



**Department of
Epidemiology and Biostatistics
MSc Student Handbook**

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Program Timeline..... | 2 |
| Full-Time MSc Students | 2 |
| Registration Period..... | 2 |
| Progress Requirements..... | 3 |
| Review of Student Progress | 3 |
| Selection of Thesis Supervisory Committee..... | 4 |
| Supervisory Committee Membership | 4 |
| Additions and Changes to Membership | 5 |
| Meeting Frequency..... | 5 |
| Graduate Student Supervision: Roles and Responsibilities..... | 6 |
| The Program (Department)..... | 6 |
| The Supervisor | 7 |
| Supervisory Committee | 9 |
| The Student..... | 9 |
| MSc Thesis Requirements..... | 11 |
| Thesis Format | 11 |
| Thesis Timelines | 12 |
| Thesis Examination | 13 |
| Preliminary Examination of the Thesis | 13 |
| Preparing for the Examination..... | 13 |
| Examination of the Thesis and the Candidate | 13 |
| Final Submission of the Thesis..... | 15 |
| Submitting the Final Copy of Your Thesis | 15 |
| Reviewing Your Final Submission..... | 15 |
| MSc Thesis Examination Process Timeline to Program Completion | 16 |
| Departmental Completion Checklist..... | 17 |
| Change of Status Requests..... | 17 |
| Request to Transfer from MSc to PhD..... | 17 |
| Request to Change Status from Full-Time to Part-Time | 17 |
| Request a Leave of Absence..... | 18 |
| Thesis Defense Only Status | 18 |
| Guidelines for a Student Appeal | 20 |

Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Graduate Program Orientation

Program Timeline

The academic year in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) consists of three terms, commencing on or about September 1 (Fall), January 1 (Winter), and May 1 (Summer). Students are entitled to 3 weeks holidays, the timing of which must be pre-approved by their supervisor.

Students are admitted in the fall term. Due to students coming to our program from a wide variety of educational backgrounds, there is a fairly heavy course-work requirement. **To ensure timely completion of the degree, there is a necessary rate of progress through the program.** MSc students must complete 3.5 credits and maintain continuous registration by paying tuition fees in each successive fall, winter and summer terms (from program entry, until the thesis is successfully defended, and corrections submitted to SGPS).

Full-Time MSc Students

Epidemiology students complete their required 3.5 credits and 2 seminar Milestones in the first two terms of registration, unless alternate arrangements have been approved by their supervisor(s) and the Graduate Chair.

Biostatistics students complete all course requirements by the end of the first two terms of registration, other than Biostatistics 9681Q and Epidemiology 9690R, which will be completed in term four.

Additional courses may be taken at the student's discretion at any time, in consultation with his or her supervisor. The thesis research will commence in the third term of registration or before. Ideally, the thesis will be completed by the end of the second year of registration, the sixth term.

Registration Period

For a Master's degree, the normal minimum registration requirement is three terms of full-time enrolment (or one year). Two terms of part-time registration is considered the equivalent of one term of full-time registration.

The full-time Master's degree is to be completed within six terms (two years) of initial registration, and for part-time students, within twelve terms (four calendar years). The deadline for degree completion will be extended in the case of an approved leave of absence (refer to section on Leave of Absence).

Progress Requirements

The Departmental Graduate Affairs Committee will require a student to withdraw from the program if he or she is not making adequate progress. This progress includes: following the recommended time line, regularly meeting with the thesis supervisor and maintaining a continued effort on the thesis research as well as maintaining a cumulative average of at least 70% calculated each term over all courses taken for credit, with no grade less than 60%.

Review of Student Progress

Success in the graduate program is marked by achieving key milestones in a timely manner. The primary purpose of the annual review of student progress, conducted at the end of terms 3 and 5 and every term after term 6, is to identify departures from the normal time line so that appropriate actions can be taken as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to initiate the process, and timely compliance is itself a formal progression requirement. All students are required to submit a completed and signed progress form by the deadline. Registration for future terms will be conditional on the student having submitted a progress form by the deadline. It is the student's responsibility to prepare the Annual Review of Student Progress Form when it is e-mailed out.

Review of student progress is a 2-step process whereby the student (1) completes Part A of the form and (2) schedules an in-person meeting with his/her supervisor(s) to complete Part B. The form is then signed by both the student and supervisor(s) and submitted by the deadline to the Academic Programs Coordinator. Copies should be kept by both the supervisor(s) and the student.

