

Senate Policy

Graduate Studies Submission and Examination of Master's Theses and MRPs

3.7

Description:

This policy outlines the processes and requirements for the examination and submission of master's theses and Major Research Papers/Projects (MRPs).

Approvals:

Approved by Senate Graduate Studies Committee: December 2011
Approved by Senate: January 2012

Approval Authority: Senate

Signature: Archie Graham, Senate

Policy:

Submission and Examination of Master's Theses and Major Research Papers/Projects

Except in the case of executive master's programs, a candidate for a master's degree will undertake research and produce a thesis or Major Research Paper/Major Research Project (MRP). (Cf. the specific requirements of each program.) Subject to the approval of the Graduate Program Committee at the outset of the student's course of study, a candidate may write his/her thesis or MRP and be examined in French.

Binding arrangements are made through the Office of Graduate Studies. Students are required to pay binding and processing costs at the time of the final submission. The thesis or MRP will not be considered submitted until these fees have been paid.

Thesis Guidelines

Submission of the Thesis for Examination:

- Depending on program requirements, candidates must supply one paper copy of the thesis produced in conformity with the *Guidelines for the Preparation of the Thesis*, to each member of the

Supervisory Committee and the Graduate Program Director.

- Supervisory Committee members shall review a completed version of the thesis and send a signed “Pre-Exam” form to the Graduate Program Director verifying that the thesis is of sufficient quality to proceed to formal examination and indicating three potential external examiners to participate in the thesis examination and defence. The Graduate Program Director shall review the thesis and sign the Pre-Exam form if the thesis is ready to proceed.

Examining Committee:

- The Examining Committee is named by the Graduate Program Director, in consultation with the Principal Advisor and the date, place, and time of the defence determined.
- The Examining Committee consists of the Graduate Program Director, the Principal Advisor, the Supervisory Committee member, an internal faculty member, and an External Examiner (five members in total).
- The External Examiner must not have any affiliation with OCAD U or the candidate that might be construed as creating a conflict of interest.

Preparation for Thesis Examination:

Copies of the thesis shall be distributed to members of the Examining Committee by the Office of Graduate Studies *at least three weeks* prior to the scheduled date of the oral defence, along with a covering letter explaining the status of the thesis and the range of options for its disposition.

Thesis Exhibition and Defence:

- Theses may culminate with a thesis exhibition/presentation reviewed on site by the Examining Committee.
- Normally the defence occurs simultaneously with the thesis exhibition. Following review of the exhibition by the Examining Committee, the candidate defends the thesis in an oral examination that is open to the university community. In the examination, candidates will be required to give evidence that they have a thorough knowledge of the discipline(s) in which they have been working.
- All graduate thesis defences will have the Examining Committee and the candidate physically present at the examination. In situations where the external examiner cannot attend in person, the external examiner may be asked to review the thesis and provide a detailed written assessment of the thesis and questions that will be

asked during the defence by the Graduate Program Director.

- The Examining Committee and the defence examination will be chaired by the Graduate Program Director or designate.
- A quorum consists of 50% plus one of the Examining Committee.
- Subject to the policy of individual graduate programs, any member of the OCAD U community is free to attend an oral thesis defence.
- The Chair will give priority to questions from members of the Examining Committee and will adjourn the examination when the Examining Committee decides that further questioning is unnecessary.
- The deliberations of the Examining Committee are held and delivered to the candidate in camera.
- It is the responsibility of the Chair to see that a report on the examination is prepared before the committee adjourns.
- The voting is based on a simple majority.

Examination Outcomes:

Five recommendations are open to the Examining Committee:

- a. the thesis is approved as it stands, or
- b. the thesis is approved provided certain minor revisions are made by a certain date and approved by the Principal Advisor, or
- c. the thesis is approved provided certain major revisions are made by a certain date and approved by all members of the Examining Committee, or
- d. the thesis is not approved as it stands but may be resubmitted and re-examined by some or all of the Examining Committee (this may or may not involve another oral defence), or
- e. the thesis is not approved.

If revisions are required, each member of the Examining Committee must provide a written list of required revisions, consistent with verbal feedback provided to the student, to the Graduate Program Director within one week of the oral defence. Minor revisions are defined as corrections that can be made immediately to the satisfaction of the Principal Advisor. Major revisions are defined as corrections requiring structural changes, or other substantive revision. When a thesis is accepted with major revisions, a precise description of the modifications must be included with the Examining Committee's report. It is then the responsibility of the candidate's Principal Advisor to demonstrate to the Examining Committee that the required revisions have been made.

Final Submission:

- The Graduate Program Director, in consultation with the Principal

Advisor, must verify that appropriate corrections have been made, and then submit a summary report of the thesis defence and examination to the Office of Graduate Studies.

- An approved thesis may be submitted at any time following the oral defence. However, candidates wishing to graduate at convocation should refer to the deadlines for submission of final copies of the successfully defended thesis. Candidates not meeting these deadlines are required to re-register until the thesis has been formally submitted and approved by the university.
- Formal submission of the thesis to the university is made to the Office of Graduate Studies, where the format, including visual documentation, will be checked.
- After the thesis has been formally approved, the candidate submits the required copies and pays the cost for binding and microfilming/electronic processing.
- When the thesis is submitted, the candidate may choose to complete a “Thesis Non-Exclusive License” form. The license enables Library and Archives Canada to microfilm, reproduce and/or harvest theses for inclusion in Theses Canada and other international bibliographies and databases.

Major Research Paper/Project Guidelines

Submission of the MRP for Examination:

- The Graduate Program Director will identify a two person Examining Committee of Principal Advisor and Second Reader and report the formation of this committee to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- Students should refer to guidelines provided by their graduate program regarding processes for examination, defence (if applicable), and final approval.

Final Submission:

- The Graduate Program Director, in consultation with the Principal Advisor, must verify that the MRP is approved and that appropriate corrections have been made. This verification must be provided to the Office of Graduate Studies.
- An approved MRP may be submitted at any time following final approval. However, candidates wishing to graduate at convocation should refer to the deadlines for submission of final approved copies. Candidates not meeting these deadlines are required to re-register until the MRP has been formally submitted and approved by the university.
- Formal submission of the MRP to the university is made to the Office of Graduate Studies, where the format, including visual documentation, will be checked.
- After the MRP has been formally approved, the candidate submits the required copies and pays the cost for binding and microfilming/electronic processing.