GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF A M.ED. THESIS
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INTRODUCTION:

The information provided below aims to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about the process of writing a thesis for the M.Ed. (Educational Studies) or M.Ed. (Counselling Psychology) programs.

WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE THESIS OPTION?

- **The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies**
  The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies sets out the university-wide policies and regulations. All graduate students at Western are registered as students in the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

  Each program has its own procedures, but they must align with the policies and regulations as laid out by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. [Thesis Regulation Guide](http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis_regulations/index.htm)

- **Your Academic Advisor**
  All M.Ed. students are assigned to an advisor upon entering the program. Make an appointment so that you can discuss your plans and the thesis option.

- **The Faculty of Education Office of Graduate Programs and Research**
  The staff of the Graduate Programs and Research Office will provide information, or point you to the resources you need.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PURSuing THE THESIS OPTION?

All Education Studies and Counselling graduate students, whether full-time or part-time, should seriously consider pursuing the thesis option.

- Writing a thesis provides you with a stimulating intellectual challenge.
- Writing a thesis offers you an opportunity to advance the state of knowledge in your chosen area.
- Writing a thesis provides an excellent foundation for doctoral studies and advanced research. Some doctoral programs require incoming students to have completed a thesis.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A THESIS

WHAT IS A THESIS?

A thesis is an extended research paper that

- addresses one or more researchable questions
- draws on published research and theoretical literature
- seeks to address a gap in the knowledge about a topic, or examines a topic in a new way
- is theoretically grounded
- is couched in proper English usage

GETTING STARTED

ONCE I'VE DECIDED TO DO A THESIS, THEN WHAT SHOULD I DO?

1. Identify a topic or topics of interest, or an issue you would like to explore
2. Find a faculty member who is willing to act as your Supervisor.
3. Work with your Supervisor to form a Thesis Advisory Committee.
1. Identify a topic or topics of interest and an issue you would like to explore.

What if I have no ideas?
An important part of the proposal writing process is turning questions and ideas into researchable questions
- Review your course texts and assignments. What was most engaging?
- Talk to faculty members and other graduate students about their research and your interests.
- Look at the bound theses and Directed Research Projects on the Education Library shelves.
- The theses in the Education Library were all completed by former graduate students in the Education faculty. As you browse select a few that pique your interest. Take a look at the Abstracts. Borrow one or two theses and read through the beginning chapters.

What are some advantages of deciding on a topic early in the program?
- You can choose courses that allow you to develop background knowledge to support your research.
- You are well positioned to meet with potential supervisors.
- You can find out early in the program whether you need to revise your plans based on the availability of potential supervisors.
- A Thesis Supervisor may recommend that certain additional graduate courses be taken before work on the thesis begins. You may save yourself additional work if you identify the general nature of your planned research before you have completed all of your course work.

What are some advantages of waiting to make a decision about your thesis topic?
- You can develop a broad-based understanding of the field. This is especially important for Masters level students who intend to pursue Doctoral Studies.
- You can be open to new questions and new ways to configure your research.

How late in the program can I make the decision?
- You should decide on a topic no later than the end of the semester in which you complete your last required course.

2. Find a faculty member who is willing to act as your Supervisor

Who can supervise my thesis?
- Your Thesis Supervisor must be a member of Graduate Faculty and a faculty member at the Faculty of Education. A Supervisor should have expertise in the area you wish to explore and in one or more research approaches suitable for your study. A Supervisor may be someone other than your Academic Advisor.

How do I find a Supervisor?
- It’s a good idea to discuss your area(s) of interest with your Academic Advisor, but you may seek advice from any faculty member. You may also wish to seek advice from other graduate students. From these preliminary discussions try to identify one or more potential Thesis Supervisors.

What do I need to do before approaching a potential Supervisor?
- Prepare a portfolio of your graduate course work. A portfolio contains (1) an accurate record of courses taken and (2) your original papers as marked by your instructors. The portfolio provides the potential Supervisor with valuable information about your supervision needs.

What should I ask the potential Supervisor?
- You need to know if the faculty member has the kind of expertise needed to supervise your research. You also need to feel comfortable with the faculty member’s style of supervision.

Ask about:
- availability and accessibility; e.g. Do you prefer to meet in person or to communicate by e-mail? How often would you be prepared to meet with me? How long can I expect to wait for
feedback on my work?
- the amount and kinds of direction the faculty member routinely provides; e.g. Will you read each chapter, or do you want me to write the whole thesis and then hand it to you?
- the faculty member’s expectations of students; e.g. How often do you want me to send you updates on my work? Do I need to provide you with paper copies of my work?

