

Guidelines on Research Student Supervision

V. 2.0 Prepared by Dr. K. H. Ha, GPD, November 20, 2002

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V.4.0 modified by Dr. Tarek Zayed, GPD, December 1, 2008

1. Examination Committee for the M.A.Sc Thesis Defence

The composition: The M.A.Sc. Examination Committee is composed of an *examiner external to the department* and at least two internal members in addition to the student's research supervisor(s). At least one of the two internal examiners should have an expertise closely related to that of the student's research area as much as feasible. Preference is given to full-time faculty members in the related areas. The *examiner external to the department* should be a full-time faculty member, but has not published jointly with the student during the last 6 years.

The Approval Procedure: After submitting the thesis, at least 3 weeks before the date of the defence, the supervisor will send the proposal of the Examination Committee to the Graduate Program Director (GPD), listing the names of all examiners, their affiliations, research thesis title, and the date of the examination to which everyone has agreed. The approval procedure will be done as follows:

- 1- Email will be sent from the GPD to the department Graduate Studies Committee members for approval within two business days. The decision shall be made by majority vote.
- 2- The GPD shall return back to the student's supervisor with the GSC committee decision.
- 3- In case of a concern regarding the Examination Committee, the GPD shall ask the student's supervisor to accommodate such concern and return back with the new Examination Committee.
- 4- If the student's supervisor disagrees with the GSC committee decision, he/she shall meet with the committee to discuss the matter. The GSC committee shall have the final decision on this matter after the meeting.

The electronic copy of the thesis abstract is also required for the announcement.

2. Critical Path for Ph.D. Students

| Activity | Credits | Normal time for completion since first registration | | Preparatory Actions |
|--------------------------|-----------------|---|------------------|---|
| | | Full-time | Part-time | |
| 1. Supervisory Committee | N/A | Within 6 months | Within 12 months | By supervisor(s) on consultation with GPD |
| 2. Course work | 12 [¥] | 10 months | 20 months | <u>Register</u> for 3 [¥] courses |
| 3. Written comprehensive | 0 | 12 months | 24 months | ▪ No registration required for ENCS 850* or 8501 [¥] ▪ Set up Committee |
| 4. Oral comprehensive | 0 | | | |
| 5. Doctoral research | 6 [¥] | 18 months | 36 months | ▪ No registration required for |

* Optional for students first registered before summer 2001. The credits may be different from shown. This option, if chosen, must be used consistently throughout the program.

¥ For students admitted for the summer 2001 or later.

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| proposal | | | | ENCS 851* or 8511* ▪ Submit written report ▪ Schedule oral presentation |
| 6. Ph.D. seminar | 2* | 20 months | 40 months | <u>Register</u> for ENCS 801* or 8011* |
| 7. Thesis Examining Committee | N/A | 6 weeks before the defence | 6 weeks before the defence | By supervisor(s) on consultation with GPD |
| 8. Thesis defence | 70* | Target: 36 months. | Target: 72 months. | ▪ Set up Committee ▪ <u>Apply for convocation</u> ▪ <u>Submit thesis</u> |
| | 90 credits | Max: 6 years | Max: 8 years | Note: Need not register for ENCS 891* / 8911* (Thesis) |

The above table is applicable to students admitted on the basis of a Master's degree on a related discipline. For other students, the time frame is to be adjusted accordingly. For example, the time frame for the accelerated 106-cr Ph.D. program (without Master's degree) would normally extend by 12 months. Underlined items are subject to specific deadlines published in the Graduate Calendar.

3. Committees for Ph.D. Students

3.1 Ph.D. Supervisory Committee

The Composition: Each Ph.D. student has a supervisory committee composed of at least two internal members in addition to the student's research supervisor(s). At least one of the two internal examiners should have an expertise closely related to that of the student's research area as much as feasible. Preference is given to full-time faculty members in the related areas. It is a common practice for the supervisor to nominate one additional member *external to the department* who will serve in the examination committee for the comprehensive as well as for the Research Proposal.

The Approval Procedure: The supervisor recommends the members of the Ph.D. Supervisory Committee (and optionally, the *examiner external to the department*) for approval by the GSC committee at least one semester prior to the comprehensive examination. The approval shall follow similar procedure as per item 1 above, i.e. M.A.Sc. committee.

The Responsibilities: The primary duty of the Ph.D. Supervisory Committee is to assist the supervisor in the process of guiding the student's research. Therefore, it is necessary for the Supervisory Committee to meet at least once a year for* :

- Progress and performance reviews.
- Advice on research activities.
- Timing for special events (e.g. thesis defence, comprehensive exams, research proposal, etc.).

Keeping Records: It is the supervisor's responsibilities to keep written records of the activities (dates, attendance, actions, decisions, etc. .) of the Supervisory Committee. At the time of the thesis defence, the supervisor will need this information to complete the student records as per the Dean's request.

* In according to the Graduate Calendar, the Ph.D. Supervisory Committee also approves the courses to be taken by the student. This may not always be feasible as course registration often takes place before the committee is set up. In such case, the supervisor recommends the course selection for approval by the GPD.

