



FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Master's Thesis Defence Recommendations

- Ensure that the examination is held in an appropriate venue.
- The candidate should make a brief presentation about the thesis, usually from 15-20 minutes long.
- The Chair is responsible for moderating the discussion and directing questions. The Chair may participate in the questioning. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that the graduate program regulations relating to the final oral examination are followed.
- It is customary for the candidate to leave the room while procedures are determined and explained (i.e. the order of questioning, the length of time allocated per question, the number of rounds, etc.).
- Ensure that the chair, student and all examiners have a final draft of the thesis at the examination.
- It is generally agreed that the most time should be allotted to the external examiner and the least to the supervisor. The Chair will discourage discussion between examiners that excludes the candidate. Examiners should be encouraged to ask detailed questions about the thesis and occasional broad or exploratory disciplinary questions that invite evidence of disciplinary education and not just training. Typographical and stylistic errors should not take up examination time.
- At the close of the examination, before the candidate is asked to withdraw, it is often beneficial to ask the candidate if there are any final comments. When a positive conclusion is obvious, some time could be spent on discussing the future of the thesis and research area.
- For the adjudication, no final verdict should be rendered without each examiner having given an opinion. The decision of the examining committee will be based on the content of the thesis and on the candidate's ability to defend it.
- Clear timelines regarding the completion of minor or major revisions must be outlined to the candidate. The grade awarded must be signed off by the defence chair.
- In announcing the decision, it is recommended that the announcement be made in the examination room, before all the examiners.