

## Section 1

### Master's Thesis Examination Agenda:

The thesis examination is normally a closed event unless the student and program, by mutual agreement, request in writing that the examination be open to the university community (e.g. faculty, academic colleagues, and students). Any member of SGPS may attend as a visitor by having a written request to attend approved by the Vice-Provost (SGPS). The chair will refuse attendance of all others.

#### The Chair Opens Proceedings

- Introduce candidate, examiners and examination chair
- Indicate the length of a Master's thesis examination may take up to 2 hours
- Ask the candidate to leave the exam room and wait in designated waiting area
- Set the order of questioners and the length of their question periods
- Remind those in attendance to refrain from using cellphones
- If an OPEN examination, welcome attendees to enter exam room

#### Thesis Examination begins

Once an OPEN examination has started, late entries are not permitted into the exam room and OPEN attendees should not leave the exam room once the examination has started. If an attendee needs to leave the room during the examination they are not permitted to return.

- Monitor the length and conduct of the candidate's presentation
- Keep a list of required revisions as exam proceeds
- Intervene if questioning becomes inappropriate or if behaviour interferes with the proper conduct of the examination

#### Deliberation Phase

- After questioning is complete, ask the candidate to leave the exam room and wait in the designated waiting area
- If an OPEN examination, ask attendees to leave the exam room (they do not return)
- If supervisor in attendance, ask them to speak on candidate, thesis and thesis examination  
If the supervisor has not approved the submission of the thesis, the Graduate Chair (or designate) takes on the role of the supervisor and attends the exam in place of the supervisor.
- Invite examiners to discuss and deliberate (supervisor does not speak during this time)
- Moderate in camera discussion on the merits of the thesis, the candidate's oral presentation and responses to questions, and other relevant matters
- Brief the examiners on the outcomes (acceptable/unacceptable) before they complete their thesis evaluations
- Provide examiners with Master's Thesis Examination Evaluation form
- Review the completed Master's Thesis Examination Evaluation forms and announce the results to the examiners in the room

Complete the Chair Report

- Identify clearly the revisions to be made (if applicable) and indicate who will oversee any revisions to be made

Invite the Candidate Back into the Exam Room

- Advise the candidate of the outcome

## **Section 2**

### **Master's Thesis Examination Regulations**

#### **8.5.4.2 - Stage Two: The Thesis Examination**

##### **Who attends the Master's Thesis Examination**

- The candidate, the Supervisor(s), the Program Examiners, and the University Examiner must attend the Thesis Examination
- Any member of SGPS may attend as a visitor by having a written request approved by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) seven days before the examination date
- The chair will refuse attendance to all others

##### **The Chair presides over the Thesis Examination**

- To open proceedings, the Chair introduces all present.
- Examiners are asked to refrain from using electronic devices (cell phones) during the examination (unless in emergencies)
- The Chair then asks the candidate and visitors to leave the room so that the Examiners can decide on the following points:
  - the order in which Examiners are to question the candidate
  - the number of rounds of questioning desired (usually two)
  - the time limit for each of the Examiners' questioning periods (typically 15-20 minutes in the first round and 5-10 minutes in the second round);
- The Chair gives to each examiner a "Master's Thesis Examination Evaluation Form" (to be completed when the questioning of the candidate is over and the candidate has left the room). The Chair advises the Examiners that their evaluations on the acceptability of the thesis content should be made independent of the assessment made in Stage One: The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis.
- The Chair invites the candidate and visitors back into the room.

##### **The Examination Begins**

- The Chair explains to the candidate the sequence of events (e.g. two rounds of questioning, the order of questioning).
- The Examiners question the candidate in the agreed-upon order, with the Chair holding them to the agreed-upon time limit. The Supervisor(s) may not question the candidate.
- When the questioning has finished, the Chair asks the candidate and visitors, but not the Supervisor(s), to leave the room.

