Geology Graduate Student Thesis Hints

1. Plan your time carefully
   Plan out how many weeks you think you'll need to write, edit, defend, edit again and print on cotton. If you think you can do it in 5 weeks, at least double it and plan for 10 weeks. You'll likely need way more time than you think.

2. Check your committee member's schedules early and often.
   a. Faculty members' schedules often change and they might not let you know they are going to be out-of-the country or giving a talk somewhere.
   b. Don't try to schedule a defense near a GSA, AGU or other meeting, especially if you are presenting at the meeting. Preparing for and attending the meeting will eat up valuable time you or your advisor could be using to edit your thesis.

3. Schedule your defense with the Graduate Office at least 3 weeks prior to your defense date.

4. Give your committee a copy of your thesis to review 2 weeks prior to the defense date. Committee members need to be really familiar with your thesis before you defend. The earlier you give it to your committee, the less likely there will major problems during your defense.

5. The Bottom Line: If your advisor doesn't have a very good rough draft (probably not the first draft) of your thesis in his/her hand in the first week of the quarter you want to defend, you will have trouble getting it all done. The Graduate Office requires that all degree requirements are completed by a deadline about two weeks before the end of the quarter. Check [http://www.cwu.edu/~masters/graduateStudies/deadlines.html](http://www.cwu.edu/~masters/graduateStudies/deadlines.html) for updates and actual deadline for the quarter you wish to file. You should allow at least 2 weeks after your defense to make changes to the thesis, based on committee feedback. Therefore, your defense will need to be completed no later than the middle of the term in which you wish to graduate.

6. Paperwork! Paperwork!
   a. Update your 'Course of Study' and 'Option Approval' forms.
      • Classes/credits may have changed
      • Thesis title change has to be signed-off on
      • Get all signatures again.
   b. Permission Slip (See #4 above)
      • Signed by entire committee
      • Choose a room for your defense and ask Vicki to help you schedule it. It is best to schedule the room an hour before your defense begins so that you can work out computer/presentation issues. You'll also need about an hour after your formal defense is over to answer committee questions.
   c. Officially schedule defense with Graduate office: Three weeks before defense
   d. Thesis brief: Two weeks before defense give 4 copies to Graduate Office
   e. Credits: You must be enrolled for at least 2 credits the quarter you defend
f. **Correction process:** The Grad Office will check ~10% of the thesis for errors. If they find significant errors, it will be sent back to the committee chair and student for editing and must be submitted to grad program coordinator for approval. After corrections are made, you will need to prepare a new signature page for the grad program coordinator to sign.

7. **Paper:** Obtain comparison prices from Jerrol’s and the University Store.  
   Example: $32/500 sheets of cotton paper at Jerrols vs $37/500 at University Store

8. **Pay your fees:**  
   Binding fee - $60 ($20/cotton copy x 3 required copies)  
   Two addition copies are required by the department. Advisor typically pays binding fees.  
   Ask your adviser directly.  
   Graduate application fee: $11

9. **Meet with Diane Houser before thesis defense and Dr. Lila Harper before or after defense.** You do not need to print thesis on cotton paper for these meetings.