

**I/O Psychology
Information on the MSc and PhD Thesis & Defence Process
Saint Mary's University**

Thesis Committee

Advising Committee

MSc	PhD
Supervisor	Supervisor
1-2 Faculty members from within Psychology	1-2 Faculty members from within Psychology
1 Faculty member external to Psychology (optional)	1 Faculty member external to Psychology
Any other Examiners external to SMU (optional)	Any other Examiners external to SMU (optional)

Defence (Examining) Committee (for both MSc & PhD)

- All members of the Advising Committee (see above), PLUS
- External Examiner (external to SMU, and having an arm's length relationship with candidate)

MSc Program General Timeline Summary

Timeline	To Do List
YEAR 1	
Sept-Dec	Term 1 Courses Get to know faculty & their research areas; think about topics/questions that interest you Attend LEARN series Join CN Centre (& other groups) Attend COHP lab sessions
December	Take a well-deserved break!
Sept - March	Work with faculty members and GPC to identify best student-supervisor fit
Jan - April	Term 2 courses Attend LEARN series Attend COHP lab sessions Identify thesis topic
April - June	Develop thesis proposal (including methods and sample) Submit ethics Secure sample (network; piggyback on other studies; talk to organizations; etc.)
May - Aug	Internship Start writing thesis (Draft 1-intro) Attend/present at conferences
Aug 15-29	Take a well-deserved vacation & prep for Year 2
YEAR 2	
Sept-Dec	Term 1 courses
Sept - Jan	Collect data
Fall	Draft 2- intro; First draft of methods
December	Take a well-deserved break!
Jan-March	Term 2 courses First draft of results & discussion
Spring	1 st full draft; 2 nd and final FULL drafts; send to committee; send to external (see defence timeline table for examples) Ensure you file to graduate in the fall
May-August	Attend/present at conferences
July-August	Set a defence date (typically in July or August, depending on your committee's schedule) SEE NEXT TABLE FOR MORE DEFENCE DETAILS
Deadline: August 31	Submit all program work to FGSR. *This date is firm in order to be eligible to graduate in October, and to be accepted into the PhD program.
Aug	Vacation and prep for PhD (and/or job)

NOTE: In planning your defence date, you need to account for the schedule of all of your committee members. Therefore, it is a good idea to create a work-back table from your 'ideal' defence date. Remember to account for unforeseen delays & 'issues'.

NOTE: This document is meant as a useful summary & template to help navigate the process. It is not meant to replace official SMU documents (e.g., FGSR; Psychology). It is your responsibility to refer to these official documents.

MSc EXAMPLE DEFENCE TIMELINE (for year 2) Based on an <u>August 15</u> defence date

Timeframe	Thesis & Defence Prep Activity
YEAR 1	
	Complete coursework, internship, and get topic, committee, and proposal
YEAR 2	
Sept-March	Create a workback timeline for yourself Complete study: Collect data; analyze data; write thesis; file to graduate
May 16	Send complete version #1 of thesis to supervisor
	Allow 2 weeks for supervisor comments
	Allow 1-2 weeks for revisions
June 13	Send complete version #2 of thesis to supervisor
	Allow 2 weeks for supervisor comments and revisions. Note: this timeframe assumes minor revisions. More revisions may be necessary depending on the quality of the document.
June 27	Send Committee Version #1 of thesis to thesis committee
	Allow 2 weeks for comments from committee
	Allow 1-2 weeks for revisions
July 18	Send Committee Version #2 of thesis to thesis committee
	Allow 1-2 weeks for review and revisions (note: this timeframe assumes minor revisions)
August 1	Send final thesis to Defence Committee (i.e., External Examiner and Thesis Committee). FGSR mandates a minimum 2 weeks prior to defence. NOTE: Your presentation MUST be based on this document. No changes to the document are allowed until after the defence.
August 1-15	Prep defence presentation Prep potential questions and responses Prep additional analyses and slides
AUGUST 15	Defence – usually about 3 hours from set up to feedback
	Revisions (typically 2 days to 1 week)
	Allow 1 day to 2 weeks for supervisor to review (depending on the extent of revisions)
Final Deadline August 31	Submit all program work to FGSR. This step is necessary in order to be eligible to graduate in October, and to be accepted into the PhD program.

NOTE: You need to allow 2 weeks for your committee to respond, but they may be able to get it back sooner to you. It is best if you stay in close contact with them so that they know when to expect a new version of your thesis. Remember to schedule for time when they may be away.

