



School of Graduate Studies

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May 19, 2009

To : Graduate Council Members

From : Medy Espiritu *Medy Espiritu*  
Assistant Secretary and SynApps System Administrator

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Please note that the next meeting of Graduate Council will be held on **Thursday, May 21, 2009** at **10:00 a.m.** in **MUSC-311/313**.

Listed below are the agenda items for discussion.

Should you be unable to attend the meeting, please notify me at extension 24204 or email [espiritu@mcmaster.ca](mailto:espiritu@mcmaster.ca).

### A G E N D A

- I. Minutes of the meeting of April 16, 2009
- II. Business Arising
- III. Report from the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies
- IV. 2009 Spring Graduands (*to be circulated*)
  - Faculty of Business
  - Faculty of Engineering
  - Faculty of Health Sciences (Nursing)
  - Faculty of Humanities
  - Faculty of Science
  - Faculty of Social Sciences

Motion: “that Graduate Council approve the list of the 2009 Spring Graduands for the (*name of Faculty*), with amendments/corrections to be made as necessary by the Graduate Registrar.”

- V. Policy on Graduate Course Outlines / Guidelines for Graduate Course Instructors (Dr. M. Hatton)
- VI. Policy on Retention of Examination Papers and Other Graded Materials  
*(Note: Undergraduate Council approved this document on April 28, 2009.)*
- VII. Policy on Access to Final Examinations  
*(Note: Undergraduate Council approved this document on April 28, 2009.)*
- VIII. Policy for Keeping Records of Graduate Student Oral Examinations
- IX. Discussion: Minimum required qualifications of a supervisor
- X. Other Business

**GRADUATE COUNCIL**  
**APRIL 16, 2009, 10:00 A.M.**  
**MUSC-311/313**

**PRESENT:** Dr. A. Sekuler (Chair), Dr. K. Bennett, Dr. R. Cain, Dr. D. Cassidy, Dr. T. Fetner, Dr. D. Goellnicht, Dr. M. Hatton, Dr. G. Kehler, Dr. T. Kirubarajan, Dr. M. Kliffer, Dr. A. Montazemi, Dr. C. Richards, Dr. M. Waddington, Dr. D. Welch, Dr. P. Widdicombe, Dr. T. Yoshikawa, Mrs. M. Espiritu (Assistant Secretary)

**REGRETS:** Dr. P. Baxter, Dr. N. Charupat, Dr. K. Dalnoki-Veress, Dr. B. Kaczynski, Dr. F. McNeill, Mr. J. Scime, Dr. J. West-Mays

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**I. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of March 5, 2009 were approved on a motion by Dr. Richards, seconded by Dr. Hatton.

**II. Business Arising**

There was no business arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

**III. Report from the Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies**

Dr. Sekuler reported that McMaster has received over ten percent of the new spots in the recent Ontario graduate allocation. She said Ontario is investing \$51.6 M to create approximately 3300 new graduate spaces and only BIU eligible students can qualify for the funding. The breakdown of the new allocation is 188 Master's and 150 Ph.D. spaces. These newly allocated spaces will be combined with McMaster's unused previously allocated spaces of 145 Master's and 127 PhD, for a total of 333 Master's and 277 PhD. Combined with McMaster's previous unused allocation, the University has a total of about 530 new graduate spots that can be filled over the next few years. She added that all spaces should be used by 2013-2014. She stated that funding will take place over two years: one third of the funding in September 2010 and two-thirds in October 2011. In response to a question, Dr. Sekuler said funding allocation to departments/programs will be conducted in a similar manner to previous years. Dr. Sekuler circulated a written overview of graduate expansion information for the Council members to share with their departments/programs.

