

The following Motions and Documents were considered by the Committee on the Learning Environment at its April 24, 2024 meeting:

1.	Agenda Title:
	Motion: THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment recommend that the General Faculties Council approve the proposed UAPPOL Exam Rescheduling Procedure, as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect September 3, 2024.
	Decision: <b>CARRIED</b>
	FINAL Item No. 5

2.	Agenda Title: Proposed Changes to Thesis Requirements for Graduate Students (GPS)
	Motion: That the General Faculties Council, on the recommendation of the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment, approve the changes to the Thesis Requirements for Graduate Students as outlined, for implementation upon final approval.
	Decision: <b>CARRIED</b>
	FINAL Item No. 6



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**FINAL ITEM NO. 5**

**Decision**  **Discussion**  **Information**

**ITEM OBJECTIVE:** Approval of a new exam rescheduling procedure.

<b>DATE</b>	April 24, 2024
<b>TO</b>	GFC Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE)
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO</b>	Vice-President (Academic)

**Motion:** THAT the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment recommend that the General Faculties Council approve the proposed UAPPOL Exam Rescheduling Procedure, as set forth in Attachment 1, to take effect September 3, 2024.

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Background

The approval of the 2024-2025 Academic Schedule required a shift to a new exam scheduling model. To accommodate 63 teaching days per term while maintaining the current number of non-instructional days, we will now schedule three final exams per day, an increase from the previous two. This change will first be effective in the Fall 2024 term and will continue in future years.

The move to three daily final exams aligns us with the practices of nearly all U15 institutions. This adjustment offers several advantages:

- The final exam period will conclude 1-4 days sooner.
- We will have additional capacity to hold consolidated final exams.
- It expands our capacity to schedule final exams for growing student enrollments.

To complement the transition to three final exams per day, we’re implementing a new procedure designed to support students who are scheduled to write three exams in four consecutive time slots. Recognizing the potential difficulty of this situation, we will offer students the opportunity to request a rescheduling of one of their exams. This procedure is designed to ensure that all students have a fair chance to perform at their best during the examinations.

Next Steps

A robust communications plan is being developed to inform students, instructors, and faculties about the new exam scheduling practices and the exam rescheduling procedure.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Exam Rescheduling Procedure (UAPPOL) (April 17, 2024)

**SCHEDULE A:**

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**GOVERNANCE OUTLINE**



**ITEM NO. 5**

**Engagement and Routing**

Consultation and Stakeholder Participation / Approval Route (parties who have seen the proposal and in what capacity) <[Governance Resources Section Student Participation Protocol](#)>

**Those who are actively participating:**

- Office of the Registrar

**Those who have been consulted:**

- Dean of Students
- Office of Education in each college.
- Students' Union
- Program Support Team
- Committee on the Learning Environment
- GFC Executive Committee
- Office of the Provost

**Those who have been informed:**

- Advisory Committee on Enrolment Management

**Approval Route:**

- Consultation with PST, February 29.
- Consultation with Committee on Student Affairs (COSA), March 21.
- Consultation with Committee on the Learning Environment (CLE), March 27.
- Consultation with GFC Executive, April 8.
- Seeking approval recommendation from CLE on April 24.
- Seeking approval from GFC on April 29.

**Supplementary Notes / Context:**

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Original Approval Date: -  
 Most Recent Approval: -  
 Most Recent Editorial Date: -  
 Parent Policy: [Academic Schedule Policy](#)

## Exam Rescheduling Procedure

<b>Office of Administrative Responsibility:</b>	Office of the Registrar
<b>Approver:</b>	Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
<b>Scope:</b>	Compliance with this University procedure extends to all academic, support and excluded staff, and academic colleagues as outlined and defined in the Recruitment Policy ( <a href="#">Appendix A</a> and <a href="#">Appendix B:Definitions and Categories</a> ), undergraduate and graduate students and post-doctoral fellows.

