DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A THESIS OR PRACTICUM (September 2011)
INTRODUCTION

The final step in completing requirements for a Master’s degree in City Planning at the University of Manitoba is to undertake a thesis or practicum. This is an independent piece of work on an approved topic. The purpose of the thesis or practicum is for students to demonstrate that they have mastery of the subject and are fully conversant with relevant literature. The thesis or practicum culminates in a public presentation timed to coincide with the regular schedule of dates for graduation.

The Department Guidelines for Conducting a Thesis or Practicum are intended to help students to understand the background and general requirements for undertaking this part of the MCP program. These guidelines are supplementary to the current Thesis and Practicum Regulations in the Regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and to the Thesis and Practicum Information and Guidelines, which are accessible at http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies. It is essential that students familiarize themselves with the Thesis and Practicum Regulations and, if they propose to undertake a thesis rather than a practicum, with the Thesis Guidelines.

Students in the Master’s program in City Planning are required to take and successfully complete the course CITY 7350 Major Degree Project (MDP) Preparation offered by the department. A number of the steps outlined in these guidelines will be completed as requirements of that course.

It is recommended that students review examples of theses and practica archived in the Architecture and Fine Arts Library. Associated with the Major Degree Project Preparation course (CITY 7350), a sample binder of City Planning Thesis/Practicum Proposals is also kept on reserve in the library.

The maximum time allowed for the completion of all course work, and thesis or practicum requirements for the Master’s degree, is five years. Under certain circumstances, an extension of up to two years beyond the five-year limit may be granted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
1 DEFINITIONS

A thesis is a formal, comprehensive, written dissertation describing original and independent research on a chosen subject. This original work may include:

- investigation aimed at the discovery and/or interpretation of facts
- challenge and/or possible revision of accepted theories or laws
- ordering and synthesizing of existing findings to support a conclusion that could open up new research directions.

The current Faculty of Graduate Studies describes a practicum as “an exercise in the practical application of knowledge or skill” usually involving “the careful definition of a problem, the application of appropriate knowledge and skills to the problem, and a report of the results in a manner suitable for evaluation by an examining committee.” Graduate Studies’ Regulations note that “while the practicum differs from the thesis in its emphasis on the application of theory, it is similar in scope, span and rigor. The weight of work required for the practicum is equal to that required for the Master’s thesis.”

In short, therefore, the thesis might be described as the generation of new knowledge whereas the practicum might be described as the application of existing knowledge in a new way. Similar standards of excellence apply to both options in terms of workload, theoretical clarity and analytical rigour. Both require a theoretical framework, clear objectives and questions driving the research, literature review, empirical work and creative analysis.

The Department also recognizes that the practicum, by convention, has the potential to be less restrictive in format than the thesis, and may take the form of design proposals, video production, and alternative formats, together with a written document. Any work produced in other than standard thesis format should only be undertaken after careful consultation with the student’s thesis/practicum advisor and other advisory committee members.
2 THESIS/PRACTICUM PROPOSAL & GENERAL FORMAT FOR THESIS

The preparation, presentation and formal approval of a well-developed proposal is a critical step in the production of the thesis or practicum. The proposal must be clearly focused and succinct. It must be approved by the student's thesis/practicum advisor, and where/when possible by other members of the advisory committee prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

If students have not completed a full proposal beginning of their second year, they are required to submit a preliminary research statement to their advisor by the end of September. This document should not exceed four pages and should include: a working title; a brief discussion of the topic and its importance to planning; the key research questions that will be addressed; a bibliography of potential literature sources; a list of possible advisory committee members.

Students must also take responsibility for undertaking the ethics approval process for Research with Human Subjects. Such approval must be granted before students begin their fieldwork. The Ethics Protocol Submission Form, guidelines for submission, deadlines, etc. are available through the Office of Research Services (see website: http://umanitoba.ca/research/media/protocol_guidelines_checklist.pdf).