##### **The Thesis Examination Board Deliberates and Renders a Decision**

- The Chair invites the Supervisor(s) to comment on the candidate, the thesis, and aspects of the oral defense.
  - In rare cases where the thesis has been submitted without the Supervisor(s)'s approval, the Chair informs the Examiners of the Supervisor(s)'s written reasons for withholding approval, before inviting the Supervisor(s) to speak.

- At the Chair's invitation, the Examiners alone discuss the thesis and the oral defense.
- The Chair instructs the Examiners once again about the difference between acceptable, acceptable with revisions and unacceptable and answers any questions about the difference between the recommendation. (See Section 8.5.4.1 Stage One: The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis)
- The Examiners vote on the acceptability of the thesis and the oral defense by completing their "Master's Thesis Examination Evaluation Form." These forms are confidential, only to be seen and recorded by the Chair.

The Examiners must decide whether the thesis content and oral defense were acceptable or unacceptable. For thesis content, they must find the thesis:

- acceptable with/without revisions
  - Examples of revisions may include limited typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation, labels for tables, nomenclature, and bibliographic form; the need for clarification of content in order to meet requisite scholarly standards. Examples may also include some additions, deletions or editing of text; further analysis or discussion of some piece of data. Normally, candidates have up to 6 weeks to submit the final thesis after examination.
- unacceptable
  - A thesis judged unacceptable may contain, for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology, misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context.

For the oral defense, the Examiners must determine if the candidate's responses to questions and general level of scholarly knowledge meet the standard for the Master's degree and are consistent with the contents of the thesis.

- The Chair collects the completed forms and tallies the results.
- The Chair announces the results of the vote on the acceptability of the content of the thesis and of the oral defense and asks if further discussion is needed. In rare instances, the Chair may allow Examiners to change their votes.
- The Chair pronounces the Thesis Examination Board's decision.
- If a majority of the Examiners find that each of the thesis content and the oral defense are acceptable, the candidate passes the Thesis Examination. The Examiners' approval may be conditional on the candidate successfully completing revisions to the thesis content.

### **When the Thesis Examination is Successful**

- On the "Master's Thesis Examination - Chair Report" the Chair:
  - Reports the Thesis Examination Board's decision for the Thesis Examination.
  - With the assistance of the Examiners, lists the revisions, if any, required by a majority of Examiners.
  - Dates and signs both pages of the Chair's Report.
- In the case that no revisions are required, the Chair, the Examiners, and the Supervisor(s) sign the Certificate of Examination. In the case that revisions are required, the Chair, with the help of the committee, determines who will withhold her/his signature(s) until the required revisions have been made.
- The Chair communicates the positive decision to the candidate. (See Communicating the Decision to the Candidate.)

### **When the Thesis Examination is Unsuccessful**

- The Chair completes the "Master's Thesis Examination - Chair Report." In consultation with the Examiners, the Chair states why the thesis and/or the oral defense was unacceptable
- If the Thesis Examination failed because the thesis content was unacceptable, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Submission Hearing Committee.
- Where the Re-Submission Hearing Committee agrees that the candidate should be given the opportunity to revise the thesis to bring it to the acceptable scholarly standard for examination, the committee first establishes a new Thesis Examination date, no earlier than twelve weeks after the date of the originally scheduled examination. Normally the same Examiners assess the re-submitted thesis. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and student written notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee
- The Examination must then proceed as listed in Section 5.1 The Program Requests a Thesis Examination for the re-submitted thesis
- Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable, the candidate proceeds to Stage Two: The Thesis Examination

If the Thesis Examination failed solely because of an unacceptable oral defense, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Examination Hearing Committee:

- Where the Re-Examination Hearing Committee\* decides that a second Thesis Examination is appropriate, it should be held, preferably with the same Thesis Examination Board, within a time period determined by the committee. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and student written notification of the decision
- \*Re-Examination Hearing Committee is chaired by the Graduate Chair of the program concerned and includes the three Examiners, the supervisor, and others specified in the procedures of the program concerned. Note: The candidate does not attend the committee meeting

If the candidate has already been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee or a Re-Examination Hearing Committee (following Stage Two: The Thesis Examination), then the Thesis Examination Board's decision is final. The candidate has no further opportunity for resubmission and/or re-examination. However, if a candidate has been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee following Stage One: The Preliminary (or Pre-Examination) Evaluation of the Thesis, then the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a second and final Re-Submission Hearing Committee.

