

## APPENDIX C

### FRAN PhD Thesis and Defence Guidelines

This summary is intended as a guide for FRAN Graduate Students and Graduate Faculty. In all cases of interpretation and administration, the specific regulations of the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies will take precedence. Refer first to the following Graduate Calendar and Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies web pages:

- [Guidelines for Oral Examination of Thesis](#)
- [University's Degree Regulations, PhD](#)
- [Completion and Graduation](#)
- [Electronic Thesis Information](#)
- Review [Policy on Responsibilities of Advisors, Advisory Committees and Graduate Students](#)
- Review [Graduate Student-Advisor Mediation Procedures](#)

#### Establish Advisory Committee

The [Advisory Committee Appointment & Graduate Degree Program Form](#) needs to be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the student's 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. Failure to submit this form will result in blocked registration in the following semester. *A new Advisory Committee Appointment form must be submitted if any changes are made to an Advisory Committee after this form has been submitted.*

#### Thesis Proposal

- Detailed proposals for the thesis are prepared by the student in consultation with the Advisor and must be submitted to the Advisory Committee for approval. See [Thesis/Major Paper Proposal: Approval Form](#).
- PhD students must present a thesis proposal to the Advisory Committee and have this approved by the committee following completion of the Qualifying Examination.
- As part of the approval process, the Advisory Committee considers the feasibility of the study in terms or time limitations, expenses and availability of participants. The proposal may need several drafts to clarify the scope or to improve the writing.
- Students may be required to submit for REB approval after consultation with the Advisory Committee.
- Difficulties sometimes arise during the data collection that may require changes to the approved procedures. For example, access to subjects may be limited or recruitment may take an excessively long time and a smaller sample than originally planned might become necessary. In these cases, all changes must be approved by the Advisory Committee.
- Faculty are expected to read and return thesis drafts (or thesis proposals) within a reasonable period, typically two weeks. Students are expected to show similar consideration of faculty.
- **Ethics Approval** – In most cases it will be necessary to obtain clearance of all research involving human subjects from the [University of Guelph's Research Ethics Board](#).

#### Sanctions and Expectations

- It is expected that most students will have no issues in meeting the deadlines for the selection of an Advisory Committee and the submission of a thesis proposal. The Department's Graduate Coordinator will review all cases where the deadlines have not been met and if the failure to comply is

judged to be due to [unsatisfactory progress](#) on the part of the student, the student will receive a “some concerns” or “unsatisfactory” semester evaluation. Success with Action Plans devised to address a “some concerns” or “unsatisfactory” evaluation will be used in subsequent semesters to determine satisfactory progress. Repeated poor evaluations and/or missed deadlines may result in recommended withdrawal from the program.

### **PhD Guidelines for Thesis Proposal and Thesis**

In keeping with the [standards of the University of Guelph](#), the PhD dissertation is expected to make a significant contribution to the field. It must provide evidence of rigorous scholarship, capacity for critical analysis, and satisfactory literary style. In general, students will pursue thesis work that contributes to theory and is empirical in nature.

### **Form and Content of the PhD Thesis Proposal**

#### **a) Introduction**

The proposal should review the relevant literature. This review should demonstrate that the author understands the critical, theoretical and methodological issues directly related to the problem which is to be investigated. The introduction should also include a clear statement of the purpose of the study.

#### **b) Research Questions (or Hypotheses)**

#### **c) Study Design and Methods**

- The procedures for obtaining access to subjects should be outlined. In rare cases, where the populations to be sampled are not easily accessible, enquiries regarding the feasibility of the project must be assured prior to the approval of the thesis proposal. Theoretical positions and stances should be clarified.
- A complete specification of the procedure and design includes: recruitment of sample, instructions to participants, assignment of participants to groups, the specific levels of variables selected or manipulated, randomization, questionnaires used, and other features which demonstrate the rigour used to carry out the study.
- Equipment needs should be detailed in this section. If a questionnaire is to be used, then its development, pre and pilot testing need to be described and a complete copy should be included with the proposal

#### **d) Analyses –** A detailed description of the data analysis and qualitative approaches, and/or statistical procedures to be used should be provided. It should be made clear how these analyses address the research questions or hypotheses.

