

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate DATE June 9, 2025
FROM Mary O'Brien,
Chair of Senate Graduate Studies
Committee (SGSC)
RE: Graduate General Regulations 1.2 Administration of the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and 1.9 Preparation for Examinations.




For Approval:

At its meeting on June 3, 2025, SGSC reviewed and approved the revision of the Graduate General Regulations 1.2 Administration of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (effective **Spring 2026**) and 1.9 Preparation for Examinations (effective **Summer 2026**). This gives rise to the following motion:

Motion:

That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulations 1.2 Administration of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (effective **Spring 2026**) and 1.9 Preparation for Examinations (effective **Summer 2026**).

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Mary O'Brien, Chair of Senate **DATE** 16 May 2025
Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)
FROM Pamela Stern, Graduate Studies 
Associate Dean, Curriculum
and Policy
RE: Graduate General Regulation Change:
1.2 Administration of the Faculty of
Graduate Studies

Motion:

That SGSC approve the addition to GGR 1.2 Administration of the Faculty of Graduate Studies

Summary and Rationale:

The proposed change follows a recommendation of the Working Group for the Regulation of Professional Graduate Program. It takes note of the fact that Supervisors and Supervisory Committees are not required for all degree programs. Additionally, it identifies the faculty role in providing academic advising to those graduate students.

Recommendations:

That SGSC approve this addition to GGR 1.2 Administration of the Faculty of Graduate Studies

Effective Spring 2026

GGR 1.2 Administration of the Faculty of Graduate Studies

Dean and Vice-Provost, Faculty of Graduate Studies

The dean is responsible for the general supervision of graduate work at the university and chairs the Faculty of Graduate Studies assembly and the senate graduate studies committee.

Associate Director, Graduate Admissions, Records and Registration

The associate director is responsible for enrollment of students, assessment of fees, maintenance of records, and other administrative duties.

Committees

The committees responsible for the supervision of graduate students are the supervisory committee, graduate program committee, the faculty graduate studies committee, the Faculty of Graduate Studies assembly and the senate graduate studies committee. The functions of these committees in relation to individual students are as follows.

Supervisory Committee (see [1.6.4](#))

The student's supervisory committee helps the student define and develop a program of studies and reports on the student's progress to the graduate program committee. The supervisory committee forms part of the student's final examination committee. **Students enrolled in programs with course work (1.7.2c) or capstone (1.7.2b) completion options do not require a supervisor or supervisory committee. In those cases, advising functions rest with the graduate program committee or a faculty member designated as program director (also called program advisor, program coordinator or academic director).**

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Mary O'Brien, Chair of Senate
FROM Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC) Pamela
Stern, Graduate Studies Associate Dean,
Curriculum
and Policy
RE: Graduate General Regulation Change: GGR
1.9 Preparation for Examinations

DATE 16 May 2025

Pamela Stern 

Motion:

That SGSC approve the proposed changes to GGR 1.9 Preparation for Examinations (effective Summer 2026)

Summary and Rationale:

The proposed changes were developed by a Working Group convened to review the processes and procedures relevant to theses at SFU. Once the Working Group completed its work, their proposed changes were reviewed by 6 faculty-level graduate program committees.

The proposed changes clarify the composition and responsibilities of examining committees. They also provide students and their supervisory committees to invite a non-academic specialist to participate in the examination and to act as an advisor to the committee. There is no requirement that such a specialist be included.

Recommendations:

That SGSC approve the proposed changes to GGR 1.9 Preparation for Examinations

Effective Summer 2026

1.9 Preparation for Examinations

1.9.1 Master's Students

Each candidate for a master's degree under [1.7.2a](#) or [1.7.2b](#) will have an examination.

1.9.1 a Examining Committee for a Master's Degree Candidate **Completing Under 1.7.2a**

~~Each candidate for a master's degree under [1.7.2a](#), [1.7.2b](#), or [1.7.2c](#) will have an examination.~~

For Master's degrees completed under 1.7.2a, the examination will be moderated by the chair of the student's graduate program committee or their designate. This individual is a continuing member of the Simon Fraser University faculty and is non-voting. If the chair of the graduate program committee is a member of the student's supervisory committee, a designate must be named to chair the examination.

Theses and research projects examined under 1.7.2a will be public and will include at least one examiner who should be free from potential [conflict of interest](#) and normally shall not have collaborated with the supervisor or any member of the examining committee in the previous four (4) years.

The examining committee for examinations under [1.7.2a](#) and [1.7.2b](#) shall have the following minimum composition:

~~a) the chair of the student's graduate program committee, or designate, who shall be a non-voting chair of the examining committee. If the chair of the graduate program committee is also on the student's supervisory committee, the chair shall designate a member of faculty at this university, who is not a member of the student's supervisory committee, as chair.~~

~~b) a) all members of the student's supervisory committee; and~~

~~c) b) an examiner who is a member of Simon Fraser University faculty; or a other person suitably qualified; who is not a member of the student's supervisory committee. For a thesis or research project examination in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, normally the examiner may not be a member of the student's department academic unit, unless a waiver is granted by the dean of arts and social sciences.~~ **Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences** or designate.

1.9.1 b Advisory Member of the Examining Committee

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to include an additional member of the examining committee with special expertise in the area of the thesis or research project. With the consent of the student and the supervisory committee, up to one additional member may

be appointed to the supervisory committee and/or as an advisor to the examining committee. This individual should have expertise in the area of the work, which may be demonstrated via a resume, CV, or lived experiences. This individual will read the work being examined and contribute to discussions about outcome of the work (1.10.2).

~~Examination of projects (under [GGR 1.7.2b](#) program requirements) may have a different examination process if it has been designated by the appropriate faculty graduate studies committee with the approval of the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. When the project is live, taped or filmed, only one presentation is required for examination, and a digital copy is required for deposition in the library.~~

~~All examinations under [1.7.2a](#) and [b](#) shall follow publication and copyright outlined in [GGR 1.11](#).~~

1.9.1 c Examining Committee for a Master's Degree Candidate completing a Capstone under 1.7.1b

For students' completing under ~~1.7.2c~~ **1.7.2b** the ~~examination capstone is examined~~ **evaluated internally by a minimum of two readers**, designated by the appropriate faculty graduate studies committee with the approval of dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or designate. **If a chair is required by the faculty or academic unit, that role should be filled by the chair of the graduate program committee or other neutral party designated by the graduate program chair.**

~~Examinations under 1.7.2c may be required to be submitted to the library. If mandatory, this requirement will be listed on the program requirements in the Calendar and shall follow publication and copyright outlined in GGR 1.11.~~

1.9.2 Preparation for Examination of Master's Thesis or Research Project (1.7.2a)

Preparation for the examination of a master's thesis **or research project (1.7.2a)** shall not take place until the ~~thesis work~~ is substantially complete and in the ~~required~~ **approved** format. See the [Thesis Assistance](#) website for information.

The candidate's **supervisor or** supervisory committee shall ~~make a recommendation to the chair of the graduate program committee concerning~~ **determine** the date, place, and time of the ~~thesis~~ examination and the composition of the examining committee in conformity with [1.9.1a](#).

~~Upon approval of the chair of the graduate program committee, this recommendation~~**This information, along with the thesis title of the work**, shall be sent to the ~~associate director, graduate admission, records and registration~~ **Faculty of Graduate Studies** for entry into the university's records. The examining committee composition shall reach ~~the associate director at least~~ **the Faculty of Graduate Studies ideally** four weeks before the examination date. At this time, the chair of the graduate program committee **or designate** will notify the university community of the intended time and place of the examination.

A digital copy of the completed work shall be distributed to the examining committee by the chair of the graduate program committee or designate at least two weeks before the date of the thesis examination, a digital copy of the completed thesis shall be distributed to the examining committee by the chair of the graduate program committee. Department Academic unit rules may require earlier submission of the completed thesis work to be examined.

If the date or place **of the examination needs to be** ~~has been~~ changed, **this change must be approved by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. In such a case, it is the responsibility of the chair of the graduate program committee will or designate to** notify the university community.

The examination of the ~~thesis work~~ shall take place under the regulations for ~~thesis~~ examination given in [1.10.1](#).

1.9.3 Doctoral Students

1.9.3a Examining Committee for Doctoral Thesis

Each candidate for a doctoral degree shall be examined on the thesis. **The examination will be moderated by the chair of the student's graduate program committee or their designate. This individual is a continuing member of the Simon Fraser University faculty and is non-voting. If the chair of the graduate program committee is a member of the student's supervisory committee, a designate must be named to chair the examination.** Each examining committee shall have the following minimum composition:

~~a) the chair of the graduate program committee, or designate, who shall be a non-voting chair of the examining committee. If the chair of the graduate program committee is also on the student's supervisory committee, the chair shall designate a member of faculty at the university, who is not a member of the student's supervisory committee, as chair.~~

~~ba)~~ all members of the student's supervisory committee

~~eb)~~ an examiner who is a member of **the Simon Fraser University** faculty, or a person suitably qualified, who is not a member of the student's supervisory committee. For a thesis examination in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, normally the examiner may not be a member of the student's **academic unit** ~~department~~, unless a waiver is granted by the dean of ~~arts and social sciences~~ the **Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences** or designate.

