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SFU.CA/GRADUATE-STUDIES

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate
FROM Mary O'Brien,
Chair of Senate Graduate Studies
Committee (SGSC)
RE: Graduate General Regulation 1.10 Examinations

DATE August 21, 2025



For Approval:

At its meeting on June 3, 2025, SGSC reviewed and approved the revision Graduate General Regulation 1.10 Examinations. This gives rise to the following motion, effective Summer 2026:

Motion:

That Senate approve the revisions to Graduate General Regulation 1.10 Examinations effective Summer 2026.

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Mary O'Brien, Chair of Senate
Graduate Studies Committee (SGSC)
FROM Pamela Stern, Graduate Studies Associate
Dean, Curriculum and Policy
Graduate General Regulation Change: GGR
RE: 1.10 Examinations

DATE 16 May 2025



Motion:

That SGSC approve the proposed changes to GGR 1.10 Examinations

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 1.10 Examinations

1.10 Examinations

1.10.1 ~~Thesis~~ Examination of the Thesis or Research Project (Master's 1.7.2a and Doctoral)

The candidate shall give an oral account of the research on which the thesis **or research project** is based and defend the ~~thesis work~~ itself. **When the project is live, taped or filmed, only one presentation is required for examination.** The candidate must be prepared to answer questions on the field of the research and related fields.

Thesis **and research project** examinations are open to the ~~university community~~ **public**. Copies of the thesis **or research project** abstract shall be made available to all those attending the examination. The chair of the examining committee shall allow ~~proper~~ **the** opportunity for questions on the thesis **or research project** to come from persons who are not members of the examining committee but are attending the examination. ~~The dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or designate shall have the right to attend all phases of the examination.~~

After the chair of the examining committee is satisfied that all relevant questions have been answered, the examining committee shall meet in camera to ~~classify the thesis~~ **determine the outcome of the examination.**

The dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or designate shall have the right to attend all phases of the examination, including the in camera portion, as an observer.

1.10.2 ~~Classification of the Thesis~~ Outcome of the Examination

~~The decision of the examining committee is by simple majority vote. A decision to pass the thesis may not be reached on a tie vote of the examining committee. If a majority vote to pass the thesis cannot be reached, the student is entitled to a re-examination.~~

~~Upon a successful completion, the thesis must be submitted to the library no later than the end of the subsequent term.~~

There are four possible ~~levels of classification of thesis~~ **outcomes of the** examination:

1. the ~~thesis work~~ may be passed as submitted.
2. the ~~thesis work~~ may be passed on the condition that **minor** revisions be completed to the satisfaction of the supervisor on behalf of the examining committee. **The expected revisions shall be clarified at the end of the examination, and the committee will set a timeline for completion that is reflective of the required revisions.** ~~The committee will set a time for completion.~~
3. the examining committee may adjourn if it judges that the ~~thesis work~~ could pass after **significant** additional work by the candidate. In the event of adjournment, **the expected**

revisions will be clarified at the end of the examination, and a deadline for completion commensurate with the scope of required revisions should be set by the examining committee. ~~The~~ the examining committee must remain the same for the re-examination, ~~must schedule the re-examination and may not adjourn a second time.~~ ~~At~~ For the re-examination, the examining committee may

- a) reach its decision ~~by individual examination of the revised thesis or~~ **solely by re-reading the revised work and submitting their written evaluation to the program committee chair; or**
- b) hold a formal re-examination under section [1.10.1](#). The preparation for the re-examination does not follow [1.9.5](#). **Normally, the** ~~The~~ re-examination schedule cannot be changed. The revised ~~thesis work~~ **thesis work** is distributed to the examining committee including the external examiner by the chair of the graduate program committee or designate **with sufficient time for evaluation**. No **new** pre-defence report will be required from the external examiner. If the revised ~~thesis work~~ **thesis work** is failed, follow the steps for the category 4 outcome (see below).

4. the ~~thesis work~~ **thesis work** may be failed.

~~In this case~~ **the event of a failure**, the ~~candidate has to receive~~ **committee must provide** a written report **to the Graduate Program Chair within two business days of the examination** ~~from the examining committee~~ detailing the reasons for the failure. **The Graduate Program Chair will communicate the result to the student.** To appeal the ~~thesis~~ failure decision, the student can follow [1.16.2 Progress Evaluations](#). If there is no appeal, the student will then be required to withdraw from the university.

Where a re-examination is deemed appropriate, a student may re-defend their work one time only. A student whose work is failed a second time will be required to withdraw from the university.

In the case of a master's examination, the decision of the examining committee is by simple majority vote. A decision to pass the work may not be reached on a tie vote of the examining committee. If a majority vote to pass the work cannot be reached, the student is entitled to a re-examination.

In the case of a doctoral examination, whenever possible, the decision should be the consensus of the committee, with deference given to the judgement of the external examiner. The examining committee may not award a higher result than the assessment of the external examiner.

Upon successful examination, the work must be submitted to the library no later than the end of the following academic term.

1.10.3 Recommendation for the Award of the Degree

When a student's program requirements include an examination as per [1.9.1](#) **1.9** the recommendation for the award of degree will not take place until after the supervisory committee has approved any revisions to the thesis or **research** project.

When a student has successfully completed the degree requirements the recommendation for the award of the degrees goes for approval ~~respectively~~ to the graduate program committee ~~and, the faculty of graduate studies committee,~~ **the Faculty of Graduate Studies before recommendation the senate graduate studies committee and to** Senate, which has the final authority to award the degree.

The title of the thesis, ~~extended essays, paper or project~~ **or research project (1.7.2a)** will be recorded on the student's transcript.

1.10.4 Submission to the Library

A digital copy of all completed theses and **research** projects **examined** under [GGR 1.7.2a](#) and [1.7.2b](#) are required to be submitted **and archived at** ~~to~~ the Library. **Academic units may also require that capstones (1.7.2b) be archived at the library. Normally, when the project is live, taped, or filmed, a digital copy is required for deposition in the library.**

Submission to the library should occur no later than the end of the ~~subsequent~~ term **immediately following a** ~~after their~~ successful examination. ~~Projects completed under GGR 1.7.2c and capstones required to be submitted to the Library will follow the requirements for a thesis below.~~

~~A digital copy of the final completed thesis shall be sent to the Library together with a memorandum from the supervisor certifying that all required revisions have been made. Once submitted, the thesis work is considered final and normally may not be changed. The Library's Assistant for Theses will review the thesis the work for formatting and upon approval, the thesis work will be deposited into the Library's University's institutional repository.~~

No degree examined as per [1.7.2a](#) and [1.7.2b](#) will be approved by Senate until the **work** ~~thesis~~ is submitted to the Library.