The Thesis or Practicum Proposal generally includes:

- Title Page, including title of project, your name, names of at least three (proposed or potential) supervisory committee members (including supervisor, internal reader, external reader)
- Table of Contents for the proposal
- Abstract summarizing the scope of the project being proposed.
- Statement of Purpose identifying the goals and objectives of the study and the research problem and questions to be addressed
- Background to the thesis or practicum topic. This should cover principal issues to be addressed: historical context; potential and ramifications or impact on society, and/or on the natural and human-made environment. The background must define assumptions and limitations that will proscribe the work
- Theoretical Framework and Literature Review including identification of the most relevant proposed sources of information and preliminary list of references
- Research Methods and Analysis, an outline of how the student proposes to carry out the research and what analytical methods are to be employed
- Significance of the Proposed Research to the scholarly literature, planning profession, and/or the larger community
- Schedule of dates for completion of the work, including critical meeting dates and proposed presentation date according to the cycle of presentation/graduation dates given below
- Proposed Table of Contents for the thesis/practicum including:
  - Appendices
  - List of References — list references according to subject area, including a section on research methods

NB. The length of the proposal will generally be approximately 20 to 25 pages, excluding References and Appendices.
General Components of a Thesis/Practicum

Each thesis or practicum takes a different form depending upon the students’ areas of research. The specific structure of each will be developed by individual students in consultation with their advisor and advisory committee. Students are encouraged to look at examples of past theses/practica, available in the Architecture and Fine Arts Library to see the range of possibilities. The following, however, outlines one possible structure of the final document:

Acknowledgments (including acknowledgment of sources of funding)
Abstract/Summary
Introduction
  Preamble
  Problem Statement
  Purpose of the Thesis/Practicum
  Scope of the Thesis/Practicum
  Research Methods
  Importance of Study
  Assumptions
  Limitations
  Theoretical Approaches
  Historical Background
  Outline of Chapters

Literature Review
Theoretical Analysis
Case Study
Analysis
Synthesis: Implications for Planning Practice
Conclusions, Recommendations and Directions for Further Study
References Cited
Appendices

Bibliography—References must have been cited in the main body of the text, and should be listed alphabetically by last name of author according to standard and consistent citation practices. The bibliography includes other material used in the research, but not specifically reference/cited.

A “Master’s Thesis/Practicum Title & Appointment of Examiners Form” (available from the Graduate Student Advisor in the Faculty of Architecture Graduate offices or online) should be completed, and signed by the student’s thesis/practicum advisor at the same time as the full proposal has been approved and approved by the Department Head, or completed at least four months before the student proceeds towards the oral examination of the thesis or practicum.
3 STAGES OF WORK

Students are expected to consult on a regular basis with individual their supervisor and committee members, and to meet at least annually with the full committee. The following indicative schedule of at least four thesis/practicum meetings, three with the full committee (together with the necessary approvals to proceed after the satisfactory completion of each stage) will ensure monitoring of each student’s progress and productive development of the topic:

1. Preliminary Research Statement – submitted to advisor to assess the initial research proposal (see Section 2 – this is not required if the student is submitting a proposal by the end of September of their second year).
2. Thesis/Practicum Proposal - to assess and approve the full research proposal (see Section 2).
3. Intermediate Stages – to evaluate the first complete draft document; and for the Advisor and Advisory Committee to assess the final draft written document, and all supporting visual material, for proceeding to a final Oral Presentation. Intermediate stages also include a formal presentation to the City Planning Graduate Colloquium (see below).
4. Oral Presentation - open to all students and staff in the department as well as special guests. Students make a 20 minute presentation and discuss their work with the members of the advisory committee.

Satisfactory completion of each stage will be judged by the thesis/practicum advisory committee on the basis of whether the student demonstrates:

- mastery of the subject
- critical thinking
- competence in independent work
- ability to present ideas in written, visual and oral forms

In order to be eligible to make public presentations of any stage of their work, students must ensure they complete each stage of work in accordance with the cycle of dates given in Section 5 (below).

City Planning Graduate Colloquium – Each M2 student will be required to make a formal presentation of their thesis or practicum work-in-progress to staff, students and guests during a second term City Planning Graduate Colloquium. Students who take more than two years to complete their work may be required to make additional presentations in the Colloquium in later years. The Graduate Colloquium will provide an opportunity for open discussion of the work, for students to get feedback and input from others outside their committee, and for M1 students to develop a better understanding of the MDP process.