If there is more than one supervisor, all supervisors' signatures are required on the forms.

Selection of Thesis Supervisory Committee

Students should feel free to solicit advice from any faculty member in the department. However, most advice will be provided by the supervisory committee and the choice of this committee is important in ensuring a strong thesis and a successful thesis examination.

Students are admitted into the program with an assigned thesis supervisor who has already indicated his/her willingness to guide the student through the thesis. The primary thesis supervisor must have School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) MSc supervisory credentials within the program. Students are certainly free to switch supervisors if there is a credentialed supervisor who is willing to accept the student and if both current and potential supervisors are agreeable to the funding implications.

Supervisory Committee Membership

In consultation with the thesis supervisor, an appropriate supervisory committee will be selected. By the end of the **third term** in the program, you should have identified at least one other supervisory committee member in addition to any primary or co-supervisors. It is important that the student have this second source of advice. The remaining members of the supervisory committee should be added if/when needed, to fill gaps in the expertise required to supervise the thesis topic. In addition to the supervisor or co-supervisors, at least one other person on this committee **MUST** be a member of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, and all committee members **MUST** hold at least Teaching and Advisory Membership with the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (list available at <http://schulich.uwo.ca/epibio/faculty/>). Supervisory Committee membership is subject to the approval of the Departmental Graduate Affairs Committee.

Committee members may be drawn from eligible faculty in any department at Western or faculty at other institutions who also hold Western appointments.

In choosing supervisory committee members, students should consider the research interests, as well as the supervisory experience, of potential committee members. The following criteria are guidelines, not requirements:

- there should be at least one person whose primary field matches that of the student (e.g. at least one biostatistician for students in the biostatistics field; at least one epidemiologist for students in the epidemiology field)
- there should be at least one experienced member who has supervised students through to completion in this department or another Epidemiology and Biostatistics program (someone who "knows the ropes")
- there should be at least one person expert in the content area of the inquiry
- the full supervisory committee should cover, as much as possible, content areas in which the student and/or supervisor perceive a need for support

The department website has a list of all full-time and cross-appointed faculty and their research interests (link available at <http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/epibio/people/faculty/>). Discuss possible choices with your supervisor and also discuss who will be responsible for contacting potential supervisory committee members (the student or the supervisor). Any additions or removals to the supervisory committee must be communicated to the Academic Programs Coordinator using the form on the departmental website.

Additions and Changes to Membership

Students are responsible for completing and submitting a Supervisory Committee Change form (available at http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/epibio/graduate/documents_forms whenever a change in committee membership takes place (with the exception of changes made immediately prior to the Annual Review of Student Progress). All change forms should be submitted as close to the date of the change as possible to ensure timely approval and tracking of committee membership.

Meeting Frequency

It is the student's responsibility to schedule regular meetings with the supervisor. While the meeting schedule needs to be tailored to the student/supervisor working styles, it is recommended that you meet with your supervisor **at least** once a month, regardless of the stage of your program. When you are actively designing your project, it is recommended that you meet with your supervisor **at least** every two weeks. Frequent meetings between the student and supervisor and occasional meetings of the entire supervisory committee have been reported by many students as a helpful part of the process and are strongly encouraged.

Graduate Student Supervision: Roles and Responsibilities

The Program (Department)

1. The program should implement and follow the policies of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS).
2. Programs should provide sufficient information in the letter of offer of admission to new graduate students. This would include, for example, details about means of support (e.g., GTA, scholarship, supervisor funding), amount of funding, time of funding, and any initial program expectations. Information should also be provided regarding supervisor arrangements, including the assignment of supervisors, or availability of potential supervisors and their research areas.
3. Programs should provide orientation/information sessions for both new and continuing graduate students. Information conveyed in these sessions might include: overviews of program policies and requirements, areas of expertise of faculty members for research supervision, expected performance and time-lines for completion of degree requirements, intellectual property policies, publication and authorship issues, scholarship and funding information, GTA information (and for international students, information about visa requirements and employment regulations), information on policies regarding the proper conduct of research, sexual harassment and race relations, AIDS policies, information about safety and work place regulations, procedures for complaints and appeals, and information on help lines, advisory offices, and counseling services.
4. The program should ensure that each new graduate student has an identified supervisor (or interim supervisor/program consultant) as soon as possible after starting the program. The program should also ensure that the supervisory committee is in place at the appropriate point in time.
5. The program shall ensure that arrangements are made for an alternate supervisor if the regular supervisor either departs or is absent for an extended period.
6. The program should provide students with written guidelines of program policies and notification of any changes.
7. The program should assess and review each student's academic and research progress, at least on an annual basis. This review would include such factors as performance on course work and PhD comprehensive examinations, and thesis progress. The program should provide feedback which may include specific goals and time-lines for completion of various components of degree requirements. Feedback may also take the form of a written contract of expectations. Areas of concern and lack of progress must be clearly identified for the student.
8. The program should identify paths/resources available to students for assistance, and if they wish to raise concerns about their program, supervisor, etc.
9. The program should encourage open communication and feedback between students and supervisors on all issues, including supervisory practices.