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**** DRAFT-&-SOMEWHAT-IDEAL* PhD Timeline Template**

Example Timeline	To Do List
YEAR 1	
Sept-Dec	Term 1 course(s) Confirm supervisor Plan out your own schedule and 3-year timeline Identify potential IRPs Submit research for spring conferences Join CN Centre (& other groups) Attend (& facilitate/present at) LEARN series
Dec 15-31	Take a well-deserved break!
Jan - April	Term 2 course(s) Work on IRP Prepare presentations for conferences Think about (& read up on) dissertation topic Attend (& facilitate/present at) LEARN series
May - Aug	Work on IRP Present work at conferences RA & consulting work
Aug 15-29	Take a well-deserved vacation & prep for Year 2
YEAR 2	
Sept-Dec	Term 1 course(s) Read and develop ideas for dissertation Attend (& facilitate/present at) LEARN series
December	Take a well-deserved break!
Jan-March	Comps preparation Attend (& facilitate/present at) LEARN series Research dissertation topics
April	Comps exam** (times offered may vary throughout the year)
May	Write dissertation proposal Meet with committee Have proposal approved by committee
May-August	Dissertation: submit ethics; start data collection Attend/present at conferences RA & consulting work *Start thinking about job hunt... work on it into Year 3
YEAR 3	
Sept-Dec	First draft of results & discussion
December	Take a well-deserved break!
Jan-April	1 st full draft; 2 nd and final FULL drafts; send to committee; file to graduate
May-August	Conferences; Job hunt; etc (as time allows)
July-August	Defence Prep (see defence timeline table for more details and examples)
August	Vacation and prep for real world ☺
NOTE: In planning your defence date, please account for the schedule of all of your committee members. It is a good idea to create a work-back table from your 'ideal' defence date. Remember to account for unforeseen delays & 'issues'.	

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PhD EXAMPLE DEFENCE TIMELINE Based on an August 15 Defence date ** NOTE: Similar to MSC, but the lead-in times are slightly longer (e.g., external examiner must have the document for 3-4 weeks). Check FGSR guidelines

Thesis & Defence Prep Activity
** After having completed a draft version that your supervisor has seen (and may have seen sections of it many times)...
Send final draft version #1 of thesis to supervisor; Allow 2 weeks for supervisor comments & allow 1-2 weeks for you to complete revisions
Send final draft version #2 of thesis to supervisor; Allow 2 weeks for supervisor comments and revisions. Note: this timeframe assumes minor revisions. More revisions may be necessary depending on the quality of the document.
Send Committee Version #1 of thesis to thesis committee; Allow 2 weeks for comments from committee; Allow 1-2 weeks for revisions
Repeat process as necessary... ☺
Send final thesis to Defence Committee (i.e., External Examiner and Thesis Committee). FGSR mandates a minimum 3-4 weeks prior to defence (please check with them). NOTE: Your presentation MUST be based on this document. No changes to the document are allowed until after the defence.
Prep defence presentation Prep potential questions and responses Prep additional analyses and slides
Defence – usually about 3 hours from set up to feedback
Revisions (typically 2-10 days)
Allow 1 day to 2 weeks for supervisor (and committee) to review (depending on the extent of revisions)
Submit all forms, signed sheets, etc. to FGSR.

NOTE: Please allow 2 weeks for your committee to respond. They may be able to get it back sooner to you, but it is a good idea to plan ahead. You should stay in close contact with them so that they know when to expect a new version of your dissertation (to ensure timing works for everyone).

MSc & PhD in I/O Psychology Thesis Defence Procedures

The Chair makes welcoming remarks:

- Introduces self, candidate, and Defence Committee & explains the process

Process:

- Candidate will present for 25 minutes
- We take a 5-10 minute break. All audience members who do not want to stay until the end of the proceedings are asked to leave at this time (accommodation made for special situations).
- Question Period :
 - This process is typically 1.5 hours (MSc) to 1.5-2 hours (PhD). (*NOTE: Excessively long responses by candidate may require a longer time period.*)
 - The order of questions is external examiner, committee members who are external to university, members who are external to department, members who are internal to the department, supervisor
 - Typically, each committee member gets approximately 10-15 minutes to ask questions in the first round, and approx. 5-10 mins for second round, and approximately 5 minutes (MSc) or 5-10 minutes (PhD) for the third and subsequent rounds (as required; any member may decline the opportunity to ask more questions during these rounds). The Chair will give latitude to give slight favour to the External Examiner in the distribution of time allotment for questioning. If time allows, the Chair may entertain questions from the audience.
 - It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that the questioning takes place in an organized and fair manner. The chair should discourage a debate among members during the questions, and that an members should not interrupt/intervene/answer the questions of another member (unless there are specific questions for another member to clarify a question to the candidate).
- The Candidate and audience leave the examination room while the Defence Committee deliberates. The candidate should stay in the vicinity of the Examination room (and typically the supervisor has a phone number or email address to reach the candidate)
- The Examination Committee deliberates and comes to a conclusion on the thesis examination. The Chair will ask each Examiner in turn (in the order identified during the Introductions above) to make **brief** comments on their assessment of the thesis as a written document and the performance of the Candidate in defending the thesis. The committee agrees on an outcome (fail, minor revisions, major revisions). For outstanding thesis, the chair may ask the Committee if they recommend the thesis be considered for Governor General's Gold Medal.
- The Candidate will be asked back into the room to hear the outcome of the examination process.
- The supervisor will provide detailed feedback to the candidate regarding the revisions requested by the committee.
- The candidate and committee and friends and family will celebrate! ☺
- The candidate will revise the document. As per standard manuscript protocol, it is recommended to create a response table indicating how you have addressed each of the committee's comments, as well as highlight all changes in your document.
- The candidate will submit these revisions to the committee for approval and revise as requested (based on decisions made in the defence, and no other changes).
- Once approved by the committee, the candidate will complete all required paperwork and submit the manuscript to FGSR.

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