



# Western Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

## GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL (GEC)

October 2, 2024

12:00 – 1:30pm

Western Interdisciplinary Research Building (WIRB), Room 3000

[Zoom link](#)

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order K. Siddiqui
2. Land Acknowledgment C. Chung
3. Confirmation of Quorum
4. Business Arising
5. For Approval
  - 5.1 Procedures for the Thesis Examinations and Final Submission  
[Exhibit 5.1](#)

**Proposal:** That the Graduate Education Council (GEC) approve and recommend to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy (Policy) that effective November 8, 2024, the Procedures for the Thesis Examinations and Final Submission be revised as presented in Exhibit 5.1.

5.2 Senate Policy on Registration – [Exhibit 5.2](#)

**Proposal:** That the Graduate Education Council (GEC) approve and recommend to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy (Policy) that effective November 8, 2024, the Senate Policy on Registration be revised as presented in Exhibit 5.2.



# Western Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

## 6. For Information

6.1 Summary of Scholastic Offences 2024-2025 – [Exhibit 6.1](#)

6.2 IQAP Year End Report – [Exhibit 6.2](#)

## 7. Other Business

## 8. Adjournment

## **EXHIBIT 5.1 – Revisions to the Procedure for the Thesis Policy – Examinations and Final Submission**

**ACTION:** ☒ APPROVAL ☐ INFORMATION ☐ DISCUSSION

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Graduate Education Council approve and recommend to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy (Policy) that effective November 8, 2024, the Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission be revised as presented in Exhibit 5.1

### **BACKGROUND:**

In June 2021 the Operations/Agenda Committee (OAC) formed an ad hoc Working Group to review the structure and remit of the Senate Committee on Academic Policy and Awards (SCAPA) and its subcommittees. The Second Report of the ad hoc Working Group presented recommendations relating to the review and approval of graduate-level academic policy. Following receipt of this report, and on the recommendation of OAC, at its meeting on September 16, 2022, Senate ratified the SGPS Regulations identified as falling under Senate's purview as Senate Academic policy, and approved that effective September 1, 2022, proposals for revisions to said policies be submitted to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy in accordance with the Policy on Establishing Senate Academic Policies and Procedures.

Senate approved the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Policies on March 15, 2024.

In 2020 SGPS began a review of the thesis regulations that involved differentiating what constituted policy, and what would remain as procedure. What is before you today will become part of thesis procedures.

The thesis regulation review involved updating language, revising wording to capture current best practices, and adding regulations that reflect the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, decolonization, reconciliation, and indigenization. Proposed revisions involved extensive consultation with the GEC Academic Policy Committee, (which included students, staff, and faculty), and consultation with the Offices of Indigenous Initiatives, and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the Indigenous Student Centre, and Research Western and the Indigenous Faculty Committee.

These regulations have been revised within the spirit of 'Truth and Reconciliation' at Western University with a goal to decolonize and indigenize the processes and procedures guiding thesis research, scholarship, and creative activity. This includes acknowledging and addressing the hierarchies and the limitations of Euro-Western knowledges and cultures that currently govern our university policies and regulations. We will create space and recognize the value of research, scholarship, and creative activity from a broad range and variety of perspectives.

Indigenous Peoples comprise many Nations within Canada and possess intellectual, research, and academic sovereignty. These regulations have been revised with the goal of expanding beyond and interrogating their Euro-Western focus (an on-going process) to respect and make explicit the rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination. These regulations affirm the rights of graduate students to produce research, scholarship, and creative activity based on Indigenous knowledges, languages, and methodologies. In this regard, we recognize that the goals of Indigeneity extend beyond the borders of Canada.

**PRIMARY CONTACT:**

K. Siddiqui, Vice Provost, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

**CONSULTATION AND RESULTS:**

Approved by the Graduate Education Council (GEC) - **DATE**

Approved by the Graduate Education Council (GEC) Academic Policy Committee – September 17, 2024

K. Siddiqui, Vice Provost, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

Associate Vice Provosts, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

**ATTACHMENT(S)** Procedures for the Thesis Policy – Examinations and Final Submission



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

### 1. Preparing for the Thesis Examination

To fulfill the degree requirement of a thesis-based program, the thesis and the student's oral defense of the thesis must be assessed and approved by a Thesis Examination Board and must meet the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral (SGPS) requirements for the thesis. The examination of the thesis exposes a student's work to scholarly and expert criticism.

For the thesis timeline and an overview of submission dates, please visit Thesis Timelines.

*Thesis examinations will not be held on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation observed at Western.*

Unless otherwise approved as part of program requirements, all non-thesis degree requirements must be completed before the student can submit the thesis for examination.

#### 1.1 Request to SGPS for a Thesis Examination

When the supervisor(s) advises that the thesis is ready for examination, the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) is responsible for submitting the completed doctoral or master's thesis examination request form to SGPS for approval at least six working weeks for PhD, four working weeks for master's, before the proposed examination date. Students with accessibility needs must ensure that the office of Accessible Education is aware of the upcoming examination so that any accommodations are communicated to the program in advance of the examination. The Graduate Chair (or equivalent) is responsible for ensuring that accessibility is provided to everyone attending the examination for the student, examiners, and all other interested parties attending the examination process is provided (i.e. equipment, furniture, space, must be accessible to those with visible and invisible disabilities).

In addition to identifying the Thesis Examination Board members, the form must confirm whether the examination will be in-person or remote, provide details about the public presentation, indicate if the examination is open or closed, and indicate whether there is a confidentiality agreement to be signed, and/or if a delay of publication is

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

requested. The form identifies whether the supervisor(s) has approved the thesis to go to examination.

SGPS approves the Thesis Examination Board and the date of the examination. The date and time of the examination are confirmed via within the formal invitation from SGPS.

### **1.2 In-Person and Remote Examinations**

The thesis examination can be held either in-person or remotely.

At the time when a thesis examination is arranged, the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) determines with the supervisor(s) and the student whether the exam will be held in-person or remotely. All examinations must follow the procedures outlined in the Thesis Examination Guide.

#### **In-Person Examinations**

The student and a supervisor(s) attend in-person. Normally, all thesis Examiners participate in-person. With Upon approval of the student Candidate and Graduate Chair (or equivalent), one examiner can may participate remotely. Flexibility will be exercised for any Indigenous Elder and/or Knowledge Keeper who expresses an interest to join virtually. Please contact SGPS and Indigenous Student Services in these situations.

#### **Remote Examinations**

The student-and a supervisor(s) attend remotely. All thesis examiners participate remotely.

### **1.3 Public Presentations**

PhD Sstudents are required to provide a public presentation on their thesis research, scholarship, and/or creative activity, normally within twenty-four hours before the thesis examination. Public Ppresentations are optional for research Master's examinations. The Ggraduate Pprogram sets the time and place for the presentations. SGPS announces the public presentation on its website. The presentation occurs in an open forum. The examiners normally attend the public presentation.

The type of-public presentation (in-person or remote)-will normally match the type of examination-(in-person or remote).

In-person public presentationslectures can include a remote component, allowing remote attendance.

### **1.4 Open versus Closed Thesis Examination**

The thesis examination is normally a closed event unless the student and program, by mutual agreement, request that the examination is open to the university community (e.g., faculty, academic colleagues, students). An exception will be granted for

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

Indigenous students who may benefit from the physical presence and support of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers.

### 1.5 Confidentiality Agreement

If the student feels that the nature of the information contained in the work must remain confidential (e.g., concerns pending patents, community needs, Indigenous data sovereignty, etc.) for a specified period, a confidentiality agreement is required. See Sections #: The Student Submits the Thesis for Examination.

### 1.6 Delay of Publication

Note: please see section XX regarding the electronic publication of theses for important information.

If a student needs to delay publication of their thesis (e.g. for example, due to a pending patent, commercial application, community needs, or Indigenous data sovereignty) this must should be identified on the thesis examination request form by indicating an automatic “delay of publication” for up to two years, is required. This option will block the thesis from public access after successful examination and final submission. This process is available as part of the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation submission process. When the “delay of publication” expires, the student can be granted a one-year extension through a written request to the Thesis Coordinator.

Exceptionally, a student may request a six-year delay of publication by contacting an Associate Vice-Provost within the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. This request requires the approval of the Graduate Education Council Academic Policy Committee.

### 1.7 Supervisor Approval to go to Examination

Normally, the supervisor(s) confirms via the Thesis Examination Request form that the thesis meets the scholarly standards of the degree and is ready to go to examination.

In those cases where the student chooses to submit a thesis for examination without the approval of the supervisor(s), the following processes are followed:

The student notifies the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) who then discusses the reasons with the student. The Graduate Chair (or equivalent) discusses with the supervisor(s) their reasons for not approving submission of the thesis. The Graduate Chair (or equivalent) ensures that the supervisory committee member(s) have also been consulted.

If the reasons concern an allegation of scholastic offence, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to university policy.  
[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.p](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)  
[df](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

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If the reason concerns intellectual property, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to university policy ([uwo.ca/research/ip.html](http://uwo.ca/research/ip.html))

If the reason concerns quality, the supervisor(s) must articulate to the student and Graduate Chair (or equivalent) the quality concerns, and the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) discusses with the student their reasons for wanting to go forward without supervisor approval and apprises the student of other options. They clarify with the student (and the supervisor(s)) that going to examination without supervisor approval means that the supervisor(s) does not view the thesis as ready for examination. It is explained that the examiners will know that the supervisor(s) has not approved the thesis to go to examination. The student is then informed of the elevated risk of failure that is introduced when a student goes to examination without supervisor approval.

If the student still chooses to submit without supervisor approval:

The Graduate Chair (or equivalent) takes on the role of the supervisor in this process. This includes making the necessary arrangements for the examination to occur, inviting the examiners, completing the Thesis Examination Request form, overseeing the student's progress and attending the exam in place of the supervisor. This involves making the necessary arrangements for the examination to occur, inviting the examiners, and completing the Thesis Examination Request Form.

~~The Graduate Chair (or equivalent) attends the thesis examination and oversees the process (including all supervisory responsibilities).~~

The supervisor(s) does not attend the thesis examination or the public presentation. The integrity of the process requires that a strict arms-length relationship between the student, the supervisor(s) and the members of the Examination Board be maintained throughout the pre-examination period. The content or quality of the work must not be discussed among these people until the oral examination itself is underway.

Upon completion of the oral defense, and after the student has left the room, the Thesis Examination Board is reminded by the examination Chair that the student has submitted without the approval of the supervisor(s). The Chair also reminds the committee to assess the oral examination and written thesis based on academic merit.

The supervisor(s) has the right to not be recognized as the supervisor on the published thesis.

### 1.8 The Thesis Examination Board

#### **Tasks of the Thesis Examination Board Examiners are to:**

- Determine if the thesis and the student meet the expectations for research, scholarship, and / or creative activity



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- Appraise the thesis for content - its underlying assumptions, methodology, findings, and scholarly significance of the findings. This should include evaluation of the thesis in terms of its organization and presentation
- Evaluate the student's skill and knowledge in responding to questions and defending the thesis
- Ensure authenticity of authorship

### 1.9 Arm's-Length Requirement for the Examination Board

Arms-Length refers to choosing examiners who are sufficiently distant from the student and the supervisor(s) to impartially assess the thesis artifact, which includes being free from bias and from conflicts of interest in respect of the student, supervisor(s), and thesis artifact. (link to FR module)

An examiner must not have been connected with the thesis research, scholarship and/or creative activity in a significant way. The examiners should not have been associated with the student, outside of the usual contact in courses or other non-thesis activities within the University, nor be related to the student or supervisor(s).

The external examiner cannot be a co-author or co-investigator in the past 6 years with the supervisor(s) or student.

Faculty members who have served on a student's comprehensive/candidacy examination committee are eligible to serve as examiners on the student's thesis examination if the other conditions of being arm's length remain unchanged.

Other relationships that are not arms-length include:

- Aa sexual or otherwise intimate relationship (past or current)
- Aa spouse or partner (past or current)
- Aa close family member. (Some examples of close family members may extend beyond blood or marriage for example clan relationships in the Midewiwin Lodge or Long House). t. Such relationships should preclude involvement on the examination board. and therefore kinship must not preclude their involvement on the examination board.
- The involvement of an examiner with the student or supervisor in a professional capacity, such as:
  - a current or former or prospective business partner
  - having previous, current, or an agreement for future negotiations relating to employment or publications relating to the thesis

This list, while not exhaustive, illustrates the nature of potential conflicts to be avoided.

The supervisor(s) and Graduate Chair (or equivalent)-must take reasonable steps to avoid recommending an examiner whose relationship with the student or supervisor is not arms- length. Best practices include reviewing the potential examiner's CV, having the graduate committee members review the list of names nominated as examiners.

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conducting a literature search on potential examiner's publications. It is recommended that supervisors and programs avoid multiple use of the same examiners.

Individuals asked to examine a thesis artifact must reveal any relationship with the supervisor(s) or student that could undermine their impartiality.

### 1.10 The PhD Thesis Examination Board

#### Examiners:

- Every PhD examination board must have exactly 4 examiners. Every board must have:
  - 1 External Examiner
  - 1 University Examiner
  - 2 Program Examiners
    - In lieu of 1 of the program examiners, 1 specialized knowledge examiner, or 1 Indigenous Knowledge Keeper examiner include at least 1 (but no more than 2) program examiners, up to 1 university examiner, and 1 external examiner and no more than 1 of either a specialized knowledge or Indigenous Knowledge Keeper examiner, for a total of 4 examiners (see chart below for more information).
- No more than 1 examiner (who cannot be the student's supervisor) may be from the student's thesis supervisory committee.
- Every effort must be made to ensure that the examination board members reflect Western's commitment to equity, diversity inclusion, decolonization, and indigenization, and the positionality of the student.

### 1.11 The Master's Thesis Examination Board

#### Examiners:

- Every master's examination board must have exactly 3 examiners. Every board must have:
  - 1 University Examiner
  - 2 Program Examiners
    - In lieu of 1 of the program examiners, 1 specialized knowledge examiner, or 1 Indigenous Knowledge Keeper examiner include at least 1 (but no more than 2) program examiners, up to 1 university examiner, and no more than 1 of either a specialized knowledge or Indigenous Knowledge Keeper examiner, for a total of 3 Examiners, (see chart below for more information).
- No more than 1 examiner (who cannot be the student's supervisor) may be from the student's thesis supervisory committee.
- Every effort must be made to ensure that the examination board members reflect Western's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, and indigenization, and the positionality of the student.

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

### 1.12 Thesis Examination Board Roles

#### Chair

The Chair is a non-voting member of the Thesis Examination Board. As the Vice-Provost's (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) representative, the Chair presides over the thesis examination and provides leadership to ensure that the established procedures are followed. It is not appropriate for the Chair to ask the student thesis- related questions during the examination period or comment on the merits of the thesis.

