



Classification Number	
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Policy Owner	Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
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Supersedes	Academic Regulations, Graduate Academic Calendar 2020-21

GRADUATE STUDENT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE POLICY

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Policy is to outline the requirements for a graduate student's to begin their thesis and the formation and responsibilities of the student's supervisory committee.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

“Doctoral Degree” means an advanced degree in a specific area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study that includes course work and a candidacy exam. It is normally completed after receiving a Master's Degree in a related subject area. A Doctoral Degree requires intensive research and the creation and defence before an examining committee of a thesis that constitutes an original contribution to a field of study.

“Graduate Program Director” means academic administrators with a Graduate Faculty Appointment within an academic unit and help to ensure the success of the Program and its students.

“Graduate Faculty Appointment” means a faculty member with an academic appointment at the University who has been approved to participate in a graduate Program in one of the three categories: Graduate Faculty, Associate Graduate Faculty or Emeritus/Emerita Graduate Faculty.

“Master’s Degree” means an advanced degree that is normally completed after receiving a first degree in a related subject area. It contains a prescribed set of courses, and/or other units of study, research or practice within an area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study, normally requiring at least 30 credit hours of study. Master’s Degrees may comprise a thesis component, a project or major paper, or be primarily comprised of coursework:

- a) A **Master’s Degree with thesis** is a research oriented Program comprised of advanced courses and intensive research culminating in a thesis. The thesis constitutes at least nine credit hours and involves an oral examination with assessment by an external examiner.
- b) A **Master’s Degree with a project or major paper** is a research oriented Program comprised of advanced courses and intensive research culminating in a project or major paper. The project or major paper constitutes at least six credit hours of supervised research and assessment by a Research Supervisor and a second reader.
- c) A **Master’s Degree by coursework** is comprised primarily of course work, and may also include other units of study, research and practice.

“Program” means a complete set and sequence of Courses, combination of Courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice, the successful completion of which qualifies the candidate for a formal credential (degree with or without major; diploma), provided all other academic and financial requirements are met.

“Research Supervisor” means a faculty member with a Graduate Faculty Appointment that oversees a graduate student’s research and academic progress towards successful completion of the student’s Program.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. This Policy applies to graduate students in a thesis Program, Research Supervisors, supervisory committee members and Graduate Program Directors.
4. The Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is responsible for determining deadlines, guidelines and procedures for thesis preparation and submission.
5. The Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of this Policy.

POLICY

All graduate students in a research Program are required to have a supervisory committee and receive permission to begin work on their thesis. The following outlines these requirements.

6. Supervisory Committee

Each graduate student in a thesis-based graduate Program requires a supervisory committee. The supervisory committee should be formed early, meet regularly and maintain formal meeting records.

6.1. Appointment of the Supervisory Committee

- a) The supervisory committee is appointed by the Graduate Program Director after consultation with the Research Supervisor and the student.
- b) The appointment of committee members is made no later than eight months after the student begins their Program.
- c) The supervisory committee must have at least one scheduled meeting in the first year of study.

6.2. Composition of the Committee

a) Master’s Candidates

- Normally, each supervisory committee for a master’s level candidate consists of the candidate’s Research Supervisor(s) and at least one other faculty member from the University with a Graduate Faculty Appointment to the Program.

- The chair, who may be someone other than the candidate's Research Supervisor, is appointed by the Graduate Program Director of the candidate's home faculty.

b) Doctoral Candidates

- The supervisory committee for a doctoral candidate consists of the candidate's Research Supervisor(s) and at least two other faculty members from the University with a Graduate Faculty Appointment, to the Program.
- The chair, who may be someone other than the candidate's Research Supervisor, is appointed by the Graduate Program Director of the candidate's home faculty.

6.3. Non-voting Advisor

- a) The supervisory committee may request a non-voting advisor to a master's or doctoral supervisory committee, upon the approval of the Graduate Program Director.
- b) A non-voting advisor would normally be an industry or discipline expert who does not have and would not normally be given a Graduate Faculty Appointment.
- c) The non-voting advisor would be allowed to attend and ask questions during master's and doctoral thesis and/or candidacy exams, but will not be permitted to vote.

