



Nutritional Sciences  
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Temerty  
Medicine

**GUIDELINES FOR  
DEFENSE OF  
MASTER'S THESES**

Updated September 2024

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## **A. M.Sc. THESIS DEFENSE PREPARATION**

### **1. The Time Line**

The stage and events in the M.Sc. program are described in the brochure, “Student Progress Through the Degree Program and the Role of the Student Advisory Committees”. This section describes the later stages and events in more detail. These stages take time and, because the School of Graduate Studies has mandatory deadlines, this means that it is necessary to think ahead.

A time line that gives the minimum time to reach the deadline leading to the M.Sc. defense is given in Appendix A.

### **2. Final Advisory Committee Meeting and Notification of the Graduate Coordinator**

The final meeting of the Student Advisory Committee will usually focus on the thesis and preparation for its defense. The supervisor must submit the report of the Final Advisory Committee Meeting linked [here](#), that recommends that the student’s thesis is ready for defense, to the Graduate Coordinator.

## **B. M.Sc. THESIS EXAMINATION**

### **1. Application for M.Sc. Defense and Submission of the Thesis**

The date of the examination must be at least two weeks, and preferably much longer, before the final submission of Departmental recommendation for the award of the degree (see the School of Graduate Studies Calendar for deadline dates).

An application for M.Sc. defense (Appendix B) should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks before the defense, along with the Final Advisory Committee report (if it has not been submitted already). This will certify that the final thesis has been approved by the Advisory Committee, propose a date and time for the examination, composition of the Examination Committee (see below) including thesis appraiser, and certify their willingness to serve and availability.

A Time Waiver (Appendix C) must accompany the application if examiners will have less than two weeks to review the thesis.

The Graduate Coordinator will 1) ensure that all course requirements have been completed, 2) approve the date and composition of the Examination Committee, 3) send confirmation letters to the Examination Committee and student with a copy of the announcement and Guideline for Conduct of M.Sc. Thesis Defense, and 4) have a Summary Report prepared for use at the examination.

An virtual copy of the final thesis must be distributed by the candidate to each appointed examiner, so it is received at least two weeks before the date of the examination (unless signed Time Waivers have been provided).

## 2. Composition of the Examination Committee

Normally members of the Student Advisory Committee will be invited to serve as examiners. The supervisor will chair the examination. The committee must consist of at least four graduate faculty members, including the chair/the supervisor, the members of the Student Advisory Committee, and an appraiser. Usually, it will consist of about four members.

The supervisor and the appraiser are required to write a report on the student and the thesis. Usually, the supervisor will comment on the student's development during the program and their independent contribution to the thesis. The appraiser, who is not a member of the advisory committee and has not been involved in the thesis, is expected to assess the thesis *per se*. External examiners will be asked to submit their appraisals 2-3 days prior to the defence, and at this point the appraisal will be shared with the student. Students who circulate their thesis later than two weeks before their exam date will waive the right to receive the external examiner's appraisal in advance.

## 3. Conduct of the Examination

The Examination Committee will be chaired by the supervisor. Before the entry of the candidate, the Chair will review the candidate's program and grades achieved. The appraisals (by appraiser and supervisor) will be read to the committee.

The candidate will be invited to present a short (10-15 minute) summary of their research and main findings. Slides or overhead projections and **minimal** notes may be used. Reading from a prepared manuscript or extensive notes is not permitted

Following this presentation, the Chair initiates the question period. Normally the appraiser will be invited to open the questions. It is recommended that questioning then proceed around the table in an orderly fashion, each examiner being given opportunity to explore an area of interest. Cross examining should be minimized except where it is for purpose of clarification. The questioning should be pertinent to the thesis or the general area surrounding the thesis work. It is the prerogative and responsibility of the Chair to restrict questions to these areas and to terminate a line of questioning that they feel is going too far astray. Normally the questioning should not continue for more than about 1-1/2 hours.

When questioning has been completed, the candidate is requested to leave the room and the committee is asked to address three questions (Appendix D):

- 1) Was the defense of the thesis acceptable?
- 2) Is the thesis, as submitted, acceptable?
- 3) If the thesis is acceptable, does it require correction, modification, or no changes?

Formal votes are taken on each of these questions. If the defense is not found to be acceptable (including serious flaws in the thesis as well as an inadequate defense of a good thesis), the candidate may be re-examined at a later date. If the defense is satisfactory but the thesis is in need of revision,

the committee should specify the revisions needed and establish a mechanism for review and approval of these revisions (there would be no further examination). The exam committee can also submit the Recommendation for Admission to PhD Program form, which is optional (Appendix E).