10. The program should strive to maintain an atmosphere conducive to scholarly work by graduate students, and help enhance their creativity and productivity.
11. The program should provide mechanisms for monitoring/resolving problems which may arise between graduate students, supervisors, and members of supervisory committee, and do so in a timely fashion. Programs should further ensure that these mechanisms are congruent with established appeals policies and procedures.
12. The program should ensure a safe working environment for students, and inform them of all relevant safety and work regulations.
13. The program should ensure that a supervisor takes on only as many graduate students as he/she can properly supervise.
14. The program should ensure students are aware of evaluation criteria for all work before work commences.

The Supervisor

1. The supervisor should make and maintain a strong commitment to devote the required time and energy needed to successfully engage in graduate student supervision. As part of this commitment, the supervisor should display the highest ethical standards of behavior at all times.
2. Potential supervisors should have sufficient familiarity with the field of research to provide appropriate guidance and supervision, or indicate a willingness to gain that familiarity before agreeing to act as supervisor.
3. The supervisor should discuss with the student, very early on, any expectations and the relevant policies concerning authorship on publications, and issues surrounding ownership of intellectual property (this may include patents/licenses). This may result in written agreements or contracts between the supervisor and student covering these issues.
4. The supervisor should make the student aware, very early on, of program requirements and deadlines, various sources of funding, policies covering the conduct of research, and any relevant safety and/or work place regulations. The nature of any financial support provided by the supervisor should be communicated clearly to the student, in writing, including such details as the amount of financial support, the length of time of such support, and any specific conditions pertaining to this financial support.
5. The supervisor should, very early on, discuss and formulate with the student a plan of study for completion of degree requirements and thesis work, with clear milestones denoting progress. This would include, for example, assisting the student in selecting and planning a suitable and manageable research project, as well as setting a viable time schedule and adhering to it for thesis progress and completion.

6. The supervisor should be available for regular consultation with the student. The supervisor and student should discuss and agree on an appropriate schedule for supervision meetings, and the supervisor should provide constructive and timely feedback to the student. More generally, the supervisor should maintain open communication and feedback with the student on all issues, including supervisory practices.
7. The supervisor should provide regular evaluations and assessments of the student's progress and academic performance. This would include a review with the student and supervisory committee, at least on an annual basis, of progress on thesis research and any other relevant degree requirements. The supervisor should then provide input to the program regarding the student's progress.
8. The supervisor should make reasonable arrangements to ensure that adequate and appropriate research resources are available for the student's thesis project.
9. The supervisor should help ensure that the research environment is safe, healthy, free from harassment, discrimination, and conflict. To this end, the supervisor should be aware of all pertinent regulations and policies covering these issues.
10. The supervisor should provide guidance, instruction, and encouragement regarding the research activities of student. The supervisor should help ensure that the student has access to intellectual resources and research opportunities, and should also encourage the dissemination of research results by publications and conferences.
11. The supervisor should monitor any major discrepancies in advice given to the student by members of the supervisory committee and/or supervisor, and attempt to achieve resolution and consensus on the issue(s) involved.
12. Supervisors should be familiar with all program, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and University policies and procedures pertaining to graduate students and supervision, along with information on graduate student financial support.
13. Supervisors should make satisfactory alternative supervisor arrangements if away for a prolonged period of time.
14. Supervisors should inform the program (i.e., graduate chair or chair), in a timely fashion, of any serious difficulties which may arise in supervision. These might include major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

