

## Joint Graduate Program in Communication & Culture

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### Regulations for the Preparation of the **MA THESIS (updated May 2016)**

#### **FACULTY/SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES REGULATIONS**

All students who are completing a degree by thesis or dissertation must prepare a thesis/dissertation proposal. See Program specific information later in this document.

The Thesis and Dissertation Proposal regulations are set out in some detail in the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Theses and Dissertations* published by York University's Faculty of Graduate Studies, and in the Ryerson University School of Graduate Studies Faculty Handbook. In addition, Ryerson School of Graduate Studies Thesis Policies and Thesis Regulations can be found on the SGS web site: [www.ryerson.ca/gradstudies](http://www.ryerson.ca/gradstudies) (click Policies).

While both the Faculty of Graduate Studies at York and the School of Graduate Studies at Ryerson have their own guidelines for submission of thesis and dissertation proposals, programs are allowed to set their own deadlines within those guidelines. Therefore, please observe the following **Program deadlines** and the consequences of not submitting the proposal by that deadline:

#### **Master's Students FT – Thesis Option**

**STUDENTS WILL FIRST NEED TO APPLY TO THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR TO COMPLETE THEIR DEGREE VIA THE THESIS OPTION. CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE STUDENT'S ACADEMIC STANDING AND PROGRESS THROUGH THE PROGRAM. STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT GRANTED PERMISSION TO WRITE A THESIS MUST MAKE SURE THEY COMPLETE THE ADDITIONAL COURSE REQUIREMENT FOR THE MASTER'S RESEARCH PAPER OPTION. THOSE STUDENTS CONSIDERING MOVING ON TO DOCTORAL STUDIES SHOULD BE ADVISED THAT A MASTER'S RESEARCH PAPER OR PROJECT IS ACCEPTABLE TO PURSUE DOCTORAL STUDIES.**

If permission to write a thesis is granted, students are required to submit to the appropriate program office a formal proposal for the Thesis, approved and signed by the supervisor.

**DEADLINES:** MA full-time students should submit the approved proposal **no later than September 30<sup>th</sup>** of their **fourth term** in the program.

MA part-time students must submit a formal proposal **no later than April of their fifth term**. The proposal may be modified with the permission of the supervisor after it has been filed with the program.

In the rare instance when a student enters the program in January or May, the deadline for submission would be in their corresponding fourth or fifth term, as applicable. Please see the program administrator to work out submission dates.

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York students who have not submitted an approved proposal may not be permitted to register for the next term until they have done so (this may mean they incur a late fee or may be withdrawn from the university). Ryerson students will not be permitted to register in courses but will have to pay the program fee. In practice, students should submit the approved proposal prior to advising for registration.

### Master's Students PT – Thesis Option

Students are required to submit to the appropriate program office a formal proposal for the Thesis, approved and signed by the supervisor, prior to the end of the **fifth** term of registration. York students who have not submitted an approved proposal will not be permitted to register for the next term until they have done so (this may mean they incur a late fee or may be withdrawn from the university). Ryerson students will not be permitted to register in courses but will have to pay the program fee. In practice, students should submit the approved proposal prior to advising for registration. For students who begin the program in September, the deadline should be 1 May of the second year. Students who start in January or May should check with the program office for deadlines.

The proposal contains a brief statement in non-technical language on the purpose of the research, its relationship to existing work in the area, and the contribution that the researcher hopes to make to the advancement of knowledge in the field. In addition, the proposal includes a title, the name of the supervisor and the supervisory committee. The title should indicate as clearly as possible the area of research, but it is understood that this title may change. The maximum length of a proposal is 3,500 words. Students prepare a proposal in consultation with their supervisors, then submit it to the Program Director. At York, the Program Director is responsible for submitting the proposals to the Dean of Graduate Studies once internal program requirements in regard to proposals have been satisfied. *See below for program specific requirements.*

