



Research and Theses Requirements

The following sections describe general requirements for research toward the M.Sc. or Ph.D. Degree, guidelines for thesis preparation, instructions for initial submission of the final thesis and forms to the School and the Thesis Office in Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS), and final thesis submission of the thesis at GPS. Students and supervisors should be familiar with the general university rules and regulations as presented at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/thesis/guidelines> and with specific regulations of the Graduate Program in Physical and Occupational Therapy presented below.

Research Guidelines

A thesis for the doctoral degree must display original scholarship, expressed in good literate style, and must make a distinct contribution to knowledge. A thesis for the Master's Degree must show familiarity with previous work in the field and must demonstrate ability to carry out research as described above and to organize and present results. The School of P & OT, as other Departments in the Faculty of Medicine, expects research for the M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees:

- To be hypothesis- or objective-driven;
- To meet standards of scientific rigor for design, subject selection, measurement, statistical analysis and sample size;
- To be of sufficient originality and validity for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Note: Publication in a journal, however, does not in and of itself demonstrates adequate quality of the thesis.

Not all research is suitable for an M.Sc. or Ph.D. thesis. The feasibility of the proposed research project is a primary consideration. If early efforts suggest the feasibility of the project is questionable, this must be addressed early in the process so that the student can meet the milestones of his/her program of study. The Graduate Program Director should be notified at the earliest possible date whenever there is a question of feasibility and consideration for revisions to the protocol. As a general guideline, for a Master's thesis, 3 months of active data collection is feasible. For a Ph.D., active data collection should rarely exceed 12 months.

The data obtained for the research project must be sufficient to test the hypotheses in a manner consistent with providing answers that meet the current scientific standard of proof. The research design and proposed methods must be adequate to support the validity of the answers produced. It is important to be able to specify that the results provide evidence that support or refute the hypotheses – i.e., are not due to chance, or an underpowered or methodologically flawed study. The Research Methods and Research Protocol courses, which are taken in the first year, are specifically designed to provide students with the requisite research skills and offer an unmatched opportunity for methodological review of the proposed work prior to presentation of the research protocol for approval. Research methodology and statistical approaches are continuously evolving and it is recommended that students and supervisors

consider seeking appropriate consultation to ensure that optimal methods and analyses are proposed.

The thesis must be consistent with the approved research thesis protocol that was presented at the School (e.g., study aims, sample size proposed, measures obtained, etc.) **Changes from the approved protocol must be outlined in detail and a rationale provided for each change in a letter http://www.mcgill.ca/spot/sites/mcgill.ca/spot/files/supervisor_formletter.pdf to the Graduate Program Director when the thesis is submitted to the School.**

Recognizing not all articles published in peer reviewed journals would meet the standards for a graduate degree at McGill University, publication is not sufficient to prove scientific validity. Conducting an underpowered study, using flawed or outdated methodology or analyses may result in a failed thesis. The consequences of a failed thesis are significant and can be very difficult to overcome. Theses which are failed often require substantial revision (e.g., underpowered studies may require additional data collection). When resubmitted, the thesis will go back to the same examiner for review and evaluation. Every effort should be made to ensure that theses meet the standards of high quality scientific research described above. Full details on the failed thesis policy are available at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/guidelines>

Research involving intellectual property (more details at <http://www.mcgill.ca/files/ott/studentIPguide-v9.pdf>): Issues of intellectual property should conform to McGill's policy and be agreed to in writing before the student begins working on the project. The student must be aware of any limitations or approvals required for publication of the data in manuscript form and implications for the examination and publication of the thesis. Bear in mind that publication of a thesis can be delayed for up to one year with permission of GPS, but after that time will be released. Policies and procedures developed by the McGill Research Policy Committee, the three Research Offices staff, and colleagues across the University are contained at <http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies/research>. Regulations and research policies are also contained in the Graduate Calendar each year, which can be viewed at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/policies/>.

Thesis Specifications

McGill University requires that all theses conform to the specifications outlined on the GPS website at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/thesis/guidelines>. The thesis must be written in English or French and demonstrate good literate style. Students and their supervisors should familiarize themselves with the requirements. The GPS website is always the best source of information for all current requirements.

Initial Submission of Thesis

Students are strongly encouraged to notify the Graduate Student Affairs Coordinator when the thesis is in the final stages of preparation. The thesis needs to be submitted to the School before it is submitted to the GPS Thesis Office (see procedure outlined in the next section). Theses are submitted electronically to GPS and may be submitted at any time; however, GPS has submission deadlines for each graduation period which are posted at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/graduating/deadlines>.

