

**SPROTT SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
CARLETON UNIVERSITY**

**MSc Thesis Guidelines**

**Preamble**

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines on the structure of the MSc thesis and for students to familiarize themselves with FGPA's Thesis Examination Policy.

Before beginning the MSc thesis, students must first complete the MSc research tutorial (i.e., thesis proposal). The MSc Thesis Proposal guidelines can be found here: <https://sprott.carleton.ca/wp-content/uploads/Sprott-MSc-Research-Thesis-Proposal-Guidelines-and-Approval-Forms-1.pdf>. They are also posted on this website: <https://sprott.carleton.ca/programs/msc-in-management/program-requirements-msc/>

As stated in the Graduate Calendar ([12.2 Master's Thesis](#)):

The master's thesis should exhibit a competence in the research process by applying an existing body of knowledge in the critical analysis of a new question or of a specific problem or issue in a new setting. On the basis of that conceptual understanding and methodological competence, it should demonstrate at least one of the following:

1. the development and support of a sustained argument in written form
2. originality in the application of knowledge

**Format**

The length of the thesis will vary but as a general guideline, students can expect to write anywhere between 100-200 pages (double spaced), excluding footnotes/endnotes, bibliography, and appendices. Use Times New Roman, 12 point size font (or equivalent). View the formatting guidelines here: <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/thesis-requirements/formatting-guidelines/>.

The thesis is an original application of new or existing knowledge to a new research question or in a new setting. Primary or secondary data can be used.

A thesis normally should include the following sections, in addition to main body of thesis. APA style is recommended for citation and reference.

1. Title page
2. Abstract
3. Acknowledgement
4. Table of contents
5. List of tables
6. List of figures
7. List of appendices
8. Glossary of terms

Main body of thesis:

1. Introduction
2. Literature review and/or theory
3. Research question and theoretical foundation
4. Research design and research methodology
5. Data analysis and findings
6. Conclusion and discussion
7. References
8. Appendices

### **Submission**

Normally, your thesis must be submitted to your supervisor in examinable form by the following deadlines in order to qualify for graduation.

Spring Convocation (June): April 1

Fall Convocation (November): August 1

Winter Graduation (February): November 1

MSc students are required to orally defend their theses before they can graduate.

### **MSc Thesis Examination Approval Form**

The MSc Thesis Examination Approval Form (page 6) must be completed by the student and the thesis supervisor and submitted to the MSc Program Office at least 5 weeks before the proposed thesis defense date.

Once the MSc Thesis Examination has been approved, the student should **apply to graduate** through Carleton Central. The deadlines are as follows:

- April 1 for Spring (June) Convocation
- August 30 for Fall (November) Convocation
- November 30 for Winter (February) Convocation (no ceremony - Winter graduates are invited to attend the Spring ceremony)

The following sections (thesis submission, oral defense, examination outcome and final thesis submission) are from the Thesis Examination Policy of the FGPA, Carleton University. For full guidelines, please visit <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/wp-content/uploads/Thesis-Examination-Policy-Revised-February-2016.pdf> found on the Graduate Studies website (<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/thesis-requirements/>).

## **Thesis Submission**

The thesis supervisor schedules the examination and recommends membership of the thesis examination board to the chair of the department. This should be the same examination board as the research (thesis) proposal.

The examination board will comprise, as a minimum:

- Thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor).
- One additional member from the Sprott School of Business. This includes cross-appointed and adjunct professors.
- One member who is internal to or external to the Sprott School of Business (Internal Examiner). If internal to the Sprott School of Business, the Internal Examiner must be from a different functional area as that of the student's supervisor.
- Chair of the unit (or delegate who serves as chair of the examination board). The Chair of the unit/department is the MSc Program Director. A delegate (another faculty member) may serve as chair of the examination board in place of the MSc Program Director.

The candidate is required to upload the examination copy of their thesis through Carleton Central **three weeks** before the actual date of the examination of the thesis.

The committee members must receive a copy of the thesis either through Carleton Central or from the student or the department **three weeks** in advance of the defense with a copy of the Committee Member Thesis Defense Authorization Form (available here: <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/thesis-requirements/thesis-forms-templates/> - to be sent by the MSc Program Administrator).

Each examiner on the examination board signs the Committee Member Thesis Defense Authorization Form and sends his/her signed copy to the MSc Program Office by email or hard copy **one week** before the oral examination. If any examiner has serious reservations regarding the thesis, these must be noted on the form at this time.

