GUIDELINES FOR THE SCHEDULING AND CONDUCT OF PH.D. ORAL EXAMINATIONS

GENERAL

Doctoral students must pass an oral examination of their thesis and matters relating thereto before they may obtain the Ph.D. degree. The examination will be conducted by the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) or the Dean's designate chosen from among scholars of the University. The examining committee will include at least three members of the University of Manitoba academic staff, normally the same members as that of the candidate's advisory committee, as well as an examiner external to the University of Manitoba. The doctoral student, advisor/co-advisor (if applicable), and all internal members of the examining committee are expected to be present. The participation of the external examiner is strongly encouraged but is not mandatory.

SCHEDULING AND ADVERTISING THE ORAL EXAMINATION

If, once the examining committee reports (both internal and external) have been submitted, no more than one member of the internal committee members has assigned a category 3 or 4 rating to the thesis, and the external examiner has provided a ‘pass’, then the oral examination may be arranged.

1. The student's home Department/Unit must reserve a room for the examination

It is the responsibility of the student's home Department/Unit to reserve the room for the oral examination and notify FGS of the date, time, and location. The examination must be held at either the University of Manitoba Fort Garry or Bannatyne campus, or the St. Boniface Research Centre during normal business hours.

FGS must be notified of the scheduled examination date at least two weeks in advance. FGS will then ensure that a memorandum announcing the examination is sent to the Department/Unit and the event is posted on the University webpages.

The oral examination is open to all members of the University community. Graduate students should be encouraged to attend.

2. The student's home Department/Unit must ensure that:

- the location, facilities and equipment are appropriate for a Ph.D. oral examination;
- the examining committee is aware of and understands the examination procedures;
- notices of the examination, including the invitation to graduate students, should be posted within the home Department/Unit.

3. The student's home Department/Unit must ensure that all internal examiners will attend

All internal members of the examining committee must indicate that they will be physically present at the examination, or seek approval from Dean of FGS to be absent due to exceptional circumstances. Such approval must be sought and granted well in advance of the scheduled date of the examination. If for any reason an internal examiner is unable to be present in person, then participation via video-conferencing may be approved by the Dean of FGS depending on the constitution of the committee and the presence of other examiners. In the event that any of the expected members of the approved examining committee are absent, the Chair must seek approval from FGS for the examination to proceed.

4. At least two weeks prior to the proposed date the following information must be received by FGS from the student's home department/unit:

   - Student’s examination program information (submitted in a Word document):
     - List of degrees obtained with institution and date specified
     - List of the student's awards, publications, and joint publications
     - An abstract of the thesis (not more than 350 words)
PREPARATION FOR THE ORAL EXAMINATION

Approximately one week prior to the oral examination, FGS will provide the Chair of the examination with a package including the following:
- copies of all of the examiner’s reports, both internal and external;
- the questions and expected answers, if provided, from the external examiner if not participating;
- the examination programs;
- Guidelines for the Scheduling and Conduct of Ph.D. Oral Examinations;
- MSpace information pamphlet;
- Final approval form;
- Sample Chair script.

CONDUCT OF THE EXAMINATION

The Chair the oral examination bears an important responsibility; a thorough examination and defence of the thesis serves as the University’s guarantee that the standards of the Ph.D. are met. To this end, the procedures for the conduct of the examination must be consistent and strictly followed.

The Chair is responsible for the following:

1. General introduction and welcome
   The Chair must welcome all those in attendance, distribute copies of the program, and must state that the examination is a formal examination and the senior academic event in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and that a successful examination is required for awarding the Doctor of Philosophy degree - the highest academic degree of the University of Manitoba.

2. Introduction of the candidate and examiners
   The Chair must
   - introduce the student and read the brief biography provided
   - introduce each member of the examining committee in the following order:
     - external examiner (noting whether the examiner is participating in person or electronically, or has provided a written report, and if so, noting whether questions will be asked by the Chair on behalf of the external examiner)
     - non-Departmental/Unit examiner
     - Departmental/Unit examiners
     - advisor or co-advisor
     - guest member (if applicable)
   The Chair should note that the written thesis has been reviewed by all members of the examining committee.

