FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
2023-24
THESIS GUIDEBOOK
(Master's)

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INTRODUCTION

TWU's Office of Graduate Studies provides this guidebook as a compilation of TWU policies and procedures, with input from Faculty of Graduate Studies programs, to assist students and programs in navigating the many facets of thesis defence preparation and completion of all thesis requirements for successful degree completion.

The Office of Graduate Studies updates this guidebook annually.

THESIS TRACK PROGRAMS

At TWU, a thesis is a graduate capstone project completed independently by a student under the guidance of a supervisory committee, as a final component of their graduate degree. A thesis provides the student with an opportunity to conduct significant autonomous research in an area of interest. For a master's degree, the focus of a thesis track is the process of research and normally includes identifying a research question, critically analyzing the literature, using a research method to collect and analyze data, presenting the results, and discussing the relevance of the findings to the broader field.

THESIS ADMINISTRATION

All theses and defences are coordinated through the Office of Graduate Studies. This office is responsible for policies, procedures, and related forms to support thesis-track programs and students.

A thesis defence is a formal examination of a thesis-track graduate student, conducted by an examining committee, upon conclusion of the student's written thesis. The purpose of a thesis defence is to provide the student with an opportunity to explain the methods, process, and results of their thesis research. Required participants at a thesis defence are the student, the examining committee, and the exam chair. Optional attendees are audience members comprised of peers, faculty, family, friends, and members of the public.

THESIS COURSE PREREQUISITES

Students in thesis-track programs will note their program's course requirements that must be completed prior to registration in Thesis I and Thesis II courses. Individual programs may have other thesis registration prerequisites, such as a minimum overall GPA.

THESIS DEFENCE PREREQUISITE

Students must complete all other degree requirements prior to scheduling a thesis defence.
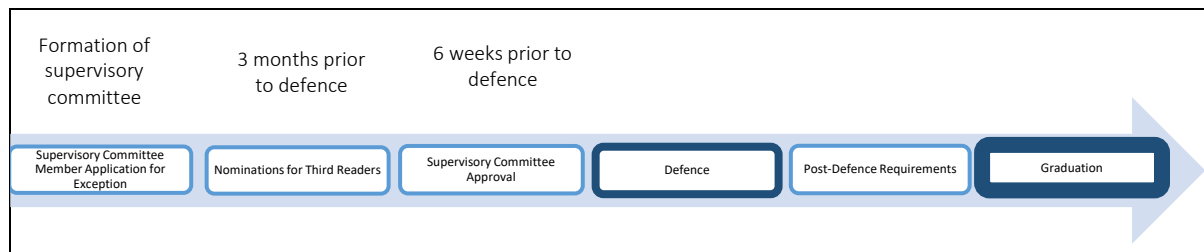
THESIS PROCESS

1. Research selection. The student will think about a topic that they would like to address. They will then discuss their thesis ideas with the program director and find out more about the research experience of potential thesis supervisors.
2. Identify a Supervisory Committee. Check program processes related to identifying the supervisor and additional supervisory committee member(s).
3. Prepare a proposal:
   a. Submit thesis proposal to supervisor for feedback
   b. Receive approval of proposal from supervisory committee (TWU) or program committee (ATCS)
   c. Obtain Research Ethics Board approval (if relevant)
   d. Ensure compliance with external requirements (if relevant – e.g., Tri-Agency funding body)

4. Collect and analyze data. Check with the program for methods relevant to the discipline.
5. Write the thesis. The student and supervisor will meet regularly to discuss the research and to review drafts of the written thesis. Once a draft of the entire thesis is completed, it should be submitted to the supervisory committee. This draft copy normally is comprised of the introduction, all chapters, conclusions, table of contents, and bibliography or reference list, as well as an abstract. Please see program for details related to the thesis composition for their discipline.
6. Defend the thesis.
7. Publish the thesis.

THESIS DEFENCE TIMELINE

Formation of supervisory committee	3 months prior to defence	6 weeks prior to defence			
Supervisory Committee Member Application for Exception	Nominations for Third Readers	Supervisory Committee Approval	Defence	Post-Defence Requirements	Graduation

NOTE: By request, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will assist the student and supervisor in developing a specific timeline accommodating to the student's graduation goals.