6.4. Responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee

The supervisory committee's main responsibilities include the following:

- a) Advise the student and help define the course of study.
- b) Assess and approve the student's research proposal.
- c) Provide support to the student and Research Supervisor by broadening and deepening the range of expertise and experience available.
- d) Be reasonably accessible to the student to discuss and suggest other sources of information.
- e) Offer comments when requested on written work submitted by the student.
- f) Review the student's progress toward successful completion of the thesis with scheduled meetings at least once per year.
- g) Provide constructive feedback and provocative discussion of the student's Program of study, thereby exposing the student to a wider range of expertise and ideas than can be provided by the Research Supervisor alone.
- h) Report progress to the Graduate Program Director and recommend continuation in the Program [in compliance with Grading System, Research Progress and Academic Standing \(Graduate\) policy.](#) ~~based on satisfactory~~

~~performance (in the case of reports of unsatisfactory progress, the student may be required to withdraw from the graduate program).~~

- i) Recommend to the Graduate Program Director and the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies whether the body of the thesis work is sufficient to proceed to ~~a thesis should move to~~ oral examination. This recommendation must be made no less than three months prior to the date set for examination.

6.5. Chair's Responsibilities

The main responsibilities of the chair of the supervisory committee include the following:

- a) Convene and run regular supervisory committee meetings.
- b) Keep the Graduate Program Director informed of the student's progress.
- c) Recommend potential thesis, university, external and candidacy examiners to the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
- d) Ensure Forward a copy of the student's thesis is sent to members of the examining committee ~~at least four weeks before the oral examination in accordance with the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidacy Policy.~~
- e) Ensure a non-disclosure agreement is signed by the examining and/or candidacy committee members prior to the thesis being distributed, where applicable.

7. Permission to Begin

- 7.1. Permission to begin the thesis is given by the student's supervisory committee when there is general agreement that sufficient research has been done.
- 7.2. Students should ~~seek guidance from~~ consult their Research Supervisor(s) and/or the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies regarding the use of a style manual appropriate to the academic discipline in which they are working, ~~as well as other available guides to assist in effective writing.~~
- 7.3. Students are also expected to be aware of and follow all research policies and procedures as outlined in the University's policy library.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

8. This Policy will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

9. This section intentionally left blank.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

10. Graduate Academic Calendar
Responsibilities of Graduate Program Directors, Faculty Advisors, Research Supervisors and Graduate Students Policy
Graduate Faculty Appointments Policy
Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidates Policy
Doctoral Candidacy Examinations Policy

Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Policy

Section	Notes on updates/changes
Editorial updates	Capitalized defined terms throughout the policy.
Definitions	Definitions added.
Scope and Authority	Solely GR. 4. Added from Permission to begin regulation as relevant to scope and authority. Reference to website removed.
Policy	General policy statement added as per policy instructions.
Supervisory Committee	Existing GR calendar language added. 6. General statement from regulation reorganized and edited to be more concise. Removed non-policy language “help ensure higher completion rates”. No changes to intent of statement. 6.1 expanded heading – from “Appointment” to “Appointment of the Supervisory Committee”. 6.1 c) included regulation section “The first meeting”. No changes to content. 6.2 expanded heading – from “Composition” to “Composition of the Committee”. 6.2 a) and b) editorial amendment to update reference to graduate faculty appointment. Removed specific appointment types. Ensures consistency across policies. Definition added to policy. 6.4 Expanded heading – from “Responsibilities” to “Responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee”. 6.4 h) language updated to add reference to relevant policy and remove extraneous information. 6.4 i) language edited to clarify that the body of the thesis work is sufficient to proceed. 6.5 a) addition of the word “regular”. 6.5 c) editorial amendment to update correct terms for type of examiners.

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	<p>6.5 d) amendment to clarify that the chair "Ensure"s a copy of the student's thesis is sent to examining committee. Removed reference to specific timeline as only applicable to master's and added reference to Thesis Oral Examination Policy which outlines timelines.</p> <p>6.5 e) new language added to address non-disclosure agreement.</p>
Permission to Begin	<p>Existing GR calendar language added.</p> <p>7.2 editorial amendment for clarity and to include SGPS. Removed unnecessary procedural language.</p> <p>7.3 editorial amendment to remove duplicated copywrite language already included in Submission of Thesis, Project or Major Paper Policy. Language updated to correctly reference all research policies and procedures in the policy library. Removed procedural website reference.</p>