FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DOCTORAL THESIS DEFENSE PROCEDURES

The Chair makes welcoming remarks which includes:

- Introduction of himself/herself and role of Chair as an impartial guide to the Defense process.
- Identification that the PhD is the highest academic degree bestowed at Brock University and that this event is the culmination of a large amount of work and scholarly activity by the candidate, his/her supervisor, the supervisory committee and the faculty as a whole.
- Introduction of the candidate.
- Introduction of the examination committee in the order of:
    - The External Examiner
    - The Internal External Examiner
    - Faculty members external to the home graduate program
    - Faculty members from within the home graduate program
    - The Supervisor

The Chair announces the agenda, which is:

- The candidate will make a presentation on his/her thesis, highlighting the research problem/topic, the research approach, the findings and the implications of the research outcomes. This presentation will be 30-35 mins in length.
- First round of questioning occurs with the order of questioning following the order of introductions identified above. During the first round, it is recommended that each examiner ask questions for 15-20 mins.
- Second round of questioning (individual examiners may choose not to pursue a second round of questioning). The second round of questioning is typically brief with each examiner asking only one or two questions.
- Supplementary round of questioning; if necessary and time allowing.
- The questioning can then be open to the audience, time allowing.
- The question period (all rounds) should normally last no more than 1.5-2.0 hours. The time allotment for each examiner within each round will be determined by the Chair before the defense and will be defined largely by the number of examiners.
- The Chair will ensure that the External Examiner's questions take precedence.

- It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the questioning takes place in an organized and fair manner. He/she should discourage a debate among examiners and ensure that an examiner does not interrupt/intervene in the questioning by another examiner.
- The candidate and audience will then be asked to leave the examination room while the examination committee deliberates. The candidate should not stay in the vicinity of the examination room.
- The examination committee deliberates and comes to a conclusion on the thesis examination. The examination committee will be assessing the acceptability of the thesis as a written document and the acceptability of the candidate's defence of the thesis. In addition to voting on the outcome, the committee must discuss any required revisions to the thesis document.
- The Chair will ask each examiner in turn (in the order identified during the introductions above) to make brief comments on their assessment of the thesis as a written document and the performance of the candidate in defending the thesis.
- The committee must then come to a consensus or majority vote in providing its recommendation according to FHB 14.8.2 regulation.
- The candidate will be invited back into the room to hear the outcome of the examination process.