



Guidelines for Neutral chair

A Neutral Chair ensures that policy and procedure are correctly followed during and after an oral examination, and guards against perceived conflict of interest or undue influence.

Choosing a Neutral Chair for an Oral Thesis Examination

- The Graduate Program Coordinator appoints the Neutral Chair no later than one week from the date of the examination.
- Neutral Chairs, normally University of Calgary members with a professorial appointment (Senior Instructors with experience supervising graduates, as well as Emeriti Professors) can be from within or from outside the program.
- The Neutral Chair does not have a close relationship with the candidate or the supervisor, and is not involved in the candidate's or the supervisor's research.

Duties of the Neutral Chair:

A Neutral Chair:

- Is not a member of the examining committee and therefore does not read the Project, participate in the discussion of the thesis or the oral defense of the thesis, or vote.
- Is responsible for contacting Graduate Office Director if an examiner fails to appear or leaves prior to the completion of the exam. You will be put in contact with Dean.
- presides over the oral examination and ensures that all examiners have appropriate opportunity to question the candidate
- Guards against any tendency of examiners to interact with each other instead of concentrating on the examination of the candidate
- Keeps a record of process, especially if there is not a unanimous decision.
- Facilitates the confidential discussions pertaining to the examination outcome. If questions arise at any point during the deliberations that the committee is unable to resolve, the Neutral Chair should consult the Graduate Studies director.
- Communicates the result of the examination to the student, and gives the Final Thesis Oral Examination form to the Graduate Program Director who ensures that it is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies within 24 hours of the examination.
- reports failed examination or lack of unanimity outcomes to the Graduate Studies director (See Neutral Chair Report Guide lines Below)

Neutral Chair Report Guidelines:

In the case of a failed examination, lack of unanimity, or procedural anomaly(s), the Neutral Chair is responsible for submitting a report of the examination procedures (generally 1 page) to the Associate dean of Graduate Studies within 5 working days. The Neutral Chair's report should:

- Give a description of the procedure followed during the exam.
- Highlight any procedural deviations or unusual events that could have had a bearing on the outcome.
- Give a brief summary of noteworthy post-exam discussion relevant to the outcome of the exam.
- Identify names of examiners, as relevant, in discussing any procedural anomalies or post-exam discussions. Names would be removed in the case of a FOIP request.

Teleconference and Video Conferencing:

Examiners may participate by teleconference or video conference (including Voice over Internet Protocol services); telephone backup must be available for video conference examinations.

- Teleconferencing or videoconferencing should be prearranged by Graduate office at least 2 weeks prior to exam.
- An IT technician should be on site.
- In case of teleconference or difficulty with video conference you need to dial
- **Host (in Qatar)**
 - Toll-free Number: (9) 00 800 100 501 **Host code: 8448974**
- **Guest:**
 - Canadian Toll-Free number: 1-855-950-3725 **Guest code: 844897**
 - US/Canada Toll-Free number: 1-866-546-3377 **Guest code: 844897**

Process:

- 1- Introduction and set the tone (formal)
- 2- Students has 10- 15 minutes to give an overview (you time and monitor)
- 3- Questions- Round begins from External to Internal
 - a. External examiner b. Practice Partner C. Co- supervisor D. Supervisor
- 4- Rounds continue until there are no more questions or for 90 minutes (generally 2 or 3 round)
- 5- The student is asked to leave the room
- 6- Straw vote (examiners note their decision to pass or fail on a ballot)
- 7- External announce whether or not there is a unanimous decision and then deliberations. Suggest external to internal for comments.
- 8- Bring student back (usually the supervisor goes and gets the student and tells them of the committees decision)
- 9- Opportunity for committee to give feedback to the graduate (Generally external to Internal)