Supervisory Committee

1. In conjunction with the supervisor, the supervisory committee should help the student develop a program of study, and also report on the progress of the student's work. Members of the supervisory committee thus serve to broaden and deepen the range of expertise and experience available for providing advice and for assessment of the student. As such, membership on this committee should be determined by consultation between the supervisor, student, and program (e.g., graduate chair).
2. The supervisory committee may assist the supervisor with the monitoring process. This may include at least an annual meeting between the student, supervisor, and supervisory committee to review progress on degree requirements.
3. Members of the supervisory committee may provide additional guidance and advice on the student's thesis research project, thus complementing the expertise of the supervisor. The supervisory committee members should be available to provide other sources of information to the student, and also provide constructive criticism and discussion of the student's ideas as they develop.
4. Members of the supervisory committee should be reasonably accessible to the student when called upon for discussion of the student's academic progress, consultation on issues related to the thesis research project, and for general guidance. Supervisory committee members should be reasonably available to meet at the request of the student or supervisor.

The Student

1. The student should make and maintain a strong commitment to devote the required time and energy needed to engage successfully in graduate work and research, write a thesis, and contribute fully to the scholarly and intellectual life of the University. The student should show dedicated efforts to gain the background knowledge and skills needed to pursue graduate work successfully, and adhere to the highest standards of ethical behavior to assure academic integrity and professionalism.
2. The student should discuss with the supervisor, very early on, any expectations concerning authorship on publications, and issues surrounding ownership of intellectual property (this may include patents/licenses). This may result in written agreements or contracts between the student and supervisor covering these issues. In this regard, the student should become familiar with relevant policies in these domains.
3. The student should become aware of, very early on, all program requirements and deadlines, information about various sources of funding, and university policies covering the proper conduct of research, race relations, sexual harassment, AIDS, appeals, and any other relevant safety and/or work place policies and regulations.

4. The student should, very early on, discuss and formulate with their supervisor a plan of study for completion of degree requirements and thesis work, with clear milestones denoting progress. This would include, for example, setting a viable time schedule and adhering to it for all graduate work, including thesis progress and completion. Any variations to this schedule, including prolonged absences by the student, should be discussed. More generally, the student should maintain open communication and feedback with the supervisor on all issues, including supervisory practices.
5. The student and supervisor should discuss and agree on an appropriate schedule for supervision meetings. This discussion should also include agreement regarding appropriate time-frames for the submission of student materials to be reviewed by the supervisor, and the supervisor providing feedback. The student should be reasonably available to meet with the supervisor and supervisory committee when requested, and be able to report fully and regularly on thesis progress and results.
6. The student should give serious consideration and response to comments and advice from the supervisor and committee members.
7. The student should maintain registration throughout the program and ensure, that where required, visas and employment authorization documents are kept up to date.
8. The student should be aware of and conform to program, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and University requirements relating to deadlines, thesis style, award applications, and other graduate requirements, etc.
9. The student should pay due attention to the need to maintain a workplace which is safe, tidy, and healthy. The student should respect the work and equipment of others, and show tolerance and respect for others sharing the same facilities. This would include, for example, cleaning up work space when finished, and complying with all safety and work regulations of the program/university.
10. The student should be thoughtful and reasonably frugal in using resources, and assist in obtaining resources for the research of other group members, when applicable. Where applicable, the student should comply with all ethical policies and procedures governing human or animal research.
11. The student should meet agreed performance standards and deadlines of funding organizations, to the extent possible, when financing has been provided under a contract or grant. This would include adherence to any contractual terms under which the thesis research is conducted.
12. The student should meet the terms and conditions of any financial contractual agreements, such as a TA position.
13. The student should inform the program (i.e., graduate chair or chair), in a timely fashion, of any serious difficulties which may arise in supervision. These might include major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

MSc Thesis Requirements

Please see the **School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website for detailed and accurate information on all official Thesis Regulations:**
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/index.html.

All thesis research must take place under the direction of a thesis supervisor. A Master's thesis is usually a project that addresses well-defined objectives and/or hypotheses. This may be:

- the analysis and interpretation (related to objectives) of previously collected data
- the analysis and interpretation of data from a discrete subsection of an ongoing project
- a small stand-alone project involving study design, data collection, analysis and interpretation

On occasion, a student may instead develop a research protocol. A proposal-style thesis would be acceptable only in the situation where the actual study is too large to be fully implemented as an MSc project. It must be a protocol developed to the point of implementation together with evidence of its feasibility.

