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## G. THESIS

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** The new **G. Thesis** regulation will be implemented October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

[Access to the new \*\*G.Thesis\*\* regulation](#)

### 1. Standards

#### a) Master's thesis

The master's thesis should reveal that the candidate is able to work in a scholarly manner and is acquainted with the principal works published on the subject of the thesis. Insofar as it is possible, the thesis should be an original contribution.

#### b) Doctoral thesis

A doctoral thesis must constitute a significant contribution to knowledge, embody the results of original investigation and analysis on the part of the student and be of such quality as to merit publication.

#### c) Thesis in article format

There are essentially two kinds of theses: a traditional monograph; and a thesis consisting of a series of articles, or in rare instances one article, prepared for publication in a scholarly journal.

The monograph thesis is the most popular thesis form. It resembles a non-fiction book in that it deals in depth with a specific topic.



In a monograph thesis, a student presents a proposition, or “thesis,” and the research findings to support it. The student draws on existing research, which he or she may accept or reject. The thesis usually follows a simple overall format – it begins with an introduction, which is followed by a main body or several sections, and ends with a conclusion.

Besides the traditional monograph, a significant number of theses, especially in the sciences, consist of a series of articles or, very rarely, a single article.

Each individual academic unit decides which format is suitable for its discipline. Before embarking on their thesis, students must check with their academic unit to find out the acceptable format.

The same quality and ethical standards apply to both thesis formats.

The minimum requirements for a thesis that consists of a series of articles or one article are as follows:

- a general introduction, which outlines the thesis topic, and how the articles that comprise the main body of the text will address the topic;
- a general discussion and conclusion, which integrates the material addressed in the various articles and provides a global summary and analysis, and
- a statement of Contributions of Collaborators and/or Co-Authors, which clearly distinguishes the contributions of the student from those of all other collaborators or co-authors, and identifies in detail all other contributions. To misrepresent the contributions of collaborators to joint work would constitute **academic fraud**, and it would be subject to the sanctions prescribed by the University.

Some academic units have additional requirements, so it is essential to check beforehand with the academic unit to find out what is accepted and what is not.

Note: Some theses may be a combination of a monograph thesis and a series of articles.

For more information on theses, please consult the [guide for completing a thesis](#).

## 2. Registration of the Topic

a) The topic of the thesis is to be determined in consultation with the student's research supervisor, who must be a member of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (FGPS) (please refer to section D). For master's students the topic must be determined by the end of the second session and, for doctoral students, by the end of the third session of studies.

b) When the thesis topic has been approved by the academic unit concerned, the academic unit submits it to the FGPS for registration, using the form for that purpose. The form will bear the signatures of the student's supervisor, of the director of graduate studies or chair of the academic unit, and of the student. In the case of a supervisory committee, the form will be signed by the chair of the committee.<sup>1</sup>

c) The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will confirm that the thesis topic has been registered.

d) After the topic is registered, each student must maintain registration until completion of all the requirements for the degree, in accordance with regulations published elsewhere in this calendar (please refer to section C - 2. b).

## 3. Writing of the Thesis



The writing of the thesis must conform to the rules of methodology established by the academic unit. If the thesis consists of a series of published articles, it must conform to university and academic unit guidelines for such theses. It is important that the manuscript be of good quality in order to permit its reproduction. Details are provided in the appropriate guide.

## 4. Submission of the Thesis for Evaluation

The writing and presentation of the thesis must conform to the rules established by the FGPS and the student's graduate program.

*N.B. Before submitting a thesis for evaluation, the student must complete all other program requirements, including residence.*

4.1 At the time the thesis is submitted for evaluation, the thesis supervisor(s) must sign a form (see 4.2) confirming that they have read the thesis and find it acceptable for submission to the jury for evaluation, and that all required approvals were obtained. For a **doctoral** thesis, the list of jury members must be established **one month** in advance of the anticipated submission date of the thesis.

4.2 A thesis will not be considered to be officially submitted for evaluation until all the following documents have been received by the office responsible for organizing the evaluation and defence: a) the signed form entitled "Statement of thesis supervisor for the submission of the thesis for evaluation"; b) the number of paper copies required; including a copy for the chair of the defence; c) the electronic version of the thesis, and d) the "List of Examiners for the evaluation of the thesis" form.

