



THESIS PREPARATION & DEFENCE

Thesis Preparation

Following approval at the Permission to Write meeting, the student prepares a complete draft of the thesis in accordance with the CGPS Thesis Guidelines (see the [Thesis Roadmap](#) on the Grad HUB).

The draft is submitted to the supervisor, who reviews the document and provides feedback. The student revises the thesis until the supervisor is satisfied that it is ready for committee review. The approved draft is then circulated to all committee members. Committee members are expected to provide feedback within two to three weeks. The student revises the thesis in response to all comments.

Once revisions are complete, the thesis is returned to the supervisor for final review. All committee members must approve the final version. The supervisor provides confirmation of this approval to the Graduate Administrative Support person before the defence can be arranged.

Submission for Defence

For PhD students, the final approved thesis must be submitted to the committee and Graduate Administrative Assistant **at least five weeks** prior to the defence date. The College will forward the thesis to CGPS, which distributes it to the University Examiner and External Examiner in accordance with CGPS policy.

For MSc students, the final approved thesis must be submitted to the committee, the Graduate Administrative Support person, and the Arm's-Length Examiner **at least two weeks** prior to the defence date.

Examiners

The selection, eligibility, and approval of all examiners are governed by CGPS policy (see [Section 8.2](#)).

For a PhD defence, a University Examiner and an External Examiner are required. The supervisor is responsible for identifying suitable individuals, confirming that they meet CGPS criteria, and providing any required documentation for approval (e.g. CV). The University Examiner is approved by the Graduate Chair or Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Affairs, while the External Examiner is approved by the Associate Dean, CGPS.

For an MSc defence, an Arm's-Length Examiner is required. This examiner must not have been directly involved in the student's research and must be approved internally. For this, the supervisor submits to the Graduate Administrative Support Person the examiner's name, affiliation, qualifications, and confirmation of arm's-length status for approval by the Graduate Chair or Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Affairs.

Scheduling the Defence

Once the thesis has been approved and examiners have been confirmed, the defence can be scheduled. The supervisor identifies possible dates based on the availability of the student and examiners. The Graduate Administrative Support person schedules the room or virtual platform.

Students must not contact the External Examiner or Arm's-Length Examiner prior to the defence.

Defence

Public Presentation

The defence begins with a public thesis presentation, approximately 40 minutes for a PhD and 30 minutes for an MSc, followed by a brief question period from the audience. This event is typically advertised to College faculty and graduate students, and the student may invite additional audience members.

Request for a Closed Presentation

A student or supervisor can request that the presentation be closed to the public, subject to email approval by the advisory committee through a majority vote. The Graduate Chair and/or Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Affairs must be copied on the correspondence, and the Graduate Office must be notified at least two weeks in advance to prevent advertisement of the defense.

Examination

Following the public presentation, the chair will ask all audience members to leave before the examination begins. All exam procedures, questioning, and evaluation are conducted in accordance with the [CGPS Defence policy](#).

Request for an Open Examination

A student may request that the examination portion of the defence be open to audience members. Attendance (in-person only) is limited to current graduate students, faculty, and staff. Requests must be made through the Graduate Chair and/or Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Affairs, who will conduct a confidential vote of the defence committee, including the examiner. Unanimous approval is required. The Graduate Office must be notified at least four weeks in advance of the defence to advertise and book a large enough space. To prevent disruptions, children are not permitted to attend, and audience members must be informed to remain in the room for the entire duration of the examination, which may last several hours. Audio and video recording is not permitted.

After the Defence

Following a successful defence, the student completes all required revisions to the thesis, which must be approved by the Examiner. The Examiner may, however, delegate final approval authority to the Supervisor. Once the revised thesis is approved, the Supervisor must inform the Graduate Office. The student must also ensure that all program requirements have been met, including completion of the 990 seminar.

Final Submission

The student submits the final approved thesis to the Electronic Thesis Database (ETD) in accordance with CGPS requirements and provides any required documentation (see [Section 9](#)). Submission to the ETD confirms completion of degree requirements.

Graduation

The student must [apply to graduate](#) by the applicable deadline and ensure that all degree requirements are complete and all outstanding fees have been paid. Students who require proof of completion prior to convocation may request a letter from CGPS.