

Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

GUIDELINES FOR SETTING AN M.Sc. EXAM

Please follow this procedure when setting up your M.Sc. thesis exam.

Arranging for exam:

1. The MSc Examination Committee, jointly recommended by the supervisor and student, consists of the supervisor (and co-supervisor if relevant), one member of the supervisory committee and two other members from EEB who were not on the supervisory committee.
2. These names should be sent to the graduate office for approval (please indicate the status of each of faculty member—that is, who is/are the supervisor(s), the member of the supervisor committee, etc.). Following approval, the student and supervisor can consult with exam committee members and set a date for the exam. The graduate office will choose the exam chair from among the non-committee members; the chair will also act as an examiner during the exam.
3. The date for the exam should be sent to the graduate office **at least two weeks** ahead of the exam date and the Graduate Administrator grad.eeb@utoronto.ca will book the exam room and circulate the formal announcement to participants.
4. Student and supervisor may invite other faculty to attend the examination but they will not have an official vote.

Thesis:

Consult thesis writing guidelines posted at:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Producing-Your-Thesis.aspx>

Note that the SGS MSc template has two chapters; if you did not write a review chapter, then you may delete Chapter Two from the SGS template.

5. A written thesis following SGS guidelines must be approved for examination by the supervisor who should **complete the “Approval of MSc Thesis for Examination” form** (available on the EEB graduate Forms and Links webpage) and send it to the Graduate Office **before** scheduling the defense or circulating the thesis. The student or supervisor must also send a rough draft of the thesis to the Graduate Office grad.eeb@utoronto.ca and either the Graduate Coordinator (and if they are not available, the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies) at least three weeks before the exam.
6. Once the thesis is approved for examination, the student should send it to examiners at least two weekends before the exam.

Exam:

7. The defense will begin with a 20-minute oral summary of the thesis research given by the student. Usually, the talk is given *in camera* to just the exam committee, but if the student would like invite members of the department and/or friends and family, that is permissible. Next the *in camera* examination will consist of approximately 1.5 – 2 hours of questioning by the exam committee, followed by a committee

discussion of the student's performance after the student has left the room.

8. Questioning during the examination typically focuses on the thesis research, but questions of a more general nature may also be posed.
11. The student is called back into the room after the committee discussion. The exam chair will identify major strengths and weaknesses of the thesis and detail any required changes. This information will be recorded by the exam chair on the "**MSc Thesis Examination Report**" (available on the EEB graduate Forms and Links web page), copies of which will be given to the student and supervisor within 24 hours of the examination. Possible committee decisions include accepting the thesis a) as is, b) with minor modifications (typographical errors, minor word changes for clarity), c) major modifications (changes in presentation or interpretation of data), or d) rejecting the thesis or defense as unacceptable.
12. If the student does not pass the thesis exam, one retake is possible **within 2 – 6 months**. If the student fails this exam, he/she has failed to meet the required academic standards for EEB's MSc program and must meet with the Associate Graduate Chair of EEB to discuss the next steps.

Return of Exam Report to Graduate Office:

13. The exam chair is responsible for returning the MSc Examination Report to the Graduate Office within 24 hours of the examination. The candidate's final paperwork cannot be completed until the report is received.

Procedures for dealing with corrections, degree recommendation and thesis submission:

14. The student must complete any required revisions within four weeks of the exam, and the person designated to approve these revisions (typically the exam chair or supervisor) should complete the "**Approval of MSc Examination Corrections**" form (available on the EEB Graduate Forms and Links web page) and return it to the graduate office immediately. The student does not require approval by the EEB Graduate Office for the final version of the thesis.
15. The graduate administrator will prepare the degree recommendation forms.
16. Students are required to submit their final thesis in digital format through the School of Graduate Studies. See this link for advice about how to do this and other steps in completing the degree requirements, making sure all fees are paid (note: it can take SGS several weeks to adjust the tuition fees), and graduating and convocating:
<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/program-completion/>

Before leaving the department:

17. Please email your forwarding address and your non U of T email address (if you are willing to share it) to the EEB Graduate Office gradadmin.eeb@utoronto.ca, as well as to the administrator responsible for your TA and RA payments (for future T4 tax form mailings). If you will not be continuing in the department, please return your key and remove all of your personal items from your desk so that it is ready for the next occupant.