What if I can’t find a Supervisor?
- It is the student’s right and the student’s responsibility to ask a faculty member to act as thesis Supervisor. However, if you and your Academic Advisor are unable to find an appropriate and available faculty member, contact the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Be prepared to change or modify your topic.

3. Work with your Supervisor to form a Thesis Advisory Committee.
According to the regulations of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Thesis Advisory Committee must have at least two members: the Supervisor and another member. Your committee member(s) may or may not be from the Faculty of Education.

Please inform the Associate Dean, Graduate Programs & Research in a timely fashion of any serious difficulties such as major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A PROPOSAL?
- The proposal should leave the reader in no doubt as to what you intend to accomplish in the Thesis and how you will accomplish it.
- The proposal is a crucial piece of work which must be completed BEFORE you invest time in detailed research.
- A well designed and tightly written proposal can save you much time and effort in composing the final product.
- Students typically write and revise several drafts of a proposal before the final submission.

HOW DO I INFORM THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS & RESEARCH OFFICE THAT I’M WORKING ON MY PROPOSAL?

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete course requirements* Register in 9590 Masters Thesis Submit proposal including Ethics Approval if applicable within two terms of registering in 9590. Receive approvals</td>
<td>Complete course requirements* Register in 9684 (IPP) Individual Proposal Preparation (one term) Submit proposal including Ethics Approval if applicable Receive approvals Register in 9590 Masters Thesis after completion of IPP</td>
<td>Complete course requirements* Register in 9683** (IPP) Individual Proposal Preparation (one term) Submit proposal including Ethics Approval if applicable Receive approvals Register in 9590 Masters Thesis after completion of IPP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Students may take more than the minimum required number of courses for the program and route of study. Reasons for taking extra courses include narrowing down a research focus and providing relevant background for the thesis research.

**Exception: TVDSB Leadership students register for 9684 IPP

Read the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies guidelines, Principles and Guidelines Regarding Graduate Student Supervision, for further information on the rights and responsibilities of students and Supervisors.

http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/graduate_supervision/index.htm
9684/9683 INDIVIDUAL PROPOSAL PREPARATION (IPP)
The IPP is a required element of the M.Ed. in Educational Studies program for those students who began their program in July 2007 or later. The IPP process is the academic mechanism that facilitates the student’s proposal and ethical review (where required) for the thesis.

The IPP is completed when the proposal and ethical review (where required) have been submitted for approval.

The IPP should be completed in one term. Under exceptional circumstances a student may seek permission to register in the IPP for a second term. A student may be withdrawn from his/her program if the IPP is not completed by the end of the second term of registration.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL?
The proposal must communicate clearly in standard written English what you propose to accomplish in your thesis. There is no set length for a proposal, but 20 pages (double-spaced) is usually sufficient.

A proposal must meet the following criteria.

- The issues are clearly defined.
- Manageable limits for the study have been set.
- The research questions or problem to be addressed are clearly stated.
- The research techniques and methods of analyzing and/or interpreting the findings are described.
- The applicability of the study to educational scholarship and/or practice is demonstrated.
- Potential implications for education are noted.
- Ethical issues are identified and discussed.
- The adequacy of materials and available resources are demonstrated.
- A preliminary bibliography is attached.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM
The research problem or question to be investigated is the core of your research. Until you have clarified a workable research problem you cannot determine the nature of the approach or style of investigation that is appropriate for your research.

Your committee will advise you on the merit of your idea and the quality of the language in which it is expressed. Most students find that narrowing down the focus of the research is not an easy task, but it is a critical first step in the design of the study.

Research Methods:
Once the research problem is clearly defined you are ready to identify a research methodology and methods for your study.

Some questions to consider
- Should the study be empirical-analytic? interpretive? critical?
- Are quantitative methods appropriate?
- What weight should be given to empirical and/or theoretical considerations?
- Will you utilize historical or philosophical methods of analysis?
THESIS RESEARCH-PERMISSION AND OBLIGATIONS

WHEN DOES A RESEARCHER NEED TO APPLY FOR RESEARCH PERMISSION?
If your research involves human subjects in any manner, there are very strict procedures that must be followed.

For example
- conducting interviews
- using surveys and questionnaires
- using written work produced in their own classrooms or those of colleagues.

WHAT PROCEDURES MUST THE RESEARCHER FOLLOW?
You must obtain consent from the Ethical Review Committee and the Associate Dean, Graduate Programs and Research.

- No research involving human subjects can be undertaken until the Ethical Review Committee and the Associate Dean, Graduate Programs & Research, have given consent. Please discuss this matter thoroughly with your Supervisor before you begin any aspect of your research.

- It can take up to six weeks for the Ethical Review Committee to complete its review and it is not uncommon for the Ethical Review Committee to require changes in the protocol. If you have any queries about this issue, contact the Associate Dean, Graduate Programs & Research, who is also Chair of the Ethical Review Committee.


- If you are a teacher, you must also secure the written permission of your Board. (Check your Board’s procedures about this important point.)

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

When the Advisory Committee decides that the proposal is ready for submission, the student will submit the following to the Graduate Programs & Research Office.

1. One copy of your proposal (in paper format)


3. If Ethical Review is required:
   i. Protocol form and all attachments (new, adapted or standardized instruments (e.g. questionnaires), recruitment ads or posters, letters of information and consent forms) must be submitted to edu-ethics@uwo.ca. Note that only email submissions in MS Word/RTF format can be accepted.

   ii. Signature pages (Section 1.1 to 1.7) of the protocol form in paper format must be submitted to the Graduate Programs & Research Office. (Original or faxed signatures are acceptable.)

Your proposal or prospectus must be approved by your Thesis Supervisor and Thesis Advisory Committee, the Ethical Review Committee if necessary, and the Associate Dean, Graduate Programs & Research, BEFORE you begin to collect your data. Any data collected before you receive approval cannot be used in the Thesis.
APPROVAL OF YOUR PROPOSAL

HOW WILL I KNOW MY PROPOSAL HAS BEEN ACCEPTED?
You will receive an email notification from the Graduate Programs and Research Office once your proposal has been accepted. Included in the email will be a PDF file of your completed signature sheet (Form A).

Please note:
Although you will be anxious to start your data collection as soon as possible, you must plan for the possibility that the approval will not proceed as quickly as you would wish. Ethical review may require a month or more, depending on any changes that are required.

MAY I MAKE CHANGES TO MY RESEARCH PLAN AFTER THE PROPOSAL HAS BEEN ACCEPTED?
- Acceptance of the proposal does not mean that you and your committee are committed to it in all circumstances.
- Unforeseen difficulties or unexpected findings might necessitate revisions or amendments to your original proposal.
- You should consult your Supervisor and committee if you feel you need to make changes.
- If your changes involve any of the procedures approved by the Ethical Review Committee you will have to notify the committee.

THESIS PREPARATION

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I MEET WITH MY SUPERVISOR?
- There is no rule, but it is imperative that you maintain close contact with your Supervisor and other members the Advisory Committee regarding the progress of the Thesis. Quite often a series of regularly scheduled appointments is established. This is particularly crucial during the final stages of preparation.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I MEET WITH MY COMMITTEE?
- There is no rule. Talk to your Supervisor. A meeting of the full committee can be convened at your request and will be arranged by your Supervisor. At the very least, you will be required to keep the Supervisor and other members of the Advisory Committee informed of the progress of the work.

HOW DO COMMITTEE MEMBERS SUPPORT MY WORK?
The functions of the committee are:
- to review, make recommendations and approve the proposal;
- to advise and supervise the development of the study;
- to receive progress reports;
- to require modifications deemed necessary;
- to evaluate the final draft of the thesis;
- to determine when the final draft is ready for the oral examination.

WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH MY COMMITTEE?
- Should there be a difference of opinion between you and the committee concerning the readiness of the final draft for examination, you have the right to appeal this decision.
- If you are not successful in your appeal you do still have the right to proceed to defence. However, you must recognize that if your committee believes the thesis is not ready you will likely have a very difficult time defending your thesis before an examining committee.
- In the final analysis, the thesis is wholly your responsibility. Your committee is there to offer advice and guidance.

ARE OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS ALLOWED TO ADVISE ME?
- While working on your Thesis, you should feel free to consult any member of the Faculty of Education who may be able to offer advice.
WHAT IS THE RIGHT LENGTH FOR A THESIS?

- There is no set limit to the length of a M.Ed. Thesis. The only reasonable criterion is the space that is needed to discuss the issue being explored.
- Typically, a Thesis is approximately 80-125 pages in length.

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism is a serious Scholastic Offence. The following policy statement from Senate is in effect for all graduate work. "Students must write their essays in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations."

Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar: http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/graduate_regulations/section_10.htm).

Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

Students are required to follow the University of Western Ontario’s policies concerning plagiarism and the extensive use of copyrighted material.

PROPER FORMAT FOR THE THESIS

It is your responsibility to consult the web site of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for regulations and for the current Guide for the Preparation of Theses. The latter contains detailed instructions about the quality of paper, typescript, the use of illustrative material, the numbering of pages, binding the completed work, etc.: http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis_regulations/index.htm

THESIS EXAMINATION

The regulations of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies concerning the submission of a thesis and the scheduling of the oral examination are on the web site and should be carefully consulted: http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis_regulations/index.htm

The following information supplements School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies regulations.

- When the Advisory Committee decides that the thesis is ready for an examination, the student and supervisor will submit the following to the Faculty of Education Graduate Programs & Research Office:
  - Master’s Thesis Supervisor Approval Form (located on the SGPS web site at http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis_regulations/index.htm)
  - 3 copies of the thesis
  - 1 extra copy of the abstract

- Normally an examination committee consists of a neutral chair, two members from the Faculty of Education (excluding the Supervisor and Advisory Committee members) and a university examiner. The examination cannot be held until the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has approved the list of examiners and the date.

- A minimum of four weeks is needed for reading the thesis.
GRADUATE PROGRAMS & RESEARCH

- After submission of the examination copies, the Graduate Programs & Research Office will provide a package of information for the candidate, which includes instructions on creating the Certificate of Examination (samples located in Appendix; see Section 3.1.6. of SGPS Thesis Regulation Guide: http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis_regulations/section_3.htm). The student must take one Certificate of Examination to the Oral Examination to be signed. The Certificates of Exam that are bound do not contain signatures.

- The examiners may require that there are revisions and amendments before the examination is held.

- The examination is closed to the public.

- The examination committee will examine the candidate on the content, format, and implications of the thesis. In addition to determining the adequacy of the findings, the committee must be satisfied that the work meets the proper standards of scholarship.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE EXAM?
- Before the oral examination begins, the Chair of the examining committee will introduce you to all members of the committee.
- Then you will withdraw from the room for a few minutes while the examiners determine the order of questioning.
- Although the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies no longer requires that you do this, you should be prepared to present a 10-15 minute resume of the research when you return to the room. You should discuss this format with your Supervisor beforehand.
- Then the questioning begins. There may be one or two rounds of questioning. On the completion of all questioning you will retire from the room while the examining committee makes its determination.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE THESIS

WHAT HAPPENS IF I’M ASKED TO DO REVISIONS?
Students are often required to make minor revisions to the content and/or the format of the thesis once it has been successfully defended, before final approval.

- Revisions are supervised by one of the examiners who has withheld his/her signature from the Certificate of Examination.

- Within two weeks of the defence date:
  - Revisions must be completed.
  - The final signature must be obtained by the student.
  - The revised thesis must be submitted to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for final approval, and UWO’s Graphic Services for binding.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING THE THESIS TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES?
- After the revisions have been accepted, make sure that the thesis conforms to the correct format. A Master’s Checklist will be included in your Thesis Defence Confirmation package from the Graduate Programs & Research Office.
- Make sure your Certificate of Examination has all the required signatures.
- Make an appointment with the Thesis Coordinator, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Room 200, Natural Sciences Building: http://www1.regx.uwo.ca/GradSchedule/

- Bring the following to your meeting with the Thesis Coordinator:
  - one copy of your thesis
  - signed Certificate of Examination
  - Checklist for the Presentation of a Master’s Thesis
  - UWO Licence form (included in your Thesis Defence Confirmation package from the Graduate Programs & Research Office)
SUBMITTING THESIS COPIES FOR BINDING
Once approved by SGPS, you must submit the thesis with all the completed forms to UWO’s Graphic Services (Graphic Services Building), who will accept the thesis and make copies for binding and microfiching.

- Three thesis copies must be submitted for binding: 2 for Western Libraries + 1 for Graduate Program Library
- You may submit your own paper copies for binding, although you must check every page of every copy to ensure all copies are the same. Alternatively, you can pay to have Graphic Services print the copies, thus placing this responsibility with them.
- Graphic Services thesis binding information is sent to students in their Thesis Defence Confirmation package from the Graduate Programs & Research Office.

DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS
If you have promised participants that you will make your findings available to them, please make sure that you do so as soon as possible after your thesis has been accepted. It is an excellent technique for disseminating research results and also a way of maintaining good public relations with school boards and other sectors of the education system.

DEADLINES:

IPP SUPERVISOR APPROVAL FORM
Located on the Forms & Guidelines web page: http://www.edu.uwo.ca/programs/graduate-education/guidelines.html is due the last business day of the term preceding the start of the IPP, or approximately:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To commence IPP in Winter term</th>
<th>December 31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To commence IPP in Summer term</td>
<td>April 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To commence IPP in Fall term</td>
<td>August 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION
The final dates for submitting your proposal and ethical review, if applicable (with Approval of M.Ed. Thesis Proposal - Form A) to the Graduate Programs & Research Office are:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Last business day of term, or approximately:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THESIS FINAL SUBMISSION DEADLINES
A chart of current deadline dates related to thesis submission can be found at http://www.edu.uwo.ca/programs/graduate-education/guidelines.html.
MASTER'S THESIS CHECKLIST

This checklist highlights most of the key steps to successful completion. Before proceeding ensure that you have read Sections 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Thesis Regulation Guide (http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis_regulations/index.htm).

Section 1:
- GENERAL THESIS REGULATIONS

Section 2:
- COMPLETION OF ALL NON-THESIS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Section 3:
- THE THESIS PREPARATION AND FORMAT
  - FORMAT SPECIFICATIONS (MONOGRAPH OR INTEGRATED-ARTICLE)
    - Length
    - Copyright Material and Permissions
    - Confidentiality Agreement (where applicable)
    - Titling the Thesis
    - Title Page
    - Certificate of Examination
    - Abstract and Keywords
    - The Co-Authorship Statement (where applicable)
    - Acknowledgments (where applicable)
    - Table of Contents
    - Ethics Approval (where applicable)
    - Appendices (where applicable)
    - Curriculum Vitae
  - FORMATTING
    - Style for headings, subheadings, references, figures, tables, spelling, punctuation, and bibliographic citations
    - Typescript, point size, and print quality
    - Line spacing
    - Margins
    - Illustrative material
  - PAPER
    - Oversize pages
  - PAGE NUMBERING

Section 5:
- MASTERS’S CANDIDATE - COMPLETION OF THE THESIS DEGREE REQUIREMENT
  - THE CANDIDATE SUBMITS THE THESIS FOR EXAMINATION
    - Three unbound copies of the thesis
    - Application for Thesis Examination - Form B
    - “Master’s Thesis Supervisor Approval”
  - FINAL SUBMISSION OF THESIS
    - Any changes recommended by the Thesis Examination Board have been completed
    - Appointment booked with the Thesis Coordinator via appointment scheduler (http://www1.regx.uwo.ca/GradSchedule/)
    - Provide SGPS with the thesis in the prescribed format with 1 “UWO license” and two “Certificates of Examination” (one of which has the required original signatures).
    - Once approved by SGPS, the candidate must submit the thesis with all the completed forms to UWO’s Graphic Services (Graphic Services Building), who will accept the thesis and make copies for binding.
BEHAVIOURISM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

(Spine title: Type short title, maximum 60 characters; leave brackets)

(Thesis format: indicate Monograph OR Integrated-Article; leave brackets)

by

John A. Doe

Faculty of Education

Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario
Month Year*

© John A. Doe Year**

*Month and Year thesis submitted to School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

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SAMPLE CERTIFICATE OF EXAM

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION

Supervisor

Dr. Martin Kreiswirt

Examiners

Dr. Mike Smith

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Fred Jones

Dr. George Emery

Dr. Alan Franklin

Dr. Tony Vandervoort

Dr. Bill Arnold

The thesis by

First Name Middle Name Last Name

Entitled:

Full Title of Your Thesis

is accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Date__________________________________

Chair of the Thesis Examination Board
SAMPLE CERTIFICATE OF EXAM FOR BOUND COPIES

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION

Supervisor
Signature on file
Dr. Martin Kreiswirt

Examiners
Signature on file
Dr. Mike Smith

Supervisory Committee
Signature on file
Dr. Fred Jones

Signature on file
Dr. George Emery

Signature on file
Dr. Alan Franklin

Signature on file
Dr. Tony Vandervoort

Signature on file
Dr. Bill Arnold

The thesis by

First Name Middle Name Last Name

Entitled:

Full Title of Your Thesis

is accepted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Date________________________

Signature on file
Chair of the Thesis Examination Board