### OVERVIEW

The Office of the Registrar recommends on the Academic Schedule to the GFC Executive Committee who approves it. In order to ensure 63 teaching days and schedule final exams within the approved two-week examination period, the Office of the Registrar schedules three final exams per day in that period. Pursuant to subsection 26(1)(e) of the Post-secondary learning Act, General Faculties Council may make decisions as to the conduct of examinations. GFC has set out the following procedure to provide guidelines for students who are scheduled to write three or more final exams within four consecutive time slots, outlining how they can request to have one of these exams rescheduled to a different date and time.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish the eligibility criteria, application process, and guidelines for rescheduling a final exam when a student is scheduled to write three exams in four consecutive time slots.

## PROCEDURE

This procedure is applicable only to final examinations scheduled within the **term's** official final exam period (as defined in the **Academic Schedule**).

1. The University holds three final exams per day during the final exam period, including 8:30 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 5:30 p.m. When a student is scheduled to write three (3) or more final examinations within four consecutive time slots, they are eligible to request rescheduling of one of the exams.

For example, a student is eligible if they are scheduled to write one exam at 8:30 a.m. and one exam at 5:30 p.m. on one day, and another exam at 8:30 a.m. the next day.

A student is not eligible if they are scheduled to write one exam at 8:30 a.m. and one exam at 5:30 p.m. on one day, and another exam at 1:00 p.m. the next day.

2. Efforts will be made to hold rescheduled exams no later than December 22 in the Fall Term and April 30 in the Winter Term. However, in some cases, exams may be rescheduled beyond the end of the Final Exam period. Reasons may include, but are not limited to: using a faculty's pre-established common deferred exam date for the purpose of rescheduled exams and constraints such as exam venue availability or instructor availability.
3. Students who are eligible to reschedule an exam may submit their application through Bear Tracks. Applications for rescheduling in the Fall Term must be received by mid-November, and by mid-March for the Winter Term (specific dates will be provided in the University's Academic Schedule). Opting to reschedule an exam is discretionary; students retain the option to write all three exams at their initially scheduled times.
4. The Office of the Registrar will review and approve or deny applications based on the student's final exam schedule.
5. Students may select which eligible exam they wish to reschedule and submit their request to the Office of the Registrar. The Office of the Registrar will select a new date, time, and venue for the rescheduled exam, and inform the instructor. If the instructor is unable to invigilate the exam during the new date/time, they may select a different day/time and inform the Office of the Registrar no later than two weeks before the final exam period begins. Rescheduled exam dates, times, and locations will be made available for students in Bear Tracks at least two weeks before the commencement of the official examination period.
6. If a student's rescheduled exams lead to another instance of three exams within four consecutive time slots, or an exam conflict, the Office of the Registrar will work with the student to make alternate arrangements.

7. If a student has an approved exam accommodation, they must work with the Academic Success Centre to make arrangements for their rescheduled exam.
8. The course instructor is responsible for invigilating the rescheduled exam. Should the instructor be unable to perform this role, the respective teaching department or faculty will appoint an alternative invigilator. The invigilator's duties include providing the exam papers, overseeing the exam session, and collecting the completed papers at the end of the exam.
9. If a student misses their rescheduled final exam and is eligible for a deferred exam (see [Absence from Final Exams](#) in the University Calendar), they must follow all established policies and procedures related to exam deferrals. (See [Deferred Final Exams](#) in the University Calendar).

## DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. <a href="#">[▲Top]</a>	
<b>Term</b>	The Academic Year is divided into four (4) (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer) terms for the purposes of registration and the scheduling of classes and examinations.
<b>Academic Schedule</b>	The Academic Schedule is the listing of important dates and deadlines for the University of Alberta, and is published in the University Calendar each year.

