

## FAHS INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHAIRING A MASTER'S THESIS DEFENCE

### A. Prior to the Defence

1. Visit the Graduate Program Administrator's Office (Bev Minor, WC285) to pick up the relevant paper work for the Defence, including: Certificate of Approval/ Report of Graduate Thesis Examination Board. The Administrative Assistant will go over the material that must be completed at the end of the Defence.
2. Visit the Defence Site (WH147, WC204B, WC284) 20 minutes before the Defence to make sure that all is set up and ready to proceed. This should include ascertaining: (a) that the necessary equipment for the presentation is available and ready to go, (b) that there are markers for the whiteboard/flip chart available, and (c) that there is water for the Candidate.
3. The Chair of the Examination confirms that there is a quorum. The quorum for an Examination consists of a minimum of three appointed Examination Committee Members (one of which must be the External Examiner), plus the Chair of the Examination Committee. Voting members of the Examination Committee include: the External Examiner, and the Thesis Advisory Committee Members, including the Supervisor. The Chair of the Examination Committee does not vote. Should there not be a quorum, it is the responsibility of the Chair to determine whether to delay the Examination for a period of time or to postpone it to another date.

### B. At the Defence

1. Once everyone has arrived and been introduced, ask everyone present, except the Examining Committee, to leave the room for about 10-15 minutes.
2. During this period, the Chair asks the Examining Committee for comments concerning the thesis. The comments of the External, who should have provided a written review of the thesis previously, can read the appraisal letter, or highlight any issues. The Advisory Committee Members are asked to comment first,

followed by the Supervisor. At this time, any specific areas that may be problematic should be identified.

3. The Chair needs to ascertain that ALL Examining Committee Members have read the thesis, and have sufficient knowledge that they will not abstain from voting at the end of Defence on the basis of a lack of knowledge to form an opinion.

4. Invite the Candidate and others back into the room.

5. The Chair needs to go over the “rules” of the Defence (i.e., the order of questioning, the number of rounds, and the length of each Examiner’s questioning period). The suggested order is: External Examiner, Advisory Committee Members, Supervisor; the number of rounds is usually two (but an additional round could be necessary); and the duration of each Examiner’s questioning should be 12-15 minutes (i.e., each Examiner will have a total of at least 30 minutes to examine that Candidate, if they want it).

6. Invite the Candidate to make a presentation to the Examination Committee and Visitors (expected duration: 30 - 40 minutes). No questions are allowed during or after the presentation.

7. Begin the questioning with the External Examiner.

8. Keep track of the order of Examiners and the time so that you can indicate to an Examiner when his/her time has expired, or suggest that the Examiner has time for one additional question.

9. Keep a record of ALL questions asked of the Candidate, and mark any areas or issues that might require changes to the thesis (this will expedite discussions concerning required changes at the end of the Defence).

10. At the end of Round #1 of questioning, indicate to the Committee the total duration of the Round. Begin the Round #2 of the questioning.

11. At the end of Round #2 of questioning, ask the Examining Committee if they need an additional Round (often it may be only one Examiner that has a few last questions). If the Examining Committee does not need an additional Round, ask if there are any questions from the Visitors. If not, ask the Candidate if there are any

questions, or comments that he/she would like to make. If not, ask the Candidate and Visitors to leave for 15-20 minutes.

12. The Examining Committee should engage in a conversation, which is intended to lead to a motion that “the Candidate has passed the Defence of the Thesis”; this vote covers both the Thesis and the Defence of the Thesis as a package. Once this motion has been made and seconded, the Examining Committee should discuss the motion, and vote Yes/No. If the vote is in the affirmative, then a second motion is needed concerning the Thesis itself. This is essentially a vote on the amount of thesis corrections that will be needed to make the Thesis acceptable. The options are:

a. As Is - essentially no additional changes are required.

b. Minor Corrections – typographical errors, small additions, etc. These changes are overseen by the Supervisor. The Candidate has 2-4 weeks to complete these changes.

Regarding options a and b above –

**Note 1.** Bring a copy of the requested changes to the Program Office after the Defence. This list does not include what would be considered typographical changes, and small items listed by Examiners in their copy of the thesis

**Note 2.** Students planning to convocate at the next Convocation should take into consideration “the last day for submission of the Graduate Record form to the Office of Graduate Studies” See Schedule of Important Dates:

<http://www.brocku.ca/webcal/current/graduate/sche.html>

c. Major Modifications – essentially changes in sections of chapters, changes to graphs, figures, interpretation of results, etc. These types of changes require a Sub-committee of at least two Committee Members (usually the Supervisor plus one additional Examiner), and a list of the required changes must be agreed upon before the Candidate is invited back to hear the result. The Candidate has a maximum of 3 months to make these changes.

Regarding the option “major” changes –

**Note 1.** the Chair must ensure that there is an agreed upon list of all the changes that the Examination Committee requires before proceeding to #15 below. Bring a copy of the required changes to the Program Office after the Defence.

**Note 2.** If the major changes being contemplated include a significant re-analysis, the addition of a chapter, or changes of a similar magnitude, then the thesis is not acceptable for a pass. If the Examination Committee believes that the necessary corrections are of this nature, then the Defence must be adjourned, the appropriate changes should be made to the thesis, and a second Defence will be scheduled.

15. Invite the Candidate and Visitors back into room (unless the Vote was negative). If the Vote was to accept under conditions a, b, or c above, then the Chair should ask the Supervisor to congratulate the Candidate. The Chair should indicate to the Candidate: (a) the type of pass, (b) the changes required to the thesis, and the expected schedule for completing the changes.

16. The Chair requests that the Examining Committee and Candidate complete the necessary paperwork, including the signing of the Examination Certificate and the Examination Signature page for inclusion in the bound Thesis.

17. The Chair should thank all, especially the External Examiner for their time and effort.

18. If the Vote is negative, then the Examination Committee and the Visitors are “dismissed”, the Chair and the Supervisor should inform the Candidate, and sit down to go over the options and the “next steps”.

19. The Chair must return all necessary paperwork to the Graduate Program Administrator’s Office as soon as possible after the Defence.

**THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF THE FACULTY OF APPLIED HEALTH  
SCIENCES AND THE GRADUATE PROGRAM FOR TAKING THE TIME  
TO ASSIST THE PROGRAM BY ACTING AS CHAIR.**