3. Outline of procedures for the oral examination
   The Chair must provide to an overview to all in attendance of the procedures to be used for the conduct of the examination as follows:
   - the student will be asked to give a 20 to 25 minute presentation of the thesis to include the major objectives, content, results, and conclusions;
   - the student's ability to present the thesis clearly and concisely is an essential part of the examination process;
   - at the conclusion of the candidate's presentation, the examiners will be invited to pose questions;
   - the examiners will each be initially allowed approximately 20 minutes to pose questions
- because this is an examination on which candidate may pass or fail, their comments and discussions on the subject matter of the thesis, apart from those essential to the questions, should be made only at the post-examination meeting of the examiners;
- a second round of questions may be offered to the examining committee if time permits. If time permits, the guest member (if applicable) and audience members will be invited to ask questions;
- once questioning is completed, the student, the audience, and the guest member of the committee will be asked to leave the room and the examining committee will discuss the student’s performance and determine the outcome of the examination.

Note that
- the order of questioning from the examiners must be:
  - external examiner
    (if the external examiner is not participating, then the Chair will pose any questions submitted by the external examiner to the candidate)
  - non-Departmental/Unit examiner(s)
  - Departmental/Unit examiner(s)
  - advisor / co-advisor
- in no case should the questioning exceed two hours, and normally 90 minutes is sufficient.
- the Chair is not permitted to pose any questions of his/her own to the student. The Chair must remain neutral at all times.
- at the conclusion of the student's presentation and before the questioning period, the Chair should allow sufficient time for those audience members who wish to leave the session to do so.

4. Invite the candidate to give their presentation

5. Invite each examiner, in the order listed above, to ask questions of the candidate.
   You may offer a reminder that each examiner has about 20 minutes available to ask questions but that additional questions may be asked in a second round of questioning if time permits

6. Invite the guest member and then the audience to ask questions (time permitting)
   Once questioning from the committee is completed and if time permits, the guest member may be allowed to ask a question or two. Following this, and again if time permits, audience members may be given an opportunity to ask questions.

7. Once all questioning is completed, the student, the audience, and guest member of the committee should be thanked and asked to leave the room.

8. Survey the committee and reach a decision
   Each examiner must be asked, in sequence, to comment on the student's performance.
   Each examiner must be asked specifically whether in their view the student passed or failed the oral examination. Each examiner must vote in favour of either pass or fail. **Co-advisors count as one member of the examining committee and have one vote in total.**
If the external examiner votes that the student has failed the examination, then the student fails the oral examination, regardless of the votes of the internal committee members.

If more than one vote is received from the internal committee members that the student has failed the examination, then the student fails the examination regardless of the vote of the external examiner.

If the external examiner or two or more internal examiners indicate a fail, the candidate fails the examination. All examining committee members who have indicated a failed outcome must provide written detailed reasons for the decision to the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies within one week of the oral examination. A copy of these details will be provided to the candidate by the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

If the external examiner feels that the student has passed, and no more than one of the internal examiners (including advisor/co-advisor) in attendance feels that the student has failed, then the student has passed the examination.

A pass or fail decision must be made. No other decision is permitted.

9. Discuss required revisions
   The Chair must establish with the examiners any required revisions, and the procedure to be used for approval of the revised thesis.

10. Complete the “Final Oral Examination of the Ph.D. Thesis” form
    The decision of the Examination Committee is reported on this form, which must be submitted to FGS.

11. Inform the student of the result of the examination
    The student is invited back into the room and informed of the results of the examination, the nature of revisions (if any), and the procedure to be used for approval of the revisions.

    The student should be congratulated (if appropriate) and members of the Examining Committee thanked.

    The student should be provided with the MSpace brochure which provides information about submitting the final version of the thesis.

FOLLOWING THE EXAMINATION
The Chair shall communicate to the Dean of FGS, through the submission of the “Report for Final Examination of the Ph.D.” form, the nature of the revisions and the procedures to ensure that the revisions are satisfactorily made.

The Advisor shall ensure that any required revisions to the thesis have been approved according to the agreed upon procedure, obtain the signature of all committee members who participated in the oral examination on the "Final Oral Examination of the Ph.D. Thesis" form, including any members who attended the oral examination remotely, and submit the "Final Oral Examination of the Ph.D. Thesis" form to the Faculty of Graduate Studies Office in time to meet relevant deadlines.

The student shall submit all required forms to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, 500 University Centre, including thesis release forms, and complete an online copyright declaration and upload a digital (pdf) version of the final thesis at the MSpace website: https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/index.jsp.