A proposal-style thesis will ideally still contain a data collection and analysis component (perhaps a pilot study) and all implementation details should be specified. Please see the department's Principles & Guidelines for the Proposal Style MSc Thesis (available at http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/epibio/graduate/documents_forms/).

When MSc students are ready to defend their thesis, and after consultation with the supervisor and supervisory committee, an **Intent to Submit Thesis** form must be submitted to the Academic Programs Coordinator **at least six (6) to eight (8) weeks prior to the earliest proposed thesis examination date.**

Given that defenses are often clustered near the end of a term, a deadline to submit this form will be enforced. For the fall term (September- December), the form must be submitted no later than November 1; for the winter term (January-April), no later than March 1; and for the summer term (May-August), no later than July 1. For specific details concerning the thesis examination process and deadlines, please reference http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/.

Thesis Format

A thesis based on the report of research findings may take one of two formats: Monograph (traditional or proposal style format) or Integrated-Article (manuscript format).

These formats are well described in the SGPS Thesis Guide (available at http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/8.html), which **MUST** be followed by all MSc students. The student is reminded that, regardless of the format adopted, a thesis in Epidemiology and Biostatistics needs to contain a chapter devoted to a detailed, critical review of the literature. The type of literature review suitable for publication as a "review paper" is not usually sufficiently detailed.

Thesis Timelines

When MSc students are ready to defend their thesis, and after consultation with the supervisor and supervisory committee, an Intent to Submit Thesis form must be completed and given to the Academic Programs Coordinator **at least six (6) weeks** prior to the earliest proposed examination date.

Given that defenses are often clustered near the end of a term, the deadline to submit this form will be enforced. For the fall term (September- December), the form must be submitted no later than November 1; for the winter term (January-April), no later than March 1; and for the summer term (May-August), no later than July 1. For specific details concerning the thesis examination process, and deadlines, please refer to http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/.

Please note that revisions and final thesis submission are due six weeks after a successful thesis examination.

If revisions continue into a new term, registration and related fee charges will also continue into the new term until the final copy of the thesis is submitted. To avoid registration and charges in the following term, the final thesis submission must take place by the official final day of the current term (April 30 for Winter term, August 31 for Summer term, and December 31 for Fall term) unless the student has obtained Thesis Defense Only status.

For example, the current timeline is as follows:

| Final Date for Programs to Submit Thesis Examination Request Form to SGPS | Final Date for Candidate to Submit the Thesis for Examination to SGPS | Final Date for Thesis Examination | Final Date for Final Submission of the Thesis* | Notes | Convocation Eligibility |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| November 17, 2017 | November 24, 2017 | December 15, 2017 | December 31, 2017 | Last Term of Registration is Fall 2017 | Awarded Degree in Absentia, February 2018 |
| March 24, 2017 | March 31, 2017 | April 21, 2017 | April 30, 2017 | Last Term of Registration is Winter 2017 | Eligible for Spring Convocation 2017 |
| July 27, 2017 | August 3, 2017 | August 24, 2017 | August 31, 2017 | Last Term of Registration is Summer 2017 | Eligible for Fall Convocation 2017 |

*If this day falls on a weekend or holiday, please note that the submission will be reviewed on the next business day.

Thesis Examination

Preliminary Examination of the Thesis

An e-mail instructing how to access your thesis will be sent to each examiner one business day after your submission is received. Examiners are given a digital copy of your work in PDF format and the option to request a paper copy of your thesis should they choose. Paper copies are available at the examiner's expense.

All examiners are required to perform a preliminary examination of your thesis. Examiners may identify issues in form or content for exploration or clarification at the oral examination. The results from preliminary examinations are not shown to you or your supervisory team in advance of the oral examination.

Preparing for the Examination

Preparation for the oral examination should be given via your supervisory team. Your supervisory team should ensure that you understand the requirements and purpose of the oral examination and that you are adequately prepared for the oral examination and if necessary arrange practice in oral examination techniques.

Be prepared to be able to summarise your main arguments and to explain your choice of approach and methodology. Ask your supervisory team for guidance concerning the questions that your examiners are likely to ask.

Examination of the Thesis and the Candidate

The Thesis Examination may be postponed or cancelled if any step in the examination process is not completed on schedule (e.g. the candidate fails to submit the Thesis for Examination on schedule, or the Examiners fail to submit evaluations on time).

