HANDBOOK OF SUPERVISION AND EXAMINATION

Part I: Course-based Master's Degree

Preamble
This handbook contains the rules, guidelines and procedures of the Faculty of Graduate Studies that pertain to the administration of graduate programs and to the appointment of graduate supervisors. While the rules are stated in fixed or absolute terms, it is intended that they be administered with some degree of flexibility and, to that end, the Dean of Graduate Studies is empowered to grant exceptions, extensions and variances, upon written request and explanation. Requests, whether from students or faculty members, should be made over the signature of the Graduate Coordinator of the program concerned.
The Head of a Department, Director of an interdisciplinary program or, in the case of non-departmentalized faculties, the Dean of the Faculty, is responsible for graduate programs. However, this responsibility is normally delegated to a Graduate Coordinator. In this document, for the sake of clarity in describing common practice, the Graduate Coordinator is referred to as the person responsible for the graduate program.
Please note that in this document "the Dean" refers to the Dean of Graduate Studies unless otherwise noted.

Supervisors and Supervisory Committees

1. Selection of a Supervisor

1.1 General Advice to Students
All students must have either an interim advisor or an approved supervisor at the time of first registration. A supervisor must be approved by the Faculty of Graduate Studies no later than the second annual registration. It would help the student in program planning if the selection of a supervisor were completed as quickly as possible. Students are encouraged to think about and select their areas of specialization as early as possible, and preferably before the beginning of the program.
For further information, review the Guidelines Governing the Supervisory Relationship at http://www.grad.ucalgary.ca > Policies and Procedures > Supervision.

1.2 Initiation of Supervisor Selection
The selection of a supervisor should be by mutual agreement between student and faculty member, and approved by the Graduate Coordinator. Difficulties or conflicts in selecting or recommending a supervisor should be referred promptly to the Dean by any of the persons involved.
1.2.1 Supervisor Eligibility Requirements
Continuity of supervision throughout a graduate program is important to a student’s success. Normally, faculty members with full-time teaching and research Board appointments are chosen as supervisors. However, there are occasions when it is to the student’s advantage for a program to recommend the appointment of a supervisor who does not have a full-time Board appointment. For example, an individual who holds an appointment that is term certain, specific term, part-time, clinical or adjunct, or honorary, or has emeritus status, or is from outside the University, may be
appointed supervisor. In cases such as these, the Faculty of Graduate Studies requires assurance that the proposed supervisor will be able to provide continuity.

The proposed supervisor must understand the commitment expected in terms of time and funding and be familiar with graduate program and Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations. The Graduate Coordinator must ensure that supervision will be provided for the probable time period required for the completion of the degree program.

There must be provision, in the form of a co-supervisor, for backup if the proposed supervisor is someone from outside the graduate program who does not have a full-time Board appointment, or is from outside the University of Calgary.

The supervisor should be currently active in research in an area related to the student's interest. Faculty members working on their own graduate degrees cannot be approved in any supervisory capacity without special dispensation from the Dean. For detailed policy and the required forms, see http://www.grad.ucalgary.ca > Policies and Procedures.

1.2.2 Conflict of Interest

The relationship between the supervisor and student is an academic one. Where other relationships that might constitute conflict of interest exist or develop, they must be immediately reported to the Graduate Coordinator and to the Dean.

1.3 Appointment of Co-supervisor

A co-supervisor may be appointed by the Graduate Coordinator upon the written recommendation of the supervisor and agreement of the student. The role of the co-supervisor is to provide supplementary guidance, instruction and research stimulation on a regular or extensive basis.

1.4 Supervisor from Outside the Department, Program or Faculty

A supervisor may be from a department, program, or faculty other than the student's home department, program, or faculty. The recommendation must be endorsed by the student. Such an "external" supervisor must agree to be responsible to the Graduate Coordinator of the student's home department in all matters related to the supervisory responsibilities.

1.5 Continuity of Supervision

Students are entitled to continuity of supervision. Where problems arise because of the resignation, illness or death of the supervisor, the Graduate Coordinator must make immediate arrangements to provide continuity of supervision pending the appointment of a new supervisor.

1.6 Supervisor Selection and Approval Deadlines

Regular students are required to have approved supervisors within twelve months of initial registration. A student admitted as a special case admission must have an approved supervisor before admission.

2. Responsibilities of Supervisors

2.1 Knowledge of Rules and Procedures

Supervisors should be familiar with the rules and procedures of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (see also flowcharts at the end of this document). A supervisor should be fully informed of the academic schedule in the University calendars at http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar. Both student and supervisor are responsible for ensuring compliance with all Faculty of Graduate Studies and program regulations and requirements.

2.2 Meetings between Student and Supervisor

A student and a supervisor have a shared responsibility to meet on a regular basis.

