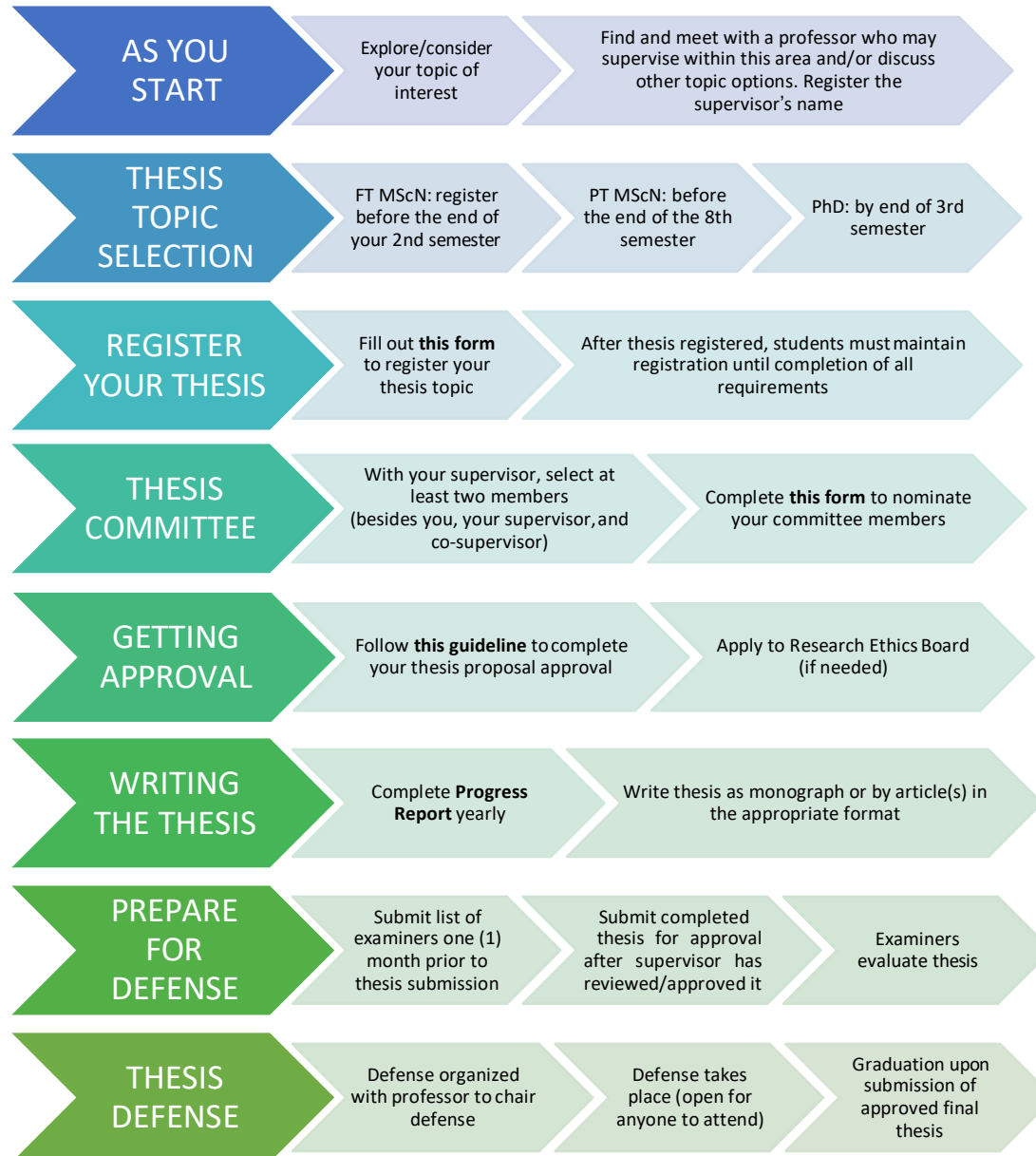


Guideline for Thesis Process



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Document authors:

Dawn Stacey RN, PhD, Assistant Director – Graduate Programs, School of Nursing

Marlene Haines RN, BScN, BHSc, PhD Candidate

Falonne Elimo, Administrative Assistant for Graduate Programs

Approved by the School of Nursing Graduate Committee

Thesis FAQs

1) How do I find a supervisor?

