Western University
Department of Statistical and Actuarial Sciences
Ph.D. Thesis Proposal Defence

Timing:
The thesis proposal shall be scheduled within 28 months (i.e. two years and one term) of the start of the program. For example, a student starting in September would submit the thesis proposal no later than December, 2 years later.
If a candidate fails to complete the proposal defense within 36 months of the start of the program, then the Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) will meet with the supervisor(s) to determine an appropriate course of action to address the situation.
The exact date and time of the proposal defence are to be determined by the student and supervisor, in consultation with the graduate chair.

Content:
The thesis proposal should contain a review of relevant literature and tools, and report on a novel contribution that would, at the least, be sufficient for a poster or presented paper at a national conference. The student should also outline future research plans. This will form the basis for the oral examination. The content will be prepared in conjunction with the supervisor. A report containing the thesis proposal is to be submitted to the supervisor and examiner at least one week prior to the defence.

Exam:
An oral examination will be conducted for each thesis proposal. It will commence with a Public Lecture lasting approximately 30 minutes. This will be followed immediately by a public question period which should last no longer than 10 minutes.

This will be followed immediately by a private question period which should last no longer than 40 minutes. The supervisor(s) plus one other faculty member (examiner) from within the program, chosen by the Graduate Chair in consultation with the supervisor(s), will ask questions. The Chair and the examiner must be full-time faculty members who hold SGPS membership within the Department.

Outcome:
It is expected that the outcome of the Thesis Proposal will confirm the student in their current direction of study. A standardized form will be used to provide feedback to the student on various aspects of the Thesis Proposal presentation and to assist them in their future work.

Satisfactory Progress:
Ph.D. Students are reminded that they are required to make satisfactory progress on their program throughout their degree. In this context, if the standardized forms from the Thesis Proposal reveal a significant deficiency*, the GAC will meet in consultation with the supervisor(s) and the non-supervising examiner to determine an appropriate course of action to address the situation.

*Specifically – if either examiner fails the student on one or more categories from the five categories on the standardized form.

Ph.D. Thesis Proposal Defence Form
DSAS Only (not used by SGPS)

CANDIDATE DETAILS	
Name (Last Name, First Name)	Email
Student Number	Graduate Program

SUPERVISORY DETAILS		
Supervisor Name (Last Name, First Name)	Email	Role - select one -
Additional Supervisor Name (if applicable, include co/joint)	Email	Role - select one -

THESIS EXAMINATION DETAILS		
Public Lecture Date	Start Time	Location
Examination Date	Start Time	Location
Program Examiner Last Name, First Name	Email	
Chair of Examination (Last Name, First Name)	Email	
Title:		
Abstract:		
Is an examiner participating remotely? ◯ Yes ◯ No	Which examiner is participating remotely? Select	
Primary remote method: (Include contact information e.g. Skype ID)	Backup remote method: (Include contact information e.g. Phone Number)	

APPROVALS

Candidate: In my judgment my **proposal** is ready for examination.

_____ _____
Signature of Candidate Date

Supervisor: In my judgment the **proposal** is ready for Examination.

_____ _____ ◯ Yes ◯ No (If No, please attach written reasons)
Signature of Supervisor Date

_____ _____ ◯ Yes ◯ No (If No, please attach written reasons)
Signature of Additional Supervisor (if applicable) Date

Graduate Chair: I am not aware of any potential conflict of interest that the proposed Examiners have with the Candidate and/or Supervisor.

_____ _____
Signature of Graduate Chair Date

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The Graduate Chair or designate appoints a member of the Statistics Graduate Program to chair the PhD Thesis Proposal Defence, which follows the following procedure:

1. The Chair introduces themselves, the candidate, and the examination committee, which comprises of the supervisor(s) and one non-supervising program examiner.

2. The Chair monitors the time (maximum 30 minutes) of the candidate's presentation.

3. Once the candidate has finished the presentation, the Chair opens the floor for questions from the audience (excluding the examination committee).

4. When the question period is finished (maximum 10 minutes), everyone (including the candidate) except the Chair and the examination committee leaves the room.

5. The Chair and the examination committee discuss:
    - Number of rounds
    - Order of questioning
    - Timing (maximum 40 minutes in total)

6. The Chair invites the candidate, explains what has been agreed upon with the committee, and the oral examination commences.

7. Once the examination is finished, or 40 minutes elapsed, the Chair asks the candidate to leave the room.

8. The Chair provides each examiner with an evaluation form and allows time for a short discussion in advance of their completion of the forms.

9. The Chair collects the forms and determines the outcome:
    - If no examiner requires a second attempt on any of the five categories, the defense is a pass.
    - If at least one examiner requires a second attempt on at least one of the five categories, the Chair informs the examiners that they will meet with the GAC to discuss a course of action. *(see supplement)*

10. The candidate is invited back into the room, and the result of the defense is communicated.

11. The Chair returns the completed evaluations to the Academic Program Coordinator, who then informs the GAC of the outcome.

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Ph.D. Thesis Proposal Defence: Supplement

If at least one examiner requires a second attempt on at least one of the five categories, the Chair informs the examiners that they will meet with the GAC to discuss a course of action.
After the discussion, a vote among the GAC members and the PhD proposal examiners takes place, with one of the following outcomes:

- The majority pass the candidate but request the candidate to fix the transpired issues before the actual PhD defense.
- The majority request to have a second attempt, which should take place within 60 days of the original defense.
- In the case of the 50-50 vote, the chair of the GAC makes a binding decision.

There is no third attempt: if after the second attempt the majority of the GAC members and the PhD proposal committee are still dissatisfied, the candidate is requested to withdraw from the PhD program.

Candidate: _____ Field: _____ Date: _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

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1. The thesis proposal literature review
   - ○ exceeds promotion requirements
   - ○ meets promotion requirements
   - ○ approaches promotion requirements
   - ○ requires remedial work and a second attempt

2. The thesis proposal presents a novel contribution which
   - ○ exceeds promotion requirements
   - ○ meets promotion requirements
   - ○ approaches promotion requirements
   - ○ requires remedial work and a second attempt

3. The thesis proposal presents a plan for the thesis which
   - ○ exceeds promotion requirements
   - ○ meets promotion requirements
   - ○ approaches promotion requirements
   - ○ requires remedial work and a second attempt

4. The thesis proposal presentation
   - ○ exceeds promotion requirements
   - ○ meets promotion requirements
   - ○ approaches promotion requirements
   - ○ requires remedial work and a second attempt

5. The candidate answered questions in the defence at a level which
   - ○ exceeds promotion requirements
   - ○ meets promotion requirements
   - ○ approaches promotion requirements
   - ○ requires remedial work and a second attempt

NOTE: If any examiner fails the student on one or more categories from the five categories, a G.A.C. meeting with the examiners will be held to determine a course of action

Comments:

Examiner's Signature:_____ Date:_____