Dr. Sekuler requested the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies to provide an update on the International Excellence awards that will be awarded to graduate visa students. Dr. Goellnicht explained that the Faculty of Business chose to award the scholarship to a visa student enrolled in their Ph.D. program. Dr. Goellnicht said each department/program in the Faculty of Humanities nominated its top visa graduate student. The departments/programs in the Faculty of Social Sciences, in consultation with the Dean, decided amongst themselves which departments should nominate their students. Dr. Goellnicht, the SGS admissions officer, and the Faculty Deans then decided who should receive the awards. In the Faculty of Health Sciences, Dr. Richards said the procedure will take some time because a competition for the scholarships will

be held among the programs. Each program in the Faculty of Health Sciences will nominate two best students. Dr. Welch explained that a similar process is being conducted in the Faculty of Science. Dr. Hatton said the situation is the same in the Faculty of Engineering—each department/program will submit names and the Dean of Engineering will decide who gets the awards. Dr. Sekuler said once all the Faculties have awarded the scholarships, the details will be published on the SGS website. If this undertaking is successful and funding is available, Dr. Sekuler said the University might continue this process next year.

Dr. Sekuler reported that Senate approved the revised *Policy on the Steps for the Creation of New Graduate Programs or New Fields in Existing Doctoral Programs* at its meeting on April 8, 2009. Dr. Sekuler also reported the status of the graduate programs submitted to OCGS for approval. The M.A. Communication and New Media and the M.Sc./Ph.D. Cognitive Science of Language programs have been approved by OCGS and these programs are now accepting students. Dr. Sekuler said the M.Sc. programs in Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy received final approval from OCGS for their periodic appraisal, with a classification of “Good Quality.” Dr. Sekuler added that the site visit for the Chemistry M.Sc./Ph.D. programs is scheduled for May 11-12, 2009. In response to a question, Dr. Sekuler explained that there are no new developments concerning the OCGS review system. She said the issue is on the agenda of the upcoming OCGS retreat and the next OCAV meeting as well.

#### **IV. 2009 Faculty of Health Sciences Spring Graduands**

Dr. Sekuler referred the Council to the list of the 2009 Spring Graduands for the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Dr. Richards moved, and Dr. Hatton seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the list of the 2009 Spring Graduands for the Faculty of Health Sciences, with amendments/corrections to be made as necessary by the Graduate Registrar.”**

The motion was carried.

#### **V. Graduate Scholarship: The Dr. Ronald J. Gillespie Prize in Inorganic Chemistry**

Dr. Sekuler reviewed the details concerning the Dr. Ronald J. Gillespie Prize in Inorganic Chemistry.

Dr. Fetner moved, and Dr. Kehler seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the Dr. Ronald J. Gillespie Prize in Inorganic Chemistry scholarship, as described in the document.”**

The motion was carried.

## VI. 2009-2010 Graduate Curriculum Revisions

### a) Report from the Faculty of Engineering Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee

Dr. Hatton reviewed the proposed curriculum revisions for the Faculty of Engineering for Graduate Council approval. Dr. Hatton said approval of Graduate Council is contingent upon approval of the recommendations by the Faculty of Engineering at its meeting on May 25, 2009.

Dr. Hatton explained that the Department of Chemical Engineering recommended closure of its graduate diploma programs: Advanced Automation in the Process Industries; Colloid, Polymer and Surface Science and Engineering; and Polymer Processing Technology. Rationale for the closure is lack of student interest in the programs.

Dr. Hatton moved, and Dr. Welch seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the closure of the graduate diploma programs in the Department of Chemical Engineering: *Advanced Automation in the Process Industries; Colloid, Polymer and Surface Science and Engineering; and Polymer Processing Technology, as described in the documents.*”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Hatton said the Department of Civil Engineering has requested changes in course requirements for its M.A.Sc., M. Eng., and Ph.D. programs. Currently, students enrolled in the Master’s programs are required to take Civil Engineering 761 – Graduate Seminar (Master’s), and Ph.D. students need to enroll in Civil Engineering 762 – Graduate Seminar (Ph.D.) for the entire period of study. The department is proposing to change these requirements by allowing Master’s students to take Civil Engineering 761 – Graduate Seminar (Master’s) only for the first 6 terms (24 months) of study. For the Ph.D. program, the department will require the students to take Civil Engineering 762 – Graduate Seminar (Ph.D.) only for the first 12 terms (48 months) of study. Dr. Hatton explained that the rationale for the change is to allow students in the programs to qualify for discounted tuition fees. Students are eligible for discounted tuition fees if they have completed all their course work and research.

