



PhD Final Oral Exam

The thesis defense for the PhD degree includes two parts. In the first part the student presents a full (45-60 minute) seminar open to the public. In the second part the student will undergo an oral examination in restricted to the examiners where they will ask questions based both on the thesis work and other areas in immunology.

The formation of the examination committee is set in conjunction with the School of Graduate Studies, and in order to fully comply with SGS guidelines, the student should be prepared to present a short summary of their work during the second part of the exam, should this be requested by any of the committee members.

The examination committee for the PhD Final Oral Exam will normally include six voting members. Four voting members constitute a quorum. The committee must include an examiner from another university (the external examiner), the student's supervisor and supervisory committee members. In addition the exam will usually include two other members of the graduate faculty who are not members of the supervisory committee. According to the rules of the Department and SGS, it is not necessary for the external examiner to attend the exam, although their presence is strongly preferred. In recommending external examiners for PhD exams, kindly remember that the external must be 'at arms length'. Essentially, this means that the candidate and supervisor should not have published or obtained grants with the external for at least five years (preferably never). Once the external is approved by SGS and officially appointed to the exam committee, there should be no contact between the student and the external examiner until the day of the exam. The external should be relatively senior and have a graduate appointment at a recognized university. See below. The PhD exam will be chaired by a non-voting member who is appointed by SGS.

The Graduate office requires 8-9 weeks to schedule a Final Oral Exam. The thesis must be received by the external examiner at least 6 weeks in advance of the examination date. The external examiner is required to submit their evaluation of the thesis to SGS, the Department and to the student at least 2 weeks before the examination date. The completed thesis must be given to the examining committee at least four weeks before the exam date. Please refer to the timeline in the Thesis Preparation Guidelines document.

Composition of the examination committee