THESIS FORMATTING

The Office of Graduate Studies presents the following formatting requirements for all of TWU's Faculty of Graduate Studies theses. Consistent formatting helps ensure compatibility with standards established by Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and the Tri-Agencies, as well as reader accessibility, ability to reproduce the thesis in various formats, and longevity of the archived copy.

When a thesis is one of the requirements for the fulfillment of a degree, if the thesis does not conform with the format requirements, graduation will be delayed until the requirements are met. Questions may be directed to the Graduate Studies Coordinator at GradStudies@twu.ca.

Language
1. Theses must be written in English, unless approval has been granted by the Office of Graduate Studies.
2. Exception: Due to the brief and personal nature of the Dedications page, font style and language is not restricted and approval is not needed for the use of different fonts and languages.

Font
1. Use a standard font that is appropriate for an academic paper. Ask the thesis supervisor about the preferred font for the discipline. Recommendations include Arial, Calibri, and Times New Roman.
2. Font must be sized 11 or 12, with a maximum 10 cpi (characters per inch).
3. Font must be black.
4. Text and page numbers must be in the same font throughout the thesis.
5. Exception: Font and font size may be varied for symbols or emphasis, where appropriate (science and mathematical terms).

Layout (*Use this guidebook as an example of custom margin settings, pagination, and running header.)
1. Use 8.5" x 11" paper size.
2. Use portrait orientation.
3. Margins must be set to 1.25" for the left side and 1" for the top/bottom/right sides, including the pagination and running header. Custom margins settings will look like this document, which is set at:
    Layout
    - Header: 1"

Margins
- Top: 1.25"
- Bottom: 1"
- Left: 1.25"
- Right: 1"

4. The running header must be aligned at the top left hand and may not exceed 50 characters.
5. Page numbers must be aligned at the top right hand, in line with the top line of the running header.
6. Use 1.5 line spacing for the body of the text, with single spaced block quotations.

Title Page

1. Use the university approved Title Page Template. Required information includes:
   - Title
   - Author
   - Previous degrees
   - "in partial fulfillment…"
   - Degree
   - Program
   - Faculty
   - University name
   - Claim of copyright (© symbol)
   - Year of publication
   - Name of copyright owner
   - Month and year of submission
2. Use the same font and size as the body of the thesis.
3. Do not include a page number or running header on the title page.
4. Use regular font style (no bold, italics, or underlining).
5. Do not use special effects font or quotation marks.
6. Acronyms and abbreviations must be spelled out completely.

Table of Contents

The acceptable order of pages follows. Not all items listed below are required. Consult with your thesis supervisor regarding which pages (from the list above) your program includes in their theses. If included, the pages must be presented in the following order:

Preliminary pages
- Title page (required)
- Committee/Approval page (optional)
- Dedication (optional)
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Abstract (required)
- Table of Contents (required)
- List of Tables (if any)
- List of Figures and Illustrations (if any)
- List of Plates (if any)
- List of Symbols, Abbreviations, Acronyms, or Glossary (if any)

Body of text

Final sections
- End notes (if any)
- References/Bibliography
- Appendices (if any)
- Index (optional)

Remember:
1. All pages (except the title page) must include the running header and pagination.
2. All sections (except the title page) must be listed in the table of contents.

Preliminary Pages
1. Use small Roman numeral pagination (e.g., ii, iii, iv…), starting with "ii" on the Abstract page (e.g., Begin numbering pages after the title page. The "i" on the title page is implied but not given.)
2. The running header and page numbering must appear on all pages, within the 1" margins.
3. Ensure that you have permission to include someone's name in the dedication or acknowledgements, as a thesis is a public document.
4. Abstracts for master's theses are limited to 150 words.
5. Each list must start at the top of a new page.

Body of the Text
1. Use Arabic numeral pagination (e.g., 1, 2, 3…) on all pages of the body of the text.
2. Do not type "Page" in front of the number.
3. The running header and page numbering must appear on all pages, within the 1" margins.

Final Sections
1. Use Arabic numeral pagination (e.g., 247, 248, 249…) on all pages of the final sections, continuing the numbering from the body of the text.
2. The running header and page numbering must appear on all pages, within the 1" margins.

