



# PhD Program in Critical Disability Studies

## Overview of Graduate Supervision, Dissertation Process, Timelines and Research Ethics

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## Doctoral Degree - Minimum Requirements and Regulations

### Doctoral Degree-Level Expectations

Included below are degree level expectations for doctoral programs offered at York University. The structure and requirements of doctoral programs are intended to support the achievement of degree-level expectations and program-specific learning outcomes.

This degree extends the skills associated with the Master's degree and is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:

<b>Expectation</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Depth and breadth of knowledge</b>	A thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of their academic discipline or area of professional practice including, where appropriate, relevant knowledge outside the field and/or discipline.
<b>Research and scholarship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The ability to conceptualize, design, and implement research for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the research design or methodology in the light of unforeseen problems.</li> <li>b) The ability to make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, sometimes requiring new methods; and</li> <li>c) The ability to produce original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, and to merit publication.</li> </ul>
<b>Level of application of knowledge</b>	<p>The capacity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Undertake pure and/or applied research at an advanced level; and</li> <li>b) Contribute to the development of academic or professional skills, techniques, tools, practices, ideas, theories, approaches, and/or materials.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional capacity/autonomy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex situations.</li> <li>b) The intellectual independence to be academically and professionally engaged and current.</li> <li>c) The ethical behavior consistent with academic integrity and the use of appropriate guidelines and procedures for responsible conduct of research; and</li> <li>d) The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.</li> </ul>
<b>Level of communications skills</b>	The ability to communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas, issues, and conclusions clearly and effectively.
<b>Awareness of limits of knowledge</b>	An appreciation of the limitations of one's own work and discipline, of the complexity of knowledge, and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.

## Program Structure

A candidate for a doctoral degree shall pursue at York University, under the direction of a Graduate Program, an advanced course of study and research approved by the Graduate Program Director (GPD) of the sponsoring program.

All doctoral programs require the submission of a dissertation proposal, including appropriate ethics review and approval; a dissertation embodying the results of original research, and successful defense of this dissertation at an oral examination. In addition to the submission of a dissertation and oral examination, individual Graduate Program may have additional requirements, such as coursework, comprehensive examinations, practicum, fieldwork, language requirements, etc.

## Program Length and Minimum Period of Registration

All doctoral programs are structured in terms, which is a four-month period. Doctoral students must register and pay fees for a minimum of the equivalent of six terms of full-time registration.

**The PhD program in Critical Disability Studies is a 4-year full-time program of advanced graduate study. Students are required to maintain continuous registration upon admission as well as throughout the course of study at the same status since it is the basis of admission and enrollment planning.**

## Time Limits

All requirements for a doctoral degree must be fulfilled **within 18 terms (6 years) of registration as a full-time or part-time doctoral student** in accordance with [Faculty of Graduate Studies Registration Policies](#), including the requirement of continuous registration. Terms that students register as Leave of Absence, Maternal Leave, Parental Leave, or No Course Available are not included in these time limits.

## Annual Progress Reports

In accordance with the requirements and procedures of a Graduate Program, students in doctoral programs must submit a Progress Report to the GPD on an annual basis, normally in the Spring. Once established, a dissertation supervisory committee shall meet annually at minimum with the student, normally in the Spring, to evaluate the Report on Progress submitted by the student and submit a completed copy of the Report on Progress to the GPD after the meeting. **Reports to the GPD of unsatisfactory progress may require a student to withdraw from the Graduate Program in which the student is enrolled.**

PhD students in Critical Disability Studies are required to submit an [Annual Progress Report](#) to the GPD (electronically) and to the Graduate Program Office physically (Room 409 HNES Building) **by May 31<sup>st</sup> of each year** (or the following business day if May 31<sup>st</sup> falls on a public holiday).

## Graduate Supervision and Supervisor Responsibilities

Graduate supervision is an important part of training scholars. Positive, respectful, professional, and productive working relationships are paramount to the success of graduate students and their advisors/supervisors. Arrange a consultation meeting with your supervisor to outline the parameters of your graduate supervision. **Students are to review guidelines to establish expectations and responsibilities with their graduate supervisor before supervision begins.** Both students and supervisors are to familiarize themselves with the draft policy on Graduate Supervision, as well.

