

Guidelines for Scheduling, Preparing for and Executing PhD Thesis Examinations

A. Student Responsibilities

1. **Scheduling.** In consultation with the supervisors, the PhD student must propose a date for the thesis examination before a Thesis Examination Committee (TEC). The date must meet the following requirements:
 - 1.1. By the proposed examination date, the student will have completed all coursework requirements for the degree.
 - 1.2. The online proforma indicating the proposed examination date as described below must be submitted at least six weeks in advance. Inadequate notice served for taking the thesis examination will result in postponement of the thesis examination.
 - 1.3. The examination should not be scheduled on a Sunday or public holiday in order to encourage the participation of members of the University community.
 - 1.4. Avoid scheduling a thesis examination toward the end of a term, in order to allow sufficient time for revisions and other post-examination arrangements to avoid unnecessary delay in graduation.
2. **Form submission.** The student must submit an online proforma via the [Thesis Examination System](#). The proforma must be submitted to supervisors and Thrust for endorsement no less than six weeks before the proposed examination date.
3. **Thesis submission.** Students are required to submit the thesis copies to the [iThenticate platform](#) for originality check. The *iThenticate* report together with sufficient hard or electronic thesis copies ready for examination purpose should be submitted to the Thrust no less than four weeks before the thesis examination. Students failing to deliver these copies before the submission deadline may be required to postpone the thesis examination.

B. Supervisor Responsibilities

1. **Patent protection.** If the contents of the thesis involve commercially sensitive information, the thesis supervisors is/are advised to approach the [Intellectual Property Department](#) well

in advance to discuss the possibility of obtaining patent protection before the Thrust announces the thesis examination to the public.

2. Originality Check. As students are required to submit the thesis copies to the [*iThenticate* platform](#) for originality check, supervisors should advise students on whether it is appropriate to exclude bibliography and works cited including the students' own previously published papers from the checking.

C. Thrust/Hub Responsibilities

1. Thesis examination committee (TEC). The Hub and Thrust is responsible for identifying examiners to serve on the examination committee following the “Guidelines on PhD Thesis Examination Committees”. The Thrust is also responsible for checking the availability of examiners, and making appointments with them. The proposed membership must be approved by FYTGS(GZ).
 - 1.1. Liaison with examiners to make arrangements for the thesis examination should not be done by the candidate being examined.
 - 1.2. Approval from FYTGS(GZ) on the proposed membership of the TEC should be sought no less than four weeks before the proposed examination date.
 - 1.3. If a Chairperson or examiner declines the appointment to serve on the TEC, the Hub/Thrust is responsible for nominating a replacement Chairperson/examiner for the consideration of FYTGS(GZ) as soon as possible. FYTGS(GZ) may request the thesis examination to be postponed if the time allowed for the replacement Chairperson/examiner to review the student’s thesis prior to the thesis examination is considered insufficient.
2. Receipt of thesis copies. The Thrust should confirm and record the actual date of receipt of the thesis copies in the Thesis Examination System.
3. Thesis distribution. The Thrust should immediately distribute the thesis copies and the *iThenticate* report to the following and record the actual dispatch date in the Thesis Examination System:
 - 3.1. Chairperson and members of the PhD TEC, such that members are given sufficient time to review the thesis.
 - 3.2. A thesis copy will be made available at the Thrust for perusal by faculty, students, other University members, and members of the public.
4. Announcements. After receipt of the thesis copies has been entered in the [Thesis Examination System](#), announcements will be automatically posted on the University Event Calendar. Other forms of posting, such as emails and/or posters, should also be made as appropriate.

5. TEC appointment. Upon approval of the TEC membership and students' submission of the thesis copies for examination purpose, the Thrust will formally issue an appointment to the Chairperson and examiners of the TEC.
6. Email reminder. At least one working day before the thesis examination is held, the Thrust is required to send an email reminder to members of the PhD TEC and relevant parties of the Hub/ Thrust, specifying the TEC membership and details of the thesis examination.

D. FYTGS(GZ) Responsibilities

After the Thrust Head and the Dean or the Dean's designee have endorsed the proposed membership of the TEC, the proforma will be forwarded to FYTGS(GZ) for approval.

1. TEC membership. FYTGS(GZ) will check the proposed TEC membership to ensure that it complies with the "*Guidelines on PhD Thesis Examination Committees*".
 - 1.1. If the proposed membership is in line with the guidelines, a confirmation email will be sent to the student, copying the thesis supervisors, the Thrust and the Hub, normally no less than four weeks before the examination date.
 - 1.2. If deviations from the University guidelines are identified, postponement or withdrawal of the thesis examination (regardless of whether the student has duly submitted the thesis or not) will be requested/required until the clearance and approval of FYTGS(GZ) has been sought.

E. Safety Assessment

Upon receiving the proforma via the Thesis Examination System, the Department of Health Safety and Environment (HSE) will conduct risk assessment. HSE will notify the student if a safety check is required.

F. Changes to Approved Proforma

After the proforma has been approved, any changes initiated by the Thrust, student's supervisors, or student must be approved by FYTGS(GZ) before the changes can be effected.

G. Further Enquiries

All enquiries regarding the arrangements for scheduling PhD thesis examinations, should be submitted to the Thrust.

HKUST Fok Ying Tung Graduate School (Guangzhou)

June 2024