There are several forms associated with a thesis submission:

- Nomination of Examiners and Thesis Submission Form
- McGill and Library and Archives Canada, Waivers

- Thesis Submission Checklist

The current versions of fillable pdf forms and instructions for each of these forms are at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/guidelines/initial-submission#process>

- Supervisor Form Letter Thesis Submission (for the School only)
http://www.mcgill.ca/spot/sites/mcgill.ca.spot/files/supervisor_formletter.pdf

The **Nomination of Examiners and Thesis Submission form** must be signed by the student, supervisor and Graduate Program Director prior to submission to the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office.

The **Supervisor Form Letter** must be signed by the supervisor and Graduate Program Director prior to submission to the Graduate Program Student Affairs Coordinator. This form can be found at https://secureweb.mcgill.ca/spot/sites/mcgill.ca.spot/files/supervisor_formletter.pdf

It is the student's responsibility to ensure the following: 1) the version being submitted has been approved by the supervisor(s); 2) the thesis meets all formatting requirements and is free of typographical and grammatical errors; 3) the Graduate Program Student Affairs Coordinator is given a hard copy of the version of the thesis to be submitted for review by the Graduate Program Director and an electronic version of the thesis when it is submitted electronically to GPS.

The supervisor and student identify the required number of internal and external examiners and provide complete contact information on the Nomination of Examiners and Thesis Submission form. **The supervisor is responsible for choosing and securing the examiners.** Note: Supervisors are not allowed to act as thesis examiners of Master's or PhD theses. Master's theses require a single examiner, not two. PhD theses require two examiners: internal and external examiner. Conflict of interest policies are clarified and emphasized at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/guidelines/initial-submission>

It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the Nomination of Examiners and Thesis submission form is accurately and completely filled out.

There is to be no contact with external examiners by the student, the School, supervisor (except for securing the examiners), or any committee members regarding the evaluation of the thesis and in the case of doctoral students, the set-up of the Oral Defense Committee.

Initial Submission of Thesis to the School

At least 2 weeks prior to anticipated deposition of the thesis to GPS, the student must provide the Graduate Student Affairs Coordinator with the following:

1. Completed Nomination of Examiners and Thesis Submission form,
2. Thesis Checklist
3. Supervisor's form letter
4. Hard copy of thesis to be deposited (or a close to finish draft) for review by the Graduate Program Director.

Please note that the Supervisor's form letter must be provided to the GPD at the same time as the thesis is provided for review and must be signed by the Supervisors. This form states the following information:

1. All persons nominated meet the current McGill requirements for Masters or Ph.D. examiners. See <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/guidelines>
2. All persons nominated are at arm's length and have no potential or apparent conflicts of interest between the supervisor, persons nominated or student (see above web link)
3. The final version of the thesis has been read and approved by the supervisor(s). All members of the committee have a copy of the thesis.
4. All deviations of the thesis from the approved thesis protocol are outlined and a rationale provided

The Graduate Program Director verifies that all degree requirements have been met by the student. The Graduate Student Affairs Coordinator will notify the student when the forms have been signed by the GPD and the thesis is ready to be submitted electronically to GPS.

Initial Submission of Thesis to Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies – Initial e-thesis process

As indicated on the GPS website, the following procedure must be followed for the initial thesis submission:

- Theses must be submitted as a single PDF from your official McGill email address to the following:
Masters students: mastersthesissubmission.gps@mcgill.ca
Doctoral students: doctoralthesissubmission.gps@mcgill.ca
- Subject line: Initial e-thesis submission
- The naming convention for the initial e-thesis file must be as follows:
Student id #_ last name_ first name_ unit name (can be abbreviated) thesis.pdf
Example 260123456_ Smith _John_ Electrical & Computer Eng (ECE)_thesis.pdf

If students are having difficulty in sending the PDF please contact the thesis office at thesis.gps@mcgill.ca

Students should also provide a PDF copy to each Supervisor or Co-supervisor and to the School. For doctoral students, the PDF will be distributed to the oral defense committee members by the School prior to the Oral defense.

Should any examiner require a hardcopy, the examiner should contact GPS directly.

Students will receive a confirmation receipt of submission

Final Thesis Submission

e-Thesis submission will be required for the final, corrected copy of the thesis to GPS. Please note: you can submit your final e-thesis at anytime, but a final e-thesis WILL NOT be considered submitted to GPS until it has been approved online by the supervisor(s). Students are strongly encouraged to upload their e-thesis for online supervisor approval well in advance of the Deadline for Submission of Final Copies (<http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/deadlines>) otherwise the e-thesis may be approved too late for the intended date of graduation. For more information visit <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/thesis/e-thesis>

Additional Notes

For further details on thesis submission, please contact the Graduate Thesis Administrator, Sandra Gibson, Room 400, James Administration Building, or call 514 398-3990.

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