A supervisor usually shares similar research interests with their graduate students. Consult the [Faculty List](#) of regular professors in the School of Nursing to review their research interests to assist you with your choice. For students entering the **PhD program**, acceptance into the program requires you have a professor who has agreed to be your supervisor. For students entering the **MScN program** thesis option, you need to find a supervisor within the first year of the program. Your supervisor must be a regular faculty member at the University of Ottawa. Adjunct professors may co-supervise with a regular faculty member.

Once you have confirmed your thesis supervisor and/or co-supervisor, please complete the service request “Add a thesis supervisor” in uoZone for approval.

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2) Who approves my service requests to uoZone?

Your service requests submitted in uoZone are typically approved by your supervisor (if you have a co-supervisor, both need to approve service requests). Then the request is approved by the Assistant Director of Graduate Nursing Programs and finally by the Vice-Dean Academic in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

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3) How do I register my thesis topic?

All students enrolled in the thesis option of a graduate program must register their thesis topic. For full time **MScN students**, registration must be done by the end of the second session of initial registration (i.e., end of the winter semester). For part time **MScN students**, thesis registration must be done, at the latest, before the end of the 8th semester (i.e., end of the winter semester). For **PhD students**, the topic must be determined by the end of the third semester of studies (i.e., end of the spring semester).

Once you have determined your thesis topic, please complete the service request “Add thesis title” in uoZone to register your topic for approval. You can modify the thesis title as your thesis evolves by submitting a new service request.

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4) What is the role of the thesis committee?

The thesis committee is organized to provide the graduate student support in the conduct of their thesis. The student should meet with their committee during the design of their thesis proposal and the committee must “sign-off” on the proposal indicating approval prior to starting the thesis project. During the thesis process, the graduate student keeps the committee up to date on their progress and seeks guidance

as necessary. The student may want to periodically arrange committee meetings; for example, when there are issues to discuss or results to review. A good practice is to provide the committee with a monthly email to update the committee on your progress. Speak to your thesis supervisor about the frequency of meetings with the committee, as well as the process for arranging individual meetings with committee members. Committee members may also be identified as examiners (see Question 11).

You are asked to submit a [Thesis Advisory Committee meeting report](#) with your annual report (see question 9). Thesis advisory committee (TAC) meetings are required yearly. The first meeting usually occurs at the end of your first year (MScN, PhD before comprehensive exams) or for part-time MScN end of your second year.

Once the [Thesis Advisory Committee \(TAC\) report](#) form is complete, the student must submit the form with all required signatures via the service request “Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC)” in uoZone for approval.

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5) How do I nominate my thesis committee members?

The thesis committee is composed of the supervisor (with or without a co-supervisor) plus a minimum of 2 members. At the **masters’ level**, at least one of the 2 members must be a regular professor; at the **doctoral level**, all should be regular professors or adjunct professors. It may also be relevant to have an advanced practice nurse, manager, or administrator on your thesis committee. Given your research ideas are likely to evolve over the first year of the program, thesis committee members are often chosen at the end of your first year. For PhD students, this is done prior to the comprehensive examination.

The student and supervisor together identify individuals who possess particular expertise within the student’s topic and/or research methods. In some cases, and granted that no costs be incurred to the University of Ottawa, one or more members may be from another university or be a researcher from another institution (e.g., Ottawa Hospital Research Institute). In such cases, the student must obtain the external member’s CV and submit it along with the [Nomination of Thesis Committee Members](#) form.

Once the committee is formed, the student completes the [Nomination of Thesis Committee Members](#) form with all required signatures and submits it via the service request under “Thesis Advisory Committee(TAC)” in uoZone for approval.

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6) What is a reasonable timeframe for obtaining feedback from my supervisor or committee members?

