

# Department of Landscape Architecture

## Guidelines for Thesis / Practicum 2011-12

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### Introduction

The final step in completing requirements for the Master of Landscape Architecture degree is to undertake a Thesis or Practicum. This is an independent study into an approved topic. The purpose of the Thesis or Practicum is for students to demonstrate that they have mastery of the topic 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 shown in Section 6.

These Guidelines are intended to help students to understand the background and general requirements for undertaking this part of the MLA program. They are supplementary to the current Thesis and Practicum Regulations: Masters in the Regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies - which are available in the General Calendar of the University - and to the Thesis Guidelines for Masters and PhD Students - which are accessible on the Faculty of Graduate Studies pages of the University web site.

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 are also recommended to review examples of Theses and Practica found in the Thesis Section of the Architecture and Fine Arts Library.

Students entering the Master's program from Fall 2010 are **required** to take and successfully complete the course LARC 7040: Design Research offered by the Department in the Fall Term AND to complete the course LARC 7300: Landscape Topics which will be an individual and/or group reading and/or seminar-based class run by their Thesis / Practicum Adviser.

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. A minimum of four months notice is required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies before the expiry of an existing completion date.

It should be noted that the Faculty of Graduate Studies is actively seeking to monitor and control the time for completion by Master's students throughout the University.

The Department has established a cycle of presentations (for students at whatever stage of work) scheduled to meet the regular pattern of graduation deadlines set by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The dates for examination of graduands and for Intermediate and Preliminary presentations are in November, February and May - ahead of the respective graduation dates in February, May and October respectively.

## 1: Definitions

A **Thesis** is a formal, comprehensive, written dissertation describing original 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 which could open-up new research directions.

Specific requirements with respect to the format of the final written document for a **Thesis** are set out in the Thesis Guidelines for Masters and PhD Students. These can be found under theses/guidelines in the Faculty of Graduate Studies pages of the University web site.

The Academic Guide of the 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”.

The *Academic Guide* notes that “while the **Practicum** differs from the **Thesis** in its emphasis on the application of theory, it is similar in scope, span and rigour. The weight of work required for the Practicum is equal to that required for the Master’s **Thesis**”.

In short, therefore, the **Thesis** can be described as the “generation of new knowledge” whereas the **Practicum** can be described as the “application of existing knowledge in a new way”.

Once students have decided whether they wish to do a Thesis or a Practicum they should use the corresponding number on their Aurora registration.

## 2: Stages of Work

There are two components to the completion of a Thesis / Practicum – completion of the required preparatory coursework and execution of the research / design work and documentation. The required coursework comprises Course LARC 7040: Design Research and Course LARC 7300: Landscape Topics. The procedure for the execution and examination of the research / design work and documentation is outlined here.

Students are expected to consult on a regular basis with their Academic Adviser – particularly in the completion of Course LARC 7300: Landscape Topics – and to consult as mutually agreed with other Committee members / Examiners. It is strongly recommended that students do not seek advice from their other Committee members / Examiners without the knowledge and agreement of their Academic Adviser.

The stages for Theses / Practica in the Department of Landscape Architecture are:

- **Preparation and Presentation of Proposal** – to establish the "research question"; to outline goals for the work and to set a program for its execution (this stage will generally be an output from Course 7240). This is described in more detail in Section 3;
- **Preliminary Presentation** – to review field work, inventory, site selection (if appropriate) and background data including relevant literature, and appropriate case studies and precedents;
- **Intermediate Presentation** – to evaluate the first draft document including text and/or drawings. This work may be presented to students and staff in the department and to special guests on the same dates as set out in Section 6 for Examinations;
- **Final Presentation / Examination** – to examine orally and in public the final draft written document and all supporting visual material. This presentation is timed in accordance with the schedule set out in Section 6;

A schedule of Thesis / Practicum Committee meetings – together with the necessary approvals to proceed after the satisfactory completion of each stage – is required in order to monitor the student's progress and to facilitate productive development of the topic.

