

Graduate Education Council Meeting
Minutes

Date: February 24, 2016.

Time: 12:30pm– 2:00pm (Pizza lunch starting 12:30 pm)

Place: International and Graduate Affairs Building Room 1N05

Attendees:

Cheryl Harding	Jan Plug	Liwen Vaughan	Arzie Chant
Chantal Lemire	Pam Bishop	Lori Johnson	Joel Armstrong
Janet Holmes	Doug Jones	Jim Dickey	Susan Scollie
Vanessa Sperduti	Nandi Bhatia	Kristen Reilly	Nanda Dimitrow
Kate Choi	Tamara Hinan	Leeann Mclvor	Alison Allan
Pam McKenzie	Kamran Siddiqui	Maya Kumar	Ron Wagler
Ruth Martin	Kyle Fricke	Jamie Baxter	Catherine Nevin
Lorraine Davies			

Regrets: Linda Miller, Miriam Capretz, Erika Chamberlain, Greg Kopp, Pauline Barmby, Robert Wood, Jason Brown, Andrew Johnson, Joanna Quinn, Tilottama Rajan, Jessica Esseltine, Elizabeth Webb, Catherine Steeves, Debra Dawson, Catherine Nolan, Mark Vandenbosch, Matt Thomson, Alicia Garcia

1. Approval of the Minutes of October 28th, 2015 (Attached)

The Minutes of the meeting were approved as circulated

2. Business arising from the Minutes - none

3. Reports from GEC Committees (Lorraine Davies)

• Policy Committee

I. Professional Development Regulations (Attached)

- Motion Approved with a friendly amendment changing the last “expected” to “required”. Please see attached.

II. Role of the Chair in thesis exams (Attached)

- Approved with minor revisions. Please see attached.

III. Decision when vote is tied 8.4.4.2 (Attached)

- Approved as presented

4. Informal discussions with the Ad Hoc Senate Committee on Renewal

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/senate/renewal_cttee/Interim_Report.pdf

**A reminder, please sign in on Council Attendance
Sheet before leaving the meeting**

Other business

1. Suggestion to set up a working group to provide direction around data and IP when the supervisor/student relationship dissolves
2. Can the policy committee visit the signature policy after a thesis exam?

Announcements:

Dr. Karen Campbell is attending the April 27th GEC to discuss the Grad Funding Report
http://provost.uwo.ca/planning_reports/grad_funding_final_report.pdf

Professional and Career Development

Graduate students are encouraged to participate in professional development and career-related courses, workshops, talks and events. Graduate students do NOT need the approval of their supervisors or their programs to participate in these faculty, program and university-wide events. Professional development and career-related events can be found through the Teaching Support Centre, the Student Development Centre, the Student Success Centre: Careers, Leadership and Experience, the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and individual Faculties. Participation in professional development and career offerings is expected to occur outside of TA duties, time-critical research duties, and shall not interfere with **required** ~~expected~~ current Graduate program courses, meetings and responsibilities.

Doctoral Thesis Examination Board Roles

Chair:

- The Chair is a non-voting member of the Thesis Examination Board. As the Vice-Provost's (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) representative, the Chair presides over the thesis examination and provides leadership to ensure that the established procedures are followed. It is not appropriate for the Chair to ask the Candidate Thesis related questions during the examination period.

CHAIR DUTIES:

- Determines when a quorum exists
- Opens and closes the examination proceedings
- Sets the order of questioners and the length of the two rounds of questions
- Monitors the length and conduct of the candidate's presentation
- If the External Examiner is not present, ensures that questions raised in the External Examiner's report are put to the candidate
- If requested by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), where the External Examiner has submitted a negative report but is not present, provides copies of the External Examiner's report to the Examiners to assist in their deliberations
- Intervenes if questioning becomes inappropriate
- Deals with behaviour that interferes with the proper conduct of the examination
- Moderates in camera discussion on the merits of the thesis, the candidate's oral presentation and responses to questions, the External Examiner's report, and other relevant matters
- Calls for a vote and recommendation
- Recalls the candidate and advises him/her of the recommendations that are to be made to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies)
- Prepares a report to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) of the Examiners' assessment of the thesis and the candidate's oral performance

Chair Qualifications:

- Must have appropriate SGPS membership
- The Chair must not be a member of the candidate's program or the Supervisor's home program

