

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

1. Doctoral Candidate – Completion of the Thesis Degree Requirement

Normally the entire process, from the Graduate Chair's request for a Thesis Examination to the placement of the candidate's name on the convocation list, requires approximately eight weeks. For an overview of submission dates, please visit Thesis Timelines.

1.1. The Program Requests a Thesis Examination

When the thesis is thought to meet recognized scholarly standards for the discipline and degree and is ready for examination, the Graduate Chair arranges a Thesis Examination by setting a proposed date, and obtaining provisional consent from the potential members of the Thesis Examination Board. (The thesis Supervisor(s), Supervisory committee or the candidate alone may also initiate this process.) They must then submit for approval the Examination Board to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS), using the Doctoral Thesis Examination Request Form at least seven working weeks before the proposed date, and, where applicable, set a date and time for the Public Lecture.

1.2. In-Person and Remote Examinations and Public Lectures

The thesis examination can be held either in-person or remotely. Both In-Person Examinations, and Remote Examinations, must follow the procedures outlined in the Thesis Examination Guide.

At the time when a thesis examination is arranged, the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) determines with the Supervisor and the Candidate whether the exam will be held in-person or remotely.

In-Person Examinations

The Candidate and a Supervisor attend in-person. Normally, all thesis examiners participate in-person. Upon approval of the Candidate and Graduate Chair, one examiner may participate remotely.

Remote Examinations

The Candidate and a Supervisor attend remotely. All thesis examiners participate remotely.

Public Lectures

Public Lectures are required for PhD Examinations and optional for Master's examinations. The location of the public lecture (in-person or via zoom) will normally

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match the location of the examination. In-person public lectures can include a remote component, allowing remote attendance.

Programs that choose to host a remote examination assume the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that requests and approvals for remote examination are made in a timely manner
- Ensuring remote attendance at public lectures (wherever possible)
- Hosting a conferencing solution in an appropriate environment that adequately supports the needs of the candidate and examiners. This includes:
 - Providing a dedicated support resource to the conference to ensure the best possible experience for all participants during the examination
 - Ensuring that a backup technology exists in the event that the primary solution fails
 - Ensuring that a list of questions from the remote examiner has been obtained in advance of the examination date and are available to the Chair of the examination (this serves as back-up in cases where the connection to the remote examiner is lost)
- Testing the remote connection with the examiner in advance of the examination

Examiners that wish to attend the examination remotely assume the following responsibilities:

- Submitting intention to attend exam remotely prior to agreeing to serve as examiner
- Testing the remote connection (all equipment and backups) with the host in advance of the examination
- Submitting questions to the program and SGPS at least 48 hours in advance of the examination

During the thesis exam, the Chair of the examination is responsible for assuring the following requirements and procedures are satisfied:

- All participants must be able to communicate effectively with each other at all times
- If the primary method of communication is unable to function effectively the examination Chair must determine when it is appropriate to use the pre-arranged backup technology or the submitted questions
- At the beginning of the examination, the Chair must 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)
- The Chair of the examination must suspend the examination if technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination and backup options are unavailable
- The Chair of the examination must guarantee the standards of the examination have been met and the requirements have been satisfied

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1.3. Examinations for alternative format theses [Doctoral]

The location of examinations for alternative format theses must be discussed with SGPS to ensure that any technical needs for displaying, demonstrating, or otherwise examining such theses are accommodated.

1.4. SGPS Approves the Thesis Examination Board and Thesis Examination (and Public Lecture, If Applicable)

SGPS approves the Thesis Examination Board provided by the candidate's program. Doctoral candidates must submit the thesis six weeks before the approved date for the Thesis Examination. This ensures adequate time for:

- Providing access to the thesis for the Examiners
- Examiners to read the thesis and prepare their reports
- Examiners to submit reports to SGPS

Candidates are required to present a Public Lecture on their thesis research, normally within twenty-four hours before the Thesis Examination. The Graduate program sets the time and place for the lecture. SGPS announces the public lecture on its website. The lecture is open to all members of the community. The Examiners should normally attend the Public Lecture and Thesis Examination. Doctoral Only - Effective May 2012, public lectures are mandatory for all programs. The Thesis Examination and Public Lecture may be postponed or cancelled if any step in the examination process is not completed on schedule (e.g. the candidate fails to submit the Thesis for Examination on schedule, or the Examiners fail to submit evaluations on time) or if there is a credible allegation of a possible scholastic offence.

Note: The thesis defense is normally a closed event unless the student and program, by mutual agreement, request that the defense is open to the university community (e.g. faculty, academic colleagues, students).

1.4.1. The Thesis Examination Board

Examiners:

- Every PhD exam must include at least one (but no more than 2) program examiners and one external examiner. A total of four examiners are to be identified from the categories below. (Exceptions will be considered for programs in non-departmentalized faculties)
- Every effort must be made to ensure that the examination board members reflect Western's commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Tasks of the examiners are to:

- Determine if the thesis and the candidate meet recognized scholarly standards for the degree and, where relevant, the collaborative specialization
- Appraise the thesis for content - its underlying assumptions, methodology, findings, and scholarly significance of the findings. This should include evaluation of the thesis in terms of its organization, presentation of graphs, tables, and illustrative materials, and its use of accepted conventions for addressing the scholarly literature

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- Evaluate the candidate's skill and knowledge in responding to questions and defending the thesis
- Ensure authenticity of authorship

1.4.2. Arm's-Length Examiners

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. Co-authors or collaborators of any component of the thesis may not serve as Examiners.

Relationships that might appear to have a conflict of interest include:

- The involvement of an Examiner with the candidate or Supervisor in a personal capacity, such as:
 - A spouse or partner
 - A close family member
 - A business partner
 - Having previous, current, or future negotiations relating to employment

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. Best practices include reviewing the potential examiner's CV; having the grad committee members review the list of names nominated as examiners; conducting a literature search on potential examiner's publications. It is recommended that supervisors and programs avoid multiple use of the same examiners.

A faculty member asked to examine a thesis should declare possible sources of conflict.

1.4.3. Doctoral Thesis Examination Board Roles

1.4.3.1. Chair

The Chair is a non-voting member of the Thesis Examination Board. As the Vice-Provosts' (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) representative, the Chair presides over the thesis examination and provides leadership to ensure that the established procedures are followed. It is not appropriate for the Chair to ask the Candidate thesis related questions during the examination period.

