

Guidelines for the Final Oral Examination (FOE)

Scheduling the Examination

There are multiple steps in the final oral examination process and good planning is key to successfully meeting this milestone. Students who are beginning to think about scheduling their final oral examination are encouraged to reach out to the Graduate Office as soon as possible so timelines can be reviewed and expectations can be clarified.

When the FOE candidate and doctoral supervisory committee decide the dissertation is ready for examination, GD-PCS must be informed. This is done via the completion of FOE Form D3. Candidates must complete and submit Form D3 to the Graduate Coordinator (clinical-psych@utsc.utoronto.ca) a **minimum** of 9 weeks prior to the requested FOE date. Examinations may be scheduled throughout the year; however, additional processing time should be factored in if holidays and university closures intervene. Note that December examinations can only occur within the first week of the month.

GD-PCS will distribute the examination program and the abstract to the candidate, the members of the Examination Committee, the Chair of the Examination, and the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), approximately two weeks before the date of the examination.

Note: Once an FOE is scheduled, it can only be postponed by SGS and with the permission of the Office of the Vice Dean, Programs, and only in exceptional circumstances (e.g., illness, challenges for travel, etc.). See Section B Postponing an Examination in the SGS Guidelines for the Doctoral Final Oral Examination for further information.

Examination Committee

Note that the examination committee must include five voting members. At least one member, but not more than three members, can be on the student's doctoral supervisory committee. At least two voting members will not have been closely involved in the supervision of the thesis; the external appraiser to the University and external appraiser within the University. The examination committee may include, in addition, up to two non-voting members, who will be members of the graduate faculty of the candidate's graduate unit or members of the graduate faculty of another graduate unit of the University. A quorum for the final examination is four voting members, two of whom must not have been closely involved in the dissertation, plus the examination committee chair, who has no vote. The Chair will be a full member or member emeritus of the graduate faculty, holding no appointment to the graduate faculty of the candidate's graduate unit. Full details regarding the requirements and composition of the examination committee can be found in the [SGS Calendar](#) (see section 8.3 Doctoral Final Oral Examination). Any proposed exceptions to the committee composition must be approved by the Vice-Dean, Programs.

GD-PCS will work with the candidate to ensure the committee members receive the thesis at least four weeks before the date of the examination. The External Appraiser to the University will receive the thesis 6 weeks prior to the exam (see details below).

Proposing an External Appraiser within the University (*also referred to as the 'internal-external appraiser'*)

The candidate, together with the (co-)supervisor(s), should consider the following criteria when selecting an internal-external appraiser:

- a) The internal-external appraiser must have the appropriate level of graduate faculty membership and appointment at the University of Toronto. Students should email the name of their proposed internal-external appraiser to the Graduate Coordinator to verify this information.
- b) It is recommended that candidates select a GD-PCS associate member or a member of the graduate faculty of the Department of Psychology. Consideration will be given for faculty members outside of these departments on a case-by-case basis.
- c) It is strongly recommended that the selected internal-external appraiser have previously served on a final oral examination committee and have supervised a PhD student through to defense.

Note that selecting the internal-external appraiser does not need formal approval from the GD-PCS Chair.

Proposing an External Appraisers to the University (*also referred to as the 'external-external appraiser'*)

The candidate, together with the (co-)supervisor(s), must consider the following criteria when selecting the external appraiser (as provided on the FOE External Appraiser Request Form). The GD-PCS Chair/DCT must approve the recommended external appraiser and GD-PCS will make the final recommendation to SGS.

- a) The external appraiser must be external to the University as well as to its affiliated teaching hospitals and their research institutes.
- b) The external appraiser must be a recognized expert on the subject of the thesis, and an Associate or Full Professor at their home institution, and experienced as a successful supervisor of doctoral candidates through to defense. If the individual comes from outside the academic sector, must possess the qualifications to be appointed to an academic position at the Associate or Full Professor level.
- c) The external appraiser must be at arm's length from both the candidate and the (co-)supervisor(s). Normally, this will exclude anyone who: has served as Master's or PhD supervisor/supervisee of the candidate or the supervisor(s); or has, in the past six years, been a departmental colleague of the candidate or the supervisor, or has collaborated on a research project, scholarly work or publication, with either of them.
- d) The external appraiser is willing to serve as a member of the examination committee and is available to participate either in person or remotely on the scheduled date and time of the oral examination.

Candidates are encouraged to complete the FOE External Appraiser Request Form prior to submitting Form D3. Once the GD-PCS Chair/DCT reviews and approves the External Appraiser request form, the supervisor will contact the examiners in the rank order provided until one is secured. Once an examiner is secured, the supervisor must notify the GD-PCS Chair/DCT via email so that the recommendation can be made to SGS. Once the external appraiser has been approved by SGS, GD-PCS will ensure that the external appraiser receives the thesis at least six weeks before the date of the examination. GD-PCS will communicate directly with the external appraiser what will be expected of them, including but not limited to, receiving the written appraisal at least two weeks prior to the examination. The candidate is not permitted to communicate with the external appraiser until the examination is underway. Normally, the external appraiser will participate in the FOE via video conference; however, GD-PCS will work with SGS to handle any travel arrangements (up to \$500), compensation (\$100), etc. required for the external appraiser's participation.

Next Steps and Additional Information

At least six weeks before the FOE, GD-PCS will update all relevant FOE information on ROSI and will communicate directly with the SGS Doctoral Examinations Office to request a committee Chair and approval of the examination committee. The examination office will also be notified of the date/time of the FOE. GD-PCS will prepare a Nomination Form and Certificate of Completion. When the committee Chair is assigned, GD-PCS will provide the Chair with the program, abstract and written appraisal as soon as possible (and no later than two weeks in advance of the examination). These materials will also be provided to the examination office and all committee members.

It is recommended that oral exams take place at UTSC. GD-PCS will ensure the committee Chair receives the Chair's Examination File at least one week prior to the examination. GD-PCS will be responsible for reminding the Chair and the committee members of the examination one business day prior.

After the FOE is complete, the committee Chair is required to deliver the final paper work to the GD-PCS Graduate Office. GD-PCS is then responsible for informing the SGS Doctoral Examination Office of the results via email. At that point, instructions on next steps will be sent to the candidate. If the oral exam takes place at SGS, the candidate will be required to visit the Doctoral Examination Office to receive the Post Examination Package. Information on the evaluation of the FOE can be found in the [SGS Calendar](#), section 8.3, points 12-15.

If in the rare case a student wishes to proceed with the FOE without GD-PCS approval, the student should contact the Vice-Dean, Programs, who will make arrangements for the examination in consultation with the GD-PCS Chair/DCT.

Any questions about the FOE process, including the selection of examiners, should be directed to the GD-PCS Chair/DCT.

Additional FOE resources:

SGS Guidelines for the Doctoral Final Oral Examination: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/Documents/Final-Oral-Examination-Guidelines.pdf>

Doctoral Examinations Office
School of Graduate Studies, Room 110,
63 St. George Street
Email: sgs.doctoral@utoronto.ca
Tel: 416-978-5258

Information on producing your thesis: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Producing-Your-Thesis.aspx>

SGS FAQ page for Electronic Theses & Dissertations:
<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/FAQs.aspx>