

*Effective for examinations of ThD/PhD(USMC) theses submitted to the GCTS on or after November 1, 2018, the following regulations supersede the regulations in section 10.5-10.9 in the ThD/PhD(USMC) Handbook 2018-19 for students who choose the Option 1 Final Oral Examination procedures.*

**Option 2 [only external examiner writes report; student receives external report in advance of oral defence]**

## **10.5 The thesis examination committee**

### **10.5.1 Constitution of the committee.**

In the case of a ThD examination, the thesis examination committee shall comprise five voting members: (a) the thesis supervisor; (b) one other member of the thesis supervisory committee; (c) the other member of the thesis supervisory committee; (d) an external examiner; and (e) an examiner representing the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Toronto, who is appointed by the Vice-Dean, Programs, of the School of Graduate Studies in consultation with the GCTS Director. In the case of a PhD (USMC) examination, a TST examiner is appointed instead of a University of Toronto examiner.

#### **10.5.1.1 Restriction on examiners.**

The external examiner must have an arm's-length relationship to the student. In addition, at least one other member of the committee must not have been closely involved in the preparation of the thesis. Frequently, the UofT examiner (ThD) or TST examiner (PhD-USMC) will fulfill this requirement; however, any member of the committee who has not been closely involved in the preparation of the thesis may be considered to satisfy this requirement.

#### **10.5.1.2 Arm's length rule.**

The supervisor must certify that the proposed external examiner is a recognized expert on the subject of the dissertation, is an Associate or Full Professor at their institution, has the necessary academic qualifications to appraise a doctoral dissertation, and should be experienced as a successful Supervisor of doctoral students through to defence.

The external examiner must have an arm's-length relation both with the student and with the supervisor. This will normally exclude anyone who has been a master's or doctoral supervisor/supervisee for the student or the thesis Supervisor; or someone who has been a departmental colleague of the student or supervisor within the last six years; or who has collaborated on a research project, or scholarly work or publication, with either of them. The Director, GCTS will assess the arm's length relationship of the nominee.

#### **10.5.1.3 Non-participating examiner.**

In the rare situation where the external examiner cannot participate in the oral defence, the external examiner submits a written report and the GCTS appoints an auxiliary examiner to represent his or her views at the defense.

### **10.5.2 Authority of the committee.**

The thesis examining committee is responsible for examining the thesis in accordance with the regulations of this section.

### **10.5.3 Process for appointing the committee.**

When the thesis is ready for submission, or when completion is imminent, the thesis supervisor so advises the GCTS, and, having consulted with the student, will recommend names for the thesis examination committee. The Thesis Supervisor shall secure the willingness of the examiners (minus the External) to participate in the exam process. The Director, GCTS, then approves the committee. Recommendations of committee memberships should be made well in advance of students desiring a Fall or Winter graduation.

### **10.5.4 Substitutions.**

Should it become necessary to appoint one or more substitute members of the thesis examination committee, the Director, GCTS, in consultation with the supervisor, student and college Graduate Director, may replace examiners in order to allow the examination to proceed.

## **10.6 Submitting the thesis**

### **10.6.1 Notice of submission.**

Approximately one month prior to the anticipated date of submission, the student should notify the GCTS Office that the thesis is close to being ready for submission. This will give the GCTS Office time to ensure that the members of the examination committee are available and to provide the examiners with advance notice of the need to set aside the time necessary to read the thesis. Failure to provide notice of submission will delay the process.

### **10.6.2 Approval of the thesis supervisor.**

When the thesis supervisor is satisfied that the thesis is ready for defence, he or she sends a letter to the GCTS Office certifying that this is the case. Before submitting the thesis, the student should be assured that the thesis supervisor is satisfied that it is ready to go forward. Nevertheless, if the supervisor is not so satisfied, the student may, after advising the supervisor of his or her intention to do so, seek the permission of the GCTS Director to send the thesis to examination without the approval of the supervisor.

### **10.6.3 Submission of copies.**

The student submits five unbound copies of the thesis, printed double-sided, each such copy being contained in a letter-size re-sealable expandable envelope, to the GCTS Office. The expandable envelopes should be of a high enough quality for the thesis to be shipped to the examiners and for the examiner to carry it around for at least two months. The envelope should have a flap. In addition, the student must submit five copies of the authorized thesis proposal at the same time. If an auxiliary examiner is appointed (10.5.1.4), the student must submit an additional copy of the thesis. If the student has not already done so, they must submit a completed and signed *Final Oral Examination Procedure Election* form at the time of the submission of the thesis to the GCTS Office.

### **10.6.4 Deadlines for submission.**

While theses may be submitted at any time, deadlines have been established for those wanting to graduate at the next convocation. These deadlines are published each year under "Key Academic Dates" at [www.tst.edu](http://www.tst.edu). Even if the student meets the deadline, no guarantee can be given that unforeseen circumstances will not prevent the student from graduating at the next

convocation. If possible, therefore, the student should submit the thesis well in advance of the deadline.

## **10.7 Preliminary examination of the thesis**

### 10.7.1 Preliminary readers.

The first stage of the examination process is the assessment of the thesis by the preliminary readers. The three preliminary readers are the members of the thesis supervisory committee (i.e., the supervisor, the second committee member and the third committee member).

### 10.7.2 Distribution of copies of the thesis.

The GCTS Office distributes copies of the thesis with the approved thesis proposal to the preliminary readers, who must agree to read the thesis normally within a month.