## RELATED POLICIES, FRAMEWORKS, AND PROCEDURES

If any links are broken, please contact <a href="mailto:uappol@ualberta.ca">uappol@ualberta.ca</a> <a href="#">[▲Top]</a>
<a href="#">Academic Schedule Policy</a>

## RELATED LINKS

If any links are broken, please contact <a href="mailto:uappol@ualberta.ca">uappol@ualberta.ca</a> <a href="#">[▲Top]</a>
<a href="#">Absence from Final Exams</a> <a href="#">Deferred Final Exams</a>



**Decision**  **Discussion**  **Information**

**ITEM OBJECTIVE:** Propose Changes to the Thesis Formatting Requirements for Graduate Students

<b>DATE</b>	April 24, 2024
<b>TO</b>	GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO</b>	Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

**MOTION:** That the General Faculties Council, on the recommendation of the GFC Committee on the Learning Environment, approve the changes to the Thesis Requirements for Graduate Students as outlined, for implementation upon final approval.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The proposal is before the committee to discuss changes to the current thesis format guidelines within the calendar. These changes highlight two areas:

1. Last year's Unit Review and consistent feedback from students have made clear that the current thesis format guidelines document lacks clarity, is not user friendly, and must be replaced.
2. At the same time, we have been receiving more requests from students and supervisors in recent years to allow theses in formats other than the traditional chapter- or paper-based document. These requests have been accommodated on a case-by-case basis, which takes up valuable staff time in the absence of any established procedure or student-facing formatting guidance.

This Calendar change enables students to create theses in any format deemed acceptable by their program, supervisor, and supervisory committee, and points to two new formatting guideline documents that address calls for more clarity and ease of use.

*Note: The updated guidelines are available for information, but are not part of the Calendar language changes and do not require approval.*

**Supporting Materials:**

1. Calendar Change Request Form: Thesis Changes
2. For Info: Digital Artistic Performance Mixed Thesis Format Guidelines
3. For Info: Paper Chapter Based Thesis Format



**SCHEDULE A:**

**Engagement and Routing**

**Additional Consultation:**

Acting Director of Media and Technology Studies and Digital Humanities Area Coordinator, March 27, 2024

Department of Art and Design Director of Graduate Programs, April 3, 2024

Department of Music Director of Graduate Programs, April 5, 2024

**Approval Route:**

- GPST: March 25, 2024
- GPS Council: April 17, 2024
- CLE: April 24, 2024 (Anticipated)
- GFC: May 27, 2024 (Anticipated)

**Supplementary Notes / Context from University Governance:**





Faculty (& Department or Academic Unit):	Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
Contact Person:	Micah True (Associate Dean)
Level of change: (choose one only)	• Undergraduate
	• Graduate
Type of change request: (check all that apply)	• Program
	• Regulation
For which term is this intended to take effect?	Fall 2024 (Early Implementation Requested)
Does this proposal have corresponding course changes? (Should be submitted at the same time)	No

**Rationale**

*Things to consider (maximum 500 words): Why is this being changed; How will it benefit students/department/unit; How is this comparable to similar programs (internal or external); Historical context; Impacts to administration or program structure; Consultation with stakeholders*

Last year's Unit Review and consistent feedback from students have made clear that the current thesis format guidelines document lacks clarity, is not user friendly, and must be replaced. At the same time, we have been receiving more requests from students and supervisors in recent years to allow theses in formats other than the traditional chapter- or paper-based document. These requests have been accommodated on a case-by-case basis, which takes up valuable staff time in the absence of any established procedure or student-facing formatting guidance.

This Calendar change enables students to create theses in any format deemed acceptable by their supervisor and supervisory committee, and points to two new formatting guideline documents that address calls for more clarity and ease of use.

Note: The updated guidelines are available for information, but are not part of the Calendar language changes and do not require approval.

**Calendar Copy**

URL in current Calendar (or "New page")	
Current Copy: <b>Removed language</b>	Proposed Copy: <b>New language</b>

## Thesis Requirements

### Regulations and Outline of Responsibilities

All students in a thesis degree program must present and defend a thesis embodying the results of their research. The topic of the master's and doctoral thesis must have been approved by the student's supervisor and supervisory committee **respectively**.