4 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are required to:

- submit written or graphic material to the members of their advisory committee at least two weeks prior to any meeting or review, at each stage of the research process;
- schedule and coordinate all committee meetings;
- make arrangements for any required audio/visual equipment; confirm the time and place of all meetings with all committee members and make all necessary room bookings;
- summarize in written form at the end of each formal meeting the committee's comments and any recommendations they might make. This summation should be completed and circulated to all committee members within one week after the meeting date. Students may consider using a tape recorder to record comments or having a fellow graduate student act as a "recorder."
• secure their own funding and necessary support for any thesis/practicum topic. Department staff will assist students in this endeavour, but the primary responsibility remains with the student.
• ensure that their schedule for completion of the final stages of work matches the cycle of dates given in Section 5 (below).

5 CYCLE OF SUBMISSION, PRESENTATION & GRADUATION DATES

This cycle is based on the principle of required lengths of time for:

• distribution of thesis/practicum to committee members
• committee members to read, comment and meet with student
• student to respond to comments
• public presentation of work
• revisions prior to submission of final material to Department of City Planning and to Faculty of Graduate Studies.

In general terms, the cycle is based on:

October graduation - submission of final draft to advisory committee for review and approval in late June; final presentation in mid-July to mid-August; submission of recommendation for graduation to be submitted for final approval to Faculty of Graduate Studies by a deadline near the end of August. (Note: Students should make sure to coordinate their submissions with faculty members’ summer research and travel schedules).

February graduation - submission of final draft to advisory committee for review and approval in late October; public presentation in late November-early December; submission of recommendation for final approval to Faculty of Graduate Studies by the deadline near the beginning of January.

May graduation - submission of final draft to advisory committee for review and approval in mid-February; public presentation in mid-March; submission of recommendation for final approval to Faculty of Graduate Studies by the April deadline.

Precise dates will vary according to the University Calendar and to convenient days for staging presentations. They should, however, be determined as far in advance as practicable.

6 COMPOSITION OF EXAMINING COMMITTEES

Students are assigned a faculty advisor upon entry to the program in City Planning. Generally students will remain with the same advisor through the whole program and become their thesis/practicum advisor. However, it is important, to ensure that the interests and experience of the advisor and the advisory committee members are appropriate for the proposed thesis/practicum topic. It is possible, if all parties agree, for students to change advisors as their thesis/practicum topic develops.

The thesis/practicum advisor will guide the development of the proposal and administer the thesis/practicum process to completion. Students must remember, however, that they are entirely responsible for programming their work in accordance with the stages and cycles set out above.
In addition to the thesis/practicum advisor, the advisory committee will comprise at least two other members; these have often been referred to as “internal” and “external” examiners or readers, however, the requirements of Graduate Studies are slightly more nuanced.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies requires that the committee consist of a minimum of three examiners. At least two examiners must be members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. One examiner must hold a primary appointment from within the major department of the student and one examiner must be external to the department. All examiners must be deemed qualified by the Department Head and willing to serve. All members of the advisory committee must be approved by the Department Head. Committee members agree to act in the role of advisor or mentor and to participate in the pertinent decisions and approvals at each stage of the student's thesis/practicum work.

The key intentions are as follows:
1) a master's examining committee must consist of three persons;
2) two of the three must be members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (leaving the majority of academic decision making in academic hands);
3) one member must be external to the department;
4) all members must be deemed qualified and willing to serve committee members agree to act in the role of advisor or mentor and to participate in the pertinent decisions and approvals at each stage of the student's thesis/practicum work.

In a professional program like City Planning it is common practice for the one “external” member not only be from outside the department, but also from outside the university – often a practicing professional. In these cases, that committee member must:
- have a Masters degree;
- be well established in their field;
- be able to evaluate whether or not the student's work is acceptable for the degree in question;
- be at arm’s length from the department (i.e. has had no collaboration with the student or advisor, nor any affiliation with the department (either as staff or student), within the last five years.

