



## MSc Final Oral Examination Rules of Procedure (In-Person Examinations)

### Examination Committee Member Checklist:

- ✓ **The Examiner/Chair has collected the examination file from the IMS Office**
- ✓ **The Examiner/Appraiser has submitted their appraisal to the IMS Office**
- ✓ **Only the pre-approved examination committee members may attend:**
- ✓ ***the Examiner/ Appraiser and Examiner/Chair must attend***
- ✓ **ALL members must have read the thesis and prepared questions and feedback**

### At the Start of the Examination:

1. The Examiner/Chair introduces the members and the candidate and ensures that all approved examiners are present. If members are missing, the Examiner/Chair advises the IMS Office and discusses action to be taken. **The examination will be cancelled if quorum is not met.**  
Quorum is as follows:
  - Supervisor
  - One Program Advisory Committee member
  - Examiner/Appraiser
  - Examiner/Chair
2. The Examiner/Chair instructs the supervisor of their responsibility to carefully document items for revision and modification (if necessary) during the examination.
3. The Examiner/Chair asks the student to leave the room.
4. The Examiner/Chair advises the Examination Committee members of the exam procedures and what is expected of them. This is particularly important if there are members from other departments or universities who are not familiar with IMS exam procedures.
5. The Examiner/Chair advises the examiners whether the student has completed degree course requirements and inquires whether there are any major concerns about the upcoming examination.
6. The Examiner/Appraiser summarizes their appraisal with focus on the most pressing points. Discussion may follow the summary of the appraisal.
7. The Examiner/Chair provides the supervisor with a copy of the appraisal.
8. The Examiner/Chair and the Examination Committee determine the order of questioning. Order of questions is usually from the most-to-least distant to the student i.e., Examiner/Appraiser, Examiner/Chair, PAC members, and Supervisor (if necessary).

### **Presentation by candidate:**

9. The student is invited back into the room to give a 20-minute (uninterrupted) presentation. **This is a strict time limit.**
10. A PowerPoint presentation usually accompanies the presentation. The student must bring a back-up in case of technical difficulties.

### **Question period:**

11. Following the student's presentation, the examination committee ask questions in the pre-determined order. These are presented as a round of questions, with 10 minutes allotted to each examiner per round.
12. The Examiner/Chair allows only one examiner at a time to ask questions at a time (discussion by examiners among themselves will only detract from the 10-minute time period) **and will intervene if another examiner, or the supervisor, starts to join in the discussion.**
13. A second (typical) or third (unusual) round of questions is permitted. Some examiners may choose not to ask additional questions, or not to take up the full 10 minutes on the second round.
14. The Examiner/Chair should keep informal notes about the content of questions that may lead to thesis revisions for reference during the analysis of the defense.
15. Following questioning, the student is again asked to leave the room.

### **Committee discusses the examination and votes:**

16. The Examiner/Chair asks the following specific questions of the examiners. All examiners must address the following questions:

#### **Is the written thesis acceptable?**

- With no modifications
- With minor or organizational corrections (typos, change in format, additional information, no new data or new interpretation of data required) to be corrected within one month of the examination.
- With minor modifications (rewrite part of the proposal, addition of new experimental data and/or completely new interpretation of data). The student has three months to complete the modifications and these must be reviewed by a sub-committee appointed by the Examiner/Chair after the exam.
- Not acceptable

**Was the Oral Defense:**

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Acceptable
- Not acceptable; must undergo re-examination

*The exam committee also determines if the student should be recommended for an award and if the student is suitable for entry into the PhD program.*

17. In the case that a consensus about the recommendations is not reached, the Examiner/Chair must ask for a vote on each question.
18. More than one negative vote (or abstention) causes the examination to be adjourned.
19. **If minor modifications are required, the Examiner/Chair appoints a Modifications Subcommittee (see [After the Examination](#)).**
20. The Examiner/Chair completes the Chair's Summary Form and obtains signatures from the examination committee.

**Outcome:**

21. The student is invited into the room and the Examiner/Chair advises the student about the outcome of the examination (see [After the Examination](#)).
22. A clear statement about who will review the revised thesis is given to the student and supervisor, and the examination is adjourned.

**After the Examination:**

23. The Examiner/Chair returns the examination file to the IMS Office within 24 hours.
24. IMS will send next steps instructions to the student.

**a) If Minor or Organizational Corrections are recommended**

- Student will consult with supervisor and PAC members about changes, revises thesis and submits it to their PAC
- Supervisor confirms completion of revisions via email to IMS within 1 month of the examination

**b) If Minor Modifications are recommended**

- Examiner/Chair will appoint a subcommittee
  - The subcommittee must include the Examiner/Appraiser and 2 other Examiners
  - The Subcommittee Chair cannot be the supervisor
- Student will consult with the subcommittee members about changes, revises thesis and submits it to the subcommittee
- Subcommittee Chair confirms completion of revisions via email to IMS within 3 months of the examination

**c) A repeat MSc Oral Examination is absolutely required if:**

- The written thesis is deemed not acceptable
- Student does not pass the oral defense. This may occur when a vote is required (i.e., examiners disagree about the recommendations) and there is a negative outcome.
- Corrections are not submitted within the required timeline (above)

**The student is allowed one repeat MSc Final Oral Examination, to be scheduled within one year of the original examination.**