

**Proposed Graduate Academic Calendar Regulation Amendment**  
**Section – Thesis, Project, Major Paper – Outcomes of completion of the oral examination**  
**Academic Council –June 25, 2019**

**Rationale for proposed changes:** In response to committee member feedback and to reflect proposed changes to the form, the proposed change will clarify that examining committees can grade the oral presentation in addition to the written thesis.

**Outcomes of completion of the oral examination**

A student's thesis defence includes both an oral presentation and an evaluation of the written thesis. ~~A thesis is ultimately graded as a Pass or a Fail and these are the only grades that are~~ An overall grade of Pass or Fail is assigned, encompassing both components, and will appear on the transcript. ~~In addition, there are possibilities for revision available as part of the process leading to a final grade of Pass or Fail.~~ During the oral examination, the examining committee will evaluate and render separate decisions for the oral presentation and question phase, and for the written thesis.

The examining committee will render one of the following two decisions about the oral presentation and questions phase:

1. Acceptable

An evaluation by the committee of Acceptable means that the student's subject-matter knowledge, as demonstrated by the oral presentation and ability to answer questions is acceptable.

2. Not acceptable

An evaluation by the committee of Not Acceptable means that the student's subject-matter knowledge as demonstrated in the oral presentation and ability to answer questions is not acceptable. This determination should be made in exceptional circumstances.

The examining committee will determine specifically what requirements are being put in place to address the identified deficiencies. Requirements may include, but are not limited to: a full re-examination; a question session with examining committee; any other reasonable means of demonstrating the student's ability to orally present material and answer questions, as agreed upon by the committee.

In order to receive a grade of pass, the examining committee must also be satisfied with the written thesis as outlined below and that the student has demonstrated their ability to present the material and answer questions.

The examining committee renders one of the following four evaluations about the written thesis:

### 1. Acceptable without Required Revisions

An evaluation by the committee of Acceptable without Required Revisions means that the thesis is acceptable without any further editorial work. ~~A thesis that~~ When the written thesis is so evaluated, the defence is given a grade of Pass, ~~subject-only-to~~ provided that the decision rendered on the oral presentation is “Acceptable” and that the written thesis document ~~reproduction of the thesis and its decision~~ is submitted to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Any minor discretionary edits (e.g., spelling, grammar, table numbering) that are made before the final thesis is submitted must be approved by the research supervisor and cannot alter the thesis in any substantial way.

### 2. Acceptable with Minor Revisions

An evaluation by the committee of Acceptable with Minor Revisions means that there are no fundamental changes to the thesis required by the committee. Minor revision requirements are changes or additions that normally should be able to be accomplished within four weeks. The supervisor will normally be tasked with approving these revisions, but the chair may designate other member(s) of the committee to supervise the edit if this will expedite the process. A maximum of two examiners can supervise minor revisions.

~~A thesis that is Acceptable with Minor Revisions will be given a grade of Pass when:~~ When the written thesis is found “Acceptable with Minor Revisions”, the defence is given a grade of Pass when all criteria below are satisfied:

- the revisions to the written thesis have been approved;
- the oral presentation is deemed either acceptable or any noted deficiencies have been addressed; and
- ~~and when~~ the completed thesis document is ~~reproduced and~~ submitted to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

### 3. Major Revisions Required

A thesis that has the potential to be acceptable after major revisions will be evaluated as Major Revisions Required. Any revisions so mandated must be able to be completed within a maximum of six months. A thesis can be evaluated as Major Revisions Required only once. The committee shall decide how the revised thesis will be examined. Re-examination options include the following: a full repeat of the oral exam; an oral defence without an audience in front of the examining committee, or a subset of the examining committee; or editorial supervision by the supervisor and a second

reader. The decision on re-examination should factor in the examining committee's decision regarding the oral presentation. In the case of a re-examination, there must always be two examiners at minimum (normally including the supervisor) for major revisions. Although a subset of the examining committee can approve major revisions, a full examining committee (optionally including a master's thesis examiner and doctoral external examiner) must determine that a revised thesis is not acceptable and receives a grade of Fail.

The defence is given a grade of Pass when all criteria below are satisfied:

- the revised thesis has been submitted within six months;
- the revisions to the written thesis have been approved;
- the oral presentation is deemed either acceptable or any noted deficiencies have been remedied to the satisfaction of the committee; and
- the completed thesis document is submitted to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

#### **4. Not Acceptable**

The examining committee may evaluate a thesis as Not Acceptable if it does not meet the standards for the discipline or the area of study. A thesis can be evaluated as Not Acceptable in the first attempt at a defence if it is found to be fundamentally flawed and beyond revision in six months. In this type of case, the outcome of the oral presentation does not impact the overall evaluation, as the committee will have decided that there is no reasonable prospect of success with a revision of the written thesis.

Detailed reasons for failure must be submitted by the chair of the examining committee to the Dean of Graduate Studies, the graduate program director and the candidate within two weeks. The thesis is given a final grade of Fail.