In the exceptional circumstance where an advisor/head feels an external should be considered who does not hold a Master's degree, the department will seek approval of the appointment from Graduate Studies by illustrating the value of the person’s qualifications. There are no guarantees in this process though, and students proposing external committee members without Master’s degrees should initiate the approval process at the earliest possible time.

All full-time faculty members and adjunct professors of the Department of City Planning are available to serve as thesis/practicum advisors or on advisory committees as internal examiners. All other full-time and part-time faculty of the Faculty of Architecture, and the Faculty of Graduate Studies are eligible to serve as external examiners on advisory committees.

7 THESIS/PRACTICUM ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The thesis/practicum advisor will be responsible for:

- formally writing to invite and thank external committee members of the thesis/practicum advisory committee;
- formalizing advisory committee membership;
- completing the Faculty of Graduate Studies thesis/practicum annual progress reports (APRs);
serving as the student’s program advisor for course selection and academic program re-registration purposes.

8 PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT’S FINAL ORAL PRESENTATION

When the student and thesis/practicum advisor consider the thesis/practicum to have attained a satisfactory level of accomplishment, copies of the final draft document should be submitted to other members of the advisory committee. The members of the committee will examine the draft document within a reasonable period of time and make recommendations to the student concerning subject matter and presentation.

The committee's comments will be considered by the student and thesis/practicum advisor; a final document will be prepared, and copies circulated to the rest of the committee members for review and comment.

Arrangements for a time and place for the final oral presentation will be made. The student will deposit a copy of the document with the Department Head at least one week prior to the oral.

The thesis/practicum advisor will act as chair of the student’s oral presentation. The advisor will have a vote on the acceptability of the thesis or practicum.

The oral presentation will normally be about one hour to an hour and a half. The presentation takes the following format:

- the student will be introduced by the advisor;
- the student will give a 15-25 minute account of his/her work;
- questions will then be asked by members of the advisory committee in rotation beginning with the external reader/examiner, internal reader/examiner, followed by the advisor. When the committee has completed its rounds of questioning, guests will be invited to ask questions. At the conclusion of the questioning by the committee and guests, the student and guests will be asked to withdraw (or the committee will withdraw)
- the committee will then deliberate on whether or not the work has been successfully completed. The decision concerning the approval of the work must be unanimous
- the student will be recalled and advised of the outcome.

The final thesis/practicum shall be assessed by the advisory committee according to the following scheme:

i) acceptable as is
ii) acceptable with minor revisions
iii) acceptable with major revisions (e.g., revision of content)
iv) unacceptable.

The committee may require corrections, and minor changes in format or presentation, but no major changes in the manuscript, in order for the student to be recommended for graduation.

The thesis/practicum may be rejected if the oral presentation reveals plagiarism, is poorly defended, or exposes a major weakness. In such a case, the student will have a second chance.

The student will be responsible for the required corrections/or revisions, as well as the final submission of copies to the committee and the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
Once final corrections have been approved, the thesis/practicum advisor will have the advisory committee sign the “Thesis/Practicum Approval Form” of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Once the document has been approved the student is responsible for providing:

Submit 1 paper copy (monochrome - single sided) and one electronic version of their thesis to (mspace). The steps for this can be found on the web:

http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/media/ETDBrochure.pdf

1 copy (hard bound) delivered to the Graduate Student Advisor (Dept Copy) other copies as the student determines necessary.

For updated information on submission requirements for Graduate Studies, students should go to the Thesis Information at the Faculty of Graduate Studies web page at:
http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/thesis/250.htm

(Note: Committee Members may make arrangements with a Student on an individual basis for a copy of the Thesis or Practicum, if they wish to do so.)

9 HEAD OF DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The Head of Department must:

- ensure fairness and equivalency in the assessment of all thesis/practicum final approvals;
- seek to maintain or improve the standard of work that the department expects from every student;
- inform the Faculty of Graduate Studies once all requirements for graduation have been met;
- maintain a roster of active thesis/practicum students and advisors.

