



Examination of the DN Thesis Proposal: Procedure and Guidelines

To achieve candidacy, an oral examination of the thesis proposal will take place:

- 1) after successful completion of the required course work, and
- 2) after successful completion of the literature review paper (see Three Component Requirements for Candidacy document), and
- 3) prior to submission of the proposal for ethics review, if applicable.

A. Purpose:

The purpose of the examination is to evaluate the student's ability to defend, in writing and orally, the rationale, underlying theoretical concepts/constructs, methods, and plan for implementation and dissemination of the project.

B. Timing:

The supervisor, thesis committee, and student will together determine the date and time of the examination. The student will send the proposal to the members of the Examination Committee, at least four weeks in advance of the date of the examination.

C. Examination Committee

Voting Members:

The Examination Committee will consist of 4 voting members:

- a) the student's supervisor,
- b) the members of the thesis committee (minimum of 2) and
- c) an Examiner chosen by the student's supervisor in consultation with the DN Program Director. The Examiner will be a member of the School of Graduate Studies who has not been involved with the thesis.

Chair of Examination Committee:

The Chair of the Examination Committee will be appointed by the Registrar's Office. The Chair will inform the student of the outcome (Pass/Fail) at the end of the examination. The supervisor will complete the Examination Report at the end of the examination and submit it to the Registrar's Office within two days of the completed examination.

D. Examination format:

The examination will last a maximum of 2 hours. With the student excused from the room, the Chair will determine that a quorum – defined as the supervisor, 2 committee members, and the Examiner – is present and that everyone has read the proposal and is prepared to question the student. The Chair will review the procedures to be followed and will clarify the order in which the members will question the student. Normally the Examiner is the first questioner, and the supervisor is the last. The student is then invited into the room to give a 15-minute oral presentation of the proposal. Following the presentation, the Examiner and committee members ask questions to explore the student's knowledge of the literature, theoretical and conceptual issues, and methods required to support the proposed project. When there are no further questions, the student is again excused from the room. After the committee has discussed the examination and reached a decision, the student will be invited back into the room and informed of the decision.

E. Evaluation:

A successful thesis proposal examination will include a clear articulation of knowledge and synthesis of the field in relation to the following:

- a) Importance of the problem to be studied;
- b) Synthesis and appropriateness of the literature review;
- c) Logical relationships among the literature review, theoretical concepts/constructs, study questions, and methods;
- d) Rigour of the chosen methods;
- e) Quality of the proposed plan for implementation and dissemination.

Voting

Members must vote yes or no on the question whether the proposal and its defense are acceptable. More than one negative vote (or abstention) constitutes a failure of the proposal examination. If the student fails the examination, they may retake the exam once, provided the student has not reached the time limit for achieving candidacy. If the second proposal examination is also graded as a Fail, the Faculty will normally recommend to the SGS that the student's registration in the program be terminated. Students may appeal a failed first examination, using the steps outlined in the Academic Appeals Policy in the SGS Calendar, beginning with an appeal to the Graduate Academic Appeals Committee. As noted in the SGS Calendar, the appeal of a failed second examination goes directly to the Graduate Academic Appeals Board of SGS.