Department of English

Supervisory Committee's Recommendation on Final PhD Thesis Proposal

PhD students admitted before Fall 2015: This Candidacy requirement is detailed in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Handbook of Supervision and Examination for 2014-15, section 7.0
http://grad.ucalgary.ca/current/grad-calendar/calendar-archives

The purpose of this form is to document the Supervisory Committee's recommendation on the Final Thesis Proposal and Bibliography which must be completed no later than 3 months following the Oral Field of Study examination. According to Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations, the Supervisory Committee is required to approve the Final PhD Thesis Proposal and Bibliography. Once approved by the Supervisory Committee, the proposal and this recommendation will be kept in the student's departmental file.

Student: Ensure that you follow the requirements, described on page 2.
Supervisor: Hand in the approved Final Thesis Proposal & Bibliography and this form to the Graduate Director.

Student		UCID	Date
Proposed Thesis Title			Admission Date

Supervisory Committee Members	Individual Recommendation	Supervisory Committee Recommendation	Signature
		Thesis Proposal approved / not approved	
Supervisor:			
Supervisory Committee Member:			
Supervisory Committee Member:			
Co-supervisor or additional member (if applicable)			

August 2015

<div align="center">**Final PhD thesis proposal (Draft Guidelines)**</div>

Why a proposal and who is it for?

The final thesis proposal distinguishes itself from your initial thesis proposal in its detail and focus, as well as being somewhat longer than a SSHRC doctoral proposal. However, a funding proposal is a good basis from which to start, particularly as the bibliography requirements are approximately the same length as for this thesis proposal. In essence, your proposal is a road map, and your specific audience is your supervisory committee; you are demonstrating that you can embark on dissertation writing immediately (perhaps have already written something in draft form), and are able to provide them with structuring principles, timeline, and context. You are not required to include samples of your work in progress, although your committee may suggest that you do. In essence, your committee must be convinced that you have conceived of a feasible and original project that will meet Faculty of Graduate Studies definitions of a doctoral thesis in good time.

What does it do? Your proposal presents a workable and detailed plan of attack—in whatever form you and your committee deem best for your project—demonstrating sophisticated understanding of a) theoretical and critical assumptions involved in the project b) the contribution of your Field of Study to the ongoing work required for the thesis, and c) of the importance of the specific research field(s) you will explore in the thesis.

Supervisory committee review and approval: The proposal review will consist of an hour-long discussion with the supervisory committee, who will provide written comments and oral feedback before approving your proposal or recommending any revisions. The main function is for your supervisory committee to provide detailed feedback about the project's feasibility, the coherence of its research goals and questions, methodology, literature, creative practice (where relevant) and, possibly, some draft writing itself. For creative writing students, special emphasis will be placed on the creative component of the project, along with the critical and theoretical contexts required of critical thesis projects. The specific format and content of the proposal and review will be negotiated among the student and all members of the supervisory committee, subject to the guidelines and outcomes listed in our candidacy requirements for the review of the proposal.

The new supervisory committee proposal review process as the final component of candidacy, while approved by the department, has not yet been approved by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The proposal review is, as of Fall 2015, a Faculty of Graduate Studies candidacy requirement for new students. Please note, however, that all students and supervisory committees must at least complete paperwork to show that the proposal approval process is complete, whether the proposal review has been chosen or not. <u>Students admitted before Fall 2015 can opt to follow old or new requirements for the thesis approval process</u>. If you are uncertain about regulations, consult with the Graduate Program Director.

Although each student's proposal will vary in accordance with their project what follows are some *general guidelines* for the final proposal. Please consult, first, with your committee and then with the Associate Head (Graduate) should you have further questions.

Examples:

A thesis proposal should contain an overview of the entire project, organizing principles (such as a chapter-by-chapter breakdown if relevant, or a detailed timeline for the project such as projected dates for handing in sections of material, research or archival trips, ethics clearance; a literature review and an up-to-date bibliography).

The total word count will usually be about **5000 words (15 pages)** and should not exceed **10,000 words**. This page count does not include the bibliography, which should be about 5-7 pages (about the same length as a bibliography for a SSHRC doctoral proposal). The range in length indicated above reflects whether you include some draft writing from your dissertation, what form your writing takes, whether you have appendices, etc.