10 APPENDICES

Appended are:

- 2 Sample Completion Schedules (19 months - May Graduation, and 24 months – Oct Graduation).
- Summary Administrative Guidelines for the Major Degree Project
- Copy of the Masters Thesis/Practicum Proposal
- Copy of Master’s Thesis/Practicum Title & Appointment of Examiners Form
APPENDICES
### SAMPLE MDP PROJECT TIME-LINE

"Ideal" Completion time: **19 months from date of entry – May Graduation**

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<td>Attend internship presentations at CP Graduate Colloquium; begin thinking about your topic; consult with faculty advisor</td>
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<td>CITY 7350 MDP Preparation Course; attend M2 thesis/practicum work-in-progress presentations at CP Graduate Colloquium</td>
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<td>by mid-Mar.</td>
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<td>Recruit two other committee members. Fill out Thesis/Practicum Proposal Form (See Graduate Student Advisor)</td>
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<td>by mid-Apr.</td>
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<td>Submit full proposal to advisory committee; ethics review</td>
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<td>Meeting of the advisory committee to approve proposal Submit proposal form and examiner’s form to grad advisor</td>
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<td><strong>Jun. – Aug.</strong></td>
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<td>Internship; execute proposal plans (esp. if these link with internship)</td>
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<td>Present report on internship at CP Graduate Colloquium</td>
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<td>Submit full first draft to thesis/practicum advisor</td>
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<td>Meeting of advisory committee; fill out Thesis Title and Examiner’s Form (See Graduate Student Advisor)</td>
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<td>Present thesis/practicum work-in-progress at CP Graduate Colloquium</td>
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<td>Submit Exam Copies to committee - once approved, set date for oral; copy to Dept. Head at least 1 week prior to oral; notify GS Advisor re: date/time for oral</td>
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<td><strong>Feb. - Mar.</strong></td>
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<td>Present thesis/practicum at final oral presentation</td>
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<td>Final copies to Dept. and Grad. Studies (See Graduate Student Advisor for deadline!)</td>
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<td><strong>Graduation!</strong></td>
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### SAMPLE MDP PROJECT TIME-LINE

Completion time: **24 months from date of entry – October Graduation**

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<td><strong>Attend internship presentations at CP Graduate Colloquium; begin thinking about your topic; consult with faculty advisor</strong></td>
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<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Sep. – Dec.</td>
<td>CITY 7350 MDP Preparation Course; attend M2 thesis/practicum work-in-progress presentations at CP Graduate Colloquium</td>
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<td>Jan. – Apr.</td>
<td>Internship; consider potential for research topic and plans for proposal - possible link with internship</td>
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<td>Year 2</td>
<td>end of Sep.</td>
<td>Submit preliminary research statement to advisor</td>
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<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Sep. – Nov.</td>
<td>Present report on internship at CP Graduate Colloquium</td>
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<td>Sep. – Nov.</td>
<td>Develop draft proposal; confirm thesis/practicum advisor; recruit two other committee members</td>
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<td>Nov.</td>
<td>Submit full proposal to committee; ethics review</td>
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<td>Meeting of the full advisory committee to approve proposal. Submit proposal form and examiner’s form to grad advisor</td>
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<td>Execute research and WRITE</td>
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<td>Jan. – Apr.</td>
<td>Present thesis/practicum work-in-progress at CP Graduate Colloquium</td>
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<td>Submit full first draft to thesis/practicum advisor [Revisions]</td>
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<td>First draft to advisory committee</td>
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<td>[Revisions] Fill out Master’s Thesis/Practicum Title &amp; Appointment of Examiners Form (See Graduate Student Advisor)</td>
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<td>Submit exam copies to committee</td>
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<td>Once approved, set date for final oral presentation</td>
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<td>Copy to Dept. Head at least 1 week prior to oral</td>
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<td>Notify GS Advisor re. date/time for oral</td>
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<td>Final copies to Dept. and Grad. Studies (See Graduate Student Advisor for deadline!)</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>Graduation!</td>
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SUMMARY CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING A THESIS OR PRACTICUM

All students should read the Thesis Guidelines publication put out by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. This is available on the Graduate Studies web-site.