For individual thesis chapters or draft manuscripts, thesis supervisors/committee members should be given approximately two weeks. For the full thesis, thesis supervisors/committee members should be given approximately four weeks. When the feedback is due, you may also want to book a meeting with your supervisor to discuss it. It is highly suggested to speak with your thesis committee in advance to discuss expected timelines so that committee members are aware of when proposals and thesis documents need to be reviewed.

7) What is the process for getting my thesis proposal approved?

There is some variance to the approval process. Some committees may review the proposal and approve the final version after revisions are made. Other committees may have the student present the proposal orally as an informal 'proposal defence'. Some committees have the student present the plans for the proposal to confirm the problem, research question(s), and methods before drafting the proposal. For the required elements and deadlines for the thesis project approval consult the following documents: [Thesis Proposal Approval – Guidelines](#) & [Monograph Thesis and Thesis by Article\(s\)- Regulations](#)

Once the committee has approved the thesis proposal, the student must complete the [Thesis Proposal Approval](#) form with all required signatures and submits it via the service request under "Thesis proposal" in uoZone for approval.

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8) How do I get approval from the ethics committee?

After the thesis proposal is approved, students whose research involves human subjects can submit their research project for the approval of the Research Ethics Boards (REB). For studies being conducted within a hospital environment, the ethics application is submitted to the hospital (e.g., The Ottawa Hospital, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, the Montfort Hospital) and then the hospital approval is submitted for ethics approval at the University of Ottawa. The Ottawa Hospital also has a process for approval of Quality Improvement Projects that waives the requirement for ethics approval. If you are unsure if you require ethics approval, discuss your proposal with someone in the Research Ethics office. For forms and procedures for the University of Ottawa, see the [Ethics Application Process](#). In order to submit a new application to the uOttawa REB, you must do so through eReviews. Students can find more info on the eReviews system [here](#). There is also an [internal guideline](#) and the [Dates and Timelines](#) for submission and reviews information.

9) When do I need to complete the research progress form?

Following the thesis topic registration, the student and the thesis supervisor/co-supervisor, **together**, complete the [Annual Research Progress Report](#) form each year. The student then submits the service request under "Progress Report" on uoZone for approval. The deadline is the end of April, keeping in mind it takes a minimum of two weeks to process the service request. In situations where the student is not progressing as planned, it may be required to complete this form more often. **If the progress report has not been processed in time, you will not be able to register for any courses in the next term.**

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Note: Students registered in a thesis program must submit an annual progress report regardless of the student's year of admission and status (part-time or full-time).

10) How do I write my thesis?

The thesis may be written in traditional monograph format or may consist of a series of article(s). Despite the format for your thesis, the same standards of quality (described in the General Regulation of the Office of the Vice-Provost, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) will apply. Accepted referencing formats include: AMA, APA, Chicago, MLA, and Vancouver. Consult the [Monograph Thesis and Thesis by Article\(s\) – Regulations](#) for the School of Nursing that govern the specific format, the nature of the publications relied upon, and the content of various parts of the thesis. [UOResearch](#) also provides information about formatting your title page, pagination, and other important points for preparing your thesis. The [Academic Writing Help Centre](#) can provide assistance in preparing your thesis.

11) What is the process for naming examiners?

The student together with the thesis supervisor/co-supervisor identifies potential examiners. All names proposed need to have agreed to have their name put forward as a potential examiner – it is the responsibility of the supervisor and/or graduate student to obtain permission to have their name submitted.

- **For the Master`s Program:** a) one examiner from the thesis committee; and b) at least one examiner external to the thesis committee and usually internal to the University of Ottawa (e.g., regular professor or adjunct professor). All examiners should be PhD prepared.
- **For the Doctoral program:** a) one examiner external to the committee and external to the University of Ottawa according to the University of Ottawa regulations; b) up to two examiners from the thesis committee; and c) at least one other examiner external to the thesis committee and usually internal to the University of Ottawa (e.g., regular professor or adjunct professor). All examiners should be PhD prepared
 - External examiners must have had no collaborations with the supervisor, co-supervisor, or graduate student for a minimum of 6 years.
 - For external examiners, 2 to 3 potential examiners (this number depends on the Vice-Dean and could be as few as 1) are submitted with a copy of their CV so that the potential examiners can be reviewed to: a) determine if they qualify to be an examiner; b) ensure there are no conflicts of interest; and c) ensure they have not been asked in the last year.
 - If approved, the external examiner needs to provide their date of birth, email, and phone number to be added into uoCampus (faculty access to uoZone) for access to the thesis and for submitting their report.