## **C. FINAL STEPS**

### **1. M.Sc. Recommendation Form and Thesis Submission to the School of Graduate Studies**

The Master's Degree Recommendation form which will be sent to the SGS will be prepared and signed by the Graduate Coordinator after:

- ❑ required corrections to the thesis have been made and the appropriate signed form has been received by the Graduate Coordinator (Appendix D)
  
- ❑ Submit your thesis as a PDF document using the proper file naming convention to the U of T Electronic Theses and Dissertations (EDTs).  
<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/program-completion/producing-your-thesis/>
  
- ❑ Forms and checklist  
<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/program-completion/completing-degree-requirements-for-thesis-programs/>

### **2. Convocation**

Notice with regard to convocation dates and other details will be found at the following website:  
<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/convocation>



**TIMELINES FOR COMPLETION OF M.Sc. DEGREE**

	<b><u>Weeks Before Final Exam</u></b>
1. Approval of Final Thesis by Student’s Advisory Committee*	
2. Submission by Supervisor of signed “Report of Final Advisory Committee Meeting” to Department Office.	2-3
3. Submissions by Supervisor of “Application for M.Sc. Thesis Examination” to Department Office.	2
4. Distribution by student copies of Thesis to all Examination Committee members	2
5. Thesis Examination **	0
6. Submission by student of Final Thesis to SGS	***

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\* It is expected that the Student’s Advisory Committee will review the last draft of the thesis and specify the exact changes to be made. It is assumed that when members of the Examination Committee receive the thesis, all changes will have been made. If the changes suggested by the Advisory Committee are extensive, then it would be wise to arrange for another review by the Advisory Committee before proceeding to the defense. No examination will be scheduled until “**Report of Final Advisory Committee Meeting**” form is signed by all members of the Advisory Committee.

\*\* Preferably one week before the SGS deadline to allow time for additional changes and certification of completion by Supervision and Graduate Co-ordinator.

\*\*\* SGS deadline (see <https://sgs.calendar.utoronto.ca/>)



APPLICATION FOR M.Sc. THESIS EXAMINATION

Candidate:

\_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Title:  
(Print or Type)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Examiners:

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Chair

\_\_\_\_\_

Co-Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_

Appraiser

\_\_\_\_\_

Examiner(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Date and Time:

\_\_\_\_\_

(virtual correspondence), 2 hours

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Certification by Supervisor:

1. The final thesis has been approved by **all** members of the Advisory Committee (attach Report of Final Advisory Committee Meeting form).
2. All proposed examiners **have agreed** to serve and are available on the proposed date/time.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

**Note:** The candidate is responsible for thesis distribution to all examiners at least two weeks before exam date.

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Office Use Only:

1. Arrangements Approved: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Memos Distributed: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Letter Sent: \_\_\_\_\_

**TIME WAIVER**

(to be signed by all Departmental Examination Committee Members)

I understand that the Department of Nutritional Sciences requires the provision of copies of the thesis to the Examination Committee at least three weeks prior to the scheduled Departmental Examination.

Despite the short time provided me to read the thesis of \_\_\_\_\_

however, I am still willing to serve as an Examiner.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



**REPORT OF M.Sc THESIS EXAMINATION**

**Candidate:**

**Thesis Title:**

**Date, Time & Location:**

**Examination Committee: Were the Following Acceptable?**

**If Thesis Acceptable Needs\*:**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Defense</b> (yes, no, abstain)	<b>Thesis</b> (yes, no, abstain)	<b>Modification (M) Correction (C) No Changes (NC)</b>
<b>Chair/ Supervisor:</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Co-Supervisor:</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Appraiser:</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**Committee Decision:**

That the thesis be accepted: (NC)  no changes (C)  minor correction (M)  minor modification

If thesis modification is required, describe changes:

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If defense is unacceptable, recommend re-examination: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, when: \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Member(s) to see that Thesis corrections or modifications are made:** \_\_\_\_\_

Minor corrections: involve typographical errors, errors in punctuation, or problems in style  
 Minor modifications: are more than changes in style and less than major changes in the thesis. A typical example of a minor modification is clarification of textual material or the qualification of research findings or conclusions.

Recommendation for Admission to PhD Program  
(optional)

**Examination Committee**

**Would you recommend the student to the Ph.D. Program**

**Name**

**Signature**

**Yes**

**No**

**Chair/Supervisor:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Co-Supervisor:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Appraiser:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Committee:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

09/24



**CERTIFICATION OF COMPLETED THESIS REVISIONS**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thesis Title:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(or Staff member(s) responsible for thesis corrections)

I have read the revised thesis and certify that the minor correction to the thesis required by the Examination Committee has been satisfactorily completed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**