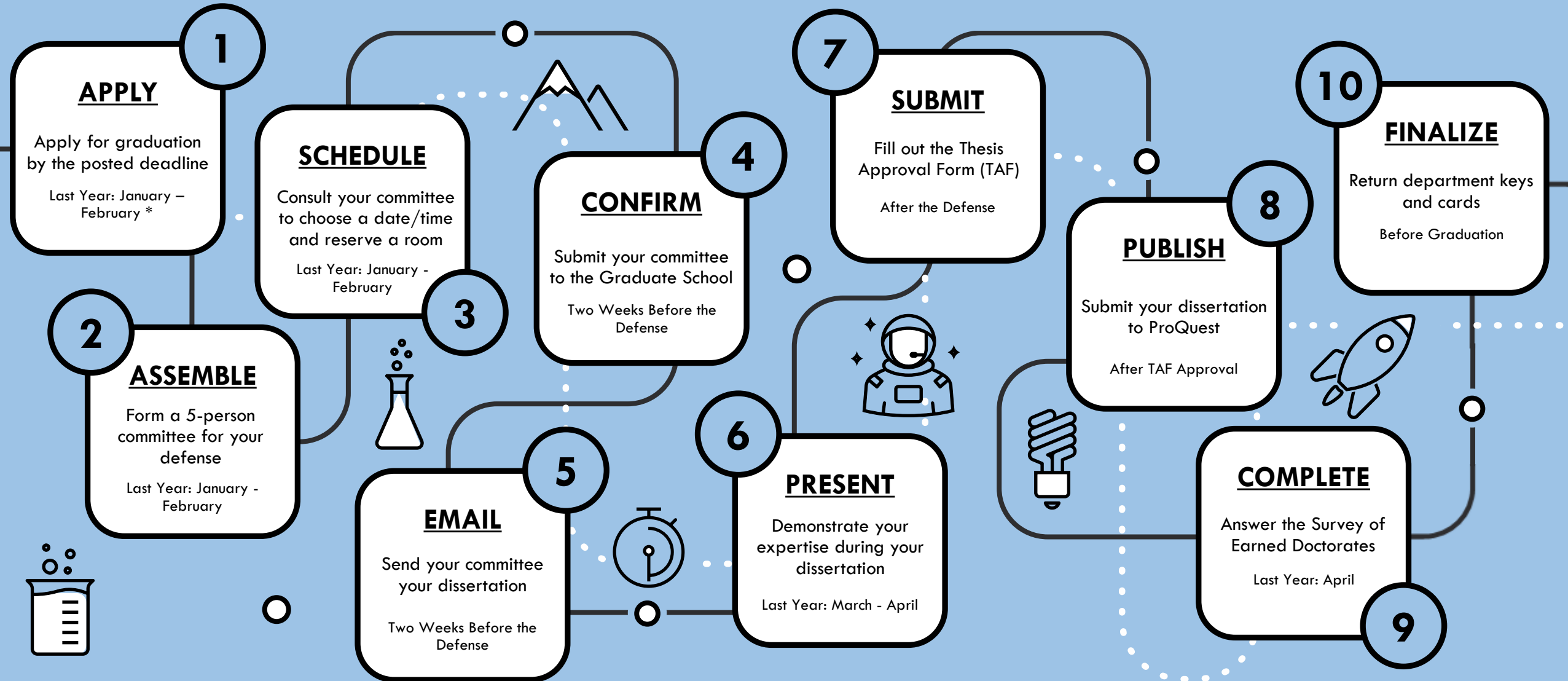


DISSERTATION DEFENSE TIMELINE



* All dates are based on a spring graduation timeline. Please contact the Graduate Program Manager for fall or summer timelines.

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OVERVIEW

The ten total steps for your dissertation defense can be broken down into three main phases.