### ETHICS

**York:** The Senate Committee on Research is responsible for York University policies respecting Ethics. In particular, attention is drawn to the Senate Policy on Research involving Human Participants (Appendix C), and the Animal Use and Care Protocol (Appendix D) at the following web site: <http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/thesis-dissertation/research-ethics/>

In addition, most individual graduate programs have developed or require additional Codes of Ethics. The proper form must be submitted at the same time as the proposal. Students are advised to consult with Graduate Program directors and the Secretary of the Senate Committee on Research. FGS regulations concerning the recommendations and appointment of supervisory committees are set out in the Faculty of Graduate Studies' Calendar [Committees: Master's and Doctoral.] The following is an interpretation of these regulations and procedures for recommendations and approvals, and does not supersede the Faculty Regulations in any way.

Please note too that the guidelines merely state the general conditions that apply across the Faculty.

**Ryerson:** Ryerson's Policy for Ethics Review of Research Involving Humans can be found on the web site: [www.ryerson.ca/ORS/policies/ethics-h.html](http://www.ryerson.ca/ORS/policies/ethics-h.html), and Guidelines and Application Forms are on the web site: [www.ryerson.ca/ORS/forms/index.html](http://www.ryerson.ca/ORS/forms/index.html).

**(A) COMPOSITION OF SUPERVISORY COMMITTEES**

Normally all members of supervisory committees must be members of the Faculty / School of Graduate Studies. In exceptional circumstances the Dean may approve a Program Director's recommendation that a faculty member who is not a member of the Graduate Faculty serve as a member (but not a Chair) of a supervisory committee. Such recommendations are to be accompanied by an up-to-date curriculum vitae. Faculty members who are appointed to more than one graduate program may act as the outside member of a supervisory or examining committee if they have not designated that Program as their primary affiliation.

External members are expected to be established academics and normally members of a graduate Faculty at another university.

***Master's Supervisory Committee***

A Master's supervisory committee normally consists of a minimum of three faculty members, (including one from each university). The principal supervisor must be a member of the core faculty of the program.

It is the responsibility of the student in consultation with the Program Directors to constitute the committee. The membership of the committee must conform to FGS / SGS regulations and be approved by the Directors.

**(B) APPROVAL OF SUPERVISORY COMMITTEES AND THESIS PROPOSALS**

The membership of each student's supervisory committee must be recommended by the appropriate Program Director to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval. The Thesis/Project Supervisor will chair the Supervisory Committee. A copy of the candidate's proposal should accompany the recommendation. The proposal must contain at least the tentative title of the thesis and a brief statement, in non-technical language if possible, outlining the purpose of the research, its relationship to existing work in the area, and its intended contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field. Master's proposals should be submitted at least *three* months before the oral examination.

**THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE IS TO:**

1. Review a candidate's research proposal and recommend its approval to the appropriate Program Director;
2. Review the candidate's progress from time to time. Reports to the Graduate Program Director of unsatisfactory progress may require candidates to withdraw from the Graduate Program in which they are enrolled; and
3. Ensure that a copy of the candidate's thesis is sent to each member of the examining committee as far as possible in advance of the oral examination, but no later than **four** weeks prior to the date set, in the case of a Master's thesis.
4. Advise the Program Director as to whether the thesis is examinable.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU START**

***For comprehensive information from Graduate Studies on theses and dissertations, please see:  
<http://gradstudies.yorku.ca/current-students/thesis-dissertation/>***

**PROGRAM SPECIFIC REGULATIONS**

***The Proposal:***

Length: 8 - 10 pages + bibliography (maximum = 3500 words)

Format:

