

ALBERTA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS PHD PROGRAM RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR DOCTORAL THESES

Purpose

This document provides basic guidelines for what constitutes a doctoral thesis based on University regulations specified in the Graduate Program Manual (GPM) of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) and Alberta School of Business practices.

FGSR Definition of a Doctoral Thesis

Section 8.4 of the GPM is Thesis Requirements. Section 8.4.1 Regulations and Outline of Responsibilities states:

All students in a thesis degree program shall present and defend a thesis embodying the results of their research. The topic of the thesis must have been approved by the student's supervisor.

A doctoral thesis must embody the results of original investigations and analyses and be of such quality as to merit publication, meeting the standards of reputable scholarly publications. It must constitute a substantial contribution to the knowledge in the student's field of study.

It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor to be aware of any specific requirements of the student's department with respect to the student's thesis.

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual/section-8-supervision-oral-examinations-and-program-completion/8-4-thesis-requirements>

From a functionalist perspective, a quality thesis is one that passes, or passes with revisions, the Final Oral Examination.

FGSR Indicators of a Quality Thesis from the Final Exam Procedures

Section 8.3.4 of the GPM is titled Final Doctoral Examination. In essence, a quality thesis is one that satisfies all but one member of the final exam committee. This typically consists of at least three members of the supervisory committee and two arm's length examiners, including one from outside the University of Alberta.

Before the thesis is forwarded to the External, the supervisory committee members shall declare in writing to the supervisor(s) either that the thesis is of adequate substance and quality to warrant that the student proceed to the final examination...

Section 8.3.4 External Readers, states:

In the letter of invitation, the External Reader is asked to prepare a written report consisting of:

1. an evaluation of the scope, structure, methodology, and findings of the thesis...

These are good criteria for evaluation of the thesis by all committee members.

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual/section-8-supervision-oral-examinations-and-program-completion/8-3-conduct-of-examinations>

Thesis components

The following motions regarding theses were passed by FGSR Council on November 20, 2013.

4.1. Mandatory Inclusion of a Preface for Collaborative Work

Be it resolved that as of Spring Term 2014, all theses at the University of Alberta must contain a preface, as a mandatory component of a thesis regardless of thesis format, when the thesis contains journal articles authored or co-authored by the student (including an accepted paper that is forthcoming at the time of thesis submission) and/or when the research conducted for the thesis required ethics approval, with the preface serving as the place for the student to include a statement indicating the nature and extent of his or her contribution to the collaborative work included in the thesis and/or a statement that the required research ethics approval was obtained.

4.2. Bibliography

Be it resolved that as of Spring Term 2014, all theses at the University of Alberta, regardless of thesis format, must contain a bibliography indicating all sources used, with the bibliography appearing at the end of the thesis.

4.3. Electronic Submission

Be it resolved that as of Spring Term 2014, all theses at the University of Alberta, regardless of thesis format, will be submitted electronically using a Portable Document File (PDF) format.

Alberta School of Business Practices

A traditional thesis is a multi-chapter monograph. The three-paper dissertation has emerged as a common alternative to the traditional thesis, in which three papers, each of which approximates a journal submission, are used. Dissertations may also have two papers, four papers, or more. FGSR informed us that there is no set rule for how many papers a student submits within their thesis. As long as it is formatted properly in the 'paper-style' designation, then it will be approved by FGSR. What is important is the quality of the thesis and its substantial contribution to knowledge. We do recognize that the thesis itself is not likely to be published "as is" in most scholarly publications given the nature of the review process. This is especially in the case of a traditional thesis, which is much longer than an article in a scholarly business journal.

Nevertheless, our overriding principle is that the work carried out as part of the thesis can be adapted for scholarly publication.

A good way to learn about Alberta School of Business theses is to check a few out of the Library or ask a faculty member for a copy of a recent one.

Students should carefully work with FGSR to ensure that their thesis is accepted by the electronic submission system. Some students have had trouble with one part called ERA.

Rules for Alberta School of Business Theses

Preface: Theses by Alberta School of Business Students must include a Preface when any chapter or paper in the thesis is co-authored by the student and others. This chapter or paper need not be published or accepted for publication. The preface should list the co-authors and their affiliations and detail the contribution of the student to the chapter or paper.

Bibliography: Students should use format that complies with FGSR requirements.

Approved by the Alberta School of Business PhD Policy Committee, 2014.04.10.

History of Revisions

2016-11-04 updated web page hyperlinks