THE THESIS

Each candidate shall submit a thesis, written by the candidate, on the research carried out by the candidate on an approved topic. The thesis is expected to be a significant contribution to knowledge in its field and the candidate must indicate in what ways it is a contribution. The thesis must demonstrate mature scholarship and critical judgement on the part of the candidate and it must indicate an ability to express oneself in a satisfactory literary style. Approval of the thesis is taken to imply that it is judged to be sufficiently meritorious to warrant publication in reputable scholarly media in the field.

External Examiner

For each doctoral thesis an External Examiner from outside the University is appointed on behalf of the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies) by the Department Chair, in consultation with the Advisor. The External Examiner must not have served as Advisor to the student’s Advisor or have been a trainee of the Advisor in the last six years, must not have directly collaborated in joint projects or co-authored publications with the Advisor or the student in the last six years, and must not have an existing plan to collaborate with the Advisor or the student. In addition, the External Examiner must not have been a student or member of the graduate faculty at the University in the last five years. The nomination will be made when the candidate’s Advisor declares that the thesis is about to be prepared, normally no later than the beginning of the student’s last semester. The External Examiner will submit a written appraisal of the thesis (at least seven days prior to the examination) to the Chair of the Department who will then provide these comments to the candidate and the Advisory Committee. The External Examiner is expected to participate in the final oral examination and to assist in evaluating all aspects of the candidate’s performance. Any individual who serves as an External Examiner may not serve again until a period of 3 years has passed.

Procedures

The thesis may be submitted at any time of the year, but candidates are advised to allow ample time for revision and examination. A copy of the schedule of deadlines should be obtained from the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies by the candidate no later than the beginning of the semester in which the candidate intends to graduate.

It is understood that, as the thesis is being written, the candidate will be in regular communication with the Advisory Committee. When a draft is completed that the Advisory Committee recommends for examination, the candidate, with the endorsement of the Department Chair, formally requests an examination. A copy of the final draft is then sent to the External Examiner as fair copy of the thesis. Arrangements for the final oral examinations are made. It is understood that as a result of the final oral examination corrections may be necessary to produce a revised final draft of the thesis.

Final Oral Examination

The final oral examination is devoted chiefly, but not necessarily entirely, to the defence of the doctoral thesis. It is a faculty (as distinct from a departmental) examination, for which the arrangements are made by the department on behalf of the faculty in consultation with the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

The examination is conducted by a committee consisting of five members:

• A member of the regular graduate faculty who is not a member of the Advisory Committee appointed to act as Chair by the Department Chair on behalf of the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies);
• The External Examiner;
• A member of the regular graduate faculty, who is not a member of the Advisory Committee, selected by the departmental Graduate Program Committee;
• Two members of the student’s Advisory Committee, selected by the Advisory Committee.

Note:

• The Chair serves to administer and ensure the proper conduct of the examination. The Chair is expected to exercise full control over the proceedings and does not participate directly in questioning the candidate during the examination. In unforeseen circumstances where an examiner is unable to attend due to sudden illness, accident, etc., the Chair will attempt to receive questions to ask on behalf of the absent member, to be answered by the student to the satisfaction of the examiners.

The Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies), or a designate, may attend a part or all of the examination. The examination is open to the public but members of the audience may question the candidate only upon invitation of the Chair of the Examination Committee.

The members of the Examination Committee, including the External Examiner, report individually on the final examination and the thesis. The candidate is deemed to have passed if no more than one of the four examiners votes negatively. An abstention is regarded as a negative vote. Concurrently, the members sign the Certificate of Approval, which is submitted with the approved thesis in its final form to the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies) via the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (see Submission of Thesis (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/thesis/submission-thesis/)) where the decision of satisfactory or unsatisfactory will be recorded.

If unsatisfactory, the candidate may be given a second attempt. A second unsatisfactory result constitutes a recommendation to the Board of Graduate Studies that the student be required to withdraw (see Unsatisfactory Progress (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/unsatisfactory-progress/) and Appeals of Decisions (calendar.uoguelph.ca/graduate-calendar/general-regulations/appeals-decisions/)).

Copies of Thesis

One electronic (.pdf) copy of the certified thesis must be submitted to the Atrium (https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/) by the thesis submission deadline date shown in the Schedule of Dates in the calendar. Also included in the electronic submission must be a copy of an abstract consisting of no more than 350 words. The Certificate of Approval signed by the External Examiner and the members of the Examination Committee, a copy of the circulation waiver and the copying license must also be submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Departments may have a requirement to submit a bound copy of the thesis.
Publication

The Certificate of Approval indicates that the thesis is suitable for publication. The university requires publication of the thesis in the following manner:

One electronic copy of the thesis is uploaded by the National Library of Canada, and the agreement form signed by the candidate authorizing the National Library to publish the thesis and to make copies available for sale on request. The National Library will upload the thesis exactly as it is and will list the thesis in Theses Canada (http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/thesescanada/index-e.html) as a publication of the National Library.

An abstract of not more than 350 words, prepared by the author and approved by the Advisor and submitted as part of the electronic thesis submission, is also uploaded by the National Library.

The National Library’s Theses Non-Exclusive License (https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/frm-nl59-2-e.pdf) will be sent to the candidate prior to the final oral examination, to be signed and submitted to the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies immediately after the successful completion of the examination.

The candidate, in consultation with the Advisor and the Department Chair, shall have the right to request that circulation and/or copying of the thesis in any form be withheld for up to one year.

Publication in the above manner does not preclude publication of all or part of the thesis in journals or in book form.