**Thesis Examination**   
**Chair Guidebook**

If you have any questions before, during, or after- the Examination, please do not hesitate to contact Nafisa Gillani.  
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# Before the Examination

## Who May Attend the Examination?

The thesis examination is normally a closed event unless the student and program, by mutual agreement, request in writing that the examination be open to the university community (e.g. faculty, academic colleagues, and students). Any member of SGPS may attend as a visitor by having a written request to attend approved by the Vice-Provost (SGPS). The Chair will refuse attendance of all others.

## How do the Participants Connect to a Remote Examination?

All participants (including the Chair) should have access to a single Zoom meeting invitation that provides participants with a link to the Zoom conference room for the duration of the examination. Normally this invitation is provided directly to participants by the student’s program close to the exam date. This invitation should also contain information regarding how to connect with the conference room via telephone should a participant become unable to connect to the examination via their computer or tablet.

# Thesis Examination Agenda

## The Chair Opens Proceedings

* + Introduce candidate, Examiners and examination Chair
  + The Chair presents [Western's Land Acknowledgement](https://communications.uwo.ca/comms/land-acknowledgement/): <https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/land-acknowledgement.html>.
  + Indicate the length of a thesis examination may take up to 3 hours
  + Inform the candidate and all members of the committee of the potential for suspending the exam should technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination (until the technical problems have been resolved)
  + Excuse the candidate ([to the Zoom conference waiting room](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360022174112-Using-a-Waiting-Room-with-Zoom-Rooms#h_fe31aa37-a07d-4b3e-8696-c578fd6285f6) if remote or out of the exam room if in-person)
  + Set the order of questioners and the length of their question periods
  + Remind those in attendance to refrain from performing tasks outside of their duties within the examination and that the candidate should, where possible, always be able to hear and see each of them throughout the examination and each participant should be able to see and hear the candidate at all times as well
  + [Retrieve the candidate from the Zoom conference waiting room](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360022174112-Using-a-Waiting-Room-with-Zoom-Rooms#h_8afff6b9-54a3-49ec-93dc-4b161d00987b) or physical waiting room
  + If an OPEN examination, admit attendees to the exam room

## Thesis Examination

* + Once an OPEN examination has started, late entries are not permitted into the exam room and OPEN attendees should not leave the exam room once the examination has started. If an attendee needs to leave the room during the examination, they are not permitted to return.
  + Monitor the length and conduct of the candidate's presentation
  + Keep a list of required revisions as the exam proceeds
  + If the External Examiner is not present, ensure that questions raised in the External Examiner's Report are put to the candidate
  + Intervene if questioning becomes inappropriate or if behaviour interferes with the proper conduct of the examination
  + Suspend the examination if technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination and backup options are unavailable
  + After the questioning is complete, excuse the candidate ([to the Zoom conference waiting room](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360022174112-Using-a-Waiting-Room-with-Zoom-Rooms#h_fe31aa37-a07d-4b3e-8696-c578fd6285f6) if remote or out of the exam room if in-person) so deliberation may begin
  + If it is an OPEN examination, ask attendees to leave the exam room (they do not return)

## Deliberation Phase

* + If the supervisor is in attendance, ask them to speak on candidate, thesis, and thesis examination
  + If the supervisor has not approved the submission of the thesis, the Graduate Chair (or designate) takes on the role of the Supervisor and attends the exam in place of the supervisor
  + If requested by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), where the External Examiner has submitted a negative report but is not present, provide copies of the External Examiner's Report to the Examiners to assist in their deliberations
  + Invite Examiners to discuss and deliberate (supervisor does not speak during this time)
  + Moderate discussion on the merits of the thesis, the candidate's oral presentation and responses to questions, the External Examiner's Report, and other relevant matters
  + Instruct the Examiners of the three possible outcomes for the thesis that the Examiners may consider:
  + Pass - This indicates that the thesis is acceptable as it stands. Minor changes may be made before final submission
    - Examples of such changes might include minor typographical, grammatical or formatting errors. Normally such changes should be completed within 1-2 weeks
  + Pass conditional upon revisions to thesis - This indicates that required revisions must be reviewed and approved by a member of the examining committee prior to submission
    - Examples of required revisions may include extensive typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation; the need for clarification or addition of content in order to meet requisite scholarly standards; some additions, deletions or editing of text; further analysis, or discussion of some data. Normally such revisions should be completed within 6 weeks after the examination
  + Unacceptable - This indicates that the thesis cannot be accepted as it stands and would require extensive revision to reach the acceptable standard. A thesis found unacceptable proceeds to the re-submission process
    - A thesis judged unacceptable may contain, for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology, misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context
  + There are 2 possible outcomes for the oral defense that the Examiners may consider:
  + Acceptable
  + Unacceptable
  + Ensure Examiners have access to the online [Thesis Examination Evaluation Form](https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3VhNgBXhjouzgHP)
  + Instruct Examiners that submitting the online form will provide a copy of their decision via email to SGPS, the Chair and provide them with a copy as well
* The Chair collects the Thesis Examination Evaluation Forms and tallies the results
* The Chair announces the results of the vote on the acceptability of the written thesis and of the oral defense and asks if further discussion is needed. In rare instances, the Chair may allow Examiners to change their votes
* If a majority of the Examiners find that the thesis content is a pass and the oral defense is acceptable, the candidate passes the Thesis Examination
* If a majority of the Examiners find that the thesis content and the oral defense will pass conditional upon revision, the candidate has not yet passed the Thesis Examination
  + The Committee selects one Examiner to function as the Designated Examiner – ensuring the required revisions are completed at a later date. The Designated Examiner cannot be the Supervisor
* If the examiners' decisions are equally split (2/2) between acceptable and unacceptable on any one of the thesis content and/or the oral defense, then the vote is weighted in favour of the External Examiner’s decision
* The Chair pronounces the Thesis Examination Board's decision

## Complete the Chair Report

* + Access the online [Chair Report](https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b1S0AaukmbjVTLv)
  + If applicable, identify clearly the revisions to be made and indicate which Examiner will oversee any revisions to be made
  + Submit the report – this transmits the results of the examination to SGPS and will provide the supervisor(s) and the Chair with a record of the results via email. If successful, the candidate is emailed additional information regarding the next steps required towards the publication of their thesis. If revisions are required and submitted in the Chair Report, the revisions required will be detailed in that email

## Invite the Candidate Back into the Exam Room

* + [Retrieve the candidate from the Zoom conference waiting room](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360022174112-Using-a-Waiting-Room-with-Zoom-Rooms#h_8afff6b9-54a3-49ec-93dc-4b161d00987b) or physical waiting room
  + Inform them of the decision of the committee
  + The examination is now concluded