### Guidelines for Supervisors

The supervisor's principal task consists in helping students realize their scholarly potential. This can only be accomplished in a relationship that offers insights born of experience, and furnishes the requisite challenges, stimulation, guidance, and genuine support. The student has a right to expect from the supervisor expertise, accessibility, and support. The supervisor must offer substantive and procedural assistance with the design, planning and conduct of feasible research projects, introduction to the network of scholars in the area of specialization, and support for the presentation and publication of the research results. At the same time the supervisor must ensure that the scholarly standards of the university and the discipline are met in the student's work.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to:

- 1) Be reasonably accessible to the student for consultation and discussion of the student's academic progress and research problems. The frequency of such meetings will vary according to the discipline involved and the stage and nature of the student's work, but should normally occur at once a month, and never less than once each term.
- 2) Give timely response to submitted written work, with constructive and concrete suggestions for improvements. This normally means within 3 weeks or as agreed upon between supervisor and student.
- 3) Make satisfactory arrangements in advance with the approval of the Graduate Program Director for the supervision of the student when on leave or sabbatical, or on extended absence from the university.
- 4) Convene an annual meeting of the supervisory committee, normally in the spring, to evaluate the student's Report on Progress, and submit a copy of the completed Report to the Graduate Program Director after the meeting. Apart from highlighting the student's academic progress thus far, the Progress Report should also clearly identify the challenges, if any, facing the student, including considerations for students with disability.
- 5) In conjunction with the Graduate Program Office, ensure the student is aware of University, Faculty and program requirements and standards to which the thesis/dissertation is expected to conform.
- 6) Assist the student with attempts to acquire external funding, including meeting appropriate deadlines, and to engage in scholarly development (e.g., conference presentations and publications).
- 7) Offer supervision and advice appropriate to the stage of the student's work, helping the student to establish and modify a suitable timetable for completion of the various stages of the thesis/dissertation project:
  - o at the proposal stage, assist the student with selection of a suitable and manageable topic and approach.
  - o at the research stage, assist the student with initial research design and subsequent modification, with alleviating current and anticipated problems, with interpretation and analysis of findings, and with bringing the project to completion.

- at the writing stage, assist the student with appropriate and timely feedback on individual draft chapters, and with revision to the draft thesis/dissertation as an integrated whole.
  - at the oral defense stage, advise the student on preparation for the examination and assist the student to interpret and comply with any changes recommended by the examining committee.
- 8) When the final draft of the thesis or dissertation is complete, ensure that all members of the committee have read the document and are agreed that it is ready to proceed to an oral defense. Suggest possible members of the examining committee to the Graduate Program Director (i.e., outside examiner, external examiner). Ensure that a master's thesis is sent to the examining committee at least 15 business days prior to the date of the examination, and a doctoral dissertation at least 20 business days prior to the date of the examination.
  - 9) Appropriately acknowledge in published material the contributions of the student, including consideration of joint authorship of publications. Where the student's research comprises a component of the supervisor's research program, and joint publication is envisaged, it must be recognized that the responsibility for utilization of data and for publications is held jointly by the supervisor and student. Endeavour to clarify at the outset of the supervisory relationship expectations regarding the responsibility and publication credit for work initiated, designed, and researched by the student, but supported financially or otherwise by the supervisor.
  - 10) Conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism in the development of a mature and objective relationship with the student. It must be recognized that there is a power imbalance in the supervisory relationship and that any form of harassment or exploitation of students is unacceptable.
  - 11) Conform to the graduate program and Faculty processes in the event of a supervisory relationship which is unsatisfactory for any reason or in situations where there is a change of supervisors for any reason.
  - 12) Even though "each student has final responsibility for her or his academic honesty" (Senate Policy on Academic Honesty), it is incumbent on the supervisor to ensure, to the extent that it is practicable in the circumstances, the academic integrity of primary research data, and the consistency with academic integrity and practice of interpretations relating to such data.

### **Guidelines for Students receiving supervision:**

By entering a Graduate Program, the student has made a commitment to devote the time and energy necessary to engage in research and write a thesis/dissertation which constitutes a substantial and original contribution to knowledge in a field. The supervisor has a right to expect from the student ability, initiative, and receptivity. It is the responsibility of the student to:

1. Conform to University, Faculty and Program requirements and procedures for completion of the graduate degree, about such matters as research ethics, registration and graduation requirements, thesis/dissertation style and quality standards etc.
2. Develop, in conjunction with the supervisor and supervisory committee, an intended timetable for completion of all stages of the thesis/dissertation, and work to realize that timetable, meeting appropriate deadlines.
3. Meet regularly with the supervisor to review progress. The frequency of such meetings will vary according to the discipline involved and the stage and nature of the student's work but should normally occur at least once a month and not less than once each term. Interact with other members of the supervisory committee as appropriate.
4. Keep the supervisor and Graduate Program office informed of where the student may be contacted and respond appropriately to all communications received.
5. Prepare a Progress Report for an annual meeting with the supervisory committee.
6. Give serious consideration to and respond to the advice and criticism received from the supervisor and the supervisory committee.