#### Chair Duties:

- See Thesis Examination Guide
- Determines when a quorum exists
- Opens and closes the examination proceedings
- Sets the order of questioners and the length of the question periods
- Monitors the length and conduct of the student's presentation (if appropriate)
- If the external examiner is not present, determines which examiner will put the questions raised in the external examiner's report to the student (for PhD examinations only)
- If requested by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), where the external examiner has submitted a negative report but is not present, provides copies of the external examiner's report to the examiners to assist in their deliberations (for PhD examinations only)
- Deals with behaviour and/or discussion that interferes with the proper conduct of the examination
- Moderates in camera discussion on the merits of the thesis, the student's oral presentation and responses to questions, the external examiner's report (if applicable), and other relevant matters
- Calls for a vote and recommendation
- Recalls the student and advises them of the recommendations that are to be made to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)
- Prepares a report to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) of the examiners' assessment of the thesis and the student's oral performance

#### Chair Qualifications:

- Must have SGPS membership
- The Chair for a doctoral examination must not be a member of the student's program or the supervisor's home program

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible students whose thesis focuses on Indigenous issues should have a <i>thesis examination Chair who has relevant Indigenous or cultural safety training or expertise (e.g., 4 Seasons of Reconciliation online module).</i></li> </ul>
<b><u>Program Examiner</u></b>	<p>This <b>academic</b> examiner is an expert in the thesis area, upholds the standards of the discipline and ensures the graduate degree level expectations and the learning outcomes for the thesis are met.</p> <p>No more than 1 program examiner may be from the student's supervisory committee.</p> <p>The student's supervisor cannot be a program examiner.</p> <p><b><u>Criteria:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The program examiner must have Teaching/Advisory, Associate, Master's or Doctoral SGPS membership in the student's program.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Responsibilities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Thesis Examination Guide</li> <li>Conducts and submits a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than 5 business days <del>one week</del> before the examination date</li> <li>Attends the public presentation</li> <li>Attends the thesis examination and participates in questioning the student, evaluating the thesis and the student's defense of the thesis</li> <li>Contributes their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense</li> <li>If the final determination is a pass conditional upon revisions, be willing to review and approve the revisions</li> <li>If needed, participates in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing</li> </ul>
<b><u>University Examiner</u></b>	<p>This academic examiner provides an interdisciplinary or other discipline perspective on the student's research, scholarship and/or creative activity. The university examiner is normally a faculty member of Western University or its affiliated university colleges whose primary appointment is not in the same department as the student's program.</p> <p><b><u>Criteria:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university examiner must have Teaching/Advisory, Associate, Master's or Doctoral SGPS membership and must be able to bring an interdisciplinary or other disciplinary perspective</li> </ul>

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>Must not have had any involvement in the development of the thesis nor interest in the outcome</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Responsibilities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>See Thesis Examination Guide</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Conducts and submits a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than 5 business days<del>one week</del> before the examination date.</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Attends the public presentation</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Attends the thesis examination and participates in the questioning of the student, evaluating the thesis and the student's defense of the thesis</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Contributes their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense</u></li> <li>▪ <u>If the final determination is a pass conditional upon revisions, be willing to review and approve the revisions</u></li> <li>▪ <u>If needed, participates in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing</u></li> </ul>
<b><u>Specialized Knowledge Examiner</u></b>	<p><u>This non-academic examiner has knowledge, experience and expertise related to the research, scholarship and/or creative activity and provides a community, industry, cultural, career and/or applied perspective.</u></p> <p><b><u>Criteria:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>This examiner does not need to hold membership in SGPS</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Must not have been involved in the development of the thesis nor have a material or financial interest in the outcome</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Responsibilities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <u>See Thesis Examination Guide</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Conducts and submits a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than 5 business days<del>one week</del> before the examination date</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Attends the public presentation</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Attends the thesis examination and participates in the questioning of the student, evaluating the thesis and the student's defense of the thesis</u></li> <li>▪ <u>Contributes their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense.</u></li> <li>▪ <u>If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing</u></li> </ul>
<b><u>Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Examiner</u></b>	<p><u>The Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Examiner is a member of a recognized Indigenous community or organization with knowledge, experience, and expertise related to the research, scholarship and/or creative activity</u></p> <p><b><u>Criteria:</u></b></p>

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>This Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Examiner does not need to hold membership in SGPS</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Responsibilities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>See Thesis Examination Guide</u></li> <li>• <u>Conducts and submits a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than 5 business days<del>one week</del> before the examination date</u></li> <li>• <u>Attends the public presentation</u></li> <li>• <u>Attends the thesis examination and participates in the questioning of the student, evaluating the thesis and the student's defense of the thesis</u></li> <li>• <u>Contributes their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense</u></li> <li>• <u>If needed, participates in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing</u></li> </ul>
<b><u>External Examiner (for PhD thesis examinations only)</u></b>	<p><u>This academic examiner is a faculty member at another University and has an established reputation in the field of the thesis.</u></p> <p><b><u>Criteria:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>This examiner does not need to hold membership in SGPS</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Responsibilities:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>See Thesis Examination Guide</u></li> <li>• <u>Conducts and submits a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than 5 business days<del>one week</del> before the examination date</u></li> <li>• <u>Attends the public presentation</u></li> <li>• <u>Attends the thesis examination and participates in the questioning of the student, evaluating the thesis and the student's defense of the thesis</u></li> <li>• <u>Contributes their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense</u></li> <li>• <u>If needed, participates in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing</u></li> </ul>

### **1.13 The Student Submits the Thesis for Examination**

Doctoral students must submit the thesis at least 5five working business weeks before the approved date for the Thesis Examination. Master's students must submit the thesis at least three working business weeks before the approved thesis examination date. This ensures adequate time for examiners to:

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- access the thesis via the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) Repository
- read the thesis and prepare their reports
- submit reports to SGPS through the ETD repository

Once the thesis has been officially submitted for examination, it cannot be withdrawn except with the permission of the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). The version which has been submitted to and circulated from the repository is the only version that the committee can examine. No other copies are to be circulated or examined.

### **2. The Examination of the Thesis and the Student**

- SGPS distributes to the examiners an electronic package via e-mail consisting of:
- A formal electronic invitation to examine the thesis and the student
  - The date, time, and location of the examination
  - Instructions on how to access the Scholarship@Western ETD repository
  - The thesis, in PDF format available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository. Only this official version of the thesis may be examined.
  - If appropriate, the option to request the thesis in a paper format through Graphic Services.
  - Pertinent excerpts from the Thesis Regulation Guide
  - The secure Thesis Examiner Report available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository
  - For PhD exams, please visit the external examiners page for appropriate forms and information.

The examiners do their work in a two-stage process – Stage One: The Preliminary Evaluation of the thesis and Stage Two: The Thesis Examination.

The Thesis Examination may be postponed or cancelled if any step in the examination process is not completed on schedule (e.g., the student fails to submit the thesis for examination on schedule, or the examiners fail to submit preliminary evaluations on time) or if there is a credible allegation of a possible scholastic offence.

#### **2.1 Stage 1: The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis**

Each Examiner must independently and without consultation complete the examiner's report and decide whether the thesis meets the scholarly standards for the discipline and degree.

There are 2 outcomes that the examiners may consider:



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- **Acceptable with Revisions:** A work that requires some revisions may be **deemed** acceptable. Revisions include limited typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation, labels for tables, nomenclature, and bibliographic form; and the need for clarification of content.
- **Unacceptable:** A thesis **deemed** unacceptable may contain, for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology, misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context.

The completed examiner reports are confidential to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) until the examination is completed. SGPS must receive the completed forms from all the Examiners at least five working days before the date scheduled for the student's thesis examination. If the preliminary evaluation is deemed acceptable, the examiner reports are shared with the supervisor(s) and student after the thesis examination.

### **If the Thesis is Deemed Acceptable**

A majority of the examiners must deem that the thesis is acceptable to allow the thesis examination to proceed. In the case of a tie, the external examiner's vote will break the tie. An examiner's preliminary judgment of acceptability is provisional. It does not preclude the examiner changing their judgment and to finding the thesis unacceptable at the thesis examination.

### **If the Thesis Content is Deemed Unacceptable**

A thesis deemed unacceptable by a majority of the examiners at the preliminary evaluation stage of the thesis examination process is referred to a Re-submission Hearing.

SGPS cancels the Thesis Examination. The Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) (for PhD exams) or Graduate Chair or equivalent (for Master's exams) appoints a Re-submission Hearing committee which reviews the situation, including the examiners' preliminary evaluations. The preliminary evaluations are only shared with the members of the Re-submission Hearing committee. The examiner reports are not shared with the supervisor(s) and student.

### **Composition of the Doctoral Re-submission Hearing Committee**

Chair: Associate Vice-Provost (or designate)

Where possible students whose thesis focuses on Indigenous issues should have a Thesis Examination Chair who has relevant Indigenous or cultural safety training or expertise (e.g., 4 Seasons of Reconciliation online module).

Graduate Chair (or equivalent)

Examiners (external examiner is optional)



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

In attendance: Supervisor(s)

Composition of the Master's Re-submission Hearing Committee

Chair: Graduate Chair (or equivalent)/designate)

Where possible students whose thesis focuses on Indigenous issues should *have a Thesis Examination Chair who has relevant Indigenous or cultural safety training or expertise* (e.g., 4 Seasons of Reconciliation online module).

### Examiners

In attendance: Supervisor(s)

#### Role and Responsibilities of the Chair

The Chair is a non-voting member of the Re-submission Hearing committee with the following responsibilities:

- Ensures that the responsibilities of the re-submission hearing committee are met
- Moderates the in-camera discussion
- Provides the Graduate Chair (or equivalent designate), student and supervisor(s) written notification of the committee's decisions and list of recommended revisions
- Chairs the subsequent thesis examination

#### Responsibilities of the Examiners:

- Determine whether the student should be provided the opportunity to revise the thesis to bring it to the acceptable scholarly standard for examination

If the student is provided another opportunity to revise the thesis, the examiners:

- Establish a date by which the revisions should be completed, normally no earlier than twelve weeks for PhD and six weeks for master's, after the date of the originally scheduled examination
- Participate in committee discussion that results in agreed upon revisions to strengthen the thesis
- Serve on the re-examination board, and in this capacity, assess the re-submitted thesis

If the student is not provided the opportunity to revise the thesis:

- The outcome of the examination is a failure
  - The student has the opportunity to appeal the decision (link to appeal policy)

Normally the same examiners continue to serve on the examination board, and in this capacity, assess the resubmitted thesis.

#### Role and Responsibilities of the Supervisor(s):

The supervisor(s) attends the Re-submission hearing as a resource to the committee to assist their deliberations. They do not actively participate in the deliberations.

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

### Responsibilities of the Student

If determined by the examiners, the student shall revise the thesis based on the re-submission hearing committee's feedback and resubmit the thesis for examination.

Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable by the examination board, the student proceeds to the Thesis Examination as explained in Section . XX

### 2.2 Stage Two: The Thesis Examination

The Chair presides over the thesis examination:

To open proceedings, the Chair introduces all present.

- The student, the supervisor(s), the thesis examination board members must attend the thesis examination
- For PhD examinations, SGPS normally requires that the external examiner attend either in-person or remotely; however, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) may waive the presence of the external examiner for extenuating circumstances. If unable to attend, the external examiner must submit questions to be put to the student by the other examiners.
- Any member of SGPS may attend as a visitor by having a written request to attend approved by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). The Chair will refuse attendance to all others.

During the examination, the supervisor(s), Examiners and the student are asked to refrain from using electronic devices (cell phones, smart watches) for purposes other than the examination during the examination (with the exception of emergencies or for medical use)

The Chair then asks the student (and visitors) to leave the room so that the examiners can decide on the following points:

The order in which examiners are to question the student;  
The number of rounds of questioning desired (usually two);  
The time limit for each of the examiners' questioning periods (typically 15-20 minutes in the first round and 5-10 minutes in the second round);  
For PhD examinations, who will ask the questions submitted by the external examiner if they are not present;

The examination board members each have a link to an electronic Thesis Examination Evaluation form. The Chair advises the examiners that their evaluations on the acceptability of the thesis should be made independent of the assessment made in the preliminary evaluation of the thesis.

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

The Chair invites the student (and visitors) back into the room.

### The Examination Begins

The Chair explains to the student the sequence of events (e.g. two rounds of questioning, the order of questioning).

For master's examinations, the student may briefly present the thesis (10-15 minutes is appropriate).

The examiners question the student in the agreed-upon order, with the Chair holding them to the agreed-upon time limit. The supervisor(s) may not question the student and may not interject during questioning.

When the questioning has finished, the Chair asks the student and visitors, but not the supervisor(s), to leave the room.

### Allegation of Academic Misconduct During the Examination

It is expected that evidence supporting an allegation of academic misconduct would be identified at the preliminary evaluation stage and conveyed to SGPS at that time.

However, if during, or at the conclusion of the examination, the student's Supervisor, the Chair or any member of the examining committee expresses the view that there is a prima facie case for alleging that a material portion of the thesis has been plagiarized, or that there is other evidence of academic misconduct, the Chair shall submit the matter (together with any supporting materials) to SGPS for investigation. Where this occurs, the Chair shall, without informing the student of the identity of the person making the relevant allegation, inform the student that an allegation of academic misconduct has been made. The Chair shall also inform the student that an investigation into the matter will be conducted. The evaluation of the thesis is paused pending the results of the investigation.

### The Thesis Examination Board Deliberates and Renders a Decision

The Chair invites the supervisor(s) to comment on ~~the student~~, the thesis and aspects of the oral defense.

In rare cases where the thesis has been submitted without the supervisor(s)'s approval, the examiners are reminded that the student has submitted without the approval of the supervisor. The Chair reminds the committee to assess the oral defence and the thesis on academic merit.

At the Chair's invitation, the examiners alone discuss the thesis and the oral defense.

The Chair instructs the examiners that there are three outcomes available to them:

- **Pass** - This indicates that the thesis is acceptable as it stands. Minor changes may be made before final submission.

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

Examples of such changes might include minor typographical, grammatical or formatting errors. Normally such changes should be completed within 1 – 2 weeks.

- **Pass conditional upon revisions to thesis** - This indicates that required revisions must be reviewed and approved by a member(s) of the examining committee prior to publication~~submission~~.

Examples of required revisions may include extensive typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation; the need for clarification or addition of content in order to meet requisite scholarly standards; some additions, deletions or editing of text; further analysis, or discussion of some data. Normally such revisions should be completed within 6 weeks after the examination.

- **Unacceptable** - This indicates that the thesis cannot be submitted as it stands and would require extensive revision to reach the acceptable standard. A thesis found unacceptable proceeds to the re-submission hearing process.

A thesis judged unacceptable may contain, for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology, misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context.

The Chair instructs the examiners that there are 2 outcomes for the oral defense that the examiners may consider:

- **Acceptable**
- **Unacceptable**

For the oral defense, the examiners must determine if the student's responses to questions and general level of scholarly knowledge meet the standard for the doctoral or master's degree and are consistent with the contents of the thesis.

The examiners vote on the acceptability of the thesis and the oral defense by completing their electronic Thesis Examination Evaluation form.

These forms are confidential, only to be seen and recorded at the examination by the Chair.

The Chair reviews the completed forms and tallies the results.

The Chair announces the results of the vote on the acceptability of the thesis and of the oral defense and asks if further discussion is needed. In rare instances, the Chair may allow examiners to change their votes.

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

If a majority of the examiners find that the thesis content is a pass and the oral defense is acceptable, the student passes the thesis examination.

If a majority of the examiners find that the thesis content is pass conditional upon revision and the oral defense is pass, the student has not yet passed the thesis examination. Upon successful acceptance of the required revisions by a designated examiner(s), the student passes the thesis examination.

For doctoral thesis examinations, if the examiners' decisions are equally split (2/2) between acceptable and unacceptable on any one of the thesis content and/or the oral defense, then the vote is weighted in favour of the external examiner's decision.

Once the results are tallied and any required discussion has concluded, the Chair pronounces the Thesis Examination Board's decision.

### **The Thesis Examination is Successful**

On the "Thesis Examination - Chair Report," the Chair reports the thesis examination Board's decision for the thesis examination.

Though revisions are not required following a pass, examiners may suggest minor changes that would be beneficial, and the student is encouraged to complete such changes before final submission. The Chair is encouraged to list such changes on the Chair Report.

The Chair communicates the positive decision to the student. (See Communicating the Decision to the Student.)

### **The Thesis Examination is Conditionally Successful**

On the "Thesis Examination - Chair Report," the Chair:

- With the assistance of the examiners, provides a detailed list of the specific revisions as agreed upon by a majority of the examiners. The Chair's Report will be made available to the designated examiner(s), the student, and the supervisor(s), who will normally continue to support the student through the revision process.
- With the help of the examining committee, determines which examiner(s) will review the revised thesis. The designated examiner(s) withhold their approval until the required revisions have been made. All the examiners may receive a copy of the revised thesis to review.

After the examination, the supervisor(s) must meet with the student to ensure that they understand the revisions required by the thesis examination board and oversee the required revisions.

### **The Thesis Examination is Unsuccessful**

The Chair completes the "Thesis Examination - Chair Report." In consultation with the examiners, the Chair states (on the Chair report) why the thesis and/or the oral defense was unacceptable.

