

2022-23 COVID 19 Pandemic  
Addendum to the  
**Graduate English Guidelines**

Section 11:  
Submission of the Thesis to the Department

Section 12:  
The Final Oral Examination

**Graduate English Department  
University of Toronto**

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<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/program-completion/formatting/> )*

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## 11 Submission of the Thesis to the Department

In consideration of the limitations and restrictions put on in-person meetings during the pandemic, the Department of English and the School of Graduate Studies have modified the procedures to accommodate the public health requirements of the current situation. The Department of English is allowing digital submission of dissertations in advance of Final Oral Exams (FOEs), and the School of Graduate Studies is allowing both modified in-person or “hybrid” examinations and on-line or “remote” examinations, both until further notice. These exceptions to SGS requirements are subject to change at minimal notice depending upon public health requirements at the time of submission and examination.

The candidate should begin by emailing MS WORD drafts of their Curriculum Vitae and Abstract to the Director and the Graduate Assistant. This should happen at least a month before the candidate plans to submit. **The Abstract must be no longer than 350 words** (excluding title, name, etc.) and should list the degree or date as “Expected,” until after the Oral Examination has been successfully completed and the candidate is submitting the dissertation to the School of Graduate Studies. Please refer to the SGS **Producing Your Thesis > Formatting** page:

<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current-students/program-completion/formatting/>

The candidate’s Academic CV should include their prospective PhD degree, thesis title, supervisor, and committee members. The Abstract and CV are used to secure an external appraiser and therefore should include any related academic activities.

In order to secure an external appraiser, the Director may suggest revisions to both the Abstract and the CV, and more than one round of revisions may be required for the Abstract.

The final version of the Abstract and CV are then emailed in PDF format to the Director and the Graduate Assistant, and the final version of the Abstract is incorporated into the dissertation.

Once the supervisor and other committee members agree that the thesis has been completed to their satisfaction, the supervisor then emails the Director of Graduate Studies, stating that the thesis is ready for examination and suggesting names of a minimum of four to five external examiners and two to three potential internal (departmental) examiners.

The candidate would normally be required to submit six copies of the thesis, printed single-sided, not stapled or bound, in a thesis box to the Department Assistant. **Until further notice, we are requesting that a final PDF of the dissertation be submitted to the Graduate Assistant (this exception to the requirement is subject to change).** The dissertation PDF must be formatted as per the instructions in the *Graduate English Guidelines for the Preparation of PhD Theses*, and the entire file should be between 1 and 3 MB in size. (If your dissertation has a number of coloured illustrations, it could be up to 8 to 10 MB in size but may need to be submitted via a shared drive.) Please contact the Graduate Assistant if you need assistance with producing this version of your thesis.

## 12 The Final Oral Examination

Please note that during the Covid 19 pandemic, SGS and the Department of English exclusively hosted all Final Oral Examinations via ZOOM teleconferencing, and no “in-person” exams were allowed. (We used a secure passcode protected version of ZOOM with a “Waiting Room,” to control access to the exam and to where we could virtually “withdraw” the candidate during deliberations.)

At present, the Department is offering a range of options: **entirely remote** (via Zoom), **hybrid** (with the candidate and some members of the examination committee in person and some members on Zoom), and **entirely in person**. *Please discuss the format of your exam with the Graduate Assistant at the same time as you submit your CV and final PDF of your dissertation (including the abstract) to the department.*

During the pandemic, all candidates who are scheduled for *either a hybrid or a remote* Final Oral Exam will be **required to complete an attestation form stating that they agree to their Final Oral Exam being held remotely.**

The Final Oral Examination takes place, under normal circumstances, about ten to thirteen weeks after the submission of the thesis to the Department; however, during the pandemic this length of time could be weeks longer. The summer months and the holiday break in December and January create major exceptions to this timing: no defences occur during the SGS “black-out

period” in December – January, and **Final Oral Examinations are not scheduled in July and August except for emergency situations.**

Other factors that may influence the timing of the oral examination include delays in securing an external examiner and the external examiner’s own schedule. *Candidates are advised to speak with the Director of Graduate Studies 2-3 months before the planned submission date.*

**The Oral Examination committee is appointed by the School of Graduate Studies on the advice of the Department, which makes arrangements for the examination.**

The Final Oral Examination Committee consists of the following:

**Non-Voting Members:**

- Chair: a member of the graduate faculty from another department; ensures that the rules are followed and that the candidate is treated fairly; is a **non-voting** member of the committee and generally does not ask questions.

**Voting Members:**

- External Appraiser: an expert in the field from another university who writes a short appraisal of the thesis, often called the “external report”: the appraisal will state whether or not the thesis is acceptable “in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.” This report is submitted at least 10 business days in advance of the oral defense, at which time a copy will be provided to the candidate and the examination committee. The External Appraiser asks at least one and often two rounds of questions.
- Supervisor: usually asks a leading question or two at the beginning of the oral exam, but in the Department of English it is standard practice for the supervisor not to ask questions otherwise.
- Two Supervisory Committee Members, each of whom asks a round or two of questions (if there is an additional Supervisory Committee Member, they may participate in the exam as a **non-voting** member of the committee: non-voting members may participate in the questioning of the candidate and may remain during the committee’s deliberations but have no vote) .
- Internal Examiner: a member of the Department with the same functions as the External

Appraiser, except the Internal Examiner does not provide a written report.

- Departmental Representative: Director of Graduate Studies or a delegated member of the graduate faculty in English. (In remote or hybrid examinations, the Departmental Representative usually also acts as the departmental tech and Zoom host for the ZOOM host).