Electronic Thesis Deposit
1. Ensure your manuscript conforms to the citation style of your discipline.
2. Remove signatures.
3. Remove all personal, identifying, or contact information from the body of the thesis.
4. If appendices (e.g., Research Ethics Board Application) contain personal contact information of the author or others, either redact that information from the appendices or list the documents as appendices and then, instead of including the actual document, on the appendix page type "A full copy of this document is available upon request".
5. Remove blank pages, hanging titles, and widow lines.
6. Refer to *Post-Defence Checklist* section for further instructions regarding the archival process.

MODES OF DEFENCE

Physical. A physical defence will be held with all required parties attending in-person, including the student, examining committee members, and exam chair. The exception will be any remote third reader, who may need to attend virtually. Any audience members will attend in-person.

Virtual. Virtual defences are based on the needs of the student. If the student is remote or needs a virtual defence for other reasons, then all parties will attend in the same mode as the student. A virtual defence will be held with all required parties attending virtually, including the student, examining committee members, and exam chair. These required parties may not attend in-person together primarily and virtually secondarily (e.g., the supervisory committee may not be in the same room while the student is remote). They must all be separately virtual. Any audience members will also attend virtually.

Hybrid. A hybrid defence will consist of all required parties attending physically, including the student, the supervising committee, and the exam chair, while the remote third reader and audience members attend virtually.

THESIS COMMITTEE ROLES & EXCEPTIONS

EXAMINING COMMITTEE
Consists minimally of three scholars who adjudicate both the oral defence and the written thesis. The committee consists of the supervisory committee plus a third reader.

University Policies	
Thesis Administration (Master's) Policy Thesis Supervisory Committee (Master's) Policy	Thesis Examining Committee (Master's) Policy

Supervisory Committee Consists minimally of two members: either a primary supervisor and a second reader, or two co-supervisors			
Thesis Supervisor	Co-Supervisor(s)	Second Reader	Third Reader
Qualifications			
A doctoral-prepared TWU tenure-track or tenured faculty member from the graduate program offering the degree, and who holds the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor. Should have competence in the student's proposed area of research.	The lead co-supervisor must meet the qualifications and carry the responsibilities of a TWU thesis supervisor. The second co-supervisor, if not a TWU faculty member, must be approved by the Office of Grad Studies, and may be a retired FGS member if approved by the graduate program director.	Holds a doctorate or terminal degree in the discipline and is normally a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the FGS May be a retired FGS member if approved by the graduate program director.	Must have no conflict of interest with either the student or supervisor. Must be from outside of the student's department or program but may be from within TWU. Must hold a doctorate or terminal degree in the field of research. Is normally a tenured or tenure-track faculty member. Selected because of their expertise in the research discipline.
Roles			
Provides primary supervision and guidance to the student through research planning (proposal, ethics approval, data collection, analysis), final writing, defence preparation, defence, and post-defence requirements to completion. Ensure the student is conducting research in a manner that is ethical,	Lead co-supervisor must carry the responsibilities of a thesis supervisor and takes ultimate responsibility to ensure roles and expectations are met. Second co-supervisor works closely in collaboration with the lead co-supervisor.	Reads the thesis for appropriate content, theory, and/or methodology. Participates in a supervisory committee to discuss the student's thesis plan at an early stage of development. Reviews the proposal and provides feedback to the supervisory for consideration in	Responsible to conduct an oral examination of the student, evaluate and grade both the thesis and defence, and collaboratively determine the student's final grade.

safe, rigorous, and within realistic timelines. Facilitates the ethics review process, if applicable. Together with the graduate program director and in consultation with the student, identifies an appropriate second reader.		determining proposal approval. Is available for consultations and meetings. Participates in the thesis defence.	
Pre-Defence Approvals and Exceptions **from the Office of Graduate Studies**			
No exceptions	No exceptions for lead co-supervisor Supervisory Committee Member Application for Exception (for second co-supervisor and second reader only)		Nominations for Third Reader (NTR)
Supervisory Committee Approval (SCA-MT)			
Honorariums for Thesis Committee Members			
Determined and administered by the graduate program.			
Community Covenant and Statement of Faith			
Thesis committee members who are non-TWU faculty are <u>not</u> required to sign the Community Covenant or Statement of Faith.			

