

Procedure for Securing an External Thesis Examiner

Note: For Master's thesis examination, the **external examiner can be internal or external to the Unit* or University.**

About 2 to 4 weeks before the thesis is ready for initial submission, the supervisor should consult with his/her student and identify one or more potential examiners who are qualified to examine the thesis.

Once the potential examiner is decided upon, an academic from the Unit*, according to internal procedures, must determine the willingness of the examiner(s) to serve prior to submission of the "Nomination of Examiners Form."

Initial contact can be made by phone or email, as deemed most efficient. However, it is usually best to discuss by phone at some point. The person contacting the examiner should make sure the individual is able to review the thesis within the required timeline.

Conflict of Interest Checklist

If it is known that the potential examiner's answer to any of the questions in the [Conflict of Interest checklist](#) is "Yes," that person should not be contacted.

Whoever contacts the potential examiner must review the [Conflict of Interest checklist](#) with the examiner and ensure that he/she does not answer "Yes" to any of the questions. If there are any questions about this process, please contact the Thesis Unit at GPS.

Talking Points when contacting the potential examiner:

1. Introduce yourself
2. Explain that a doctoral or master's student will soon be completing his/her thesis, and that the McGill process requires the thesis to be examined by an external expert in the field.
3. The thesis examination requires a written assessment, but once that is fully completed, the external examiner's work is done.
4. Explain that for Doctoral students there is a two-tiered thesis examination process: the examination of the written thesis and an oral defence. The external examiner does not need to be present at the oral defence (unless required by the Unit*).
5. Explain when the thesis is expected to be ready for examination, and that the examiner is given 4 weeks to submit his/her assessment and, furthermore, that meeting this deadline is critical for the student's progress towards the degree.
6. Ask if he/she would be willing and able to undertake this task within the expected time.
7. If the topic is raised, McGill does not provide an honorarium for thesis reviews. (This may be surprising to some examiners.)
8. Explain that this time-consuming task is an important part of academic collegiality and McGill appreciates the time and energy that he/she will devote to it.
9. If the person agrees, explain that once the thesis is submitted, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will contact him/her to arrange for mailing of the thesis and examination forms.



Note: Throughout the interaction with the potential examiner, the academic responsible for making contact should not discuss the quality of the thesis, since that could bias the review. It is, however, reasonable to send the thesis abstract to the potential examiner, so that he/she may better judge his/her ability to undertake the review.

*Unit refers to a department, a division, a school, an institute, or a Faculty/University-wide graduate program