7. Recognize that the supervisor and other members of the supervisory committee may have other teaching, research and service obligations which may preclude immediate responses.
8. Recognize that where the student's research comprises a component of the supervisor's research program, and joint publication is envisaged, the responsibility for utilization of data and for publications is held jointly by the supervisor and student. In such cases, the thesis/dissertation, or draft papers, together with a copy of the raw data, shall be made available to the supervisor prior to submission for publication.
9. Conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism in the development of a mature and objective relationship with the supervisor, the supervisory committee, and other scholars. The entire training in a Graduate Program, including research and writing of the thesis/dissertation, shall be conducted under the strictest rules of ethics and academic honesty.
10. As stated in the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty, "A lack of familiarity with the Senate Policy and Guidelines on Academic Honesty on the part of a student does not constitute a defense against their application." With that in mind, it is incumbent on each student to ensure the academic integrity of his or her primary research, and of the interpretations relating to such research.

Please refer to the Faculty of Graduate studies [supervision guidelines](#) and click 'Doctoral Supervision' tab for the "**Discussion Topics to Inform Productive Supervisory Relationships.**"

### **Role of the Graduate Program Office**

The role of the Graduate Program Office (GPO) in supporting graduate student supervision is a very important one. The GPO is responsible for setting program expectations, ensuring that graduate students have a clear sense of what is expected of them to successfully fulfill their degree requirements in a timely manner. This includes setting up an explicit timeline including all project milestones.

It is the role of the GPO to keep the student informed, on track, to direct the student to relevant offices and procedures as they progress through their degree, and to participate in the resolution of any supervisor-student conflicts.

### **Conflict Resolution Policy**

Conflicts should be resolved as close to the source as possible. Students and Supervisors are encouraged to address any issues promptly and informally with the Graduate Program Director. If conflicts continue to exist, any part may seek the advice of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and students may enlist YUGSA to represent them at any meeting with program and/or FGS representatives. Consult with the Faculty of Graduate Studies policy overview on [conflict resolution](#).

## **Dissertation Process – 8 Stages**

After successful completion of the comprehensive papers, students will begin preparation of the dissertation proposal. Following successful discussion of the dissertation proposal the student advances to candidacy.

The dissertation process has **several stages** as below.

1. The establishment of a **Supervisory Committee** which consists of **three faculty members** – a Principal Supervisor and two supervisory committee members. see subsequent page for the composition and approval of a committee. A supervisor must be declared **before Term 5** and the remaining committee members **before Term 8**, otherwise a registration block is placed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

## Supervisor & Supervisory Committee Approval form

2. Arrange a consultation meeting with your supervisor to outline the parameters of your graduate supervision of your dissertation. Use the draft graduate supervision checklist to establish expectations and responsibilities. Supervisors are to familiarize themselves with the draft policy on Graduate Supervision, as well.
3. The preparation of a **Dissertation Proposal** of **3500 words maximum, not including sources and notes**, as per the Faculty of Graduate Studies standards. A completed **TD1 form** to indicate the appropriate category must accompany the proposal signed off by supervisor and list the dissertation committee names. The student submits the dissertation proposal, TD1 and applicable forms together as a package to the Graduate Program Office for review.

The purpose of the proposal is to provide guidance for the successful completion of the dissertation. **It should state succinctly and clearly the following points:**

- a. A brief thesis question and summary of the dissertation topic
- b. Why it is important to Critical Disability Studies
- c. The original contribution your dissertation will make to the field
- d. Methodology, subject to Research Ethics protocols
- e. Sources – for example, human participants, archival sources, secondary sources, arts/media-based material, mixture of above
- f. Preliminary outline of sections for the dissertation document
- g. Timeline
- h. A select reference list of essential sources
- i. Any additional supporting materials and research ethics materials can be included as an appendix

When writing your dissertation proposal, you will need to work with your supervisory committee at all stages. **A completed dissertation proposal, TD1 form (with research ethics approval, if required) must be approved for all doctoral students by FGS/Research Ethics by Term 9 (end of Year 3).**

4. A **Critical Disability Studies dissertation proposal oral examination with the signed TD1 form is required** to pass this academic milestone. Submit to with the Graduate Program Office with signatures from the dissertation supervisor and listing all members of the dissertation supervisory committee. The Graduate Program Director (or GPD designate is the Chair of the proposal defense)

Once the proposal is **passed** by a student's dissertation supervisory committee, the student submits the final dissertation proposal and any research ethics forms (CORE-22 certificate, **TD1** and or TD2) to the Graduate Program Office. Please ensure that your graduate supervisor signs the TD1 and/or TD2 forms. Include the appropriate documents outlined in the TD1 category that relates to your research and methodologies.

**DO NOT SUBMIT** incomplete packages to the Graduate Program Office. Students wait for approval from Research Ethics before they proceed with primary data collection or secondary data analysis.

5. During the **writing of a dissertation**, graduate supervisors must offer substantive and procedural assistance with the design, planning and conduct of feasible research projects, introduction to the network of scholars in the specialization, and support for the presentation and publication of the research results. At the same time the

supervisor must ensure that the scholarly standards of the university and the discipline are met in the student's work. Timely responses to submitted written work is key, with constructive suggestions for improvements. This normally means within 3 weeks or as agreed upon between supervisor and student.