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

Unless a previous re-examination hearing has occurred, a thesis deemed unacceptable by a majority of examiners (regardless of whether the oral defense is deemed acceptable) is referred to a Re-examination Hearing. The Chair of the previous examination is excused from further involvement.

When this occurs, the Vice-Provost (SGPS) (for PhD exams) or the Graduate Chair (for master's exams) appoints a Re-examination Hearing Committee.

### Composition of the Doctoral Re-examination Hearing Committee

Chair: Associate Vice-Provost (or designate)

Where possible students whose thesis focuses on Indigenous issues should have a Thesis Examination Chair who has relevant Indigenous or cultural safety training or expertise (e.g., 4 Seasons of Reconciliation online module).

Graduate Chair (or equivalent)

Examiners (external examiner is optional)

In attendance: Supervisor(s)

### Composition of the Master's Re-examination Hearing Committee

Chair: Graduate Chair (or equivalent/designate)

Where possible students whose thesis focuses on Indigenous issues should have a Thesis Examination Chair who has relevant Indigenous or cultural safety training or expertise (e.g., 4 Seasons of Reconciliation online module).

Examiners (external examiner is optional)

In attendance: Supervisor(s)

### Role and Responsibilities of Chair:

The Chair is a non-voting member of the Re-examination Hearing committee with the following responsibilities:

- Ensures that the responsibilities of the committee are met
- Moderates the in-camera discussion
- Provides the Graduate Chair (or equivalent designate), supervisor(s), and the student written notification of the committee's decisions and a list of recommended suggested-revisions
- Chairs the subsequent thesis examination

### Responsibilities of the Examiners:

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- Determine whether the student should be provided the opportunity to revise the thesis to bring it to the acceptable scholarly standard for re-examination
- Establish a date by which the revisions should be completed, normally no earlier than twelve weeks for PhD and six weeks for master's, after the date of the originally scheduled examination
- Participate in committee discussion that results in agreed upon revisions to strengthen the thesis
- Serve on the re-examination board, and in this capacity, assess the re-submitted thesis

If the student is not provided the opportunity to revise the thesis:

- The outcome of the examination is a failure
- The student has the opportunity to appeal the decision ([link to appeal policy](#))

Normally the same examiners assess the resubmitted thesis.

### Role and Responsibilities of the Supervisor(s):

The supervisor(s) attends the Re-examination Hearing as a resource to the committee to assist their deliberations. They do not actively participate in the deliberations of the committee.

### Responsibilities of the Student

If determined by the examiners, the student shall revise the thesis based on the examiners' feedback and re-submit the thesis for re-examination.

Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable by the examination board, the student proceeds to the final thesis examination as explained in section ...

### Where only the oral defense is Unsuccessful:

The Chair completes the "Thesis Examination - Chair Report." In consultation with the examiners, the Chair states why the oral defense was unacceptable.

A thesis examination deemed unacceptable by the examination board on the oral defense alone is referred to a Re-examination Hearing Committee. The Chair of the previous examination is excused from further involvement.

The Vice-Provost (SGPS) (for PhD exams) or the Graduate Chair (for Master's exams) appoints a Re-examination Hearing Committee.

### Composition of the Doctoral Re-examination Hearing Committee

Chair: Associate Vice-Provost (or designate)

Where possible students whose thesis focuses on Indigenous issues should *have a*

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

*Thesis Examination Chair who has relevant Indigenous or cultural safety training or expertise (e.g., 4 Seasons of Reconciliation online module).*

Graduate Chair (or equivalent)

Examiners (external examiner is optional)

In attendance: Supervisor(s)

### Composition of the Master's Re-examination Hearing Committee

Chair: Graduate Chair Associate Vice-Provost (or equivalent designate)

Where possible students whose thesis focuses on Indigenous issues should *have a Thesis Examination Chair who has relevant Indigenous or cultural safety training or expertise (e.g., 4 Seasons of Reconciliation online module).*

Graduate Chair (or equivalent)

Examiners (external examiner is optional)

In attendance: Supervisor(s)

### Role and Responsibilities of Chair :

The Chair is a non-voting member of the Re-examination Hearing committee with the following responsibilities:

- Ensures that the responsibilities of the committee are met
- Moderates the in-camera discussion
- Provides the Graduate Chair (or designate), supervisor(s), and the student written notification of the committee's decisions and suggested revisions
- Chairs the subsequent thesis examination
- Explains at the outset of the second oral defense that the student is defending their original thesis.

### Role and Responsibilities of the Examiners:

- Determine whether the student should be given the opportunity to orally defend the thesis a final time

If a student is provided the opportunity to orally defend the thesis a final time, the examiners:

- Establish a date for the oral defense, normally within six weeks of the date of examination (PhD and master's)
- Participate in committee discussion that results in feedback to improve the oral defense

If the student is not provided the opportunity to orally defend the thesis a final time:

- The outcome of the examination is a failure
- The student has the opportunity to appeal the decision (link to appeal policy)



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

Normally the same examiners re-assess the oral defense of the thesis.

**Role and Responsibilities of the Supervisor(s) (same as above):**

The supervisor(s) attends the Re-examination Hearing as a resource to the committee to assist their deliberations. They do not actively participate in the deliberations of the committee.

**Responsibility of the Student:**

If determined by the examiners, the student shall take into account the Re-examination Hearing committee's feedback as they prepare for the oral defense.

The student proceeds to the thesis examination, where the oral defense is assessed a final time. The student defends their original thesis.

The Thesis Examination Board's decision is final.

If the oral defense is acceptable, Within six weeks of the second oral defense, the student shall revise the thesis based on the examiners' feedback (as part of their pass, or conditional pass decision on content), and then resubmit the thesis.

To meet the thesis requirement of the PhD or master's degree, both the thesis and the oral defense must be deemed acceptable by a majority of examiners.

Following a Re-examination hearing, the Thesis Examination Board's decision is final.

### **Communicating the Decision of the Thesis Examination to the Student**

When the Chair and the examiners have completed the documentation, the Chair invites only the student back into the room and informs them of the result, including whether a re-examination hearing will occur. (see Section XX).

### **Following the Thesis Examination**

The Chair of the examination submits all forms to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. When an examination is successful, SGPS will share the content of the thesis evaluations with the student and the supervisor.

### **Final Submission of the Thesis**

When the student has completed any changes recommended by the examiners, the student must submit the final copy of their work via digital submission through the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.

The student accesses their original submission within the repository and submits a revised copy of their work.

Once the thesis is published, the student has officially completed the thesis requirement for their degree. Subject to approval by the University Senate, the student's name is placed on the convocation list.

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

### **Final Submission of the Thesis**

When the student has completed any changes recommended by the examiners, the student must submit the final copy of their work via digital submission through the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.

The student accesses their original submission within the repository and submits a revised copy of their work.

Once the thesis is published, the student has officially completed the thesis requirement for their degree. Subject to approval by the University Senate, the student's name is placed on the convocation list.

### **1. Doctoral Candidate – Completion of the Thesis Degree Requirement**

Normally the entire process, from the Graduate Chair's request for a Thesis Examination to the placement of the candidate's name on the convocation list, requires approximately eight weeks. For an overview of submission dates, please visit Thesis Timelines.

#### **1.1. The Program Requests a Thesis Examination**

When the thesis is thought to meet recognized scholarly standards for the discipline and degree and is ready for examination, the Graduate Chair arranges a Thesis Examination by setting a proposed date, and obtaining provisional consent from the potential members of the Thesis Examination Board. (The thesis Supervisor(s), Supervisory committee or the candidate alone may also initiate this process.) They must then submit for approval the Examination Board to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS), using the Doctoral Thesis Examination Request Form at least seven working weeks before the proposed date, and, where applicable, set a date and time for the Public Lecture.

#### **1.2. In-Person and Remote Examinations and Public Lectures**

The thesis examination can be held either in-person or remotely. Both In-Person Examinations, and Remote Examinations, must follow the procedures outlined in the Thesis Examination Guide.

At the time when a thesis examination is arranged, the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) determines with the Supervisor and the Candidate whether the exam will be held in-person or remotely.

#### **In-Person Examinations**

The Candidate and a Supervisor attend in-person. Normally, all thesis examiners participate in-person. Upon approval of the Candidate and Graduate Chair, one examiner may participate remotely.

#### **Remote Examinations**

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~The Candidate and a Supervisor attend remotely. All thesis examiners participate remotely.~~

### ~~Public Lectures~~

~~Public Lectures are required for PhD Examinations and optional for Master's examinations. The location of the public lecture (in-person or via zoom) will normally match the location of the examination. In-person public lectures can include a remote component, allowing remote attendance.~~

### ~~Programs that choose to host a remote examination assume the following responsibilities:-~~

- ~~• Ensuring that requests and approvals for remote examination are made in a timely manner~~
- ~~• Ensuring remote attendance at public lectures (wherever possible)~~
- ~~• Hosting a conferencing solution in an appropriate environment that adequately supports the needs of the candidate and examiners. This includes:~~
  - ~~▪ Providing a dedicated support resource to the conference to ensure the best possible experience for all participants during the examination~~
  - ~~▪ Ensuring that a backup technology exists in the event that the primary solution fails~~
  - ~~▪ Ensuring that a list of questions from the remote examiner has been obtained in advance of the examination date and are available to the Chair of the examination (this serves as back-up in cases where the connection to the remote examiner is lost)~~
- ~~• Testing the remote connection with the examiner in advance of the examination~~

### ~~Examiners that wish to attend the examination remotely assume the following responsibilities:~~

- ~~• Submitting intention to attend exam remotely prior to agreeing to serve as examiner~~
- ~~• Testing the remote connection (all equipment and backups) with the host in advance of the examination~~
- ~~• Submitting questions to the program and SGPS at least 48 hours in advance of the examination~~

### ~~During the thesis exam, the Chair of the examination is responsible for assuring the following requirements and procedures are satisfied:~~

- ~~• All participants must be able to communicate effectively with each other at all times~~
- ~~• If the primary method of communication is unable to function effectively the examination Chair must determine when it is appropriate to use the pre-arranged backup technology or the submitted questions~~
- ~~• At the beginning of the examination, the Chair must inform the candidate and all members of the committee of the potential for suspending the exam should technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination (until the technical problems have been resolved)~~

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- The Chair of the examination must suspend the examination if technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination and backup options are unavailable
- The Chair of the examination must guarantee the standards of the examination have been met and the requirements have been satisfied

### 1.3. Examinations for alternative format theses [Doctoral]

The location of examinations for alternative format theses must be discussed with SGPS to ensure that any technical needs for displaying, demonstrating, or otherwise examining such theses are accommodated.

### 1.4. SGPS Approves the Thesis Examination Board and Thesis Examination (and Public Lecture, If Applicable)

SGPS approves the Thesis Examination Board provided by the candidate's program. Doctoral candidates must submit the thesis six weeks before the approved date for the Thesis Examination. This ensures adequate time for:

- Providing access to the thesis for the Examiners
- Examiners to read the thesis and prepare their reports
- Examiners to submit reports to SGPS

Candidates are required to present a Public Lecture on their thesis research, normally within twenty-four hours before the Thesis Examination. The Graduate program sets the time and place for the lecture. SGPS announces the public lecture on its website. The lecture is open to all members of the community. The Examiners should normally attend the Public Lecture and Thesis Examination. Doctoral Only - Effective May 2012, public lectures are mandatory for all programs. The Thesis Examination and Public Lecture may be postponed or cancelled if any step in the examination process is not completed on schedule (e.g. the candidate fails to submit the Thesis for Examination on schedule, or the Examiners fail to submit evaluations on time) or if there is a credible allegation of a possible scholastic offence.

**Note:** The thesis defense is normally a closed event unless the student and program, by mutual agreement, request that the defense is open to the university community (e.g. faculty, academic colleagues, students).

#### 1.4.1. The Thesis Examination Board

##### Examiners:-

- Every PhD exam must include at least one (but no more than 2) program examiners and one external examiner. A total of four examiners are to be identified from the categories below. (Exceptions will be considered for programs in non-departmentalized faculties)
- Every effort must be made to ensure that the examination board members reflect Western's commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

##### Tasks of the examiners are to:-

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- Determine if the thesis and the candidate meet recognized scholarly standards for the degree and, where relevant, the collaborative specialization
- Appraise the thesis for content—its underlying assumptions, methodology, findings, and scholarly significance of the findings. This should include evaluation of the thesis in terms of its organization, presentation of graphs, tables, and illustrative materials, and its use of accepted conventions for addressing the scholarly literature
- Evaluate the candidate's skill and knowledge in responding to questions and defending the thesis
- Ensure authenticity of authorship

### 1.4.2. Arm's-Length Examiners

Examiners must be seen to be able to examine the student and the thesis at arm's-length, free of substantial conflict of interest from any source. The test of whether or not a conflict of interest might exist is whether a reasonable outside person could consider a situation to exist that could give rise to an apprehension of bias. Co-authors or collaborators of any component of the thesis may not serve as Examiners.

Relationships that might appear to have a conflict of interest include:

- The involvement of an Examiner with the candidate or Supervisor in a personal capacity, such as:
  - A spouse or partner
  - A close family member
  - A business partner
  - Having previous, current, or future negotiations relating to employment

This list, while not exhaustive, illustrates the nature of potential conflicts to be avoided. The candidate's program must take reasonable steps to avoid recommending an Examiner whose relationship with the candidate or Supervisor could be seen as jeopardizing an impartial judgment on the thesis. Best practices include reviewing the potential examiner's CV; having the grad committee members review the list of names nominated as examiners; conducting a literature search on potential examiner's publications. It is recommended that supervisors and programs avoid multiple use of the same examiners.

A faculty member asked to examine a thesis should declare possible sources of conflict.

### 1.4.3. Doctoral Thesis Examination Board Roles

#### 1.4.3.1. Chair

The Chair is a non-voting member of the Thesis Examination Board. As the Vice-Provosts' (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) representative, the Chair presides over the thesis examination and provides leadership to ensure that the established procedures are followed. It is not appropriate for the Chair to ask the Candidate thesis related questions during the examination period.

