

PhD Thesis Defence Process

January 2025



Agenda

What to Expect:

- Before You Initiate
- Initiating the Defence
- Thesis Defence Timeline
 - Standard (Traditional)
 - Accelerated
- Preparing for the Defence
- Online Defence
- The Day of the Defence
- Becoming Cleared to Graduate



Are You Ready?

Before You Initiate

- Does your Supervisory Committee agree that you are ready to defend?
 - Circulate dissertation
- Has your Supervisor run your thesis through iThenticate?
 - Required effective December 1, 2023.
- Work backward from a proposed defence date to target your initiation date
 - Decide if you are targeting a particular convocation
 - Sessional dates:
<https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=48&navoid=953>
2
- Attend other defences
- Check your committee early!

Initiating the Thesis Defense Process

Process is initiated online in the Mosaic. Log into Student Centre and under 'Academics' select 'other academics':

The screenshot displays the Student Centre Mosaic interface. The 'Academics' section is expanded, showing a search bar with 'other academic...' selected. A red arrow points to this dropdown menu. To the right, a 'This Week's Schedule' table is visible, listing 'SGS 700-C01 RSC (15428)' with a 'TBA' schedule. Below the table are links for 'weekly schedule' and 'enrollment shopping cart'. On the right side of the interface, there are several utility buttons: 'SEARCH FOR CLASSES', 'SHARE MY INFORMATION', 'Holds' (No Holds), 'To Do List' (No To Do's), 'Milestones' (MSc Thesis), 'Enrollment Dates' (Open Enrollment Dates), and 'Graduation and Convocation' (Apply to Graduate, Graduation Information Centre, Minor/Certificate Application).

This Week's Schedule	
Class	Schedule
SGS 700-C01 RSC (15428)	TBA

Initiating the Thesis Defense Process


Select Thesis Intent -> Defend my Thesis:

Favorites | Main Menu > Self Service > Student Center

Program/Plan Application	Program/Plan Application
Academic Requirements	View my advisement report
What-If Report	Create a what-if scenario
Advisors	View my advisors
Transfer Credit	Evaluate my transfer credits View my transfer credit report
Course History	View my course history
Transcript	View my unofficial transcript Request official transcript
Enrollment Verification	Request enrollment verification
Enrollment/Financial Letters	Enrollment/Financial Letters
Graduation	Apply for graduation View my graduation status
Student Exchange App	Apply for Exchange Program
Student LOP App	Apply for Letter of Permission
Student OVGS App	Apply for OVGS
Thesis Intent	Defend my Thesis
Service Request	View my service requests

My Program:

- Institution - McMaster University
- Career - Graduate
- Program - Engineering MASC
- (Thesis) - Chemical Engineering THS



Initiating the Thesis Defense Process

Select Degree and Program before selecting “Next” button:

McMaster University

Lindsay White go to ...

Search Plan Enroll My Academics

Thesis Defence Submission

McMaster University | Graduate

Science MSc > Mathematics MAS

Science PhD > Mathematics

↑

next ←

Search Plan Enroll My Academics

go to ...

Initiating the Thesis Defense Process

Review your Supervisory Committee (names, roles, emails). If incorrect or incomplete, please contact your program Graduate Administrator. You may see inactive supervisors listed. Confirm these with your admin! If correct, select “Next”. You may see inactive supervisors listed

The screenshot shows a web interface for 'Thesis Defence Submission'. At the top, there is a navigation bar with buttons for 'Search', 'Plan', 'Enroll', and 'My Academics'. Below this, the page title is 'Thesis Defence Submission'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'McMaster University | Graduate | Science PhD | Mathematics'. A message states: 'Please review your Supervisor information below. If any of this information is incorrect, please contact your Graduate Administrator prior to submitting your intent to defend your thesis.' Under the heading 'Supervisory Committee:', there is a table with three rows. Each row has a redacted name, a role, and an email address. The roles are 'Supervisory Committee Member', 'Supervisor', and 'Supervisor'. The email addresses are all redacted and end in '@mcmaster.ca'. At the bottom of the table, there are 'cancel' and 'next' buttons. A red arrow points to the 'next' button. At the very bottom of the page, there is another navigation bar with links for 'Search', 'Plan', 'Enroll', and 'My Academics'.