THESIS EXAM CHAIR

The exam chair is appointed and oriented by the Office of Graduate Studies. An exam chair must be from outside the thesis student's program and must not have a conflict with either the student or supervisor.

The role of the exam chair is to be a neutral facilitator representing the Vice or Associate Provost of Graduate Studies at a thesis defence, to ensure that the formal exam and related documentation proceed according to TWU policies and procedures.

If an available exam chair cannot be secured for a proposed defence date, the defence date will be returned to the graduate program for rescheduling.

POLICY: Thesis Exam Chair Policy (ED September 2022)

THESIS FORMS (in order of use)

Form	Description
Supervisory & Student Expectation Agreement (SSEA)	The intention of this agreement is to clarify expectations between the supervisor and the student, and to provide the student with information necessary for success. Both the supervisor and the student should retain a copy of the completed form, and the supervisor/program (@twu.ca) will also provide a copy to the Office of Graduate Studies (GradStudies@twu.ca).
Supervisory Committee Member Application for Exception to Policy	Program directors must submit this form to the Office of Graduate Studies to request approval for any proposed supervisory committee member who is not a member of TWU's Faculty of Graduate Studies. To be considered, the non-TWU and/or non-FGS nominee must meet all other supervisory committee member qualifications listed in the Thesis Supervisory Committee (Master's) Policy.
Nominations for Third Reader (NTR)	Examining committees for master's level theses must have a third reader and all third readers must be approved by the Office of Graduate Studies. Students must submit a completed nomination form from their TWU student email (@mytwu.ca), together with an abstract or research proposal in Word format, to the Office of Graduate Studies (GradStudies@twu.ca) a minimum of three months prior to the proposed timeframe for defence.
Supervisory Committee Approval (SCA)	This form must be signed by all required parties and submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by the student from their @mytwu.ca student email a minimum of six weeks prior to the proposed defence date. OGS office closure dates are not included in the minimum submission requirement. Thesis defence blackout dates are not included in the SCA validity period.
Title Page Template	A student may request this template from the Graduate Studies Coordinator, for use in creating their thesis title page. Formatting of the thesis title page must adhere to this template.
Thesis Evaluation Agreement (TEA)	Thesis Evaluation Agreements are provided by the Office of Graduate Studies to the exam chair prior to the defence and consist of the grading scale and the program's respective standards for thesis evaluation.
ARCA Instructions for Student Submitter	The Librarian provides this instructional form to students who have created a student account in ARCA for the purpose of uploading their thesis into the library's repository, TWUSpace.
Final Thesis Completion (FTC)	Students must submit this form, with all necessary signatures attached, from their TWU student email (@mytwu.ca) to the Graduate Studies Coordinator, as part of the process for completing thesis requirements.
Notice of Thesis Completion (NTC)	The Graduate Studies Coordinator provides this form to the Office of the Registrar upon completion of all thesis requirements, to deposit the student's final thesis grade.

DEFENCE ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

The sequence of a defence is:

Pre-Defence Meeting	A pre-defence meeting is hosted by the Graduate Studies Coordinator, 15 minutes before the start of the defence, and includes the student, examining committee, and exam chair.
Call to Order	The exam chair will call the defence to order, introduce themselves, provide the Land Acknowledgement, offer a prayer, and explain exam protocol to the audience. Alternatively, the thesis supervisor may offer the prayer.
Introductions	The exam chair will introduce the examining committee in order of thesis supervisor, second reader, third reader. The exam chair will then introduce the student for their presentation.
Presentation	The student will give a 20 to 25-minute presentation of their written thesis.
Examinations	The exam chair will moderate the examination of the thesis by calling upon the examining committee to examine the student in the following order: third reader, second reader, thesis supervisor. Examinations may be in one round or two rounds, depending on the program's preference. The examination must conclude within one hour.
Audience Questions	If the examination period ends short of one hour, the exam chair may open the floor for questions from the audience until the one hour terminates.
Deliberations	The student and audience are excused from the examination room – whether physical or virtual – to provide the examining committee privacy to deliberate the results of the examination.
Conclusion	The exam chair provides the student with their recommendations and a final grade. Audience members will not be present. As this is an exam, the results are provided privately to the student first, who may then decide whether to share the results.

