**Rubric 4: Want to Pass Your Oral Thesis Defense? Here’s how!**

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| **Characteristic/Quality** | **Exceptional** | **Standard1** | **Not Passing** |
| **Science** | ***Problem*** | A problem of broad interest is outlined, and put into a context of prior work | An original problem is clearly stated | No clear problem is articulated; problem is not original |
| ***Approach*** | Clearly differentiated and put into context of published studies | Methods explicitly connected to addressing the stated problem | Methods not connected to addressing the stated problem |
| ***Results & Discussion*** | A novel solution is found that addresses a compelling problem | The results represent a clear scientific advance | No clear advance or solution to a problem |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Presentation** | ***Slides/Talk*** | Talk is clear, concise, and on time; few if any flaws;  | Talk is clear, concise. Free of long pauses, or distracting gestures or phrasing | Talk is unclear; poor use of allotted time |
| ***Organization*** | Maximizes audience’s understanding | Talk is on time, easy to follow | Talk is difficult to follow (any of motivation, approach, results, are unclear) |
| ***Q&A*** | Can answer any and all questions; answers demonstrate a command of the thesis, and ancillary subjects | Is able to answer most questions, showing a mastery of the thesis topic  | Unable to answer even the most basic questions (such as why the topic, data or approach were chosen)   |

Notes: 1. You must meet the standard in all of the Science & Presentation categories to pass and earn thesis credit.