Supervisory Committee Member	Supervisor	Supervisor
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]
[Redacted]	[Redacted]	[Redacted]

Initiating the Thesis Defense Process

Enter the intended date for submission of your pre-defence thesis to SGS. You must select a date no less than 2 weeks away from the date of initiation. Enter your thesis title as well abstract (optional) before selecting “Submit”. If you make a mistake on your intended submission date, don’t worry about it; just carry on and submit when you are able.

The screenshot shows a web form for thesis submission. It consists of three main sections, each with a rich text editor toolbar above it. The first section is labeled '*Intended Submission Date' and has a date picker icon to its right. A red arrow points to this date picker. The second section is labeled '*Thesis Title' and is followed by a large empty text area. A red arrow points to this text area. The third section is labeled 'Thesis Abstract' and is followed by another large empty text area. A red arrow points to this text area. Below these sections are two buttons: 'cancel' and 'submit'. A red arrow points to the 'submit' button. The form is styled with a light blue header and footer, and the text editors have a white background with a blue toolbar.

Initiating the Thesis Defense Process

Mosaic will prompt you to review your entered details to ensure accuracy before selecting “Submit” one final time. The cancel button will “disappear” and nothing will seem to happen. You probably did it correctly. **Wait a day** and if you don’t receive email confirmation then email gthesis@mcmaster.ca with your name, program, student ID and thesis title.

Thesis Defence Submission

McMaster University | Graduate | Science PhD | Mathematics

Please be sure that you have entered all of your information prior to selecting the Submit button. When your intent to Submit information is submitted, your Graduate Administrator will be informed within a day. If you wish to make the changes after you have submitted, please contact your Graduate Administrator.

Your defence date, time and place should be confirmed with your program office. You should refer to the sessional dates in the Graduate Calendar for deadlines and convocation dates.

*Intended Submission Date 2016/12/15

*Thesis Title

SSSS

Thesis Abstract

SSS

Comment

SSS

cancel

submit



Initiating the Thesis Defense Process

Once you have initiated the defence online:

- 3 Emails are sent:
 - One to you to confirm the initiation
 - One to your Supervisor for their input
 - One to your Grad Admin to check your committee in Mosaic
- Your Supervisor will have to select either:
 - Standard (Traditional) Stream
 - Accelerated Stream