Dr. Hatton explained that the department is also requesting closure of its two graduate diploma programs, namely: Masonry: Material and Design and Rehabilitation of Civil Engineering Structures. Rationale for the closure is lack of interest from students.

Dr. Hatton moved, and Dr. Welch seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the changes in the course requirements for the M.A.Sc., M.Eng., and Ph.D. programs in the Department of Civil Engineering as well as the closure of the two graduate diplomas in Masonry: Material and Design, and Rehabilitation of Civil Engineering Structures, as described in the documents.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Hatton explained that the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering has recommended the following changes:

Change in course requirements for the M.Eng. program. Currently, students in the M. Eng. program are required to complete six half courses, of which at least four must be 700-level and up to two 600-level courses. The proposed change will require students to take seven half courses of which at least five must be a 700-level and two 600-level courses. The change will allow students to complete the degree (without doing a project) by completing another course.

Change in the *General Requirements* calendar description, eliminating the requirement for all M. Eng. students to register for course ECE 790. Currently, all graduate students in the department are required to take ECE 790 – Graduate Poster Seminars in Electrical and Computer Engineering. The department is proposing that only M. Eng. students enrolled in the new course, ECE \*701 – M. Eng. Project, are required to take ECE 790. Dr. Hatton further said that students who are not taking ECE \*701 are not required to present research papers.

Dr. Hatton moved, and Dr. Welch seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes for the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering: change in course requirements for its M. Eng. program; and change in the *General Requirements* concerning course ECE 790, as described in the documents.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Hatton presented the proposed calendar copy for the Walter G. Booth School of Engineering Practice. Dr. Hatton explained that the School would like to restructure its graduate calendar listing so that there is one specific section for the Walter G. Booth School of Engineering Practice as an academic unit, which would list the faculty, the program units (Engineering Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Engineering and Public Policy, Engineering Design, and Manufacturing Engineering) and all the SEP courses. Students are finding it difficult to search for courses listed by program in the current format—they need to know the program first to be able to find corresponding courses.

Dr. Hatton moved, and Dr. Goellnicht seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposed calendar copy for the Walter G. Booth School of Engineering Practice, as described in the document.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Hatton then briefly discussed the remaining report of the curriculum committee for Council information.

b) Report from the Faculty of Health Sciences Graduate Policy and Curriculum Committee

Dr. Richards reviewed the proposed curriculum revisions for the Faculty of Health Sciences for Graduate Council approval. Dr. Richards reminded the members that Graduate Council approval is contingent upon approval of the recommendations by the Faculty of Health Sciences Executive, which will meet on May 27, 2009.

Dr. Richards explained that the School of Nursing recommended changing the admission requirements for its M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs. The current procedure requires applicants to submit two academic and two clinical references. The new requirement will allow applicants to submit two academic and one clinical reference. Dr. Richards said the School believes that one clinical reference is sufficient to assess the candidate's clinical competence and the process will be less burdensome for the applicants. Dr. Richards said the School of Nursing is also seeking a change in the procedure of the comprehensive examination for its Ph.D. program. The proposed change requires students to complete two outlines, one for each of the two topic areas, and the time to write the papers is reduced to six weeks, and ten weeks for special circumstances.

Dr. Richards moved, and Dr. Hatton seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes in the School of Nursing: change in admission requirements for the Ph.D./M.Sc. programs, and change in the comprehensive examination procedure, as set out in the documents.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Richards explained that the School of Rehabilitation Science has submitted for approval a revised calendar copy of the Physiotherapy program. Dr. Richards said the revised document now includes a “personal interview” with applicants.

