



PhD Thesis Handbook

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Table of Contents

General information.....	4
Introduction.....	4
Definitions	4
Disclaimer	5
Personnel Related to the Thesis Process.....	6
Thesis Procedures – Prior to Oral Examination	8
1. Establishment of Student’s Supervisory Committee.....	8
2. PhD Candidacy Exam.....	9
3. Research Progress	9
4. Supervisory Committee Declaration of Thesis Readiness	10
5. Transcript Check – Verify Completion of Coursework	10
6. External and University Examiner Nomination.....	10
7. Preparation and Submission of Materials by Student.....	11
8. PhD Request to Schedule an Oral Examination	12
9. Scheduling of Oral Examination.....	13
10. Distribution of Materials to Examining Committee.....	13
11. External Examiner’s and University Examiner’s Report.....	13
12. Negative Reports and Re-Scheduling of Oral Exam.....	14
Thesis Procedures – The Day of the Oral Exam	16
Preparation of Room and Documents.....	16
Conduct of Exam	16
Chair’s Report on Thesis and Certificate of Approval.....	16
Summary of Possible Outcomes of Oral Examination.....	18
Thesis Procedures – After the Exam.....	19
1. Post-exam Revisions and Sign Off by Research Supervisor.....	19
2. Thesis Package Preparation	19
Submission of Master’s or PhD Thesis	20
Theses Non-Exclusive License (Library and Archives Canada)	20
ProQuest Option	20
Request for Approval to Withhold a Thesis from Publication.....	21
Early Completion Tuition Refund Request	22

3. Electronic Submission of Theses	23
4. Role of SGPS.....	23
5. Requirements Completed and Mark Entered.....	23
6. Role of the University Library	24
7. Personal Thesis Binding	24
Thesis Procedures – Deadlines.....	25
Thesis Procedures – Example Timeline	25
Thesis Procedures – Time Limits	25
Other Information.....	26
1. Applying to Graduate	26
2. In-Camera Defence	26
3. Intellectual Property and Work with External Partners.....	26

General information

Introduction

This handbook has been designed to serve as a guide for graduate students, graduate program staff, graduate faculty and members of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS). It aims to:

- Clarify the roles of SGPS and the individual program/faculty offices, which administer graduate programs.
- Clarify the procedures to be followed for students completing a PhD Thesis.
- Provide and explain the purpose of forms and checklists required as part of the process.

We welcome your questions, feedback and recommendations and look forward to working with you to establish 'best practices' in this area of Graduate Studies operation.

A note regarding terminology used in this Handbook:

The term "thesis" is used to refer to PhD theses. (In some universities, a PhD thesis is known as a 'dissertation'.)

The oral examination is sometimes referred to as the oral defence because students are required to demonstrate mastery of their subject matter and defend their position(s) in response to questions from members of an examining committee. In this document, the terms 'oral examination' or 'oral exam' will be used. These are consistent with the terminology used in the Graduate Studies policies.

Doctoral students who have submitted their theses for examination are often referred to as 'candidates'. In this document, the term 'student' will be used.

Definitions

A PhD thesis must contain a substantial contribution of new knowledge to the field of study. It presents the results and an analysis of original research and should be significant enough to be published. PhD students are guided by a research supervisor (or co-supervisors) and a supervisory committee. Each student in a doctoral program is required to prepare a written thesis proposal and pass a candidacy exam. Full-time students are expected to do so within 18 months of their initial registration in the program. A judgement of satisfactory allows the student to proceed with PhD studies.

Once the thesis has been completed, students must undergo a formal and demanding oral examination, often called the **oral defence**. This examination is conducted by an examining committee, usually with at least one member from outside the student's home university. Naturally, the PhD thesis is longer and the credit value much higher

than that of a Master's thesis. A Master's Thesis handbook is available on the [SGPS website](#).

Every discipline and program has slightly different requirements for each component of their degree requirements. The program's graduate program director and faculty are the best resources for detailed information about the requirements of each and the specific distinctions in their programs.

Note

Although SGPS makes every attempt to notify all stakeholders when important additions/revisions are made to information and forms on the website, all individuals are encouraged to check these sites and announcements on the SGPS site regularly to ensure that they have the most up-to-date forms and information.

For a complete summary of forms required by the faculty and student in the thesis process, visit the [graduate thesis website](#).

