

PhD Program Milestones

Guidelines for Students and Supervisors

1. Chapter defence: the purpose of the chapter defence is to permit the student to receive constructive advice about possible methods of strengthening the student's research and analysis. The defence will be relatively informal. It will consist of two rounds of questions from each committee member. The first round will consist of 10-15 minutes of questions from each committee member, typically about general issues like methodology, sources consulted, and strength of analysis. The second round will take 5-10 minutes, and will typically focus on more specific questions about the content of the chapter. After the questioning is complete, the committee members will deliberate in private to determine whether the student has passed the defence. If, by majority vote, the defence is deemed unsatisfactory, the student must deliver a new chapter defence to the satisfaction of the committee within 12 weeks or the end of that term, whichever is later. If he or she does not, the student will be deemed to have withdrawn from the program.
2. Proposal defence: the purpose of this defence is to permit the student to outline their thesis hypothesis and the proposed structure and methodology of the thesis. More formal than the chapter defence, it is designed to more closely reflect the procedure of the final dissertation defence. It will consist of two rounds of questions from each committee member. The first round will consist of 15-20 minutes of questions from each committee member; the second round will take 5-10 minutes. After the questioning is complete, the committee members will deliberate in private to determine whether the student has passed the defence. If, by majority vote, the defence is deemed unsatisfactory, the student must deliver a new proposal defence to the satisfaction of the committee within 12 weeks or the end of that term, whichever is later. If he or she does not, the student will be deemed to have withdrawn from the program.
3. Research talks: the Graduate Program Committee intends to explore the creation of various settings for these presentations, including graduate colloquia and lunch-time talks.
4. Continuing enrolment in the program will depend upon the satisfactory completion of each of these milestones, subject to the discretion of the Chair of the Graduate Program.
5. Flexibility will be exercised in the application of these milestones to students already enrolled in the PhD program as of January 10, 2017.