Dr. Richards moved, and Dr. Kehler seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the revised calendar copy for the Physiotherapy program, as described in the document.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Richards then briefly discussed the remaining report of the curriculum committee for Graduate Council information.

c) Report from the Faculty of Science Graduate Curriculum, Policy, Admissions and Study Committee

Dr. Welch reviewed the proposed curriculum revisions for the Faculty of Science for Graduate Council approval. Dr. Welch said approval of Graduate Council is contingent upon approval of the recommendations by the Faculty of Science, which will meet on May 25, 2009.

According to Dr. Welch, the Department of Chemistry recommended the following changes to its *M.Sc. Degree* and *Departmental Colloquia and Seminars* sections in the graduate calendar: adding a statement regarding (a) the required maximum number of module courses for students in the program; and (b) the mandatory attendance at colloquia for M.Sc. and Ph.D. students during the first two years of the program.

Dr. Welch moved, and Dr. Widdicombe seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes by the Department of Chemistry as stated above, and described in the documents.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Welch then briefly discussed the remaining report of the curriculum committee for Graduate Council information.

d) Report from the Joint Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee

Dr. Goellnicht reviewed the proposed curriculum revisions for the Faculty of Humanities for Council approval. He stated that Graduate Council approval is contingent upon approval of the Faculty of Humanities, which will meet on May 25, 2009.

Dr. Goellnicht presented the calendar copy for the M.Sc./Ph.D. in Cognitive Science of Language. In response to a question, he said that the program is still waiting for the approvals of new faculty members who will be added to the list. Dr. Kehler commented that the calendar copy did not include the information concerning the required thesis length for the Master’s program. Dr. Goellnicht will ask the department to include this information in the submission.

Dr. Goellnicht moved, and Dr. Welch seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the calendar copy for the M.Sc./Ph.D. in Cognitive Science of Language, subject to the above-mentioned amendments.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Goellnicht then discussed the proposed calendar copy for the M.A. Communication and New Media.

Dr. Goellnicht moved, and Dr. Widdicombe seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the calendar copy for the M.A. in Communication and New Media, as described in the document.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Goellnicht explained that the History Department has requested a course requirement change to its M.A. with Thesis program. The current regulations require students to complete five half courses (four course seminars and History 741), a comprehension test in another language, and a thesis. The proposed change will require students to take three half-course seminars offered by the department and one half-course from another department (subject to approval by the History department), History 741, a comprehension test in another language, and a thesis. The department has proposed the change as a result of the last OCGS review in which the consultants expressed concern that the course requirement is quite heavy for a one-year Master's program.

Dr. Goellnicht moved, and Dr. Kehler seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposed changes from the Department of History as stated above, and outlined in the documents.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Goellnicht reviewed the calendar copy for the M.A. in International Relations. He briefly discussed the admission requirements and the list of courses that will be offered by the program.

Dr. Goellnicht moved, and Dr. Fetner seconded,

**“that Graduate Council approve the proposed calendar copy for the M.A. in International Relations program, as described in the document.”**

The motion was carried.

Dr. Goellnicht then discussed the remaining report of the curriculum committee for Graduate Council information.

## **VII. Policy: Course Instructor, School of Graduate Studies**

The Course Instructor Policy, revised by the sub-committee composed of Drs. Hatton and Cain, was presented to Graduate Council for approval. The members reviewed the document and there was a general comment that the contents of the material are a combination of guidelines and policy requirements for offering courses and course outline information. It was decided that the document should be divided to create two documents, a “policy document” for course outlines and “guidelines” for instructors offering graduate courses. It was suggested that the policy document on course outlines should include the overview/format of the course, explanation of assignments, list of required reading materials, method of evaluation, and the statement concerning academic dishonesty. Another member suggested including the length of time a course outline should be kept on file by the department. There was a comment that most of the items described in the document that was circulated to the Council members can be considered as guidelines for graduate course instructors. The sub-committee, with the addition of Drs. Kehler and Widdicombe, will revise the document based on the comments and suggestions from the members and will be submitted to the next meeting of Graduate Council.

### **VIII. Policy for Keeping Records of Graduate Student Oral Examination**

This agenda item was tabled to the next meeting of Graduate Council.

### **IX. Policy Concerning Retention of Examination Papers and Other Graded Materials**

This agenda item was tabled to the next meeting of Graduate Council.

Dr. Sekuler explained that the above two policy documents need to be consistent with the student appeal policy. She added that Dr. Welch is currently involved with the revision of the student appeal policy and the University Secretary wants to ensure that revisions of the policies are also consistent with the FIPPA guidelines. Dr. Sekuler said she will discuss the documents further with the AVP Academic, Dr. Welch and the University Secretary before they are presented to Graduate Council.

### **X. Other Business**

1) Discussion: Minimum required qualification of a supervisor

This agenda item was tabled to the next meeting of Graduate Council.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

**Draft Policy: Graduate Course Outlines [to be added to section 1.2.6 in the Graduate calendar]**

A course outline is a document that sets the expectations for graduate students in terms of course objectives and content, format, assignments, and evaluation. Graduate courses vary considerably in structure and expectations, and no single policy can anticipate all situations. This policy outlines the minimum elements to be included in all graduate course outlines.

- A graduate course outline should include the following:
  - Administrative details, such as the year and semester of the course, contact information for the instructor, instructor availability for student consultation, and any prerequisites
  - Course objectives
  - Required readings and any other required course material
  - Overview of the course and its format
  - Detailed class schedule
  - Explanation of all assignments (including participation), methods of evaluation, the weight given to each course component, due dates for student work, as well as penalties for late submissions
  - Any additional statements, such as those referring to the Academic Integrity Policy, the Student Code of Conduct, possible modification of course, or research ethics
- The graduate course outline must be made available to students either before or at the first course meeting.
- It is often difficult to predict accurately the content and direction the course will take, so course outlines may indicate that alterations might take place as the course progresses. Instructors who wish to revise the course outline during the term should inform students in writing as early as possible in the course.
- Graduate programs reserve the right to change dates and/or deadlines for courses in the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as illness of the instructor or a labour disruption.
- Many graduate students register for “reading” or “independent study” courses, often taken by an individual student working with an instructor. In lieu of a course outline, instructors should negotiate early in the term a written agreement that outlines the work to be done by the student, the methods to be used to evaluate the student’s work, the number and duration of face-to-face meetings, and any penalties for late submission of student work.
- The graduate course outline should be kept on file by the Department for a minimum of five years.

*To be added to section 1.2.6 (print edition)*

A document entitled ‘Guidelines for Graduate Course Instructors’ is available from the School of Graduate Studies and from all departments and Graduate programs throughout the university.

*To be added to section 1.2.6 (web edition)*

A document entitled ‘Guidelines for Graduate Course Instructors’ is available online.

## **“Guidelines for Graduate Course Instructors”**

### **[To be made available to all course instructors either from the online calendar or, in print, from SGS and all departments and Graduate Programs]**

For most faculty members and graduate students alike, the graduate classroom offers a unique site of intellectual development, exploration, and exchange. To help instructors plan and run successful graduate courses, the following guidelines are suggested:

1. In fields that include diverse knowledge bases or skill sets, the instructor may wish to meet with prospective students before the course starts, particularly with those who are from outside the program or department. Such a meeting might include a discussion of the overall objectives and content of the course, an explanation of the methods of assessment, and a description of the expertise and skill level expected of the student. If the instructor agrees to allow the student to register in the course, the instructor should give the student the course outline so that the student can prepare for the start of the course.
2. The graduate course instructor may decide to recruit one or more faculty members or field experts to give special lectures during the course. Such an invitation should be made well in advance of the lecture date. Invited instructors are not usually expected to evaluate the students. However, if the invited instructors are required to assess the students, then the students should be made aware of this in advance.
3. Graduate course instructors are responsible for providing students with a written course outline either before the course starts or at the first meeting of the class. (See the Policy on Graduate Course Outlines.)
4. The instructor must bring the Policy on Academic Integrity to the students’ attention during the first session. (See the Policy on Graduate Course Outlines.)
5. At the first session, the instructor should remind students that they are responsible for ensuring that they have formally registered for the course through their department or graduate program.
6. The course instructor is responsible for providing each student with several evaluations of her or his academic performance at various points in the course. It is preferable that each student receive at least one written evaluation prior to the ‘drop’ date so that a student can have the chance to withdraw from the course without academic penalty. For example, such an evaluation might entail a response to a seminar, or to a written assignment, or to a collaborative work.
7. Some students, particularly those whose first language is not English, may be reluctant to participate in a discussion in class. These students should be recognized early and, whenever possible, tactfully drawn into the discussion by the instructor. The ultimate aim of any graduate course is not only to impart to, and exchange information with, the

