PhD Thesis Proposal Defence Procedures

Please note: The Student, the Supervisor and the Supervisory Committee (SC) are responsible for completing the steps as outlined in this checklist; the timeline is suggested.

I. Prior to the Thesis Proposal Defence:
   A. The Student is enrolled in HSCI 983-6 Comprehensive Examination and Thesis Proposal.
   B. Normally the thesis proposal defence will be completed in the Student’s second year.
   C. The Student will prepare a written research proposal that integrates theory, current research, and methods in fields related to the selected research problem. The proposal will be organized and evaluated in accordance to the policies and procedures established by the FHS MSc/PhD Graduate Studies Committee. Briefly, these policies specify that the proposal:
      1. Reviews the relevant research literature;
      2. Reflects original work;
      3. Describes methodology appropriate to the principal research question(s).
   D. The Student, in collaboration with the Supervisor and SC, will determine the timeline for defending the thesis proposal.
   E. The Student will contact the SC and schedule a meeting (reserve a room) for the thesis proposal defence. All SC members will be involved in all steps of the thesis proposal defence, and be present in person (or via phone or other media if not possible) at the thesis proposal defence.
   F. The MSc/PhD Graduate Program Assistant will provide the Supervisor with the PhD Thesis Proposal Confirmation of Acceptability form for completion by the SC at the conclusion of the thesis proposal defence.
   G. The comprehensive examination and thesis proposal defence may be combined in one meeting, depending on the judgment of the Student’s SC. In the case of a combined meeting, then the comprehensive examination will occur first. If the Student successfully passes the comprehensive examination then the thesis proposal defence will proceed according to the procedures outlined in this document.
   H. To ensure consistency of standards across the Faculty of Health Sciences the MSc/PhD Graduate Studies Committee will oversee the comprehensive examination and thesis proposal defence processes. This may include attending the Student’s thesis proposal defence at the invitation of the Student and SC.
II. **At the thesis proposal defence meeting:**

A. The Student will present a summary of the thesis proposal. Normally the presentation will be approximately 30 minutes. The thesis proposal defence continues with questions from the SC with the Supervisor posing questions (if any) last. When the SC is satisfied that there are no further questions, then the Student is invited to step out of the room and the SC makes a decision on one of the following outcomes of the thesis proposal defence:

1. **Satisfactory.** The Supervisory Committee has read and responded to the student’s thesis proposal and defence. We agree that the student has satisfactorily met the requirements of this committee and should move forward with his/her research leading to a PhD thesis.

2. **Satisfactory with conditions** (attach specific conditions that must be met for a satisfactory assessment). The Supervisory Committee has read and responded to the student’s thesis proposal and defence. We agree the Student will have satisfactorily met the requirements of this committee and should move forward with his/her PhD thesis research once specific conditions (attached) are addressed to the satisfaction of the Supervisor; the Supervisor will withhold signature until such time that the conditions are fully addressed.

3. **Unsatisfactory** (attach specific conditions for satisfactory assessment). The Supervisory Committee has read and responded to the student’s thesis proposal and defence. We agree that the student has not satisfactorily met the requirements of this committee and is not adequately prepared to move forward with his/her PhD thesis research. A new thesis proposal defense may be required.

B. If the Student fails a portion of the thesis proposal and must re-write and re-defend, they may only do so once; if they do not successfully pass on the second try they will be withdrawn from the program in accordance with Graduate General Regulation 1.8.3.

III. **After the thesis proposal defence meeting:**

A. The Student is invited to return to the room when the Supervisor will notify the Student formally with the completion of the PhD Thesis Proposal Confirmation of Acceptability form. The form has the signatures of the Supervisor and SC confirming that the Student has successfully completed the thesis proposal and defence.

B. The Supervisor (or designate) will submit the completed PhD Thesis Proposal Confirmation of Acceptability form to the MSc/PhD Graduate Program Assistant (mscphd_assistant@sfu.ca).

C. The original completed form will be kept confidential and reside in the Student’s paper file.

D. If the comprehensive examination and thesis proposal are a separate entity, the Student will receive an IP (in progress) grade for HSCI 983-6. The grade of S (Satisfactory) will be assigned for HSCI 983-6 when the thesis proposal is defended successfully.

E. The Student will enroll in HSCI 990-12 Thesis Research in the semester following the successful completion of the comprehensive examination and thesis proposal defence. The Student will enroll in HSCI 990 in subsequent semesters until the completion of the PhD program.