

Requirements for Doctoral Thesis Examinations

The doctoral thesis examination is the culmination of the candidates' research program. It exposes their work to scholarly criticism by members of the University, and gives students the opportunity to defend it.

When candidates give notice of their readiness to submit the thesis, the graduate studies committee of the candidate's program appoints an Examining Committee in consultation with the thesis supervisor. The Graduate Program Director forwards a doctoral thesis examination committee form to the Thesis Office. This form lists the members of the examining committee and the Chair, the name and address of the external examiner and the preferred date and time for the oral examination. A copy of the external examiner's C.V. must also be attached. In the John Molson School of Business and in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, the Graduate Studies Committee is a Faculty committee. The doctoral examination form for students in the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science must be approved by the Faculty Associate Dean prior to being sent to the Thesis Office. In the Faculties of Arts and Science and Fine Arts, this committee is departmental. The Ph.D. in the Individualized Program is administered by a special subcommittee of the C.S.G.S.

The Examining Committee consists of at least five (5) members. At least one (1) must be from outside the University (external examiner). In programs where there is a Thesis Supervisory Committee, any or all members of this committee may be named as members of the Examining Committee, subject to the practices of the relevant program. The student's supervisor(s) must be a member of the Examining Committee. Co-author(s) of work included in the thesis cannot serve as an examiner for that thesis except for the supervisor(s).

Any member of the examining committee who cannot attend the defence must submit a written report on the thesis with questions to be raised on the thesis to the Dean of Graduate Studies at least two weeks before the defence. The graduate studies committee will then appoint a proxy to raise these questions at the examination. The proxy examiner will assume the role of the absent member of the examining committee.

The examination date must be set **a minimum of 6 weeks** from receipt of the thesis **and** the Doctoral Thesis Examination Committee Form submitted by the student's program. In the case of Engineering & Computer Science, it must also be approved by the Associate Dean of the student's faculty. The Thesis Office must distribute the thesis electronically to the Examination Committee at least one month prior to the examination.

The Thesis Office announces the upcoming defence on the Events website. Questions on a thesis by members of the University, other than those on the examining committee, must be submitted in writing to the Dean of Graduate Studies no later than one week before the thesis defence. The thesis defence is an oral examination conducted by a Chair who shall be the Dean of Graduate Studies, or a delegate, selected from a relevant discipline. Any member of the University is free to attend the oral examination.

The candidate first presents the thesis orally with whatever aids are required to make an effective presentation. The candidate is then questioned on the thesis. The Chair will give priority to questions from members of the examining committee. Any member of the University who has submitted written criticism may be recognized by the Chair. The Chair adjourns the examination when the examining committee decides that further questioning is unnecessary.

The Chair presides over the examining committee during its deliberations in camera, but takes no part in the decision. The decision of the examining committee is based both on the thesis and on the candidate's ability to defend it. It is the responsibility of the Chair to see that a report on the examination is prepared before the committee adjourns. This report will be made on the Examining Committee Report form provided for this purpose, and will carry the signatures of all members of the examining committee, including the delegates of absent members. The written reports of absent readers, and of members of the examining committee who dissent from its decision, must accompany it. Where the Chair has been a delegate, the Chair's final responsibility is to report to the Dean of Graduate Studies on the conduct of the examination.

Four decisions are open to the examining committee and voting is based on a simple majority. The thesis can be *accepted as submitted*, *accepted with minor modifications*, *accepted with major modifications*, or *rejected*. Accepted as Submitted may include corrections that do not require the supervisor's approval. Minor modifications are defined as corrections which can be made immediately to the satisfaction of the supervisor. When a thesis is accepted with major modifications, a precise description of the modifications must be included in the examining committee's report along with a date for their completion. This date can be no longer than six months from the date of defence. It is then the responsibility of the candidate's supervisor to demonstrate to the examining committee that the required modifications have been made. It is not necessary to reconvene the committee. The candidate's supervisor should inform the Thesis Office in writing that the modifications have been approved. When the thesis has been rejected, the candidate may not resubmit the thesis for six months from the date of the original defence. A rejected thesis may be submitted, in revised form, only once.

If the Examining Committee is unable to reach a decision concerning the thesis at the time of the defence, it is the responsibility of the Chair to determine what is required by the Examining Committee to reach a decision. The Chair must also make the necessary arrangements to fulfill any requirements of the Examining Committee and promptly call another meeting, as well as inform the student that the Examining Committee's decision is pending. The student is not normally required to be present at the second meeting of the Examining Committee.

On the basis of the examining committee's report and its own records of the candidate's progress in their assigned program of study, the graduate studies committee decides whether the candidate has fulfilled the requirements of the doctoral degree. If its decision is yes, the committee requests that the Dean of Graduate Studies recommends to the Council of the School of Graduate Studies that the degree be awarded. If the Dean has any reason to feel that the acceptance of the thesis is open to dispute, the matter may be brought before the Council of the School of Graduate Studies. Once the recommendation has been passed by Senate, the digital version of the thesis may be made available to the public via Spectrum: Concordia University's Research Repository.