Departments may set specific requirements for student theses, including requirements pertaining to traditional format theses, paper-based theses (e.g., theses consisting of published, accepted or submitted papers), and mixed format theses (combining the **traditional format and the paper-based format**). Clarity is recommended in setting departmental requirements to avoid disputes later.

For students in a master's degree program, the thesis, at a minimum, should **reveal** that the student is able to work in a scholarly manner and is acquainted with the principal works published on the subject of the thesis. As far as possible, it should be an original contribution.

A doctoral thesis, at a minimum, must embody the results of original investigations and analyses and be of such quality as to merit publication, meeting the standards of reputable scholarly publications. It must constitute a substantial contribution to the knowledge in the student's field of study.

The thesis should normally be written in English. In some departments, students may be permitted to write their thesis in a language other than English, provided that language has been approved for use by the supervisory committee, the department, and the Dean of the department's Faculty. Theses written in a language other than English must have two abstracts, one in the language of the thesis, and the other in English.

Students are responsible for following the [FGSR Minimum Thesis Formatting Requirements](#).

## Thesis Requirements

### Regulations and Outline of Responsibilities

All students in a thesis degree program must present and defend a thesis embodying the results of their research. The topic **and format** of the master's and doctoral thesis must have been approved by the student's supervisor and supervisory committee.

Departments may set specific requirements for student theses, including requirements pertaining to traditional format theses, paper-based theses (e.g., theses consisting of published, accepted or submitted papers), **theses composed of digital, artistic, or performance-based materials**, and mixed format theses (combining **any of the above formats**). Clarity is recommended in setting departmental requirements to avoid disputes later.

For students in a master's degree program, the thesis, at a minimum, should **demonstrate that the program's learning outcomes have been achieved and** that the student is able to work in a scholarly manner and is acquainted with the principal works published on the subject of the thesis. As far as possible, it should be an original contribution.

A doctoral thesis, at a minimum, must embody the results of original investigations and analyses. **It must demonstrate that the program's learning outcomes have been achieved** and be of such quality as to merit publication, meeting the standards of reputable scholarly publications. It must constitute a substantial contribution to the knowledge in the student's field of study.

The thesis should normally be written in English. In some departments, students may be permitted to write their thesis in a language other than English, provided that language has been approved for use by the supervisory committee, the department, and the Dean of the department's Faculty. Theses written in a language other than English must have two abstracts, one in the language of the thesis, and the other in English.

Students **who write chapter- or paper-based theses, or theses combining these two formats**, are responsible for following the [FGSR Minimum Thesis Formatting Requirements](#) <<insert new link>> **for Chapter- and Paper-Based Theses**.

<p>It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor(s) to be aware of any specific requirements of the student's department with respect to the student's thesis.</p>	<p>Students who prepare theses in other formats, or that combine other formats with papers or chapters, are responsible for following the FGSR Minimum Thesis Formatting Requirements for Digital, Artistic, Performance-based and Mixed-format Theses &lt;&lt;insert new link&gt;&gt;.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor(s) to be aware of any specific requirements of the student's department with respect to the student's thesis.</p>
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**Reviewed/Approved by:**

<p>REQUIRED: Faculty Council (or delegate) and approval date:</p> <p>GPST: March 25, 2024 GPS Council: April 17, 2024 CLE: April 24, 2024 (Anticipated) GFC: May 27, 2024</p>
<p>OPTIONAL: Other internal faculty approving bodies, consultation groups, or departments, and approval dates.</p> <p>Acting Director of Media and Technology Studies and Digital Humanities Area Coordinator, March 27, 2024 Department of Art and Design Director of Graduate Programs, April 3, 2024 Department of Music Director of Graduate Programs, April 5, 2024</p>

## **GPS Minimum Formatting Requirements: Digital, Artistic, Performance-based, and Mixed-format Theses**

With the approval of your supervisor and supervisory committee, you may choose to produce a thesis that is composed partly or entirely of digital, audio, video, or other materials that cannot be presented as text. Be aware that:

