**Outcome Categories of the Oral Thesis Examination**

The outcome of the oral thesis examination is based on the acceptability of both the thesis and the defence of the thesis at the oral thesis examination. The purpose of the oral thesis examination is to ascertain that the student is able to adequately present and defend the thesis and its underlying assumptions, methodology, results and conclusions in a manner consistent with the degree being sought.

At the oral thesis examination, the examining committee will reach one of the 4 outcomes listed below and record it on the “Thesis Examination Results" form. The 4 potential outcome categories are Passed, Passed with Major Revisions, Referred or Failed. The lowest outcome category with two or more votes will result in the decision of the examining committee.

1. Passed: A thesis is passed if it is acceptable in its present form or pending minor revisions, and its defence at the oral thesis examination was satisfactory. A thesis may be passed if no substantive changes are required. Changes in the form of corrections of typographical or grammatical errors, minor modifications to the thesis, editorial revisions to improve clarity and revisions to clarify results, findings or conclusions, or the like, may be recommended with a thesis classified as passed. A list of the required revisions must be provided by the Chair to the student and the supervisor, and the completion of the revisions must be certified to the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs by the thesis supervisor or other designated person.
2. ii. Passed with Major Revisions: A thesis is passed with major revisions if it is not acceptable in its present form or pending minor revisions but could be acceptable pending major revisions. Major revisions could include, for example, rearticulation and repositioning of research purpose, substantive integration of new literature, major additions or revisions to conceptual framework, methodology, results, and/or discussion. In cases of portfolio or manuscript theses, a passed with major revision outcome may be assigned if one or more of the manuscripts requires major revisions. A passed with major revisions may not require revaluation of the written thesis by the whole examining committee. Revisions must be certified to the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs by those whom the examining committee deem responsible for oversight of revisions.

iii. Referred: A thesis is referred if it is unacceptable in its present form and/or requires re-examination by the PhD oral thesis examining committee. For example, a thesis will be referred if it requires substantive changes such as rewriting a chapter, reinterpretation, reanalysis or recalculation of data or findings, or additional research in order to attain acceptable standards of coherence and integrity in argument and presentation. The committee may decide to reconvene the examining committee and hold another oral thesis examination of the revised thesis.

The examining committee may also use the referred category if it determines that the oral thesis examination itself, either separate from or in conjunction with the written thesis, is unsatisfactory. This means that the student did not adequately present and defend the thesis and its underlying assumptions, methodology, results and conclusions in a manner consistent with the degree being sought. In such cases, a second oral thesis examination must be held, and the committee must then return a decision of either “passed” or “failed".

In all cases of referral, the nature of the revisions and/or additional work, and/or the deficiencies associated with the oral thesis examination, must be specified in writing by the Chair to avoid dispute or ambiguity. When outlining the revisions and/or additional work required, and/or the holding of a second oral thesis examination, the Chair must be as specific as possible. These comments will be passed on to the candidate in a letter from the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs as revisions and/or improvements that must be met for the thesis to be reconsidered.

Any outlined revisions in relation to a referred outcome must be certified by the Chair or delegate as having been completed satisfactorily. Usually, this certification is delegated to at least two members of the Committee. In all cases of referral, the examining committee continues to exist until it has agreed that the thesis outcome is either passed or failed. The decision of Passed with Major Revisions is not an option once the thesis and/or oral examination has been placed in the Referred category.

iv Failed: Failure can occur in 2 ways:

1. A thesis is failed if the document is unacceptable to the discipline even with substantive revisions. If the committee returns two or more votes of Failed on the basis of the document, this means that the committee recommends that the student be required to withdraw on academic grounds.
2. Failure may also result from an unacceptable second oral thesis examination, where the student was manifestly unable to adequately present and defend the thesis and its underlying assumptions, methodology, results and conclusions in a manner consistent with the degree being sought. A decision of Failed on the basis of the second oral thesis examination requires agreement by the majority (more than half) of the examining committee.

The student will be notified of the result immediately by the Chair of the committee and the decision confirmed in writing by the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs.