

Trent University
Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies
Guidelines for M.A. Thesis/MRP Supervisory Committees

Approved by FC Grad Exec April 27, 2017

1. Each student must have a thesis supervisory committee consisting of a supervisor and at least one committee member. Committees should be limited to three members.
2. The supervisor must be a Trent tenured or tenure-track professor and member of the Frost Centre. The supervisor should be identified, after consultation with the student, the Frost Centre Director and the student's Academic Advisor by **November 1st** of the first term of a student's tenure in the Frost Centre. The full supervisory committee should be in place by April 15th of the student's first year in the Frost Centre.
3. The supervisor and one member of the committee must be tenured or tenure-track professors at Trent and members of the Frost Centre. A third member can be a tenured or tenure-track professor at Trent and member of the Frost Centre; an adjunct professor in the Frost Centre; a professor emeritus; or, if a convincing case can be made in writing to the Director of the Frost Centre, a qualified community representative with specific expertise not found in other members of the Frost Centre.
4. In the spirit of interdisciplinarity that grounds the Frost Centre, supervisory committees should be demonstrably interdisciplinary, if possible containing members from different departments.
5. Thesis/MRP topics should be confirmed in writing by the student with her/his supervisor by **April 15st** of his/her first academic year. Recognizing that there will be refinement of the focus of a thesis/MRP as the project develops, a drastic change in topic after this date should be discouraged by the supervisory committee.
6. The supervisory committee should meet with the student by May 1 of a student's first academic year. In the first meeting of the supervisory committee, agreement should be reached on the role of individual committee members, the frequency of committee meetings, a timetable for (and the nature of) the committee's feedback on the student's work. In a student's second year, the supervisory committee should meet at least once; the student and the supervisor should meet more frequently as needed.

7. If a supervisor or committee member is unavailable (that is not accessible on email or conference call) for more than six months, replacement(s) can be appointed to a committee with written approval of the Frost Centre Director.
8. Thesis/MRP proposals should be read by the supervisor by **May 15th** of a student's first academic year. Supervisors must communicate to the Frost Centre Director if s/he identifies significant problems/concerns with the proposal as submitted. Thesis and MRP committee members are expected to also read these proposals and give feedback to the student/supervisor. *Copies of all final thesis/MRP proposals are to be filed with the Frost Centre Director.*
9. If a student is unable to approach her/his supervisory committee, s/he should consult with the Frost Centre Director in the event of dissatisfaction with the composition or performance of the supervisory committee. When the supervisor in question is the Frost Centre Director, the Dean of Graduate Studies should be consulted.
10. The following timeframe(s) should be communicated by supervisors/academic advisors to students as a guide to their timely completion. Progress in relation to this schedule should be closely monitored by supervisors and documented in annual reports to the Frost Centre Director. If students encounter problems keeping to this timeframe they should speak with their supervisor, and if necessary, the Frost Centre Director.

Thesis-based MA Benchmarks

Year 1

- Sept 1 to Oct 15 Discussions with Academic Advisor and Frost Centre Director about potential supervisors/thesis topics
- November 1 Confirmation of supervisor by student /reported to Frost Centre Director
- December 15 Clarification of the theme and direction of thesis with supervisor
- March 15 Full committee in place
- April 15 Thesis direction/content confirmed in writing with supervisor by student
- April 30 Completion of course work/submission of thesis proposal to supervisor for approval/copy sent to FC Director for file

- May 1 Final thesis proposal submitted to supervisor and committee
 - May 15 Feedback given to student on proposal
 - May 1 to August 31 Research
- Year 2
- Sept 1 to Dec 30 Completion of research and organization of materials/Data analysis/Regular communication with supervisor as to the direction/content of thesis/Second meeting of full committee
 - January 1 to May 30 Completion of remainder of thesis/review of complete draft by full committee
 - By May 30 Meeting of full committee
 - June 1 to July 15 Completion of revisions
 - July 15 to July 30 Final review of thesis by full committee
 - August 1 to Sept 15 Examination scheduled

Major Research Paper Based MA Benchmarks

Year 1.

- a. Fall term
 - i. Discussion with Academic Advisor and Frost Centre Director about potential supervisors/MRP topics (Sept 1 to Oct 15)
 - ii. Confirmation by student of supervisor/reported to Frost Centre Director (Nov 1)
 - iii. Clarification of the theme and direction of MRP with supervisor (Dec 15)
- b. Winter Term
 - i. Full committee in place (by April 15)
 - ii. Completion of course work/submission of MRP proposal (April 30)
- c. Spring Term
 - i. MRP Proposal read by supervisor/feedback given to student (May 1 to May 15)
 - ii. Completion of MRP: research and writing (May 1 to Aug 30)
 - iii. MRP submitted to supervisor and second reader (Aug 31)
 - iv. Final MRP grades submitted (independently) to Frost Centre (Sept 15)