

Guidelines for Chairs of Oral Examinations

Master's Non-thesis

1. **Arrive 10 minutes prior to exam** start time.
2. **Introduce yourself** as Chair acting on behalf of Faculty of Graduate Studies. Begin with the statement "We acknowledge and respect the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day."
3. **Introduce the candidate.**
4. **Ask examining committee members to introduce themselves.**
5. **Review the process.**
6. **Conduct the examination** (*usually lasts from 1 ½ - 2 hours*):
 - a. Candidate begins with a brief (10—20 minutes) summary of work;
 - b. Examining committee asks two rounds of questions;
 - c. If there is sufficient time you may call for questions from other members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies;
 - d. If there is sufficient time you may call for questions from the audience;
 - e. When questioning is completed, ask the candidate and the audience to withdraw so that the examining committee can consider the research and oral examination *in camera*.
7. **Conduct post-oral discussion *in camera***

Departmental regulations will set out the basis on which the student is to be examined. Questions usually focus on the required independent work, and the committee members may also ask questions which allow them to evaluate the student's comprehension of certain coursework or understanding of a required reading list.
8. **The committee chooses an outcome** from the options listed below.
9. **The candidate is asked to return** to the examining room and the results are discussed.
10. **The Chair fills out the Chair's Report** and returns it to Graduate Admissions and Records within five days.
 - a. The Chair's Report indicates the constituency of the examining committee.
 - b. If a committee member is absent or has been substituted, please note this on the form.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF THE ORAL EXAMINATION

1. The independent research work is **acceptable and the oral examination is acceptable.**

In this case the Chair of the academic unit and the student's primary supervisor shall sign the academic unit's Letter of Recommendation.

2. That the independent research work is **acceptable subject to minor revision and the oral defence is acceptable.**

In this case, all members of the examining committee except the primary supervisor shall sign the letter and at the end of the examination work together to draw up a list of revisions and establish a time limit for the completion of these revisions. The primary supervisor will approve the independent research work when it has been amended to their satisfaction.

3. That the independent research work is **acceptable subject to major revision and the oral defense is acceptable.**

After consultation with the candidate, the maximum length of time permitted for the revision shall be set by majority vote of the committee (not to exceed one year). A detailed and complete list of the necessary revisions shall be set by majority vote of the examining committee and given to the student at the

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conclusion of the examination. The primary supervisor shall oversee the revision of the project. If the primary supervisor finds the revisions have met the requirements agreed at the examination, the primary supervisor shall distribute the project to the rest of examining committee. If it is acceptable to the committee, the primary supervisor shall sign the Letter of Recommendation.

4. The examination is “adjourned”.

This result should not be confused with failure (see 5. Failure, below). Adjournment may be called for two different types of circumstances:

- a. A sudden illness or emergency that does not allow for the examination to be completed; an external environmental situation arises that forces the exam to be prematurely terminated (such as fire alarm, power failure or natural disaster); or when the technology being used breaks down and cannot be repaired in time to continue the examination. When an examination is adjourned for these types of circumstances, the chair shall make a written report to the Dean of Graduate Studies within three (3) working days of the date of the oral examination. After reviewing these reports the Dean will set a date for reconvening the examination. The date for reconvening shall be no later than six months from the date of the first examination.
- b. Where the written work is acceptable but the student has failed the oral defense. When an examination is adjourned for this circumstance, each member of the examining committee shall make a written report to the Dean of Graduate Studies within 10 working days of the date of the oral examination. After reviewing these reports the Dean will set a date for reconvening the examination. The Dean shall also determine whether or not the composition of the original committee is appropriate for the reconvened examination. The date for reconvening shall be no later than six months from the date of the first examination.

5. The examination is **failed**.

If two or more members of the examining committee are opposed to passing the student, the student will not be recommended for the degree. In this case, the committee shall make a written report to the Dean of Graduate Studies outlining the reasons for the decision. A student who fails the oral examination has the right to appeal and should consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies.