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 approximately 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 Programs Administrative Assistant before the defence can be arranged.

Submission for Defence

For PhD students, the final approved thesis must be submitted to the committee and the Graduate Programs Administrative Assistant **at least five weeks** prior to the intended 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 Programs Administrative Assistant, 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 Programs Administrative Assistant 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 is scheduled. The supervisor identifies possible dates based on the availability of the student and examiners. The Graduate Programs Administrative Assistant finalizes the date and time, books the room or virtual platform, and coordinates logistical arrangements.

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

Defence

Graduate student defence presentations are open to all interested attendees. Following the presentation (approximately 40 minutes for a PhD and 30 minutes for an MSc), there will be a brief question period for members of the audience.

After this, the chair will ask all audience members to leave so that the closed portion of the defence may begin. All examination procedures, questioning, and evaluation are conducted in accordance with the CGPS Defence policy.

Following a successful defence, the student completes all required revisions to the thesis. The supervisor reviews and approves the final version and confirms completion to Graduate Affairs. The student must also ensure that all program requirements have been met, including completion of the 990 seminar and the 994 or 996 requirement, which is not credited until the final thesis is approved.

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.