In the event of serious reservations, the MSc Program Director will consult with the thesis supervisor and the candidate to determine whether the examination will be deferred. The candidate has the right to proceed to examination. If the examination is deferred, the MSc Program Director will inform the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.

## **Oral Defense**

The chair of the department (or designate) chairs the examination board.

**The procedures to be followed in defenses are as follows:**

- The chair of the examination board conducts a brief in camera meeting with the examination board at the outset to review the examination procedures and potential outcomes. The definitions of minor and major revisions will be addressed by all members of the examination board along with the criteria for medal eligibility. The chair of the examination board inquires whether any member of the board can foresee any significant difficulty with respect to the final acceptability of the thesis. If significant difficulties are foreseen, concerning either content or

scholarly presentation, the chair of the examination board determines whether there is reason to adjourn the examination. If the examination proceeds, the chair of the examination board informs the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs following the examination.

- The chair of the examination board admits the candidate to the room and reviews the examination procedures.
- The candidate may make a brief introductory statement and may use audio/visual aids or other appropriate methods supporting this statement.
- In the first round of questions, the examiners normally proceed in the order set out in the examination notice. Questioning in this round is one-on-one without interventions from other board members.
- This will be followed by a second round of questions without a set order. In this round, questions may come from any of the examiners, and comments and general discussion may take place. The duration of this round is at the discretion of the chair of the examination board.
- The candidate may make a closing statement but is not required to do so.
- The candidate is asked to withdraw while the examination board deliberates.

#### **Examination Outcome**

- The chair of the examination board polls the members of the examination board to determine if the candidate passes or fails. The chair of the examination board records in writing all required revisions, major or minor, agreed to by the board. In addition, the chair of the examination board records in writing the process for approving required revisions.
- The chair of the examination board polls the internal and departmental members of the examination board regarding recommendation of the candidate for a medal if the thesis is judged to be outstanding. The thesis supervisor does not participate in the discussion regarding medals. If the board members agree to recommend the candidate, the chair of the examination board submits a written report to the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.
- The chair of the examination board ensures that the Examination Report is prepared and signed by all members before the adjournment of the examination board. The chair of the examination board signs for absent members of the examination board and completes the Examination Report Outcome Form in Carleton Central.
- The chair of the examination board invites the candidate back into the examination room to discuss the examination outcome.
- The total duration of the examination should not normally exceed two hours.

## **Final Thesis Submission**

### **a) Minor Revisions:**

- i) The candidate, after completing minor revisions as directed by the examination board, will upload the final copy of the thesis in Carleton Central for approval by the thesis supervisor or designate. The candidate will also complete the required electronic forms.
- ii) Having verified that the required revisions have been completed, the thesis supervisor or designate will approve the upload and the final thesis will be electronically forwarded to FGPA.
- iii) Provided that all master's program requirements have been satisfied, the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs recommends to Senate, through the Faculty Board of Graduate Studies, that the degree be awarded.
- iv) The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs arranges for the electronic thesis to be transferred to the Library.

### **b) Major Revisions:**

- i) The candidate, after completing major revisions as directed by the examination board, will submit copies of the final thesis to all those involved in the approval of the revisions or modifications.
- ii) Having verified that the required revisions have been completed, those involved will sign the Thesis Revisions Approval Form (available here: <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/thesis-requirements/thesis-forms-templates/>).
- iii) Once all necessary approvals have been obtained, the candidate will upload the final copy of the thesis in Carleton Central for approval by the thesis supervisor or designate. The candidate will also complete the required electronic forms.
- iv) Having verified that the required revisions have been completed, the thesis supervisor or designate will approve the upload and the final thesis will be electronically forwarded to FGPA.
- v) Provided that all master's program requirements have been satisfied, the Dean of the FGPA recommends to Senate, through the Faculty Board of Graduate Studies, that the degree be awarded.
- vi) FGPA arranges for the electronic thesis to be transferred to the Library.

## MSc THESIS EXAMINATION APPROVAL FORM

*To be submitted 5 weeks before the proposed thesis defense date*

### To be completed by the student:

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ STUDENT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed Time: \_\_\_\_\_

In-person

Hybrid

*Note: In a hybrid examination, the student and at least one committee member are required to attend in-person.*

\*Closed Defense

Open to all

Open to selected (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

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### EXAMINATION BOARD: (to be completed by the supervisor)

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by MSc Director: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: The committee members should be the same as those who were approved for the research (thesis) proposal. If they are not, a written request must be submitted to the MSc Program Director for approval.*

*\* Note: The decision to keep the defense closed or open will not affect the outcome of the defense and should be made by the student, in collaboration with the supervisor*