Satisfactory completion of each stage will be judged by the Academic Adviser and Examiners on the basis of whether the student demonstrates: mastery of the subject; critical thinking; competence in independent work; ability to present ideas in written, oral and an appropriate range of visual forms.

A maximum of three presentations (Preliminary, Intermediate and Final) and a minimum of one (Final / Examination) public presentations may be made in accordance with the schedule of given in Section 6.

## 3: Thesis / Practicum Proposal

The preparation, presentation and formal approval of a well developed Proposal is a critical step in the process of undertaking a Thesis or Practicum. The Proposal must be clearly focused and succinct. The Proposal must be approved by the Student's Thesis / Practicum Advisor, and other committee members prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

The Thesis or Practicum proposal is considered formally approved with the submission of the *Faculty of Graduate Studies Master's Thesis / Practicum Form* and a copy of the Proposal to the Graduate Student Advisor. This approval generally follows a formal Proposal Presentation made to the staff and students of the Department of Landscape Architecture. This is expected to be done at the completion of the course LARC 7040: Design Research.

The Student must also take responsibility for undertaking the ethics approval process for Research with Human Subjects if required for their research. Such approval must be granted before the Student begins their fieldwork. The Ethics Protocol Submission Form, guidelines for submission, deadlines, etc. are available through the Office of Research Services at [http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics\\_human\\_ethics\\_index.html](http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics_human_ethics_index.html).

The Thesis / Practicum Proposal must include:

- **statement of purpose** identifying the goals and objectives of the study and the questions that are to be addressed;
- **background** to the Thesis or Practicum topic. This should cover principal issues to be addressed, including, inter alia, historical context; potential 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;
- **review** of pertinent literature including identification of the most relevant sources of information and preliminary list of references;
- **methodology** - an outline of how the student proposes to carry out the research and what analytical methods are to be employed;
- **schedule** of dates for completion of the work including critical meeting dates and proposed presentation date (s) according to the cycle of presentation / graduation dates given in Section 6 (below);
- anticipated **output** including written text; digital or manual drawings; physical or digital models; videos etc.
- proposed **Committee** comprising Academic Adviser / Committee Chair (a member of Department faculty), Internal and External Examiner.

#### 4: Committees and Examiners

The Committee is to comprise a minimum of three members - the Academic Adviser / Committee Chair, the Internal Examiner and the External Examiner. The Internal and External Examiner may also act in an advisory as well as an examining role in the development of the Thesis / Practicum. Their respective roles will be subject to mutual agreement between the student, the Academic Adviser and the two other Committee Members / Examiners.

Committees must consist of a minimum of three persons at least one (1) of whom must be from outside the Department. At least two Committee members must be members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Approval of External Examiners has been devolved by the Faculty of Graduate Studies to individual departments. It is still required, however, that External Examiners have a Masters degree or qualifications of equivalent standing.

If they do not have these qualifications, a formal application for their approval MUST be submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Any such application MUST be submitted on the appropriate form (obtainable from the Department web site and/or Graduate Student Adviser) AT LEAST four (4) months before the intended date for

examination (see Section 6). The Faculty of Graduate Studies also reserves the right to call for justification of the selection of any External Examiner.

Students should note that they are free to propose Committee members / Examiners of their own choosing – subject, of course, to agreement by the proposed members to be on the Committee. Students are under no obligation to propose their Academic Adviser (allocated on entry to the program) as their Thesis / Practicum Committee Chair. It is important, however, to ensure that the interests and experience of the Committee members are appropriate for the proposed topic.

A Form for Approval of Thesis / Practicum Proposal and Committee (in the format given in Appendix A) must be completed by the student, signed by the Academic Adviser and approved by the Head of Department before the student makes an Intermediate presentation and/or proceeds to examination without making an Intermediate presentation.