### **Form and Content of the PhD Thesis**

The thesis includes all of the sections described above for the thesis proposal and will be in the format specified by the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies. In addition, the thesis includes:

#### **e) Results –** Note: this chapter may be written as a draft publication for submission, including abbreviated literature review/introduction, methods and discussion. Please note this explanation of results suggests it may be written as an abbreviated literature review/introduction/methods/discussion. Students who choose this option are still expected to write a comprehensive literature review as well as a thorough discussion/implications section (as noted in the next section)

#### **f) Discussion –** overall discussion of the project as a whole

#### **g) Appendices with copies of the following**

- REB approval certificate
- Information letter for study participant, if appropriate, and consent form
- Recruitment materials (e.g. Copies of ads in newspapers, posters, etc.)
- Final copies of instruments or questionnaires used, if they are not copyrighted

- Additional data/results not presented in the Results chapter

In this department, the choice of format for the final dissertation is made by the student and the Advisory Committee. Two formats for the dissertation are common:

1. A single **unified write-up** with separate chapters for the literature review, methodology and analyses, results, and discussion
2. A **modified write-up**. Chapters in the dissertation will include a complete Introduction, Objectives/Hypotheses, Methods and detailed Discussion, as in the unified write-up (above). The Results chapter(s) consists of a series of two or more self-contained articles, which could be submitted separately for consideration to a scholarly journal. The scope of the Introduction, Methods and Discussion chapters is similar to that of the unified write-up (above) demonstrating the depth and breadth of the work undertaken.

It is recommended that thesis research be prepared for publication in an appropriate journal before a student leaves the department. Should a student submit a manuscript prior to dissertation, he/she should be advised that acceptance of a manuscript from a journal is separate from, and does not constitute, acceptance or approval by the Advisory Committee. It is the responsibility of the examining committee to determine if the dissertation fully meets degree requirements.

### **External Examiner**

For each doctoral thesis, an External Examiner from outside the university is appointed on behalf of the Dean of Graduate Studies by the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Program Assistant, in consultation with the Advisor. Three names are provided to the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Program Assistant by the advisor in consultation with the student. The External Examiner must not have served as Advisor to the student's Advisor and must not have participated in joint projects with the Advisor or student nor have been a student or member of the graduate faculty in the University in the last 5 years. The nomination will be made when the candidate's Advisor declares that the thesis is approaching completion, which is **normally no later than the beginning of the student's last semester**.

The External Examiner will read the thesis and submit a written appraisal of the thesis to the Chair of the Defence. A copy of the External Examiner's report will be made available to the candidate and advisory committee members prior to their scheduled defence date. This report may outline any serious concerns that the External Examiner has with the thesis. If these concerns cannot be resolved prior to the defence, the defence may be delayed until the issues can be resolved to the examination committee's satisfaction (e.g. if data analyses need to be reconsidered) or to "agree to disagree" and proceed as scheduled. Given that the student's advisory committee has approved the thesis and given consent for the student to proceed to defence, the External Examiner cannot call off the defence. The External Examiner is expected to participate in the final oral examination and to assist in evaluating all aspects of the candidate's performance. Any individual who serves as an External Examiner may not serve again until a period of 3 years has passed.

### **Submission of Thesis for Examination**

During the preparation of the written thesis, the student should be receiving regular feedback from the Advisory Committee. In the event that the student demonstrates an inability to prepare a suitable thesis, the Advisory Committee will report to the Department's Graduate Coordinator, through the semester reports, the challenge the student is having (see: Graduate Calendar [Unsatisfactory Progress](#)). A copy of the semester report will be sent to the student and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Faculty may then recommend that the student withdraw from the program.

When the Advisory Committee indicates that a thesis is ready for examination, each member of the Committee will sign the [Examination Request Form](#), and submit it to the Graduate Program Assistant a minimum of **8 weeks** before the scheduled examination. Once a chair has been determined (see below), the Graduate Coordinator signs the form and it is then forwarded to the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies for processing of final paperwork.

The student distributes drafts (hardcopy or digital copy depending on the committee's preference) of the thesis to the examination committee a minimum of **4 weeks** prior to the defence date. The External Examiner will submit a written appraisal of the thesis (at least 7 days prior to the examination) to the Chair of the Defence who will then provide these comments to the Candidate and Advisory Committee prior to the scheduled defence date.

It should be noted that the candidate may request the examination even though the Advisory Committee considers that their thesis is not ready to go forward for examination and defence. At busy times in the semester, or when faculty are on vacation, quick turn-around time or the scheduling of the oral defences may not be possible.

Raw data and/or copies of computer printouts do not need to be included in the final draft of the thesis, but they must be available for inspection by the Advisory Committee if requested. The original of all research materials, laboratory records, questionnaires, transcripts, computer printouts etc. must be made available to the Advisor on a regular basis, with copies retained by the student. REB may also require that materials be stored in a particular way.

