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## Examination Arrangements for the Joint Educational Placement for PhD between The University of Hong Kong (HKU) and the University of Toronto (U of T)

**Lead Institution** for HKU students means HKU and for U of T students means U of T.

**Collaborator Institution** for HKU students means U of T and for U of T Students means HKU.

The student will be examined in accordance with the regulations of the Lead institution (i.e. the institution at which the student commenced the joint educational placement for PhD).

Candidates will normally spend the last six months before submission of their thesis at the Lead institution.

### 1 Nomination and Appointment of Examiners

1.1 The nomination of examiners should normally be made at least two months (for U of T) and three months (for HKU) prior to the expected submission of a thesis for examination. This is to ensure that there is sufficient time for the examiner nomination process to be completed and agreed by both institutions before thesis submission. The process is as follows:

- a) HKU and U of T supervisors should identify and agree on the examiners to be nominated and acquire approval for these from their respective Departments. Students should not, under any circumstances, communicate with any examiner on matters related to his/her thesis examination. Inappropriate communication by a student towards an examiner would make that student liable for disciplinary action.
- b) Once agreed by the supervisors' respective Departments, proposals for examiners are then approved in accordance with the usual procedure of the Lead institution. Once approved by the Lead institution they should be submitted to the Collaborator institution for approval

For U of T, the examination booking and nomination of examiners procedure can be found here:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/facultyandstaff/Pages/Policies-and-Guidelines.aspx>

For HKU, the thesis submission and nomination of examiners procedure can be found here:  
<http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/web/student/thesis/index.htm>

- c) For students with HKU as Lead institution, the composition of the Thesis Examining Committee (TEC) will be as follows:
  - o One examiner from HKU (voting member)
  - o One examiner from U of T (voting member)
  - o One examiner external to both institutions (voting member)
  - o HKU Supervisor(s) (non-voting member(s))
  - o TEC Chairperson (non-voting member)

For students with U of T as Lead institution, the Examination Committee will be composed of four to six voting members:

- o At least one member, but not more than three members, of the student's supervising committee (voting member(s))
  - o Three examiners who have not been closely involved in the supervision of the thesis: one from HKU, one from U of T and one external to both institutions (voting members)
  - o Chairperson of the Examination Committee (non-voting member)
  - o Up to two additional non-voting members may be appointed.
- d) Although it is unlikely that either institution will object to the nomination of a particular examiner on account of the quality of the examiner, an institution may be aware of a potential conflict of interest which the other institution is not and therefore, each partner has the right to veto the examiners and request new nominations.

- e) Once both institutions have approved the appointment of the examiners, and informed each other of their agreement, the Lead institution will write to the examiners to confirm appointment and will explain the examination procedure.

## **2 Submission of thesis for examination**

- 2.1 Candidates should submit their thesis to the Lead institution following the thesis submission requirements of the Lead institution. The Lead institution is responsible for organising the examination and for sending the thesis to the examiners, keeping the Collaborator institution informed at all stages of the examination process.

For U of T, the examination entry procedure can be found here:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/facultyandstaff/Pages/Policies-and-Guidelines.aspx>

For HKU, the procedure can be found here:

<http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/web/student/thesis/index.htm>

## **3 PhD Oral Examination**

- 3.1 Candidates must be physically present during the oral examination which will normally be held at the Lead institution and conducted according to the Lead institution's Regulations.
- 3.3 The examiner from the Collaborator Institution and the examiner who is external to both institutions may attend the oral examination via tele- / video-conferencing, while the examiner from the Lead Institution should be physically present.
- 3.4 For oral examinations taking place at HKU, there will be a Thesis Examining Committee (TEC), comprising the three examiners, the supervisor(s) at HKU and a Chairperson. The role of the Chairperson is to ensure that the oral examination is conducted in a proper manner. The supervisor(s) is/are there as ex-officio member in order to be able to assist the student with potential revisions to the thesis. The Chairperson and supervisor(s) take no part in the decision making on the award of the degree.
- 3.5 At U of T, a chair of the examination committee will be appointed, who is responsible for, and empowered to, ensure the proper conduct of the examination. The chair has no voting right.
- 3.6 In exceptional cases, HKU and U of T may choose to appoint an independent observer to attend the oral examination.
- 3.7 At both institutions the oral examination will be held in private.