8.4.4.2

The Thesis Examination Board Deliberates and Renders a Decision

- The Chair invites the Supervisor(s) to comment on the candidate, the thesis, and aspects of the oral defence.
 - In rare cases where the thesis has been submitted without the Supervisor(s)'s approval, the Chair informs the Examiners of the Supervisor(s)'s written reasons for withholding approval, before inviting the Supervisor(s) to speak.
- At the Chair's invitation, the Examiners alone discuss the thesis and the oral defence.
- The Examiners vote on the acceptability of the thesis and the oral defence by completing their Doctoral Thesis Examination Evaluation form. In cases where the External Examiner is not physically present, the Chair speaks to her/him privately and fills out the Evaluation form as directed.
- These forms are confidential, only to be seen and recorded by the Chair. For the oral defence, the Examiners must determine if the candidate's responses to questions and general level of scholarly knowledge meets the standard for the Doctoral degree and is consistent with the contents of the thesis. The Examiners must decide whether the thesis form and thesis content and oral defence were acceptable or unacceptable.
- There are 3 possible outcomes to the oral defense that the examiners may consider:
 - Acceptable - no changes
 - Acceptable with revisions/modifications
 - Unacceptable
 - **Examples of Acceptable with Revisions/Modifications:** May include limited typographical or grammatical errors; errors in calculation, labels for tables, nomenclature, and bibliographic form; the need for clarification of content in order to meet requisite scholarly standards. Examples may include some additions, deletions or editing of text; further analysis or discussion of some piece of data. Normally, candidates have up to 6 weeks to submit the final thesis after examination.
 - **Unacceptable:** A thesis judged unacceptable may contain for example, faulty conceptualization, inappropriate or faulty use of research methodology, misinterpretation or misuse of data, neglect of relevant material, illogical argument, unfounded conclusions, seriously flawed writing and presentation, and failure to engage the scholarly context.

The Chair collects the completed forms and tallies the results.

The Chair announces the results of the vote on the acceptability of the content and form of the thesis and of the oral defence and asks if further discussion is needed. In rare instances the Chair may allow Examiners to change their votes.

If a majority of the Examiners finds that each of the thesis content, thesis form, and the oral defence are acceptable, the candidate passes the Thesis Examination. The

Examiners' approval may be conditional on the candidate successfully completing revisions to the thesis content or thesis form. If the majority of Examiners find that any one of the thesis content, thesis form, and the oral defence is unacceptable, the candidate fails the Thesis Examination.

If the Examiners' decisions are equally split (2/2) between acceptable and unacceptable on any one of the thesis content, thesis form, and/or the oral defence, then the vote is weighted in favour of the external examiner's decision.

The Chair pronounces the Thesis Examination Board's decision.

Graduate Education Policy Committee brought forward from April 13th, 2016 meeting

Recommended: The GEC approve the following changes to the Graduate Regulations, Section 8.4.4.2 and Section 8.5.4.2 effective immediately.

Draft Regulations for Withholding Signatures after Defense

Doctoral Section

8.4.4.2 Stage Two: The Thesis Examination

When the Thesis Examination is Successful

- On the "Doctoral Thesis Examination - Chair Report," the Chair:
 - Reports the Thesis Examination Board's decision for the Thesis Examination on page 1
 - With the assistance of the Examiners, lists the revisions/modifications, if any, required by a majority of the Examiners on page 2.
 - Dates and signs both pages of the Chair's Report.
- ~~In the case that no revisions/modifications are required, the Chair, the Examiners, and the Supervisor(s) sign the Certificate of Examination. In the case that revisions/modifications are required, the Chair, with the help of the committee, determines who will withhold her/his signature until the required revisions/modifications have been made. normally the Examiners sign the Certificate of Examination and the Supervisor(s) withhold his/her signature until the required revisions/modifications have been made.~~
- The Chair communicates the positive decision to the candidate. (See Communicating the Decision to the Candidate.)

Master's Section

8.5.4.2 Stage Two: The Thesis Examination

When the Thesis Examination is Successful

- On the "Master's Thesis Examination - Chair Report" the Chair:
 - Reports the Thesis Examination Board's decision for the Thesis Examination on page 1.
 - With the assistance of the Examiners, lists the revisions/modifications, if any, required by a majority of the Examiners on page 2.
 - Dates and signs both pages of the Chair's Report.
- In the case that no revisions/modifications are required, the Chair, the Examiners, and the Supervisor(s) sign the Certificate of Examination. In the case that revisions/modifications are required, the Chair, with the help of the committee, determines who will withhold

her/his signature until the required revisions/modifications have been made.
~~normally the Examiners sign the Certificate of Examination and the Supervisor(s)
withhold his/her signature until the required revisions/modifications have been made.~~

- The Chair communicates the positive decision to the candidate. (See Communicating the Decision to the Candidate.)

Graduate Education Policy Committee brought forward from April 13th, 2016 meeting

Recommended: The GEC approve the following addition to the Graduate Regulations

CHANGING SUPERVISOR DRAFT REGULATIONS

A supervisor is required for all research-degree students. At admission, students are given an offer letter that outlines the contractual obligations between the student and the program.

When the supervisor is determined (either at admission or some later point) the supervisor commits to assuming the roles and responsibilities specified by the School for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and the program. http://grad.uwo.ca/faculty_staff/viceprovost/supervision.html#

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is committed to resolving any conflicts between students and supervisors as early as possible. When the process breaks down, the following apply:

Students have the right to request a change of supervisors. Each program will ensure that students receive appropriate supervision.

Supervisors cannot unilaterally terminate the thesis supervisory relationship. The appropriate processes must be followed. Questions about the process should be directed to the Associate Dean (Graduate) of the Faculty.

Student and faculty member requests for changing supervisors will be reviewed by the Graduate program. If the supervisor and student agree that a change to the supervisory relationship is needed, normally the Graduate Chair will work with the student and supervisor to find a solution as early as possible.

The new supervisor, normally from the student's program, will assume the roles and responsibilities specified by SGPS and the program. Normally, the normal duration of the degree program for the student will not be increased.