Chair Duties:

- Determines when a quorum exists
- Opens and closes the examination proceedings
- Sets the order of questioners and the length of their question periods
- Monitors the length and conduct of the candidate's presentation
- If the External Examiner is not present, ensures that questions raised in the External Examiner's report are put to the candidate
- If requested by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), where the External Examiner has submitted a negative report but is not

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present, provides copies of the External Examiner's report to the Examiners to assist in their deliberations

- Intervenes if questioning becomes inappropriate
- Deals with behaviour that interferes with the proper conduct of the examination
- Moderates in camera 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
- Calls for a vote and recommendation
- Recalls the candidate and advises them of the recommendations that are to be made to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)
- Prepares a report to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) of the Examiners' assessment of the thesis and the candidate's oral performance

Chair Qualifications:

- Must have appropriate SGPS membership
- The Chair must not be a member of the candidate's program or the Supervisor's home program

Note: If, at the conclusion of the defense, the candidate's supervisor, the Chair or any member of the examining committee expresses the view that there is a prima facie case for alleging that a material portion of the thesis has been plagiarized, or that there is other evidence of academic misconduct, the Chair shall withhold his/her signature from the examination certificate and submit the matter (together with any supporting materials) to SGPS for investigation. Where this occurs, the Chair shall, without informing the candidate of the identity of the person making the relevant allegation, inform the candidate that an allegation of academic misconduct has been made. The Chair shall also inform the candidate that an investigation into the matter will be conducted

1.4.3.2. Program Examiner

This examiner is an expert in the thesis area, upholds the standards of the discipline and ensures the graduate degree level expectations and the learning outcomes for the thesis are met.

Criteria:

- The program examiner must have Teaching/Advisory, Associate, Masters or Doctoral SGPS membership in the student's program.
- No more than one Program Examiner may be from the candidate's Thesis Supervisory Committee

Responsibilities:

- See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations
- Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.
- Attend the public lecture

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- Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis
- Contribute your decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense
- If the final determination is a pass conditional upon revisions be willing to review and approve the revisions
- If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing

1.4.3.3. University Examiner

This academic examiner provides an interdisciplinary/other discipline perspective on the student's research. The University examiner is normally a faculty member whose primary appointment is not in the same department as the student's program.

Criteria:

- The University examiner must have Teaching/Advisory, Associate, Masters or Doctoral SGPS membership and must be able to bring an interdisciplinary or other disciplinary perspective
- Must not have had any involvement in the development of the thesis nor interest in the outcome

Responsibilities:

- See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations
- Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.
- Attend the public lecture
- Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis
- Contribute your decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense
- If the final determination is a pass conditional upon revisions be willing to review and approve the revisions
- If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing

1.4.3.4. Specialized Knowledge Examiner

This non-academic examiner has knowledge, experience and expertise related to the research and provides a community, industry, cultural, career and/or applied perspective.

Criteria:

- This examiner does not need to hold membership in SGPS.
- Must not have had involvement in the development of the thesis nor have a material or financial interest in the outcome

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Responsibilities:

- See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations
- Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.
- Attend the public lecture
- Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis
- Contribute their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense. If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing

1.4.3.5. Indigenous Knowledge Examiner

This examiner is a member of the Indigenous community with knowledge, experience and expertise related to the research.

Criteria:

- This examiner does not need to hold membership in SGPS.

Responsibilities:

- See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations
- Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.
- Attend the public lecture
- Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis
- Contribute their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense
- If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing

1.4.3.6. External Examiner

This academic examiner is a faculty member at another University and has an established reputation in the field of the thesis.

Criteria:

- This examiner does not need to hold membership in SGPS.

Responsibilities:

- See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations
- Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.
- Attend the public lecture
- Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis
- Contribute their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense

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- If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing (this may be waived)

1.5. The Candidate Submits the Thesis for Examination

No later than six weeks before the date of the Thesis Examination, the Doctoral candidate submits a copy of their work for preliminary examination. This is done through digital submission via the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.

In those cases where the student chooses to submit a Thesis for Examination without the approval of the Supervisor(s), the Supervisor(s) must state on the Doctoral Thesis Examination Request Form why their approval is withheld. The Graduate Chair signs the form and provides the candidate with a copy of the Supervisor's stated reasons for withholding approval.

Once the thesis has been officially submitted for examination, it cannot be withdrawn except with the permission of the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). The version which has been submitted to and circulated from the SGPS repository is the only version that the committee can examine. No other copies are to be circulated or examined.

1.5.1. The Candidate Submits the Thesis for Examination without the Approval of the Supervisor

In those cases where the student chooses to submit a thesis for examination without the approval of the Supervisor(s), the following processes are followed:

- The student notifies the Graduate Chair and the Supervisor. The Graduate Chair discusses with the Supervisor their reasons for not approving submission of the thesis.
- If the reason concerns academic integrity, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to the Academic Policy Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students
- If the reason concerns intellectual property, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to MAPP 7.0 Responsible Conduct of Research
- If the reason concerns quality, the supervisor must articulate to the student and Graduate Chair (or designate) the quality concerns and the Graduate Chair discusses with the student their reasons for wanting to go forward without Supervisor approval and apprises the student of other options. They clarify with the student (and the Supervisor) that going to defense without supervisor signature means that the Supervisor does not view the thesis as ready for examination. It is explained that the examiners will know that the Supervisor has not signed off. The student is then informed of the elevated risk of failure that is introduced when a student goes to defense without Supervisor approval. The Graduate Chair (or designate) ensures that the supervisory committee member(s) have also been consulted.
- If the student still chooses to submit without supervisor approval:

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- The Graduate Chair (or designate) takes on the role of the Supervisor in this process, oversees the student's progression, and attends the exam in place of the supervisor.

This involves making the necessary arrangements for the defense to occur, inviting the examiners, and completing the Doctoral Thesis Examination Request Form.