**Chair Duties:**

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- ~~Determines when a quorum exists~~
- ~~Opens and closes the examination proceedings~~
- ~~Sets the order of questioners and the length of their question periods~~
- ~~Monitors the length and conduct of the candidate's presentation~~
- ~~If the External Examiner is not present, ensures that questions raised in the External Examiner's report are put to the candidate~~
- ~~If requested by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), where the External Examiner has submitted a negative report but is not present, provides copies of the External Examiner's report to the Examiners to assist in their deliberations~~
- ~~Intervenes if questioning becomes inappropriate~~
- ~~Deals with behaviour that interferes with the proper conduct of the examination~~
- ~~Moderates in camera discussion on the merits of the thesis, the candidate's oral presentation and responses to questions, the External Examiner's report, and other relevant matters~~
- ~~Calls for a vote and recommendation~~
- ~~Recalls the candidate and advises them of the recommendations that are to be made to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)~~
- ~~Prepares a report to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) of the Examiners' assessment of the thesis and the candidate's oral performance~~

### **Chair Qualifications:**

- ~~Must have appropriate SGPS membership~~
- ~~The Chair must not be a member of the candidate's program or the Supervisor's home program~~

**Note:** ~~If, at the conclusion of the defense, the candidate's supervisor, the Chair or any member of the examining committee expresses the view that there is a prima facie case for alleging that a material portion of the thesis has been plagiarized, or that there is other evidence of academic misconduct, the Chair shall withhold his/her signature from the examination certificate and submit the matter (together with any supporting materials) to SGPS for investigation. Where this occurs, the Chair shall, without informing the candidate of the identity of the person making the relevant allegation, inform the candidate that an allegation of academic misconduct has been made. The Chair shall also inform the candidate that an investigation into the matter will be conducted~~

### **1.4.3.2. Program Examiner**

~~This examiner is an expert in the thesis area, upholds the standards of the discipline and ensures the graduate degree level expectations and the learning outcomes for the thesis are met.—~~

#### **Criteria:-**

- ~~The program examiner must have Teaching/Advisory, Associate, Masters or Doctoral SGPS membership in the student's program.—~~

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- ~~No more than one Program Examiner may be from the candidate's Thesis Supervisory Committee~~

### ~~Responsibilities:~~

- ~~See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations~~
- ~~Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.~~
- ~~Attend the public lecture~~
- ~~Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis~~
- ~~Contribute your decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense~~
- ~~If the final determination is a pass conditional upon revisions be willing to review and approve the revisions~~
- ~~If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing~~

### ~~1.4.3.3. University Examiner~~

~~This academic examiner provides an interdisciplinary/other discipline perspective on the student's research. The University examiner is normally a faculty member whose primary appointment is not in the same department as the student's program.~~

### ~~Criteria:~~

- ~~The University examiner must have Teaching/Advisory, Associate, Masters or Doctoral SGPS membership and must be able to bring an interdisciplinary or other disciplinary perspective~~
- ~~Must not have had any involvement in the development of the thesis nor interest in the outcome~~

### ~~Responsibilities:~~

- ~~See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations~~
- ~~Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.~~
- ~~Attend the public lecture~~
- ~~Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis~~
- ~~Contribute your decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense~~
- ~~If the final determination is a pass conditional upon revisions be willing to review and approve the revisions~~
- ~~If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing~~

### ~~1.4.3.4. Specialized Knowledge Examiner~~



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~This non-academic examiner has knowledge, experience and expertise related to the research and provides a community, industry, cultural, career and/or applied perspective.~~

### ~~Criteria:-~~

- ~~• This examiner does not need to hold membership in SGPS.~~
- ~~• Must not have had involvement in the development of the thesis nor have a material or financial interest in the outcome~~

### ~~Responsibilities:-~~

- ~~• See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations~~
- ~~• Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.~~
- ~~• Attend the public lecture~~
- ~~• Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis~~
- ~~• Contribute their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense. If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing~~

### ~~1.4.3.5. Indigenous Knowledge Examiner~~

~~This examiner is a member of the Indigenous community with knowledge, experience and expertise related to the research.~~

### ~~Criteria:-~~

- ~~• This examiner does not need to hold membership in SGPS.~~

### ~~Responsibilities:-~~

- ~~• See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations~~
- ~~• Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.~~
- ~~• Attend the public lecture~~
- ~~• Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis~~
- ~~• Contribute their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense~~
- ~~• If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing~~

### ~~1.4.3.6. External Examiner~~

~~This academic examiner is a faculty member at another University and has an established reputation in the field of the thesis.~~

### ~~Criteria:-~~

- ~~• This examiner does not need to hold membership in SGPS.~~

### ~~Responsibilities:-~~

- ~~• See Thesis Examination Guide for Remote and In-Person examinations~~



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- Conduct and submit a preliminary evaluation of the thesis artifact no later than one week before the exam date.
- Attend the public lecture
- Attend the thesis examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's defense of the thesis
- Contribute their decision in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense
- If needed, participate in a re-submission and/or a re-examination hearing (this may be waived)

### 1.5. The Candidate Submits the Thesis for Examination

No later than six weeks before the date of the Thesis Examination, the Doctoral candidate submits a copy of their work for preliminary examination. This is done through digital submission via the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.

In those cases where the student chooses to submit a Thesis for Examination without the approval of the Supervisor(s), the Supervisor(s) must state on the Doctoral Thesis Examination Request Form why their approval is withheld. The Graduate Chair signs the form and provides the candidate with a copy of the Supervisor's stated reasons for withholding approval.

Once the thesis has been officially submitted for examination, it cannot be withdrawn except with the permission of the Vice Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). The version which has been submitted to and circulated from the SGPS repository is the only version that the committee can examine. No other copies are to be circulated or examined.

#### 1.5.1. The Candidate Submits the Thesis for Examination without the Approval of the Supervisor

In those cases where the student chooses to submit a thesis for examination without the approval of the Supervisor(s), the following processes are followed:

- The student notifies the Graduate Chair and the Supervisor. The Graduate Chair discusses with the Supervisor their reasons for not approving submission of the thesis.
- If the reason concerns academic integrity, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to the Academic Policy Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students
- If the reason concerns intellectual property, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to MAPP 7.0 Responsible Conduct of Research
- If the reason concerns quality, the supervisor must articulate to the student and Graduate Chair (or designate) the quality concerns and the Graduate Chair discusses with the student their reasons for wanting to go forward without Supervisor approval and apprises the student of other options. They

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~clarify with the student (and the Supervisor) that going to defense without supervisor signature means that the Supervisor does not view the thesis as ready for examination. It is explained that the examiners will know that the Supervisor has not signed off. The student is then informed of the elevated risk of failure that is introduced when a student goes to defense without Supervisor approval. The Graduate Chair (or designate) ensures that the supervisory committee member(s) have also been consulted.~~

- ~~• If the student still chooses to submit without supervisor approval:
  - ~~• The Graduate Chair (or designate) takes on the role of the Supervisor in this process, oversees the student's progression, and attends the exam in place of the supervisor.~~~~

~~This involves making the necessary arrangements for the defense to occur, inviting the examiners, and completing the Doctoral Thesis Examination Request Form.~~

- ~~• No later than six weeks before the date of the Thesis Examination, the Doctoral candidate submits a copy of their work for preliminary examination. This is done through digital submission via the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.~~
- ~~• The Graduate Chair (or designate) attends the thesis examination and oversees the process (including all supervisory responsibilities).~~
- ~~• The Supervisor does not attend the thesis examination or the public lecture. The integrity of the process requires that a strict arms-length relationship between the External Examiner, the candidate, the Supervisor and the other members of the Examining Committee be maintained throughout the pre-exam period. The content or quality of the work must not be discussed among these people until the oral examination itself is underway.~~
- ~~• Upon completion of the oral defense, and after the student has left the room, the Thesis Examination Board is reminded that the student has submitted without the approval of the Supervisor. The Examination Chair reminds the committee to assess the oral examination and written thesis based on academic merit.~~
- ~~• The Supervisor has the right to not be recognized as the Supervisor on the published thesis.~~

### **1.5.2. Confidentiality Agreement**

~~If the candidate feels a confidentiality agreement is required, the candidate must ensure that each Examiner's signed agreement is delivered to SGPS along with the Doctoral Thesis Examination Request Form. SGPS will ensure the Chair of the Thesis Examination has signed an agreement prior to the Thesis Examination. A thesis confidentiality agreement form can be found in the SGPS thesis guide.~~

### **1.5.3. Delay of Publication**

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~Note: please see section regarding the electronic publication of theses for important information.~~

~~If a student needs to delay publication of their thesis or dissertation, they can indicate an automatic “delay of publication”, for up to two years, on their work. This option will block the work from public access after successful examination and final submission. This process is available as part of the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation submission process. When the “delay of publication” expires, the author can be granted a one-year extension through a written request to the Thesis Coordinator. Exceptionally, a candidate may request a six-year delay of publication by contacting an Associate Vice Provost within SGPS. This request requires the approval of the Policy, Regulations and Graduate Program Membership Committee of the Graduate Education Council.~~

### ~~1.6. The Examination of the Thesis and the Candidate~~

~~The Tasks of the Examiners are to:~~

- ~~• Determine if the thesis and the candidate meet recognized scholarly standards for the degree~~
- ~~• Appraise the thesis for content—its underlying assumptions, methodology, findings, and scholarly significance of the findings. This should include evaluation of the thesis in terms of its organization, presentation of graphs, tables, and illustrative materials, and its use of accepted conventions for addressing the scholarly literature~~
- ~~• Evaluate the candidate's skill and knowledge in responding to questions and defending the thesis~~
- ~~• Ensure authenticity of authorship~~
- ~~• SGPS distributes to the Examiners an electronic package via e-mail consisting of:
  - ~~○ A formal electronic invitation to examine the thesis and the candidate~~
  - ~~○ The date, time and location of the examination~~
  - ~~○ Instructions on how to access the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) repository~~
  - ~~○ The Thesis, in PDF format available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository. Only this official version of the thesis may be examined.~~
  - ~~○ The option to request the thesis in a paper format through Graphic Services. Only this official version of the thesis may be examined.~~
  - ~~○ Pertinent excerpts from the Thesis Regulation Guide~~
  - ~~○ The secure Thesis Examiner Report available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository~~
  - ~~○ Please visit the External Examiners page for appropriate forms and information.~~~~

~~The Examiners do their work in a two-stage process.~~

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

### ~~1.6.1. Stage One: The Preliminary (or Pre-Examination) Evaluation of the Thesis~~

~~Each Examiner must independently and without consultation complete the examiner's report and decide whether the thesis meets the scholarly standards for the discipline and degree.~~

~~There are two possible outcomes that the examiners may consider:~~

#### ~~1. Acceptable to go to defense with revisions~~

- ~~• **Acceptable with Revisions:** A work that requires some revisions may be judged acceptable. Revisions include limited typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation, labels for tables, nomenclature, and bibliographic form; and the need for clarification of content.~~

#### ~~2. Unacceptable to go forward to defense~~

- ~~• **Unacceptable:** A thesis judged unacceptable may contain, for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology, misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context.~~

~~The completed examiner reports are confidential to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) until the examination is completed. SGPS must receive the completed forms from all the Examiners at least five working days before the date scheduled for the candidate's Thesis Examination. The reports will be included in the chair's package and all examiner reports are shared with the Supervisor and candidate after the examination.~~

### ~~If the Written Thesis is Judged Acceptable~~

~~A majority of the Examiners must judge that the thesis is acceptable to allow Stage Two: The Thesis Examination to proceed. An Examiner's preliminary judgment of acceptability is provisional. It does not preclude the Examiner changing their judgment to finding the thesis unacceptable at the Thesis Examination.~~

### ~~If the Thesis Content and Thesis Form is Judged Unacceptable~~

~~If there is not a majority of Examiners who judge the written thesis to be acceptable, SGPS cancels the Thesis Examination, and the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) appoints a Re-Submission Hearing Committee which reviews the case, including the examiners' reports, and decides whether or not to allow the candidate to prepare a revised version of the thesis for examination and, if so, the time limit for doing so.~~

- ~~• Where the Re-Submission Hearing Committee\* agrees that the candidate should be given the opportunity to revise the thesis to bring it to the acceptable scholarly standard for examination, the committee first establishes a new Thesis Examination date, no earlier than 12 weeks after the date of the originally scheduled examination. Normally the same Examiners assess the re-submitted thesis. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and student written~~

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee.~~

~~\*The Re-Submission Hearing Committee is chaired by an Associate Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) and includes the two Program Examiners, University Examiner (the External Examiner's presence is waived), the Supervisor, the Graduate Chair of the program concerned. Note: The candidate does not attend the committee meeting.~~

- ~~• The Examination must then proceed as per the resubmission process. The Program Requests a Thesis Examination above for the re-submitted thesis.~~
- ~~• Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable, the candidate proceeds to Stage Two: The Thesis Examination. All examinations for re-submitted theses should be held in an SGPS examination room during working hours.~~

### 1.6.2. Stage Two: The Thesis Examination

~~The Chair presides over the Thesis Examination:~~

- ~~• To open proceedings, the Chair introduces all present:
  - ~~• The candidate, the Supervisor(s), the Program Examiners, and the University Examiner must attend the Thesis Examination~~
  - ~~• SGPS prefers that the External Examiner attend, however, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) may waive the presence of the External Examiner. If unable to attend, the External Examiner must submit questions to be put to the candidate by the other Examiners. Alternatively, the External Examiner may allow the other Examiners access to their report immediately before the Thesis Examination so that they can question the candidate on the issues it raises.~~
  - ~~• Any member of SGPS may attend as a visitor by having a written request to attend approved by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)~~
  - ~~• The Chair will refuse attendance to all others~~~~
- ~~• Examiners are asked to refrain from using electronic devices (cell phones) during the examination (unless in emergencies)~~
- ~~• The Chair then asks the candidate (and visitors) to leave the room so that the Examiners can decide on the following points:
  - ~~• The order in which Examiners are to question the candidate;~~
  - ~~• The number of rounds of questioning desired (usually two);~~
  - ~~• The time limit for each of the Examiners' questioning periods (typically 15-20 minutes in the first round and 5-10 minutes in the second round);~~
  - ~~• Who is to ask the questions submitted by the External Examiner if they is not present;~~~~
- ~~• The Chair gives to each Examiner a Doctoral Thesis Examination Evaluation form (to be completed when the questioning of the candidate is over and the candidate has left the room). The Chair advises the~~

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~Examiners that their evaluations on the acceptability of the written thesis should be made independent of the assessment made in Stage One: The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis.~~

- ~~• The Chair invites the candidate (and visitors) back into the room.~~

### **The Examination Begins**

- ~~• The Chair explains to the candidate the sequence of events (e.g. two rounds of questioning, the order of questioning).~~
- ~~• Where the candidate's program does not provide for a public lecture, the candidate may briefly discuss the thesis (10-15 minutes is appropriate).~~
- ~~• The Examiners question the candidate in the agreed-upon order, with the Chair holding them to the agreed-upon time limit. The Supervisor(s) may not question the candidate.~~
- ~~• When the questioning has finished, the Chair asks the candidate and visitors, but not the Supervisor(s), to leave the room.~~

### **The Thesis Examination Board Deliberates and Renders a Decision**

- ~~• The Chair invites the Supervisor(s) to comment on the candidate, the thesis, and aspects of the oral defense.~~
  - ~~• In rare cases where the thesis has been submitted without the Supervisor(s)'s approval, the Chair informs the Examiners of the Supervisor(s)'s written reasons for withholding approval, before inviting the Supervisor(s) to speak.~~
- ~~• At the Chair's invitation, the Examiners alone discuss the thesis and the oral defense.~~
- ~~• The Chair instructs the Examiners of the decisions available to them:~~
  - ~~• There are 3 possible outcomes for the thesis that the examiners may consider:~~
    - ~~• **Pass** – This indicates that the thesis is acceptable as it stands. Minor changes may be made before final submission.~~
      - ~~• Examples of such changes might include minor typographical, grammatical or formatting errors. Normally such changes should be completed within one to two weeks.~~
    - ~~• **Pass conditional upon revisions to thesis** – This indicates that required revisions must be reviewed and approved by a member of the examining committee prior to submission.~~
      - ~~• Examples of required revisions may include extensive typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation; the need for clarification or addition of content in order to meet requisite scholarly standards; some additions, deletions or editing of text; further analysis, or discussion of some data. Normally such revisions should be completed within six weeks after the examination.~~



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- ~~**Unacceptable**~~ – This indicates that the thesis cannot be submitted as it stands and would require extensive revision to reach the acceptable standard. A thesis found unacceptable proceeds to the re-submission process.
  - ~~A thesis judged unacceptable may contain, for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology, misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context.~~
- ~~There are 2 possible outcomes for the oral defense that the examiners may consider:~~
  - ~~**Acceptable**~~
  - ~~**Unacceptable**~~
- ~~The Examiners vote on the acceptability of the thesis and the oral defense by completing their Doctoral Thesis Examination Evaluation form. In cases where the External Examiner is not physically present, the Chair speaks to them privately and fills out the Evaluation form as directed.~~
- ~~These forms are confidential, only to be seen and recorded by the Chair. For the oral defense, the Examiners must determine if the candidate's responses to questions and general level of scholarly knowledge meet the standard for the Doctoral degree and are consistent with the contents of the thesis. The Examiners must decide whether the written thesis and oral defense were acceptable or unacceptable.~~
- ~~The Chair collects the completed forms and tallies the results.~~
- ~~The Chair announces the results of the vote on the acceptability of the written thesis and of the oral defense and asks if further discussion is needed. In rare instances, the Chair may allow Examiners to change their votes.~~
- ~~If a majority of the Examiners find that the thesis content is a pass and the oral defense is acceptable, the candidate passes the Thesis Examination.~~
- ~~If a majority of the Examiners find that the thesis content and the oral defense will pass conditional upon revision, the candidate has not yet passed the Thesis Examination. Upon successful acceptance of the required revisions by a designated Examiner the candidate passes the Thesis Examination.~~
- ~~If the examiners' decisions are equally split (2/2) between acceptable and unacceptable on any one of the thesis content and/or the oral defense, then the vote is weighted in favour of the external examiner's decision.~~
- ~~The Chair pronounces the Thesis Examination Board's decision.~~