3.2 Committee for Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination and Research Proposal

The Composition: Minimum of 4 members composed of the Supervisory Committee plus one additional member *external to the department*. This examiner external to the department should preferably be a full-time faculty member who has expertise related to the area of research, and has not published jointly with the student during the last 6 years. If this member was not part of the committee previously approved by the GSC as per item 3.1 above, it is necessary to seek the GSC's approval **at least one semester** prior to the comprehensive examination.

Notification: The supervisor will notify the GPD of his/her students who will undergo the comprehensive written examination prior to the date of the exam, which is scheduled on the following days:

- The third Wednesday of November (e.g. 19 November, 2008)
- The third Wednesday of May (e.g. 20 May, 2009)

The Committee Chair: GPD will invite a member among the internal members to chair the examination committee.

3.3 Ph.D. Thesis Examination Committee

The Composition: Minimum of 5 members composed of members of the Supervisory Committee plus two additional members:

- A member external to the department. This member also serves in the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination Committee and Research Proposal.
- A member external to the university.

The *examiner external to the university* for the Ph.D. thesis defence should be an established authority in a closely related research area, as evidenced by advanced degrees (e.g. Ph.D.), research publications, and senior positions in the academia (full professor) or government and industry (e.g. research scientist). Preference is given to full professor who has supervised at least one Ph.D. student to completion. Furthermore, this individual cannot be from the student's supervisory committee nor affiliated with the supervisor or the student in any manner that may constitute an apparent conflict of interest as defined in NSERC guidelines and Concordia's Code of Ethics.

The Approval: At least 7 weeks in advance of the date of the Ph.D. thesis defence, the supervisor will forward to the GPD the following information:

- (i) The names of all examiners, and their affiliations.
- (ii) The CV of the *examiner external to the university* (with complete postal address, phone/fax numbers and email address).
- (iii) The date (and optionally an alternate date) of the oral defence examination to which everyone has agreed.
- (iv) An electronic version of the thesis abstract.

The GPD will forward the request to the Dean's Office for approval.

4. Written Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

4.1 The examiners shall hand the written questions in signed & sealed envelopes to the Graduate Program Assistant at least one week prior to the examination date. The names of the examiner and of the student should be written on the envelope as well as on every question paper. The question papers will remain in sealed envelopes until opened by the student in the examination room.

4.2 All questions prepared by an individual examiner will be sufficient for a one-hour **closed-book** exam unless specified otherwise by the supervisor. Students should ask individual examiners on the topics covered.

4.3 The examination is for 3 hours, and will cover fundamentals in three subject materials including:

- Mathematics/Statistics
- Two additional subjects as prescribed by the Supervisory Committee

4.4 The exam will start at 13:00 on the following dates:

- The third Wednesday of November (e.g. 19 November, 2008)
- The third Wednesday of May (e.g. 20 May, 2009)

Further details on the conduct of the written examination are in the section “General Instructions for Students”.

3.5 A student who has failed one or more examination papers is considered to have failed the comprehensive examination after the Supervisory Committee has met and reviewed each and everyone of the failed papers. A failed student is permitted to take the written exam a second time in the following term on the subject(s) that the student has failed. Students failing a second time are withdrawn from the program.

5. Oral Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

Only students who passed the written exam in all subjects will proceed to the oral comprehensive examination. The oral Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination normally takes place 1 to 3 weeks after the written part. A student who has failed the oral comprehensive examination is considered to have failed the comprehensive examination. Failed students are permitted to take the oral part a second time in the following term. Students failing a second time are withdrawn from the program.

The GPD should be informed, in advance, of the date for the examination and names of the members.

6. Ph.D. Research Proposal

At least 2 weeks before the oral presentation for the research proposal, the student's written report shall be given to the examiners and the electronic version of the abstract be sent to the Assistant to the GPD for the announcement.

Per graduate calendar 08-09: Students will be assessed on the basis of written and oral presentations that must include: (i) a critical review of previous work relevant to the subject of the thesis, and (ii) a detailed research plan of action and expected milestones. Students are required to defend their doctoral research proposal before a committee that will normally be comprised of the same members as the Comprehensive Examination Committee. Students must demonstrate the viability of their project and their capacity to undertake doctoral thesis research. The proposal may be accepted, returned for modifications, or rejected. The rejection of a proposal will result in the student's withdrawal from the program. A student whose proposal is accepted will be admitted to candidacy for the Ph.D.

Ph. D. Comprehensive Examination – Written Part

General Instructions for Students

Time 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

- (a) Write your name and your supervisor's name on the front page of every answer booklet.
- (b) Use separate answer booklet(s) for different examiners.
- (c) In case of doubt and/or missing information, exercise your good judgment and state/justify your assumptions.
- (d) Communication and use of illegal material during the exam are forbidden and violators will be charged. In the examination room, no cell phones, and no calculators capable of displaying text or graphics are allowed. University regulations on cheating will be strictly enforced.

Request for Approval Template

Student Name:

Degree:

Thesis (Research) Topic:

Exam (select one): comprehensive, proposal, thesis defense

Exam Date:

Committee:

1- External to the program:

Affiliation:

2- BCEE examiner 1:

3- BCEE examiner 2:

4- Supervisor(s):