Completion Process for MA with Oral Defence

The supervisor(s) will select an examination committee. They may consult with the Department Head and/or the Department Graduate Coordinator if needed. The Examination Committee will consist of:

- Supervisor(s)
- 2 Examiners - Faculty members who may be from the department or from another department at Queen's, provided they are well versed in the subject of the student's thesis. *In exceptional cases, where a faculty member with sufficient expertise cannot be found within Queen's University, a suitable member from another nearby institution may be recommended for the committee, pending approval from the Dean of SGSPA*.
- Chair - the Chair is a non-voting member of the committee and thus does not require specific expertise with the topic in question. The Chair must be a Faculty member from Queen's, but does not need to be from the Philosophy Department.

The supervisor, in discussion with the examination committee and the student, will select a time and date for the oral examination and inform the Department Graduate Assistant. If a Chair has not yet been secured, the Graduate Assistant can try to assist, but all reasonable effort should be made to have a Chair already secured by this point.

The Graduate Assistant will prepare the notice paperwork to send to SGSPA. This paperwork must be sent to SGSPA **no later than ten working days prior to the oral examination** and must include the following information:

- Date, time, and location of the defense
- Names of the Student and Examination Committee (including Chair)
- Title of Thesis
- Signatures from Supervisor, Graduate Coordinator, and Department Head

The student will provide a copy of the thesis to all committee members **no later than ten working days prior to the oral examination**. It is the responsibility of the student to provide the examining committee with the thesis, but the Graduate Assistant can provide help as needed, as in cases where a physical copy needs to be mailed.

Examiners should bring with them to the defense a report summarizing their thoughts and plans for inquiry on the thesis in question. If the exam will take place remotely, reports

should be sent by email to the Chair by end-of-day the day before the defence. These reports will be read aloud at the beginning of the examination by the Chair.

Aside from submitting reports the evening before a defence in the case of a remote exam, examiners do not submit reports on the thesis prior to the oral examination unless they wish to submit a "negative report" that in their opinion the examination should not proceed as scheduled. If, after assessing the written thesis, any committee member feels the oral examination should not proceed, they must submit a report of substantive reasons to the Chair of the committee and/or the Graduate Coordinator no later than three working days prior to the scheduled date.

- If no negative reports are submitted, the examination will proceed as scheduled
- If only one negative report is submitted, the examination will proceed as scheduled
- If two (or more) negative reports are submitted, SGSPA will be notified and the candidate and supervisor will be consulted by the Chair of the examining committee and/or the Department Graduate Coordinator to determine if they wish to proceed with the examination. The decision of whether or not to proceed as scheduled will be made by the candidate.
- If the candidate agrees to postpone the examination, the Chair will convey to the candidate and the supervisor the nature of the revisions to the thesis that have been advised, and the candidate will have the right to present the revised thesis at a later date. The Department will notify SGSPA that the oral examination has been postponed.
- Once the required revisions are made and the supervisor agrees that an oral examination is warranted, a new oral examination session will be scheduled following the same process as the original scheduling, including notifying SGSPA with at least ten working days of advance notice.

Once the candidate has completed their examination, the committee will discuss and agree on the outcome of the examination. The possible outcomes are: Pass, Pass with Major Revisions, Referred, and Failed. Please see the *"Outcome Categories of an Oral Thesis Examination"* document for detailed descriptions of each outcome, and the next steps that accompany each.

Once a decision is reached, the Chair will request any commentary from the examining committee regarding the conduct of the examination that they would like to have included in the final report, and will complete the requisite paperwork. This paperwork must then be

sent to the Graduate Assistant so that it can be submitted to SGSPA. Examiners are also welcome to submit a report to the Graduate Assistant after the examination if they so wish.

If the outcome of the examination was a Pass, the candidate will then need to complete any minor revisions required by the examination committee, ensure that all formatting requirements are adhered to, and then upload the final thesis to QSpace. Details about formatting requirements and instructions on how to upload to QSpace are available on the SGSPA website.

The degree will not be considered complete until the thesis is uploaded to QSpace, so it is crucial to consider this part of the process when planning an examination date.

Timeline Planning Notes

- It is usually a good idea to factor in a couple of days between when the examination is completed and when the submission to QSpace is made, to allow time for minor revisions. This means if a student is hoping to finish by a specific date, the examination should be scheduled 1-3 days before that date.
- It is often a good idea to factor in a couple of days between deciding on a date/time, and sending notice in to SGSPA to allow for finding a Chair if the first option is not available.
- It is important to note that neither departmental nor SGSPA staff work on weekends or holidays, so if a student is trying to finish by a specific date, scheduling should plan to allow completion by the nearest weekday before that specific date.

Scheduling Example: MA requirements must be completed **before August 1**. With this timeline in mind, this is the **latest** we would want to complete these pieces:

- July 11 - Supervisor advises Graduate Assistant of examination, leaving time to secure a Chair
- July 14 - Notification form submitted to SGSPA and thesis sent to examiners
- July 28 - Oral Examination
- July 31 - Submission to QSpace following time after the oral exam that allows for minor revisions to be made