### ~~When the Thesis Examination is Successful~~

- ~~On the "Doctoral Thesis Examination - Chair Report," the Chair:~~

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- ~~Reports the Thesis Examination Board's decision for the Thesis Examination.~~
- ~~Dates and signs the Chair's Report.~~
- ~~Though revisions are not required following a pass, examiners may suggest minor changes that would be beneficial, and the student is encouraged to complete such changes before final submission. The Chair is encouraged to list such changes on the Chair Report form and the Supervisor(s) may withhold signature until the changes are complete.~~
- ~~The Chair communicates the positive decision to the candidate. (See Communicating the Decision to the Candidate.)~~

### **~~When the Thesis Examination is Conditionally Successful~~**

- ~~On the "Doctoral Thesis Examination – Chair Report," the Chair:~~
  - ~~With the assistance of the Examiners, provides a detailed list of the specific revisions as agreed upon by a majority of the Examiners. The Chair's Report will be made available to the designated Examiner, the candidate, and the Supervisor, who will normally continue to support the candidate through the revision process.~~
  - ~~With the help of the examining committee, determines which Examiner(s) will review the revised thesis. The designated Examiner(s) withhold their signature(s) until the required revisions have been made. All the Examiners may receive a copy of the revised thesis to review.~~
  - ~~Dates and signs the Chair's Report.~~

### **~~When the Thesis Examination is Unsuccessful~~**

~~The Chair completes the "Doctoral Thesis Examination – Chair Report." In consultation with the Examiners, the Chair states (on the Chair report) why the thesis and/or the oral defense was unacceptable.~~

~~If the Thesis Examination failed because the thesis content was unacceptable, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Submission Hearing Committee.~~

- ~~The Re-Submission Hearing Committee reviews the case, including the examiners' reports, and decides whether or not to allow the candidate to prepare a revised version of the thesis for examination and, if so, the time limit for doing so. The committee establishes a new Thesis Examination date, no earlier than 12 weeks after the date of the originally scheduled examination. Normally the same Examiners assess the re-submitted thesis. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and student written notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee.~~
- ~~The Examination must then proceed as listed in the resubmission process. The Program Requests a Thesis Examination for the re-submitted thesis.~~



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable, the candidate proceeds to Stage Two: The Thesis Examination. All examinations for re-submitted theses should be held in an SGPS examination room during working hours.

If the Thesis Examination failed solely because of an unacceptable oral defense, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Examination Hearing Committee.

- Where the Re-Examination Hearing Committee\* decides that a second Thesis Examination is appropriate, it should be held, preferably with the same Thesis Examination Board, within a time period determined by the committee. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and student written notification of the decision. All examinations for re-submitted theses should be held in an SGPS examination room during working hours.

\* The Re-Examination Hearing Committee is chaired by an Associate Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) and includes the two Program Examiners, University Examiner (the External Examiner's presence is waived), the Supervisor, and the Graduate Chair of the program concerned. Note: The candidate does not attend the committee meeting.

If the candidate has already been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee or a Re-Examination Hearing Committee (following Stage Two: The Thesis Examination), then the Thesis Examination Board's decision is final. The candidate has no further opportunity for resubmission and/or re-examination. However, if a candidate has been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee following Stage One: The Preliminary (or Pre-Examination) Evaluation of the Thesis, then the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a second and final Re-Submission Hearing Committee.

### Communicating the Decision to the Candidate

When the Chair and the Examiners have completed the documentation, the Chair invites only the candidate back into the room and informs them of the result.

- If the thesis is passed conditional upon revision the Supervisor(s) must meet with the candidate, to ensure that he/she understands the revisions required by the Thesis Examination Board.

### Following the Examination

The Chair of the examination returns all forms to SGPS.

### 1.7. Final Submission of the Thesis

When the candidate has completed any changes recommended by the Thesis Examination Board the candidate must submit the final copy of their work via digital submission through the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~The candidate accesses their original submission within the repository and submits a revised copy of their work.~~

~~Once the thesis is published, the candidate has officially completed the thesis requirement for their degree. The candidate's name is placed on the Convocation list.~~

### **1.8. — Publishing the Thesis**

~~A thesis is a research document. It is a record of the research that the student conducted while completing a graduate degree. Given the research and education mandate of Canada's publicly funded universities, it is expected that the results of this research will be made publicly available.~~

~~For those theses that are submitted through the Scholarship@Western ETD Repository, the University requires that successful graduate theses be made available through the Western Library's Scholarship@Western program. The thesis will be published electronically at the conclusion of the degree process and will be available online globally.~~

~~At the same time, the University recognizes that the student is the author of the thesis, and retains copyright and control interests in the material.~~

~~Note: Students should be conscious of the implications of electronic publication in the digital context: material is accessible to any interested party, academic and non-academic. The thesis should also be understood to be permanently available — once published electronically, it can be withdrawn from Scholarship@Western, but digital copies will inevitably persist. Students engaging in thesis preparation and research should be mindful of electronic publication and availability as an endpoint of their research. Supervisors, equally, have a responsibility to be acquainted with the implications of electronic publication and advise their students accordingly. In certain cases, a “delay of publication” may be appropriate.~~

~~The candidate is asked to permit the release of the thesis to be used for research by signing the "National Library Non-Exclusive License" to allow the non-exclusive right to reproduce or loan copies of the thesis in microform, paper, or electronic formats. The term "non-exclusive license" means that the author retains the copyright of the thesis and can seek other forms of publication.—~~

~~Upon final approved submission, the work is published to the Scholarship@Western ETD repository, pending any requests for a delay of publication. This repository is publicly accessible, permitting free access to the work. The repository transmits regular reports via e-mail to the author on how often the work is accessed.~~

### **1.9. — Archiving of the Thesis**

~~Western preserves all doctoral theses in microform images within microfiche flat sheets formatting. These archival copies are stored within Western Libraries. Other format versions of the thesis (e.g. paper, digital) may also be retained.~~

### **2. Master's Candidate – Completion of the Thesis Degree Requirement**

Normally the entire process, from the Graduate Chair's request for a Thesis Examination to the placement of the candidate's name on the convocation list, requires approximately five weeks. For an overview of submission dates, please visit [Thesis Timelines](#).

#### **2.1. The Program Requests a Thesis Examination**

When the thesis is thought to meet recognized scholarly standards for the discipline and degree and is ready for examination, the Graduate Chair arranges a Thesis Examination by setting a proposed date and obtaining provisional consent from the potential members of the Thesis Examination Board. (The thesis Supervisor(s), Supervisory committee or the candidate alone may also initiate this process.) He/she must then submit for approval the Examination Board to SGPS, using the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form at least four working weeks before the proposed date.

#### **2.2. In-Person and Remote Examinations and Public Lectures**

The thesis examination can be held either in-person or remotely. Both In-Person Examinations, and Remote Examinations, must follow the procedures outlined in the Thesis Examination Guide.

At the time when a thesis examination is arranged, the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) determines with the Supervisor and the Candidate whether the exam will be held in-person or remotely.

##### **In-Person Examinations**

The Candidate and a Supervisor attend in-person. Normally, all thesis examiners participate in-person. Upon approval of the Candidate and Graduate Chair, one examiner may participate remotely.

##### **Remote Examinations**

The Candidate and a Supervisor attend remotely. All thesis examiners participate remotely.

##### **Public Lectures**

Public Lectures are required for PhD Examinations and optional for Master's examinations. The location of the public lecture (in-person or via zoom) will normally match the location of the examination (in-person or via zoom). In-person public lectures can include a remote component, allowing remote attendance.

##### **Programs that choose to host a remote examination assume the following responsibilities:**

- Ensuring that requests and approvals for remote examination are made in a timely manner

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- Ensuring remote attendance at public lectures (wherever possible)
- Hosting a conferencing solution in an appropriate environment that adequately supports the needs of the candidate and examiners. This includes:
  - Providing a dedicated support resource to the conference to ensure the best possible experience for all participants during the examination
  - Ensuring that a backup technology exists in the event that the primary solution fails
  - Ensuring that a list of questions from the remote examiner has been obtained in advance of the examination date and are available to the Chair of the examination (this serves as back-up in cases where the connection to the remote examiner is lost)
- Testing the remote connection with the examiner in advance of the examination

### **Examiners that wish to attend the examination remotely assume the following responsibilities:**

- Submitting intention to attend exam remotely prior to agreeing to serve as examiner
- Testing the remote connection (all equipment and backups) with the host in advance of the examination
- Submitting questions to the program and SGPS at least 48 hours in advance of the examination

### **During the thesis exam, the Chair of the examination is responsible for assuring the following requirements and procedures are satisfied:**

- All participants must be able to communicate effectively with each other at all times
- If the primary method of communication is unable to function effectively the examination Chair must determine when it is appropriate to use the pre-arranged backup technology or the submitted questions
- At the beginning of the examination, the Chair must inform the candidate and all members of the committee of the potential for suspending the exam should technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination (until the technical problems have been resolved)
- The Chair of the examination must suspend the examination if technical problems interfere with the integrity of the examination and backup options are unavailable
- The Chair of the examination must guarantee the standards of the examination have been met and the requirements have been satisfied

### **2.3. SGPS Approves the Thesis Examination Board and the Graduate Program Arranges for the Thesis Examination**

SGPS approves the Thesis Examination Board and the date of the examination. The date and time of the examination will be confirmed within the formal invitation from SGPS. Master's candidates must submit the thesis three working weeks before the approved date for the Thesis Examination. This ensures adequate time for:

- Providing access to the thesis for the Examiners

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- Examiners to read the thesis and prepare their reports
- Examiners to submit reports to SGPS

The Thesis Examination may be postponed or cancelled if any step in the examination process is not completed on schedule (e.g. the candidate fails to submit the Thesis for Examination on schedule, or the Examiners fail to submit evaluations on time) or if there is a credible allegation of a possible scholastic offence.

**Note:** The thesis defense is normally a closed event unless the student and program, by mutual agreement, request that the defense is open to the university community (e.g. faculty, academic colleagues, students).

### 2.3.1. The Thesis Examination Board

#### 2.3.1.1. Chair

The Chair is a non-voting member of the Thesis Examination Board. As the Vice-Provosts' (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) representative, the Chair presides over the thesis examination and provides leadership to ensure that the established procedures are followed. It is not appropriate for the Chair to ask the Candidate Thesis related questions during the examination period.

#### Chair Duties:

- Determines when a quorum exists
- Opens and closes the examination proceedings
- Sets the order of questioners and the length of their question periods
- Monitors the length and conduct of the candidate's presentation
- Intervenes if questioning becomes inappropriate
- Deals with behaviour that interferes with the proper conduct of the examination
- Moderates in-camera discussion on the merits of the thesis, the candidate's oral presentation and responses to questions, and other relevant matters
- Calls for a vote and recommendation
- Recalls the candidate and advises him/her of the recommendations that are to be made to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)
- Prepares a report to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) of the Examiners' assessment of the thesis and the candidate's oral performance
- 

#### Chair Qualifications:

- Must have appropriate SGPS membership

**Note:** If, at the conclusion of the defense, the candidate's supervisor, the Chair or any member of the examining committee expresses the view that there is a prima facie case for alleging that a material portion of the thesis has been plagiarized, or that there is other evidence of academic misconduct, the Chair shall withhold their signature from the examination certificate and submit the matter (together with any supporting materials) to SGPS for investigation. Where this occurs, the Chair shall, without informing

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~the candidate of the identity of the person making the relevant allegation, inform the candidate that an allegation of academic misconduct has been made. The Chair shall also inform the candidate that an investigation into the matter will be conducted.~~

### ~~2.3.1.2. Two Program Examiners~~

#### ~~Role:~~

- ~~• Attend the Thesis Examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating the thesis and the candidate's responses at the oral defense~~
- ~~• Cast a vote in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense~~

#### ~~Regulations:~~

- ~~• Must have appropriate SGPS membership~~
- ~~• No more than one Program Examiner may be from the candidate's Thesis Supervisory Committee~~
- ~~• Must not have had significant involvement in the development of the thesis nor interest in the outcome~~

### ~~2.3.1.3. University Examiner~~

#### ~~Role:~~

- ~~• The University Examiner brings to the thesis examination insights from outside the candidate's discipline~~
- ~~• They must have knowledge in the general field of the thesis, but need not be an expert on the thesis topic~~
- ~~• Attend the Thesis Examination and participate in the questioning of the candidate, evaluating both the thesis and the candidate's responses at the oral defense~~
- ~~• Cast a vote in the final determination of the acceptability of the thesis and oral defense~~

#### ~~Regulations:~~

- ~~• Must have appropriate SGPS membership~~
- ~~• They must not be a member of the candidate's Thesis Supervisory Committee, or a member of the Supervisor's home program~~
- ~~• Where the program unit is a Faculty, the University Examiner must not be from the candidate's or Supervisor's home Department~~

~~Where the University Examiner is from a unit that does not have a Graduate program, or from outside the University, the Graduate Chair of the candidate's program must nominate them for Teaching/Advisory membership in SGPS~~

### ~~2.3.2. Arm's-Length Examiners~~

~~Examiners must be seen to be able to examine the student and the thesis at arm's-length, free of substantial conflict of interest from any source. The test of~~

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

whether or not a conflict of interest might exist is whether a reasonable outside person could consider a situation to exist that could give rise to an apprehension of bias. Co-authors or collaborators of any component of the thesis may not serve as Examiners.

Relationships that might appear to have a conflict of interest include:

- The involvement of an Examiner with the candidate or Supervisor in a personal capacity, such as:
  - A spouse or partner
  - A close family member
  - A business partner
  - Having previous, current, or future negotiations relating to employment

This list, while not exhaustive, illustrates the nature of potential conflicts to be avoided. The candidate's program must take reasonable steps to avoid recommending an Examiner whose relationship with the candidate or Supervisor could be seen as jeopardizing an impartial judgment on the thesis. Best practices include reviewing the potential examiner's CV; having the graduate committee members review the list of names nominated as examiners; and conducting a literature search on potential examiner's publications. It is recommended that supervisors and programs avoid multiple use of the same examiners.

A faculty member asked to examine a thesis should declare possible sources of conflict.

### 2.4. The Candidate Submits the Thesis for Examination

No later than three weeks before the date of the Thesis Examination, the Master's candidate submits a final draft of the thesis for preliminary examination. This is done through digital submission via the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository:

- In addition to the thesis, the candidate must ensure the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form is forwarded to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies:

In those rare cases when the student chooses to submit a Thesis for Examination without the approval of the Supervisor(s), the Supervisor(s) must state on the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form why their approval is withheld. The Graduate Chair signs the form and provides the candidate with a copy of the Supervisor(s)'s stated reasons for withholding approval.

Once the thesis has been officially submitted for examination, it cannot be withdrawn except with the permission of the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). The version which has been submitted to and circulated from the SGPS repository is the only version that the committee can examine. No other copies are to be circulated or examined.