Once examiners are identified, the student must submit the [List of Examiners for the Evaluation of the Thesis](#) form with the CVs of the proposed external examiners under the service request “List of examiners for evaluation of the thesis” in uoZone. Internal examiners are approved of by the Assistant Director of Graduate Programs in the School of Nursing and

the external examiner (PhD only) is approved by the Vice-Dean Academic in the Faculty of Health Sciences. The list of examiners must be completed 1 month before the student plans to deposit their thesis for examination. Do not submit too early in case examiners may no longer be available (e.g., the list of approved examiners “expires” within 3 months).

12) How long do examiners have to review the thesis and provide a report?

PhD examiners have 6 weeks MScN examiners have 4 weeks

The timing starts on the day the thesis is sent to the examiners.

13) How do I deposit the thesis for evaluation?

Prior to depositing the thesis, the supervisor must read the thesis and the student has to have made any necessary changes to the thesis. The supervisor must approve the submitted version. Ideally, all thesis committee members agree that the thesis is ready to be submitted.

When all the other requirements of the program have been met and the thesis is deemed acceptable by the supervisor for defence, the thesis must be submitted under the service request “Initial thesis submission for evaluation” in uoZone for approval. If the list of examiners was submitted one month earlier and the thesis is approved for examination, the student is no longer required to pay tuition fees (and may qualify for some reimbursement of fees already paid).

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14) What do I do if I want my thesis to be embargoed?

To request an embargo, students must complete the Embargo Request Form (PDF) and submit it with their final version of their thesis using the service request “Attestation of final version of your thesis” via uoZone.

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15) How soon after the deadline for reports is the oral defence scheduled?

The tentative thesis defence is typically scheduled 8-10 weeks after the Master’s thesis is sent to examiners and 10-12 weeks after the PhD thesis is sent to examiners. This allows 5 days for the student to review comments and decide whether or not to proceed to oral defence, as well as an extra week(s) in case reports are delayed and/or there are system processing delays. If a student has decided to proceed with the oral defence, they must submit their decision using the service request “Thesis defence (oral)” via uoZone.

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The potential date for the oral thesis defence is arranged soon after the thesis is set to the examiners. A date is chosen that is convenient to the examiners, supervisor(s) and student.

16) What is the process for organizing the thesis defense?

Master's: The Administrative Assistant for Nursing Graduate Programs will distribute the thesis for examination to the approved examiners and secure a professor to chair the thesis defence. The thesis is distributed to examiners through uoCampus – for any examiners who are not uOttawa employees, the Administrative Assistant for Nursing Graduate Programs will need to set up a profile in uoCampus (this requires the examiner's date of birth and telephone number).

In consultation with the student, the thesis supervisor, the examiners, and the chair, the Administrative Assistant for Graduate Programs of the School of Nursing organizes the tentative defence date for approximately 8-10 weeks after the thesis has been distributed (4 weeks for the examination process, 5 working days for the student to review feedback and indicate preference to proceed to oral defence, 2 week grace period).

PhD: The Administrative Assistant for the Vice-Dean Academic in the Faculty of Health Sciences will distribute the thesis for examination to the approved examiners and secure a professor from outside the School of Nursing to chair the thesis defence. The thesis is distributed to examiners through uoCampus – for any examiners who are not uOttawa employees, the Administrative Assistant for Nursing Graduate Programs will need to set up a profile in uoCampus (this requires the examiners date of birth and telephone number). In consultation with the student, the thesis supervisor, the examiners and the chair, the administrative assistant for the Vice-Dean Academic organizes the tentative defence date for approximately 10-12 weeks after the thesis has been distributed (6 weeks for examination process, 5 working days for the student to review feedback and indicate preference to proceed to oral defence, 2 week grace period).