Disclaimer

Some information in this handbook may be available in the [Graduate Academic Calendar](#), however, the Academic Policies are the authority. It is the student's responsibility to review these policies and ensure they are being followed.

References and links to the policies used throughout this handbook include but are not limited to:

- [Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Policy](#)
- [Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidates Policy](#)
- [Graduate Submission of Thesis, Project, or Major Paper Policy](#)

The Players

Personnel Related to the Thesis Process

Title	Acronym	Comments/Descriptions See Responsibilities of Graduate Program Directors, Faculty Advisors, Research Supervisors and Graduate Students Policy .
Student		<p>With the guidance of faculty advisors, research supervisor(s) and/or supervisory committees, the student conducts research, prepares a written thesis and presents/defends their work in an oral exam.</p> <p>Students can consult the supervisor-student conversation starter's document to help align expectations with their supervisors.</p>
Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies	DGPS	<p>Approves thesis, external and university examiners.</p> <p>Receives report from examiner and has right to postpone oral exam if report is not received by deadline or if report suggests there are issues to be resolved.</p>
School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies	SGPS	<p>Information directed to SGPS is referred to the DGPS as suitable.</p> <p>SGPS coordinates several administrative processes related to the implementation of thesis procedures, registration in thesis related courses and coordination of documentation.</p> <p>Accepts final thesis package from program office, checks materials and forwards to the university library.</p>
Graduate Program Director	GPD	<p>Appointed by the dean of the home faculty in consultation with the DGPS.</p> <p>Approves and coordinates many of the people and processes associated with theses.</p>
Graduate Program Staff	GPS	<p>This refers to the administrative staff who support the GPD and graduate faculty in the program.</p>
Faculty Advisor	FA	<p>Appointed by GPD.</p> <p>In programs that do not have a thesis, students are guided by an FA throughout their program. In programs which require a thesis, students may initially be assigned a FA, but they are then assigned a Research Supervisor when they begin their research.</p>
Research Supervisor	RS	<p>Approved by the dean of the home faculty.</p>

		In some cases, a student may have two co-supervisors.
Supervisory Committee	SC	Appointed by GPD, usually by end of student's second semester Composition of Supervisory Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes RS and at least two other faculty members - Chairs of these committees are appointed by the GPD, and they may or may not be the student's RS. - May include a non-voting advisor
Examining Committee	EC	Composition of Examining Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes all members of student's SC plus one other university examiner and one external examiner - ECs are chaired by the program GPD or designate.
External Examiner	EE	Someone 'outside' the student's program or faculty Appointed by DGPS on recommendation of GPD.
University Examiner	UE	Examining committees for PhD dissertations must have one other university examiner in addition to the SC members and an external examiner. Appointed by DGPS on recommendation of GPD.
University Library		The library receives paper and electronic copies of the student's thesis from SGPS. It sends paper copies to be bound and places one bound copy of each student's thesis in the Library collection. It sends electronic copies to Library and Archives Canada and uploads them to the University's digital repository research.
Office of the Registrar	RO	When the thesis process is complete and a grade of pass has been entered for the thesis course, the student is eligible to apply to graduate as per RO procedures. The RO conducts a degree audit and, if all is in order, the Registrar will recommend to the university's Academic Council that the student graduate. The student may then participate in the next scheduled convocation.

Thesis Procedures – Prior to Oral Examination

1. Establishment of Student’s Supervisory Committee

Each graduate student in a program that requires a thesis has a supervisory committee. Form 1 – Establishment of a Supervisory Committee is used to document the committee and is submitted to SGPS.

In consultation with the student and the research supervisor(s) (RS), the GPD appoints the committee members and a chair. The chair of the supervisory committee may or may not be the RS. The responsibilities of supervisory committee members and its chair are described in the [Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Policy](#). Each member of the supervisory committee will have a Graduate Faculty Appointment to the student’s program.

Supervisory committee for a PhD student consists of:

- Student’s research supervisor or co-supervisors
- At least two other faculty members with active appointments in the student’s home program

A non-voting advisor may be added to the supervisory committee. 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. The non-voting advisor:

- Can take part in all meetings, but cannot vote in the final oral examination
- They can attend the defence as an observer and may stay during questioning but must leave before the committee discusses the outcomes

The appointment of the supervisory committee is made once the RS is satisfied that the student has made adequate progress in their research area. As noted in section [6.1 b\) of the Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Policy](#), the supervisory committee is formed no later than eight months after the student begins their Program (**normally no later than the end of the student’s second semester of study**).