4.3 The student **must be registered** during the session in which the thesis is officially submitted for evaluation.

## 5. Evaluation of the Thesis

### 5.1 Examining board

#### a) Master's thesis

i) A master's thesis will be read by and subsequently defended before a committee of no fewer than two and no more than four examiners. The thesis supervisor shall not count as one of the minimum number and shall not have the right to vote.

ii) The examiners of a master's thesis will be appointed by the chair of the academic unit (or the dean of the faculty) where the student is registered. A copy of the form entitled **Nomination of Thesis Examiners** is sent to the FGPS.

iii) In the case of a collaborative program, at least one examiner will normally be approved by the director or coordinator of the collaborative program.

iv) In the case of joint programs with Carleton University, one examiner will normally be from Carleton University.

#### b) Doctoral thesis

i) For a doctoral thesis, the examining board shall consist of no fewer than four, and no more than seven members. The thesis supervisor shall not count as one of the minimum number and shall not have the right to vote.

ii) The examining board is appointed by the Dean of the FGPS upon recommendation from the chair of the academic unit or the Dean of the faculty of the student concerned. The recommendation, to be sent on the **Nomination of Thesis Examiners form**, should reach the FGPS one month in advance of the expected date of submission of the thesis. The academic unit is expected to have checked in advance that the proposed examiners are willing to read the thesis.

iii) In the case of joint programs with Carleton University, one examiner will normally be from Carleton University, with this person being considered an internal examiner.



iv) At least one examiner will be from outside the University of Ottawa. This examiner will be selected by the Dean of the FGPS from a slate of at least two names provided by the academic unit. The proposed examiners must be at arm's length from the student and the supervisor. See point C below.

v) In the case of a collaborative program, at least one internal examiner must be approved by the director or coordinator of the collaborative program.

vi) The examining board will be chaired by the Dean of the FGPS or a representative.

## c) Independence of external examiner

The proposed external examiner should be at arm's length from the PhD candidate, from the thesis research and from the thesis supervisor. Examiners must be seen to be able to examine the student and the thesis at arm's-length, free of substantial conflict of interest from any source. The test of whether or not a conflict of interest might exist is whether a reasonable outside person could consider a situation to exist that could give rise to an apprehension of bias.

There is a conflict of interest when:

- A proposed external examiner is, or was in the last six years, from the same university, organization or department, or belongs or belonged, in the last six years, to the same research unit as the supervisor(s) or candidate; or
- There is an administrative or family link between the proposed external examiner and the supervisor(s) or candidate (e.g., head of the department, dean of the faculty, etc.); or
- A proposed external examiner is a former research supervisor or graduate student of the supervisor(s) or candidate or has collaborated or published with the supervisor(s) or candidate within the past six years.
- A proposed external examiner is an industrial or government representative who is or was in the last six years directly involved in collaborative activities with the supervisor(s) or candidate; or

This list, while not exhaustive, illustrates the nature of potential conflicts to be avoided. The candidate's program must take reasonable steps to avoid recommending an examiner whose relationship with the candidate or supervisor could be seen as jeopardizing an impartial judgment on the thesis.

In signing the form with the names of the proposed examiners, the chair of the academic unit or delegate is indicating that, to the best of their knowledge, no conflict of interest exists.

## 5.2 Evaluation procedures

a) In light of the standards required for the degree (see 1. a) or b) above), each examiner will communicate, on the appropriate form, one of the following four verdicts:

1. The thesis is accepted for the defence.
2. The thesis is accepted for the defence on the understanding that revisions must be completed after the defence.
3. The thesis requires substantial revision to meet the standards required for the degree; a revised version of the thesis must be submitted to the examiners. See point 7 below for information regarding the time allotted for making revisions.
4. The thesis fails to meet the standards required for the degree.

A thesis may not be defended if two examiners are opposed. If one of the examiners has serious reservations concerning the thesis (verdict 3 or 4), the matter will be referred to the Dean of the FGPS. A candidate whose thesis, following a second reading, is not recommended for the defence (a majority of verdicts 3 or 4) must withdraw from the program.

b) The examiners of a master's thesis will submit the **Thesis Examiner's Report form** to the chair of the academic unit. If the reports are all positive, the academic unit will proceed to arrange the defence. In the event of a negative report or reports, the matter is referred to the Dean of the FGPS.

c) All examiners of a doctoral thesis will submit the **Thesis Examiner's Report form** to the Dean of the FGPS.

In the case of a master's or doctoral thesis requiring revisions prior to defence, examiners must return the **Thesis Examiner's Report for Revised**



Thesis form to the Dean of the FGPS.

