

# **GUIDELINES FOR ORAL EXAMINATION OF THESIS<sup>1</sup>**

## **Role of the Chair**

The chair of the examination committee is the official representative of the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies). The chair serves to administer the examination according to the approved format of the program. The chair does not serve as an additional examiner.

It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the oral examination is conducted in a professional manner. The Chair must ensure that proper forms from the Office of Graduate Studies are available and duly completed and signed by the Examination Committee. The Chair should ensure that adequate time is allotted to the candidate for presentation of research findings, and to the examiners for questions. The details on the time allocation to the candidate and examiners are given in the following paragraphs. It is also the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that examiners should adhere to the allocated time.

In unforeseen circumstances where a Committee member is unable to attend the examination (*e.g.*, due to sickness) either in person or by video/teleconference, the Chair will attempt to receive questions to ask on behalf of the absent member, to be answered by the student to the satisfaction of the examiners present. If this absent member is the External Examiner of a PhD thesis examination, and the written thesis Appraisal and/or questions to ask have not been received, the examination should be postponed.

If during the examination the behaviour of either the candidate or the examiner(s) is unprofessional, the Chair should provide a warning. If the unprofessional behaviour continues, the Chair should stop the examination and report to the Graduate Coordinator.

The Chair should ensure recommendations for revision of the thesis are completed, and should withhold their endorsement of the examination (through signing the Recommendation Form) until such time.

## **Role of the Examiners**

The examiners have the responsibility to review the thesis as outlined in the University Guidelines for thesis evaluation. If an examiner feels that there is a major problem with the thesis, the examiner should inform the candidate in writing with a confidential copy only to the **advisor** and **Graduate Coordinator**. If the candidate and the examiner cannot resolve the problem before the oral examination, the Graduate Coordinator will act as facilitator. If there is no agreement, the examination can go forward at the student's request, or postponed on the advice of the Graduate Coordinator.

## **Maximum Duration of Oral Examinations**

Ph.D. Examination: 3.5 hours  
Master's Examination: 2.5 hours

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<sup>1</sup> Oral Examination Procedure October 22, 1996 (re-typed November 7, 2007 & updated June 1, 2016)

## Examination Procedure

### Ph.D. Oral Examination

Introduction by Chair- 5 minutes

Presentation of research findings/scholarly work by candidate - 30 minutes (maximum)

Public Question Period -10 minutes

Break - 5 minutes (members of the public are free to leave)

Examination Period (questions only from examiners) - 2 hours and 40 minutes

#### **Ordering of Questions by the Examination Committee:**

There will be two rounds of questions by the Committee. The questioning by the Committee will be in the following order:

- 1) External Examiner
- 2) Member of the Graduate Faculty (not on the Advisory Committee)
- 3) Member of the Advisory Committee
- 4) Advisor or second member of the Advisory Committee

Suggested time allotted to examination committee members:

<u>Examiner</u>	<u>Round 1</u>	<u>Round 2</u>
External	25 minutes	10 minutes
Graduate Faculty	20 minutes	10 minutes
Advisory Committee Member	20 minutes	10 minutes
Advisor/Advisory Committee Member	20 minutes	10 minutes

Deliberation (in camera) - 35 minutes

### Master's Oral Examination

Introduction by the Chair - 5 minutes

Presentation of research findings/scholarly work by candidate - 30 minutes (maximum)

Public Question Period - Audience -10 minutes

Break - 5 minutes (members of the public are free to leave)

Examination Period (questions only from examiners) - 1 hour and 40 minutes

**Ordering of Questions by the Examination Committee:**

There will be two rounds of questions by the Committee. The questioning by the Committee will be in the following order:

- 1) Member of the Graduate Faculty (not on the Advisory Committee)
- 2) Member of the Advisory Committee
- 3) Advisor or second member of the Advisory Committee

Suggested time allotted to examination committee members:

<b><u>Examiner</u></b>	<b><u>Round 1</u></b>	<b><u>Round 2</u></b>
Graduate Faculty	15 minutes	10 minutes
Advisory Committee Member	15 minutes	10 minutes
Advisor/Advisory Committee Member	15 minutes	10 minutes

Deliberation (in camera) - 25 minutes