- No later than six weeks before the date of the Thesis Examination, the Doctoral candidate submits a copy of their work for preliminary examination. This is done through digital submission via the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.
- The Graduate Chair (or designate) attends the thesis examination and oversees the process (including all supervisory responsibilities).
- The Supervisor does not attend the thesis examination or the public lecture. The integrity of the process requires that a strict arms-length relationship between the External Examiner, the candidate, the Supervisor and the other members of the Examining Committee be maintained throughout the pre-exam period. The content or quality of the work must not be discussed among these people until the oral examination itself is underway.
- Upon completion of the oral defense, and after the student has left the room, the Thesis Examination Board is reminded that the student has submitted without the approval of the Supervisor. The Examination Chair reminds the committee to assess the oral examination and written thesis based on academic merit.
- The Supervisor has the right to not be recognized as the Supervisor on the published thesis.

1.5.2. Confidentiality Agreement

If the candidate feels a confidentiality agreement is required, the candidate must ensure that each Examiner's signed agreement is delivered to SGPS along with the Doctoral Thesis Examination Request Form. SGPS will ensure the Chair of the Thesis Examination has signed an agreement prior to the Thesis Examination. A thesis confidentiality agreement form can be found in the SGPS thesis guide.

1.5.3. Delay of Publication

Note: please see section regarding the electronic publication of theses for important information.

If a student needs to delay publication of their thesis or dissertation, they can indicate an automatic "delay of publication", for up to two years, on their work. This option will block the work from public access after successful examination and final submission. This process is available as part of the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation submission process.

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When the “delay of publication” expires, the author can be granted a one-year extension through a written request to the Thesis Coordinator. Exceptionally, a candidate may request a six-year delay of publication by contacting an Associate Vice-Provost within SGPS.. This request requires the approval of the Policy, Regulations and Graduate Program Membership Committee of the Graduate Education Council.

1.6. The Examination of the Thesis and the Candidate

The Tasks of the Examiners are to:

- Determine if the thesis and the candidate meet recognized scholarly standards for the degree
- Appraise the thesis for content - its underlying assumptions, methodology, findings, and scholarly significance of the findings. This should include evaluation of the thesis in terms of its organization, presentation of graphs, tables, and illustrative materials, and its use of accepted conventions for addressing the scholarly literature
- Evaluate the candidate's skill and knowledge in responding to questions and defending the thesis
- Ensure authenticity of authorship
- SGPS distributes to the Examiners an electronic package via e-mail consisting of:
 - A formal electronic invitation to examine the thesis and the candidate
 - The date, time and location of the examination
 - Instructions on how to access the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) repository
 - The Thesis, in PDF format available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository. Only this official version of the thesis may be examined.
 - The option to request the thesis in a paper format through Graphic Services. Only this official version of the thesis may be examined.
 - Pertinent excerpts from the Thesis Regulation Guide
 - The secure Thesis Examiner Report available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository
 - Please visit the External Examiners page for appropriate forms and information.

The Examiners do their work in a two-stage process.

1.6.1. Stage One: The Preliminary (or Pre-Examination) Evaluation of the Thesis

Each Examiner must independently and without consultation complete the examiner's report and decide whether the thesis meets the scholarly standards for the discipline and degree.

There are two possible outcomes that the examiners may consider:

1. Acceptable to go to defense with revisions
 - **Acceptable with Revisions:** A work that requires some revisions may be judged acceptable. Revisions include limited typographical or

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grammatical errors; errors in calculation, labels for tables, nomenclature, and bibliographic form; and the need for clarification of content.

2. Unacceptable to go forward to defense
 - **Unacceptable:** 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.

The completed examiner reports are confidential to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) until the examination is completed. SGPS must receive the completed forms from all the Examiners at least five working days before the date scheduled for the candidate's Thesis Examination. The reports will be included in the chair's package and all examiner reports are shared with the Supervisor and candidate after the examination.

If the Written Thesis is Judged Acceptable

A majority of the Examiners must judge that the thesis is acceptable to allow Stage Two: The Thesis Examination to proceed. An Examiner's preliminary judgment of acceptability is provisional. It does not preclude the Examiner changing their judgment to finding the thesis unacceptable at the Thesis Examination.

If the Thesis Content and Thesis Form is Judged Unacceptable

If there is not a majority of Examiners who judge the written thesis to be acceptable, SGPS cancels the Thesis Examination, and the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) appoints a Re-Submission Hearing Committee which reviews the case, including the examiners' reports, and decides whether or not to allow the candidate to prepare a revised version of the thesis for examination and, if so, the time limit for doing so.

- Where the Re-Submission Hearing Committee* agrees that the candidate should be given the opportunity to revise the thesis to bring it to the acceptable scholarly standard for examination, the committee first establishes a new Thesis Examination date, no earlier than 12 weeks after the date of the originally scheduled examination. Normally the same Examiners assess the re-submitted thesis. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and student written notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee.

*The Re-Submission Hearing Committee is chaired by an Associate Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) and includes the two Program Examiners, University Examiner (the External Examiner's presence is waived), the Supervisor, the Graduate Chair of the program concerned. Note: The candidate does not attend the committee meeting.

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- The Examination must then proceed as per the resubmission process. The Program Requests a Thesis Examination above for the re-submitted thesis.
- Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable, the candidate proceeds to Stage Two: The Thesis Examination. All examinations for re-submitted theses should be held in an SGPS examination room during working hours.

1.6.2. Stage Two: The Thesis Examination

The Chair presides over the Thesis Examination:

- To open proceedings, the Chair introduces all present.
 - The candidate, the Supervisor(s), the Program Examiners, and the University Examiner must attend the Thesis Examination
 - SGPS prefers that the External Examiner attend, however, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) may waive the presence of the External Examiner. If unable to attend, the External Examiner must submit questions to be put to the candidate by the other Examiners. Alternatively, the External Examiner may allow the other Examiners access to their report immediately before the Thesis Examination so that they can question the candidate on the issues it raises.
 - Any member of SGPS may attend as a visitor by having a written request to attend approved by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)
 - The Chair will refuse attendance to all others
- Examiners are asked to refrain from using electronic devices (cell phones) during the examination (unless in emergencies)
- The Chair then asks the candidate (and visitors) to leave the room so that the Examiners can decide on the following points:
 - The order in which Examiners are to question the candidate;
 - The number of rounds of questioning desired (usually two);
 - The time limit for each of the Examiners' questioning periods (typically 15-20 minutes in the first round and 5-10 minutes in the second round);
 - Who is to ask the questions submitted by the External Examiner if they is not present;
- The Chair gives to each Examiner a Doctoral Thesis Examination Evaluation form (to be completed when the questioning of the candidate is over and the candidate has left the room). The Chair advises the Examiners that their evaluations on the acceptability of the written thesis should be made independent of the assessment made in Stage One: The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis.
- The Chair invites the candidate (and visitors) back into the room.

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The Examination Begins

- The Chair explains to the candidate the sequence of events (e.g. two rounds of questioning, the order of questioning).
- Where the candidate's program does not provide for a public lecture, the candidate may briefly discuss the thesis (10-15 minutes is appropriate).
- The Examiners question the candidate in the agreed-upon order, with the Chair holding them to the agreed-upon time limit. The Supervisor(s) may not question the candidate.
- When the questioning has finished, the Chair asks the candidate and visitors, but not the Supervisor(s), to leave the room.

The Thesis Examination Board Deliberates and Renders a Decision

- The Chair invites the Supervisor(s) to comment on the candidate, the thesis, and aspects of the oral defense.
 - In rare cases where the thesis has been submitted without the Supervisor(s)'s approval, the Chair informs the Examiners of the Supervisor(s)'s written reasons for withholding approval, before inviting the Supervisor(s) to speak.
- At the Chair's invitation, the Examiners alone discuss the thesis and the oral defense.
- The Chair instructs the Examiners of the decisions available to them:
 - There are 3 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 one to two 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 six weeks after the examination.
 - **Unacceptable** - This indicates that the thesis cannot be submitted 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

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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**
- The Examiners vote on the acceptability of the thesis and the oral defense by completing their Doctoral Thesis Examination Evaluation form. In cases where the External Examiner is not physically present, the Chair speaks to them privately and fills out the Evaluation form as directed.
- These forms are confidential, only to be seen and recorded by the Chair. For the oral defense, the Examiners must determine if the candidate's responses to questions and general level of scholarly knowledge meet the standard for the Doctoral degree and are consistent with the contents of the thesis. The Examiners must decide whether the written thesis and oral defense were acceptable or unacceptable.
- The Chair collects the completed 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. Upon successful acceptance of the required revisions by a designated Examiner the candidate passes the Thesis Examination.
- 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.

When the Thesis Examination is Successful

- On the "Doctoral Thesis Examination - Chair Report," the Chair:
 - Reports the Thesis Examination Board's decision for the Thesis Examination.
 - Dates and signs the Chair's Report.
- Though revisions are not required following a pass, examiners may suggest minor changes that would be beneficial, and the student is encouraged to complete such changes before final submission. The Chair is encouraged to list such changes on the Chair Report form and the Supervisor(s) may withhold signature until the changes are complete.

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- The Chair communicates the positive decision to the candidate. (See Communicating the Decision to the Candidate.)

When the Thesis Examination is Conditionally Successful

- On the "Doctoral Thesis Examination - Chair Report," the Chair:
 - With the assistance of the Examiners, provides a detailed list of the specific revisions as agreed upon by a majority of the Examiners. The Chair's Report will be made available to the designated Examiner, the candidate, and the Supervisor, who will normally continue to support the candidate through the revision process.
 - With the help of the examining committee, determines which Examiner(s) will review the revised thesis. The designated Examiner(s) withhold their signature(s) until the required revisions have been made. All the Examiners may receive a copy of the revised thesis to review.
 - Dates and signs the Chair's Report.

When the Thesis Examination is Unsuccessful

The Chair completes the "Doctoral Thesis Examination - Chair Report." In consultation with the Examiners, the Chair states (on the Chair report) why the thesis and/or the oral defense was unacceptable.

If the Thesis Examination failed because the thesis content was unacceptable, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Submission Hearing Committee.

- The Re-Submission Hearing Committee reviews the case, including the examiners' reports, and decides whether or not to allow the candidate to prepare a revised version of the thesis for examination and, if so, the time limit for doing so. The committee establishes a new Thesis Examination date, no earlier than 12 weeks after the date of the originally scheduled examination. Normally the same Examiners assess the re-submitted thesis. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and student written notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee.
- The Examination must then proceed as listed in the resubmission process. The Program Requests a Thesis Examination for the re-submitted thesis.
- Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable, the candidate proceeds to Stage Two: The Thesis Examination. All examinations for re-submitted theses should be held in an SGPS examination room during working hours.

If the Thesis Examination failed solely because of an unacceptable oral defense, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Examination Hearing Committee.

- Where the Re-Examination Hearing Committee* decides that a second Thesis Examination is appropriate, it should be held, preferably with the

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same Thesis Examination Board, within a time period determined by the committee. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and student written notification of the decision. All examinations for re-submitted theses should be held in an SGPS examination room during working hours.

* The Re-Examination Hearing Committee is chaired by an Associate Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) and includes the two Program Examiners, University Examiner (the External Examiner's presence is waived), the Supervisor, and the Graduate Chair of the program concerned. Note: The candidate does not attend the committee meeting.

If the candidate has already been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee or a Re-Examination Hearing Committee (following Stage Two: The Thesis Examination), then the Thesis Examination Board's decision is final. The candidate has no further opportunity for resubmission and/or re-examination. However, if a candidate has been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee following Stage One: The Preliminary (or Pre-Examination) Evaluation of the Thesis, then the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a second and final Re-Submission Hearing Committee.

Communicating the Decision to the Candidate

When the Chair and the Examiners have completed the documentation, the Chair invites only the candidate back into the room and informs them of the result.

- If the thesis is passed conditional upon revision the Supervisor(s) must meet with the candidate, to ensure that he/she understands the revisions required by the Thesis Examination Board.

Following the Examination

The Chair of the examination returns all forms to SGPS .

1.7. Final Submission of the Thesis

When the candidate has completed any changes recommended by the Thesis Examination Board the candidate must submit the final copy of their work via digital submission through the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.

The candidate accesses their original submission within the repository and submits a revised copy of their work.

Once the thesis is published, the candidate has officially completed the thesis requirement for their degree. The candidate's name is placed on the Convocation list.