In discussion with the supervisor, the student decides whether or not to proceed with the oral defence within five business days of receiving the examiner reports. If the student decides to proceed to oral defence, he/she places the service request "Oral defense" in uoZone indicating their decision to proceed with an oral defence. If the student chooses to not proceed to oral defense, the student must re-register for another term.

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17) Who can come to see my defense?

The defence is typically open to the public and everyone is welcome (family, friends, colleagues, other graduate students). For all the details concerning the thesis defence, consult [Section 6. Defence of the thesis.](#)

18) How should I prepare for the oral defense?

The student prepares a 10–20-minute presentation overviewing the content of their thesis and prepares a response to the evaluators' comments and questions. The presentation and response to reviewer feedback should be reviewed with your supervisor/co-supervisors. Some students participate in a mock defense with their supervisor and/or other graduate students excluding examiners.

19) What is the process for submitting the final version post-oral defence?

There are three possible outcomes following the oral defense, which include:

I. The thesis meets the degree requirements, but minor corrections must be made. The student:

- has 30 days to submit the final corrected version of thesis under the service request “ Attestation of final version of your thesis” on uoZone for approval uoZone
- must submit final approved copy to [uOResearch](#) (library)
- must apply to graduate (students may need to apply to graduate before the oral defence in anticipation of a positive outcome) – see Question 25 for details.

II. The thesis meets the degree requirements, but major corrections/revisions must be made. The student:

- has 30 days to submit the final corrected version of thesis under the service request “Approval of the final version of the thesis” on uoZone for approval uoZone
- If revisions will take longer than 30 days, the student re-enrols for another term(s) and follows the procedures documented at the thesis defense.

III. The thesis does not meet the degree requirements.

20) Where can I go to get more in-depth information regarding the submission of my thesis?

[UOResearch](#) offers an excellent FAQ to help guide you in your thesis process. Once you submit to uOResearch, keep in mind that you may go through several rounds of revisions with them prior to your thesis being accepted.

21) Do I need to pay tuition after I have surpassed the timeline for admission scholarships (one year of full-time tuition for MScN students or four years (12 semesters) for PhD students)?

Yes. To calculate tuition, you may refer to [uOttawa's Tuition Fees](#).

22) How long do I have to complete my graduate program?

Master's students have a maximum of 4 years (full time or part time) to complete the MScN program (including thesis) and **doctoral students** have a maximum of 6 years. If students anticipate that they will not finish by this deadline, in exceptional circumstances they must submit a request for extension with rationale and a proposed timeline for completion 1-2 months before the deadline. If full-time students are working beyond 10 hours a week, the extension typically is not approved. You must fill out the [Request for Extension of the Time Limit to Complete the Requirements of a Graduate Degree](#) form and submit under the service request "Extension of the time limit" on uoZone for approval.

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23) How do I take a leave of absence when there is an issue interfering with my ability to take graduate courses or work on my thesis?

Given that there are specific deadlines for completing the graduate programs (4 years for MScN, 6 years for PhD), you can request a leave of absence (e.g., parental leave, being sick). Please discuss any leave of absences with your supervisor. During a leave of absence, you cannot continue working on your thesis with your supervisor and cannot work for the university. To request a leave of absence for up to 1 year, complete the [Request for Leave of Absence](#) form and obtain relevant supporting information (e.g., medical certificate). This form is submitted under the service request "Leave of absence" in uoZone for approval.

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24) What are the deadlines for submission of theses to avoid paying tuition into the next semester?

The university provides deadlines to avoid paying fees for the next semester and for reimbursements of paid fees if the thesis is submitted within the semester. All deadlines for submitting theses can be found on [Important Academic Dates and Deadlines](#). For more information, see [Theses Submission and Evaluation](#).

25) Where do I go to register for graduation?

It is important to know how to complete this final and well-deserved step of the process. Within the [Obtain your Degree](#) webpage, you will find information about registering to graduate, renting gowns and hoods, as well as other important steps to attend convocation. If the oral defence is scheduled after the deadline to register for graduation but it is likely that you will be completed in time to graduate, remember to register before the deadline. Graduation ceremonies are typically in June and October/November. All graduating students must register in order to receive their degree (with or without attending convocation).