~~ec)~~ an external examiner who shall be specifically qualified in the field of the thesis and not ~~be a~~ member of faculty at ~~the university~~ **Simon Fraser University (see 1.9.4).**

1.9.3 b Advisory Member of the Examining Committee

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to include an additional member of the examining committee with special expertise in the area of the research or project. With the consent of the student and the supervisory committee, up to one additional member may be appointed to the supervisory committee and/or as an advisor to the examining committee. This individual should have expertise in the area of the work, which may be demonstrated via a resume, CV, or lived experiences. This individual will read the work being examined and contribute to discussions about classification of the work (1.10.2).

1.9.4 The Role of the External Examiner for a Doctoral Thesis

The external examiner should be a ~~distinguished scholar~~ **recognized expert** with particular research and supervisory experience in the field of the thesis research. **expertise in the field of the thesis research. They should also have experience evaluating theses at the graduate level and experience supervising to completion at the graduate level.** The examiner ~~shall~~ **should** be free from potential conflict of interest **and normally shall not have collaborated with the supervisor or any member of the examination committee in the previous four (4) years.** The external examiner may participate in person, ~~or via video/telephone conference.~~ **Normally, the external examiner may not participate or in absentia.**

The external examiner shall ~~be asked to~~ **report in writing** on the thesis. This report will normally be submitted two weeks before the examination date to the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or designate. **The report should provide an assessment of the following aspects: whether the thesis provides a significant and original contribution to knowledge, the impact on the discipline, the contextualization of the work within the broader field, the clarity and appropriateness of the research methods, the clarity and interpretation of results, the justification of the conclusions, and the implications of the work.** Finally, a statement should be provided regarding whether the thesis is ready for examination. If the report states that the thesis is ready for examination, a copy shall be sent to the chair of the graduate program committee for distribution to all members of the examining committee prior to the examination. The contents of the report will not be communicated to the student until after the examination, and the report itself may only be shared with the student with permission of the external examiner and under the discretion of the supervisor. ~~In the event the external examiner is examining in absentia, the report should be extensive and give a recommendation for the examination outcome (see 1.10.2). The report may contain specific questions the external examiner would like posed to the candidate. Those questions shall be directed to the candidate during the examination by the chair of the examining committee or members of the examining committee selected by the chair.~~

In the event the external examiner is in absentia, the report should be extensive and provide a recommendation for the examination outcome (see [1.10.2](#)). In addition to the expectations for the report outlined above, reports from in absentia examiners must contain specific questions the external examiner would like posed to the candidate and outline any suggested revisions. Those questions shall be directed to the candidate during the examination by the

chair of the examining committee or members of the examining committee selected by the chair.

~~If the report states that the thesis is ready for examination, a copy shall be sent to the chair of the graduate program committee for distribution to all members of the examining committee before the examination. The contents of the report will not be communicated to the student until after the defence with permission of the examiner.~~

If the report recommends that the examination be postponed, the dean **of the Faculty of Graduate Studies** or designate shall send ~~a copy~~ **copies** to the supervisor and the chair of the graduate program committee. The chair of the graduate program committee and the supervisor will inform the student of the contents of the report, **but may not share the report itself**. The chair of the graduate program committee shall report to the dean or designate whether the examination will take place as scheduled or be postponed.

1.9.5 Preparation for Examination of Doctoral Thesis

Preparation for the examination of a doctoral thesis shall not take place until the thesis is substantially complete and in the required format. See the Thesis Assistance website for information.

The candidate's supervisory committee shall ~~make a recommendation to the chair of the graduate program committee concerning the composition of the examining committee (in conformity with 1.9.3)~~ and **recommend** the date, location, and time of the thesis examination. **The candidate's supervisory committee shall also make a recommendation to the chair of the graduate program committee concerning the composition of the examining committee (in alignment with 1.9.3).** Upon approval of the chair of the graduate program committee, this recommendation, along with the thesis and all relevant documentation, shall be sent to the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or designate for final approval no later than six weeks before the examination date.

Once approved, the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or designate shall formally invite the external examiner and distribute digital copies of the completed thesis to the examining committee.

The examination of the thesis shall take place under the regulations for thesis examination given in [1.10.1](#).

1.9.6 Notification of Doctoral Thesis Examination

Once **the external examiner's report has been received and** the examination has been approved by the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or designate, the chair of the graduate program committee or designate is responsible for notifying the candidate, examining committee, faculty dean(s), and the university community of

the approved date, location, and time of the thesis examination. This notification should happen no later than two weeks before the examination date.

Any changes to the date, location, and/or time of the ~~thesis~~ examination must be approved by the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or designate. The chair of the graduate program committee or designate is responsible for informing the candidate, examining committee, faculty dean(s), and the university community **of these changes**. The dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or designate is responsible for notifying the external examiner of any changes.