

Regulation 26 Examination of Theses

26.1 – Interpretation

In this Regulation,

- 26.1.1 The ‘Board’ means ‘the Academic Board’ established as a committee of the College under Regulation 2.1;
- 26.1.2 ‘Thesis’ means any long essay, dissertation or project report approved by the Board for the purposes of postgraduate examination, usually in written form but not excluding others;
- 26.1.3 ‘Supervisor’ means the person or persons appointed by the Board to supervise a research candidate in accordance with the Regulation governing the degree concerned;
- 26.1.4 The ‘Chair of Examiners’ means the relevant Chair of Examiners as defined in Regulation 2.2.

26.2 - Submission

- 26.2.1 Each Thesis submitted for examination is to be bound in a manner prescribed by the Board. For Graduate Diplomas and Masters degrees, two copies are to be submitted; for Doctorates, three copies are to be submitted.
- 26.2.2 Each Thesis submitted for examination must adhere to the following requirements regarding word-length:
 - MA and MTheol by minor thesis, and MMin: no more than 25,000 words
 - MA and MTheol by major thesis: no more than 40,000 words
 - DMinStuds: no more than 50,000 words
 - PhD and DTheol: no more than 100,000 words,in each case including footnotes, but excluding bibliography, appendices, tables and illustrations.
- 26.2.3 The approval of the Supervisor must be obtained in writing before a Thesis is submitted for examination.
- 26.2.4 The Thesis must be written in an acceptable style, must be the original work of the candidate and must demonstrate both in scope and substance a mastery of the subject appropriate to the degree for which it is submitted.
- 26.2.5 The Thesis is to contain a full, precise and consistently styled bibliography, with footnotes corresponding in style. The examiners may require a thesis which in their opinion is poorly presented, or badly expressed, to be re-written and presented again within a fixed time.
- 26.2.6 A candidate must not present for examination any work submitted for a degree in another tertiary institution, but is not precluded from incorporating such work or any part thereof in the Thesis provided that the intention to do so was stated when the topic was proposed, that the Board agreed to the incorporation on the written recommendation of the Supervisor, and that the work so incorporated is clearly indicated in the Thesis.

26.3 – Examiners

- 26.3.1 The Board must appoint two examiners for a Thesis submitted for a Graduate Diploma or Masters degree, and at least two examiners for a Doctorate.
- 26.3.2 For a Graduate Diploma, at least one examiner must be external to the teaching institution to which the candidate is attached. For Masters degrees and Doctorates, all examiners should be external to the College unless compelling circumstances suggest otherwise, in which situation a case must be made by the Supervisor. Notwithstanding such

circumstances, at least one examiner must be external both to the College and to any teaching institution to which the candidate is attached.

26.3.3 For a Masters degree or Doctorate, no person associated with the Thesis either as an Supervisor or as a subject for research is to be appointed as an examiner.

26.3.4 After considering the Thesis, each examiner is to report in writing to the Chair of Examiners, stating whether they recommend that the Thesis

26.3.4.1 be accepted, only conditional upon minor grammatical or typographical errors being corrected to the satisfaction of the Supervisor;

26.3.4.2 be accepted, conditional upon revisions being made to the satisfaction of the Board, but without re-examination;

26.3.4.3 not be accepted, but be permitted to be revised and submitted for re-examination by those examiners who deemed that it needed rewriting;

26.3.4.4 not be accepted, and not be permitted to be submitted for re-examination.

The examiners may, in addition, submit a conjoint report.

26.3.5 No Thesis is to be passed unless it is deemed to be of Honours standard. In considering a recommendation made under sub-clauses 26.3.4.1 or 26.3.4.2, each examiner is to indicate whether a Master's Major or Minor Thesis should be graded with First Class, Second Class (Upper) or Second Class (Lower) Honours.

26.3.6 Normally no candidate is permitted to submit a revised Thesis for re-examination more than once.

26.4 - The Chair of Examiners

The Chair of Examiners is to consider the written reports of the examiners, and proceed as follows:

26.4.1 Where the Chair of Examiners recommends that the Thesis not be accepted, this conclusion is to be notified in writing to the Board.

26.4.2 Where the Chair of Examiners recommends that the candidate be required by the examiners to revise and resubmit the thesis for re-examination, this conclusion is to be notified to the Board in writing, specifying what revisions sought by the examiners are necessary, and what maximum time for re-submission is recommended.

26.4.3 Where the Chair of Examiners recommends that the Thesis be accepted, possibly subject to amendments being made but without further examination being necessary, this conclusion is to be notified to the Board in writing, specifying what revisions (if any) may be necessary, and (if applicable) what level of Honours is recommended.

26.4.4 Where the Chair of Examiners is unable to make a clear recommendation based upon the examiners' reports, the Chair may ask the examiners to consult, recommend to the Board the appointment of additional examiner(s), or take such other steps as may enable a clear recommendation to be made.

26.4.5 Following receipt of the written report of the Chair of Examiners, the Board must inform the candidate and the Supervisor in writing of the recommendation of the Chair of Examiners, and forward copies of the written reports of the examiners and of the Chair of Examiners.

26.5 – Oral Defence

26.5.1 Where required by Regulation, a doctoral candidate must undergo a public Oral Defence of the Thesis.

- 26.5.2 The Oral Defence is to be arranged by the Board, who must appoint the Supervisor, two of the examiners and a chairperson to constitute the Oral Defence Panel.
- 26.5.3 In the Oral Defence the candidate is expected to show a detailed knowledge of the research area concerned, to respond to questions raised by the examiners, and to demonstrate an integrated understanding of the research topic.
- 26.5.4 Following the Oral Defence, the chairperson is to report to the Chair of Examiners in writing on behalf of the Panel, making recommendations as to acceptance of the Thesis or otherwise, and specifying what revisions may be necessary. Where the Panel recommends that the Thesis be accepted, possibly subject to amendments being made but without further examination being necessary, the candidate may be informed of this recommendation.
- 26.5.5 The Chair of Examiners, in carrying out the duties specified in 26.4 above, must also take into account the written report of the Oral Defence Panel.

26.6 – Lodgement of Theses

- 26.6.1 Following the award of a Masters' degree or Doctorate by the Council, the candidate must lodge with the Registrar three permanently bound copies of the approved Thesis, prior to the degree being conferred.
- 26.6.2 Where a candidate is required by the Human Research Ethics Committee to lodge with the College data collected during research, this data is to be copied onto a single CDROM or DVD disk and lodged with the Registrar along with the bound copies of the Thesis. Unless clearance has been given in writing by the Committee, all other forms of the data must be destroyed: the Registrar must be informed in writing that this destruction has taken place.
- 26.6.3 Each bound Thesis is to be printed on archive quality A4 paper and hard-bound in royal blue cloth. On the spine is to be printed in gold the approved title of the Thesis, the name of the candidate, the approved abbreviation for the degree concerned, the word 'MCD', and the year of conferral.
- 26.6.4 One copy of each bound Thesis is to be retained by the College, one copy is to be lodged with the Dalton McCaughey Library, Parkville, and one copy is to be lodged at a library designated by the candidate.

Approved by the College June 23rd, 2004; revised following 2005 Act revision November 30th 2005.

Revisions approved by Council, December 2008, June 2009