2.3 The Role of the Supervisor

The role of supervisors is to provide general counsel and assistance to students in the successful
pursuit of their studies. They should be familiar with the programs and course offerings of their departments and those of related departments, so that they can provide effective guidance to their students in course selection. Also, supervisors should be knowledgeable in their students’ areas of specialization so that they can be effective resource persons, and can assist students in their preparation for the comprehensive examination.

Specifically, the supervisor should:

- advise the student on the establishment of a realistic timetable for the completion of the various requirements of the program of study;
- develop a relationship with the student conducive to intellectual growth;
- guide the student in the pursuit of knowledge and provide constructive criticism in support of the highest standards of professional development;
- ensure that the student is provided with adequate supervision during extended periods of leave, through the appointment of an interim supervisor.

2.4 Supervisory Provision for Leave of Absence

A supervisor must ensure that the student is provided with adequate supervision during extended periods of leave, through the appointment of an interim supervisor. Faculty members should plan an appropriate reduction in their supervisory responsibilities prior to and during leaves of absence. Students should be informed well in advance about supervisors’ plans for forthcoming leaves of absence. Supervisors granted research leave under certain programs, such as Killam Resident Fellowships, but not Sabbatical Fellowships, are expected to continue to supervise their students.

2.4.1 Supervision during Absence of Supervisor

Faculty members are responsible for the continued supervision of their students. When planning leaves of absence of any kind, they must, in consultation with their students and the Graduate Coordinator, make satisfactory arrangements for the continuation of each student’s supervision. These arrangements must be communicated in writing to the Graduate Coordinator, who bears the responsibility for ensuring continuity of supervision for students in his/her graduate program.

2.4.2 Interim Supervisory Arrangements

When an interim supervisor is appointed to cover a period of a supervisor’s absence, the regular supervisor retains the final responsibility for the adequate supervision of the student. However, faculty members approved as interim supervisors must indicate in writing to the Graduate Coordinator their willingness to accept responsibility for the day-to-day supervision of such students.

2.5 The Supervisor and Setting up Examinations

The supervisor is responsible for initiating all of the steps required in setting up the comprehensive examination.

2.6 Suggested Procedures in the Event of Problems between Graduate Students and their Supervisors

Students should first try to resolve problems with supervisors by talking to the supervisor. Supervisory committee members might be able to give helpful advice in this situation. Problems that are not resolved in this fashion should be discussed with the Graduate Coordinator, and then the Department Head or equivalent. If it appears that a solution cannot be reached, the student and/or the Graduate Coordinator may consult the Faculty of Graduate Studies for advice about the correct route to follow to bring resolution to the matter.

2.7 Procedures for the Curtailment of Supervisory Duties

The Dean of Graduate Studies approves the initial appointment of a faculty member to supervisory duties. If a complaint is made against a supervisor, the Dean will first discuss the matter with the
Department Head or equivalent, and then with the faculty member concerned. The issue may be resolved informally. If the Dean decides that a more formal approach is needed to resolve the dispute, the Dean will inform both the Head and the faculty member of his/her conclusions in writing. If the result of the Dean’s investigation is curtailment of the supervisory duties of the faculty member, the Dean will inform the faculty member in writing.

Examining Committees, Examinations and Standards

3. Standards of Performance

3.1 Performance in Course Work

Standards of performance in course work are the responsibility of individual departments and faculties. However, to remain in good standing in their program of graduate study, students must maintain the minimum grade point average (GPA) required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (see the Graduate Grading System in the Calendar).

3.2 Judgement of Student Performance

Supervisors and Graduate Coordinators must inform students on a regular basis about their academic progress. If a student's performance is judged to be below an acceptable level, this judgement should be expressed to the student formally and in writing at as early a stage in the program as possible. A student may be required to withdraw from the Faculty of Graduate Studies for reasons of "unsatisfactory progress" (see also section 4.2).

3.3 Annual Progress Report

The supervisor and each continuing student must jointly submit an annual progress report on the student's performance. This form must be signed by the supervisor, the student and the Graduate Coordinator, and must be made available to the Faculty of Graduate Studies upon request. The student must sign the report after the supervisor and Graduate Coordinator have completed their comments to acknowledge that he/she has review these comments.

4. Faculty of Graduate Studies Examinations

4.1 Faculty Examination Requirements

Care should be taken to distinguish between Faculty of Graduate Studies examinations and Departmental or Program examinations. The Faculty of Graduate Studies requires a final oral comprehensive examination in all course-based Master's programs. At their discretion, programs are entitled to require final written examinations in addition to the Faculty final oral examination. The nature and form of such written components are at the discretion of the program, but must be declared in the program regulations. Since the comprehensive oral examination is an examination of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, it is to be conducted in accordance with Faculty rules. No changes in approved timetables, composition of examination committees, sequences of events, etc., may be introduced without prior approval from the Dean.