Note: The thesis examination is normally a closed event unless the student and program, by mutual agreement, request that the defense be open to the university community (e.g. faculty, academic colleagues, and students).

The Tasks of the Examiners are to:

- Determine if the thesis and the candidate meet recognized scholarly standards for the degree
- Appraise the thesis for content - its underlying assumptions, methodology, findings, and scholarly significance of the findings
- Appraise the thesis for form - its organization, presentation of graphs, tables, and illustrative materials, and its use of accepted conventions for addressing the scholarly literature
- Evaluate the candidate's skill and knowledge in responding to questions and defending the thesis
- Ensure authenticity of authorship

The Examiners do their work in a two-stage process.

Stage 1

The Preliminary Evaluation of the Thesis

Each Examiner must independently and without consultation, decide whether the thesis meets the scholarly standards for the discipline and degree in form and content.

There are 2 possible outcomes that the examiners may consider:

1. Acceptable to go to defense with revisions/modifications
2. Unacceptable to go forward to defense

Stage 2

- The Chair presides over the Thesis Examination
- The Examination Begins
- The Thesis Examination Board Deliberates and Renders a Decision
- Communicating the Decision to the Candidate
 - When the Chair and the Examiners have completed the documentation, the Chair invites only the candidate back into the room and informs him/her of the result.
 - Following a positive decision that is subject to revisions/modifications, the Supervisor(s) must meet with the candidate, to ensure that he/she understands the revisions/modifications required by the Thesis Examination Board.

For detailed and up to date information on these outcomes, visit
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/8.html,
Section 8.5, Master's Candidate
Completion of the Thesis Degree Requirement.

Final Submission of the Thesis

Submitting the Final Copy of Your Thesis

Once your examination is successful you must update your original work and resubmit the revised thesis to Scholarship@Western.

Please note that revisions and final thesis submission are due **six (6) weeks** after a successful thesis examination.

In addition, you are required to submit the following to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies before publication can occur:

- The signed Certificate of Examination (scanned copy is acceptable)

Additional instructions are available at

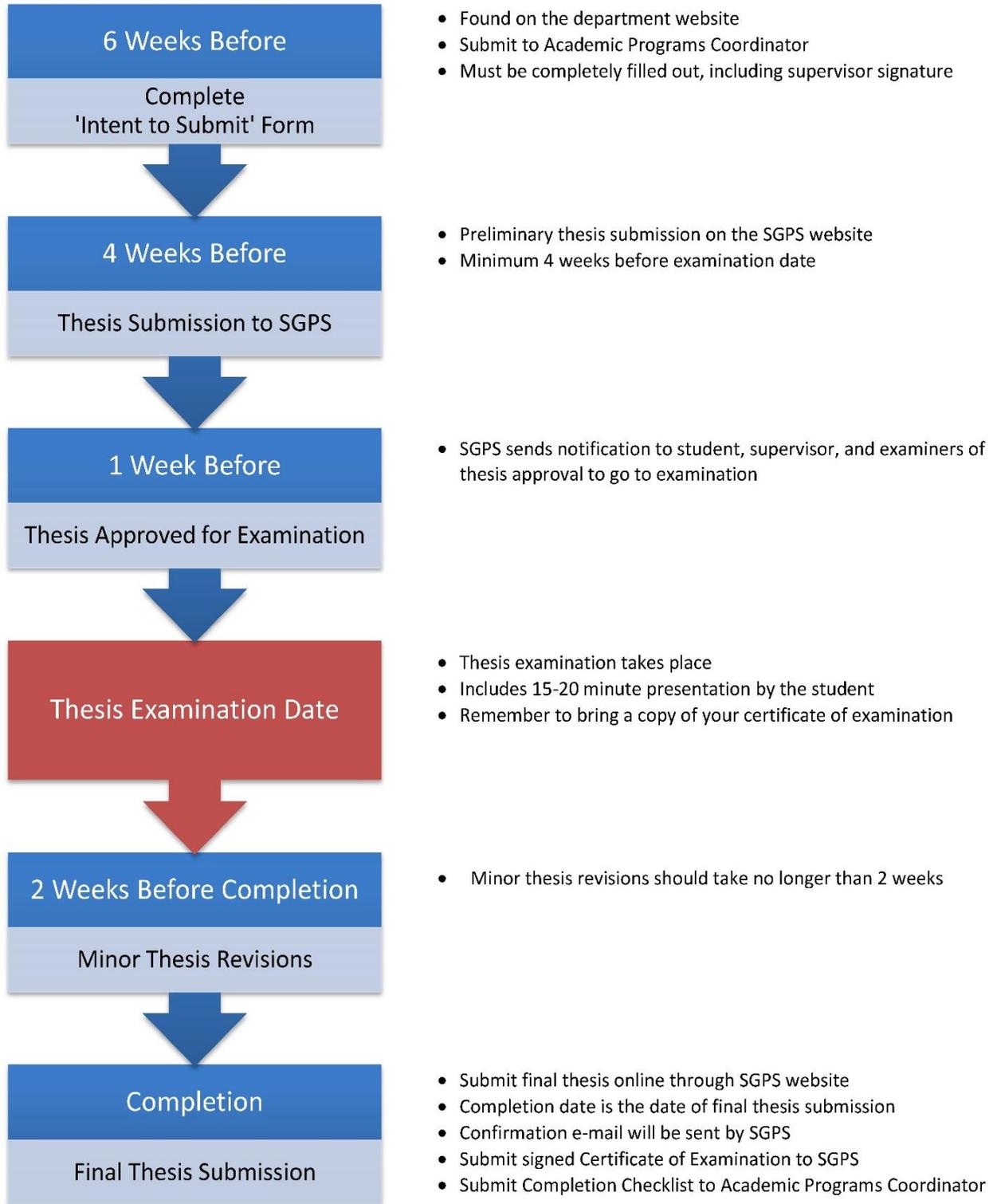
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/submission.html.

