary should be identified and will help coordinate and manage the dissertation review and defense (see details below). The advisors should carefully review the "Academic Achievement Report" of the candidate and provide a detailed "Academic Evaluation Report". The advisors or candidate must return this form to the SEO at least 1 week before the defense.

(2) At least 7 weeks before the defense, the candidate submits a list of 5 reviewers (signed by the advisors) to the SEO. These reviewers must satisfy the requirements listed below and be approved by the CSE. If any reviewers are not qualified, new reviewers must be provided.

(3) At least 6 weeks before the defense and upon approval by advisors, the Ph.D. candidate submits an application for dissertation review and fills in required information in the University Info System.

(4) At least 5 weeks before the defense, the dissertation must be provided to the approved reviewers for review.

(5) At least 3 weeks before the defense, the candidate submits a list of defense committee members to SEO for pre-approval[*].

(6) At least 2 weeks before the defense, a copy of the dissertation must be provided to defense committee members who are not the dissertation reviewer.

(7) At least 1 week before the defense, the candidate must obtain all the five reviews and submit the following materials to SEO: 1) the returned reviews[**] and 2) advisors' detailed Academic Evaluation Report.

* Note 1: If any reviewer recommends major revision or rejection, the dissertation must be revised for one to six months and send to the same reviewer for another round of review. In such case, the Ph.D. candidate should allow for one additional semester before the graduation. For details, see the "Rules of Anonymous Review for Doctoral Dissertation" document. If any committee members do not meet the requirements, new members must be nominated and re-evaluated. This process may take several weeks. The candidate should plan for additional time to account for this situation.

** Note 2: All the dates described in the above timeline are the *last* day (hard deadline) for the corresponding actions to be completed. There are no slack times in this timeline. Therefore, it is highly recommended that all the actions be taken much earlier than the dates described above. For example, the candidate should try to submit the dissertation to reviewers 8 weeks before the defense.

Requirements for Dissertation Review:

To initiate the dissertation review process, a Ph.D. candidate should first get approval from advisors and then apply to SEO for dissertation review at least 7 weeks before the defense by submitting the dissertation

and a list of reviewers (including names, contact information, and proofs of qualification). The list of reviewers must be approved by the CSE and the dissertation must meet the formatting requirement before the dissertation can be sent for review. The candidate should submit related information of dissertation review and defense to University Info System at least 6 weeks before the defense. At the same time, the candidate must also submit an application for dissertation review to SEO. SEO will check and provide feedback about dissertation format and release the dissertation for review.

In addition to being comprehensively reviewed by the advisors, the dissertation must also be submitted to 5 domestic and international domain experts (internal and external) for review. These reviewers should have doctoral supervisor qualification or senior professional title in similar domain. At least half of them should have doctoral supervisor qualification. If the dissertation involves interdisciplinary research, at least one interdisciplinary specialist must be included in the reviewer list.

At least three invited reviewers should be free of any conflicts of interest with the candidate or advisor(s). Potential conflicts of interest cover individuals such as co-authors, co-investigators/collaborators, business partners, students/postdocs, supervisors, relatives, or any persons who have a financial or personal interest that could affect the judgement of the academic quality of the dissertation. Non-relative relationship within the past 5 years (and longer for students/postdocs/supervisors) should be strictly avoided in the reviewer list.

To apply for defense, a Ph.D. candidate must obtain approval by advisor(s) and receive all the five dissertation reviews. The candidate should consult with his/her advisors about sending the dissertation for review as earlier as possible (**see Note 2 above). The dissertation must be provided to reviewers at least 5 weeks before the defense. Review feedback must be returned at least one week before the defense.

2. Dissertation Defense Process and Requirements

2.1 Approval by the Chair of Academic Advisory Committee (AAC)

At least 3 weeks before the defense, the candidate submits a list of defense committee members satisfying the conditions described in Section 2.2 to SEO for pre-approval by the Chair of the AAC.

At least 1 week before the defense, the candidate must submit all remaining application materials for dissertation defense, including 1) at least 3 returned dissertation reviews, and 2) advisors' detailed

evaluation report of candidate's academic achievement.

2.2 Requirements for Defense Committee and Members

The defense committee consists of five to seven members and should include members of the doctoral qualifying examination. It should also include one member of the Degree Committee of the matching major (department or institute) or one member of the Interdisciplinary Taskforce Committee. Other members should be domain experts with a senior professional title. Advisor(s) can nominate the members. However, the final list of defense committee members must be approved by the chairman of AAC. All requirements for the defense committee are listed in the following:

(1) At least one member of the Qualifying Examination Committee should be included;

(2) It should have one member from the Degree Committee of the matching major or one member from the Interdisciplinary Taskforce Committee;

(3) More than half of the members have doctoral supervisor qualification in related disciplines;

(4) At least one member is a reviewer of the dissertation;

(5) The committee should include two or three outside-institute members (from other schools or organizations) ;

(6) If interdisciplinary research is involved, one or two experts in relevant discipline(s) should be included;

(7) At least one AAC member should be included (for special cases, the AAC can designate a faculty member to join the defense committee on behalf of AAC).