6. The **scheduling of an oral defense** should start at least **3 months before** an intended date of defense. The student must be actively registered in the term that an oral defense occurs.
  - a. The dissertation committee is responsible to notify the home graduate office (in writing) when the dissertation is defensible.
  - b. Each student must have an approved dissertation proposal with ethics (if applicable) on file with the graduate program and Faculty of Graduate Studies or the oral examination cannot proceed to be scheduled.
  - c. The graduate program office must receive a range of dates to schedule and or a tentative date to confirm graduate office logistics and Chair/GPA availability.
  - d. The dissertation supervisor is responsible to submit the contact emails of the internal and external examiners to the graduate office, and the e-copy of the dissertation is submitted simultaneously with the supervisors' examination request.
  - e. The graduate office shares the dissertation with the internal and external examiners.
  - f. The graduate program office proceeds to schedule the defense. Examining Committee will be recommended to the Graduate Program Office, who verifies and obtains final approval by the Graduate Program Director and the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
  - g. FGS sends official documents and instructions to the Chair, external examiner, student, and committee.
7. Oral examinations for doctoral dissertations shall be held normally **no less than 30 days** from the date on which the copies of the dissertation approved by the supervisory committee are sent to each member of the examination committee.
8. In preparation for the final oral defense, the student is responsible for ensuring that all members of the exam committee have **an e-copy** of the dissertation, unless prior approval has been received for the submission of a paper copy (the pagination and formatting of each page of the paper copies and the e-copies must match). The graduate program administrator or the supervisor (not the student), should send the external examiner's copy of the dissertation.

For a complex electronic or multimodal dissertation, the student is responsible for ensuring that all members of the exam committee have **an e-copy** of the written component of the dissertation, unless prior approval has been received for the submission of **a paper copy**. (If **paper copies** are submitted for the oral exam, the pagination and formatting of each page of the **paper copies** and the **e-copies** must match.) For the remaining component of the work, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the work produced for the dissertation can be examined by the examining committee. Students producing a multimedia dissertation should consult with the Theses Canada Portal on the Library and Archives Canada website for advice on formats supportable for preservation.

9. The examination may be conducted in person, remotely by videoconference, or in hybrid format, the student's preference of which is to be considered.
10. As of May 1, 2024, external examiners who would otherwise require local lodging will be asked to **participate remotely** via videoconference unless there is a demonstrable benefit to in-person participation. **Local members of the examination committee are**



**expected to participate in person, on campus.** For doctoral oral examinations, if more than two participants in the examination in total wish to participate remotely via videoconference, then the candidate and supervisor must consent, with a rationale provided to the Graduate Program Office to share with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies for approval. The wishes of the examination candidate are paramount to the Dean's decision.

**11. The oral defense occurs at York University.** The oral defense centered on the dissertation and matters related to it, are presided over by an Examining Committee. Notification will arrive via email to the Chair, candidate and the committee members, arriving from the Faculty of Graduate Studies on for the responsibilities of the examining committee and how an oral examination occurs.

**12. Post-defense items:** The oral exam is not the final step. There may be revisions, formatting, and working with the Faculty of Graduate Studies to upload the final dissertation to the Electronic Thesis Database (ETD). Only upon FGS approval of a successful ETD upload can the graduate program begin a degree audit. All PhD degree requirements and audits are to be completed before August 31 (for October convocation), mid-December (for February convocation in absentia) and April 30 (for June convocation), no exceptions.

### **Composition of Dissertation Supervisory Committee**

A dissertation supervisory committee consists of **three faculty – a Principal Supervisor and two supervisory committee members.**

- The **Principal Supervisor** must be a **Full Member** of the Critical Disability Studies Graduate Program where the student is enrolled. (**Exceptions** are:
  1. An Associate Member of the Critical Disability Studies Graduate Program may serve as a Co-Supervisor on the condition that the other Co-Supervisor is a Full Member of the Critical Disability Studies Graduate Program.
  2. Members Emeriti may continue ongoing principal supervisions of doctoral dissertations begun prior to retirement but normally may not take on new principal supervision of doctoral dissertations. Should Program need arise, Members Emeriti may be eligible to act as Principal Supervisor of doctoral dissertations, on the condition that another member of the supervisory committee would be willing and able to act as Principal Supervisor should the need arise, and subject to the approval of the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
- The **1<sup>st</sup> supervisory committee member** must be appointed to the Critical Disability Studies Graduate Program. All faculty in the Program are eligible to take on this role.
- The eligibility of the **2<sup>nd</sup> supervisory committee member** can be the same as the 1<sup>st</sup> supervisory committee member. Alternatively, s/he can be appointed to other graduate programs at York University. In exceptional circumstances and with prior approval of the Dean, s/he may be appointed who is not a member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at York University (for example, accomplished faculty members from other universities).