1.8. Publishing the Thesis

A thesis is a research document. It is a record of the research that the student conducted while completing a graduate degree. Given the research and education

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

mandate of Canada's publicly funded universities, it is expected that the results of this research will be made publicly available.

For those theses that are submitted through the Scholarship@Western ETD Repository, the University requires that successful graduate theses be made available through the Western Library's Scholarship@Western program. The thesis will be published electronically at the conclusion of the degree process and will be available online globally.

At the same time, the University recognizes that the student is the author of the thesis, and retains copyright and control interests in the material.

Note: Students should be conscious of the implications of electronic publication in the digital context: material is accessible to any interested party, academic and non-academic. The thesis should also be understood to be permanently available – once published electronically, it can be withdrawn from Scholarship@Western, but digital copies will inevitably persist. Students engaging in thesis preparation and research should be mindful of electronic publication and availability as an endpoint of their research. Supervisors, equally, have a responsibility to be acquainted with the implications of electronic publication and advise their students accordingly. In certain cases, a “delay of publication” may be appropriate.

The candidate is asked to permit the release of the thesis to be used for research by signing the "National Library Non-Exclusive License" to allow the non-exclusive right to reproduce or loan copies of the thesis in microform, paper, or electronic formats. The term "non-exclusive license" means that the author retains the copyright of the thesis and can seek other forms of publication.

Upon final approved submission, the work is published to the Scholarship@Western ETD repository, pending any requests for a delay of publication. This repository is publicly accessible, permitting free access to the work. The repository transmits regular reports via e-mail to the author on how often the work is accessed.

1.9. Archiving of the Thesis

Western preserves all doctoral theses in microform images within microfiche flat sheets formatting. These archival copies are stored within Western Libraries. Other format versions of the thesis (e.g. paper, digital) may also be retained.

2. Master's Candidate - Completion of the Thesis Degree Requirement

Normally the entire process, from the Graduate Chair's request for a Thesis Examination to the placement of the candidate's name on the convocation list, requires approximately five weeks. For an overview of submission dates, please visit [Thesis Timelines](#).

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

2.1. The Program Requests a Thesis Examination

When the thesis is thought to meet recognized scholarly standards for the discipline and degree and is ready for examination, the Graduate Chair arranges a Thesis Examination by setting a proposed date and obtaining provisional consent from the potential members of the Thesis Examination Board. (The thesis Supervisor(s), Supervisory committee or the candidate alone may also initiate this process.) He/she must then submit for approval the Examination Board to SGPS, using the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form at least four working weeks before the proposed date.

2.2. In-Person and Remote Examinations and Public Lectures

The thesis examination can be held either in-person or remotely. Both In-Person Examinations, and Remote Examinations, must follow the procedures outlined in the Thesis Examination Guide.

At the time when a thesis examination is arranged, the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) determines with the Supervisor and the Candidate whether the exam will be held in-person or remotely.

In-Person Examinations

The Candidate and a Supervisor attend in-person. Normally, all thesis examiners participate in-person. Upon approval of the Candidate and Graduate Chair, one examiner may participate remotely.

Remote Examinations

The Candidate and a Supervisor attend remotely. All thesis examiners participate remotely.

Public Lectures

Public Lectures are required for PhD Examinations and optional for Master's examinations. The location of the public lecture (in-person or via zoom) will normally match the location of the examination (in-person or via zoom). In-person public lectures can include a remote component, allowing remote attendance.

Programs that choose to host a remote examination assume the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that requests and approvals for remote examination are made in a timely manner
- Ensuring remote attendance at public lectures (wherever possible)
- Hosting a conferencing solution in an appropriate environment that adequately supports the needs of the candidate and examiners. This includes:
 - Providing a dedicated support resource to the conference to ensure the best possible experience for all participants during the examination
 - Ensuring that a backup technology exists in the event that the primary solution fails
 - Ensuring that a list of questions from the remote examiner has been obtained in advance of the examination date and are available to the Chair

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- of the examination (this serves as back-up in cases where the connection to the remote examiner is lost)
- Testing the remote connection with the examiner in advance of the examination

Examiners that wish to attend the examination remotely assume the following responsibilities:

- Submitting intention to attend exam remotely prior to agreeing to serve as examiner
- Testing the remote connection (all equipment and backups) with the host in advance of the examination
- Submitting questions to the program and SGPS at least 48 hours in advance of the examination

During the thesis exam, the Chair of the examination is responsible for assuring the following requirements and procedures are satisfied:

- All participants must be able to communicate effectively with each other at all times
- If the primary method of communication is unable to function effectively the examination Chair must determine when it is appropriate to use the pre-arranged backup technology or the submitted questions
- At the beginning of the examination, the Chair must 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)
- The Chair of the examination must suspend the examination if technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination and backup options are unavailable
- The Chair of the examination must guarantee the standards of the examination have been met and the requirements have been satisfied

2.3. SGPS Approves the Thesis Examination Board and the Graduate Program Arranges for the Thesis Examination

SGPS approves the Thesis Examination Board and the date of the examination. The date and time of the examination will be confirmed within the formal invitation from SGPS. Master's candidates must submit the thesis three working weeks before the approved date for the Thesis Examination. This ensures adequate time for:

- Providing access to the thesis for the Examiners
- Examiners to read the thesis and prepare their reports
- Examiners to submit reports to SGPS

The Thesis Examination may be postponed or cancelled if any step in the examination process is not completed on schedule (e.g. the candidate fails to submit the Thesis for Examination on schedule, or the Examiners fail to submit evaluations on time) or if there is a credible allegation of a possible scholastic offence.

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

Note: The thesis defense is normally a closed event unless the student and program, by mutual agreement, request that the defense is open to the university community (e.g. faculty, academic colleagues, students).

2.3.1. The Thesis Examination Board

2.3.1.1. Chair

The Chair is a non-voting member of the Thesis Examination Board. As the Vice-Provosts' (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) representative, the Chair presides over the thesis examination and provides leadership to ensure that the established procedures are followed. It is not appropriate for the Chair to ask the Candidate Thesis related questions during the examination period.

