



Committee Question Prep Worksheet

Anticipate, Prepare, and Respond with Confidence

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How to Use This Worksheet

For each category below, review the common questions your committee is likely to ask. Write your prepared response in the spaces provided. Practice your answers aloud until they feel natural and confident. Aim for responses of 2–3 minutes per question.

Research Problem & Purpose

Q: Why did you choose this topic? What drew you to this research problem?

My prepared response:

Q: What gap in the literature does your study address?

My prepared response:

Q: What is the significance of your study for your field?

My prepared response:

Q: How does your research question align with your theoretical framework?

My prepared response:

Literature Review

Q: Why did you select the sources you included? How did you determine what to include or exclude?

My prepared response:

Q: Which scholars most influenced your theoretical framework and why?

My prepared response:

Q: How does your study contribute to or challenge existing literature?

My prepared response:

Q: Are there scholars who would disagree with your argument? How do you respond to them?

My prepared response:

Methodology

Q: Why did you choose this research design – qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods?

My prepared response:

Q: How did you ensure validity and reliability in your study?

My prepared response:

Q: How did you select your participants or data sources? What were your inclusion and exclusion criteria?

My prepared response:

Q: How did you address positionality, bias, or ethical concerns?

My prepared response:

Findings & Analysis

Q: Walk us through your most significant finding.

My prepared response:

Q: Were any findings surprising or unexpected? How did you account for them?

My prepared response:

Q: How do your findings connect to your research questions?

My prepared response:

Q: How do you interpret [specific finding]? Can you elaborate?

My prepared response:

Discussion & Implications

Q: What are the theoretical implications of your findings?

My prepared response:

Q: What are the practical applications of your research?

My prepared response:

Q: What are the limitations of your study?

My prepared response:

Q: If you were to conduct this study again, what would you do differently?

My prepared response:

Q: What are the next steps for this line of research?

My prepared response:

Defense Day Checklist

Practice your opening statement (2–3 minutes) at least five times

Time your full presentation — stay within the allotted window

Prepare a one-page summary of key findings to reference during Q&A;

Know your dissertation thoroughly — every table, figure, and citation

Prepare for the 'what would you do differently' question

Get a full night of rest the evening before your defense

Arrive early and test all technology in advance

Bring printed copies of your dissertation for your own reference

Remember: you are the expert on your own research