

Master's Thesis Defense

ROLE OF THE CHAIR

- Moderate the examination proceedings
- Write a brief Chair's Report that includes the student's grade, committee members' names, and a brief comment about the proceedings. Email this report to the Graduate Secretary and Associate Graduate Advisor.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE CHAIR AT THE THESIS DEFENSE

- Establish the order in which examination committee members will question the candidate. Usually, this proceeds from the member who is farthest from the field of research, and the supervisor is normally last.
- Invite the candidate to present a brief synopsis (20 minutes maximum) of the master's research. The candidate may speak from notes and use audio-visual equipment but must not read from a prepared text. The presentation should last no longer than 20 minutes and should not be interrupted by questions.
- Call upon each member of the examination committee to question the candidate in turn. The Chair should exercise discretion in managing the question period and should intervene if questioning or behaviour becomes inappropriate or interferes with the proper conduct of the exam. Within reason, the other examiners may join in the conversation.
- Call for a final round of comments and/or questions from the examining committee, and, if necessary, ask the candidate to address/clarify any points not adequately covered in previous questioning.
- Request that the candidate leave the room during the deliberation period.
- Moderate a discussion by the examination committee. First, the committee must decide if the candidate has passed. Discussion usually proceeds, once again, from the member farthest from the student's field of study, with the supervisor weighing in last. Second, assuming the student has passed, the committee must agree upon a final grade that reflects both the thesis and oral defense.
- Recall the candidate and, in the presence of the examining committee, inform the candidate that s/he has passed/failed. Do not reveal the grade. The grade will be entered into the student's record.
- Complete the Chair's Report and submit it by email to the Graduate Secretary and Associate Graduate Advisor as soon as possible.