student but also to equip the student with the confidence and ability to exchange information with others, both in the spoken word and in writing.

8. While instructors are required to provide written outlines at the beginning of courses, they may alter a course's content to reflect shifting research interests so long as the students are informed of such changes promptly and *in writing*. Instructors are advised to adhere to the original syllabus in terms of the amount of work expected from the students, the schedule of assignments, and the due dates.
9. At the end of the course, the instructor is responsible for awarding the marks for all assignments, for calculating the final grade and for conveying this information to each student and to the School of Graduate Studies within a reasonable time, i.e. approximately two months after the course has finished (as given in the Graduate calendar).

# **PROPOSED**

## **McMASTER UNIVERSITY**

Complete Policy Title: **POLICY CONCERNING RETENTION OF EXAMINATION PAPERS AND OTHER GRADED MATERIALS**

Policy Number (if applicable): **n/a**

Approved by: **Senate**

Date of Most Recent Approval: **June 13, 1990**

Revision Date(s):

Position Responsible for Developing and Maintaining the Policy: **Provost and Vice-President (Academic)**

Contact Department: **[University Secretariat](#)**

**DISCLAIMER:** *If there is a discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the Policy owner, the written copy prevails.*

Department Chairs<sup>1</sup> are responsible for ensuring that final examinations and all other graded material not meant to be returned to students, and the instructor's record of how the final grades in a course were determined, are retained by instructors for at least one year after last use, and remain accessible to the Department Chair for that period.

This policy applies to all instructors. Sessional lecturers and those retiring or otherwise leaving the service of the University must notify their immediate supervisor of the on-campus storage location of the material.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document any reference to a Department Chair shall also include the Director of a School or Program.

# PROPOSED

## McMASTER UNIVERSITY

Complete Policy Title: **UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ACCESS TO FINAL EXAMINATIONS**  
Policy Number (if applicable): **n/a**  
Approved by: **Senate**  
Date of Most Recent Approval: **June 13, 1984**  
Revision Date(s):  
Position Responsible for Developing and Maintaining the Policy: **Provost and Vice-President (Academic)**  
Contact Department: **[University Secretariat](#)**  
**DISCLAIMER:** *If there is a discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the Policy owner, the written copy prevails.*

The policy on student access to written final examinations has the following two objectives:

1. to provide an opportunity for the student to review the examination script; and
2. to enable the instructor to maintain the confidentiality of questions drawn from a limited pool of questions.

A student's written request to review the final examination script must be submitted to the Department Chair<sup>1</sup> by June 30 following the Fall/Winter Session or by October 15 following the Spring/Summer Session. The relevant Session is the one during which the last graded material for the course was due.

The Chair, in consultation with the instructor, will decide on one of the following courses of action:

1. The instructor may review the student's examination script with the student and show the script to the student. Although it is not mandatory for instructors to do this, they are encouraged to do so when it is feasible.
2. The student may read the examination script under supervised conditions, but must not make notes. Where appropriate, model answers and/or the marking scheme also may be examined by the students, subject to the approval of the instructor.
3. A photocopy of the student's examination script and, where appropriate, model answers and/or the marking scheme may be provided to the student at cost\*, subject to the approval of the instructor.

The responsibility for implementing this policy rests with the Chair of the instructor's department. A student's final examination script will be made available to the student as soon as possible and not later than one month after the written request by the student.

\* Current cost is \$10.00 per examination.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document any reference to a Department shall also apply to a School or Program, and any reference to the Chair of a Department shall also include the Director of a School or Program.