The GPD ensures that Form 1 is completed and a copy is forwarded to SGPS. Thesis Procedure #6 and onward will not be processed if Form 1 has not be sent to SGPS.

Link to website/form:

- [Form 1- Establishment of Supervisory Committee](#)

2. PhD Candidacy Exam

Each student in a doctoral program is required to prepare a written thesis proposal and pass a candidacy exam. Full-time students are expected to do so within 18 months of their initial registration in the program. A judgement of satisfactory allows the student to proceed with PhD studies. For more information see the [PhD Candidacy Exam Handbook](#) and the [Doctoral Candidacy Examination Policy](#)

3. Research Progress

Student research progress is evaluated at the end of each semester for every student in a program with a thesis, project or major paper, starting when the student is engaged with their research. This is an opportunity for the student to check in with their supervisor and/or supervisory committee to ensure they are on-track to complete in a timely manner. It is also a chance to identify any academic or non-academic challenges and identify strategies to address them.

Policies and Procedures related to Research Progress Reports are found in the [Graduate Grading System, Research Progress and Academic Standing Policy](#) (see sections 10-12).

The research progress report should be completed in full between the student, their RS(s) and their supervisory committee member(s), if applicable. It is approved by the GPD and submitted to SGPS.

The student is responsible for commenting on their academic and/or research progress. The RS and/or committee is responsible for evaluating the student's research progress in relation to the student's overall research plan across 5 areas including: research progress, research plan, requisite knowledge, research skills, and motivation and work ethic. Students may receive an overall evaluation of Satisfactory Research Progress, Difficulties with Research Progress or Unsatisfactory Research progress.

Failure to meet objectives on progress reports may be cited as ground for a warning, probation or dismissal from the program of study.

Progress reports should be evaluated **at the end of each Semester, as noted in section 10.1 of the [Graduate Grading System, Research Progress and Academic Standing Policy](#).**

Link to website/form:

- [Graduate Research Progress Form](#)

4. Supervisory Committee Declaration of Thesis Readiness

Before an oral examination can be held, the supervisory committee must receive the thesis from the student and vote/approve the thesis for examination (no more than one negative vote and/or abstention).

The supervisory committee must recommend to the GPD and the Dean of SGPS whether the body of the thesis work is sufficient to proceed to oral examination. As noted in [section 6.4 of the Graduate Supervisory Committee Policy](#), the recommendation that the thesis should move to oral examination must be made **no less than three months prior** to the date set for examination.

- Note: edits may be made to the thesis after this approval, but the final version of the thesis must be ready to be distributed to the examining committee when the Request to Schedule an Oral Exam is submitted to SGPS.

The Declaration of Thesis Readiness Form should be submitted to SGPS for record keeping once it is filled out.

Link to website/form:

- [Supervisory Committee Declaration of Thesis Readiness](#)

5. Transcript Check – Verify Completion of Coursework

SGPS must receive confirmation from the program GPD/GPS that the student has met all course requirements before the oral examination can be approved by the DGPS as per [section 8.2 of the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidates Policy](#).

The RS should advise the student to confirm with the GPS that all course requirements have been met and GPD informs SGPS prior to beginning to schedule the oral defence.

Note: Students may have their oral exam while they are completing their last seminar course pending that all other course/degree requirements are met.

6. External and University Examiner Nomination

All PhD students are required to submit a written thesis and participate in an oral examination in which an examining committee, which includes an external examiner and a university examiner, assesses their work. Form 2.1P - External Examiner Nomination and 2.1P – University Examiner Nomination are used to nominate the examiners.

In consultation with the chair of the student's supervisory committee, the GPD recommends the external and university examiner(s). The RS or GPD will confirm if the nominee(s) have been contacted and are in agreement. The nominations are sent to SGPS for approval.

SGPS ensures that the form is reviewed by the DGPS or notifies the GPD if there are any questions/issues. SGPS contacts the nominees to confirm their nomination, and to obtain a copy of the curriculum vitae if not already obtained. Conflicts of interest must be avoided for all examiners. Information related to examiners are found in [section 6 and 7 of the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidacy Policy](#). The nomination(s) are sent to SGPS for approval. The DGPS must approve the nomination

SGPS ensures that the form is reviewed by the DGPS or notifies the GPD if there are any questions/issues. The DGPS ensures there are no conflicts of interest. If the nominee(s) is (are) deemed to be acceptable, the DGPS approves the nomination(s). The signed form is scanned and sent to the GPD, the GPS and RS(s) are copied. The original form and any attachments are retained by SGPS.