Chair Duties:

- Determines when a quorum exists
- Opens and closes the examination proceedings
- Sets the order of questioners and the length of their question periods
- Monitors the length and conduct of the candidate's presentation
- Intervenes if questioning becomes inappropriate
- Deals with behaviour that interferes with the proper conduct of the examination
- Moderates in-camera discussion on the merits of the thesis, the candidate's oral presentation and responses to questions, and other relevant matters
- Calls for a vote and recommendation
- Recalls the candidate and advises him/her of the recommendations that are to be made to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)
- Prepares a report to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) of the Examiners' assessment of the thesis and the candidate's oral performance
-

Chair Qualifications:

- Must have appropriate SGPS membership

Note: If, at the conclusion of the defense, the candidate's supervisor, the Chair or any member of the examining committee expresses the view that there is a prima facie case for alleging that a material portion of the thesis has been plagiarized, or that there is other evidence of academic misconduct, the Chair shall withhold their signature from the examination certificate and submit the matter (together with any supporting materials) to SGPS for investigation. Where this occurs, the Chair shall, without informing the candidate of the identity of the person making the relevant allegation, inform the candidate that an allegation of academic misconduct has been made. The Chair shall also inform the candidate that an investigation into the matter will be conducted.

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

2.3.1.2. Two Program Examiners

Role:

- Attend the Thesis Examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's responses at the oral defense
- Cast a vote in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense

Regulations:

- Must have appropriate SGPS membership
- No more than one Program Examiner may be from the candidate's Thesis Supervisory Committee
- Must not have had significant involvement in the development of the thesis nor interest in the outcome

2.3.1.3. University Examiner

Role:

- The University Examiner brings to the thesis examination insights from outside the candidate's discipline
- They must have knowledge in the general field of the thesis, but need not be an expert on the thesis topic
- Attend the Thesis Examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating both the thesis and the candidate's responses at the oral defense
- Cast a vote in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense

Regulations:

- Must have appropriate SGPS membership
- They must not be a member of the candidate's Thesis Supervisory Committee, or a member of the Supervisor's home program
- Where the program unit is a Faculty, the University Examiner must not be from the candidate's or Supervisor's home Department

Where the University Examiner is from a unit that does not have a Graduate program, or from outside the University, the Graduate Chair of the candidate's program must nominate them for Teaching/Advisory membership in SGPS

2.3.2. Arm's-Length Examiners

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. Co-authors or collaborators of any component of the thesis may not serve as Examiners.

Relationships that might appear to have a conflict of interest include:

- The involvement of an Examiner with the candidate or Supervisor in a personal capacity, such as:

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- A spouse or partner
- A close family member
- A business partner
- Having previous, current, or future negotiations relating to employment

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. Best practices include reviewing the potential examiner's CV; having the graduate committee members review the list of names nominated as examiners; and conducting a literature search on potential examiner's publications. It is recommended that supervisors and programs avoid multiple use of the same examiners.

A faculty member asked to examine a thesis should declare possible sources of conflict.

2.4. The Candidate Submits the Thesis for Examination

No later than three weeks before the date of the Thesis Examination, the Master's candidate submits a final draft of the thesis for preliminary examination. This is done through digital submission via the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository:

- In addition to the thesis, the candidate must ensure the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form is forwarded to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies:

In those rare cases when the student chooses to submit a Thesis for Examination without the approval of the Supervisor(s), the Supervisor(s) must state on the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form why their approval is withheld. The Graduate Chair signs the form and provides the candidate with a copy of the Supervisor(s)'s stated reasons for withholding approval.

Once the thesis has been officially submitted for examination, it cannot be withdrawn except with the permission of the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). The version which has been submitted to and circulated from the SGPS repository is the only version that the committee can examine. No other copies are to be circulated or examined.

2.4.1. The Candidate Submits the Thesis for Examination without the Approval of the Supervisor

In those cases where the student chooses to submit a Thesis for Examination without the approval of the Supervisor(s), the following processes are followed: The student notifies the Graduate Chair and the Supervisor. The Graduate Chair discusses with the Supervisor their reasons for not approving submission of the thesis.

If the reason concerns academic integrity, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to the Academic Policy on Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students.

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

If the reason concerns intellectual property, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to MAPP 7.0 Responsible Conduct of Research.

If the reason concerns quality, the supervisor must articulate to the student and Graduate Chair (or designate) the quality concerns and the Graduate Chair discusses with the student her/his reasons for wanting to go forward without Supervisor approval and apprises the student of other options. She/he clarifies with the student (and the Supervisor) that going to defense without supervisor signature means that the Supervisor does not view the thesis as ready for examination. It is explained that the examiners will know that the Supervisor has not signed off. The student is then informed of the elevated risk of failure that is introduced when a student goes to defense without Supervisor approval. The Graduate Chair (or designate) ensures that the supervisory committee member(s) have also been consulted.

If the student still chooses to submit without supervisor approval:

- The Graduate Chair (or designate) takes on the role of the Supervisor in this process and oversees the student's progression.

This involves making the necessary arrangements for the defense to occur, completing the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form, inviting the examiners, and completing the Thesis Examining Board Form.

- No later than six weeks before the date of the Thesis Examination, the candidate submits a copy of their work for preliminary examination. This is done through digital submission via the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.
- The Graduate Chair (or designate) attends the thesis examination and oversees the process (including all supervisor responsibilities).
- The Supervisor does not attend the thesis examination or the public lecture. The integrity of the process requires that a strict arms-length relationship between the candidate, the Supervisor and the other members of the Examining Committee be maintained throughout the pre-exam period. The content or quality of the work must not be discussed among these people until the oral examination itself is underway.
- Upon completion of the oral defense, and after the student has left the room, the Thesis Examination Board is reminded that the student has submitted without the approval of the Supervisor. The Examination Chair reminds the committee to assess the oral examination and written thesis based on academic merit.

The Supervisor has the right to not be recognized as the Supervisor on the published thesis.

2.4.2. Confidentiality Agreement

If the candidate feels a confidentiality agreement is required, the candidate must ensure that each Examiner's signed agreement is delivered to SGPS along with the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form. The Graduate Program will

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

ensure the Chair of the Thesis Examination has signed an agreement prior to the Thesis Examination. A thesis confidentiality agreement form can be found in the SGPS thesis guide.

