



**UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA**  
FACULTY OF GRADUATE  
STUDIES & RESEARCH

# Supervision and Examinations

GFC, September 25, 2017

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# Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research



## The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

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## Supervision and Examinations

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# Supervision and Examinations Proposed Changes – Context

- High Stakes for Thesis-based Graduate Students
- Maintain Institutional Standards
- Fairness
- Transparency
- Reputational Risk - Including External Examiners



# Supervision and Examinations Proposed Changes – Drivers for revision

- Confusion following 2012-2013/14 changes
- New technology allows more flexible best practices
- Input from students, ombuds and Associate Deans FGSR on perceived bias and need to improve practices for examination outcomes



## Supervision and Examinations Proposed Changes –

# Most recent revisions

- 2012 – substantive changes to the parallel section of the Graduate Program Manual
- 2013 – authority for approvals of supervision and examinations delegated to the Faculties
- 2013 – Corresponding calendar changes approved for the 2014-15 Calendar (ASC final approver)
- 2015-16 – small change (consequence when thesis not submitted) appeared in 17-18 Calendar



## Supervision and Examinations Proposed Changes –

# Most recent revisions

- 2012 – substantive changes to the parallel section of the Graduate Program Manual
  - Broadened pool of examiners
  - Redefined categories of examiners (internal/external became arm's length)
  - Removed most procedures for conduct of examinations



# Supervision and Examinations Proposed Changes – Process to Develop Revisions

- Gathered issues from stakeholders –
  - GPAC, Tour of Grad Councils of Faculties, FGSR staff
- FGSR Policy Review Committee reviewed and compared with other institutions
- FGSR Council – Preliminary Discussions, Notice of Motion, Motions
- Student Input – Student members of FGSR-PRC, 20 student members on FGSR Council, GSA solicited input from students at large on the proposal
- Input from ASC-SOS & ASC



# Supervision and Examinations Proposed Changes – Changes to highlight

- Size limits to committees
- Conduct of examinations – common procedures
- Guidance for use of Conditional Pass for doctoral candidacy examination
- Neutral Chair for doctoral examinations\*





# Supervision and Examinations Proposed Changes – Neutral Chair Sensitivity

Neutral Chair for doctoral examinations  
*from encouraged to required*

- Separate Motion at FGSR Council
- Known burden to programs with small faculty complement
- FGSR will support Faculties/Programs to create pool of skilled chairs for loan



# Supervision and Examinations Proposed Changes – Communication

- FGSR Council Members – All Program Coordinators and Associate Chairs Grad  
– Our link to supervisors
- Program Administrators (GPAC)
- Associate Deans Graduate (GEFAC)
- Students