One member of the defense committee is elected to be the chair. This chair should be a full professor with a doctoral supervisor qualification.

A copy of the dissertation should be provided to defense committee members who are not the dissertation reviewer at least two weeks prior to the defense.

A defense secretary should be included in the defense committee. This secretary should be an inside-institute professional with an intermediate title (or above) or a Ph.D. degree in related disciplines. A

new secretary should complete secretary training.

Up to one dissertation advisor can serve in the defense committee and attend the defense. However, the advisor cannot be the chair of the defense committee. If the defense is spot-checked (randomly selected for quality check), the advisor cannot be a member of the defense committee.

No relatives of the Ph.D. candidate can serve as a dissertation reviewer or a member of the defense committee.

2.3 Defense Procedure

The procedure of the defense should include the following steps:

(1) AAC representative reads out the AAC approved defense committee members, including the chair and other members (this list of members should be officially sealed with AAC stamp).

(2) The chair of the defense committee announces the commencement of the defense.

(3) The secretary of the defense committee briefly introduces defender's background information including bibliography, academic records and other relevant information obtained after joining TBSI.

(4) The defender defenses the dissertation (around 40 minutes).

(5) The defense committee and other general participants ask questions.

(6) The defense committee holds a closed-door meeting after the Q&A part to evaluate and discuss the defense:

   a) The secretary of the defense committee reads out the summary comments from peer reviewers;

   b) The defense committee evaluates whether the defender has met the Ph.D. degree requirements;

   c) The defense committee evaluates whether the defender has met the degree requirements of the matching doctoral academic degree; the faculty member representing the Degree Committee of the matching major or Interdisciplinary Taskforce Committee fills out the "TBSI Degree Matching Evaluation Form";

   d) Vote;

   e) Discuss and approve the Defense Resolution;

   f) Sign the TBSI Degree Matching Evaluation Form.

   g) Sign the Defense Resolution.

(7) The defense is re-opened and the chair of the defense committee announces the voting result and the Defense Resolution;

(8) The chair declares that the defense is over.

If the dissertation defense is spot-checked, the defense procedure follows the rule of "The Implementation of Sampling Inspection of Graduation Dissertation and Dissertation Defense".

3. Responsibilities and Work Procedure for the Secretary of Defense Committee

The secretary of the defense committee is responsible for the following related actions:

(1) Check eligibility of reviewers and defense committee members according to the reviewer requirements and defense committee requirements as listed above;

(2) Keep track and update of the reviewers listed in the "Application of Ph.D. Degree Graduation" materials, and send dissertation to the reviewers;

(3) Summarize comments from reviewers, and fill out the "Review Summary Table for Ph.D. Dissertation of Tsinghua University";

(4) Collect all materials required for defense, fill out the "Ph.D. Defense Committee Members" form, and submit to AAC for approval (should be officially sealed with AAC stamp).

(5) Assist Ph.D. candidate in scheduling defense date, time, and location, as well as updating defense information in the system;

(6) Assist defense committee chair in preparing Defense Resolution, record defense minutes and closed-door discussion minutes, announce Defense Resolution (to be valid, a ballot must be officially sealed with AAC stamp), remind committee members to carefully read the instruction on the ballot, and scrutinize balloting; and

(7) Collate all defense related materials (ensure that all defense committee members sign the attendance list, the chair signs the Defense Resolution, the faculty representative of Degree Committee of the matching major or Interdisciplinary Taskforce Committee fills out the "TBSI Degree Matching Evaluation Form", and all defense committee members sign the "Degree Matching Evaluation Form"), and organize minutes and notes.

Note 3: The secretary of the defense committee needs to maintain and update the defense information in the online system and print out hardcopy of defense materials. If any documents require filling in information by hand, the handwriting must be legible.

The Defense Resolution form should include the following information (see Appendix 1 for formatting of the Defense Resolution):

> ✧ Importance of dissertation topic; research progress;
>
> ✧ Originality and innovation of research
>
> ✧ Evaluation of fundamental knowledge, professional knowledge, and research ability
>
> ✧ Evaluation of dissertation writing and style, and defense performance
>
> ✧ Decision of defense committee, and recommendation for degree
>
> If the candidate passes the defense without being granted the degree, the Defense Resolution should identify whether the student is allowed to revise the dissertation within two years and which parts are required for re-defending.

(8) Distribute remuneration to reviewers (RMB: 600-900), defense committee members and secretary (RMB: 300~600)

(9) Organize all materials and submit to SEO.

