

## Planning Your Master's Defense?

Congratulations on reaching this point in your program!

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### PREPARATION CHECK LIST:

- **Confirm you have completed all course requirements for your degree.** Log-in to your SSC Account to ensure that your course registration is correct (all credits accounted for) and final grades have been posted.
- **Review defense procedures as outlined in the Forestry Gradbook.** Familiarize yourself with how the defense will proceed; procedures are in the [Forestry Gradbook](#) in the section entitled, "Master's Thesis Defense".
- **Receive thesis approval from your supervisor.**

Your supervisor should let you know when your thesis is ready for final review by your supervisory committee, after which you should distribute copies with at least 2 weeks for reading and comments. Once this process is complete, your supervisor should notify the grad program office that your supervisory committee has approved the thesis for defense.
- **Confirm your examining committee members.** The examining committee must include your supervisor, at least one other member of your supervisory committee, plus a **Chair** and a **Non-departmental Examiner (NDE)**. Your supervisor is responsible for confirming Chair and NDE positions.
  - The *Chair* acts as moderator of the exam, and needs to be a Forestry faculty member who hasn't been directly associated with the preparation of the thesis. You should send a copy of your supervisor-approved thesis to the Chair as a courtesy, but they are not required to review it.
  - The *NDE* must be a UBC faculty member from outside of your supervisor's home department. The NDE should have expertise in your area of research or a related field, but must have an arm's-length relationship with you. The NDE must be confirmed far enough in advance to allow them time to read the final supervisory committee approved thesis – you are responsible for providing them with a copy.
- **Set the date.** Coordinate a date and start time with your examining committee (two hours are required). Once confirmed, notify the grad program office ([robin.poirier-vasic@ubc.ca](mailto:robin.poirier-vasic@ubc.ca)) or ([erica.triggs@ubc.ca](mailto:erica.triggs@ubc.ca)) so we can book an exam room – please provide us at least 20 days' notice. *Be sure to let us know if anyone plans to participate remotely.* Note that, normally, only those individuals physically present in the examination room can be counted for quorum. It is permissible for a third member of the Supervisory Committee to attend the defense remotely.

- **Practice, AV Equipment, Room Set-Up.** The exam room is reserved for up to one hour ahead of your exam start, so you have plenty of time to set up before the defense begins. We highly recommend that you book a practice session a few days in advance to run through your presentation and thus avoid last-minute technical glitches. IT support is provided on the day of defense, but it is your responsibility to be familiar with the AV system.
  
- **Virtual Protocols.** In response to COVID-19, we have developed a process to support virtual master's defenses, including rules surrounding audience participation. Please notify the grad program office if you are planning a virtual defense and be sure to familiarize yourself with [these protocols](#) well in advance.
  
- The official notice of defense will be sent by our office to you and the examining committee.
  
- **Apply to graduate.** The application is available on-line through your Student Service Centre account. Completion is required for degree conferral, regardless of whether you plan on attending a graduation ceremony. UBC confers graduate degrees in May and November each year. Refer to this link: <https://graduation.ubc.ca/>
  
- Be sure you are familiar with **G+PS thesis formatting & final thesis submission procedures**. Your program (and tuition assessment!) is not closed until after your defended and approved thesis is submitted to G+PS. In order to receive your thesis receipt as soon as possible after your defense, ensure your formatting meets required standards. Minor formatting changes are often required prior to the thesis receipt being issued.
  - Formatting: [www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/dissertation-thesis-preparation](http://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/dissertation-thesis-preparation) .
  - Post-defense thesis submission procedures: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/final-dissertation-thesis-submission/final-submission-instructions>
  - After the defense, your exam Chair will give you the various forms you will need to submit along with your thesis.
  
- **Program Completion Checklist.** We will also provide you with a checklist which outlines a number of action- items you are responsible for completing before you leave campus for the final time, e.g., returning keys and equipment, closing computer accounts, etc. If you are planning to depart Vancouver soon after your defense, be sure to leave yourself enough time to look after these responsibilities.

Questions? Don't hesitate to ask: [erica.triggs@ubc.ca](mailto:erica.triggs@ubc.ca) or [robin.poirier-vasic@ubc.ca](mailto:robin.poirier-vasic@ubc.ca)