**Refer to the Critical Disability Studies Handbook for a listing of supervisory eligibility.**

## Approval of Dissertation Supervisory Committee

For doctoral students to remain in good academic standing, they must have a supervisor and supervisory committee in place in accordance with program requirements. The minimum Faculty of Graduate Studies requirements are as follows:

- A **Principal supervisor** must be recommended by the Graduate Program Director for approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies **no later than the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> term of study**. Students will not be able to register in the 7<sup>th</sup> term of study unless a principal supervisor has been approved.
- A **supervisory committee** must be recommended by the Graduate Program Director for approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies **no later than the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> term of study**. Students will not be able to register in the 10<sup>th</sup> term of study unless a supervisory committee has been approved.
- For the Graduate Program to meet the above stated recommendation deadlines, students are required to submit a [Supervisor & Supervisory Committee Approval](#) form to the Critical Disability Studies graduate program office ([gradcds@yorku.ca](mailto:gradcds@yorku.ca))

### Dissertation Proposals

In accordance with program requirements and procedures, all students should prepare a thesis/dissertation proposal, normally in consultation with their supervisor in advance of commencing their proposed inquiry. Each program should have written guidelines and should communicate them to candidates, as and when appropriate. A dissertation proposal outlines the research methodology and if the data collection methods involve research ethics.

At a minimum, the proposal should contain a brief statement in non-technical language on the purpose/goals of the thesis/dissertation research, its relationship to existing work in the area, through an abbreviated literature review, the research question(s), the proposed methodology(ies) with rationale, and the contribution which the researcher hopes to make to the advancement of knowledge in the field. In addition, the proposal includes a title, the name of the supervisor and the supervisory committee. The title should indicate as clearly as possible the area of research, but it is understood that this title may change. The recommended maximum length of a proposal is 3,500 words, but individual programs may require proposals of a greater length. Proposals must be reviewed and approved by a student's thesis or dissertation committee.

#### Academic Milestone/Timeline:

As of Fall 2023, all incoming doctoral students must have an approved dissertation proposal (with research ethics approval, if applicable) **by Term 9**. Failure to do so will result in student's ability to register in the subsequent term.

Doctoral students with disabilities are to be mindful that they must complete and have an approved dissertation proposal with the [TD1](#) form and approved research ethics by **Term 9 (end of Year 3)**. If the academic milestones are not completed, an advising block is placed to necessitate a meeting with the supervisor and Graduate Program Director and student. Academic accommodations may adjust the expected rate of progress for some students with disabilities, however **all doctoral students** are expected to meet this dissertation proposal timeline.

#### Research Ethics forms

All projects involving the use of human subjects, animals, and biohazardous materials are subject to review by the appropriate University committee. York University has formulated policies and procedures for the conduct of research involving all three of these areas. Failure to obtain ethics approval prior to the commencement of Research Activities is considered both

a breach of Senate Policy as well as research misconduct. All such instances of non-compliance will be addressed by the appropriate institutional office.

The first step is the completion of the [CORE22 Tutorial and Certificate](#). As indicated on the Form TD1: Thesis/Dissertation Research Submission form, submission of the dissertation proposal to the Office of the Dean, Graduate Studies for approval must include the [relevant research ethics form and documentation](#). Even if the research method does not involve primary data collection or secondary data analysis, the TD1 form must be completed and submitted with the proposal.

- Refer to the [updates on ethical conduct for research with human participants ,indigenous research, secondary data analysis.](#)
- Determine the category of your research and the necessary [forms](#), under '**Research Ethics**'
- Determine whether the research is minimum risk, conducted as part of a faculty member's research project, involves Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples or more than minimum risk
- Complete the [Thesis/Dissertation Proposal Submission form – TD1 form](#) plus other forms/documents outlined in your category (i.e. TD2 Research Ethics Protocol form for Dissertations)
- Include the [CORE-22 tutorial certificate](#), upon completion
- Students are responsible to sign and submit the entire package to the graduate program office ([gradcds@yorku.ca](mailto:gradcds@yorku.ca))

The Graduate Program Office will vet and forward the proposal and ethics package to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for final approval. This will take several weeks for a final decision, that arrives by email. See the [Quick Guide on the Ethics Review process](#) for faculty members and students). Students are to be registered as active to receive their approval certificate.

**Data Collection** cannot occur until after the research ethics approval is issued. The doctoral student must be actively registered when conducting research with human participants.

Please note that the deadlines outlined above are the Faculty's minimum requirements, and individual graduate programs may have more specific requirements and timelines with respect to the development, review, and approval of dissertation proposals. Students should consult their program for more details.