4.2 Program Examination Requirements and Standards

Program requirements may include examinations that are in addition to the Faculty of Graduate Studies requirements. Programs are entitled to set their own standards of adequate performance in such examinations, provided these are not in conflict with Faculty of Graduate Studies standards. When a student fails to meet either Faculty or program standards, the program may recommend to the Dean that the student be required to withdraw (see also section 3.2).

4.3 Examination Sequence

When both written and oral examinations are required, the written must precede the oral.
4.4 Communication of Examination Requirements to Students
Programs should provide their students, as early as possible, with information about the precise nature and form of program examinations and tests.

5. Comprehensive Examination Committee

5.1 Establishing the Comprehensive Examination Committee
A written recommendation to the Dean on the composition of the comprehensive examination committee must be received in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at least four weeks before the scheduled date of the examination. The committee will not be approved earlier than three months before the planned examination date.

5.2 Composition of the Comprehensive Examination Committee
The comprehensive examination committee shall consist of the student's supervisor and at least two other examiners, one of whom shall be external to the student's home department or program. The composition of the committee must be recommended by the Graduate Coordinator and approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

5.2.1 The External Examiner
The external member of the examination committee must be from a department or program removed from the student’s program of studies. It is recommended that the external examiner meet the following criteria:

- has not collaborated with the supervisor in the last five years
- is not personally related to the student, and has not worked with the student
- has not been a supervisor in the student’s department or program for the last three years

An external examiner who does not meet all the criteria is not necessarily precluded from serving on the examining committee, but the Graduate Coordinator must provide the Dean with a memo explaining the circumstances. Non-Board appointees to examination committees may be designated as external examiners with the approval of the Dean.

5.2.2 Non-Board Appointees on Examination Committees
Persons who are not Board appointees of the University of Calgary may be approved to serve on oral examination committees. A recommendation to the Dean by the Graduate Coordinator for such an appointment must be accompanied by a curriculum vitae.

5.2.3 The Chair
The comprehensive examination is chaired by a member of the academic staff appointed by the Dean upon the recommendation of the Graduate Coordinator, and may be the supervisor. In the event that the chairperson is not a member of the examining committee, he/she will be non-voting.

5.2.4 Responsibilities of the Chair and the Supervisor
The chair chairs the comprehensive examination and reports on the results to the Dean and the student. The supervisor should initiate all arrangements related to the scheduling of the examination.

5.3 Composition of Examination Committee for Re-take of Comprehensive Examination
The examination committee formed to re-examine a student should not be identical to the examination committee of the first examination. At least one new member should be added. The deadlines for the recommendation of the examination committee are as for the original examination.
6. **Scheduling the Comprehensive Examination**

6.1 Supervisor Responsibility

The supervisor is responsible for setting up the comprehensive oral examination.

6.2 Notice of Comprehensive Oral Examination

The original *Notice of Comprehensive Oral Examination* form, indicating the time and place of examination, the names of the recommended examiners, and confirming that the candidate has completed all program requirements, endorsed by the Graduate Coordinator, must be received in the Faculty of Graduate Studies office at least four weeks prior to the time of examination. The committee will not be approved earlier than three months before the planned examination time.

6.3.1 Posting the Notice of Comprehensive Oral Examination

The *Notice of Comprehensive Oral Examination* form, bearing the signatures of the student, the supervisor, the Graduate Coordinator and the Dean, must be posted at least two weeks before the date of the examination. The Graduate Coordinator must ensure that copies of the *Notice* are sent to the student and to members of the examining committee.

6.3.2 Student Approval of Designated Area of Specialization

The format of the University degree parchment presented to successful candidates shows the degree, the department or area of study, and the approved area of specialization. Students should examine and approve the proposed area of specialization identified on the *Notice of Comprehensive Oral Examination* form, before it is sent to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

6.4 Attendance at Comprehensive Oral Examinations

No more than ten people may attend any oral examination. This number includes the examining committee, the Department Head, and such additional persons as are approved by the Dean. The Dean and/or Dean's Representative may attend any oral examination without prior written notice. The names of all persons in attendance with the exception of the Dean and/or Dean's Representative and the Department Head or designate must appear on the *Notice of Comprehensive Oral Examination* form.

7. **Conduct of Comprehensive Oral Examination**

7.1 Examination Regulations

The oral examination is a formal examination, not an informal discussion with the candidate. No one other than an examiner (as identified on the *Notice of Comprehensive Oral Examination* form) is allowed to question the candidate. All examiners should be given an opportunity to questions the candidate during the early part of the examination, e.g., by rounds of questioning. Ordinarily, the oral examination should not exceed two hours. If the oral is properly conducted, the examiners within this time period should have as good an assessment of the candidate as they will ever have.