### **Thesis Defence Suggested Protocol**

Once the Chair of the defence has been appointed by the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Program Assistant, the date, time and location of the examination are determined in consultation with the Advisory Committee, External Examiner and Defence Chair. The [Doctoral Final Examination Arrangements Form](#) is submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant who notifies the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies. The necessary paperwork is forwarded to the Chair of the defence and a Defence Notice will go out to notify the Department of the upcoming defence.

1. The student arranges for a projector and lap-top, if necessary, for the defence presentation. The presentation should be approx. 20-30 minutes long, after which the Chair invites members of the audience to leave if they cannot be present for the entire questioning period (approx. 2 hours for PhD students).
2. The oral examination is open to the public. People from external agencies who were involved with the research may also be invited. The defence Chair announces the rules of the examination, and the audience is responsible for following these.
3. The Chair of the defence introduces the student and examination committee members and states the number of rounds of question and the order of the examiners. Members of the audience may question the candidate only upon invitation of the chair.
4. Generally, a 2-hour time slot is booked for the defence, but defences can run longer. If the defence goes longer than 2 hours, the Chair can end the questioning. At any time during the questioning the Chair can also call for a recess if needed.
5. When the questions have ended, the Chair asks the audience and the student to leave the room while the examination committee discusses the student's performance on the: (1) written thesis, and (2) oral defence. Members of the examination committee also discuss the specific changes they want to see in the final thesis.

## **Chair of the Defence**

For PhD Defences, the Department Chair and Graduate Coordinator will rotate chairing defences.

## **Role of the Chair**

The chair serves to administer and ensure the proper conduct of the examination. The Chair is expected to exercise full control over the proceedings and does not participate directly in questioning the candidate during the examination. In unforeseen circumstances where an examiner is unable to attend due to, e.g., sudden illness, accident, etc., 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. (Graduate Calendar)

The chair of the thesis defence records whether the written thesis and oral defence are “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” and ensures that all paperwork is properly completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant.

## **Authority**

The chair may:

- Call for a recess if the student or examination committee need a break
- Ask members of the audience to leave if they are being disruptive
- In exceptional circumstances, stop the oral examination and ask for it to be rescheduled.

## **Examination Committee**

The final oral examination is conducted by a committee consisting of five members, as follows:

- The departmental Graduate Program Coordinator or Chair, who acts as chair of the examination committee
- The external examiner
- A member of the regular graduate faculty who is not a member of the advisory committee
- Two members of the student's advisory committee, selected by the advisory committee.

## **Responsibilities of Examiners**

All examiners come to the defence prepared to ask questions that may be theoretical, methodological, focused on the interpretation of results and potential implications.

All members of the examination committee are expected to be present for the examination. External Examiners may use video conferencing to attend the defence.

## **Possible Outcomes of the Thesis Defence:**

- There is consensus among the examination committee that the student has passed the oral examination and the thesis is acceptable (if necessary revisions are made).
- There is one “unsatisfactory” - i.e., one person on the examination committee feels that the oral exam or the written thesis (or both) was (were) not satisfactory. The student passes with one “unsatisfactory” vote.
- There is more than one “unsatisfactory” – the student would need to reschedule another oral defence

## **Communicating Results of the Examination**

After the student returns to the room, the Chair reviews the forms that need to be signed by the student and the changes that are required before the thesis can be submitted to the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies.

### **Final Disposition of the Thesis**

The student meets with the advisor to show him/her the changes that were required to the thesis. It is expected that these changes are to be made and reviewed immediately to avoid delay in submission.

### **Thesis Submission**

After the student has successfully defended the thesis at the final oral examination, has made required changes, and received final approval from the examination committee, see submission instructions using the [Thesis Submission Checklist](#).

### **Thesis Binding**

Once the electronic submission is approved by the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, you have two options if you wish to have your thesis bound:

- 1) You may submit your thesis as a PDF online through PageforPage at [www.pageforpage.com](http://www.pageforpage.com) .  
Simply follow the instruction, upload your files, choose the desired option for your thesis, make your payment and wait for your bound thesis to be delivered.
- 2) Retain a copy of the approval email to submit to M & T Printing Group with any PDF or required paper copies for binding. Thesis binding and copying may be done by contacting M & T Printing Group at [guelph@mtprint.com](mailto:guelph@mtprint.com) to receive instructions on submission, binding and delivery. Payment for printing and binding copies is made through the M & T Printing Group.

Lastly, complete and submit an [Application for Graduation form](#) to the Office of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies along with the appropriate graduation fee.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**