Top 13 Questions About Completing Your MSc Thesis, Defending, & Graduating!

Prepared December 2012
Revised May 2017
Timelines

1. When should a final draft of my thesis be ready?
When should a final draft be ready?

http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/start/deadlines.htm

Convocation

Revisions Completed, Thesis submitted to SGS

Defense

External appraiser approved by IHPME
Thesis distributed to Examination Ctm.

Committee “signs off”

1st Completed draft

Convocation: June
Revisions Completed, Thesis submitted to SGS: Mid April
Defense: Late March
External appraiser approved by IHPME, Thesis distributed to Examination Ctm.: Mid-February
Committee “signs off”: Jan? or Dec?
1st Completed draft: Jan? or Dec?
Deadlines for November Graduation

Thesis submitted to SGS – EARLY October
Request to IHPME re: Defense – July or Aug
2. Can I include previously published material in my thesis?
3. Where can I see examples of past students’ theses?
Can I include previously published material in my thesis?

- [http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/finup/producingthesis/copyrt.htm](http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/finup/producingthesis/copyrt.htm)

- Yes, but:
  - Need permission from copyright owner
  - Applies to your published papers and to figures you want to include from elsewhere, questionnaires, etc.
Where can I see examples of past students’ theses?

- Graduate office
- List of titles on IHPME website
  - http://www.ihpme.utoronto.ca/about/research/students.htm
- Proquest Dissertations & Theses: Full Text
  - http://simplelink.library.utoronto.ca/url.cfm/54551
Defense

4. Who will be at my defense?
5. How do I choose an external examiner?
6. How do I choose an internal examiner?
7. Does everybody have to be at the defense?
8. Who else will be at my defense?
9. Can you bend the rules for me just this once?
10. How do I schedule my defense?
Who will be at my defense?

• Final examination committee includes “at least 4 but no more than 6 voting members”

• Your Advisory Committee
  – Up to 3 Committee members vote (some MSc committees have only a supervisor and one committee member)

• External examiner/appraiser
  – Preferably a voting member

• Internal examiner
  – Voting member

• Chair
  – Non-voting; Program Director or designate
How do I choose an external examiner?

• Responsibility of “Supervisor and Student” to fix upon a suitable External Examiner/Appraiser
  – External to IHPME (CEHCR – outside supervisor/student’s hospital division and research institute)
  – Associate Professor level or equivalent, recognized expert
  – Arm’s length relationship: past 6 years not a departmental colleague, student-teacher relationship, or collaborated on a research project with Candidate or Supervisor (definitely no joint publications)

• Supervisor recommends External Examiner to Graduate Coordinator for approval

• External examiner becomes appraiser if they do not participate in defence; however, we strongly encourage External Examiners to contribute their vote

• For MSc, no written report is required of external examiner (Report is required for external appraiser)
How do I choose an internal examiner?

- Responsibility of “Supervisor and Student” to suggest an Internal Examiner to Graduate Coordinator
- Graduate Coordinator approves selection
- MSc internal examiner should be internal to IHPME, but outside of advisory committee

- Arm’s length relationship

- But, for CEHCR, may be from same research institute or hospital division, at discretion of CEHCR director and Graduate Coordinator
Does everybody on my committee have to be at my defense?

- No, however they generally are; some may not vote since quorum = 4 voting members and (only) up to 3 committee members can vote
- External can participate by teleconference
- We **strongly** encourage selecting a day/time that accommodates all members of the examination committee!
Who else will be at my defense?

- Closed exam – no friends, family
- Everyone will ask questions! Except for the Chair
Bending Rules

• We will work with you whenever possible to meet your defense objectives, however there is little “wasted” time in the timeframes outlined.

• In particular, the answer will be “No” to request for compressed timelines or inappropriate examiners.
How do I Schedule My Defense?

- Complete and submit the MSc Final Oral Exam Booking Request form
- HSR – Program Assistant; CEHCR – Zoe Downie-Ross
- Requires ALL committee members to sign that the dissertation is ready to distribute
- Final draft dissertation MUST be ready to distribute 6 weeks prior to exam date!
11. What happens at the defense?
12. What are possible defense outcomes?
13. What happens after the defense?
What Happens at the Defense?

- Initial discussion among examination committee
- Your 20 minute presentation (see next slide)
- Usually two rounds of questions, starting with external examiner, then internal examiner, then your committee and concluding with your supervisor
- Follow up discussion among examination committee, including vote to Pass/Adjourn, and vote re: conditions for Pass
- The Chair will manage the defense process, and does not (normally) ask questions
- Supervisor maintains a list of changes to be made
Twenty Minute Presentation

• Opportunity to address external examiner’s comments

• Remember – everyone will have read your dissertation

• Consider Handouts, especially if external examiner is not present
  – send slides to external examiner ahead of time
  – clarify when slides are being changed
What Are the Possible Defense Outcomes?

- Examined on both presentation and written work
- Committee votes twice:
  - Pass / Adjourn
  - If pass
    - As it stands → 1 week
    - Minor corrections → 1 month
    - Minor modifications → 3 months
Minor Corrections

• Supervisor informs Candidate of necessary corrections
• The Supervisor certifies in writing to the Graduate Coordinator that the corrections have been made
Minor Modifications

• Chair appoints a supervising subcommittee
• At least 2 members; usually includes the Departmental representative (Chair)
• 1 is appointed the role of Convener, who:
  – Reports minor modifications needed in writing
  – Reports completion to Graduate Coordinator
What Happens After the Defense?

• Make any required changes and notify Program Assistant with cc to Program Director that all necessary changes have been made.

• Submit final document to SGS for posting on T Space