Thesis Defence Timelines

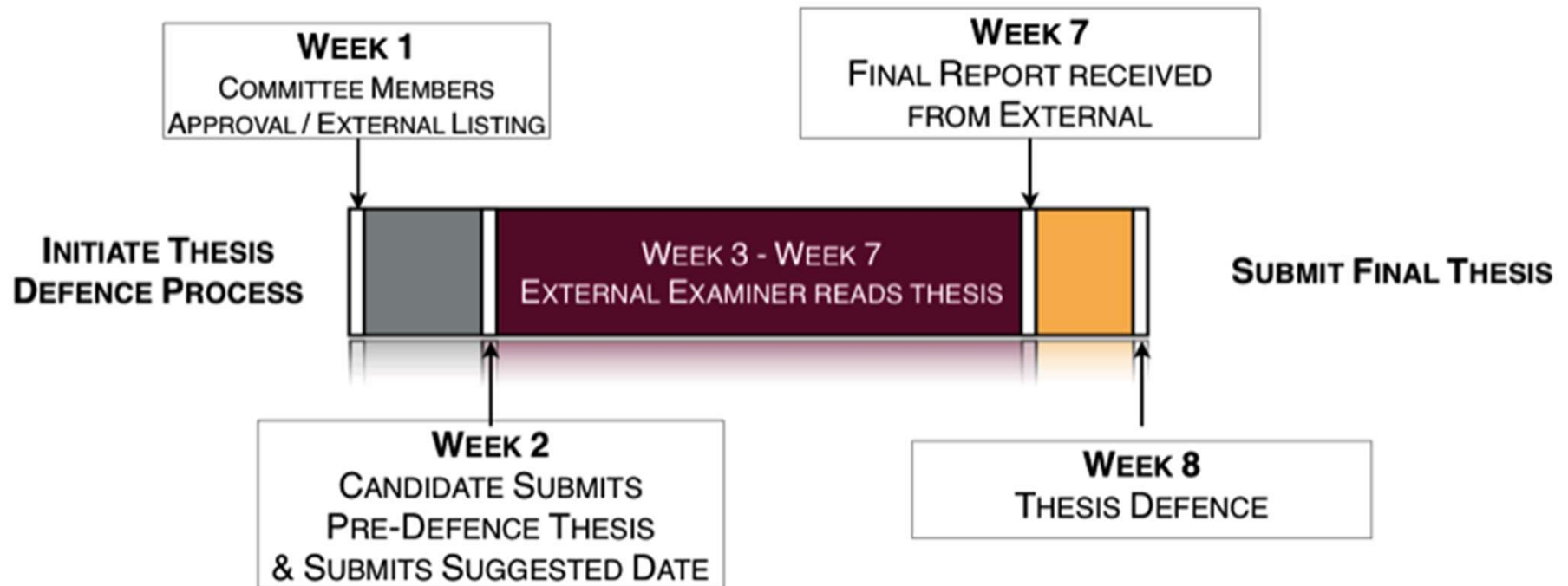
Standard Stream

- After initiation, Supervisor nominates Externals, to be approved by Committee and Dept. Chair
- SGS reaches out to approved Externals (randomly selected)
- Student proposes date and time as well as uploads thesis
- Committee approves date
- SGS selects External, sends thesis with corresponding report
- SGS finds a Chair for the defence

Accelerated Stream

- After initiation, Supervisor nominates External, to be approved by Committee and Dept. Chair
- Once approved, Supervisor selects External, identifies the date, time, location, Chair for the defence and uploads thesis
- Committee approves date
- External is sent thesis with corresponding report


There isn't an accelerated timeline because it's up to your supervisor. Therefore, use THIS timeline to plan your defence no matter which stream you are in until your supervisor gives you more details. Your thesis coordinator can't speak to an accelerated timeline in general; for that, speak to your supervisor as they are your coordinator.



Standard Thesis Defence Timeline

In an accelerated defence you won't see this screen; your supervisor will enter the details on your behalf instead.

- Selecting the date:

McMaster University  School of Graduate Studies

Doctoral Thesis Defence Submission

Confirmation of Date for Doctoral Thesis Defence

Department: Chemical

Student No:

Surname:

Email:

Thesis Title:

Should a request be made, you would be willing to make available a pdf file of the thesis:

Proposed Date: Please select defence date from calendar. It has to be at least 6 weeks away. Defence cannot be scheduled on the weekend and holiday.

Time:

February 2012						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Please note: This is the Final Submission of your defence date and time. Please make sure that you have already confirmed the chosen date/time with your supervisor and committee members before submitting the final date.

If you have any questions, please contact [Thesis Coordinator](#)

Preparing for the Defence

For the defence to proceed, it needs to have the following:

