FELLOWS THESIS DEFENSE PROCESS (beginning with 2026 graduates)

- **Thesis Defense Process**
  - Thesis must be successfully defended prior to June 15th in the last year of fellowship as an eligibility criterion for the Subspecialty QE
    - If the defense process must be repeated due to unsuccessful prior defense, defense must be successfully completed by this date for the fellow to take the Subspecialty QE in July of the year the fellow completes fellowship
    - If successful defense takes place after this date, the fellow will delay taking the Subspecialty QE
    - If successful defense never takes place, the fellow will not be eligible to take the Subspecialty QE
  - Successful defense must be attested to by the fellow and attested to by the Fellowship Program Director in the portal by midnight June 15th, 11:59 PM CDT
  - Thesis may be defended and attested to at any time during fellowship training (prior to June 15th of last year of fellowship). Early defense of a thesis will not result in a decreased research eligibility requirement (6 or 12 months depending on training program length)
  - Successful defense is documented through completion of the thesis defense form and uploaded in the fellow's ABOG portal as part of the attestation.

Thesis Defense Committee

  - Thesis Defense committee consists of a minimum of 3 members
    - For MFM, URPS, Gyn Onc, and REI, the committee should be identified and have convened at least once by the end of the fellow's second year of training. For CFP, the committee should be identified and convened at least once by the end of the fellow's first year of training.
    - A minimum of 1 external member
      - Possess expertise that makes them able to contribute to the committee defense process
      - Has an arm's length relationship with the fellow and the subspecialty division (e.g., not a current or past direct supervisor of the fellow, not a collaborator on divisional projects)
    - All thesis committee members who are ABOG Diplomates can achieve credit for Part IV Continuing Certification during any year that they participate in fellowship thesis defense activities
    - ABOG will consider thesis committee service when individuals volunteer to be ABOG examiners, committee members, division members, etc.
    - Non physician members at the Masters/PhD level are encouraged
      - Such individuals should be given context for subspecialty fellow research requirements, including the 6- or 12-month duration of research in fellowship and the clinical nature of the remainder of fellowship time.
  - Defense decision requires a simple majority of thesis committee members' votes.
  - The thesis Defense Form is completed by the thesis defense committee chair on behalf of the committee
  - The form includes committee members' names, credentials, ABOG ID (if relevant)

FELLOWS THESIS DEFENSE FORM

ABOG ID:

FELLOW'S NAME:

TYPE OF STUDY DESIGN: Implementation Science

Please use the following ranking system from 5-1 (**5 = Best**) to evaluate the fellows thesis.

A. Hypothesis and Rationale (**5 = Best**)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
5	4	3	2	1	

Study objectives are well defined.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
Population to be studied is well defined.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
Theoretical background of the study is well defined.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
Clearly articulated hypothesis	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A

Comments:

B. Design of the Investigation (**5 = Best**)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
5	4	3	2	1	

Methods are well described.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
Selected design was appropriate for addressing the hypothesis?	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
The appropriate methodology/techniques were utilized, and their rationale explained.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
Possible sources of bias or confounding factors were identified and addressed.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A

Cases and controls were appropriately selected.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
Statistical methods, including power analysis.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A

Comments:

C. Results (5 = Best)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
5	4	3	2	1	

Terms were clearly defined (i.e. diagnostic criteria, measurements made and outcome variables).	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯ N/A
Observations were reliable and reproducible.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯ N/A
Sensitivity, specificity and predictive values of the methods are clearly defined.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯ N/A
Findings were presented clearly, objectively, and in sufficient detail.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯ N/A
Findings were internally consistent (i.e. did the numbers add up properly and could the tables be reconciled etc.).	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯ N/A
Findings presented are the result of the described methods and an analysis.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯ N/A
Data were worthy of statistical analysis and the methods of analysis were appropriate to the source and nature of the data.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯ N/A
Appropriate assumptions were met for the statistical methods utilized.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯ N/A
Sufficient analyses were utilized to ascertain whether “significant difference” might have been due to a lack of comparability of the groups (i.e. age, sex, clinical characteristics, etc.).	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯ N/A

FELLOWS THESIS DEFENSE FORM

Proper statistical techniques were utilized.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
There was appropriate use of measured sensitivity without specificity.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A

Comments:

D. Conclusions of Summary (**5 = Best**)

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
5	4	3	2	1	

Conclusions were justified by the findings.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
Hypothesis was clearly proven/disproven.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
Limitations of the results were thoroughly discussed.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A
Strengths of the results were thoroughly discussed.	◯5	◯4	◯3	◯2	◯1	◯N/A

Comments:

E. Redesign the Study

If the study could be improved, how should the candidate revise the experimental design in order to provide reliable and valid information relevant to the questions under study?

Comments:

F. Final Decision

☐ Successfully Defended
☐ Not Successfully Defended

FELLOWS THESIS DEFENSE FORM

G. Summary Comments (Required if not successfully defended, along with plans for next steps):

Thesis Defense Committee Names and Qualifications

Committee Position	**Name**	**Qualifications**
Chair		
Member		
Member		
Member		
External Review Volunteer		

_____ Date _____

Signature of Chair of Thesis Defense Committee

ABOG diplomates can scan the qr code to receive Part IV credit for their participation on the thesis defense committee.

Appendix A

ABOG Approved Study Designs

- **Laboratory, Translational, and Animal research.**
- **Randomized Controlled Trial**: The study must adhere to the CONSORT standards.
- **Meta-Analysis and Systematic Review**: The report must adhere to the PRISMA or MOOSE guidelines.
- **Cost-Effective Analysis**: The report must conform to the recommendations of the Second Panel on Cost-Effectiveness in Health and Medicine for reporting CEA results.
- **Case-Control Study**: The study must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
- **Cohort Study**: The research may involve primary or secondary data analyses. The study must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies.
- **Survey Research**: The candidate must have developed the questionnaire or used a previously validated questionnaire, and there should be a 50% return and completion of the questionnaire. The thesis must conform to the STROBE guidelines for observational studies and CHERRIES guidelines for Web-based surveys.
- **Epidemiology Research**: The study must conform to the STROBE guidelines for Epidemiological Studies.
- **Mechanistic Trials**: The study must meet the NIH definition for a clinical trial.
- **Modeling and Simulation-Based Research**: A prediction model thesis must follow the TRIPOD statement. An SBR thesis must adhere to the SBR extension to the CONSORT and STROBE statements.
- **Quality Improvement**: The thesis must adhere to the SQUIRE 2.0 guidelines.
- **Qualitative Research**: The thesis must adhere to the COREQ or SRQR guidelines.
- **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Research**: The thesis must adhere to the SPIRIT-AI Extension or the CONSORT-AI Extension statements.
- **Implementation Science**: The thesis must conform to the StaRI guidelines.