# McMASTER UNIVERSITY

Complete Policy Title: **POLICY FOR KEEPING RECORDS OF GRADUATE STUDENT ORAL EXAMINATIONS**  
Policy Number (if applicable): **n/a**  
Approved by: **Graduate Council/Senate**  
Date of Most Recent Approval: **April 12, 1994 (Graduate Council)**  
**May 25, 1994 (Senate)**  
Revision Date(s):  
Position Responsible for Developing and Maintaining the Policy: **Associate Vice-President and Dean, University Secretariat**  
Contact Department: **School of Graduate Studies**  
**University Secretariat**  
**DISCLAIMER:** *If there is a discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held by the Policy owner, the written copy prevails.*

Assessment in graduate course work is usually based upon the evaluation of written work. In the rare case ~~when in which~~ an oral examination is part of the assessment process for a graduate course, an audio or video recording must be made ~~in the event~~ if there are fewer than three examiners. Oral examinations connected with or comprising a Ph.D. comprehensive examination, also must be recorded whenever there are fewer than three examiners.

The examiners are responsible for arranging the taping and for ensuring the recording is accessible to the Department Chair (or equivalent) for one year from the date of the examination, or from the last use of the recording. The relevant Session is the one during which the last graded material for the course was due.

As described by the *Student Appeals Procedure* policy, neither Master's nor Doctoral oral examinations may be appealed. Accordingly, recordings of oral defenses of Master's and Doctoral theses are never required.

~~When there are three or more examiners, no recording is necessary.~~

~~The oral defense of a doctoral thesis is chaired by a representative of the Dean of Graduate Studies, and includes three members of the Supervisory Committee as well as two additional faculty members and, when possible, the External Examiner. Accordingly, there is no need to record any oral defense of a doctoral thesis.~~

~~Master's theses are defended only before the supervisory committee. When the committee is three or more, recording is not necessary. When there are fewer than three examiners, recording should be undertaken.~~

~~In the defense of a master's or a doctoral thesis there is an assumption that the thesis is good enough to go to defense, and therefore an assumption that approval is likely. In the case of an oral examination connected with or comprising a Ph.D. comprehensive examination, that assumption cannot be made. Accordingly, a recording should be made whenever there are fewer than three examiners.~~

In all cases audio recording is preferred to video recording because it is much less intrusive. The examiners are responsible for arranging the taping and preserving the tapes for six months after the end of the academic year (deemed to end August 31) in which the oral exam took place.

## **EXCERPTS FROM THE 2008-2009 GRADUATE CALENDAR**

### **1.2.4 The Supervisory Committee**

The Supervisory Committee, or the faculty advisor when no such committee is required, provides advice to the Department as noted above. Additional responsibilities include, where applicable: planning and approving the student's program of courses and research; approving thesis proposals; deciding, within departmental regulations, on the timing of the comprehensive examination and, language and other examinations; maintaining knowledge of the student's research activities and progress; giving advice on research; providing the student with regular appraisals of progress or lack of it; initiating appropriate action if the student's progress is unsatisfactory, including any recommendation that the student withdraw; deciding when the student is to write the thesis and giving advice during this process; acting as internal examiners for the thesis.

### **2.6 Supervision**

It is the responsibility of the department/program to ensure that every graduate student has, at all times, a faculty advisor or a properly constituted supervisory committee. The department/program should ensure that the members of a supervisory committee are sufficiently competent and experienced to serve at the required level. In identifying a supervisory committee, the department/program should consider the following, among other things: the balance of the committee by rank and experience; publications and other demonstrations of competence in scholarship or research on the part of the supervisor. Supervisory committees for Ph.D. candidates shall be reviewed annually by the department/program.

While the supervisor and student have a mutual obligation to meet on a regular basis, the department/program shall ensure there is a formal regular meeting of each Ph.D. supervisory committee at least once a year, and possibly more often, to discuss the student's progress. Each Ph.D. supervisory committee must report annually on the student's progress and the department/program chair must forward such reports to the School of Graduate Studies. The report formally documents the supervisory committee's assessment of the progress of the student's program.