Reviewing Your Final Submission

The Thesis and Membership Coordinator will audit your final submission to ensure it meets all regulations pertaining to thesis formatting. Once approved, the work will immediately be published within the repository and you will be informed of the publication via email.

Confirmations will also be sent to your supervisor and program administrator. Once the thesis is published, you have officially completed the thesis requirement of your degree. Subject to approval by the University Senate, your names placed on the convocation list. Should you require proof of completion of all degree requirements you should contact the Thesis Coordinator in SGPS.

MSc Thesis Examination Process Timeline to Program Completion



Departmental Completion Checklist

All students who have received confirmation of completion from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies must submit a signed copy of the Completion Checklist (available at http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/epibio/graduate/documents_forms). This checklist summarizes the various loose ends a student is expected to wrap up before leaving the university. It also contains very important information requests for post-graduation contact and success.

Change of Status Requests

Request to Transfer from MSc to PhD

Students who are accepted into our MSc program may apply to reclassify into the PhD program if:

- academic performance (courses and thesis research to date) is compatible with PhD studies
- they have support of a PhD credentialed supervisor willing to fund them and supervise their thesis

Students who wish to re-classify may make application in late May of year one for a September re-classification. As part of the application, the student will submit a proposal outlining his/hers rationale for his/her request to transfer and how his/her Master's thesis project will be modified to make it compatible with Doctoral studies. The Graduate Affairs Committee will review the request and decide whether the application will be approved.

Earlier applications will not normally be considered because there is an inadequate opportunity to assess student performance early in the program. Later application is possible but re-classification should occur no later than the start of the 6th term of registration. Students who reclassify into the PhD program will write the comprehensive examination with the cohort they have joined in the PhD program.

Request to Change Status from Full-Time to Part-Time

For registered full-time MSc students, a change to part-time study may be considered if:

- the student has full-time employment in hand;
- the student has been accepted in another full-time university program;
- the student has medical circumstances that make it impossible to devote full-time attention to the thesis

Official documentation is required in order to grant a change of status request. Financial circumstances alone are not grounds for a change from full-time to part-time status (e.g. the student has gone beyond the eligible funding period but has not finished the requirements for the degree). The part-time registration should not give the student undue relative academic or financial advantage in comparison with students enrolled full-time.

In all cases, a request to change to part-time status will not normally be considered before the student has completed two years in a Master's program. As well, the student must have completed all research and data collection and expect to defend within one year. Part-time status can be granted for a maximum of one year (three terms) and is not renewable. Students registered part-time may take no more than two courses in a term. Undergraduate courses taken as extra courses or as degree requirements are to be included in the totals above.