#### 2.4.1. The Candidate Submits the Thesis for Examination without the Approval of the Supervisor

In those cases where the student chooses to submit a Thesis for Examination without the approval of the Supervisor(s), the following processes are followed:



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~The student notifies the Graduate Chair and the Supervisor. The Graduate Chair discusses with the Supervisor their reasons for not approving submission of the thesis.~~

~~If the reason concerns academic integrity, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to the Academic Policy on Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students.~~

~~If the reason concerns intellectual property, then the appropriate procedures are followed according to MAPP 7.0 Responsible Conduct of Research.~~

~~If the reason concerns quality, the supervisor must articulate to the student and Graduate Chair (or designate) the quality concerns and the Graduate Chair discusses with the student her/his reasons for wanting to go forward without Supervisor approval and apprises the student of other options. She/he clarifies with the student (and the Supervisor) that going to defense without supervisor signature means that the Supervisor does not view the thesis as ready for examination. It is explained that the examiners will know that the Supervisor has not signed off. The student is then informed of the elevated risk of failure that is introduced when a student goes to defense without Supervisor approval. The Graduate Chair (or designate) ensures that the supervisory committee member(s) have also been consulted.~~

~~If the student still chooses to submit without supervisor approval:~~

- ~~• The Graduate Chair (or designate) takes on the role of the Supervisor in this process and oversees the student's progression.~~

~~This involves making the necessary arrangements for the defense to occur, completing the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form, inviting the examiners, and completing the Thesis Examining Board Form.~~

- ~~• No later than six weeks before the date of the Thesis Examination, the candidate submits a copy of their work for preliminary examination. This is done through digital submission via the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository.~~
- ~~• The Graduate Chair (or designate) attends the thesis examination and oversees the process (including all supervisor responsibilities).~~
- ~~• The Supervisor does not attend the thesis examination or the public lecture. The integrity of the process requires that a strict arms-length relationship between the candidate, the Supervisor and the other members of the Examining Committee be maintained throughout the pre-exam period. The content or quality of the work must not be discussed among these people until the oral examination itself is underway.~~
- ~~• Upon completion of the oral defense, and after the student has left the room, the Thesis Examination Board is reminded that the student has submitted without the approval of the Supervisor. The Examination Chair reminds the committee to assess the oral examination and written thesis based on academic merit.~~



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~The Supervisor has the right to not be recognized as the Supervisor on the published thesis.~~

### **~~2.4.2. Confidentiality Agreement~~**

~~If the candidate feels a confidentiality agreement is required, the candidate must ensure that each Examiner's signed agreement is delivered to SGPS along with the Master's Thesis Examination Request Form. The Graduate Program will ensure the Chair of the Thesis Examination has signed an agreement prior to the Thesis Examination. A thesis confidentiality agreement form can be found in the SGPS thesis guide.~~

### **~~2.4.3. Delay of Publication~~**

~~Note: please see section regarding the electronic publication of theses for important information.~~

~~If a student needs to delay publication of their thesis or dissertation, they can indicate an automatic "delay of publication", for up to two years, on their work. This option will block the work from public access after successful examination and final submission. This process is available as part of the Scholarship@Western~~

~~Electronic Thesis and Dissertation submission process. When the "delay of publication" expires, the author can be granted a one-year extension through a written request to the Thesis Coordinator.~~

~~Exceptionally, a candidate may request a six-year delay of publication by contacting an Associate Vice-Provost within SGPS. This request requires the approval of the Policy, Regulations and Graduate Program Membership Committee of the Graduate Education Council.~~

## **~~2.5. The Examination of the Thesis and the Candidate~~**

~~The Tasks of the Examiners are to:~~

- ~~• Determine if the thesis and the candidate meet recognized scholarly standards for the degree~~
- ~~• Appraise the thesis for content – its underlying assumptions, methodology, findings, and scholarly significance of the findings. This should include evaluation of the thesis in terms of its organization, presentation of graphs, tables, and illustrative materials, and its use of accepted conventions for addressing the scholarly literature~~
- ~~• Evaluate the candidate's skill and knowledge in responding to questions and defending the thesis~~
- ~~• Ensure authenticity of authorship~~

~~SGPS distributes to the Examiners an electronic package via e-mail consisting of:~~

- ~~• A formal invitation to examine the thesis and the candidate~~
- ~~• The date, time and location of the examination~~
- ~~• Instructions on how to access the Scholarship@Western ETD repository~~

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- The thesis, in PDF format available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository. Only this official version of the thesis may be examined.
- The option to request the thesis in a paper format through Graphic Services. Only this official version of the thesis may be examined.
- Pertinent excerpts from the Thesis Regulation Guide
- The secure Thesis Examiner Report available through the Scholarship@Western ETD repository

The Examiners do their work in a two-stage process.

### **2.5.1. Stage One: The Preliminary (or Pre-Examination) Evaluation of the Thesis**

Each Examiner must independently and without consultation complete the examiner's report and decide whether the thesis meets the scholarly standards for the discipline and degree.

There are two possible outcomes that the examiners may consider:

1. Acceptable to go to defense with revisions
  - A work that requires some revisions may be judged acceptable. Revisions include limited typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation, labels for tables, nomenclature, and bibliographic form; and the need for clarification of content.
2. Unacceptable to go forward to defense
  - A thesis judged unacceptable may contain, for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology, misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context.

The completed examiner reports are confidential to the Vice Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) until the examination is completed. SGPS must receive the completed forms from all the Examiners at least five working days before the date scheduled for the candidate's Thesis Examination. The reports will be included in the chair's package and all examiner reports are shared with the Supervisor and candidate after the examination.

#### **If the Written Thesis is Judged Acceptable**

A majority of the Examiners must judge that thesis content is acceptable to allow Stage Two: The Thesis Examination to proceed. An examiner's preliminary judgment of acceptability is provisional. It does not preclude the examiner changing their judgment to finding the thesis unacceptable at the Thesis Examination.

- For those reports collected via the ETD repository, SGPS will forward the preliminary decision to the candidate, examiners, supervisor(s), graduate chair and graduate assistant.

#### **If the Written Thesis is Judged Unacceptable**

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

If there is not a majority of Examiners who judge the written thesis to be acceptable, the Program cancels the Thesis Examination, and the Graduate Chair of the Program concerned appoints a Re-Submission Hearing Committee\* which reviews the case including the examiners' reports, and decides whether or not to allow the candidate to prepare a revised version of the thesis for examination and, if so, the time limit for doing so.

\* The Re-Submission Hearing Committee is chaired by the Graduate Chair of the program concerned and includes the three Examiners, the Supervisor, and others specified in the procedures of the program concerned. Note: The candidate does not attend the committee meeting.

- The Re-Submission Hearing Committee reviews the case, including the examiners' reports, and decides whether or not to allow the candidate to prepare a revised version of the thesis for examination and, if so, the time limit for doing so. The committee establishes a new Thesis Examination date, no earlier than six weeks after the date of the originally scheduled examination. Normally the same Examiners assess the re-submitted thesis. The Chair of the committee provides the Supervisor(s) and student written notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee.
- The Examination must then proceed as listed in the resubmission process—The Program Requests a Thesis Examination for the re-submitted thesis.
- Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable, the candidate proceeds to Stage Two: The Thesis Examination.

### 2.5.2. Stage Two: The Thesis Examination

#### Who attends the Master's Thesis Examination

- The candidate, the Supervisor(s), the Program Examiners, and the University Examiner must attend the Thesis Examination
- Any member of SGPS may attend as a visitor by having a written request approved by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) seven days before the examination date
- The chair will refuse attendance to all others

#### The Chair presides over the Thesis Examination

- To open proceedings, the Chair introduces all present.
- Examiners are asked to refrain from using electronic devices (cell phones) during the examination (unless in emergencies)
- The Chair then asks the candidate and visitors to leave the room so that the Examiners can decide on the following points:
  - the order in which Examiners are to question the candidate
  - the number of rounds of questioning desired (usually two)
  - the time limit for each of the Examiners' questioning periods (typically 15-20 minutes in the first round and 5-10 minutes in the second round);

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- The Chair gives to each examiner a "Master's Thesis Examination Evaluation Form" (to be completed when the questioning of the candidate is over and the candidate has left the room). The Chair advises the Examiners that their evaluations on the acceptability of the thesis content should be made independent of the assessment made in Stage One: The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis.
- The Chair invites the candidate and visitors back into the room.

### The Examination Begins

- The Chair explains to the candidate the sequence of events (e.g. two rounds of questioning, the order of questioning).
- The Examiners question the candidate in the agreed-upon order, with the Chair holding them to the agreed-upon time limit. The Supervisor(s) may not question the candidate.
- When the questioning has finished, the Chair asks the candidate and visitors, but not the Supervisor(s), to leave the room.

### The Thesis Examination Board Deliberates and Renders a Decision

- The Chair invites the Supervisor(s) to comment on the candidate, the thesis, and aspects of the oral defense.
  - In rare cases where the thesis has been submitted without the Supervisor(s)'s approval, the Chair informs the Examiners of the Supervisor(s)'s written reasons for withholding approval, before inviting the Supervisor(s) to speak.
- At the Chair's invitation, the Examiners alone discuss the thesis and the oral defense.
- The Chair instructs the Examiners once again about the difference between acceptable, acceptable with revisions and unacceptable and answers any questions about the difference between the recommendation. (See Section Stage One: The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis)
- The Examiners vote on the acceptability of the thesis and the oral defense by completing their "Master's Thesis Examination Evaluation Form." These forms are confidential, only to be seen and recorded by the Chair.

The Examiners must render a decision on the thesis content and oral defense. For thesis content there are three possible outcomes to the Examination that the examiners may consider:

- **Pass** - This indicates that the thesis is acceptable as it stands. Minor changes may be made before final submission.
  - Examples of such changes might include minor typographical, grammatical or formatting errors. Normally such changes should be completed within 1-2 weeks.

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- ~~**Pass conditional upon revisions to thesis**~~—This indicates that required revisions must be reviewed and approved by a member of the examining committee prior to submission.
  - ~~Examples of required revisions may include extensive typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation; the need for clarification or addition of content in order to meet requisite scholarly standards; some additions, deletions or editing of text; further analysis, or discussion of some data. Normally such revisions should be completed within six weeks after the examination.~~
- ~~**Unacceptable**~~—This indicates that the thesis cannot be submitted as it stands and would require extensive revision to reach the acceptable standard. A thesis found unacceptable proceeds to the re-submission process.
  - ~~A thesis judged unacceptable may contain, for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology, misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context.~~

~~For the oral defense, the Examiners must determine if the candidate's responses to questions and general level of scholarly knowledge meet the standard for the Master's degree and are consistent with the contents of the thesis.~~

- ~~The Chair collects the completed forms and tallies the results.~~
- ~~The Chair announces the results of the vote on the acceptability of the content of the thesis and of the oral defense and asks if further discussion is needed. In rare instances, the Chair may allow Examiners to change their votes.~~
- ~~The Chair pronounces the Thesis Examination Board's decision.~~
- ~~If a majority of the Examiners find that the thesis content is a pass and the oral defense is acceptable, the candidate passes the Thesis Examination.~~
- ~~If a majority of the Examiners find that the thesis content and the oral defense will pass conditional upon revision, the candidate has not yet passed the Thesis Examination. Upon successful acceptance of the required revisions by a designated Examiner the candidate passes the Thesis Examination.~~

### **When the Thesis Examination is Successful**

- ~~On the "Master's Thesis Examination – Chair Report" the Chair:~~
  - ~~Reports the Thesis Examination Board's decision for the Thesis Examination.~~
  - ~~Dates and signs both pages of the Chair's Report.~~
- ~~Though revisions are not required following a successful defense, examiners may suggest minor changes that would be beneficial, and the student is encouraged to complete such changes before final~~

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

~~submission. The Chair is encouraged to list such changes on the Chair report form and the Supervisor(s) may withhold signature until the changes are complete.~~

- ~~• The Chair communicates the positive decision to the candidate. (See Communicating the Decision to the Candidate.)~~

### **~~When the Thesis Examination is Conditionally Successful~~**

- ~~• On the "Master's Thesis Examination - Chair Report," the Chair:~~
  - ~~• With the assistance of the Examiners, provides a detailed list of the specific revisions as agreed upon by a majority of the Examiners. The Chair's Report will be made available to the designated Examiner, the candidate, and the Supervisor, who will normally continue to support the candidate through the revision process.~~
  - ~~• With the help of the examining committee, determines which Examiner(s) will review the revised thesis. The designated Examiner(s) withhold their signature(s) until the required revisions have been made. All the Examiners may receive a copy of the revised thesis to review.~~
  - ~~• Dates and signs the Chair's Report.~~

### **~~When the Thesis Examination is Unsuccessful~~**

- ~~• The Chair completes the "Master's Thesis Examination - Chair Report." In consultation with the Examiners, the Chair (on the Chair report) states why the thesis and/or the oral defense was unacceptable~~
- ~~• If the Thesis Examination failed because the thesis content was unacceptable, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Submission Hearing Committee.~~
- ~~• Where the Re-Submission Hearing Committee agrees that the candidate should be given the opportunity to revise the thesis to bring it to the acceptable scholarly standard for examination, the committee first establishes a new Thesis Examination date, no earlier than six weeks after the date of the originally scheduled examination. Normally the same Examiners assess the re-submitted thesis. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and candidate written notification of the decision and the changes suggested by the committee~~
- ~~• The Examination must then proceed as listed in Section 5.1 The Program Requests a Thesis Examination for the re-submitted thesis~~
- ~~• Whether or not the re-submitted thesis is found acceptable, the candidate proceeds to Stage Two: The Thesis Examination~~

~~If the Thesis Examination failed solely because of an unacceptable oral defense, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a Re-Examination Hearing Committee:~~



## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

- Where the Re-Examination Hearing Committee\* decides that a second Thesis Examination is appropriate, it should be held, preferably with the same Thesis Examination Board, within a time period determined by the committee. The Chair of the committee provides the Graduate Chair, Supervisor(s), and candidate written notification of the decision. All examinations for re-submitted theses should be held in an SGPS examination room during working hours.
- \*Re-Examination Hearing Committee is chaired by the Graduate Chair of the program concerned and includes the three Examiners, the Supervisor(s), and others specified in the procedures of the program concerned. Note: The candidate does not attend the committee meeting

If the candidate has already been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee or a Re-Examination Hearing Committee (following Stage Two: The Thesis Examination), then the Thesis Examination Board's decision is final. The candidate has no further opportunity for resubmission and/or re-examination. However, if a candidate has been through a Re-Submission Hearing Committee following Stage One: The Preliminary (or Pre-Examination) Evaluation of the Thesis, then the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) refers the case to a second and final Re-Submission Hearing Committee.

### Communicating the Decision to the Candidate

When the Chair and the Examiners have completed the documentation, the Chair invites only the candidate back into the room and informs him/her of the result.

- If the thesis is passed conditional upon revision, the Supervisor(s) must meet with the candidate, to ensure that they understands the revisions required by the Thesis Examination Board

### Following the Examination

The Chair of the Examination returns all forms to the graduate program office.

### 2.6. Final Submission of the Thesis

When the candidate has completed any changes recommended by the Thesis Examination Board the candidate must submit the final copy of their work via digital submission through the Scholarship@Western Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository:

The candidate accesses their original submission within the repository and submits a revised copy of their work.

Once the thesis is published, the candidate has officially completed the thesis requirement for their degree. The candidate's name is placed on the convocation list.

### Publication of the Thesis

A thesis is a research document. It is a record of the research that the student conducted while completing a graduate degree. Given the research and education

## Procedure for Thesis Examinations and Final Submission

mandate of Canada's publicly funded universities, it is expected that the results of this research will be made publicly available.

~~For those theses that are submitted through the Scholarship@Western ETD Repository, the~~ The University requires that successful graduate theses be made available through the Western Library's Scholarship@Western ~~program portal~~. The thesis will be published electronically at the conclusion of the degree process, and will be available ~~online~~ globally via the internet.

At the same time, the University recognizes that the student is the author of the thesis, and retains copyright and control interests in the material.

~~Note:~~ Students should be conscious of the implications of electronic publication in the digital context: material is accessible to any interested party, academic and non-academic. The record thesis should also be understood to be permanently available – once published electronically, it can be withdrawn from Scholarship@Western, but digital copies will inevitably persist. Students engaging in thesis preparation and research should be mindful of electronic publication and availability as an endpoint of their research work. Supervisors, equally, have a responsibility to be acquainted with the implications of electronic publication, and advise their students accordingly.