For U of T, guidelines for the conduct of oral examinations can be found here:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/facultyandstaff/Pages/Policies-and-Guidelines.aspx>

For HKU, the Guidelines for Setting Up and Conducting Oral Examination for MPhil and PhD Candidates can be found at: <http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/hku-staff/tec-chairpersons>

- 3.8 U of T offers guidances to students on preparing and submitting the thesis, and preparing for their oral examination, respectively, which are available online here:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Producing-Your-Thesis.aspx>

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Doctoral-Exams-and-Schedule.aspx>

HKU provides reference materials on preparing and submitting thesis which can be found here: <http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/web/student/thesis/index.htm>

- 3.9 The role of the examiners is to establish whether the thesis is genuinely the work of the candidate and whether the requirements of a PhD thesis have been met. The oral examination should allow:

- The candidate to defend his/her dissertation and clarify any matters raised by the examiners;
  - The examiners to probe the candidate's knowledge in the field;
  - The examiners to assure themselves that the work presented is the candidate's own and to clarify matters of any collaboration; and
  - The examiners to come to a definite conclusion about the outcome of the examination.
- 3.10 At the end of the oral examination, a final report which indicates their findings and confirms the outcome of the assessment will be prepared. The outcome will then be communicated to the Collaborator institution who must be provided with a copy of this final report and each individual preliminary report.
- 3.11 At HKU, any contention will be referred to the Chair of the TEC panel to determine if a recommendation should be made to appoint a fourth examiner. Such a recommendation would require approval from U of T. At U of T, on a first examination, if there is more than one negative vote and/or abstention, the examination is adjourned. On a reconvened examination, more than one negative note and/or abstention constitutes a failure.
- 3.12 Where the examiners determine that minor amendments or further examination is required, this should be completed within a period specified by them and in compliance with the procedures of the Lead institution.
- 3.13 Recommendation for the award of a degree cannot be granted until the corrections have been made to the satisfaction of the examiners. If the candidate is required to make substantial changes to the thesis, then the entire examination process starts again, though the assumption is that the same examiners will be appointed.
- 3.14 It should be noted that the maximum time period allowed for re-submission of the thesis will be 12 months, where either HKU or U of T is the Lead institution, unless prior approval is given.
- 4 Submission of final copy of thesis**
- 4.1 Once the examiner(s) have agreed that they are satisfied with the revision(s) and the outcome of the examination has been endorsed by JDP Committee and/or the relevant units of both the Lead and Collaborator institutions, candidates may proceed to submit the final thesis to each institution in accordance with their respective requirements.
- 4.2 The requirements for HKU can be found here:  
<http://www.gradsch.hku.hk/gradsch/web/student/thesis/index.htm>
- The requirements for U of T can be found here:  
<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Producing-Your-Thesis.aspx>
- 4.3 Where HKU is the Lead institution, HKU Graduate School should send a copy of the following to the School of Graduate Studies at U of T:
- A letter from HKU to confirm that the candidate has completed the requirements in HKU; and
  - A copy of all reports submitted by the Examiners (Preliminary Reports and Final Report).
- 4.4 Where U of T is the Lead institution, U of T should similarly send a copy of the following to HKU Graduate School:
- A letter from U of T to confirm that the candidate has completed the requirements in U of T; and
  - A copy of all reports submitted by the Examiners (Appraisal, Ballot Summary Form, List of Confirmation of Minor Corrections accomplished, if applicable, List of Minor

Modifications and Confirmation of modifications accomplished, if applicable, Adjournment Report, if applicable.)

## 5 Conferment

- 5.1 When both institutions have given endorsement, candidates will then be put up for conferment following the procedures of the Lead institution. Each candidate will be awarded a single doctoral degree from the Lead institution with both the parchment (degree certificate) and transcript. The transcript will have a note on it stating that "the degree is awarded as a single degree under a Joint Placement arrangement with The [University of Hong Kong or University of Toronto]" (depending which party is the Collaborator institution).
- 5.2 Successful candidates are regarded as a graduate of both institutions and will be entitled to become a member of the alumni associations of both parties. They are eligible to attend the appropriate degree ceremony at one or both institutions.

## 6 Degree Scroll

The Lead institution will print the degree scroll and transcript.

## 7. Appeals and Student Disciplinary Procedures

### Appeals

- 7.1 Candidates will follow the Appeals procedures of the Lead institution for appealing against the result of their examination. The Collaborator institution will be kept informed at all stages of the procedure and of the outcome.

For U of T, the appeals procedures can be found here:  
<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/calendar/Pages/Academic-Appeals-Policy.aspx>

For HKU, appeals concerning perceived irregularities of the examination procedures should be submitted to the Board of Graduate Studies.

### Student Disciplinary Procedures

- 7.2 Candidates will be subject to student disciplinary procedures of the institution at which they are based when an incident arises. Each institution will inform the other of the proceedings and of the final outcome.

For U of T, there are two codes of behavior with relevant procedures:

1. Code of behavior on Academic Matters:  
<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>
2. Code of Student Conduct:  
<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjul012002.pdf>

For HKU, the relevant procedures can be found in the University Statutes XXX and XXXI which are available here: <http://www4.hku.hk/pubunit/calendar>

## 8. IP and Copyright

- 8.1 Candidates own their copyright which is governed by the Lead institution's Intellectual Property policies.

For U of T, Copyright and Intellectual Property policies can be found here:  
<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Copyright.aspx>

For HKU, the Intellectual Property policies can be found here:  
<http://www.rss.hku.hk/contracts/ipr>