

## Appendix I

# PHD THESIS DEFENSE GUIDELINES

## PLAN IN ADVANCE

Writing up and defending your PhD thesis takes an AVERAGE of 5 ½ – 7 ½ months [3 months for writing up, 1-3 months for thesis proofing, review, and a month and a half (6 weeks) for the examination process].

- Send thesis drafts to supervisor to review (allow at least one month for this).
- Be sure that you have completed all degree requirements.

*Please make sure that your supervisor reviews each part of your thesis as you write them. This process will help you to make corrections and changes early and help you to maintain continuity throughout the writing process. Feedback from your supervisor on draft chapters (or parts of chapters) should be provided within 2 weeks or an agreed upon time.*

## THE THESIS

### Before writing your thesis

- Consult the format of previously completed theses in OCI library
- Obtain School of Graduate Studies guidelines for the preparation, formatting and binding of thesis at <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current/thesis/index.asp>
- Obtain the necessary forms from the SGS website at <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current/studentforms/index.asp> . They'll accompany your final thesis submission to SGS.

“Authorization to Distribute Form”

“UMI Categorization Form”

“National Library of Canada Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Thesis Form”

Copyright Checklist and Sample Letter

Author Checklist for Theses

### Thesis Contents

Title Page

Table of Contents with page numbers

Table of Illustrations

List of Abbreviations in alphabetical order

Abstract

Introduction and Background (Review of the Literature) including Hypothesis

Experimental design and Methods

Results

Conclusions and Discussion and Future Directions

References

Subtitles in the Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion will help organize the presentation and provide easy reference for the reviewers. All copies of the thesis must have a complete copy of illustrations that are clearly labeled, numbered and are an exact duplicate of the original.

Some student's use published manuscripts as the basis for the thesis. Choose your main project and use other papers if associated with the work in the body, or as appendices. Revise the manuscripts to remove redundancies (i.e. repeats of methods used) and add bridging sections as required to make the thesis easily readable. Include a reasonable review of your literature, and expand on the science as required. Your "Methods" section will contain more information than the average research publication. Also, remember that theses should not contain any "data not shown".

On average, a PhD thesis should be 75-125 pages in length excluding figures and references, double-spaced, 12-point size font, or equivalent, 1-inch margin. All pages should be numbered.

### **Special Issues**

#### **Contributions of others for your project...**

Discuss this with your supervisor. Acknowledge others properly in the thesis, but be ready to defend work by others used in your thesis. Clearly state your own contribution in the thesis.

#### **More than one publication was generated during your training...**

If they are related to your main hypothesis, you may present them as separate chapters in the thesis. If they are not directly related to your main research, you may add it as an appendix in the thesis. However, be ready to answer questions raised from such work.

Two commonly used formats are:

- If the methods are similar, put them together, then present results as separate chapters
- If different methods are used, eliminate the Methods chapter and present methods in separate chapters

#### **Which comes first: publication of the research, or defense of the thesis?**

Talk to your supervisor about this and come to an agreement early on in your program. Your supervisor has a vested interest in prompt publication. You have an interest in a quick degree completion. Contact the MBP Office if there is disagreement over this.

#### **Confidentiality and intellectual property...**

Make an appointment with the MBP Graduate Coordinator IMMEDIATELY if

- your student stipend is derived from a contract, or
- if your research project is associated with an industrial contract

*Industrial support of research may limit the communication of research findings. This may affect your thesis and degree defense.* Faculty of Medicine Guidelines for Graduate Students Working in an Industrially Supported Environment is on the web at:

<http://utl1.library.utoronto.ca/www/medicine/cal/calrppgg.htm>

## **PHD SENATE ORAL EXAMINATION (FOE)**

The Final Oral Examination (FOE), in addition to reviewing and approving the thesis, and testing the student's knowledge of his/her field of study, should discuss new questions that arise from the work and future projects that could be developed. The examination usually lasts

about 2-3 hours, and is made up of 2 parts: (1) public seminar 20-40 minutes, and (2) a closed oral examination.

### **The Examination Committee**

- There is no internal examiner.
- All examiners (except the external examiner) must have full membership in the SGS.
- Non-voting members may ONLY attend with the written approval of the MBP Chair and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

### **After the Exam**

Immediately after the FOE, the student and examination chair should go to the PhD Oral Office to submit the completed examination file. The student will be informed at this time of any additional paperwork that must be completed. If the exam is held later in the day and if the student goes the next day, please drop by the Departmental office before you go.

Convocation is held annually in November and June and *in absentia* in March.

### **Revise and submit your thesis**

The thesis is a permanent evidence for your degree training. It is the culmination of your Ph.D. Your degree is not an occupation, but a lifetime honor. Make sure that this enduring document is impeccable! Your thesis will require the following attachments AFTER your Final Oral examination.

- Copyright checklist
- Author Checklist
- Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Theses
- Authority to Distribute
- UMI Subject Categorization Form

The student must submit an unbound final copy of the thesis to the School of Graduate Studies, and one bound copy to the MBP Office, by the following deadline (check the Grad. Student Handbook to confirm these dates):

- October 3, for November Convocation
- January 30, for March Convocation (*in absentia*)
- April 24, for Spring Convocation

### **Examination Hints**

#### **When studying for the exam:**

- Get familiar with several key references, including the first author's name and the research group.

#### **On the day of the exam:**

- There is no dress code, but students should dress in a professional manner. It is your day!
- Come early to check the equipment
- Bring a bottle of water

## **Public Presentation**

- 20-40 minutes **MAXIMUM** (about 20 slides)
- Hypothesis: This is the most important part of your research
- Method: concentrate on the experimental design
- Results: only present the main results
- Conclusion: be clear and accurate
- Break, resume

## **Closed Exam- Examination Questions**

There are several types of examination questions, which fall into 4 categories:

- Related to your research: background, significance
- Questions from your thesis: statement, presentation of figures, additional information, and your mistakes
- Background knowledge: statistics, etc
- Unpredictable questions

## **How to answer your questions:**

- Make sure you understand the question properly.
- Provide a clear, brief answer
- Use references to demonstrate your knowledge and support your point
- Don't be defensive
- Be honest. Sometimes, "I don't know" could be the best answer
- If the question is not related to your research directly, point it out first, and then speculate
- After the first round, if you feel necessary, you may ask a short break.
- The Chair has the obligation to protect the student. If you feel "harassed" you may bring this to the attention of the Exam Chair

## **DEFENSE DATE AND TUITION FEES**

**Fees in your final year are levied on a monthly basis.** Fees will be charged until the end of the month after you have handed in your final thesis to the PhD Orals Office. You have **THREE OPTIONS FOR FEES PAYMENT** in the final year of study. Call the Fees Office at 416-978-2142 to discuss payment.

- Pay full year fees up front and get a rebate of the portion of unused fees (i.e. pay fees in September, graduate in April and get 5 month fee rebate)
- Pay one term of fees up front and get a rebate of the unused fees portion (i.e. pay fees in September, graduate in November and get 2 month rebate)
- Pay fees pro-rated on a monthly basis