University of Waterloo
Department of Economics
GUIDELINES - PHD THESIS PROSPECTUS PAPER & EXAMINATION

THESIS PROSPECTUS PAPER

Description
The thesis prospectus paper is the document to accompany the Thesis Prospectus Examination.

Timing
Due two weeks before the thesis prospectus examination date.

Purpose
It lays out the work done to date and the proposed future work for the thesis.

Format
The thesis prospectus document is expected to be anywhere from 15 to 25 pages. It is expected to contain a partial literature review relevant to the proposed research. It is understood that at the time of the examination much is at the conceptual or ideas stage. Proposed research should be laid out in sufficient detail that a reader can judge the appropriateness of the approach, the novelty of the research question, and the possibility of success. Data availability (if applicable) should have been considered at this stage. Any existing results on already concluded research should be summarized in terms of model choices and outcomes.

It is up to the candidate to find a format that is appropriate. It is possible to have an independent section on literature, and then lay out the different models/questions growing out of that. It is also possible to have a general introduction as to the topics and links between them, and to include the literature for each in separate sections.

It would be expected that this document does NOT include any already completed or nearly completed article(s) by the candidate in their entirety, but summarizes them appropriately and succinctly. (For these purposes it is acceptable to copy and paste from such existing articles, and this would not be considered plagiarism.)
THESIS PROSPECTUS EXAMINATION

Description
The oral thesis prospectus examination is a required milestone in the PhD program. It is Part II of the comprehensive examination.

Timing
During the winter term of Year 3.

Purpose
The thesis prospectus examination has been instituted in order to test if a student has sufficient grasp of the knowledge and skills required to successfully complete the proposed program of research and defend the thesis. This is meant to be interpreted broadly, including relevant economic theory, econometric theory, techniques and software, institutional background, and related literature.

A secondary purpose is to inform department members at large about ongoing thesis research, and to allow them to help the candidate’s supervisors determine if such research is likely to lead to a successful thesis. Comments and suggestions from faculty members not on the student’s advisory board are welcome. Written suggestions are encouraged.

Examination Board
The student’s Advisory Committee constitutes the Examination Committee and determines if the examination has been passed. An internal-external supervisor/examiner is required to participate in the examination.

Format
The thesis prospectus examination will be chaired by the Associate Chair, Graduate affairs, or his/her delegate. The chair of the examination will not be a member of the student’s Advisory Committee.

The exam begins with a 30 minute oral presentation from the student laying out the body of work that will comprise the thesis. The oral presentation should proceed uninterrupted by questions. It should provide an overview of the motivation of the thesis, research questions, contributions to the literature, data requirements and methodology.

The presentation is followed by questions from the Examination Board, usually beginning with the internal-external committee member. After the Examination Board has asked its questions, questions will be solicited from others in the room.

At the conclusion of the exam, the Examination Board and the Chair of the exam will meet in private to reach a decision on whether the student has passed.
**Decision**
The Examination Committee will reach a consensus regarding one of the following possible decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passed</td>
<td>This means that a candidate’s proposal and background preparation are generally adequate but certain deficiencies need to be rectified. The recommendation might require additional courses be completed, or a written report be prepared on designated aspects of the proposed research program. The specific recommendation must be clearly identified on the Examination Form, by the Chair, along with target dates and committee members responsible for ensuring the recommendations will be satisfied.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passed subject to completion of recommendations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Decision deferred/re-examination required</td>
<td>This means that a candidate’s proposal and/or background preparation is deficient. Re-examination cannot take place within six weeks after the date of the first exam. The re-examination date must be established by the supervisor(s) in consultation with the examiners and the candidate. A student who fails a re-examination will be required to withdraw from the PhD program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>The candidate will be required to withdraw from the PhD program.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The Examination Committee must fill in and sign the [PhD Prospectus Examination Decision Form](#). The Chair will inform the candidate in the presence of the Examination Board of the outcome of the examination and of all recommendations and/or conditions imposed on the candidate.

The Chair will notify the Economics Graduate Office of the results of the exam. If the exam has been passed the Economics Graduate Administrative Coordinator will inform the Graduate Studies Office that the student has completed this required milestone.