## Doctoral Dissertation Regulations

### Overview

Doctoral dissertations shall be on a topic approved by the student's supervisor and supervisory committee and shall include submission and approval of a dissertation proposal, including appropriate ethics review and approval, in accordance with York's Research Ethics and procedures. Dissertations must embody the results of original research and must be successfully defended at an oral examination.

The doctoral dissertation must embody original work conducted while in program and must constitute a significant contribution to knowledge. It should contain evidence of critical understanding of the relevant literature. The material embodied in the dissertation should merit publication.

The general form and style of dissertation may differ from program to program, but a dissertation should be a coherent document. This means that if a dissertation contains separate manuscripts, there needs also to be introductory and concluding chapters that explain how these separate manuscripts fit together into a unified body of research. If previously published materials are included, it should be made clear what exactly is the student's own work and what the contribution of other researchers is.

Students must comply with the requirements for the preparation, submission and types of theses (manuscript-based, complex and multi-modal) as described on the **Faculty of Graduate Studies [Thesis and Dissertation regulations](#)**.

### **Language of Dissertations**

**A dissertation should be written in English**, but approval may be given to a written request from a student for a dissertation to be written in French or in the language of any Aboriginal/First Nations people in North America, subject to confirmation from the GPD of the Graduate Program concerned that relevant supervision and sufficient support for the completion of such written work can be provided.

### **Language and Cognate Requirements**

Requirements with respect to language facility (other than language required for admission), technical skill (*e.g.*, statistics or computer techniques), and/or cognate subjects are determined by individual Graduate Programs with the approval of the Faculty of Graduate Studies' Council.

### **[Technical Requirements](#) (Refer to FGS Organization and Technical Requirements section)**

**Page Size:** 8 ½ by 11 letter size

**Font:** 10 – 12-point font (*e.g.*, Arial or Times Roman) used throughout the dissertation, particularly the main body.

The font size of the main body of the dissertation must be a minimum of 10 points, with smaller font sizes permitted for endnotes/footnotes, graphs formulae appendices, etc. A font size larger than 12 points is not recommended for the main body of the dissertation.

**Line Spacing:** At least 1.5 spaces or Double spaced  
Left aligned.

**Title page, Abstract Guidelines, Table of Contents, Page number Location, Diagrams and Tables, Photographs and Images** refer to the FGS link.

**Margins:** All margins must be at least 1 inch (25mm). Margin may be wider but not narrower than the stated requirements. For example, the first page of every chapter may have a top margin of 2.5 inches.

## Dissertation Supervisory Committees

1. A dissertation supervisory committee will consist of **a minimum of three members** from the Faculty of Graduate Studies, at least two of whom must be members of the graduate program in which the student is enrolled. **The principal supervisor must be a Full Member of the graduate program in which the student is enrolled. An Associate Members of the graduate program may serve as a co-supervisor on the condition that the other co-supervisor is a Full Member of the graduate program.** In exceptional circumstances and with prior approval of the Dean, the third, or an additional member, may be appointed who is not a member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

For doctoral students to remain in good academic standing, they must have a supervisor and supervisory committee in place in accordance with program requirements. The minimum Faculty of Graduate Studies requirements are as follows:

A supervisor must be recommended by the appropriate Graduate Program Director for approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies no later than **the end of the fifth term of study (end of second term of Year 2)**. Students will not be able to register in the **seventh term of study (in Year 3)** unless a supervisor has been approved. A supervisory committee must be recommended by the appropriate Graduate Program Director for approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies no later than the **end of the eighth term of study (end of second term of PhD III)**. Students will not be able to register in **the tenth term of study (in Year 4)** unless a supervisory committee has been approved.

2. A dissertation supervisor (Chair of the supervisory committee) shall:
  1. be reasonably accessible to the student normally meeting once a month and never less than once each term.
  2. ensure that a copy of the student's dissertation is sent to each member of the student's dissertation examining committee as far as possible in advance of the date of the student's oral examination but no later than four weeks prior to the date set.
3. A dissertation supervisory committee shall:
  1. review the student's research proposal and recommend its approval to the appropriate Graduate Program Director and the Dean not less than six months prior to the date set for the oral;
  2. review the student's progress normally each month and never less than once each term. (Reports to the Graduate Program Director of unsatisfactory progress may require a student to withdraw from a program of studies or withdraw from the graduate program in which the student is enrolled).
  3. meet annually with the student, normally in the Spring, to evaluate the Annual Progress Report submitted by the student and submit a completed copy of the Progress Report to the Graduate Program Director after the meeting; and,
  4. read the dissertation and make a recommendation to the Graduate Program Director regarding oral defense.