A

Early In Your Last Semester

1. Apply for graduation by the deadline
2. Assemble a 5-person committee
3. Schedule a date/time for your defense

B

Before/During Your Defense

1. Confirm your committee
2. Email your committee your dissertation
3. Present your research and expertise

C

After Your Defense

1. Submit your Thesis Approval Form (TAF)
2. Publish your dissertation online
3. Complete the Survey of Earned Doctorates

1. APPLY

Use [this form](#) to apply for graduation through the Office of the Registrar by the posted deadline.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- The deadline for spring graduation is usually March 1st, although students should fill out the form as soon as possible

2. ASSEMBLE (PART 1)

Form a 5-person committee that meets Graduate School and departmental requirements:

1. **Research Advisor (PI)** – Chair of the committee
2. **CU Faculty Member** – from Chemistry or another department
3. **CU Faculty Member** – from Chemistry or another department
4. **CU Faculty Member** – from Chemistry or another department
5. **Outside Member** – external to the Chem Department or university

If the outside member is not a CU faculty member, students must provide the member's current CV to chemgrad@colorado.edu well in advance of the defense date.

2. ASSEMBLE (PART 2)

One committee member must agree to serve as your **Second Reader**.

Your Second Reader, in addition to your PI will:

1. Provide substantive feedback on your dissertation draft and
2. Approve the final version of your dissertation

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Ask the advice of your PI during the entire process of writing and defending your dissertation

3. SCHEDULE

In consultation with your committee, choose a date and time for your oral exam. When you've decided on a time, email the Graduate Program Manager (chemgrad@colorado.edu) to request a room.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Use www.when2meet.com or a similar scheduling tool
- Start by offering days of the week and then specific times
- Plan to schedule a 2-hour block of time

4. CONFIRM

Use [this form](#) to submit your committee for approval to the Graduate School **two weeks before your defense date.**

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Your committee chair will be your advisor/PI

5. EMAIL

Two weeks before your defense, send your committee your dissertation to allow them to prepare.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- If you wish your defense advertised to the department, should also send your title and abstract to the Graduate Program Manager

6. PRESENT

The dissertation defense is the culmination of your PhD research. You will first present your research and then answer a few questions from the committee.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **Know Your Dissertation Inside Out:** Be ready to discuss every detail, including methodology, assumptions, limitations, and alternative approaches.
- **Anticipate Questions:** Think critically about weaknesses in your dissertation and how you would address them.
- **Demonstrate Breadth and Depth:** Show you can connect your specific research to broader concepts in your field.

7. SUBMIT

Fill out the [Thesis Approval Form \(TAF\)](#) to send the final copy of their dissertation to the Graduate School.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Make sure to do this **multiple days** before the deadline
- You will need the approved TAF on the next step

8. PUBLISH

Submit the final copy of your dissertation and your approved TAF to ProQuest using [this link](#).

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- **Do not** wait until the deadline to submit this task
- Previous CU Boulder students' dissertations can be found [here](#)

9. COMPLETE

To graduate, you must answer the [Survey of Earned Doctorates \(SED\)](#).

Since 1957, the SED is an annual survey sponsored by several federal agencies. The survey is governed by strict confidentiality rules, so individual responses never published; only aggregated statistics are released. Many universities, including CU Boulder, make completion of the SED a requirement of degree conferral.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Your degree will not process until you complete this survey

10. FINALIZE

Before graduation, students should return any departmental keys or procurement/travel cards to the Graduate Program Manager.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Make sure to wrap up any unfinished business before graduation!

FORMS

1. **Apply** for Graduation: <https://www.colorado.edu/registrar/students/graduation>
4. **Confirm** your Committee:
<https://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/academics/forms/doctoral-final-examination-form>
7. **Submit** the Thesis Approval Form:
<https://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/academics/forms-current-students/thesis-approval-form>
8. **Publish** Your Dissertation: <https://www.etsadmin.com/?siteId=70>
9. **Complete** the Survey of Earned Doctorates: <https://sed-nces.org/>



QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Graduate Program Manager
(chemgrad@colorado.edu)