4. Submission of Dissertation and Defense Materials

After successfully passing the defense, the doctoral student should follow the following guidelines to submit both hard-copy and electronic version of the dissertation, and all other materials required for the degree clearance and/or approval.

4.1 Required Materials to be Submitted by Secretary

After the defense, the doctoral student should assist the secretary in compiling and printing out required materials for applying for the Ph.D. degree at Tsinghua University. All materials must be submitted to SEO before the deadline set by SEO. These materials are listed in the following:

(1) Two copies of degree clearance materials:

A. (Original copy, documentary archives): Application materials for applying the Ph.D. degree at

Tsinghua University and supporting documents (including the original copy of all items listed in Catalog C below, and these materials will be kept in the school's archives);

B. (Photocopy, personnel documents): Copies of partial materials mentioned above and other related materials (including copies of Items 1 to 3, 7 to 10, and 12 in Catalog C. These materials w will be kept in the graduate student archives);

C. The directory of original materials:

1	Application form of doctoral dissertation defense
2	Transcripts for doctoral degree program, and proofs of Preliminary examination(s) and Qualifying examination(s)
3	Review and evaluation of dissertation by advisors
4	List of invited reviewers
5	Summary of peer reviews
6	Peer review comments for dissertation (_____ copies)
7	List of defense committee members
8	Defense Resolution of the defense committee
9	List of defense committee members attended the defense
10	Application form for Ph.D. degree clearance
11	Minutes of dissertation defense
12	Registration form for graduation
13	Copy of degree diploma (no official stamp)

(2) Other materials:

A. 10 to 15 copies of the personal information form and Defense Resolution of the defense committee.

B. Original copy of the defense minutes, reports, and vote tickets (based on the number of attended members).

4.2 Online Degree Declaration

After passing the defense, the doctoral student should submit dissertation information and research outcomes to the online "graduate degree application system", including the following relevant information:

(1) Doctoral dissertation: dissertation information and both Chinese and English abstracts;

(2) Published papers: information of published and accepted papers;

(3) Published monographs: information of published monographs;

(4) Scientific research achievements: information of participated scientific research projects;

(5) Employment information: job-placement information

4.3 Submission of Dissertation

After passing the defense, the doctoral student should submit a complete version of the dissertation (both electronic and printed copies).

(1) For dissertations containing classified materials: A printed version of the dissertation should be submitted to school archives. An electronic version must be transmitted directly to the school archives through an encrypted media designated by the school. No online transmission is allowed.

(2) For non-classified dissertations: 4 printed copies should be delivered to SEO. The SEO will keep one copy and forward one copy to the school archives and two copies to the library. The electronic version shall be submitted through the online Degree Declaration System.

Note: To complete the formal departure procedure for leaving the school, two printed copies and the electronic version of the thesis need to be submitted to the Shenzhen University Town Library.

4.4 Outstanding Ph.D. Dissertation Award

Doctoral student can apply for the university's outstanding Ph.D. dissertation award under the advisors' or AAC's nomination. The AAC is responsible for selecting award candidates from all eligible dissertations within the same underlying discipline and submitting them to the Graduate School. For details, please see the "Evaluation Methods of Tsinghua University's Outstanding Graduate Dissertations".

Ph.D. Dissertation Defense Procedure Flow-Chat

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Beginning of last          Check completion of all program
academic year              requirements (except dissertation and
                           defense)
      replenish
          N                        Complete?

                                 Write dissertation  ◄──  Follow "TBSI Degree
                                                          Dissertation Writing
                                                          Guidelines"
          N            Dissertation complete?
                                                     ◄──  If classified materials are
                                                          involved, follow "Tsinghua
                                                          University Graduate
                                                          Dissertation Confidential
                                                          Management Procedure"
                                 Prepare for defense

8 weeks            Submit "Academic Achievement Report"
before defense     and consult with advisors about required
                   materials and identify a secretary

7 weeks            Submit a list of dissertation reviewers to
before defense     SEO

6 weeks            Submit application for defense and fill in      CSE checks qualification of
before defense     online information for defense                 reviewers

          N              CSE approves reviewers?

5 weeks            Send dissertation to approved reviewers
before defense

3 weeks            Submit a list of defense committee
before defense     members to SEO

                   SEO pre-approves the defense        N      Select new defense
                   committee members?                         committee members

2 weeks            Provide dissertation to defense committee
before defense     members who are not reviewer

1~2 weeks          Give an optional open talk
before defense

At least 1         Submit all returned reviews and advisors'
weeks before       evaluation report to SEO
defense
                   AAC checks reviews, evaluation and
                   committee members
                                                                              Y
                   All materials are satisfactory?   N    Time is sufficient?

                            Y                                      N
Defense time              Defend dissertation           Refer to Note 1 in Section
                                                        1.3

                   After passing the defense, submit all   ◄──  Fill in online info for
                   materials for degree clearance and           graduation
                   graduation
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