In certain cases, a “delay of publication” may be appropriate. See section XX above. ~~The candidate is asked to permit the release of the thesis to be used for research and also to agree to allow the non-exclusive right to reproduce or loan copies of the thesis in micro-form, paper, or electronic formats. The term "non-exclusive license" means that the author retains the copyright of the thesis and can seek other forms of publication.~~

Upon final approved submission, the work is published to the Scholarship@Western ETD repository, pending any requests for a delay of publication. This repository is publicly accessible, permitting free access to the work. The repository transmits regular reports via e-mail to the author on how often the work is accessed.



## **EXHIBIT 5.2 – Revisions to the Policy on Registration**

**ACTION:** ☒ APPROVAL ☐ INFORMATION ☐ DISCUSSION

**Recommended:** That the Graduate Education Council (GEC) approve and recommend to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy (Policy) that effective November 8, 2024, the Senate Policy on Registration be revised as presented in Exhibit 5.2

### **BACKGROUND:**

The current policy requires revision each time a program adds or removes a part-time option or when a new program with a part-time option is created. Currently, programs offering part-time options are listed on the Program's page section of the SGPS website. Any changes to a program's part-time registration status must undergo a “major modification” process as defined by the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), which necessitates approvals from SUPR-G, ACA, and the Senate.

Listing part-time programs within the policy itself is redundant and poses a risk of error and confusion for students if updates are not made promptly. To ensure accuracy and reduce administrative burden, we recommend removing the specific listing of part-time programs from the policy. Instead, part-time program offerings should be maintained and regularly updated on the SGPS website. This change will streamline the process, minimize the potential for outdated information, and improve clarity for students.

### **PRIMARY CONTACT:**

K. Siddiqui, Vice Provost, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

### **CONSULTATION AND RESULTS:**

Approved by the Graduate Education Council (GEC) - **DATE**

Approved by the Graduate Education Council (GEC) Academic Policy Committee – September 17, 2024

K. Siddiqui, Vice Provost, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
Associate Vice Provosts, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

**ATTACHMENT(S)** Registration

## Registration

<b>Policy Category:</b>	Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
<b>Subject:</b>	Registration
<b>Subsections:</b>	<a href="#">Initial Registration</a> ; <a href="#">Registration Requirements</a> ; <a href="#">Categories of Registration</a> ; <a href="#">Transfer from Master's to Doctoral Degree Status in a Program</a> ; <a href="#">Leave of Absence</a> ; <a href="#">Student Progress and Withdrawal</a> ; <a href="#">Admission After Withdrawal</a>
<b>Approving Authority:</b>	Senate
<b>Responsible Committee:</b>	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
<b>Related Procedures:</b>	Procedure for Registration
<b>Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:</b>	Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies)
<b>Related Policies:</b>	*
<b>Effective Date:</b>	March 15, 2024 November 8, 2024
<b>Supersedes:</b>	May 17, 2024; March 15, 2024; September 16, 2022

### 1. Initial Registration

A candidate whose application for admission has been approved by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) must register in the term indicated on the "Offer of Admission". In exceptional circumstances, registration may be deferred for one term, with approval of the program and SGPS. The candidate should consult the appropriate program for details about registration.

## 2. Registration Requirements

### a) Continuous Registration

Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in the SGPS in each successive term from initial registration until all requirements for the degree are completed.

### b) Maximum Registration Period

The maximum registration period for completing a Master's degree is three calendar years from initial registration and, in the case of a Doctoral degree, six calendar years from initial registration. For students who transfer from a Master's program to a Doctoral program without completing the Master's program or Direct-Entry to a Doctoral program, a maximum of seven calendar years from the initial registration in the Master's program or Doctoral program (Direct Entry) will be given to complete the Doctoral degree. For students admitted part-time to an approved part-time Master's program, the maximum registration period is four years.

The student will be withdrawn at the end of his or her maximum registration time limit unless the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) has approved an extension.

## 3. Categories of Registration

### a) Full-Time Student

To be registered as a full-time student, a student must meet the following criteria:

- make satisfactory progress toward degree completion in alignment with full-time program expectations and requirements. Failure to meet progression requirements may result in being required to withdraw from the program.
- be present on campus as required by their program
- have paid, or make arrangements to pay, full-time tuition fees.

### b) Part-Time Student in Approved Part-Time Program

Students may be admitted as part-time students in approved part-time programs ~~(listed below)~~ as stipulated in the program's regulations. During the course of study, and with the approval of the program and SGPS, such a part-time registrant may be approved to register as a full-time student; they may then register as a part-time student at a later date by meeting the requirements as stipulated in (c) below. Students who begin as full-time students in programs that have an approved part-time course of study may only change to part-time registration as stipulated in (c) below.

Students registered part-time may take no more than two courses in a term. Undergraduate courses taken as extra courses or as degree requirements are to be included in the totals above.

~~Students can enroll part-time in the following established part-time programs:~~

- ~~• Computer Science MSc~~
- ~~• Education MEd~~
- ~~• Engineering Sciences MEng~~
- ~~• Epidemiology and Biostatistics MSc~~
- ~~• Family Medicine MGIsc & PhD~~
- ~~• Foods and Nutrition MScFN – Thesis Stream~~
- ~~• Law LL.M~~
- ~~• Library and Information Science MLIS~~
- ~~• Media Studies MA~~
- ~~• Music MMus (Music Education)~~
- ~~• Nursing MScN~~
- ~~• Master of Nursing~~
- ~~• Pathology and Laboratory Medicine MSc & PhD~~
- ~~• Public Administration MPA~~
- ~~• Theology MA (Huron University College)~~

### c) **Part-Time Students in Full-Time Programs**

Part-time registration in full-time programs may be granted in exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of both the Graduate Program and the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). Examples of such circumstances are: admission to another full-time university program or medical or compassionate circumstances that make it impossible for the student to continue to devote full-time attention to their program of study. Supporting documentation must be submitted with the request for part-time status.

Part-time status is not to be used as a means for reducing or avoiding tuition fees. Being beyond the funding eligibility period will not, by itself, constitute grounds for a change from full-time to part-time status. Part-time status may be granted for up to a cumulative total of three terms.

Students registered part-time may take no more than two courses in a term. Undergraduate courses taken as extra courses or as degree requirements are to be included in the totals above.

### d) **Thesis Defense Only Student**

The purpose of this status is to allow a student who: a) has completed all program requirements (including thesis submission), but b) has not been able to defend their thesis before the end of term, to register at the University in the subsequent term without paying tuition fees. Thesis Defense Only registration (TDO) can be held for only one term.

- This registration category will not require payment of tuition fees; however, students will be required to pay part-time ancillary fees.

- In order to be considered for TDO status students must upload their thesis electronically.
- TDO status will be granted to those students who have submitted a thesis by the final official day of term but have not been able to secure an examination board and/or examination date that falls before the end of the term.
- Programs are required to inform SGPS as soon as possible (and in any case no less than 10 working days before the last working day of the term) when a thesis examination will need to be scheduled into the subsequent term.
- The thesis examination must be successfully completed, all required revisions done, and the final thesis submitted to SGPS prior to the end of the TDO term. A student who does not meet these conditions will be required to pay part-time tuition for the TDO term and will continue to be registered until the final thesis is submitted.
- TDO applies only to students in programs that have a thesis requirement.
- A student will be given TDO status for no more than one term.
- When the thesis examination is unsuccessful at either the preliminary or examination stages, the student will not have met the TDO conditions and will be required to pay part-time tuition and fees for the TDO term.

**e) Non-degree Part-time Student**

Non-degree part-time students must meet normal admission requirements. If a student in this category is subsequently admitted to a degree program, no more than 20% of the course requirements for the degree may be credited from courses taken while a non-degree student. Non-degree part-time students are not required to maintain continuous registration. For each term in which they are registered, however, they must inform their Graduate Chair before the start of the next term whether they plan to take courses during that term or whether they plan to withdraw. Without withdrawal, they will receive a tuition bill for the following term, as if they were in a degree program. Once withdrawn, they must apply for readmission to resume their non-degree part-time studies. In such cases, SGPS waives the readmission fee.

**f) Concurrent Degree Student**

Students in the following programs will be registered in both programs and are eligible to receive degrees in each:

- MD-PhD
- MBA-LLB in Business and Law

**g) Doctoral Flex-time Registration**

Students must select flex-time registration prior to commencing their program of study and cannot alter their registration status once selected.\* Students enrolled in flex-time studies pay full-time tuition fees for the first four years of their registration, and part-time fees until they complete their program. As the flex-time option is intended for working professionals, Western's doctoral funding guarantee does not apply to students in flex-time studies. Flex-time enrolment

will normally require two additional years of study for students to complete the program, in comparison to students in a regular full-time enrolment status. Completion within six to eight years while in flex-time enrolment is expected.

\*Please note that the flex-time registration option is available only for doctoral programs with an approved flex-time option.

### h) **Interdisciplinary Combined PhD**

A Western Interdisciplinary Combined PhD entails the completion of the combined degree requirements of two Western doctoral programs simultaneously under the supervision of a faculty member from each program.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

**Home Program:** For the purposes of the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Agreement Form, “Home Program” will refer to the graduate program that has administrative responsibility for the student, including providing work/office space, assignment of GTAs, completion of annual progress reports, etc. The Home Program is also the “fall-back” program in the event that the student wishes to discontinue in the combined option.

**Partnering Program:** For the purposes of the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Agreement Form, “Partnering Program” will refer to the second graduate program.

### i. **Program Structure**

- The student shall have two supervisors – one supervisor with doctoral membership in each graduate program. In exceptional circumstances, a single supervisor, with doctoral membership in both programs may be approved by SGPS, conditional upon the supervisory committee representing both programs.
- One of the two programs will be identified as the “Home Program” for the purpose of registration and administration.
- Programs are encouraged to “share” or “merge” some of their usual requirements. For example, a required course in one program can also be counted as an optional or elective course in the second program.
- One thesis is to be completed; the thesis must meet the expectations of both programs, the content of the thesis should represent a blending of the disciplines.
- The composition of the examining board for the dissertation will include representation of both participating programs and disciplines. Some variation from the usual PhD Examination Board structure may be needed to achieve this; such variation must be approved by SGPS.
- The student's individual program (structured to support completion in 4 years) must be determined and agreed upon by the two programs normally no later than by the second term, including:

- All courses to be completed to meet the learning outcomes of both programs
- The nature and timing of comprehensive(s) to satisfy both programs (if feasible, the comprehensive exam requirements of the two programs can be merged into one exam)
- Any additional milestones required to meet the learning outcomes of both programs
- The topic of the dissertation/research

### ii. **Inclusion on Transcripts and Degrees**

- One degree/parchment will be awarded; it will list both graduate programs.
- The student's transcript will note registration in both graduate programs, with one degree awarded upon completion of all requirements.
- The student's transcript will read under "Academic Program History":
  - Program: Home Program
  - Plan: Interdisciplinary Combined Doctor of Philosophy
  - Home Program and Partnering Program
  - Status: Active in Program (or later, "Completed Program")
- The final degree awarded will appear on the parchment as: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, Home Program and Partnering Program

## 4. **Transfer From Master's to Doctoral Degree Status in a Program**

Programs may allow students to transfer their registration from the Master's to the Doctoral degree within the same program, without completion of the Master's degree. The Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) will consider such requests on the recommendation of the student's program.

Transfers from the Master's to the Doctoral program must take place before the sixth term of Master's registration.

## 5. **Leave of Absence**

The Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) may grant a leave of absence on pregnancy/parental, medical or compassionate grounds normally to a maximum of three terms or 12 months, on the recommendation of the program.

When recommending a leave of absence to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), programs should contact SGPS about any academic considerations for outstanding coursework.

While on leave, students are expected to be away from normal activities as graduate students (e.g. attending classes, conducting research). However, students and supervisors may negotiate ongoing communication during this period. Before the end of the approved leave of absence, students notify the Graduate Chair/Director, the Graduate Assistant and, where relevant, the Supervisor(s), to discuss the transition



back to their studies. If students are applying for an additional leave of absence, it is important that the program and SGPS be notified as soon as possible.

To ensure that they are optimally supported throughout their degree, students requiring leaves of absence that extend beyond three terms are encouraged to communicate with programs about potential professional, academic or research implications of the extended period away from their studies.

The start and finish of the leave may begin or end at any point in the term; normally the leave will coincide with the start and end of terms. Students are advised to consult with their graduate program to make special arrangements especially if taking courses during this period.

The date for degree completion and funding of the degree program will be extended by the duration of the time taken on leave, i.e. one, two or three terms as appropriate.

**a) Pregnancy and/or Parental**

Pregnancy/Parental Leave is intended to recognize the need for leave at the time of pregnancy, birth or adoption, and to permit a pause in studies in order to provide full-time care in the first year of parenting a new child. Either parent may request up to three terms of leave, which must be started within twelve months of the date of birth or custody.

Provided the student has been a registered full-time graduate student for at least one term and is not receiving additional Tri-Agency benefits, they are entitled to a \$1,500 pregnancy and parental bursary per leave.

During a Pregnancy/Parental leave international students can opt into UHIP for up to 12 months.

**b) Medical**

Graduate students may apply for a medical leave by providing a Medical Certificate completed by a health care practitioner. During a Medical leave, international students can opt into UHIP for four months in a 12-month leave period. It is possible to extend UHIP for another four months subject to the approval of the insurance provider.

**c) Compassionate**

Graduate students may apply for a compassionate leave for care and support of a seriously ill family member. This leave is not intended to cover circumstances related to travel, employment or other financial concerns.

**d) Internship**

Graduate students in programs without an internship requirement who secure an internship through Western's Internship Program may apply for an internship leave.

Students may apply for a leave of absence by completing an online request via the Graduate Student Web Services Portal. The request is then reviewed by the graduate program. If approved by the program, it is reviewed by SGPS.

Once on leave, students are not registered with the University nor will they be required to pay tuition and ancillary fees for this period; however, they are entitled to receive/maintain certain benefits as described in the related Procedures.

**6. Withdrawal**

The Graduate Chair of a program:

- Must approve the student's plan of study
- Must ensure the preparation and filing of an annual progress report for each student

Graduate faculty must provide students with timely feedback on courses, examinations, or other requirements.

The program may require students to withdraw if they fail to meet the following standards:

- Students must maintain a cumulative average of at least 70% calculated each term over all courses taken for credit, with no grade less than 60%
- Students must make satisfactory progress towards the degree according to milestones set by the program

Withdrawal from a program can occur in two ways. A student can voluntarily withdraw, following formal notification to the program. Alternatively, the program or SGPS can withdraw a student for failure to meet admission conditions, progression requirements, specified deadlines for completion, or failure to pay fees. Once withdrawn from a program (and SGPS), the person withdrawn is no longer a student and may not attend classes, receive supervision, or have access to any resources of the University.

**7. Admission After Withdrawal**

Students who have voluntarily withdrawn or who have been withdrawn and wish to complete their program must formally re-apply for admission. Credit for previous work completed must be approved by the program and SGPS.

Students who are withdrawn for non-payment of fees will be considered for admission under the following payment conditions:

- Any student who has withdrawn or has been withdrawn may be required to pay fees for the terms in which registration has lapsed if admitted.
- Payment of all fees owing at the time of withdrawal including all penalty fees incurred as a result of the default
- Prepayment of full fees for the term in which admission is sought
- These payments must be money order, cash, direct debit, or certified cheque

### **8. Time Away From Studies and Vacation Time**

Full-time graduate students in research-based programs are expected to be active in their program for all three terms of the university year, as specified in Section 2. While engaging in their program, we recognize that personal time (i.e. time away from studies) is beneficial for student health, well-being and academic achievement. It is acceptable and expected that Supervisors, Supervisory Committee Members and Graduate Chairs will discuss expectations around students' study and research schedules; they will mentor students and support their need for time off and their pursuit of work/life balance. Time away from studies must take into account the impact on timely progression and the impact on research and other responsibilities.

It is expected that students devote a reasonable number of hours each weekday to study and to research. It is acceptable for students to take days off. In making these time management decisions, it is expected that students will learn to discern when time away from studies supports academic productivity, and when it undermines timely progression.

Graduate Chairs are encouraged to ensure that both student and supervisor needs and expectations are met. See SGPS Regulation regarding supervisor expectations.