## 6. Defence of the Thesis

### 6.1 Time of examination

Thesis defences may be held at any time subject to the availability of examiners. The oral defence will take place when the examiners have had time to critically evaluate the thesis. Candidates should allow at least three months for the reading and examination of their thesis.

#### Procedures for the oral defence of a thesis

Once favourable reports are received from the examiners, the Academic Unit or the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies organizes the oral defence at a time acceptable to the examiners and to the candidate. Prior to the defence the Chair of the jury receives a file containing the examiners' reports and other documents pertaining to the defence.

Immediately before the defence and **in the absence of the candidate** and other persons who are not members of the jury, the Chair of the jury meets briefly with the examiners and the thesis supervisor a) to discuss any difficulties arising from the examiners' reports, b) to explain the procedure to be adopted, and c) to determine the sequence in which the examiners will question the candidate and the time allocated to each examiner for questioning. All the examiners are expected to be present at the defence.

The Chair begins the oral defence by inviting the candidate to present the subject of the thesis. The time allotted for this purpose is specified by the Chair. (Ten to fifteen minutes is usually sufficient.)

The Chair then invites the examiners (in the sequence previously determined) to question the candidate on the thesis. A second round of questions may be appropriate. Finally, the thesis supervisor is given the opportunity to comment or ask questions.

At the end of the defence, the candidate and other persons who are not members of the jury are asked by the Chair to leave the room. **The thesis supervisor may remain.**

The members of the jury then exchange their views to arrive at a decision in the general terms given below. The Chair indicates the decision on the (**Report of the Jury - Thesis Defence**) form under the appropriate category (1, 2, 3 or 4) and, if appropriate, notes in the space for "comments" (or separately) the general nature of the corrections/revisions required **and specifies the names of the persons responsible for ensuring that the corrections/revisions are made satisfactorily.**

If appropriate, the Chair should enquire at this time whether the examiners are prepared to recommend the thesis for a prize. **The supervisor must be asked to withdraw while this decision is being taken.**

[Policy on thesis defence by videoconference](#)

### 6.2 Verdicts

The members of the examining board will render one of the following four verdicts (form entitled **Report of the Jury [Thesis Defence]**):

1. The thesis is accepted for the degree. The thesis supervisor will ensure that all corrections are made, as required by the examining board.
2. The thesis must be revised. The examining board must decide who will ensure that the required revisions have been made (one or more members of the examining board or the thesis supervisor). See point 7. for information regarding the time allotted for making revisions.
3. The thesis must be revised and undergo the evaluation and defence process again from the beginning with the same examiners (except for



necessary replacements).

4. The thesis is unacceptable and the candidate must withdraw from the program.

The chair immediately informs the candidate of the verdict. If the examining board cannot agree on a decision, the chair will report this to the Dean of the FGPS, who will refer the matter to the Executive Committee of the FGPS. A candidate who is not recommended for the degree after the second defence must withdraw from the program.

## 7. Thesis Revisions and Corrections

### 7.1 Prior to defence

A candidate whose thesis, following initial evaluation, requires revision and re-evaluation by the examiners, must re-register. The deadline for submitting the revised thesis at the FGPS is one session unless the FGPS has granted an extension. If the deadline is missed, the file will be closed.

### 7.2 Post defence

Candidates are allowed one month in which to submit the final copy of their thesis, including all revisions or corrections specified at the defence, to the FGPS. If a longer period is required, candidates must reregister in their program and submit the final copy to the FGPS within one session. Candidates who are unable to submit within one session can apply for an extension, giving their reasons. They should use the form Request for extension of the time limit to complete the requirements of a graduate degree.

If the submission deadline is missed and the FGPS has received no request for extension, the file will be closed. Under no circumstances can a candidate be recommended for the degree unless one acceptable final copy of the thesis has been submitted to the FGPS.

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1. In the case of a collaborative program, the topic also requires the approval of the collaborative program director or coordinator.
  2. In the absence of the form, the FGPS will require a letter from the chair of the academic unit prior to accepting the thesis for submission.
  3. By means of the same document, the author also authorizes the University of Ottawa, its successors and assignees, to make reproductions of the thesis by photographic means or by photocopying and to lend or sell such reproductions at cost to libraries and to scholars requesting them. The right to publish the thesis by other means and to sell it to the public is reserved for the author (see also section D - 7.).