



FINAL ORAL EXAMINATION

Procedures & Guidelines

Role of the Chair

The Chair is responsible for:

- ensuring that the Candidate is treated fairly;
- ensuring that the Candidate is given reasonable opportunity to defend the thesis; and,
- ensuring that the proceedings follow approved regulations.

Quorum

- A minimum of four (4) voting members of the Final Oral Examination Committee must be present.
- One examiner is counted towards the quorum in the case where he/she participates through telecommunications.
- When a quorum is not present, the Chair may delay the examination (until quorum is achieved) or must postpone it to another date.

Visitors

The only visitors permitted to attend are:

- TST faculty members and registered TST graduate (AD) students; and,
- The Candidate's one invited guest.

Recording & Cellphones

- The unauthorized use of any form of device to audiotape, photograph, video-record or otherwise reproduce the doctoral exam is prohibited.
- Cellphones should be turned off.

GETTING STARTED

- If an examiner is participating by teleconference, a GCTS staff member connects the examiner via the telecommunication equipment.
- The Chair greets everyone.
- The Chair notes the policy on visitors.
- The Chair asks all present to ensure that their telephones are off.
- The Chair indicates that the examination has commenced.
- The Chair invites the Candidate and Examiners to introduce themselves and verifies that the local members are able to hear and understand those joining the examination via telecommunication, and vice-versa.

1st *IN CAMERA* SESSION

***In camera* meeting**

The Chair then invites the Candidate and visitors to withdraw. The Examiners remain for all *in camera* sessions.

The Chair confirms that the examination report(s) have been given to all Examiners (including the External), and, where necessary, allows time for the Examiners to read the report(s).

The Chair determines the order of questioning and length of time for each Examiner. The defence typically lasts two (2) hours.

Typical Order of Questioning

1. Thesis Supervisor
2. External Examiner
3. Internal / Supervisory Committee Examiner
4. Supervisory Committee Examiner
5. SGS Examiner (conjoint ThD/PhD/DMin); *or* TST Examiner
(non-conjoint PhD)

Time-Limits for Examiners

Two rounds of questioning are typically held:

- 1st Round – up to 15 minutes per Examiner
- 2nd Round – up to 5 minutes per Examiner

External Examiners are customarily allowed additional time. Individual Examiners may choose to forfeit their allotted time in the 2nd round.

PUBLIC EXAMINATION

The Examination

- The Chair invites the Candidate and visitors to return.
- As part of the Thesis Supervisor's 1st round of questions, the Supervisor invites the Candidate to summarize the research and conclusions of the thesis orally, in no more than fifteen (15) minutes.
- Two rounds of questioning continue, in the agreed-upon order.

2nd IN CAMERA SESSION

The Evaluation of the Thesis and Defence

At the conclusion of the two rounds of questions, the Chair:

- invites the Candidate and visitors to withdraw.

The Chair then:

- distributes the Voting Ballots (*in the Final Oral Examination Binder*).
- reminds Examiners that the examination covers both the Thesis and the Candidate's oral defence.
- outlines the voting procedures and evaluation policies (*see next page*).

THE FINAL EVALUATION DECISIONS

The Final Oral Examination Committee must make one of five decisions about the Thesis and oral defence:

(1) ACCEPTABLE IN ITS PRESENT FORM. The Candidate passes with no conditions. The thesis is entirely acceptable as submitted, and the typescript is entirely free of typographical and stylistic errors, or so very nearly free that the candidate can be entrusted with producing the library copy without further oversight.

(2) ACCEPTABLE WITH EDITORIAL CORRECTIONS. The Candidate passes with editorial corrections to the thesis being required (such as typographical errors, errors in punctuation, or problems in style). The corrections are to be completed within one month to the satisfaction of the Supervisor (i.e., the expertise of the Supervisor alone is sufficient to approve all corrections).

(3) ACCEPTABLE WITH MINOR REVISIONS. The Candidate passes with minor revisions to the thesis being required that are more than changes in style and less than major changes in the thesis (e.g., clarification of textual material or the qualification of research findings or conclusions). These are to be completed within three months to the unanimous satisfaction of a sub-committee of three examiners selected by and from the members of the examination committee. If they do not give their unanimous approval, the final oral examination must be reconvened within twelve months of the date of the original examination.

(4) ADJOURNMENT. Major (substantive) modifications are required to the thesis, and the examination is adjourned for no longer than one year. The same examiners (insofar as possible) will then be reconvened, and the revised thesis re-examined within one year of the first examination.

(5) FAILURE. The Thesis and Examination fails.

VOTING RULES

Straw Poll – Informal Voting

The Chair then solicits feedback on the thesis and its oral defence, following the same order as the questioning, according to the possible decisions (*See previous page*).

Rules for determining the outcome in a Final Oral Examination

- Decisions (1), (2), (3) require either a unanimous vote of those present (and constituting a quorum for the examination) or not more than one negative vote or abstention.

If the committee is unable to reach decision on (1) or (2) or (3) with either a unanimous vote or with not more than one negative vote or abstention, Adjournment is mandatory, unless a majority of those present vote in favour of (5).

Thesis corrections or modifications

- In the event of Acceptable with Editorial Corrections, the Supervisor provides the Candidate with a written list of all the corrections required by the Examiners.
- In the event of Acceptable with Minor Revisions or an Adjournment, the Supervisor provides the Candidate with a written summary list of the modifications to be required.
- The Candidate is given the examination report(s) at the end of the examination (*see the envelope in the Final Oral Examination Binder*). In some cases, the Candidate will already have received the examination report(s).

(For Reconvened Exams Only)

Rules for determining the outcome in a Reconvened Oral Examination

- In the case of an adjourned or re-convened oral examination, the only three allowable votes are: (1) Acceptable in its Present Form; (2) Acceptable with Editorial Corrections; and (5) Failure.
- The Candidate passes if the decision is unanimous or if there is not more than one negative vote or abstention. The committee may not vote to adjourn and re-examine a re-examined thesis.

EXAMINATION DOCUMENTATION

Examiners' Ballots

- Each Examiner must complete and submit to the Chair a signed ballot indicating his/her evaluation of the thesis and oral examination.
- The External Examiner does not need to submit a ballot. The Chair simply attests the External Examiner's vote on the Chair Summary Form.

Chair's *Testamur*

- The Chair of the Final Oral Examination committee shall complete two forms testifying to the result of the thesis examination (*contained in the Final Oral Examination Binder*).
- The forms, with the ballots, shall be forwarded to the GCTS Office.

OUTCOME PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED

Report of Evaluation

The Chair then invites the Candidate and visitors to return and reports the outcome of the committee's deliberations.

The examination is then considered finished.

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