2.4.3. Delay of Publication

Note: please see section regarding the electronic publication of theses for important information.

If a student needs to delay publication of their thesis or dissertation, they can indicate an automatic “delay of publication”, for up to two years, on their work. This option will block the work from public access after successful examination and final submission. This process is available as part of the Scholarship@Western

Electronic Thesis and Dissertation submission process. When the “delay of publication” expires, the author can be granted a one-year extension through a written request to the Thesis Coordinator.

Exceptionally, a candidate may request a six-year delay of publication by contacting an Associate Vice-Provost within SGPS. This request requires the approval of the Policy, Regulations and Graduate Program Membership Committee of the Graduate Education Council.

2.5. The Examination of the Thesis and the Candidate

The Tasks of the Examiners are to:

- Determine if the thesis and the candidate meet recognized scholarly standards for the degree
- Appraise the thesis for content - its underlying assumptions, methodology, findings, and scholarly significance of the findings. This should include evaluation of the thesis in terms of its organization, presentation of graphs, tables, and illustrative materials, and its use of accepted conventions for addressing the scholarly literature
- Evaluate the candidate's skill and knowledge in responding to questions and defending the thesis
- Ensure authenticity of authorship

SGPS distributes to the Examiners an electronic package via e-mail consisting of:

- A formal invitation to examine the thesis and the candidate
- The date, time and location of the examination
- Instructions on how to access the Scholarship@Western ETD repository
- The thesis, in PDF format available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository. Only this official version of the thesis may be examined.
- The option to request the thesis in a paper format through Graphic Services. Only this official version of the thesis may be examined.
- Pertinent excerpts from the Thesis Regulation Guide
- The secure Thesis Examiner Report available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

The Examiners do their work in a two-stage process.

2.5.1. Stage One: The Preliminary (or Pre-Examination) Evaluation of the Thesis

Each Examiner must independently and without consultation complete the examiner's report and decide whether the thesis meets the scholarly standards for the discipline and degree.

There are two possible outcomes that the examiners may consider:

1. Acceptable to go to defense with revisions
 - A work that requires some revisions may be judged acceptable. Revisions include limited typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation, labels for tables, nomenclature, and bibliographic form; and the need for clarification of content.
2. Unacceptable to go forward to defense
 - 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.

The completed examiner reports are confidential to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) until the examination is completed. SGPS must receive the completed forms from all the Examiners at least five working days before the date scheduled for the candidate's Thesis Examination. The reports will be included in the chair's package and all examiner reports are shared with the Supervisor and candidate after the examination.

If the Written Thesis is Judged Acceptable

A majority of the Examiners must judge that thesis content is acceptable to allow Stage Two: The Thesis Examination to proceed. An examiner's preliminary judgment of acceptability is provisional. It does not preclude the examiner changing their judgment to finding the thesis unacceptable at the Thesis Examination.

- For those reports collected via the ETD repository, SGPS will forward the preliminary decision to the candidate, examiners, supervisor(s), graduate chair and graduate assistant.

If the Written Thesis is Judged Unacceptable

If there is not a majority of Examiners who judge the written thesis to be acceptable, the Program cancels the Thesis Examination, and the Graduate Chair of the Program concerned appoints a Re-Submission Hearing Committee* which reviews the case including the examiners' reports, and decides whether or not to allow the candidate to prepare a revised version of the thesis for examination and, if so, the time limit for doing so.

* The Re-Submission Hearing Committee is chaired by the Graduate Chair of the program concerned and includes the three Examiners, the Supervisor, and

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

others specified in the procedures of the program concerned. Note: The candidate does not attend the committee meeting.

- The Re-Submission Hearing Committee reviews the case, including the examiners' reports, and decides whether or not to allow the candidate to prepare a revised version of the thesis for examination and, if so, the time limit for doing so. The committee establishes a new Thesis Examination date, no earlier than six weeks after the date of the originally scheduled examination. Normally the same Examiners assess the re-submitted thesis. The Chair of the committee provides the Supervisor(s) and student written notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee.
- The Examination must then proceed as listed in the resubmission process - The Program Requests a Thesis Examination for the re-submitted thesis.
- Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable, the candidate proceeds to Stage Two: The Thesis Examination.

2.5.2. Stage Two: The Thesis Examination

Who attends the Master's Thesis Examination

- The candidate, the Supervisor(s), the Program Examiners, and the University Examiner must attend the Thesis Examination
- Any member of SGPS may attend as a visitor by having a written request approved by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) seven days before the examination date
- The chair will refuse attendance to all others

The Chair presides over the Thesis Examination

- To open proceedings, the Chair introduces all present.
- Examiners are asked to refrain from using electronic devices (cell phones) during the examination (unless in emergencies)
- The Chair then asks the candidate and visitors to leave the room so that the Examiners can decide on the following points:
 - the order in which Examiners are to question the candidate
 - the number of rounds of questioning desired (usually two)
 - the time limit for each of the Examiners' questioning periods (typically 15-20 minutes in the first round and 5-10 minutes in the second round);
- The Chair gives to each examiner a "Master's Thesis Examination Evaluation Form" (to be completed when the questioning of the candidate is over and the candidate has left the room). The Chair advises the Examiners that their evaluations on the acceptability of the thesis content should be made independent of the assessment made in Stage One: The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis.
- The Chair invites the candidate and visitors back into the room.

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

The Examination Begins

- The Chair explains to the candidate the sequence of events (e.g. two rounds of questioning, the order of questioning).
- The Examiners question the candidate in the agreed-upon order, with the Chair holding them to the agreed-upon time limit. The Supervisor(s) may not question the candidate.
- When the questioning has finished, the Chair asks the candidate and visitors, but not the Supervisor(s), to leave the room.

The Thesis Examination Board Deliberates and Renders a Decision

- The Chair invites the Supervisor(s) to comment on the candidate, the thesis, and aspects of the oral defense.
 - In rare cases where the thesis has been submitted without the Supervisor(s)'s approval, the Chair informs the Examiners of the Supervisor(s)'s written reasons for withholding approval, before inviting the Supervisor(s) to speak.
- At the Chair's invitation, the Examiners alone discuss the thesis and the oral defense.
- The Chair instructs the Examiners once again about the difference between acceptable, acceptable with revisions and unacceptable and answers any questions about the difference between the recommendation. (See Section Stage One: The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis)
- The Examiners vote on the acceptability of the thesis and the oral defense by completing their "Master's Thesis Examination Evaluation Form." These forms are confidential, only to be seen and recorded by the Chair.