### 10.7.3 Preliminary reports.

When the preliminary readers have read the thesis in its entirety and agree that the thesis is ready to proceed to the oral defence (that is, to the rest of the examination committee), all three preliminary readers are required to notify the GCTS of this in writing. An examiner's judgement that the thesis is ready for oral defence does not necessarily imply that the examiner will pass the thesis after the oral examination is completed. Preliminary readers may, but are not required to, submit written reports.

### 10.7.4 Assessment of the preliminary reports.

If the three preliminary readers agree that the thesis is ready for oral defence, the examination proceeds. If the three preliminary readers agree that the thesis is not ready for oral defence, the student must revise the thesis to meet the objections of the preliminary readers. If the three preliminary readers disagree whether the thesis is ready for defence, the GCTS Director may consult with them to seek consensus in recommending the next step, which may be (a) that the examination will proceed or (b) that the student will make revisions. Nevertheless, where the three preliminary readers disagree, the student has the right to require that the examination proceed. If revisions are to be made, the student must submit a written indication of the changes that have been made (normally a general description plus a list of pages, though a highlighted version might also be acceptable). The time required for the student's revisions and the re-reading of the thesis may impede a student's ability to graduate at their intended convocation. The thesis supervisor is responsible for communicating the required revisions to the student and for ensuring that the preliminary readers reach a consensus on the revisions. Once this consensus is reached and changes are made to the satisfaction of the readers, all three examiners are required to notify the GCTS in writing that the dissertation is ready to proceed to the next stage of the examination process. The student must re-submit five (5) printed copies of the revised thesis according to the provisions of section 10.6.3 (above).

### **10.8 Further examination**

If, after the assessment of the preliminary reports, it is determined that the examination will proceed, the GCTS Director arranges a date and location for the oral defence, and the GCTS Office distributes the remaining copies of the thesis to the other members of the thesis examination committee, together with copies of the authorized thesis proposal.

Only the external examiner is required to submit a written report. The report should contain an explicit recommendation that the thesis be accepted, or not accepted, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of doctoral degree. The appraisal should consist of constructively critical and analytical comments and the importance of the work should be addressed in relation to its field. A synopsis of the thesis, if included at all, should be brief. The appraisal should be received by the GCTS at least two weeks (ten working days) prior to the examination.

The external examiner's report will be circulated, along with the defence announcement, to the student, the members of the examination committee and the chair of oral defence. Neither the student nor any member of the committee should communicate with the external examiner until the oral defence. The student may address any aspects of the external examiner's report in his/her opening statement at the oral defence.

### **10.9 The oral defence**

#### **10.9.1 Abstract and curriculum vitae.**

In preparation for the oral defence, the student submits her or his abridged curriculum vitae and abstract of the thesis (not to exceed 350 words in length) to the GCTS Office, by email.

#### **10.9.2 Members of the oral examination board.**

The five members of the thesis examination board are the voting members of the oral examination board. In addition, the oral examination board has two non-voting members. (a) The chair of the board, who is appointed by the Graduate Director of the student's college of registration, presides over the entire process of the oral defence, i.e., the initial meeting of the examiners, the oral defence itself, and the final meeting of the examiners to decide upon the outcome of the defence. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that the student is treated fairly. (b) The GCTS Director, or his or her representative, ensures that TST procedures are properly observed.

#### **10.9.3 Quorum.**

In order to proceed with the oral defence, a quorum of four voting members of the oral examination board must be present. However, one examiner may be counted towards the quorum in the case where he or she, though not physically present, participates in the oral defence through telecommunications.

#### **10.9.4 Visitors.**

The only visitors permitted to attend the examination are TST faculty members and registered TST graduate students. The student may also invite only one guest. All visitors attending the examination may enter the examination room when the student enters, and must leave the room once the student has completed his/her defence. Only the examination committee remains in the room during the *in camera* sessions.

#### **10.9.4.1 Recording policy.**

The unauthorized use of any form of device to audiotape, photograph, video-record or otherwise reproduce the doctoral exam is prohibited.

#### **10.9.5 Form of the oral defence.**

The defense usually lasts no more than two hours, during which questions from the examiners are addressed to the student. The order is as follows.

##### **10.9.5.1 Convening the defence.**

After determining that the student has satisfied all other requirements for the degree, the chair convenes the oral examination board.

##### **10.9.5.2 *In camera* meeting.**

The chair then invites the student and visitors to withdraw, and the board meets *in camera* to determine the order of questioning, the number of rounds of questioning, and the length of time to be allocated to each examiner for questioning. Normally the supervisor is the first questioner, and the external examiner is the second questioner.

##### **10.9.5.3 The examination.**

The chair invites the student and visitors to return, and the examination proceeds according to the plan determined. The supervisor invites the student to summarize the research and conclusions of the thesis orally, in no more than fifteen (15) minutes. Then each member proceeds to ask questions of the student.

##### **10.9.5.4 The evaluation.**

At the conclusion of the examination, the chair invites the student and visitors to withdraw. The oral examination board then evaluates the thesis and the oral defence. The chair reminds the examiners of the voting procedures and evaluation policies and procedures, and that the examination covers both the thesis and the student's oral defence.

##### **10.9.5.5 Report of evaluation.**

The chair then invites the student and visitors to return, and reports the outcome of the board's deliberations.