If approved, the program office then contacts all examining committee members to determine their availability and book the examination date.

The external and university examiner nominations should be submitted **no less than 10 weeks before** the scheduled oral examination.

Link to website/form:

- [Form 2.1P EE – External Examiner Nomination](#)
- [Form 2.1P UE – University Examiner Nomination](#)

7. Preparation and Submission of Materials by Student

Note: If a written thesis and thesis defence requires a confidential disclosure agreement, this should be brought to the attention of the GPD and SGPS before a thesis is distributed. Please see [section 4.2 of the Intellectual Property Policy](#).

The student must prepare their thesis for distribution to the examining committee. The original PDF and/or printed copies must be submitted in accordance with the specifications of the university's Thesis Template and the Thesis Checklist and Formatting Guidelines, as well as any particular guidelines the Faculty may have.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all materials are prepared and assembled appropriately. Students should consult with their research supervisor(s) for specific regulations on the preparation and presentation of thesis/dissertation materials.

As per [section 8.3 b\) of the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidacy Policy](#), the examination copy of the thesis must be submitted to SGPS for distribution **at least 8 weeks** prior to the date of the oral exam. The thesis will be sent to SGPS with the Request to Schedule an Oral Examination form.

Link to website/form:

- [Thesis template](#)
- [Thesis Checklist and Formatting Guidelines](#)

8. PhD Request to Schedule an Oral Examination

In consultation with the chair of the student's supervisory committee, the GPD confirms the members of the student's examining committee and informs SGPS of the oral examination information (date, location, time) on Form 2.2P - PhD Request to Schedule an Oral Examination.

The examining committee for a PhD student includes:

- All members of the student's supervisory committee*.
- One external examiner.
- One university examiner.
- The chair of the committee is the GPD or designate.

*If any changes have occurred since the establishment of the original supervisory committee, the new committee members are named and an updated Form 1 must be submitted.

The GPD completes Form 2.2P with the RS(s). The student also signs Form 2.2P confirming that the thesis submitted is the final version and is ready for distribution to the examining committee. Form 2.2P and the thesis are sent to SGPS.

SGPS ensures that the form is reviewed by the DGPS or notifies the GPD if there are any questions/issues. A copy of the form is signed by the DGPS and a copy is returned to the GPD when the oral examination information is approved. The GPS and RS(s) are copied. The original form and any attachments are retained by SGPS.

It is recommended that Form 2.2P be submitted to SGPS **8 weeks before** the scheduled oral examination. [See section 6.2 c\) of the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidacy Policy](#).

Link to website/form:

- [Form 2.2P – PhD Request to Schedule Oral Examination](#)

9. Scheduling of Oral Examination

Once the request to schedule an oral examination is approved, the chair of the EC (who is the GPD or designate), in consultation with the student and all members of the examining committee, schedules the date of examination as listed on Form 2.2P. Any changes to information recorded on Form 2.1 or Form 2.2 (e.g. date of exam, chair of examining committee, attendance of committee members) must be communicated to SGPS as soon as possible.

The GPD/GPS (or designate) reserves a room suitable for the exam and sends email notices to the student and all members of examining committee regarding the date, time and location of exam. The GPD/GPS (or designate) can then arrange for the presentation component of the oral examination to be advertised to the broader university community.

Note: As outlined in the Fees and charges section of the [Graduate Academic Calendar](#), students with fees outstanding beyond the due date will be assessed a late payment fee and will be subject to the university's hold policy. Students **on hold** cannot be registered in the final thesis course or apply to graduate. An oral examination may be postponed if a hold is not cleared.

10. Distribution of Materials to Examining Committee

SGPS sends the entire PhD examining committee the thesis document. The GPD and GPS are copied. As per, [section 8.3 b\) of the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidacy Policy](#) all materials are to be distributed to members of the examining committee **at least 8 weeks prior to** the oral exam. The GPD may request reports from internal members of the examining committee prior to the oral exam.

SGPS sends the approved external and university examiner's a letter from the DGPS outlining their responsibilities, providing them with the appropriate form for their report and confirming the deadline for submission of the form/report).