The Examiners must render a decision on the thesis content and oral defense. For thesis content there are three possible outcomes to the Examination 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 six weeks after the examination.

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- **Unacceptable** - This indicates that the thesis cannot be submitted 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.

For the oral defense, the Examiners must determine if the candidate's responses to questions and general level of scholarly knowledge meet the standard for the Master's degree and are consistent with the contents of the thesis.

- The Chair collects the completed forms and tallies the results.
- The Chair announces the results of the vote on the acceptability of the content of the 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.
- The Chair pronounces the Thesis Examination Board's decision.
- 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. Upon successful acceptance of the required revisions by a designated Examiner the candidate passes the Thesis Examination.

When the Thesis Examination is Successful

- On the "Master's Thesis Examination - Chair Report" the Chair:
 - Reports the Thesis Examination Board's decision for the Thesis Examination.
 - Dates and signs both pages of the Chair's Report.
- Though revisions are not required following a successful defense, examiners may suggest minor changes that would be beneficial, and the student is encouraged to complete such changes before final submission. The Chair is encouraged to list such changes on the Chair report form and the Supervisor(s) may withhold signature until the changes are complete.
- The Chair communicates the positive decision to the candidate. (See Communicating the Decision to the Candidate.)

When the Thesis Examination is Conditionally Successful

- On the "Master's Thesis Examination - Chair Report," the Chair:
 - With the assistance of the Examiners, provides a detailed list of the specific revisions as agreed upon by a majority of the

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

Examiners. The Chair's Report will be made available to the designated Examiner, the candidate, and the Supervisor, who will normally continue to support the candidate through the revision process.

- With the help of the examining committee, determines which Examiner(s) will review the revised thesis. The designated Examiner(s) withhold their signature(s) until the required revisions have been made. All the Examiners may receive a copy of the revised thesis to review.
- Dates and signs the Chair's Report.

When the Thesis Examination is Unsuccessful

- The Chair completes the "Master's Thesis Examination - Chair Report." In consultation with the Examiners, the Chair (on the Chair report) states why the thesis and/or the oral defense was unacceptable
- If the Thesis Examination failed because the thesis content was unacceptable, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Submission Hearing Committee.
- Where the Re-Submission Hearing Committee agrees that the candidate should be given the opportunity to revise the thesis to bring it to the acceptable scholarly standard for examination, the committee first establishes a new Thesis Examination date, no earlier than six weeks after the date of the originally scheduled examination. Normally the same Examiners assess the re-submitted thesis. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and candidate written notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee
- The Examination must then proceed as listed in Section 5.1 The Program Requests a Thesis Examination for the re-submitted thesis
- Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable, the candidate proceeds to Stage Two: The Thesis Examination

If the Thesis Examination failed solely because of an unacceptable oral defense, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Examination Hearing Committee:

- Where the Re-Examination Hearing Committee* decides that a second Thesis Examination is appropriate, it should be held, preferably with the same Thesis Examination Board, within a time period determined by the committee. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and candidate written notification of the decision. All examinations for re-submitted theses should be held in an SGPS examination room during working hours.
- *Re-Examination Hearing Committee is chaired by the Graduate Chair of the program concerned and includes the three Examiners, the Supervisor(s), and others specified in the procedures of the program concerned. Note: The candidate does not attend the committee meeting

Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

If the candidate has already been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee or a Re-Examination Hearing Committee (following Stage Two: The Thesis Examination), then the Thesis Examination Board's decision is final. The candidate has no further opportunity for resubmission and/or re-examination. However, if a candidate has been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee following Stage One: The Preliminary (or Pre-Examination) Evaluation of the Thesis, then the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a second and final Re-Submission Hearing Committee.

Communicating the Decision to the Candidate

When the Chair and the Examiners have completed the documentation, the Chair invites only the candidate back into the room and informs him/her of the result.

- If the thesis is passed conditional upon revision, the Supervisor(s) must meet with the candidate, to ensure that their understands the revisions required by the Thesis Examination Board

Following the Examination

The Chair of the Examination returns all forms to the graduate program office.

2.6. Final Submission of the Thesis

When the candidate has completed any changes recommended by the Thesis Examination Board the candidate must submit the final copy of their work via digital submission through the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository:

The candidate accesses their original submission within the repository and submits a revised copy of their work.

Once the thesis is published, the candidate has officially completed the thesis requirement for their degree. The candidate's name is placed on the convocation list.

2.7. Publication of the Thesis

A thesis is a research document. It is a record of the research that the student conducted while completing a graduate degree. Given the research and education mandate of Canada's publicly funded universities, it is expected that the results of this research will be made publicly available.

For those theses that are submitted through the Scholarship@Western ETD Repository, the University requires that successful graduate theses be made available through the Western Library's Scholarship@Western program. The thesis will be published electronically at the conclusion of the degree process, and will be available online globally.

At the same time, the University recognizes that the student is the author of the thesis, and retains copyright and control interests in the material.

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Note: Students should be conscious of the implications of electronic publication in the digital context: material is accessible to any interested party, academic and non-academic. The record should also be understood to be permanently available – once published electronically, it can be withdrawn from Scholarship@Western, but digital copies will inevitably persist. Students engaging in thesis preparation and research should be mindful of electronic publication and availability as an endpoint of their research. Supervisors, equally, have a responsibility to be acquainted with the implications of electronic publication, and advise their students accordingly.

In certain cases, a “delay of publication” may be appropriate. See above. The candidate is asked to permit the release of the thesis to be used for research and also to agree to allow the non-exclusive right to reproduce or loan copies of the thesis in micro-form, paper, or electronic formats. The term “non-exclusive license” means that the author retains the copyright of the thesis and can seek other forms of publication.

Upon final approved submission, the work is published to the Scholarship@Western ETD repository, pending any requests for a delay of publication. This repository is publicly accessible, permitting free access to the work. The repository transmits regular reports via e-mail to the author on how often the work is accessed.