## **Dissertation Examining Committees**

A dissertation examining committee occurs at the oral defense and shall consist of **at least five voting members, including the Chair**, as follows:

- a. The Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or her/his representative, who will be at arm's length from the supervision of the dissertation, and who will serve as Chair of the examining committee;
- b. One external examiner, from outside York University, at arm's length from the dissertation, recommended by the Graduate Program Director;
- c. one graduate faculty member at arm's length from the dissertation, and normally from outside the program, recommended by the Graduate Program Director;
- d. two graduate faculty members from the supervisory committee, or one member from the supervisory committee and one graduate faculty member from the program.

These are minimum requirements with respect to the composition of and quorum for dissertation examining committees. Individual graduate programs may include one additional voting member on examining committees, in accordance with program requirements and procedures.

In addition to the voting members, the thesis examining committee may include the following ex-officio members (non-voting, unless present as one of the voting members named above): Vice-President Academic & Provost, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies or his/her representative, Graduate Program Director.

The membership of each committee must be recommended by the appropriate Graduate Program Director for approval and appointment by the Dean of Graduate Studies as soon as possible and no later than four weeks before the date set for the oral examination. In exceptional circumstances, the Dean may approve a Program Director's recommendation that a York University faculty member who is not a member of the graduate faculty serve as a member (but not the Chair) of an examining committee.

Members of the examining committee are normally expected to attend the oral examination in person, except where decanal permission for the use of alternative technologies such as video- or teleconferencing has been granted. The rationale for this examination mode must be made by the program to the Dean. Normally, no more than one member of an examining committee should be linked to the examination process through alternative means. Only in exceptional circumstances would the supervisor, an internal York member, or the student be the off-site participant.

With the consent of the voting members of the examination committee, the Program Director and the student, the Dean may approve a recommendation that an oral examination be rescheduled due to exceptional circumstances.

## **Conduct of the Oral Examination**

1. Before an oral can be convened, a majority of the examining committee members must agree that the dissertation is examinable. The graduate program director shall poll the members of that committee one week before the scheduled date for the oral. If the student does not receive a majority vote, the members of the examining committee who do not agree that the dissertation is examinable are required to give their reasons in writing to the student, the supervisor, and the Dean within one week after the poll. In such cases, the oral shall be postponed for a period not to exceed

one year. However, the student has the right to insist that the oral proceed as planned.

2. The time and place of oral examination shall be set by the graduate program director in consultation with the student, the Chair, and members of the examining committee and with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. Normally, the examination shall be held no less than four weeks from the date on which copies of the completed dissertation approved by the supervisory committee are sent to each member of the examining committee. The examination may be held less than four weeks from the time copies are sent to the examining committee provided all parties agree.
3. The oral examination will center on the dissertation.
4. The oral examination is a public academic event. Faculty members, graduate students and others may attend oral examinations at the discretion of the Chair of the examining committee. They may, at the discretion of the Chair, participate in the questioning. Only members of the examining committee may be present for the evaluation and for the vote at the conclusion of an oral examination.
5. The dissertation oral examination requirement is met if one of the following situations exists:
  - a. if the committee accepts the dissertation with no revisions; or,
  - b. if the committee accepts the dissertation with specified revisions.
6. Specified revisions could range from typographical errors or changes of a minor editorial nature, to specified insertions or deletions which do not radically modify the development/argument of the dissertation. The committee must specify such changes with precision. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that all such changes are made, and the Dean's representative will confirm that this is the case. Specified revisions must be completed within six months of the date of the oral examination.
7. In cases where there are no more than two votes for major revision or one vote for failure, then specified revisions are expected.
8. A dissertation is referred for major revision if any of the following conditions exist:
  - a. the committee agrees that the dissertation requires substantive changes in order to be acceptable; or,
  - b. there are two votes for failure; or,
  - c. there is one vote for failure **plus** a minimum of one vote for major revision; or,
  - d. there are at least three votes for major revision.
9. In the cases of major revision, one of the following procedures, agreed upon by the committee before the examination is adjourned, must be used to finalize the oral results:
  - a. the committee will reconvene within twelve months to continue the oral examination; or,
  - b. the revised dissertation will be circulated within twelve months to all members, who will inform the Dean's representative whether they feel the stipulated requirements have been met.
10. Detailed reasons for referring pending major revisions must be supplied in writing by

the Chair to the Dean, the program director and the student concerned within two weeks.

11. After an adjournment and when the major revisions have been completed, the dissertation is failed if there are two or more votes for failure. A dissertation cannot be referred for major revisions more than once and no further adjournment is permitted. In the event of failure, detailed reasons must be supplied in writing by the Chair to the Dean, program director and student within two weeks.
12. A dissertation is failed if there are a minimum of three votes for failure. In the event of failure, detailed reasons must be supplied in writing by the Chair to the Dean, program director and student within two weeks.
13. Decisions of the thesis examining committee are communicated to the Faculty of Graduate Studies' Thesis Office, usually in the form of the Oral Examination Report containing appropriate signatures, through the Chair of the Examining Committee.
14. The degree completion date is NOT based on the date of the oral examination; it is based on the date of submission to the Office of the Dean, Graduate Studies of the **acceptable final approved copy**. Students are responsible for active registration and all tuition fees until the final copy is submitted to and approved by the Office of the Dean, Graduate Studies. The graduate program office can proceed to a final degree audit, when the student successfully meets the final electronic upload submission into the theses database with the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Students expecting to be awarded degrees will be in communication with the graduate office for Convocation details.