11. External Examiner's and University Examiner's Report

The external examiner and university examiner shall prepare a report of their assessment of the student's thesis and send it to the DGPS or designate by the specified deadline using Form 3 – Thesis Examiner's Report. The examiners are asked to indicate their recommendation as to whether or not the thesis should proceed to oral examination as scheduled.

The DGPS (or designate) receives and reviews the examiner's reports. A copy is signed by SGPS and sent to the chair of the examining committee (GPD or designate) and all other members of the examining committee. The GPS is copied.

Depending on the content of the examiner's report, the examining committee and the DGPS may meet to determine whether or not to proceed with the final examination.

The content of the report is confidential and must not be discussed with the student prior to the examination.

The DGPS reserves the right to postpone the final examination if the external and university examiner's report not received by the deadline.

As per, [section 7.4 a\) of the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidacy Policy](#), the external and university examiner reports are due **10 Calendar Days before** the scheduled examination date *If the deadline date falls on a weekend, the examiner has until the following Monday morning to submit their report.

Link to website/form:

- [Form 3 – Thesis Defence Examiner's Report](#)

12. Negative Reports and Re-Scheduling of Oral Exam

The external and/or university examiner's report may recommend that the student **not** proceed to the oral examination.

If the either examiner recommends the student should not proceed to oral examination, the DGPS informs the GPD and all members of the examining committee of the recommendation.

The committee's options are:

- Student proceeds to scheduled oral exam and risks thesis being assessed as requiring major revisions or failure.
- The scheduled oral exam is cancelled and student has the opportunity to use feedback to revise and resubmit thesis.

If the decision is made to **cancel** the exam, the following process will apply:

- The DGPS or designate will send an email to the GPD and to confirm that the oral exam will be cancelled and rescheduled at a later date.
- The GPD will inform the student of the cancellation.
- The supervisor will verbally disclose the content of the examiner's report and provide an electronic copy of the examiner's comments provided in the body of the thesis to the student.

- The remaining members of the examining committee can submit comments on the thesis to be passed on to the student.
- The committee will meet with the student as soon as possible to outline a pathway for the completion of the thesis.

The DGPS will inform the GPD and all members of the examining committee of the thesis examiner's recommendation as soon as it is received.

Thesis Procedures – The Day of the Oral Exam

Preparation of Room and Documents

The chair of the examining committee (GPD or designate) ensures the space is arranged properly and that the necessary documents are ready at the time of the exam.

Required forms include:

- Chair's Report on Thesis
- Certificate of Approval (The GPS completes the Certificate of Approval form with the exception of the examining committee member signatures.)

Conduct of Exam

The oral examination is conducted as outlined in the [sections 9-12 of the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidacy Policy](#).

The chair presides over the oral presentation and examination. They also chair the proceedings of the in-camera deliberation of the examining committee as a non-voting member. The chair verifies that the student and all the members of the examining committee are present.

Chairs are requested to ensure that the exams proceed with minimal interruptions to the presenters. Interruptions occur especially when people walk in after the presentations have started. Committee chairs can use their discretion to see the available seats are not near the presenter. They may also arrange for a note to be posted outside the room to indicate that a presentation is in progress.

The chair of the examining committee ensures all required documentation for the final examination are completed and they record the outcome of the exam. The student and SGPS are provided with a copy at the conclusion of the oral exam.

Chair's Report on Thesis and Certificate of Approval

The chair of the examining committee completes Form 4 - Chair's Report on Thesis Examination form to record the outcome of the oral examination. The student is not given a numerical or letter grade. The options open to the examining committee are defined in [section 12 of the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidacy Policy](#).

The chair of the examining committee ensures that the Certificate of Approval is signed by all members of the examining committee. The student's supervisor is required to

sign off on the Certificate of Approval form when the student has completed all required revisions (if applicable).

Note: Guidelines for the Chair of the Examining Committee are the available on the SGPS website.

The chair's report must be completed and submitted to SGPS no later than 1 week after the date of the examination.

Link to website/form:

- [Form 4- Chair's Report on Thesis Examination](#)
- [Certificate of Approval](#)

Summary of Possible Outcomes of Oral Examination

Review [section 12 of the Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidacy Policy](#), for the possible outcomes of completion of the oral examination.

Thesis Procedures – After the Exam

1. Post-exam Revisions and Sign Off by Research Supervisor

Note: Depending on the decision rendered by the examining committee at the time of the oral exam, there may be additional revisions and actions required that may take varying amounts of time.