## **5: Student Responsibilities**

Students are required to:

- submit written or graphic material to the members of the Committee at least two weeks prior to any meeting or review at each stage of the process;
- schedule and coordinate all Committee meetings, make arrangements for any required audio / visual equipment, to confirm the time and place of all meetings with all Committee members and to make all necessary room bookings;
- summarize in written form at the end of each formal meeting the Committee's comments and any recommendations the Committee might make. This summary should be completed and circulated to all Committee members within one week after the meeting date;
- ensure that they have formal written approval in accordance with University Policy 1406 “The Ethics of Research Involving Human Subjects” for all surveys, interviews and similar work;
- 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 stages of work matches the schedule given in Section 6;
- submit a Presentation Booking Form (in the format given in Appendix B) to the Graduate Student Adviser at least ten (10) working days prior to any presentation.

Students are reminded that they may **only** submit material electronically – at any stage – with the prior approval of their Academic Adviser and Committee members.

## **6: Schedule of Submissions, Presentations and Graduation Dates**

This schedule is based on dates set by the Senate and the Faculty of Graduate Studies as set out in the University Calendar and on reasonable lengths of time for:

- distribution of draft documents to Committee members;

- Committee members to read and comment on the documents, and to meet with the student;
- the student to respond to comments;
- public presentation / oral examination of the work;
- submission of revisions to the Academic Adviser and/or Internal Examiner for approval prior to submission of the final document to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

The schedule is also based on the principle that there will be only three public presentation events each year (extended to a number of consecutive days as necessary to complete all presentations) and that students at the Preliminary, Intermediate and Final stages will be ready to present on those designated days. Failure to submit materials according to this schedule is likely to lead to delay in graduation.

	FOR GRADUATION IN FEBRUARY 2012	FOR GRADUATION IN MAY 2012	FOR GRADUATION IN OCTOBER 2012
Department Date for Submission of Draft Final Document to Committee	Monday 17 October 2011	Monday 23 January 2012	Wednesday 2 May 2012
Date for Examination / Final Presentation	Friday 4 November 2011	Wednesday 29 February 2011	Wednesday 30 May 2012
Department Deadline for Submission of Corrected Document to Academic Adviser and/or Internal Examiner	Friday 7 December 2011	Wednesday 21 March 2012	Monday 18 June 2012
FGS Deadline for Receipt of Corrected Copies of Theses / Practica	<b>Tuesday 3 January 2012</b>	<b>Wednesday 4 April 2012</b>	<b>Thursday 23 August 2012</b>

## 7: Academic Advisers / Committee Chairs

At the time of entry to the MLA program, students will be assigned a full-time faculty member as an Academic Adviser. The faculty member will be available to answer any academic questions the student may have about the program. They may also help the student in developing their research interest. As soon as their research interest is sufficiently well defined, students may identify another full-time faculty member of the Department if they so wish to act as their Academic Adviser / Committee Chair and to be their Instructor for Course LARC 7300: Landscape Topics.

The selection of the Academic Adviser / Committee Chair must be approved by the Head of Department. The Committee Chair will guide the development of the proposal and administer the Thesis / Practicum process to completion. It must be remembered, however, that students are **entirely responsible** for programming their work in accordance with the stages and schedule outlined above.

The Academic Adviser / Committee Chair is required to participate in the decisions and approvals given at each stage of the student's Thesis / Practicum work. S/he will be responsible for:

- formally writing to invite and thank external committee members of the Thesis / Practicum committee;
- formalizing Committee membership;
- completing an annual Faculty of Graduate Studies Progress Report with the student;
- serving as the student's Adviser for course selection and academic program re-registration purposes (in addition to being their Instructor for Course LARC 7300: Landscape Topics).

## **8: Final Examination Procedure**

When the student and Academic Adviser / Committee Chair consider the Thesis / Practicum to have attained a satisfactory level of accomplishment, copies of the Draft Final document must be submitted to other members of the Committee in accordance with the schedule in Section 6. The members of the Committee will review the Draft Final document ahead of the Examination.

