

TO: Chair, Examining Committee

FROM: Dongyan Blachford, PhD, Associate Dean

RE: Defense Procedures and Required Forms for Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts defenses

A representative of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research chairs the oral examination.

Subsequent to the examination, the following forms are to be completed.

Report of the Examining Committee

This form is filled out by the Chair and returned to the FGSR office.

Certification of Exhibition and Oral Examination

This form is to be signed by the examining committee members only (the Chair does not sign this form) and returned to the FGSR office by the Chair immediately following the defense. FGSR will prepare a one-page document for insertion into the support paper after the defense.

Committee Assessment for Post Defense Award(s)

This form is used to provide guidance to the FGSR Scholarship Office in determining eligible candidates for external and internal graduating awards. The form is to be completed by the Chair and returned to FGSR.

Application for Graduation

This form is given to the student to fill out and must be submitted to FGSR by the deadlines specified in the Calendar. It is important that the student submit this form on time.

EXHIBITION, SUPPORT PAPER AND ORAL EXAMINATION

In order to complete the degree requirements, students are required to:

- (a) Present an exhibition
- (b) Submit a written support paper
- (c) Undertake an oral examination of the exhibition and support paper

- (a) Present an exhibition

A professional exhibition is presented at the Mackenzie Art Gallery, or an alternative space approved by the Department. The exhibition will consist of a body of work not shown previously.

- (b) Submit a written support paper

A support paper of 20-50 pages (double spaced) written by the student defines the intent of the work, and refers to the possible sources and theoretical basis of the art presented. The written component is evaluated for form and content and is intended to articulate an understanding of the candidate's aesthetic stance, intent, content and knowledge about the work presented.

- (c) Undertake an oral examination of the exhibition and support paper

The examining committee consists of the external examiner, supervisor(s) and at least one member of the student's supervisory committee who have signed off on the acceptability to go to defense, and the Chair (Associate Dean of FGSR or Designate). The student's supervisory committee consists of faculty members from the Department of Visual Arts and possibly from other relevant departments in which the student has studied. The examining committee will conduct an oral examination of the exhibition and the support paper. If the exhibition fails, the support paper automatically fails. If the support paper is irrelevant to the exhibition, it is deemed a failure. The external examiner, whose expertise is in the candidate's major area, reviews the exhibition and leads the oral examination.

Upon successful completion of the exhibition and oral examination, students must submit the following to the Department and subsequently the FGSR:

The title page from the corrected support paper as well as confirmation from the student's supervisor(s) that all of the corrections have been completed that were required by the examining committee.

PROCEDURES FOR ORAL EXAMINATIONS

Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts

The following is the procedure for conducting an oral defense for MFA candidates:

The Chair introduces the candidate and all members of the Examining Committee, and outlines the examination procedures.

The candidate will provide a brief overview of the work exhibited (approximately 15 minutes) and the support paper. The overview describes the sources, concepts, theoretical basis, historical precedents and contemporary association involved with the work, and the technical aspects involved in the production. No questions are allowed at this time.

The supervisor will be asked if the candidate has omitted any major points in the overview.

The External Examiner, who is expected to have the longest single period of questioning, will begin the examination. This portion of the examination usually takes from 30 to 60 minutes. The external examiner is expected to deal with major matters of importance in the paper/defense/exhibition, leaving non-substantive matters such as concerns about style, typographical errors, spelling, etc. for subsequent action from the supervisory committee.

The other members of the examining committee then question the candidate. The supervisor is the last examiner. The Chair will ensure that a faculty seminar does not develop, although some discussion will be allowed to clarify points.

After the first round of questioning is complete, the Chair will invite further questions. When the questioning is completed, the candidate and all individuals who are not members of the examining committee will leave the room. The candidate will wait nearby to be called to return to the room to be informed about the deliberations of the committee.

The examining committee will discuss the paper/defense/exhibition. The chair polls the committee, beginning with the external examiner and indicates the responses in three categories.

The vote of the Examining Committee was that:

The Exhibition:

_____ Passes

_____ Fails *****If the exhibition fails, it is not possible to pass the support paper and defense***

The Support Paper:

_____ Passes without revision

_____ Passes with minor revision

_____ Passes with substantial revision

_____ Must be rewritten and redefended

_____ Fails *****If the support paper fails, it is not possible to pass the defense***

The Defense:

- Passes
- Fails and may be repeated
- Fails

The committee must provide the candidate with clear written instructions that reflect the consensus of the committee, about any expected corrections or revisions to the support paper. The revised title page (corrected date) as well as a memo from the supervisor(s) that all corrections have been completed must be forwarded to FGSR as soon as possible.

If the exhibition fails, it is not possible to pass the support paper and defense. If the support paper fails it is not possible to pass the defense. If the support paper and/or defense are required to be re-written and re-defended, each member of the examining committee will provide a brief rationale to the graduate coordinator who will forward the statements to the Associate Dean of FGSR. The graduate coordinator and the Associate Dean will meet to discuss the issues.

If the exhibition/paper/defense fails, which would constitute an exceptional situation given the authorization to go to defense, the Associate Dean of FGSR will request information from relevant parties to determine whether the student is to be given an opportunity to revise and resubmit for defense.

Committee Assessment for Post-Defense Award(s)

This form is used to record the assessment of the examining committee at the time of defense. The FGSR Scholarship & Awards Committee will refer to this form when selecting nominated recipients.

The Chair polls the examining committee and completes the Committee Assessment for Post-Defense Award(s). The External Examiner has the major vote in this decision; however, there must be agreement from other members, not necessarily a majority of the committee for any decision. The Chair pronounces the final decision after the discussion by the committee.