DEFENCE FORMAT

Defences will be held in an approved indoor room on a TWU campus and will proceed with terminology and roles as determined by TWU policy and procedure. Any alteration to the sequence, location, or terminology used at a defence must be pre-approved by the Office of Graduate Studies. Requests to alter the precedent format or procedure of a defence must be made to the Office of Graduate Studies for consideration well in advance of the anticipated defence date.

POLICY: Thesis Administration (Master's) Policy (ED December 2022)

DEFENCE RECORDING

Requests to record a defence in any manner must be made to the Office of Graduate Studies for consideration well in advance of the anticipated defence date. Only the student presentation portion of the defence may be considered for recording. No portion of the defence will be streamed. The exam chair has the right to discontinue a recording if it is interfering with the proper conduct of the defence.

POLICY: Thesis Administration (Master's) Policy (ED December 2022)

PUBLIC EVENT

Thesis defences are public events. Requests for exceptions to public announcements and access that are deemed necessary for safety-related concerns must be made to the Office of Graduate Studies for consideration well in advance of the anticipated defence date.

POLICY: Thesis Administration (Master's) Policy (ED December 2022)

The recommendations and grading scales as outlined below are standard for all Faculty of Graduate Studies theses. However, graduate programs will individually determine their own Standards for Thesis Evaluation.

Recommendations. The examining committee will provide the student with one of the following recommendations of merit for the written thesis.

1) The thesis merits the award of the degree and is **acceptable as is** without revision.
2) The thesis merits the award of the degree, subject to **minor revisions** made to the satisfaction of the thesis supervisor.
3) The thesis merits the award of the degree, subject to **moderate revisions** made to the satisfaction of the thesis supervisor and at least one other member of the examining committee, namely: _____
4) The thesis merits the award of the degree subject to **substantive revisions** made to the satisfaction of the entire examining committee.
5) The thesis is **unsatisfactory** and does not merit the award of the degree. Further research is required, and re-examination is necessary before a degree can be awarded.
6) The thesis is **unacceptable** and does not merit the award of the degree. It is not of sufficient merit to warrant re-submission after further work.

Grading. The examining committee will provide the student with a letter grade or pass/fail grade on the basis of the student's written thesis and performance at their defence, in accordance with the program's evaluation criteria The grade will be reflective of the preliminary recommendation for merit, in accordance with the program's evaluation criteria.

Thesis Letter Grading Scale

☐	A+	(90% - 100%)	Outstanding
☐	A	(85% - 89%)	Excellent
☐	A-	(80% - 84%)	Good (average grade for graduate school)
☐	B+	(77% - 79%)	Proficient (typically not suitable for doctoral work)
☐	B	(73% - 76%)	Acceptable
☐	B-	(70% - 72%)	Marginally acceptable
☐	F	(0%-69%)	Inadequate/Fail

Thesis Pass/Fail Grading Scale

☐ Pass with Commendation

☐ Pass

☐ Defer until after an additional examination (i.e., Recommendation 5)

☐ Fail (i.e., Recommendation 6)

POLICY: Graded Course Performance Indicators (ED December 2013)

POST-DEFENCE CHECKLIST

This checklist assists thesis students in completing all post-defence requirements.