The RS (and any other committee members as determined at the oral defence) ensures that the student makes all the required revisions to the thesis by the deadline and signs off on the lower section of the Certificate of Approval form.

The GPS provides the student with a paper copy (**not the original**) and a PDF copy of the final Certificate of Approval form (with all required signatures) for inclusion in their final thesis package. The original form is promptly forwarded to SGPS.

The RS or GPD will not be able to enter the student's grade (pass or fail) in the course unless the student is formally registered in the appropriate course. SGPS will ensure that the student is registered in the course upon receiving the Certificate of Approval and the final thesis package. As per [section 6.1-6.4 of the Graduate Grading System, Research Progress and Academic Standing Policy](#), final grades are not available until they are approved at the end of semester

2. Thesis Package Preparation

Once a student's thesis has been approved, the student must submit the work formally to SGPS in order to be eligible to graduate. Specifically, [as per Section 5 of the Graduate Submission of Thesis, Project or Major Paper Policy](#), each student must submit one printed, unbound copy of their post-defence final thesis to SGPS.

The student should consult Checklist #1: Thesis Checklist and Formatting Guidelines document to ensure their thesis document complies with specific formatting requirements. Checklist #2: Checklist for Final Thesis Package should be completed and submitted to the GPS in the program office. The GPS checks the contents of the package against Checklist #2 and the student is notified if there are any missing components or obvious formatting errors. The GPS then signs off on the checklist and ensures the final thesis package is forwarded to SGPS.

Link to website/form:

- [Checklist #1 – Thesis Checklist and Formatting Guidelines](#)
- [Checklist #2 – Checklist for Final Thesis Package](#)

The following forms are to be included in the thesis package:

Submission of Master's or PhD Thesis

All Doctoral students must include the Submission of Master's or PhD Thesis form with their final thesis package. It provides necessary information (abstract and key words) to the library for archiving student work. It confirms authorization from the student to the library to make the work accessible to other institutions or individuals for research purposes.

The student completes a paper copy of this form. In addition, the student is required to include a PDF file of this form in the shared google drive folder (sent to their .net email).

Link to website/form:

- [Submission of Master's or PhD Thesis](#)

Theses Non-Exclusive License (Library and Archives Canada)

The Thesis will be sent to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and each student will need sign the Thesis Non-Exclusive License that allows the thesis to be reproduced. This permission is only for the purpose of making single copies solely for private study and research, in response to written requests from individuals, libraries, universities or other similar institutions.

A print and electronic copy of every student thesis is forwarded to the Library by SGPS for its archival collection and for electronic publication. The print copy does not circulate; however, the electronic copy is posted on the library's institutional repository providing open access to the full-text of all university theses through [E-Scholar](#).

The student completes and signs this form and includes the original in the final package that is submitted to the Program Office (and subsequently to SGPS).

Note: theses cannot be removed from Library Archives Canada after they have been submitted.

Link to website/form:

- [Theses Non-Exclusive License](#)

ProQuest Option

In addition to the Library uploading the thesis to E-Scholar, they submit the electronic file for processing to ProQuest, allowing the theses to become available online on AMICUS via the Library and Archives Canada's Thesis Canada Program.

ProQuest is OPTIONAL, but if students would like to take advantage of this option, they must complete a separate license form from the LAC form. The benefit is that it is a free publishing service and has potential royalties.

If the student would like to take advantage of this option:

On the Submission form, the student will check where it says they would like to take advantage of the ProQuest option. The original ProQuest form needs to be filled out and sent to the SGPS office along with the thesis package.

If this is not an option for the student:

On the Submission form, the student will check that they are not interested in the ProQuest option.

Link to website/form:

- [ProQuest Publishing Agreement](#)

Request for Approval to Withhold a Thesis from Publication

The student uses this form to apply for permission to keep their thesis out of circulation for a period of time. Some examples of when this might be necessary include:

- Time is required for completion and submission of a significant manuscript or patent application for a device or idea that might emerge from the thesis research.
- The thesis might describe something of considerable monetary potential which could, if the student were given an opportunity to develop it first, benefit the student and/or the university.
- The thesis might deal with a potentially dangerous product or process or a potential cure for a disease that requires more testing before information is released to the public.

