

## **Biology Department MSc Defense and Thesis Completion Checklist**

The purpose of this checklist is to familiarize students and faculty members to the EXPECTED timeline for MSc thesis submission and completion. All efforts will be made to ensure the efficient processing of all requirements (pre-submission, submission, defence, corrections, final thesis deposit to Spectrum). Following the steps described below will assist with the successful completion of this process.

Any questions can be addressed to the Graduate Programs Assistant (GPA), Ms. Kelly Pingel, [biograd.fas@concordia.ca](mailto:biograd.fas@concordia.ca) or the Graduate Program Director (GPD), Dr. Grant Brown ([grant.brown@concordia.ca](mailto:grant.brown@concordia.ca)).

Students should familiarize themselves with the School of Graduate Studies' (SGS) *Thesis Preparation Guide*:  
(<http://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/concordia/offices/sgs/docs/handbooks/thesispreparationguide.pdf>)

**A:** The submission and defence of the MSc thesis is a multi-stage process, designed to allow:

- *sufficient time for the student to receive feedback from the advisory committee prior to defence*
- *sufficient time for the evaluation of the thesis by the examining committee*
- *Sufficient time for all required modifications (if applicable) to be made prior to the deposit of the final thesis on Spectrum.*

**B:** Thesis preparation is a lengthy process. If you plan on defending at the end of the academic term, you should be writing at the onset of the term. Students are encouraged to budget enough time to allow for pre-submission comments from the supervisory committee. The thesis is then submitted for defence (see below) and the examining committee must have enough time to evaluate the thesis. Following the defence, time must then be allocated to allow for any modifications and/or corrections to be made. Lastly, the final version of the thesis (approved by the examining committee) is deposited on Spectrum and the School of Graduate Studies is notified that all degree requirements have been met.

In order to allow sufficient time for all steps within this process, all MSc students are advised to follow the recommended path:

- 1) **at least two months** prior to anticipated defence date, you should circulate a draft of the thesis to the supervisor and committee members for comments. At the same time, and with the approval of your supervisor, you should notify the GPA and GPD that you plan on submitting the thesis.
- 2) **3 to 4 weeks** prior to the anticipated defence date, you will submit your thesis for defence.
- 3) The anticipated defence date should be planned to allow sufficient time post-defence for all required corrections and modifications to be made prior to the final deposition of the

thesis. **It is highly recommended that you plan on defending at least 4 weeks prior to final deposit deadline.**

**C:** The only way to avoid paying fees for subsequent terms is to have your thesis deposited in Spectrum by the first week of the subsequent term. *IT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED THAT YOU PLAN TO HAVE ALL CORRECTIONS COMPLETED AND THE FINAL THESIS DEPOSITED TO SPECTRUM BEFORE THE END OF THE CURRENT TERM IN ORDER TO AVOID ADDITIONAL FEES AND THE ENSURE TIMELY PROCESSING OF YOUR DEGREE.*

Consult the Academic Dates link ([Graduate Academic Dates](#)) for updated information on deadlines.

**D:** Thesis preparation and submission details.

**Prior to submission:**

1. Thesis preparation is a lengthy process. Students wishing to defend near the end of the term should be writing at the beginning of the term! Consult with your supervisory committee early to ensure the timely completion of the thesis.
2. Apply for graduation (January 15 for Spring Convocation (June) and July 15 for Fall Convocation (typically held in October or November)
3. Students must check to ensure all fees have been paid prior to defending their thesis.
4. Check your transcripts on line to be sure that they are not enrolled automatically in the next semester as "Continuing in Program". Once you have applied for graduation the CIP for the following term should automatically be removed.

**Two months + prior to your intended thesis defense**

Give advance notice to the GPA and GPD that you intend to file (initial submission) your MSc thesis. An external examiner is chosen based on the recommendations of the Supervisory committee. Normally, the committee will suggest at least three potential faculty members to serve as the 'external to committee' member on the defense panel.

**One month before the defense**

1. Verify that your thesis format conforms to those required by the School of Graduate Studies ([SGS thesis guidelines](#)).
2. When the thesis is ready for the initial submission, send fully completed MSc Thesis Submission form to the graduate program director and to the Graduate Program Assistant Ms. Kelly Pingel [biograd.fas@concordia.ca](mailto:biograd.fas@concordia.ca). Kelly needs to initial the form and will verify that all information is complete.
  - a. Once the thesis submission form has been signed and submitted, the student can forward the thesis to the examining committee.
  - b. An electronic copy of the thesis is sent to the SGS thesis office – [thesisdeposit@graduatestudies.concordia.ca](mailto:thesisdeposit@graduatestudies.concordia.ca), **Kelly must be copied on this email**
  - c. Thesis committee members receives the document and evaluates the thesis. Student must cc: Kelly on the email distribution of the thesis to committee members. Kelly will forward the thesis to the external examiner
3. The supervisor submits recommendations for an external examiner. The Graduate Program Director (GPD) arranges for an external examiner.