1. Sign the **Thesis Evaluation Agreement (TEA)** grading form. If the defence was physical, you will have signed this form after receiving your grade at the conclusion of your defence. If the defence was virtual, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will send you the form via email for electronic signature.
2. Complete all thesis revisions required by the examination committee.
3. Ensure that the thesis complies with the formatting requirements described in this Thesis Guidebook under *Thesis Formatting*.
4. Submit the revised thesis to the thesis supervisor, and to other examination committee members identified on the TEA, for final approval.
5. Once the final thesis is approved by the required committee members, complete the **Final Thesis Completion (FTC)** form, including signatures.
    > NOTE: If the thesis was recommended on the TEA as "acceptable as is", no committee member signatures are required.
6. Submit the final thesis and FTC to the Graduate Studies Coordinator for formatting compliance review. The Graduate Studies Coordinator will advise of any further necessary revisions. When the Graduate Studies Coordinator approves formatting, move on to next step.
7. Contact Librarian Qinqin.Zhang@twu.ca. Librarian Zhang will help you create an ARCA student account and will provide you with instructions for uploading a pdf version of your final thesis.
    > NOTE:
    > -   Students must agree to the non-exclusive licensing agreement.
    > -   Abstracts must be limited to a maximum of 150 words.
    > -   Manuscripts with errors will be published, as is.
8. When the thesis is published, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will submit a Notice of Thesis Completion to the Office of the Registrar, depositing the thesis grade. The student and supervisor are copied on this email.
9. Follow the Office of the Registrar's degree completion steps.

POST-DEFENCE PROCESS

The student is responsible for completing post-defence requirements, including any necessary revisions to their thesis and the archival processes. Thesis completion requirements are met when:
-   a student has completed the revisions required by the examining committee
-   the student has submitted the final thesis together with the signed Final Thesis Completion form to the Office of Graduate Studies
-   the Graduate Studies Coordinator has worked with the student to ensure correct formatting of the thesis
-   the student has worked with the Librarian to create a student account in ARCA
-   the student has uploaded their thesis into ARCA and approved the licensing agreement
-   the Graduate Studies Coordinator has edited the metadata for the thesis, ensured copyrighting, and approved the thesis for publication
-   the Librarian has published the thesis

POLICY: Thesis Administration (Master's) Policy (ED December 2022)

THESIS PUBLICATION & EMBARGO

TWU requires that a thesis be published in the library repository, TWUSpace, for a degree to be awarded.

Students who wish to temporarily embargo their thesis for a period of up to 12 months must still upload the thesis info TWUSpace so that the University can publish the thesis when the embargo ends.

If a thesis is not uploaded into TWUSpace, a degree will not be awarded.

This policy follows the guidelines of the Tri-Agency Open Access Policy on Publications.

POLICY: Thesis Publication & Embargo Policy (ED September 2022)

CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

A student who finds it necessary to continue their thesis project in semesters additional to their original thesis course registration must maintain continuous registration in the capstone continuation course that is specific to their program of study (CODE 695) and continue paying tuition fees of $955 through to project completion, including, if applicable, semesters in which they complete thesis defence requirements.

POLICY: Capstone Continuation Policy (ED March 2022)

NOTICE OF THESIS COMPLETION

Once a thesis is published in the library repository, TWUSpace, the Graduate Studies Coordinator will submit a Notice of Thesis Completion to the Office of the Registrar, depositing the student's final thesis grade. This notice will also signify to the Registrar's office whether the student is entitled to receive a pro-rated tuition refund for the semester in which they completed their thesis requirements.

POLICY: Thesis Administration (Master's) Policy (ED December 2022)

PRO-RATED TUITION REFUND

Under the Office of the Registrar's Refund for Withdrawal dates, a thesis student may be eligible to receive a pro-rated tuition refund if they complete their thesis requirements within the first six weeks of the semester. The pro-rated refund will be based on the week of completion.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
100%	100%	70%	60%	50%	40%

Students may contact the Office of the Registrar at www.twu.ca/help to find out more about Tuition Refunds.

COMPLETION DATES FOR CONVOCATION & CONFERRAL ELIGIBILITY

The date when a student submits a final thesis to the Graduate Studies Coordinator will determine which convocation ceremony a student is eligible to participate in and which conferral date a student receives.

TWU has two convocation ceremonies each year, in April and November.

Similarly, TWU has multiple conferral dates, being May 31 and December 31.

A student's submission of their final thesis within the targeted date ranges below will determine the student's convocation participation eligibility and conferral date.

Final Thesis Submission by Student	Formatting Review & Publication by OGS	Grade Entry (5-week requirement) to OTR	Convocation	Conferral
Feb 16-Aug 15	August-September	September	November	December
Aug 16-Feb 15	February-March	March	April	May

POLICY: Program Completion Policy (ED December 2021); Graduation Ceremony Participation Requirements for Graduate Programs (ED March 2022)