The Committee's comments will be responded to by the student in the Examination and a Final document will be prepared, and copies circulated the Academic Adviser and Internal Examiner for final approval.

The Academic Adviser / Committee Chair will act as Chair of the Examination and will have a vote on the acceptability of the Thesis or Practicum.

The final presentation will follow this format:

- the Student will be introduced by the Chair of the Committee;
- the Student's presentation and subsequent questioning will not exceed one hour;
- the Student will give a 25 to 30 minute (or shorter by mutual agreement) account of the study;
- immediately after the presentation questions will first be asked by the Internal and External Examiners and then by faculty and other attendees;
- at the conclusion of the questioning the Committee will withdraw and deliberate on whether or not the work has been successfully completed and what corrections may be needed before final submission of the document. **Approval of the work must be unanimous** and no major change in the manuscript will be required for the student to be recommended for graduation;
- the Student will be advised of the outcome immediately after the Committee has completed its deliberations.

The student will be responsible for the submission of a corrected draft to the Academic Adviser and/or Internal Examiner, and for the subsequent submission of copies to the Faculty of Graduate Studies in accordance with the schedule in Section 6.

The student is also required to submit:

- one (1) paper copy (monochrome - single sided) and one (1) electronic version of their thesis to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The steps for this can be found on their web site at: [http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate\\_studies/media/ETDBrochure.pdf](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/media/ETDBrochure.pdf);

- updates on this requirement will be posted on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website at: [http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate\\_studies/thesis/250.htm](http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/graduate_studies/thesis/250.htm). Students who have further questions on e-thesis may contact the University of Manitoba Libraries on Extension 7895;
- one (1) hard bound copy for the Head of Department submitted to the Graduate Student Adviser;
- one (1) hard bound copy (as requested) for each Examiner / Committee Member;

## **9: Head of Department Responsibilities**

The Head of Department is required to:

- 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, with the Department's Graduate Student Adviser, a roster of active Thesis / Practicum students, Advisors and other Committee members.

## **APPENDIX A: FORM FOR APPROVAL THESIS / PRACTICUM PROPOSAL AND COMMITTEE**

This form must be completed and signed by the proposed Academic Adviser / Chair of the Thesis / Practicum Committee and be approved by the Head of Department before the student makes an Intermediate Presentation of the Thesis / Practicum. The original form will be kept in the student's file.

**Please attach separate sheets as necessary to complete fully.**

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NAME OF STUDENT:

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DATE OF SUBMISSION:

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TITLE:

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THESIS OR PRACTICUM:

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PROPOSAL:

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

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BACKGROUND TO TOPIC:

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REVIEW OF PERTINENT LITERATURE:

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METHODOLOGY:

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DATE FOR COMPLETION:

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NAME OF ACADEMIC ADVISER:

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APPROVAL BY ADVISER (SIGN):

DATE:

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NAME OF INTERNAL EXAMINER:

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NAME OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER:

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QUALIFICATIONS OF EXTERNAL EXAMINER:

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APPROVAL BY DEPARTMENT HEAD (SIGN):

DATE:

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## **APPENDIX B: DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE THESIS / PRACTICUM PRESENTATION BOOKING FORM**

This form must be completed at least 10 working days prior for all presentations.

Notices announcing presentations will be based on information provided.

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**STUDENT NAME:**

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PRESENTATION DATE:

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BUILDING / ROOM NUMBER:

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PREFERRED TIME:

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LEVEL OF PRESENTATION: Preliminary / Intermediate / Final

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**TITLE:**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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ACADEMIC ADVISER / CHAIR:

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INTERNAL EXAMINER:

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EXTERNAL EXAMINER:

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ADDITIONAL AUDIO/VISUAL REQUIREMENTS:

(Please note that data projectors will be booked as a matter of course and will be available half an hour before the commencement of presentations but that Mac users will have to provide their own adapter to connect to a data projector)

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APPROVAL BY ADVISER / CHAIR:

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DATE:

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