

The following Motions and Documents were considered by the Committee on the Learning Environment at its November 29, 2023 meeting:

1.	Agenda Title: ProDean for Graduate Examinations
	Motion: That GFC Committee on the Learning Environment recommend that the General Faculties Council approve the changes to the Graduate Regulations - Conduct of Examinations section of the University Calendar including the Common Examination protocols Pro Dean regulations for examinations, for implementation upon approval, and inclusion in the 2024-2025 University Calendar.
	Decision: CARRIED
	FINAL Item No. 4



FINAL ITEM NO. 4

Decision **Discussion** **Information**

ITEM OBJECTIVE: Adjustments to the policy on responsibilities and attendance of Pro Deans for Thesis Examinations.

DATE	November 29, 2023
TO	GFC Committee on the Learning Environment
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO	Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (GPS)

MOTION: That GFC Committee on the Learning Environment recommend that the General Faculties Council approve the changes to the Graduate Regulations - Conduct of Examinations section of the *University Calendar* including the Common Examination protocols Pro Dean regulations for examinations, for implementation upon approval, and inclusion in the 2024-2025 *University Calendar*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This change is prompted by the experiences of Graduate and post-doctoral studies/Faculty of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies and Research Associate Deans who serve as 'Pro Deans' for graduate examinations. Attendance of the Pro Dean may be at the request of a committee member, student, chair, graduate coordinator, the Dean of the department's Faculty, or the Dean, FGSR. Pro Deans also attend any thesis examinations where the External has returned a negative report, and where they have been rescheduled following additional work.

The Pro Dean's role is to ensure fairness of process and adherence to academic standards.

Pro Deans are currently asked to vote on the outcome of graduate exams, despite often not possessing the necessary disciplinary expertise and usually not having read a student's thesis/candidacy document. Under these circumstances, it is inappropriate for a Pro Dean to vote. This proposal removes the Pro Dean's power to vote in graduate exams, and clarifies that only members of the examining committee are permitted to vote. It also restricts the Pro Dean's power to unilaterally adjourn an examination to the period before deliberations on the outcome begin. Currently a Pro Dean can adjourn an examination at any time.

Supporting Materials:

1. Calendar Change: FGSR ProDean for Examinations

SCHEDULE A:

Engagement and Routing

GOVERNANCE OUTLINE



FINAL ITEM NO. 4

Approval Route:

- GPST - October 23, 2023
- FGSR Council - November 8, 2023
- CLE: November 29, 2023

2023-2024 University of Alberta Proposed Calendar Graduate Program Changes:

Rationale:

This change is prompted by the experiences of GPS/FGSR Associate Deans who serve as Pro Deans for graduate examinations. Pro Deans are currently asked to vote on the outcome of graduate exams, despite often not possessing the necessary disciplinary expertise and usually not having read a student's thesis/candidacy document. Under these circumstances, it is inappropriate for a Pro Dean to vote.

CURRENT	PROPOSED
<p>Conduct of Examinations</p> <p>Common Examination Protocols</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>The Dean, FGSR, the Dean of the department's Faculty, or a Pro Dean (the representative of the Dean, FGSR) may participate fully in the examination. Persons other than the examiners may attend only with the approval of the Dean, FGSR, the Dean of the department's Faculty, or the chair of the committee.</p> <p>Responsibilities of a Pro Dean at Examinations: A Pro Dean is a full voting member when attending an examination. The Pro Dean's presence is in addition to the regular membership. Attendance of the Pro Dean may be at the request of a committee member, student, chair, graduate coordinator, the Dean of the department's Faculty, or the Dean, FGSR.</p> <p>The Pro Dean's role is to ensure the proper conduct of the examination and will intercede actively to correct procedural problems. The Pro Dean has the power to adjourn an examination. If problems are encountered, the Pro Dean is asked to submit a brief report to the Dean, FGSR.</p>	<p>Conduct of Examinations</p> <p>Common Examination Protocols</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>The Dean, FGSR, the Dean of the department's Faculty, or a Pro Dean (the representative of the Dean, FGSR) may attend the examination and participate in questioning the student and in deliberations, but will not vote on the outcome. Persons other than the examiners may attend only with the approval of the Dean, FGSR, the Dean of the department's Faculty, or the chair of the committee.</p> <p>Responsibilities of a Pro Dean at Examinations:</p> <p>A Pro Dean's presence is in addition to the regular membership. Attendance of the Pro Dean may be at the request of a committee member, student, chair, graduate coordinator, the Dean of the department's Faculty, or the Dean, FGSR.</p> <p>The Pro Dean's role is to ensure the proper conduct of the examination, including interceding actively to correct procedural problems and to ensure fairness to the student and adherence to academic standards. The Pro Dean may participate in questioning the student and in deliberations, but does not vote on the outcome of the examination except when necessary to establish</p>

[...]

Attendance at Doctoral Examinations: Faculty members of the student's home department as well as members of FGSR Council (or their alternates) have the right to attend doctoral examinations but should notify the chair of the examining committee. Other persons may attend the examination only with special permission of the Dean of the department's Faculty, the Dean, FGSR, or the chair of the examining committee.

Except for a Dean or a Pro Dean who may participate **fully in the examination**, persons who are not members of the examining committee:

- may participate in the questioning only by permission of the chair of the committee, but
- are not permitted to participate in the discussion of the student's performance and must withdraw before such discussion commences

a majority for or against adjournment. The Pro Dean also has the power to adjourn an examination **at any time prior to the start of deliberations.** If problems are encountered, the Pro Dean is asked to submit a brief report to the Dean, FGSR.

[...]

Attendance at Doctoral Examinations: Faculty members of the student's home department as well as members of FGSR Council (or their alternates) have the right to attend doctoral examinations but should notify the chair of the examining committee. Other persons may attend the examination only with special permission of the Dean of the department's Faculty, the Dean, FGSR, or the chair of the examining committee.

Except for a Dean or a Pro Dean who may participate **in questioning the student and in deliberations**, persons who are not members of the examining committee:

- may participate in the questioning only by permission of the chair of the committee, but
- are not permitted to participate in the discussion of the student's performance and must withdraw before such discussion commences

Except when a Pro Dean's vote is necessary to establish a majority for or against adjournment, persons who are not members of the examining committee will not be permitted to vote on the outcome of the examination.

Approved by:

GPST - October 23, 2023

FGSR Council - November 8, 2023