## Academic Honesty, Accommodations and Dissertation Scholarship/Prizes

### 1. [Policy on Academic Honesty](#)

Academic conduct, particularly with respect to plagiarism, are grounded in a principle and practice that forms the basis of the academic enterprise—namely, that the work one submits for evaluation is the product of one's own original ideas, and that any material that belongs to someone else, because he or she first produced and/or presented it, must be properly referenced, and cited.

### How to Avoid Academic Dishonesty

#### York University Libraries Graduate Student Support

There are a number of citation styles that describe in detail how to reference and cite the work of others properly in one's own work. Graduate students are responsible to ensure that they are aware of and properly follow an appropriate citation style. Uncertainty about which citation style should be followed can be cleared up by consulting with one's course director or program director.

The York University Libraries [Graduate Student Library Guide](#) provides a number of useful resources, including links to the guides for the most popularly used citation styles, access to RefWorks (which is a web-based bibliographic management/citation manager tool), and links to research and writing guides.

### 2. [Accommodations for Graduate Students](#)

Academic accommodations are meant to remove barriers faced by students with disabilities in relation to their degree expectations (courses, comprehensives, proposal, and dissertation writing)

Scholarship/Award Nominations are made by examining committees for doctoral candidates, after the oral defense is successful.

3. **[SSHRC Fellowships and CGS Doctoral Awards](#)**: The SSHRC Doctoral Fellowships and Joseph–Armand Bombardier CGS Doctoral Scholarships aim to develop research skills and assist in the training of highly qualified personnel by supporting students who demonstrate a high standard of scholarly achievement in undergraduate and graduate studies in the social sciences and humanities.
4. **[Susan Mann Dissertation Scholarship](#)**: An opportunity to encourage and assist outstanding students in their final year of doctoral study to concentrate exclusively on and complete their dissertations. It is designed to be awarded to students who have made significant progress on the research and writing of their dissertations, and who will forge ahead independently and with their supervisory committees.
5. **[Thesis/Dissertation Prizes](#)**: The Faculty of Graduate Studies will award a maximum of six (6) thesis prizes for exceptional theses defended each year (*i.e.*, calendar year January 1 to December 31). Normally three (3) of these will be awarded for Doctoral dissertations (if nominated by Graduate Program Director).

## **Information on Writing a Research Paper**

[Citing Your Work & Academic Integrity - York University Libraries](#)

[The Relationship Between the Research Question, Hypotheses, Specific Aims, and Long-Term Goals of the Project](#)

[Writing a Research Paper](#)

[Library Research Using Primary Resources](#)

[Library Research: Finding Primary Sources](#)

[Writing Centre at Harvard University](#)

[A Research Guide for Students](#)

[A Guide for Writing Research Papers based on Styles Recommended by the American Psychological Association](#)

[OWL On-line Writing Lab](#)

[Preparing for Thesis Research](#)

[Dissertation Proposal Workshop](#)

## Forms and Final steps for PhD students

For all required PhD forms, please see the [Guidelines, Policies and Forms section](#) of the Graduate Program in Critical Disability Studies website.

### Licence, Copyright, Technical Requirements and Final ETD submission

1. [Theses Non-Exclusive Licence](#)
2. [Copyright](#)

The following sections provide guidance and suggestions with respect to when and how to secure copyright permission. It is, however, the responsibility of the student to confirm that if there is copyrighted material in his or her dissertation, it either complies with the “fair dealing” provisions of the [Canadian Copyright Act](#) or documented permission has been obtained to use the copyrighted material. The Office of the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies cannot offer legal advice as to whether copyright permission is required.

3. [Reimbursement of Thesis/Dissertation Costs](#)
4. Final Submission of Dissertation Electronically to the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS)

York University’s Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) record will be created for each successful candidate that passed the oral defense. This email will arrive from the thesis coordinator in the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies once all the following have been received:

- Oral Examination Report (passed)
- Revisions Approved Memorandum, if applicable
- Library and Archives Canada Theses Non-Exclusive License form, signed and dated
- Copies of copyright permissions (if applicable)

Once an ETD record is opened, the student will receive an email with instructions on how to log in and complete their submission. Students should ensure that they have followed the organization and technical requirements for theses/dissertations prior to making a submission to the Office of the Dean, Graduate Studies through the ETD platform.