
Thesis Exams: Neuroscience (MSc / PhD)

Step # 1 – Hold your final Advisory Committee meeting

This is where you will seek permission to finalize your project and name examiners. At this meeting you will determine the following:

- Who will act as a reader of your thesis (in addition to your supervisors).
- Program Examiners (two): One can be from your advisory committee, both must be [Neuroscience program members](#).
- University Examiner (one): Must NOT be from the same home department as your supervisor(s) but can be a member of the Neuroscience program.
- External Examiner (one) *PhD only*: Travel costs to be covered by the supervisor.

Please Note: It is important to list names of alternate examiners. This can help with the scheduling process.

Ensure your completed and signed Advisory Committee Meeting Report is emailed to the program office at neuroscience@uwo.ca within 48-hours of your final advisory committee meeting.

Step #2 – Approval of Examiners

This step will be completed by the program office. We will contact you once the Program Committee has approved the examiner requests provided by you and your advisory committee.

Step #3 – Contacting the Examiners

Examiners will be contacted by the program office to ensure participation. You should NOT have contact with the examiners prior to your defense.

Step #4 – Scheduling your Thesis Defense and PhD Public Lecture

The program office will arrange the date, time and location of your thesis exam. Please provide possible dates that you know will work for both you and your supervisor(s) (ie. a one- or two-week window).

A MSc thesis defense will take approximately 2 hours. This begins with a 15-20 minute presentation, followed by two rounds of questioning by examiners.

A PhD Public Lecture will take one hour, immediately followed by a two-hour oral examination. Please plan for 3.5 hours. The Public Lecture will consist of a 40-45 minute presentation, followed by a 15-20 minute Q&A by the audience. Examiners will hold their questions for the oral examination. The program office will advertise (via email) your public lecture to faculty, students and postdocs.

Step #5 – Exam Chair

Once the date and time of an MSc thesis defense is set, the program office will find a faculty member to Chair the defense. For PhD candidates, SGPS will assign an exam chair.

Step #6 – Forms

The “Thesis Examination Request Form” must be completed and submitted to SGPS by their [posted deadlines](#). Note: the form submission deadline is one week prior to the thesis submission deadline (see Step #7).

The program office will send the “Thesis Examination Request Form” to the student to sign. You must obtain your supervisor’s signature(s) once your thesis is considered ready for defense. Email the form to the program office at neuroscience@uwo.ca to obtain the Graduate Assistant and Graduate Chair signatures. We will submit the completed form to SGPS.

The [Thesis Examination Request Form](#) must be submitted to SGPS:

- For MSc: a minimum of **four** weeks prior to the oral exam
- For PhD: a minimum of **six** weeks prior to the oral exam

NOTE: Without this form, your examiners will NOT have access to your thesis!

Step #7 – Submitting your Thesis (Preliminary)

Submitting your thesis is a quick and simple process. After your supervisor(s) and thesis reader have approved your thesis, follow SGPS’s [Preliminary Submission](#) instructions. Once uploaded, your examiners will be granted access to your thesis (see Step #6 - Forms).

A MSc thesis must be uploaded to SGPS a minimum of **three** weeks prior to the oral exam.

A PhD thesis must be uploaded to SGPS a minimum of **five** weeks prior to the oral exam.

**** Step #8 – ONLY For those pursuing Thesis Defense Only (TDO) status ****

If you can complete all degree requirements (including thesis submission) by the end of the term* but are unable to schedule a defense in the same term, you can request [Thesis Defense Only status](#) for a maximum of one term. If approved for TDO status, you will not pay tuition for this one term but will be responsible for paying part-time ancillary fees and if applicable, UHIP costs.

You must submit the [Intent to Submit thesis by End of Term form](#) a recommended 5 weeks prior to the end of the current term. Once your preliminary thesis has been submitted, you must email your assigned manuscript number to SGPS to have your registration changed to TDO. You will defer the remaining steps to your TDO term.

*NOTE: In the Fall term, the deadline for thesis submission is the last business day before the University closure in December. For all other terms, the deadline for thesis submission is the last day of the term.

Step #9 – Apply to Graduate

You must apply to graduate through your [Student Center account](#). Details are available on the [Convocation website](#). You do NOT have to wait for a successful oral defense to apply!

Step #10 – Submitting your Thesis (Final)

After a successful oral defense and any required revisions have been completed, resubmit the revised thesis to Scholarship@Western. Full details are online at: https://grad.uwo.ca/academics/thesis/final_submission.html.

Revisions and [final thesis submission](#) are generally due 6 weeks after a successful thesis examination BUT must be submitted by [SGPS's posted deadlines](#) to ensure eligibility for [convocation](#) the following term.

Deadlines:

BE AWARE of all relevant thesis deadlines! These are posted on the SGPS website at: https://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/timelines.html.

Other Tips:

- Be Proactive! Allow plenty of time to complete these steps. Leaving everything to the last minute may result in a delay of your thesis defense and graduation.
- Follow the thesis [formatting requirements](#) listed on the SGPS website. Neuroscience does not have any specific formatting requirements. Consult with your supervisor if you have questions.
- Thesis Embargo: We recommend that you consider a delay in publication of your thesis (1 day up to two years). Please consult with your supervisor!
- All oral examinations will be closed to anyone other than the examination committee and supervisor(s).