



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

Faculty of  
Graduate Studies

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## **Thesis Examination Guidelines for Video Conference Examinations**

### **Master's Thesis Exams General Guidelines:**

- Normally, the examining process will be completed within one month after distribution of the thesis. Students have the right to an examination of the thesis if they and their Supervisor believe it is ready for examination, and if the Supervisory Committee agrees, as indicated in their written comments on the thesis.
- Thesis students must pass an oral examination on the subject of the thesis and related matters as part of the thesis examination process.
- The student defending their thesis will be allowed to share their screens in the video conference meeting. This will allow the student full control over sharing their PowerPoint during their initial presentation and during their responses to examiners' questions.
- All students defending their thesis will be expected to turn on both their video camera and their microphones for the duration of the examination.
- The first part of the examination will consist of an oral presentation of 20-30 minutes that will include a summary of the salient points of the research. This presentation will be followed by one or two rounds of questions from the Thesis Examining Committee and then opened to the audience for questions.
- The Chair of the Thesis Examining Committee will be responsible for maintaining the relevance of questioning and ensuring that the time limits are not exceeded. Following the completion of questioning, the candidate and audience will be required to leave the video conference before the examining committee begins to discuss their report. The Graduate Studies Thesis Officer is responsible for confirming that the student and audience has left the video conference.
- The Graduate Studies Thesis Officer will send copies of all paperwork electronically to the Thesis Examining Committee Chair at least one week prior to the date of the defense. The thesis paperwork will include: The University of Winnipeg Master's Thesis Examination Form, The University of Winnipeg Faculty of Graduate Studies Master's Thesis Final Report Form, one electronic copy of the thesis document, and the contact information for all examiners. Originals will be kept by the Thesis Officer to be circulated for signatures after the examination.

- At the same time, the Thesis Officer will schedule and send out invitations to the video conference to the thesis examining committee, the thesis examination chair, and the student. The Thesis Officer will confirm that all examiners and the examination chair have access to electronic signatures, which are needed to sign the Master's Thesis Examination Form and the Thesis Final Report Form, which will be circulated after the exam.
- The Faculty of Graduate Studies is responsible for the following: scheduling the date and time for the thesis defense; room booking; electronic distribution of the thesis to the examining committee; arranging for any media requirements (e.g. projector, video conferencing of examiners); confirmation of examination chair; and hosting and troubleshooting the remote video conference.
- The Thesis Officer will remain in the video conference during the discussion of the report but will take no part in the committee's discussion. The examination, including the committee's discussion, will be recorded. If an incident occurs that stops or disrupts the examination (such as a failure of the technology), then the video may be used by the examiners to determine whether they have sufficient information to determine the outcome of the exam or whether the exam should be reconvened and completed. This record will be deleted once the paperwork for the student's grade has been finalized.

#### **Outcomes:**

##### *Thesis grading:*

The thesis will receive one of the following evaluative designations instead of a letter grade:

- 1) *Accepted with distinction (excellent quality of contribution, minor editorial revisions),*
- 2) *Accepted (minor, non-substantive revisions required),*
- 3) *Accepted with Revisions (Some major or substantive revisions required, such as rewriting analyses or the addition of material. The changes requested by the examiners are made to the satisfaction of the Thesis Supervisor),*
- 4) *unsatisfactory in present form (major modifications required), or*
- 5) *rejected.*

More information on each designation is detailed under point 9 of Thesis Chair Responsibilities.

- The Committee shall attempt to reach consensus on the evaluation of the thesis, failing which a majority vote will decide. The decision may be reported verbally to the candidate by the Chair of the Thesis Examining Committee once a decision has been reached and the appropriate form has been signed by all of the examiners. At the same time, the candidate will be informed in general terms of any revisions of the thesis required and it will be the Supervisor's responsibility to ensure that all such revisions are carried out before the copy of the thesis and results of the examination are transmitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Should the student receive an unsatisfactory designation (category 4) twice, he/she will be required to withdraw from the program.
- Each member of the Thesis Examining Committee signs the Master's Thesis Examination Form indicating concurrence or written reasons for non-concurrence. The Thesis Examining Committee also signs a Master's Thesis Final Report Form to be

included in the final hard copy of the thesis submitted to the University. Each examiner and the examination chair will be expected to have access to an electronic signature. The Thesis Officer will circulate the examination form and final report form to committee members for their signatures after the examination has completed.

