

THE UNIVERSITY FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION (Ph.D. only)

See also "Degree Regulations" for the Ph.D. degree in the School of Graduate Studies calendar.

On successful completion of the departmental oral examination (usually involving the supervisor(s) signing off on changes/corrections to the thesis after the departmental oral examination), the candidate, in conjunction with the supervisor and the Graduate Office, begins the process of arranging for the University's final oral examination.

Examinations may be held at any time during the year. Candidates should allow sufficient time for the process of arranging and scheduling a final oral examination. Candidates must allow seven to eight weeks between the time when the thesis is approved and ready to be sent to the External Appraiser and the date of the final examination. This time period is not flexible, and must be adhered to for the following reasons:

- a. The Vice-Dean at SGS must approve the examination committee before the thesis is sent to the External Appraiser
- b. The thesis must be available to the External Appraiser for a minimum of four weeks
- c. The appraisal must be available to the Candidate for a minimum of two weeks before the examination

It should be noted that the seven to eight week period could be longer when Christmas or other holidays intervene.

Pre-Approval of External Appraiser and Examination Committee

At any time after completion of the departmental oral examination, the supervisor(s) will nominate someone external to the University to serve as the External Appraiser of the thesis. This is achieved by submitting the names of the examination committee members and the name of the proposed External Appraiser and their CV, to the Graduate Office, for approval by the Graduate Coordinator. At this point, a date and time have not been set for the final oral examination. The proposed committee is approved by the Graduate Coordinator, and the nomination is then submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, for approval by the Vice-Dean. When forwarding nominations of potential External Appraisers to SGS for approval, the department must certify that the proposed External Appraiser has an arm's-length relation with the Candidate and the Supervisor. Requirements for the External Appraiser and quorum requirements for the examination committee are provided below:

The proposed External Appraiser:

1. should be a recognized expert on the subject of the thesis
2. should be external to the University as well as to its affiliated teaching hospitals and their research institute.
3. must be an Associate or Full Professor at his/her home institution or, if he/she comes from outside the academic sector, must possess the qualifications to be appointed to an academic position at this level.
4. must have an arm's-length relation both with the Candidate and with the Supervisor. Normally, this will exclude anyone who, in the past six years, has been a departmental colleague of the Candidate or Supervisor, has stood in a student-teacher relation with either of them, or has collaborated on a research project with either of them.

When approval has been received from SGS for an examination committee, the Graduate Office will notify the candidate and the supervisor(s). When the External Appraiser has been pre-approved, candidates can allow seven, rather than eight, weeks between the time when the thesis is approved and ready to be sent to the External Appraiser, and the date of the final examination.

Quorum Requirements:

1. The Examination Committee shall consist of four to six voting members. Because quorum is four voting members, SGS recommends including at least 5 voting members to ensure the exam proceeds as scheduled. The Committee must include:
 - a) At least one member, but not more than three members, of the Candidate's supervising committee.
 - b) At least two examiners who have not been closely involved in the supervision of the thesis. Those eligible include: the External Appraiser, members of the faculty appointed to the Candidate's graduate unit, and members of the faculty appointed to other graduate units of the University.
 - c) A non-voting Chair appointed by SGS.

2. The Examination Committee may also include up to two non-voting members. These members must also be listed on the nomination form and approved by the Vice-Dean, Programs.

Booking the Final Oral Examination

When the supervisor(s) determine that the thesis is ready to go forward for final oral examination, the candidate and supervisor arrange an examination date and time (preferably at 10 AM or 2 PM) which is suitable for all committee members, including the External Appraiser. The candidate should not be in contact with the External Appraiser when these arrangements are being made. Please note that the examination should be arranged for a date which is a minimum of seven to eight weeks in the future. The candidate and supervisor should complete the "PhD Final Oral Examination Booking Information Sheet" and submit this sheet to the Graduate Office along with an unbound copy of the final thesis, and a copy of the abstract.

The Graduate Office will:

- book the examination with the School of Graduate Studies, using the date/time specified by the candidate/supervisor on the booking sheet. (Examinations are held at the School of Graduate Studies, 63 St. George Street. All examination rooms at SGS are equipped with teleconferencing facilities. Students must supply their own laptop/computer).
- send the unbound copy of the thesis to the External Appraiser, along with instructions for completing the appraisal.
- issue a notice to the candidate and all committee members notifying them of the examination details (i.e., thesis title, examination committee membership, date/time/location of examination), and provide a document outlining 'conduct of the examination'
- upon receipt of the appraiser's written appraisal, and a minimum of two weeks before the examination, distribute a copy of the appraisal to the candidate and all examination committee members, along with a confirmation (reminder) program for the exam.
- send a reminder to the Examination Chair, (assigned by SGS) one day before the examination

The Candidate will:

- ensure that a copy of the thesis is delivered to each Examination Committee member (excluding the Examination Chair and External Appraiser) at least 4 weeks prior to the exam date.
- in the interval between receipt of the appraisal and the scheduled exam date, prepare a considered response but not discuss the appraisal with the external examiner until the examination is underway.
- bring a copy of the thesis to the final oral examination.

Following the Final Oral Examination

There are three possible results at a final oral defense. These are: as it stands, minor corrections, and minor modifications.

- With as it stands, the thesis is accepted in its current format and no changes are requested of the candidate, the thesis is due to SGS one week following the defense.
- With minor corrections, the thesis is due at SGS one month following the examination date. The committee will notify the student of any changes requested at the examination.
- Minor modifications requires that the student be notified, in writing, of any changes that are required to the thesis. The thesis due date will be 3 months from the date of the examination.

In most cases, a candidate has completed their degree requirements once they have submitted their defended, correctly formatted thesis to the U of T UMI thesis submission site, containing all corrections as agreed upon by the final oral examination committee or supervisor.

Candidates should take the following steps to ensure completion of all requirements:

1. Make any corrections or modifications to the thesis as required by your supervisor or final oral examination committee.
2. Ensure that you have obtained confirmation from your supervisor/sub-committee that you have successfully completed all required edits. Forward this confirmation to the Graduate Office at the Faculty of Forestry.
3. If applicable, submit a hard copy of the "restrict release" form.
4. Follow the formatting guidelines.
5. Follow the proper file naming convention when naming your thesis: e.g., Doe_John_20195_PhD_thesis.pdf (20191 indicates a March convocation, 20195 indicates a June convocation, and 20189 indicates a November convocation).
6. Submit your thesis as a PDF document to the U of T ProQuest thesis submission site. Copy and paste the indicated copyright permissions to the thesis repository when submitting your thesis, if applicable. You will be invited to order bound copies through the ProQuest thesis submission interface, but this involves time delays and added expense, so we strongly recommend having your thesis bound locally.
7. Receive notification of your submission from SGS, who will send you an email once we have checked the thesis formatting.
8. Keep your contact information up-to-date in ROSI; the Office of Convocation will communicate with you through your U of T email address.