1. Title: state briefly and directly the subject of the research
2. Introduction: brief description of the project and its rationale
3. Objectives:
  - 1) research problem, question or hypothesis
  - 2) theoretical perspective
  - 3) expected contribution to the field (the originality of the work must be demonstrated)
4. Methods and Sources
  - 1) brief description of research methods to be employed
  - 2) description of sources to be employed
  - 3) discussion of any anticipated problems of access (to research subjects, archives, media content, etc.) and how they will be dealt with
5. Relationship to existing literature or professional practice
  - 1) identify and briefly discuss the research or professional "stream" to which you wish to contribute
  - 2) provide a brief overview of the dominant theoretical perspectives / professional practices in this stream
  - 3) indicate where your work fits in and / or where it challenges these perspectives and / or practices
6. Proposed chapter or section outline (structure of thesis)
7. Proposed time line for completion of the work  
EXAMPLE:
  - 1) literature survey: January-February
  - 2) interviews / archival work March-April
  - 3) analysis May-June
  - 4) writing July-August
  - 5) completion September 15

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8. Select Bibliography
  - 1) theoretical works relevant to chosen methodology
  - 2) works bearing on the substance of the topic.
  
8. Footnotes should be kept to a minimum. Any accepted citation form may be used.

### ***The Examining Committee:***

The Examining Committee will be constituted according to the regulations already in place in the Faculty/School of Graduate Studies at the respective universities.

***The following schedule applies to York University defences:*** Please note that the schedule set out below allows the program enough time to meet the deadlines required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies for notification of the date set for the oral examination and to deposit an examination copy of the thesis for the Dean's Representative, as set out in Regulations 29 and 36 in the FGS *Calendar*.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### ***Supervisor:***

When the thesis is in the final stages, the supervisor, in consultation with the candidate and the program director will arrange an examining committee, including an external examiner if necessary (usually only required for a doctoral defence). Once the examining committee and oral examination date is in place, the supervisor shall complete the "Recommendation for Oral Examination" form, obtain signatures from the supervisory committee and forward the form to the program office, as soon as possible but no later than **four weeks prior to the date set for an MA defence.**

#### ***Candidate:***

It is the candidates' responsibility to ensure that all members of the examining committee receives their examination copy of the thesis/dissertation no later than **four weeks prior to the date set for an MA defence.**

The Dean's Representative's copy of the thesis/dissertation shall be deposited in the program office according to the above schedule.

#### ***Program Administrator:***

- (a) Books room for defence
- (b) Obtains program director's signature on Recommendation for Oral Examination form.
- (c) Ensures Dean's Rep's copy of the thesis and Oral Examination form is deposited with the Faculty of Graduate Studies by their deadlines.

#### ***Graduate Studies:***

Graduate Studies sends out formal notification of the examination to examiners and candidate, The candidate is also sent information regarding final electronic submission of the thesis.

## MA Thesis / PhD Dissertation Proposal Approval

Student Name	Student ID	Level: Master's ____ / Doctoral ____
Thesis/Dissertation Title		
<b>Does your research involve the use of human participants?</b>  If <b>yes</b> , please read the Guidelines and Applications for Ethics Review of Research Involving Human Subjects at: <a href="http://www.ryerson.ca/ors">http://www.ryerson.ca/ors</a> , and attach a copy of the Research Ethics Board report to the proposal submitted to the Program Director.		<input type="checkbox"/> No  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes and the REB report is attached with the proposal.</b>
Student Signature		Date of Submission

**The following faculty members have approved the Thesis proposal and have agreed to sit on the supervisory committee<sup>1</sup>:**

	Name (please print)	Signature	Date
Supervisor			
Member			
Member			
Member (optional for MA)			

Please append a list of any additional committee members.

**Approval by the Program Director:**

Name (please print)	Signature	Date

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<sup>1</sup> A master's supervisory committee consists of a minimum of three faculty members. A doctoral supervisory committee consists of a minimum of four faculty members including the supervisor. For Ryerson SGS policies pertaining to master's degree specific and doctoral degree specific thesis/dissertation supervision, composition of a supervisory committee, role of a supervisor, and examination committee composition, refer to SGS Admissions and Policies Web site: [http://www.ryerson.ca/gradstudies/policies/admissions\\_studies.html](http://www.ryerson.ca/gradstudies/policies/admissions_studies.html).