In consultation with their RS(s) and the GPD, the student completes the form and includes it in their final thesis package when it is submitted to the program office. The student must provide justification for the request and propose a date of release of the thesis to the public domain. All three parties must sign the form. The thesis may be withheld from the public domain for a period of up to twelve months from the date of the successful oral examination.

The DGPS and the Vice President of Research and Innovation must approve the request. Copies of the signed (approved) form are forwarded by SGPS to the student, RS and GPD. The original form is retained by SGPS.

The student is responsible for notifying the SGPS when the restrictions have been lifted and the thesis package can be forwarded to the Library. The student is also responsible

for notifying the RS and SGPS if an extension to the original request to withhold the thesis from publication is required. The student and research supervisor will be required to justify the extension of the restriction. Subsequent requests must follow the same procedure. The policy related to this process is outlined in the [section 8 of the Submission of Thesis Project or Major Paper Policy](#).

Link to website/form:

- [Request for Approval to Withhold a Thesis from Publication](#)

Early Completion Tuition Refund Request

Students who defend their thesis prior to the end of an academic term may be eligible for a partial tuition refund. If students believe they are eligible for a refund, they are required to submit a completed Early Completion Tuition Refund Request with their final thesis package when they submit it to their program office. Students with a [credit balance](#) due to scholarships, awards or tuition overpayment will receive their refund according to the regularly scheduled refunds for tuition fees each term. Students should contact Grad Finance for more information and request a copy of the Refund Request Form. Domestic students eligible for a refund as a result of early completion may have any applicable refund amounts returned to the National Student Loan Service Centre, if tuition balance was cleared using OSAP funding. Please contact Student Awards and Financial Aid at connect@uoit.ca for more information.

In order to be eligible for a refund, a grade of pass must be entered for the student's thesis and the complete and final version of the thesis must be submitted to the program office (in accordance with the thesis guidelines) by the dates listed on the [SGPS website](#). In addition, they must also meet all other standard program requirements, which includes meeting a minimum program tuition fee. Details on minimum program tuitions fees are available on our [website](#).

The program office will record the date the final thesis package is submitted. The program office will also advise students who submit their packages on or very close (prior) to the refund deadline that if any deficiencies are found and the package requires revisions, the student will not be eligible for a tuition refund. In addition, students will be advised that it may take a few days for the program staff to check the package and confirm that it is complete. (This means that if students wait until the last minute to submit their thesis package, they cannot expect the program staff to inspect it immediately and that they will only be eligible for the refund if the package does not require any additions or revisions).

If revisions are required and the revised package is not submitted prior to the refund deadline, the student will not be eligible for the refund and the form will be removed from the thesis package before it is forwarded to SGPS.

When SGPS checks the package and finds it to be complete, they will confirm that the submission was made on or before the refund deadline. If eligible, the form will be sent to the Finance Department of SGPS for review.

Link to website/form:

- [Early Completion Tuition Refund Request](#)

3. Electronic Submission of Theses

As part of the final thesis package, students are required to submit **PDF files** in a shared google drive (sent to ontariotechu.net account):

- A copy of their thesis
- A copy of their completed Certificate of Approval
- A copy of their Submission of Master's or PhD form
- [A copy of the Theses Non-Exclusive License](#)
- [A copy of the ProQuest Form \(if applicable\)](#)

[A copy of the Withhold Form \(if applicable\)](#)

4. Role of SGPS

When the final thesis package is received, SGPS checks the physical and electronic components. SGPS signs off on the Submission of Master's or PhD Thesis form, files the original Certificate of Approval form and forwards the final thesis package (paper copy, copy in google drive and required forms) to the university library. SGPS must approve the thesis package items before the student is considered complete. Student's should take this into consideration if they are trying to submit by a specific deadline.

5. Requirements Completed and Mark Entered

When the requirements for the thesis are complete and submitted, SGPS registers the student into the thesis course and the GPD or RS enters the mark of pass or fail for the thesis course. Once the student's grade is entered, they can be advised to apply to graduate as per the online process established by the RO. The application to graduate is located on **MyCampus** and is open to students during the time periods specified on the [university website](#).

When SGPS receives confirmation that the final thesis grade has been added, they will ensure the title of the thesis is entered on the student's final transcript.

6. Role of the University Library

Once the library receives the thesis package from SGPS, they submit the hard copy for binding. The process normally takes four to six weeks. When the bound copy is returned to the library, it is placed in the library collection.