While there are many and varied ways to organize a proposal, and your first step is to consult with your supervisor, please find below two suggestions for proposal outlines.
Please note that within this structure there is room for flexibility, based on the needs of the project as determined by the student and supervisory committee. Lengths, format, and structure are provided for guidance.

Example A

1. Research questions, goals, and texts.
2. Research plan, approaches, methodology, relevance to field of study and review of areas to be explored in detail, scholarly debates, and creative contexts, where applicable.
    - Discussion of the project's position within the larger field(s) with which you identify: how are these fields defined historically, formally, politically, intellectually, ethically, and in terms of scholarly methods? How and why does this project participate in those conversations? In short, who is the project's broadest audience and what do they care about? This section will encourage you to think about the relationship between teaching field(s) and research field(s) and thus to anticipate positioning yourself for teaching, research and other careers. This section also encourages creative writers to think about relationships between creative practice, research and various readerships, and the relationship of research to the creative work.
    - Discussion of the project with respect to more specialized field(s): what work has been done in this area before, both in terms of primary and secondary materials? What will this project add? Who is the project's specific audience?
    - Discussion of critical methods (and, possibly, creative practice): outside of field definitions, how is this project defined intellectually? With whom does it share methods, and intellectual, creative or ideological commitments?
3. Chapter summaries and/or a timeline which might include key texts, methods, questions, and, if appropriate, preliminary arguments as well as essential critical/creative elements to be explored. How do you envision structuring your work over the writing period? What activities must you complete? Which of your committee members need to be consulted and see drafts of your work and when?
4. Working thesis bibliography (5-7pp), in standard MLA format.
5. Option of critical or creative writing draft (part of thesis work; introduction; section of creative work; preliminary exploration of theoretical issue; reading of text(s), etc.)

Example B (creative writing)

- An introduction discussing the genesis, genre(s), main focus or subjects to be treated/represented
- Overview of the creative goals, aesthetic principles, and formal concerns
- "Research questions"(underlying reference points, speculations and questions), as well as more traditionally-conceived research questions that will inform the work.
- Discussion of artistic/literary influences and relation of the work to other writing or creative production in the field
- An account of what you hope to achieve: how might your project extend or renovate existing genres, relate to a literary or critical tradition, engage at the level of form and language with theoretical concepts, social and political issues, ethical concerns, public discourse; contribute to knowledge, literary conversations and debates
- What techniques will be explored and in the context of which literary and critical traditions?
- What is the relationship of the work to the Field of Study?
- How might the creative work embody or explore research questions, decisions and discoveries made in the course of producing the work? How does the theoretical and reflective shed light on the creative project?
- Working thesis bibliography (5-7pp), in standard MLA format.
- Timelines for submission to supervisor and committee: how and when will your writing be workshopped and revised? What activities do you need to engage it (interviews, fieldwork, ethics clearance, archival research, for example)
- Optional: Samples of creative work-in-progress; specific plans for dissemination (such as publication).

Much of the work in these examples is excerpted or adapted from two useful documents: [What constitutes PhD research in Creative Writing?](#) (Open University, Creative Writing PhD) and from The University of Alberta's ["Long Thesis Proposal"](#) guidelines, (English and Film Studies, 2015).

For Mac users:saving fillable forms and creating electronic signatures
using Preview or other PDF readers

To create an electronic signature:

- Under Tools, go to Annotate>Signature>Create Signature> Manage Signatures (or click on signature icon in toolbar)
- Follow instructions for drawing or taking a photograph of your signature.
- Select your signature, and drag it to the signature section(s) of the form; size if necessary.

How to save fillable forms:

- If you find forms are blank when your send or print them, these steps work with most applications.
- After you've filled out a form, **choose Print from the File menu** (or command-P) and then use the PDF option to save it as a PDF. See screenshot below. You will also see options to preview, save, print, e-mail (or in recent systems, message) the file.
- The form is then saved as a "flat" file (you can't edit text any more, but it also means that the recipient will actually be able to see the form data).
- Note: *"Export As" and "Save As" do not accomplish the same thing. You lose your data that way.*