### **Communicating the Decision to the Candidate**

When the Chair and the Examiners have completed the documentation, the Chair invites only the candidate back into the room and informs him/her of the result.

- Following a positive decision that is subject to revisions, the Supervisor(s) must meet with the candidate, to ensure that he/she understands the revisions required by the Thesis Examination Board

### **Following the Examination**

The Chair of the examination returns all forms to the graduate program office.

## Section 3

### Remote Examination Regulations

#### 8.5.1.1 - Remote Examinations

All examiner participation assumes in-person attendance unless a request for remote examination is made. Graduate programs may elect the option of remote examination (when one examiner is not present in person) upon approval of the candidate, remote participant and graduate chair. If two or more members of the committee cannot be present in person, then the examination is rescheduled, unless approval of the Vice-Provost (SGPS) is given due to extenuating circumstances. Priority should be given to technologies which support video as well as audio.

#### **Programs that choose to host a remote examination assume the following responsibilities:**

- Ensuring that requests and approvals for remote examination are made in a timely manner
- Hosting a conferencing solution in an appropriate environment that adequately supports the needs of the candidate and examiners. This includes:
  - Providing a dedicated support resource to the conference to ensure the best possible experience for all participants during the examination
  - Ensuring that a backup technology exists in the event that the primary solution fails
  - Ensuring that a list of questions from the remote examiner has been obtained in advance of the examination date and are available to the Chair of the examination (this serves as back-up in cases where the connection to the remote examiner is lost)
- Testing the remote connection with the examiner in advance of the examination

#### **Examiners that wish to attend the examination remotely assume the following responsibilities:**

- Submitting intention to attend exam remotely prior to agreeing to serve as examiner
- Testing the remote connection (all equipment and backups) with the host in advance of the examination
- Submitting questions to the program and SGPS at least 48 hours in advance of the examination

#### **During the thesis exam, the Chair of the examination is responsible for assuring the following requirements and procedures are satisfied:**

- All participants must be able to communicate effectively with each other at all times
- If the primary method of communication is unable to function effectively the examination Chair must determine when it is appropriate to use the pre-arranged backup technology or the submitted questions
- At the beginning of the examination, the Chair must inform the candidate and all members of the committee of the potential for suspending the exam should technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination (until the technical problems have been resolved)
- The Chair of the examination must suspend the examination if technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination and backup options are unavailable
- The Chair of the examination must guarantee the standards of the examination have been met and the requirements have been satisfied





Candidate's Name:

Candidate's Program:

The thesis **content** is judged:

- Acceptable  
 Unacceptable

The thesis **oral defense** is judged:

- Acceptable  
 Unacceptable

If either the content or oral defense is unacceptable, please specify your reasons for this evaluation. If necessary, use the reverse of this form.

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Other Comments (e.g., suitability of thesis for award nominations such as Governor General's Gold Medal).

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Professor (program)  
Signature

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Date

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

**CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION**

Supervisor

Examiners

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Dr «**Supervisor**»

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Dr «**Program Examiner 1**»

Co-Supervisor/Joint  
Supervisor

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Dr «**Program Examiner 2**»

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Dr «**University Examiner**»

The thesis by

«**Student\_First\_Name**» «**Student\_Last\_Name**»

entitled:

«**Thesis\_Title**»

is accepted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

«**Degree**»

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Date

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Professor «**Exam\_Chair**»

Chair of the Thesis Examination Board