

Guidelines for Requesting a Dissertation Defense

The dissertation supervisor should propose an examination board to the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) well in advance of the candidate's planned submission date. The supervisor will have confirmed the examiners' willingness to participate and potential dates for the defense. The Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) is responsible for ensuring that the proposed examiners meet SGPS criteria including that they are at arm's-length from the candidate and supervisor. The Associate Dean then follows up with the proposed examiners inviting their participation.

Four examiners are required including at least one (but no more than 2) program examiners and one external examiner. For details regarding the categories of examiners and their roles, see the SGPS Thesis Regulations [1.10 - The PhD Thesis Examination Board](#).

Once the examiners and proposed dates are determined, the Graduate Program Assistant will contact the group to schedule the time and date for the public lecture and defense. These details will be recorded on a Thesis Examination Request which the Assistant will submit to SGPS at least 6 working weeks before the proposed date.

Veritas is Western's thesis examination platform launched in June 2026.

Doctoral candidates must submit their dissertation 5 weeks before the approved date for the defense. This ensures adequate time to provide access to the dissertation for the examiners and for the examiners to read and assess the dissertation. The digital submission is via Veritas, Western's thesis examination platform which is accessed through the Graduate Student Web Services Portal (<https://grad.uwo.ca/student/>).

Submission instructions can be found here:

https://grad.uwo.ca/academics/thesis/preliminary_submission.html

During the preliminary examination, each examiner will determine whether the dissertation meets the scholarly standards for the discipline and degree. The 2 possible outcomes are: Acceptable to go to defense with revisions, or Unacceptable to go forward to defense. SGPS communicates this decision to the examiners, candidate, and supervisor, usually 5 working days before the scheduled defense.

Students can track the status of their examination through Veritas. Automated email messages that provide updates will be sent to students through their UWO email account.

Last updated June 8, 2026