In addition to the above, students are entitled to be away from their studies and research responsibilities during:

- the closing of the University from late December until early January
- statutory holidays when the University is closed
- religious holidays in accordance with University policy

Graduate students are also entitled to at least two weeks of vacation time from their studies per year.

FACULTY / SCHOOL / AFFILIATED UNIVERSITY COLLEGE	OFFENCE TYPE	TOTAL OFFENCES BY TYPE	SANCTIONS IMPOSED
School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies	<i>Plagiarism</i>	Arts & Humanities (3) Arts & Humanities (1) Social Science (1) Science (1) Ivey (1)  Ivey (1)  Ivey (4)  Ivey (3) Ivey (1) Ivey (3)  Ivey (2)  TOTAL: 21	-Rewrite assignment -Failure of course (2 <sup>nd</sup> offence) -Revise and resubmit milestone -Grade penalty on plagiarized portions -Grade of 0% on assignment, write academic integrity case study -Grade of 0% on assignment question, write academic integrity case study -Grade of 0% on assignment, max 50% on make-up assignment, write academic integrity case study -Grade of 0% on assignment -Grade of 49% on assignment (2 <sup>nd</sup> offence) -Grade of 0% on assignment, recommend withdrawal (2 <sup>nd</sup> offence) -25% penalty on assignment
	<i>Unauthorized collaboration on assignment or examination</i>	Ivey (1) Ivey (1)	-5% penalty on assignment -Formal reprimand
	<i>Cheating on an examination</i>		
	<i>Contract cheating or use of contract cheating website during assessment</i>		
	<i>Submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials</i>		

	<i>Falsifying records, transcripts or other academic documents</i>		
	<i>Submitting a false medical or other such certificate</i>		
	<i>Improperly obtaining through theft, bribery, collusion or otherwise, or unauthorized possession of an examination paper prior to the date/time for writing such an examination</i>		
	<i>Impersonating a candidate at an examination or availing oneself of the results of such an impersonation</i>		
	<i>Intentionally interfering in any way with any person's scholastic work</i>		

### Report on Scholastic Offences for the period July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

	<i>Submitting for credit in any course or program of study, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought elsewhere</i>		
	<i>Aiding or abetting any offence</i>		
	<i>Undefined (please provide description)</i>	Health Sciences (1; Research misconduct)	Required to withdraw
FACULTY / SCHOOL / AFFILIATED UNIVERSITY COLLEGE		TOTAL OFFENCES 2023-2024	
SGPS		24	

## EXHIBIT 6.2

### Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Report

Western's [Institutional Quality Assurance Process \(IQAP\)](#) requires an annual report to the GEC on the outcomes of quality assurance activities at Western.

SGPS collaborates with the Office of Academic Quality Enhancement (OAQE), the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and other partners to facilitate cyclical reviews of existing graduate programs, support the development and approval of new graduate programs, and promote continuous improvement of existing programs through the major modification process.

In the Fall of 2024, Western University underwent an audit by the [Quality Council](#), which reviews each university every eight years to ensure compliance with IQAP provisions. The [audit report](#) is now available on the Quality Council website, and we encourage you to review it if you are interested in the detailed findings.

We are pleased to report that Western is the only university audited this cycle that is not required to produce a follow-up report. While the audit team provided several recommendations and suggestions for improvement, they identified no concerns. SGPS and our campus partners will address these recommendations to refine our processes, with a focus on reducing workload, improving timelines, and streamlining procedures to better support our academic programs.

### Cyclical Reviews

The cyclical review Final Assessment Reports are posted, by academic year, to the OAQE website and linked below for your reference.

*If there is no link, the results of the review have not been finalized as of the posting of this report.*

### 2022-2023 Cyclical Reviews

We have included the reviews for the 2022-2023 cycle that were not completed in time for the Fall Reporting to the GEC last year and they are now completed.

- [Astronomy \(combined with Physics\)](#) M.Sc., Ph.D.
- [Environment and Sustainability](#) M.E.S.
- [Management](#) M.Sc.
- [Music D.M.A., M.A. Music Theory, M.A. Musicology, M.Mus., Ph.D.](#)
- [Physics \(combined with Astronomy\)](#) M.Sc., Ph.D.
- [Public Administration](#) M.P.A., G.Dip
- [Sociology](#) M.A., PhD



- [Visual Arts M.A., M.F.A., Ph.D.](#)

### **2023-2024 Cyclical Reviews**

- Accounting, G.Dip (in process)
- Law LL.M., Ph.D. , Studies in Law M.S.L. (site visit completed – waiting on reports)
- Economics M.A., Ph.D. (reports completed – expected SUPR-G review in October)
- [History M.A., Ph.D. \(completed\)](#)
- [Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies M.A., Ph.D. \(completed\)](#)
- [Social Work M.S.W. \(Kings\) - completed](#)

### **2023-2024 New Programs Approved by the Quality Council to Commence**

Master of Climate Risk Assessment and Opportunity

Master of Teaching and Learning

Graduate Diploma in Professional Practice, Clinical Leadership and Education

**Major Modifications to existing Graduate Programs: The results of approved major modifications are presented below for the period September 2022-June 2023.**

*(approved from Sept 2023-June 2024)*

<b>Name of Program Being Modified</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Type of Major Modification</b>	<b>Brief Description of the Major Modification</b>	<b>Senate Agenda</b>
Comparative Literature	MA, PhD	Change course/exam requirements	Introduction of COMPLIT 9504 "New Fundamentals of Comp Lit" as a required course. This new course will merge the content and learning outcomes of COMPLIT 9501, 9502 and 9503 and will serve as a "boot-camp" course for new students in Com Lit. The course will provide basic education in the discipline to develop community among the members of each new cohort.	<a href="#">a23sep15.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Management of Applied Science	MMASc	Addition of a new field, concentration, stream	As the MMASc has evolved over the past few years, students from other disciplines have expressed interest in the program. The modification will broaden the degree by adding a second field for students whose undergraduate discipline is from Social Sciences. The "hub" is management while the field a student applicant chooses ("Applied Science" or "Applied Social Science") will depend on their academic and professional background	<a href="#">a23sep15.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Management of Applied Science	MMASc	Closure of a field, option	The field of Global Health Systems in the MMASc program will close because the MHSC in Global Health Systems was introduced as a stand alone program.	<a href="#">a23Oct13.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Media in Journalism and Communication	MMJC	Change course/exam requirements	Adding a required course - MJCOM9702 "Business Essentials" in the summer term; also adding an additional elective in the summer term; adjusting the internship from 6 to 4 weeks; and removing the capstone. Total credit reduction of 0.5; the program remains a very intensive 12-month experience.	<a href="#">a23Oct13.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>

Climate Risk Assessment and Opportunity	Gdip	Addition of a new field, concentration, stream	<p>Introduction of four fields - The GDip in Climate Risk Assessment &amp; Opportunity is a multidisciplinary program through a collaboration between the Faculties of Engineering, Science, Social Science &amp; Ivey School of Business. Each Faculty is responsible for the development and delivery of their field, in partnership and collaboration with the other Faculties. The new fields are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business and Climate Impact (Ivey School of Business)</li> <li>• Climate Change Governance (Faculty of Social Science)</li> <li>• Climate Risk and Infrastructure Resiliency (Faculty of Engineering)</li> <li>• Climate Change and Financial Modelling (Faculty of Science)</li> </ul>	<a href="#">a23nov10sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Civil and Environmental Engineering	MESc, PhD	Addition of a new field, concentration, stream	A new field of specialization “Smart Cities” is to be added to the MESc & PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering. Smart Cities is a rapidly growing area of specialization that involves the application of cutting-edge technologies including sensors & smart data acquisition technologies & management to improve the resiliency & efficiency of urban operations & infrastructure.	<a href="#">a23nov10sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Kinesiology	MKin	changed degree designation & length for course based only	Changed degree designation for course-based option, changed length of course-based option.	<a href="#">a24jan19sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Master of Music	MMus	change length of program, remove thesis	Reduced the program length from 5 terms to 3 terms (i.e., removing the thesis-based curriculum option). The current course-based field is available to full-time and part-time students. The revised field will be delivered through a combination of online, hybrid, and in-person courses. It will also be available to full-time and part-time students. Full-time students will be able to complete their degree in three terms (12 months). Part-time students will be able to complete their degree in five terms.	<a href="#">a24jan19sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Computer Science	MSc	changing length of program	The Master of Science (MSc) Computer Science has three options for completion: thesis, project, and course. The Department of Computer Science proposes to lengthen the Thesis and Project curriculum options from 16 months (4 terms) to 20 months (5 terms). Faculty and students have identified that the current (4 terms) duration of the Thesis and Project curriculum options makes it challenging for students to meet the program expectations, particularly the final deliverables.	<a href="#">a24jan19sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>

Professional Education	MPed, EdD	Add new field, concentration, stream  change name of field	Change the spelling of the existing field of “Applied Behavior Analysis” in the MPed to “Applied Behaviour Analysis” to reflect Canadian spelling and to be consistent with the proposed new field in the Doctor of Education (EdD). The Faculty of Education also proposes a modification to the EdD to introduce a new field of Applied Behaviour Analysis. The new field will have the same objectives, structure and regulations, mode of delivery, Graduate Degree Level Outcomes (GDLES), and assessment of teaching and learning as the current fields. The proposed field is designed to enhance both the professional knowledge and professional capacity of its graduates in applied behaviour analysis	<a href="#">a24feb15sen.pdf</a> ( <a href="#">uwo.ca</a> )
Education Studies	MA	Add course-based option	Add a 4-term course-based curriculum option to the Master of Arts, Education Studies in the fields of Applied Linguistics, Curriculum Studies, and Critical Policy, Equity, and Leadership Studies in the Faculty of Education. The existing thesis-based, and master’s research project (MRP), options will remain 6 terms.	<a href="#">a24feb15sen.pdf</a> ( <a href="#">uwo.ca</a> )
Anthropology	MA, PhD	remove intensive one year option	The Intensive curriculum option within the Master's Applied Archaeology field was introduced in 2009 to offer a quicker path (1 yr as opposed to 2 yrs) to the MA for people who had been working in cultural resource management archaeology for some time & entered the program with data in hand to form the basis of their MA thesis. Only 3 students have registered, one of whom withdrew. The standard (i.e., not Intensive) Applied Archaeology curriculum option has proved a faster path to the MA and sees much higher enrollment numbers.	<a href="#">a24feb15sen.pdf</a> ( <a href="#">uwo.ca</a> )
Anthropology	MA, PhD	Change program objectives and/or program-level learning outcomes	Revised language in Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) to more accurately reflect current practice and differences in expectations for MA versus PhD program. PLOs in the Program Brief from the 2016-17 review are not as strong as they could be and do not reflect current practice. Faculty and students completed a workshop to revise and map PLOs. The revised outcomes have unanimous approval from the Anthropology faculty members and the Western Anthropology Graduate Society.	<a href="#">a24feb15sen.pdf</a> ( <a href="#">uwo.ca</a> )
Sociology	MA, PhD	Change course/exam requirements	MA students will be required to take existing introductory statistics course (9001: Introduction to Multivariable Statistics). Previously, MA students were able to take either 9001 or 9021 (Qualitative methods). PhD program students will be required to take 1 of 2 existing theory courses (either 9002: Sociological Perspectives, or 9005: Contemporary Social Theory). Previously, PhD students were to take both theory courses. No changes are being made to the total number of required courses in either the MA or PhD program. MA students will still be required to take 6 courses, and PhD students will still need to take 8 courses. This change is based on a suggestion from IQAP External Reviewers.	<a href="#">a24feb15sen.pdf</a> ( <a href="#">uwo.ca</a> )

Public Administration	GDip	Change course/exam requirements  Change mode of delivery	Changing the delivery mode of the six weekend MPA courses from in-person to blended, increasing the flexibility and convenience of the MPA program for both full- & part-time students and potentially expanding the program's geographical reach. Many students in the program are working municipal professionals who commute to London for classes. Removing the Final Research Paper requirement; GDip consists of the first four courses of the MPA. Many GDip students choose to transfer into the MPA upon completing these courses. Eliminating the Research Paper requirement for GDip will streamline the process for these students. IQAP External Reviewers encouraged the program to evaluate need for the Research Paper for the GDip.	<a href="#">a24feb15sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Public Administration	MPA	Change course/program requirements	Removing the milestone requirement from the MPA and incorporating the Final Research Report into the course PA 9917. We propose to remove this milestone and incorporate a scaled-down version of the Research Report into our MPA capstone course, PA9917. This change steers a middle course between the research paper model that we have offered to date and the course-intensive program model used in many other MPA programs. The proposed change will allow us to continue to meet the academic and professional objectives of the Research Report while reducing the faculty workload demands of individual supervision. Rationalization of program requirements – including the Research Report – to reduce faculty workload demands was recommended by the Local Government Program's 2023 IQAP external review.	<a href="#">a24feb15sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Political Science	MA, PhD	Add new field, concentration, stream	Program to add a new field, "Political Methodology". Main goal of modification is to give PhD students opportunity to specialize in a field of research that will lead to additional employment prospects in academic and non-academic markets. Department has concentration of faculty with expertise in this area. By adding this field, Western will build upon already recognized strength in the area and become the only program in Canada to have such an offering. This will make the program competitive with some programs in the United States that have long offered students the opportunity to specialize in the field of Political Methodology.	<a href="#">a24feb15sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Media Studies	MA, PhD	Closure of a field, option removal of part-time option	Media Studies is removing 3 fields from the PhD program in Media Studies: Media Cultures, Media Industries, and Media Technologies. These fields of research no longer align with demonstratable & collective strengths of the program's faculty, nor do they guide areas of specialization for incoming students. Media Studies is eliminating the part-time option within the Master of Arts (MA) in Media Studies. The curriculum is not structured to support part-time studies and does not offer the flexibility necessary to accommodate the needs of part-time students.	<a href="#">a24mar15sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Library and Information Science	MLIS	Change mode of delivery	The program would like to add a fully online delivery mode for the existing Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS). This will be in addition to the existing in-person and hybrid delivery modes. The program learning outcomes, length, and the number of courses available, will be the same, but students will have the option to complete the program entirely online.	<a href="#">a24apr19sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>

Mechanical and Materials Engineering	MEng	Add new field, concentration, stream	The MEng program will add a new field of “Advanced Manufacturing”. Advanced/Intelligent manufacturing techniques and approaches are critical for keeping Canada competitive in the manufacturing sector. Manufacturing covers a very broad spectrum of industries, including automotive, aerospace, textile, food processing, construction components, and packaging & shipping, all of which can benefit from advanced automation, artificial intelligence, machine learning, & control. The field will afford students the option to enrich their skillset in manufacturing and prepare themselves for this continually emerging sector. The proposed field will have a similar structure to the existing: fields in the MEng program.	<a href="#">a24apr19sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Advanced Health Care Practice	MCISC	changes to name of field, degree designation and changes to courses.	Changes to the field of Interprofessional Pain Management (IMP): The field name will be changed to Interdisciplinary Pain Management, and the degree designation changed to MHSc. Also, the field is adding 4 courses (from 1.5FCE to 3.5 FCE). The 5 core competencies will continue to undergird the field, though will be embedded throughout in a more integrated fashion. Students will now complete six, 0.5 credit courses (4 of which are mandatory, plus 2 electives) and complete the Capstone Experience Course that offers students an experiential learning opportunity.	<a href="#">a24may17sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Environment and Sustainability	MES	Change course/exam requirements	The MES Workshops will be repositioned as milestones instead of courses, this will increase the number of MES Workshops available to students; MES also will introduce a new required course, ENVRUST 9016: The UN Sustainable Development Goals: Think Globally, Act Locally.	<a href="#">a24may17sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>
Social Work	MSW	Change course/exam requirements	The MSW is adding a required course - SOCWORK 9709: Direct Practice Lab. This course would complement the foundational Direct Practice course that takes place in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program and/or the foundation year of the two-year MSW program, allowing additional experiential learning time and space for the advanced application of knowledge and theory in preparation for professional practice.	<a href="#">a24may17sen.pdf (uwo.ca)</a>