- It is your responsibility to ensure that all non-textual elements of your thesis are saved in one of the preferred formats appearing in the Library of Congress' most recent [Recommended Formats Statement](#).
- All non-textual elements of your thesis must be submitted to GPS with file names that match those in the List of Files described in the table below.
- Theses Canada (part of Library and Archives Canada) prohibits inclusion of personal information in a thesis. Examples include dates of birth, signatures, student numbers, home addresses, and telephone numbers.
- Discipline-specific guidelines in addition to these minimum requirements may be available from your program.
- Although your thesis may primarily use non-textual media, it must include a text-based component that consists at a minimum of a clear description of your thesis.

### *General Requirements for the Text-Based Component of the Thesis*

- Every page except the title page must have a page number, in the same place on every page. Use lower-case roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.) for items 1-5 in the table below and arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) for items 6 and 7, if applicable.
- Use a single, conventional font, equivalent in size to Arial 10 pt or Times New Roman 12 pt. Choose a font that is easy to read on a screen, (eg: Georgia 11 pt, Times New Roman 12 pt, Trebuchet MS 10 pt, or Verdana 10 pt).
- Line spacing must be at least one-and-a-half spaces, except for the thesis abstract, which must be double-spaced. Single spacing may be used for long quoted passages and footnotes, if applicable (see "Additional Textual Elements," below).
- Use a consistent, discipline-appropriate style for footnotes, endnotes, or in-text references, if applicable. Check with your program or supervisor for guidance about preferred reference styles in your discipline.
- The text-based description of your thesis must be [saved in PDF/A format](#) for submission to GPS.

Elements of the Text-Based Component of your Thesis

Follow closely the guidance in the table below to format the various components of your thesis:

- ⇒ Green items are required
- ⇒ Yellow items are optional
- ⇒ Orange items may be required depending on the characteristics of your thesis
- ⇒ Items must appear in the order indicated

See Appendix for sample pages

Item	Element	Requirement
1	Title page	Make sure your title page matches the requirements shown in the Appendix.
2	Abstract	Concise summary of your thesis consisting solely of text (no images, tables, etc) and no more than 700 words. State the subject of your thesis, methods, and general conclusions. Theses written in a language other than English require abstracts in both languages. The abstract is always marked page “ii”.
3	Preface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide full bibliographic citations for any material in the thesis that has already been published and indicates the chapter(s) where it appears.</li> <li>● Acknowledge co-authorship or research collaboration that produced any of the material in the thesis and indicate the relative contributions of all collaborators and co-authors.</li> <li>● Provide details of any ethics approval you obtained for the research.</li> <li>● Acknowledge use of generative artificial intelligence/Large Language Models if this has been permitted by your program and supervisory committee.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● State that the thesis consists solely of your own unpublished work.</li> </ul>
4	Dedications or quotations	Ask your supervisor or program director if including such material is appropriate in your discipline. One page maximum.
5	Acknowledgements	Optional but recommended: acknowledge third-party funding (foundations, grant agencies, foreign countries, etc.) and the assistance of your supervisor, committee, and others. 2 pages maximum.
6	Table of Contents	Required only if your thesis includes textual elements saved in PDF/A format in addition to items 1, 2, 3, and 7. Also include every other item in this formatting guide that appears in your thesis, except the title page, in the same order as in the thesis.
7	List of Files	List items that make up your thesis, including titles and file names.
8	Additional Textual Elements	Chapters or any other textual portions of your thesis that you wish to submit in PDF/A instead of another format. Begin numbering any such pages with the Arabic numeral 1. <b>All</b> subsequent pages are numbered consecutively.
9	Bibliography, Works Cited, or References	Required if no other part of your thesis (e.g. a website) includes a complete list of all sources used in its preparation. Pages should be numbered consecutively, and in sequence with the item 8 above (if applicable).



