Guideline to Scheduling a Ph.D. Defense

- A Ph.D. defense committee consists of a minimum of 5 people, however the number might change depending on the role each committee member fills, and their level of participation. The committee is usually your supervisor, the two members of your supervisory committee and two arm’s length examiners. The external examiner or reader can be counted as one of the two arm’s length examiner. The external reader does not attend the exam. They submit a written report that is presented to the student by the exam Chair. All other exam committee members should be physically present.

- Please note: **Effective July 1, 2018** a Ph.D. defense committee will require a non-examining Chair. This role is in addition to the other exam committee members. Consult with your supervisor for the selection of the non-examining Chair. The committee must consist of the following:

  - Non-Examining Chair
  - Examiner 1 – Supervisor
  - Examiner 2 – Supervisory Committee Member 1
  - Examiner 3 – Supervisory Committee Member 2
  - Examiner 4 – Arm’s Length Examiner 1
  - Examiner 5 – Arm’s Length Examiner 2 (External Examiner or Reader)

The arm’s length examiner can be from any division or any department; the only requirement is that they meet the definition of an arm’s length examiner. A past or current member of the supervisory committee cannot be considered arm’s length.

An arm’s length examiner must not be (or have been) a member of the supervisory committee, or have been connected with the thesis research in a significant way. The examiner should not have been associated with the student, outside of usual contact in courses or other non-thesis activities within the University, nor be related to the student or supervisor(s).

Except in special circumstances (fully justified in writing to the Dean of the department’s Faculty), an arm’s length examiner should not be a close collaborator of the supervisor(s) within the last six years.

Arm’s length examiners who have served on a student’s candidacy examination committee do not lose their arm’s length status as a result, and are eligible to serve as arm’s length examiners on the student’s doctoral final examination if the other conditions of being arm’s length remain unchanged.

In the case of a doctoral final examination, the required External (i.e. the arm’s length examiner from outside the University of Alberta) is, by definition, an arm’s length examiner.

- The external examiner or reader should be invited a minimum of 6-8 weeks prior to the defense. Have the external’s CV emailed to Anita Weiler anita.weiler@ualberta.ca It should include their current research, publications and a summary of their PhD supervisory experience. The summary of their PhD supervisory experience should contain a list of PhD students they have supervised, past and current, as well as an estimate of the number of final doctoral examining committee’s they have served on. Please note the student should have little to no contact with the external examiner.

- Anita will notify you once the Dean of Science Office has approved the external examiner.
- The Preliminary Acceptance of PhD Thesis Form must be signed by the 3 members of your supervisory committee and returned to Anita prior to sending your thesis to the external examiner.

- The external examiner should be given a minimum of 4 weeks to review your thesis. The other members of your exam committee should be given the same amount of time.

- Once you have settled on a date and time, book your exam room by emailing roombooking@chem.ualberta.ca

- Notify Anita Weiler anita.weiler@ualberta.ca of the date/time/room and committee members a minimum of 4 weeks in advance of the defense. She requires this information to prepare the exam notice and send it to the Dean of Science office for approval.

- At the time Anita receives notification of the exam she will ask you if you are going to delay the publication of your thesis. If so you will receive the Request to Restrict Access to a Thesis form that is to be completed and signed by the student and supervisor. The delay in publication can be for either 1 or 2 years from the date of convocation. FGSR must receive the Request to Restrict to a Thesis prior to the student submitting the final version of the thesis.

  - Consult with your supervisor if you are going to request to withhold publication of your thesis. If you have publication(s) based on your research that are still in the preparation or review stages you should allow sufficient time for publication prior to that of your thesis. In this case, you should request to withhold publication of your thesis. Inform Anita if you are going to request to withhold publication of your thesis.

- A few days prior to the defense email Anita the exact title of your thesis as it will be published as well as a copy of the abstract for your public seminar.

- Anita will prepare the Thesis Approval/Program Completion form for your file. This form should remain in the file and be returned to Anita after the exam.

The entire exam committee except the supervisor usually signs the Thesis Approval/Program Completion form. The supervisor typically withholds their signature until they are satisfied all revisions to the thesis are complete. However the supervisor may consider signing the form prior to the revisions being complete in order for the student to meet one of the add/delete deadlines for a term.

- Once the Thesis Approval/Program Completion form is signed by the supervisor, it will be signed by the Associate Chair - Graduate Studies and then sent to FGSR. Students cannot proceed with their thesis submission until FGSR has received all of the required paperwork including the Thesis Approval/Program Completion form.

-Submission of the Thesis Approval/Program Completion form determines if further registration is required. Submission of the thesis itself determines the convocation date. The thesis must also be submitted within 6 months of the date of the defense.

- In order for a student to avoid registering and having to pay further tuition and fees the form must be submitted to FGSR by a specified date. The specified date is usually the add/delete deadline in each term but the date is set at FGSR’s discretion. Please consult the FGSR website for thesis submission deadlines: https://uofa.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/academic-requirements/thesis-deadlines
- Please see the FGSR website for thesis formatting requirements and submission procedures. There is additional paperwork the student is required to submit: [http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/degreesuperv/thesis/step4submit.htm](http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/degreesuperv/thesis/step4submit.htm)

- Also note you are required to apply for Convocation through Bear Tracks prior to making your final thesis submission.

- When you are ready to leave the department please ensure the Check Out List is completed and returned to Laura Pham in the General Office E3-44 along with your building keys. A copy of the Check Out List can be found in the Forms Cabinet on the Chemistry website.

### Timeline

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| At least **6-8 weeks** before your defense | • External Examiner is formally invited and approved.  
• Supervisory committee signs off on the Preliminary Acceptance of PhD Thesis form. |
| At least **4 weeks** before your defense   | • Inform Anita of the defense date, time, room number and who the committee members are.  
• With your supervisor, decide if you are going to delay the publication of your thesis and inform Anita.  
• Send copy of thesis to the external examiner/reader. |
| At least **3 days** before the defense | • Provide Anita with exact title of the thesis as it will be published and a copy of the public seminar abstract. |
| **Within 6 months** of the defense | • Apply for convocation in Bear Tracks before you submit your thesis.  
• Ensure all required paperwork for thesis submission is sent to FGSR.  
• Submit your thesis by the applicable deadline. |
| Leaving the Department       | • When you are ready to leave the department complete the department Check Out List and return your keys to Laura in the General Office. |