The Library submits the student's Thesis Non-exclusive License form and electronic copy to ProQuest so their thesis can be placed in the archives of Theses Canada and the National Library of Canada.

The Library uses the information from the files in a google drive folder to upload an electronic copy to E-Scholar, the library's digital repository of university research. The student's work can be accessed on the library [website](#).

For more detailed information, please visit the university library thesis publishing [website](#).

7. Personal Thesis Binding

Students may choose to have their thesis copies bound. If so, students must complete the Wallaceburg Thesis Bookbinding Form. The form and hard copies of the thesis can be dropped off to and picked up from the Graduate Thesis Coordinator at SGPS or the student can arrange thesis binding directly with the company. Finished copies take approximately 3-4 weeks to be printed and bound.

Visit the [Thesis Publishing section of the Library](#) for further information.

For more information on pick up and drop off dates email gradthesis@ontariotechu.ca

Link to form/website:

- [Wallaceburg Thesis Binding Form](#)

Thesis Procedures – Deadlines

Each term there are set deadlines for the submission of all required documentation in the thesis process. The deadlines specify the last day in a given term for documentation to be submitted or examinations to be conducted in order for students to be eligible to complete in that term. Submissions/examinations after these dates require registration in the following term; deadlines for tuition and eligibility for partial tuition refunds are posted on the [SGPS website](#).

Documentation may be submitted or exams conducted at any time **prior** to these deadlines, provided the time frames specified in the Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures are observed.

Thesis Procedures – Example Timeline

There are suggested dates and deadlines for PhD students in order to guide students through each step of the examination process in time to meet requirements for specific program end dates or for graduation ceremonies.

A PhD student looking ahead to a final examination may use the example [Timeline and Checklist](#) and/or the [Deadline Calculator](#) found on the [SGPS website](#) to help effectively plan the examination.

Thesis Procedures – Time Limits

The minimum time allowed for full-time students to complete all requirements for a doctoral program is two years, and the maximum is six years from the time of initial registration as a full-time student. Students registering on a part-time basis have a maximum of eight years to complete the degree.

Students needing to exceed the normal allotted time for completion of their program must formally [Request for program extension](#). Extension requests are to be made after the normal program length to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

For more information on time limits and extensions, [see section 7 of the Graduation and Conferral of Degrees Policy](#).

Other Information

1. Applying to Graduate

The RS or program office should advise students who have completed degree requirements that they will be required to apply to graduate in accordance with directions and deadlines provided on the [Office of the Registrar website](#).

All students completing degree requirements in a given semester are required to apply to graduate using the online application to graduate. Applying to graduate enables the RO to perform the steps required to grant the degree. If the student does not apply, the degree audit process will not occur. The application to graduate is located on MyCampus and is open to students during the time periods specified on the following university [webpage](#).

2. In-Camera Defence

Normally, the presentation is an open event that can be attended by all interested parties, although extraordinarily, it may be closed to a restricted audience, or no audience, for reasons of confidentiality, safety or intellectual property. In some cases, committee and audience members may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement. A disclosure agreement can be downloaded from the [SGPS website](#).

Prior to the defence: The chair of the examining committee, in consultation with the GPD and the RS(s), will determine whether the defence is open or closed. Once deemed closed, the RS will complete the top portion of the appropriate [Intellectual Property Disclosure](#) form and send it to SGPS. SGPS will ensure that each member of the examining committee completes the bottom portion of the form.

After the defence: The reasons for closing a defence are to be provided in the chair's report to SGPS.

Upon submission of the thesis package to the program office, and ultimately SGPS: Please ensure that the [Request for Approval to Withhold a Thesis from Publication form](#) is completed, if necessary.

3. Intellectual Property and Work with External Partners

Students who are engaged in research projects with industrial or community partners may be required to submit their thesis to the partner for review in advance of the oral examination. Often with contract research projects there are legal obligations around disclosing Intellectual property and delaying publication to protect intellectual property. Ideally, the student and their supervisor(s) will ensure that any issues or recommendations pertaining to intellectual property and research results are addressed before arrangements are made to proceed to the oral exam.

In those instances where issues have not been resolved prior to the examination, the thesis defence will not be delayed. There may, however be special conditions imposed on the conduct of the examination and/or the student may be required to apply for approval to withhold the thesis from publication for a specified period of time.

Please refer to the university's [Intellectual Property](#).

For further details, contact the [Office of Research Services \(ORS\)](#).