# GPS Minimum Formatting Requirements: Chapter- and Paper-Based Theses

## General Requirements

- Every page except the title page must have a page number, in the same place on every page. Use lower-case roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.) for items 1-10 in the table on page 2 and Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) for items 11-13.
- Use a single, conventional font throughout the thesis, equivalent in size to Arial 10 pt or Times New Roman 12 pt. Choose a font that is easy to read on a screen, (eg: Georgia 11 pt, Times New Roman 12 pt, Trebuchet MS 10 pt, or Verdana 10 pt).
- Line spacing must be at least one-and-a-half spaces, except for the thesis abstract, which must be double-spaced. Single spacing may be used for long quoted passages and footnotes.
- Use a consistent, discipline-appropriate style for footnotes, endnotes, or in-text references. Check with your program or supervisor for guidance about preferred reference styles in your discipline
- Theses Canada (part of Library and Archives Canada) prohibits inclusion of personal information in a thesis. Examples include dates of birth, signatures, student numbers, home addresses, and telephone numbers.
- Your thesis must be [saved in PDF/A format](#) for submission to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.
- Discipline-specific guidelines in addition to these minimum requirements may be available from your program.

## Components of the Thesis

Follow closely the guidance in the table on page 2 to format the various components of your thesis:

- ⇒ Green items are required
- ⇒ Yellow items are optional
- ⇒ Orange items may be required depending on the characteristics of your thesis
- ⇒ Items must appear in the order indicated

See Appendix for sample pages.

Item	Component	Requirement
1	Title page	Make sure your title page matches the requirements shown in the Appendix.
2	Abstract	A concise summary of your thesis consisting solely of text (no images, tables, etc.) and no more than 700 words. State the subject of your thesis, methods, and general conclusions. Theses written in a language other than English require abstracts in both languages. The abstract always begins on page “ii”.
3	Preface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide full bibliographic citations for any material in the thesis that has already been published and indicate the chapter(s) where it appears.</li> <li>● Acknowledge co-authorship or research collaboration that produced any of the material in the thesis and indicate the relative contributions of all collaborators and co-authors.</li> <li>● Provide details of any ethics approval you obtained for the research.</li> <li>● Acknowledge the use of generative Artificial Intelligence/Large Language Models if this has been permitted by your program and supervisory committee.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>OR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● State that the thesis consists solely of your own unpublished work.</li> </ul>
4	Dedications or quotations	Ask your supervisor or program director if including such material is appropriate in your discipline. One page maximum.
5	Acknowledgments	Optional but recommended: acknowledge third-party funding (foundations, grant agencies, foreign governments, etc.) and the assistance of your supervisor, committee, and others. 2 pages maximum.
6	Table of contents	Include chapter headings and 2-4 levels of subheadings. Also include every other item in this formatting guide that appears in your thesis, except the title page, in the same order as in the thesis.
7	Lists: tables, figures, illustrations, videos, sound files, etc.	Include a separate list, beginning on a new page, for each kind of non-textual item appearing in the body of the thesis (one list for tables, another for illustrations, etc.). Lists can be in any order.
8	Lists of symbols or abbreviations	Ask your supervisor or program director if your thesis needs a list of symbols or abbreviations. Each list must start on a separate page.
9	Glossary of terms	Ask your supervisor or program director if this is necessary.
10	Other preliminary items	Any discipline- or thesis-specific prefatory materials not mentioned in these guidelines should be placed directly before the body of the thesis.
11	Body of the thesis	Minimum requirement: introduction, presentation of your research, and conclusion. The first page is always numbered with Arabic numeral 1. <b>All</b> subsequent pages are numbered consecutively.
12	Bibliography, Works Cited, or References	List all sources used for the thesis, even if individual papers in a paper-based thesis have their own lists. This list is not numbered as a chapter. Pages are numbered consecutively with the body.
13	Appendices	Supporting material that is referenced in the body of the thesis. Appendices are not numbered as chapters, and should be kept to a minimum. Pages are numbered consecutively with the Bibliography.