### **Thesis Chair Responsibilities:**

1. Confirm that all examiners are present\* and understand the process of the examination.
2. Confirm that the student understands the process and that all technology/media is functioning.
3. Welcome everyone & introduce yourself indicating that you chair the exam, but take no part in the evaluation. Remind those present that the purpose of the graduate thesis is to demonstrate that the student has mastery of their topic and is fully conversant with the relevant literature.
4. Introduce student & thesis title
5. Introduce Thesis Examining Committee
6. Ask that the student's supervisor keep track of questions asked and points of concern or recommended changes.
7. Outline to those present how the examination will proceed:
  - The Thesis Examining Committee is responsible for examining and reporting on the student's thesis. *The final decision is based both on the content of the thesis and the candidate's ability to defend it.*
  - The first part of the examination consists of an oral presentation that will include a summary of the salient points of the research of **no more than 30 minutes**.
  - This presentation is followed by questions from the Thesis Examining Committee (one round of 8 – 10 minutes each, and if necessary, another round of 5 minutes each).
  - Following the completion of questioning, the candidate will be **required to leave the video conference** before the examining committee begins the *in camera* discussion of their report.
  - The supervisor will be asked to communicate the results as soon as possible to the student, normally within a day of the examination.
8. During the examination:
  - Invite the student to present for 20-30 minutes.
  - Begin questioning with the external examiner, followed by the other committee member(s), concluding with the student's supervisor.

- Keep a record of questions asked of the candidate, and mark any points of concern or recommended changes, as a back-up reference for the student's supervisor.
- When the questioning is concluded, request that the candidate leave the teleconference for the *in-camera* discussion by the examining committee.

#### 9. Examining Committee Assessment:

- The final decision is based both on the content of the thesis and the candidate's ability to defend it.
- Possible outcomes:
  - 1) Accepted with distinction (excellent quality of contribution, minor editorial revisions),
  - 2) Accepted (minor, non-substantive revisions required),
  - 3) Accepted with Revisions (Some major or substantive revisions required, such as rewriting analyses or the addition of material. The changes requested by the examiners are made to the satisfaction of the Thesis Supervisor),
  - 4) unsatisfactory in present form (major modifications required), or
  - 5) rejected.
- The chair will ensure that the examining committee's discussion is relevant to the sphere of the student's specific research question. The chair will provide a summary of what they heard in terms of questions and points of concern and ensure that all examiners have the opportunity to respond to the revisions being requested. The Committee will attempt to reach consensus on the evaluation of the thesis, failing which a majority vote will decide. If after approximately 30 minutes of discussion have passed, a vote may occur with the results being recorded on the Master's Thesis Examination Form. Each member of the Thesis Examining Committee will sign the report indicating concurrence or written reasons for non-concurrence.
- Once the examination concludes, the supervisor will be asked to communicate the results as soon as possible to the student.
- If the assessment is **category 1 – 3 (Accepted)**, then The University of Winnipeg Master's Thesis Examination Form should be signed by all examination committee members and returned to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The University of Winnipeg Faculty of Graduate Studies Master's Thesis Final Report Form should be signed by all committee members except the supervisor, and will be retained by the supervisor after the exam. Once the changes to the thesis document have been made to the satisfaction of the supervisor, this form should be signed and submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies along with the final thesis.
- If the assessment is **category 4 (Unsatisfactory in present form)**, then a decision needs to be reached regarding whether the examiners want to see the candidate at an oral exam again, or only want to review the revised thesis. In this case, the Thesis Final Report Form is returned to the Faculty of Graduate Studies along with the chair's comments on the Thesis Examination Form about the decision regarding a second oral exam. In this category, one opportunity for a second examination within one calendar year may be requested once the required modifications are completed.

- In the case of a student receiving a **5 evaluation (Rejected)**, the student's program is terminated.
- Each member of the Thesis Examining Committee signs the Master's Thesis Examination Form indicating concurrence or written reasons for non-concurrence. The Thesis Examining Committee also signs a Master's Thesis Final Report Form to be included in the final hard copy of the thesis submitted to the University. Each examiner will be expected to have access to an electronic signature. The Thesis Officer will circulate the examination form and final report form to committee members for their signatures after the examination has completed.
- The student, in coordination with the Thesis Supervisor, must submit the final document to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, including the Thesis Final Report Form (signed by their supervisor), prior to the end of term in order to be included in the next graduation cohort, and to avoid incurring further tuition fees.