4. The room is reserved, normally the Biology conference room SP 457.03
5. A chair for the exam is selected by the GPD. A date is selected for the defense, by Doodle set up by the GPA, approximately 1 month prior to the defense.
6. Kelly notifies members of defense date and will distribute evaluation form. Form needs to be returned to Kelly as soon as possible and no later than one week (5 working days) prior to scheduled defense date

### **One week before the defense**

1. Committee evaluation form is returned to Kelly by the Committee members
2. Kelly will prepare the signature pages
3. Reminders to committee members will be issued

### **Day of the MSc. Defense**

The student is responsible for collecting the key to the audio-visual control box or arranging for the audio-visual to be opened (as appropriate for the room used). Normally, defences are set for the conference room (SP 457.03; collect key from Kelly) or GE 110 (contact Manager of CFSG). To avoid difficulties, ensure this is taken care of ahead of time.

The defence consists of a 20 - 25 minute oral summary of their research results, followed questions posed by the examining committee.

If the examination committee recommends changes to the thesis they have to be done before final submission of the thesis.

### **Thesis revision and completion**

The Examining committee can make one of several recommendations following the defence.

Accepted as submitted: No further changes are required to the thesis.

Minor revisions: Normally, this includes grammatical and typographical errors and can require some sections to be clarified or expanded. Though minor in nature, there may be extensive corrections to be made. The thesis is revised according to the examining committee's comments. The Supervisor works with the student to insure that all revisions have been made and signs off on the completed thesis. **Supervisor sends an email to [biograd.fas@concordia.ca](mailto:biograd.fas@concordia.ca) to confirm that thesis is now ready for official final deposit.**

Major modifications: These may include extensive re-writing, additional analysis or reinterpretation of the results. The GPD discusses the required changes with the committee members and establishes a deadline date for the student to complete all requirements. Once the student has completed the modifications, and has been approved by the Supervisor, the revised thesis is re-issued to all committee members for evaluation. The supervisor notifies Kelly that the committee members are in possession of the revised thesis with the anticipated date of final completion. **Email confirmation is required from all committee members.**

Decision deferred: In the event that extensive additional work, including reanalysis and or additional experiments or in the case that the examining committee does not feel that revisions can be completed in a timely fashion (due to the nature of the work required), the examining committee may choose to defer its final decision. The thesis would be re-submitted for defence, normally within 6 months of the original defence.

Rejection: The examining committee may reject the thesis outright.

The final step for students is to upload the final corrected thesis to Spectrum; instructions are here: <http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/HowtoDepositYourThesisinSpectrum.pdf>. Ensure that you take a screen shot of submission and email to [biograd.fas@concordia.ca](mailto:biograd.fas@concordia.ca) to confirm final deposit.

## QUICK CHECKLIST

### Two months prior to desired defence date:

- Circulate draft of thesis to Supervisor and committee members for comments
- Get Supervisor's approval to notify GPD and Kelly Pingel that a defense date should be scheduled

### Three to four weeks prior to anticipated defence date:

- Verify that thesis conforms to School of Graduate Studies thesis guidelines
- Submit fully completed MSc thesis submission form to Kelly Pingel and to the Graduate Program Director
- Once Kelly verifies that information on the form is complete, submit initial thesis to examining committee. Copy Kelly ([biograd.fas@concordia.ca](mailto:biograd.fas@concordia.ca)) on email sent to committee members
- Submit electronic copy of thesis to [thesisdeposit@graduatestudies.concordia.ca](mailto:thesisdeposit@graduatestudies.concordia.ca). Copy Kelly on this email submission
- Apply to graduate. January 15 is the deadline to apply for Spring convocation; July 15 is the deadline to apply for Fall convocation. Apply through MyConcordia.ca, My Student Centre, Academics, "other academic ..." drop-down menu and select "Apply to Graduate". If you do not complete your degree requirements by the end of the appropriate semester, you will need to re-apply for graduation.
- Clear your account, including all outstanding fees, graduation fee, library fees
- Check transcript to ensure that you are not enrolled for next term as "Continuing in Program"
- Respond to Doodle poll for the scheduling of thesis defence date

### Day prior to thesis defence date:

- collect the key to the audio-visual control box or arrange for the audio-visual to be opened (as appropriate for the room used). Normally, defences are set for the conference room (SP 457.03; collect key from Kelly) or GE 110 (contact Dr. Peter Ulyczynj, Manager of CSFG).

### After defence

- Following committee recommendations, revise thesis. Once all revision steps have been completed, deposit final thesis to Spectrum. Email screen shot confirming Spectrum deposit has been made to Kelly ([biograd.fas@concordia.ca](mailto:biograd.fas@concordia.ca))