The department/program should prepare a set of guidelines for supervisors and students. The guidelines should deal with the selection and functioning of supervisory committees and should cover the joint responsibilities of faculty members and graduate students. The guidelines may be attached to or incorporated in department/program handbooks which give regulations supplementary to those in the Calendar. Items relevant to graduate supervision should be approved by the appropriate Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study. A copy of the guidelines shall be given to each faculty member and each graduate student.

It is possible to change supervisors or the membership of a supervisory committee, although this is not the norm. If the direction of the research changes, membership can be changed by mutual consent of the parties involved. Supervisors and/or supervisory committee members may not resign without the department's/program's approval.

If a student feels that she/he is receiving unsatisfactory supervision, he/she should consult the Department/Program Chair or Graduate Advisor. The appropriate person will be identified in the procedures for making changes in supervisory committee membership, specified in the departmental guidelines for graduate work. If this avenue is not sufficient, the student is encouraged to speak with the appropriate Associate Dean of Graduate Studies about the problem.

### **3.5 Supervision**

The general regulations regarding supervision, described earlier (section 2.6, "Supervision"), apply to Master's students. If the student is registered in a thesis degree program, the thesis supervisor will have been identified by mutual consent, based on the nature of the thesis research. If the student is registering in a degree program without a thesis, a faculty advisor will be assigned. In either case, the advisor may be changed with the approval of the Department, as described in section 2.6.

### **4.5 Supervision**

The general regulations in regard to supervision, described earlier (Section 2.6), apply to doctoral students. Students will be expected to confer with the Chair of the Department/Program and others in choosing a supervisor for their entire doctoral program, including the proposed research. As soon as possible, and in any case not later than six months following their arrival, a supervisory committee will be appointed by the department/program, on the recommendation of the students and their possible supervisors. The supervisory committee will consist of at least three members. Two, including the supervisor, must be from within the department/program. A third member, whose scholarly interests include the area of the student's main interest, may be from outside the department/program. One member may be appointed from outside the University with the permission of the Associate Vice-President & Dean of Graduate Studies. If the need arises, the membership of a supervisory committee will be subject to change by the same procedures involved in its appointment. Supervisory committee members, including supervisors, may not resign without the department's/program's approval.

The duties of the Ph.D. supervisory committee will be as follows:

- to assist in planning and to approve the student's program of courses and research;
- to approve the thesis proposal;
- to decide, within departmental regulations, on the timing of the comprehensive examination and, where applicable, of the language and other examinations;
- to maintain knowledge of the student's research activities and progress;
- to give advice on research, usually through the student's supervisor;
- to provide the student with regular appraisals of progress or lack of it;
- to perform such other duties as may be required by the department;

- to report on the above matters annually, in writing, on the approved form to the department, which in turn will report to the Faculty Graduate Committee on Admissions and Study;
- to initiate appropriate action if the student's progress is unsatisfactory, including any recommendation that the student withdraw, for approval by the department and the Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study;
- to decide when the student is to write the thesis and give advice during this process;
- to act as internal examiners for the student's thesis;
- to act as members of the examination committee for the final oral defense when so appointed.

The supervisory duties of the department/program will be as follows: to provide all Ph.D. students in its doctoral program with copies of the complete departmental regulations of the program (such regulations are subject to approval by the Faculty Committee on Graduate Curriculum and Policy); to approve the membership and work of the supervisory committee; and, when necessary, to make changes in the membership; to report this membership to the Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study; at least once a year to review each student's course grades and research progress, as reported by the supervisory committee; to conduct comprehensive examinations; to conduct or arrange for language examinations when these are required; to attest to the Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study that all departmental and University requirements for the degree have been satisfied; to name any departmental representatives to the examination committee for the final oral defense of the thesis; to replace any members of the supervisory committee, including the supervisor when on leave of absence or, if necessary, when on research leave.

Part-time students must have their course grades and research progress reviewed at least once a year by the supervisory committee.