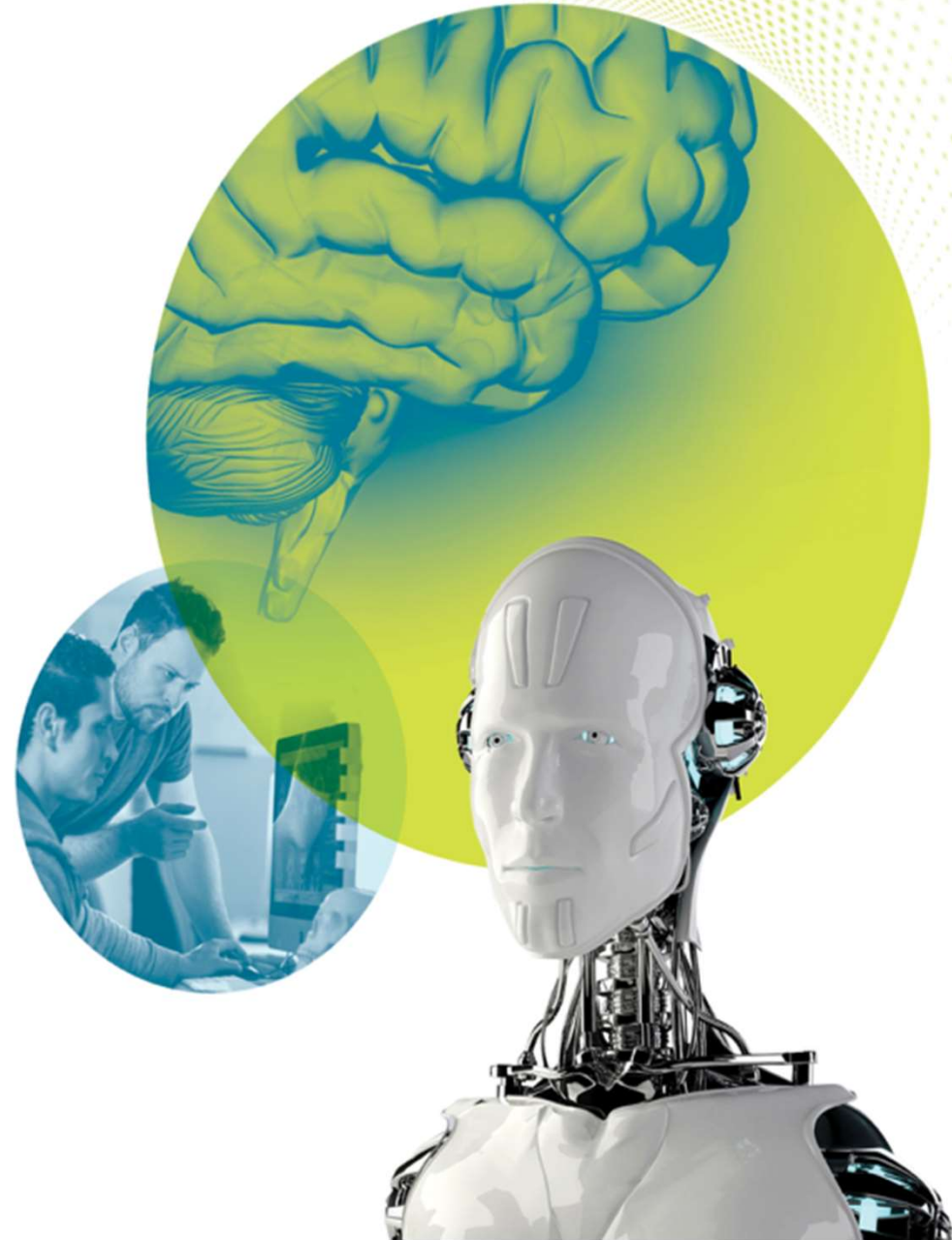
- A positive report from the External one week in advance
- A Chair for the defence
 - A faculty member who has supervised a student to completion
- A minimum of 3 members from the Supervisory Committee
 - Supervisor and 2 Committee Members
- The External Examiner
 - Can be represented by an Internal Examiner if they are unable to attend



Defence Format

SGS has adapted the existing process to accommodate online, hybrid and in-person defences:

- Online or hybrid defences are usually conducted through either Zoom or MSTeams
- The Chair and Supervisor will receive a package including instructions and forms, and they will decide who will serve as “host” of the online or hybrid defence.
- As part of the scheduling process, the “host” will need to know if attendees will be invited and will send the invitation accordingly
- Attendees should be cautioned to avoid interfering with the process



The Day of the Defence

It has
finally
come!

