

Guidelines For Doctoral Students Completing in the 2026/2027 Academic Year

UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE | SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES



From Thesis Defence to Decanal Approval

The time it takes to proceed from a request for thesis defence to obtaining decanal approval will vary from one student to another. Here's an overview of the general timeline:

Step 1: You or your supervisor submit the [Request for Final Thesis Examination](#). The version of your Thesis attached to this request is sent out to your Thesis Exam Committee and used in your oral defence.

- You cannot make any further edits until after your defence.
- **This request must be submitted at least six weeks prior to your defence date.**

Step 2: Members of your Thesis Exam Committee submit the [Assessment of Readiness to Defend](#) form to the Chair; this form indicates their confirmation that you are ready to proceed with the defence.

Step 3: Following your defence, the exam Chair submits a [Thesis Examination Report](#) to SGS, indicating the outcome of your defence and what, if any, revisions are needed. **Most students need at least two weeks to complete revisions after their defence.** Please discuss this timeline with your supervisor to ensure there is sufficient time to complete revisions.

Step 4: Once your required revisions (if any) are approved, your supervisor submits the [Recommendation of the Award of the Degree \(RAD\)](#) form to SGS.

Step 5: Upon receipt of the RAD, SGS will be in touch with you via email. We'll review your Thesis to ensure it conforms to all [thesis formatting requirements](#) and provide you with instructions to:

- Create an OPUS account
- Upload your Thesis to OPUS
- Request a [Thesis Embargo](#) (if needed)

Step 6: Your Thesis is submitted to the SGS Dean for final review and approval. Once you have decanal approval, your program is officially complete! **Allow at least one to two weeks for Steps 5 & 6 to be completed.**

Satisfying Your Program Requirements

Upon receipt of your Request for Final Thesis Examination, SGS will confirm you've satisfied all program requirements. This will include the following:

- Completion of all required coursework
- An approved [Post-Admission Thesis Proposal](#)
- Successful completion of [Comprehensive Examinations](#)

Refer to the [Graduate Calendar](#) for details specific to your program. See Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Programs »Ph.D. (most majors) or Ph.D. (Cultural, Social, and Political Thought).

Deadlines for Program Completion

Dates within the [Academic Schedule](#) will dictate whether you need to register and pay tuition for a given term. **You must remain registered in your Thesis course until your Thesis receives decanal approval—this includes the time following your defence while you complete any revisions required by your Thesis Examination Committee.**

Depending on when you want to complete your program and which graduation date you want to qualify for, work backwards and consider the following possible timelines:

SCENARIO 1: If you want to complete your program in the current term & confer your degree at the next convocation ceremony

PRIOR TO YOUR FINAL THESIS EXAMINATION			
Request for Final Thesis/Project Examination:	Per the recommended timeline that follows, submit your Request for Final Thesis Examination on this date (six weeks ahead of your defence).		
	<u>Summer 2026</u> 22-JUN-2026	<u>Fall 2026</u> 15-OCT-2026	<u>Winter 2027</u> 19-FEB-2027
Oral Defence:	SGS recommended date of oral defence.		
	<u>Summer 2026</u> 03-AUG-2026	<u>Fall 2026</u> 26-NOV-2026	<u>Winter 2027</u> 02-APR-2027
FOLLOWING YOUR FINAL THESIS EXAMINATION			
Recommendation of the Award of the Degree:	Allowing two weeks for completion of any revisions requested by the exam committee, this is the approximate date your supervisor should submit the Recommendation of the Award of the Degree (RAD) form.		
	<u>Summer 2026</u> 17-AUG-2026*	<u>Fall 2026</u> 10-DEC-2026*	<u>Winter 2027</u> 16-APR-2027*
Decanal Approval:	The final working day of the term is the final date to receive decanal approval of your Thesis. This is two weeks after submission of the RAD to allow time for Thesis upload to OPUS, formatting review by SGS, and a final review by the Dean. This is a requirement for convocation & completion of your degree.		
	<u>Summer 2026</u> 31-AUG-2026	<u>Fall 2026</u> 24-DEC-2026	<u>Winter 2027</u> 30-APR-2027
Convocation that you are eligible to attend:	Below are the convocation ceremonies that you will be eligible to attend. Please see "APPLYING FOR GRADUATION" at the bottom of this document for more information.		
	October 2026 May 2027	May 2027 October 2027	May 2027 October 2027

**This is an estimate, as you don't know how much time you'll need to complete revisions. Discuss this timeline with your supervisor to ensure there is sufficient time.*

SCENARIO 2: If you need additional time but want to avoid registering for the next term. In this scenario you will confer your degree in the subsequent convocation ceremony (not the closest).

If you obtain decanal approval prior to the add/drop deadline within a given term, you'll avoid having to register and pay tuition.