7.2 Suggested Examination Procedures

Questions to the candidate should be clear and succinct. The candidate should be given reasonable time to answer. If the candidate has understood a question and cannot answer, the examiner should pass to another question and not attempt to extract an answer by prolonged interrogation. The chairperson should guard against any tendency of examiners to interact with each other instead of concentrating on the examination of the candidate.

8. **Post Comprehensive Oral Examination Procedures**

8.1 Provisional Recommendations

At the end of the comprehensive oral examination, everyone, except the chair, the members of the examination committee, the Department Head or designate, and the Dean and/or the Dean's
representative, is required to withdraw from the room. Before any discussion of the candidate's performance, each examiner must identify, by secret ballot, which recommendation he/she favours. This provides the committee with a frame of opinion upon which a full discussion of the student's performance may be based.

8.2 Official Examiners' Discussion

Following the identification of which provisional recommendation each examiner favours, the examiners then conduct a post-examination discussion in which the Department Head or designate and the Dean or Dean's Representative may participate, although they have no vote. At the conclusion of the discussion, each examiner must write his/her final recommendation on the official Report of Oral Comprehensive Examination form. If all the examiners make the same recommendation, the chair must report the recommendation in the appropriate column. If the examiners do not make the same recommendation, there must be no further discussion and the chair must immediately inform the Dean of "lack of unanimity" (or a "hung jury."

8.3 Recommendation of the Comprehensive Examination Committee

The result of the comprehensive oral examination must be either pass or fail. The result is recorded on the official Faculty of Graduate Studies Report of Comprehensive Oral Examination form, which must be submitted to the Dean within one working day of the completion of the examination. Immediately following the decision of the examination committee, the chair must inform the student of the outcome of the examination.

8.3.1 Comprehensive Oral Examination - Pass

When the comprehensive oral examination is assessed as a pass, the Report of Comprehensive Oral Examination form is signed by all examiners and submitted to the Dean with a copy to the Graduate Coordinator.

8.3.2 Comprehensive Oral Examination - Fail

When the comprehensive oral examination is assessed as a fail, the Report of Comprehensive Oral Examination form is signed by all examiners and submitted to the Dean with a copy to the Graduate Coordinator. The examination committee must also recommend to the Dean either that the candidate be required to withdraw from the Faculty of Graduate Studies or that the candidate be allowed a re-take of the comprehensive examination.

8.3.3 Examiners' Reports on Failed Comprehensive Oral Examination

Within five working days after the failed examination, each examiner must submit a written appraisal of the overall examination performance of the candidate to the Dean with a copy to the Graduate Coordinator.

8.3.4 Re-take of Comprehensive Oral Examination

Only one re-take of a comprehensive oral examination will be permitted. The re-take must take place no sooner than two months and no later than six months from the date of the first examination.

8.4 Lack of Unanimity

Should the examiners fail to achieve unanimity, the chair must adjourn the meeting, record "lack of unanimity" on the Report of Comprehensive Oral Examination form, and immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Dean. Within one working day, each examiner must provide the Dean with a written post-examination report detailing the reasons for the assessment of that examiner. In addition, the chair must submit a written appraisal of the examination. The reports, and the chair’s assessment, must be copied to the Graduate Coordinator.

8.4.1 Dean's Action in "Lack of Unanimity"

When the examination committee report indicates "lack of unanimity", the Dean may consult with the Department Head, members of the examining committee, and the Dean's Representative at the
examination (if in attendance) before making a decision on the matter. At his/her discretion, the Dean may consult the student as well. A decision should normally be made within seven business days of receiving all the required reports, and all persons involved informed in writing of the result of the decision.

Transfers

9. Transfers Within the Program

9.1 Application for Change of Area of Specialization
A student may apply through the graduate program to the Dean for permission to transfer from one area of specialization to another, and thus from one supervisor to another, while remaining within the degree program.

10. Transfers to Doctoral Programs

10.1 Transfer from Master's to Doctoral Programs
Program Heads may recommend outstanding Master's students for transfer to the doctoral program. Such recommendations must be endorsed by the student's supervisor and accompanied by the names of members of the student's doctoral supervisory committee for the Dean's approval. The transfer must be approved by the Dean.

10.2 Course and Examination Requirements
Courses credited in the prior Master's program will be taken as fulfilling doctoral requirements where applicable, in accordance with departmental requirements for required doctoral course work. All students transferring from Master's to doctoral programs will be required to sit the doctoral candidacy examination.

10.3 Time Limits on Transfers
Transfers from Master's to doctoral programs must be completed within twenty-four months of the student's initial registration in the Faculty of Graduate Studies. All transfer students must attempt the candidacy examination within thirty-six months of first registration in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.