- You will receive a set of instructions from SGS to set expectations for the defence
- The Chair will ensure all participants join the web meeting and have a set of contingencies should anyone not arrive
- You will be moved to the “waiting room” so the Chair can discuss the proceedings with the Examining Committee
- Once you are invited back, you will begin with a brief statement, typically 15-20 mins
 - Stress the main points of your contribution and any difficulties you overcame
- This will be followed by rounds of questions by the Committee and External
 - The Chair will moderate the discussion
- You will be moved to the “waiting room” (and attendees removed) so that they can discuss your results
- You will be brought back to hear the results
- Either the Chair or your Supervisor should provide you with the necessary forms

Becoming Cleared to Graduate

The final steps to be completed:

- Complete your Final Thesis Submission Sheet
 - Decide whether or not you need to Embargo your thesis
 - Get sign off from Supervisor that your thesis has been run through iThenticate
 - Get sign off on the completion of changes (if required)
 - Hand it in to your Grad Admin so they can submit a Service Request
- Upload your thesis to MacSphere <https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/>
 - You cannot make changes after it has been uploaded
 - The date of your upload will be used as your cleared to graduate date
- Verify that all your program's milestones have been met by running your advisement report
 - Your final thesis will be added as a milestone

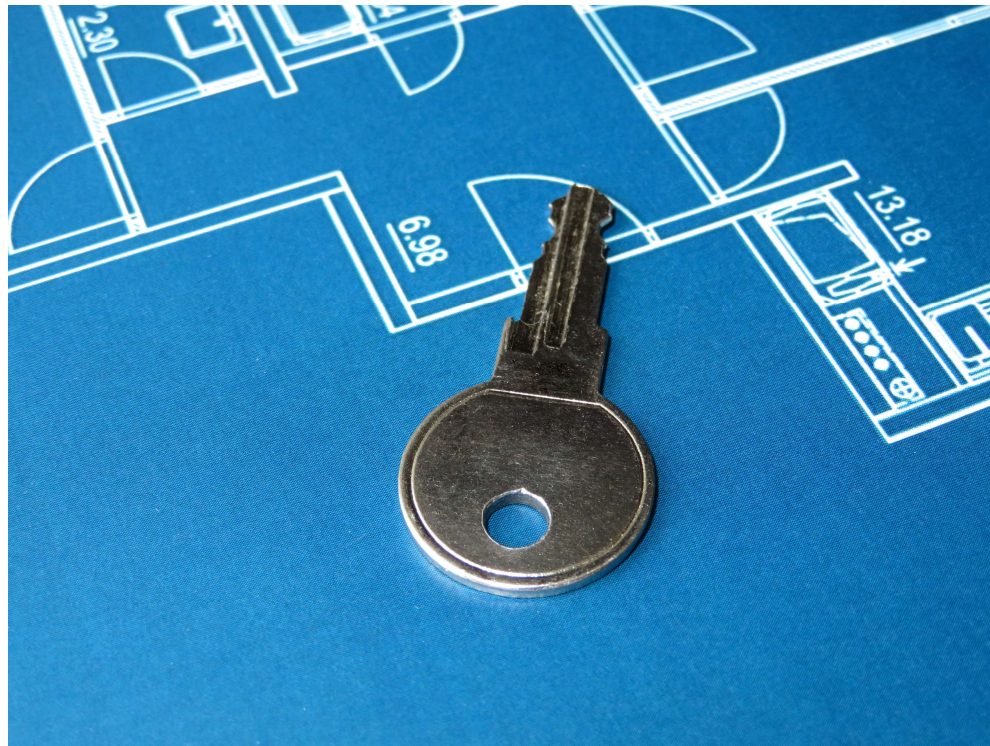
Resources

To help with your preparations:

- School of Graduate Studies website
<https://gs.mcmaster.ca/doctoral-degree>
- Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses
https://gs.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/10/Prep_Guide_Masters_and_Doctoral_Theses_August-2021.pdf
- Graduate Calendar - Section 3.2 Thesis
<https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catid=48&navoid=9526#3-2-theses>
- Graduate Writing Resources
<https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/resources/graduate-writing/>

The Key to a Successful Defence

- Initiate at least 8 weeks before your intended defence date





**Frank Coruzzi &
Nadine Pielaszek**

Academic Services Officers
School of Graduate Studies

gthesis@mcmaster.ca

GOOD LUCK!