If you would like to apply for part-time studies, you can do so through the secure Graduate Student Web Services Portal under Change of Registration. You will receive an email confirmation when your request has been approved by the department and SGPS. Please ensure you have initiated this action **AT LEAST five (5) weeks BEFORE** the beginning of the term that you wish to be registered part-time (i.e. Fall term: August 1; Winter term: December 1; Summer term: April 1).

Request a Leave of Absence

A leave of absence is normally only granted on medical and compassionate grounds. It must be approved by your Supervisor, the Graduate Chair, and the Vice-Provost of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. If you would like to apply for a leave, you can do so through the secure Graduate Student Web Services Portal under Change of Registration. Requests may only be granted in full term amounts, not partially or monthly. You will receive an email confirmation when your request has been approved by the department and SGPS. Please ensure you have initiated this action **AT LEAST four (4) weeks BEFORE** the beginning of the term that you wish to be on leave (i.e. Fall term: August 1; Winter term: December 1; Summer term: April 1).

Thesis Defense Only Status

If you have completed all degree requirements (including thesis submission), but have not defended your thesis prior to the end of the current term, you are eligible to continue your registration into the subsequent term in Thesis Defense Only (TDO) status. This additional term makes the completion of your thesis possible while not requiring you to pay tuition fees. Please note: you will still be responsible to pay part-time ancillary fees and UHIP fees where applicable. This status may apply for a maximum of one term.

In order to be considered for TDO status for the subsequent term:

- You must submit an Intent to Submit Thesis by End of Term form (available to download from http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/change_status/TDO_status.html), signed by your supervisor(s), normally five weeks prior to the end of the current term.
- You must upload your defense-ready preliminary thesis electronically by the final official day of the current term. Your uploaded preliminary thesis must be your final version for the examining committee – no further revisions will be permitted after your submission.¹

After meeting the above two requirements, you will be registered in TDO status in the subsequent term. If you submit the Intent form and fail to upload your defense-ready thesis by the deadline, your registration will return to its previous status.

In order to maintain TDO status, you must:

- Successfully complete your thesis examination.
- Complete all required thesis revisions.
- Submit your final thesis to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prior to the end of your TDO term.²

If you do not meet these conditions, you will be required to pay part-time tuition retroactively for the TDO term, and will continue to be registered until your final thesis is submitted.

Important Notes

¹ Please note that the required timelines for thesis submission are still in effect to allow for review by the examining committee. Doctoral preliminary thesis submission: six weeks prior to thesis exam.

² Although revisions and final thesis submission may be permitted six weeks after a successful thesis examination, the deadline for final thesis submission to maintain TDO status is the final day of the TDO term.

Guidelines for a Student Appeal

The appellant has a right a) to be heard (and to be heard in person if possible), b) to be made aware of any information that may adversely affect his or her case and c) to have the case judged by an unbiased decision-making body.

- i. A course grade should be appealed to the instructor, then to the Graduate Chair. A negative decision in a thesis defense, comprehensive examination or thesis proposal defense should be appealed to the Graduate Chair.
- ii. The student must submit his/her appeal in writing (complete with all necessary documentation) within six weeks of the decision/grade/requirement under appeal. The program will provide a written decision (including the reasons for making the decision) within six weeks of receiving the written appeal and complete documentation.
- iii. Final responsibility for decisions on appeals at the departmental level rests with the Graduate Chair; however, he/she may delegate responsibility to another faculty member or to a standing or ad hoc Appeals Committee. The composition and membership of such a committee will be specified in advance of the particular appeal. The size of the committee will be restricted to the number needed for a fair hearing. The committee will not include any member who might have a conflict of interest (the course instructor, in the case of an appeal of a course grad; a thesis supervisor, etc.). An appeals committee will include one graduate student.
- iv. The proceedings of the appeal hearing will be confidential.
- v. In the event of a negative decision, the candidate will be advised of his/her further avenues of appeal at a higher level. Legal counsel is not permitted below the level of the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA). However, a student may be accompanied to a meeting or hearing by a colleague or any other person of choice (i.e. partner or spouse).
- vi. For information on how to appeal a scholastic offense, Section 10 of the Graduate Student Academic Calendar:
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/index.html.
- vii. For information on how to appeal a scholastic decision, Section 11 of the Graduate Student Academic Calendar:
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/index.html.