When students start their Major Degree Project, they should complete the Thesis/Practicum Proposal Form available from the Graduate Student Advisor in the Faculty of Architecture Graduate Offices. This form should be updated if there are any changes to the proposal or advisory committee.

When they have their title and all committee members, they should advise the Graduate Student Advisor, and the student should forward a Thesis/Practicum Title and Examiners Form (attached) and the graduate advisor will forward it to Graduate Studies. This has to be accompanied by a curriculum vita for the external members of the advisory committee member (unless they are on campus), and externals must have at least a Master’s Degree.

When the advisory committee has agreed that the final draft is ready to proceed to the final oral presentation, the following requirements must be fulfilled at least one week (preferably two weeks) prior to the presentation:

- 1 complete copy of the draft is placed on deposit with the Department Head;
- the date and time for the oral presentation are given to the Graduate Student Advisor;
- the Graduate Student Advisor will book the room and send out the notices.

After their oral, students will undertake any corrections/revisions requested by the examining committee. Usually the thesis/practicum advisory will have the Thesis/Practicum Final Report Form signed at the oral, and either he/she will hold it until the final copies are received, or it will be put into their file until then with the Graduate Student Advisor. It will not be forwarded on to Graduate Studies until their copies are submitted.

Students are required to submit 1 unbound copies to Graduate Studies and an uploaded copy to Mspace and they will sign several forms also to be submitted to the Graduate Studies Office at that time. The Department requires the student to provide 1 bound copy of the thesis/practicum (this binding is usually black).
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
*****
MASTER'S THESIS/PRACTICUM TITLE & APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS

Note: This form must be submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the time of appointment of the examining committee (prior to the examination of the thesis/practicum).

Name:        Student Number:

Major Department:    City Planning

Anticipated Graduation Date:    February 20    May 20    October 20

☐ Thesis    ☐ Practicum

Title:

Recommended Committee of Examiners:

Advisor:    Department:

Examiner:    Department:

Examiner:    Department:

Examiner:    Department:

External Examiner:    Position/ Affiliation/Address:

Date:        Advisor’s Signature: ______________________________

Department Head’s Signature: ______________________________

(Note: The committee must consist of a minimum of three persons, one of whom must be from outside the major department. At least two examiners must be members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The third member must be an individual that the Advisor and Department Head deem qualified for the assignment, is external to the Department, and is willing to serve.

(Faculty of Graduate Studies’ membership: All full-time members of the academic staff of the University of Manitoba of the rank of assistant professor and above who are attached to departments, schools, or other units offering graduate programs, professors emeriti and all adjunct professors.)
CITY PLANNING
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THESIS/PRACTICUM TOPIC PROPOSAL

SECTION 1 (To be completed by the student)

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Major Department: ______ City Planning____________________________________

☐ Thesis    ☐ Practicum

WORKING TITLE:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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Academic Advisor__________________________Signature:_____________________________

Date: _______________________________________

SECTION 2 (To be completed by the Department Head)

Date: _________________________________

Department Head:__________________________________________________________
SECTION 1 (To be completed by the Examining Committee)

Name: _______________________________________________________________________

Major Department: _______________________________________________________________________

This will certify that the above-name student has successfully completed the oral examination of the thesis/practicum proposal and that the undersigned give their approval for the candidate to proceed with the thesis research without reservation or with the attached reservation(s).

☐ Thesis  ☐ Practicum

THESIS/PRACTICUM TITLE:
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Name:___________________________________Signature:_____________________________

_________________________________             ______________________________
_________________________________                 ______________________________
_________________________________         ______________________________
________________________________              ______________________________

(Examining Committee)

Date: ____________________________________

SECTION 2 (To be completed by the Department Head)

The thesis/practicum proposal of the above-named student has been approved without reservation or with the attached reservation(s). Where appropriate, the proposal has received approval from the appropriate Ethics Review Committee. (Department Head to attach copy of ethics approval notification.)

Date: _________________________

Department Head:________________________________________