Examination Outcome Guidelines

The examining committee has three options in determining the final oral examination outcome. They are Pass, Conditional, and Fail. Each of these is described in more detail below:

A. **Pass**: This option signifies the candidate has satisfied all departmental and graduate degree requirements. The committee may pass a candidate when minor revisions that do not substantially alter the thesis or research paper are required.

B. **Conditional**: A candidate may receive a conditional recommendation when there is reason to suggest that sufficient deficiencies exist within the thesis or research paper and/or the oral examination to warrant revisions and/or a second oral examination.

   Three different levels of conditional pass are possible.
   a. The student’s performance in the oral examination is acceptable, but substantial revisions to the thesis or research paper need to be made and approved by the Committee Chair.
   b. The student’s performance in the oral examination is acceptable, but substantial revisions to the thesis or research paper need to be made and approved by the entire committee.
   c. Deficiencies exist both within the thesis or research paper and the oral examination to warrant revisions to the thesis or paper and a second oral examination. A candidate has one (1) opportunity to retake the oral examination and may not schedule a second oral examination in the same semester.

   The Committee Chair must provide written recommendations to the candidate and the School of Graduate Studies outlining the specific deficiencies that must be satisfied.

   The Committee Chair must notify the School of Graduate Studies once all deficiencies noted by the examining committee have been satisfied.

C. **Fail**: A committee recommendation to fail a master's degree candidate requires that clear cause(s) exist to warrant such a decision. Generally, the recommendation to fail requires that significant deficiencies exist in the candidate's knowledge of the primary theories and literature, as well as in applications and methodologies in the major area. In addition, the committee may recommend a failing grade when the members of the committee determine the thesis or research paper to be unacceptable.

   The committee must provide to the candidate and the School of Graduate Studies a written explanation of deficiencies that in their opinion warrants the failure.

   Any failing project (thesis, research paper, capstone project, etc.) cannot be resubmitted. A candidate who “fails” will have one (1) opportunity to propose a new project.