



YEATES SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

Master's Thesis Oral Examination Procedure Guide

The Master's Thesis Oral Examination should be held at least **one month** before the last date to clear all requirements for graduation. For exact dates, refer to the *Significant Dates* posted on the Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS) web site.

Examining Committee:

When a student is ready to defend their thesis, an Examining Committee will be selected by the student's supervisor. The Examining Committee will be composed of the following:

- Committee **Chair** (normally the Graduate Program Director or designate)
- **Three faculty members** (or four in the case of two co-supervisors) who must be members of Yeates School of Graduate Studies, including the student's supervisor (or two co-supervisors). These faculty members must be familiar with the broad area of research that the thesis addresses. Optionally, an External Member may also be invited to serve on the Committee.

If necessary, the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Director may approve the appointment of an additional Computer Science faculty member who is an expert in the field of the thesis but who is not be a member of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies.

Scheduling:

Once the Examining Committee has been appointed, the Committee members and student must discuss scheduling and agree upon a date and time to hold the examination. An Oral Examination Notification form should then be completed and submitted to the Graduate Program Administrator. This form is available on the program web site and should be submitted **no later than three weeks prior to the date of the oral exam**. This form will include student information, Committee member names and signatures, the date, time, location of the examination, and the thesis title.

Thesis Preparation:

The student must prepare printed copies of their thesis formatted in accordance with the Yeates School of Graduate Studies' thesis guidelines (available on the YSGS web site) for distribution to the Examining Committee members, including the Chair, **at least three weeks** prior to the examination date. These copies must be single-sided, with each new chapter beginning on a new page, and should not be bound or stapled. Committee members may request that a digital copy (a PDF file) be supplied as well. The printed copies and a digital copy should be submitted to the Graduate Program Administrator at the same time as the Oral Examination Notification form.

The student must also prepare an extra printed copy of the thesis to have on hand during the oral examination in case the Committee members refer to specific pages or sections of the thesis during the exam.

The Oral Examination:

The oral examination begins with a brief introduction by the Chair of the Examining Committee. This is followed by a 20-minute presentation by the student about their thesis work. After the presentation, the student will answer two rounds of questions from the Examining Committee members and, optionally, one round of questions from any members of the public who are present. Following the rounds of questions, the student and public will be asked to leave the room while the Examining Committee deliberates. When a decision has been made, the student will be called back into the room and told whether they have passed or failed the exam. If the Committee requires that minor revisions be made to the thesis, the student will be notified at this time. The Committee will also decide if they are recommending that the student be considered for the Governor General Gold Medal Award (information on this award is available on the YSGS web site).

Submission of the Thesis:

Following a successful oral examination, the student must revise their thesis and incorporate any changes required by the Examining Committee. The student must also read through the YSGS thesis guidelines (available on the YSGS web site) and ensure that their paper is formatted accordingly. The revised thesis should then be sent to the student's supervisor who will verify that any necessary changes have been made and will notify the Program Administrator (via email) that the final paper is approved for submission. The student must then email a PDF file of the thesis to the Program Administrator who will verify that the paper conforms to the YSGS thesis guidelines before submitting it to YSGS and updating the student's academic record to indicate completion of the thesis component of the program.