PRIOR TO YOUR FINAL THESIS EXAMINATION			
Request for Final Thesis/Project Examination:	Per the timeline that follows, SGS recommends you submit your Request for Final Thesis Examination on this date (six weeks ahead of your defence).		
	<u>Summer 2026</u> 07-JUL-2026	<u>Fall 2026</u> 27-OCT-2026	<u>Winter 2027</u> 1-MAR-2027
Oral Defence:	SGS recommended date of oral defence.		
	<u>Summer 2026</u> 18-AUG-2026	<u>Fall 2026</u> 8-DEC-2026	<u>Winter 2027</u> 12-APR-2027
FOLLOWING YOUR FINAL THESIS EXAMINATION			
Recommendation of the Award of the Degree:	Allowing two weeks for completion of any revisions requested by the exam committee, this is the approximate date your supervisor should submit the Recommendation of the Award of the Degree (RAD) form.		
	<u>Summer 2026</u> 01-SEP-2026*	<u>Fall 2026</u> 22-DEC-2026*	<u>Winter 2027</u> 26-APR-2027*
Decanal Approval:	The add/drop deadline for the term is the final date to receive decanal approval of your Thesis. This is two weeks after submission of the RAD to allow time for Thesis upload to OPUS, formatting review by SGS, and a final review by the Dean. This is a requirement for convocation & completion of your degree.		
	<u>Summer Term /Fall Add/Drop</u> 15-SEP-2026	<u>Fall 2026/Winter Add/Drop</u> 12-JAN-2027	<u>Winter 2027/Summer Add/Drop</u> 10-MAY-2027
Convocation that you are eligible to attend:	Below are the convocation ceremonies that you will be eligible to attend. Please see "APPLYING FOR GRADUATION" at the bottom of this document for more information.		
	May 2027 October 2027	May 2027 October 2027	October 2027 May 2028

**This is an estimate, as you don't know how much time you'll need to complete revisions. Discuss this timeline with your supervisor to ensure there is sufficient time.*

SCENARIO 3: If you need additional time into the upcoming term, you may be eligible to register for a half-thesis course and confer your degree in the subsequent convocation ceremony (not the closest).

- A Half-Thesis course provides students with an **additional six weeks** past the first day of classes to receive decanal approval of their theses.
- The tuition for the Half-Thesis course is commensurate with its duration, but all fees (except for the GSA fee) will be at a full-time rate. Refer to the [Graduate Fee Schedules](#) provided by Financial Services for this information.
- **Students are not able to register for the Half-Thesis course via the Bridge**—this process must be done manually by SGS. Reach out to sgs@uleth.ca if you are interested in this option.

PRIOR TO YOUR FINAL THESIS EXAMINATION			
Request for Final Thesis/Project Examination:	Per the timeline that follows, SGS recommends you submit your Request for Final Thesis Examination on this date (six weeks ahead of your defence).		
	<u>Summer 2026/Fall Half</u> 19-AUG-2026	<u>Fall 2026/Winter Half</u> 9-DEC-2026	<u>Winter 2027/Summer Half</u> 12-APR-2027
Oral Defence:	To qualify for a half-thesis, your date of defence must be on this date or sooner.		
	<u>Summer 2026/Fall Half</u> 30-SEPT-2026	<u>Fall 2026/Winter Half</u> 27-JAN-2027	<u>Winter 2027/Summer Half</u> 24-MAY-2027
FOLLOWING YOUR FINAL THESIS EXAMINATION			
Recommendation of the Award of the Degree:	Allowing two weeks for completion of any revisions requested by the exam committee, this is the approximate date your supervisor should submit the Recommendation of the Award of the Degree (RAD) form.		
	<u>Summer 2026/Fall Half</u> 14-OCT-2026*	<u>Fall 2026/Winter Half</u> 10-FEB-2027*	<u>Winter 2027/Summer Half</u> 7-JUN-2027*
Decanal Approval:	The half-thesis ends six weeks after the first day of the term. This is the final date to receive decanal approval of your Thesis, and is one week after submission of the RAD to allow time for Thesis upload to OPUS, formatting review by SGS, and a final review by the Dean. This is a requirement for convocation & completion of your degree.		
	<u>Summer 2026/Fall Half</u> 21-OCT-2026	<u>Fall 2026/Winter Half</u> 17-FEB-2027	<u>Winter 2027/Summer Half</u> 14-JUN-2027
Convocation that you are eligible to attend:	Below are the convocation ceremonies that you will be eligible to attend. Please see “APPLYING FOR GRADUATION” at the bottom of this document for more information.		
	May 2027 October 2027	May 2027 October 2027	October 2027 May 2028

**This is an estimate, as you don't know how much time you'll need to complete revisions. Discuss this timeline with your supervisor to ensure there is sufficient time.*

What happens if a student misses the Half-Thesis deadline?

- If you have not received decanal approval of your Thesis by the relevant deadline, you must contact SGS to register for an additional Half-Thesis course.
- Tuition and fees will be equal to what you would pay had you registered for the full term.

Applying for Graduation

You must apply to graduate, even if you do not plan to attend convocation. You do not need to defend before applying for graduation.

- For instructions on how and when to apply, visit the [Convocation](#) web pages.
- Once you apply to graduate, you have several weeks before the deadline to withdraw your application. Be sure to make a note of [Important Graduation Deadlines](#).
- Direct inquiries related to your graduation application to graduation@uleth.ca and inquiries related to the convocation ceremony to convocation@uleth.ca.

Students Applying for a Post-Graduation Work Permit

If you are an international student and you intend to apply for a Post-Graduation Work Permit, please submit a [Request for Completion Letter for Post-Graduation Work Permit Application](#) through the International Office. They will reach out to SGS to confirm the date of your defence and the date your Thesis receives decanal approval.

If you have additional questions or would like to schedule an advising appointment with an SGS Program Specialist, email us at sgs@uleth.ca.