

IGS Program Theme Student Handbook

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Supervision

Supervisors should be familiar with the [rules and procedures](#) of the College of Graduate Studies and program regulations and requirements.

Meetings. Both the graduate student and the supervisor have a shared responsibility to meet on a regular basis. It is important for supervisors to be available to provide guidance and feedback to graduate students, especially for those who are new to graduate studies and/or new to Canada. The frequency of meetings may vary by discipline, stage in the program, nature of the project and the independence of the student. For example, these could be weekly, bi-weekly or monthly meetings.

The Role of the Supervisor. To be an effective graduate supervisor, a faculty member must first recognize the responsibilities of the role, and ensure that these are met to the best of their abilities with each graduate student. The critical relationship between a research graduate student and their supervisor should always be **academic and professional, with an emphasis on a mutually open, committed, and respectful relationship**. The supervisor should act as both an academic mentor, with an emphasis on guidance, instruction, and encouragement of scholarship and research, and as an evaluator of the student's performance. A fundamental duty of the supervisor is to impart to the student the skills necessary to plan and conduct original research. Specifically, the supervisor should:

- Work with the student to establish a realistic timetable for the completion of the various requirements of the program of study;
- Discuss with the student and establish mutual expectations for the student's vacation time (students are entitled to three weeks of vacation during each twelve-month academic year);
- Develop a relationship with the student conducive to research and intellectual growth;
- Guide and mentor the student concerning the research ethics approval process and concerning the intellectual property issues around their thesis or dissertation research;
- Guide the student in the pursuit of knowledge and provide constructive criticism in support of the highest standards of research and professional development;
- Mentor the student in areas such as, but not limited to, the development of appropriate professional skills, funding applications, networking, assistance with publications, and career development.

[Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor](#). The aim of this agreement is to define the expectations and responsibilities of the graduate student and the supervisor. Graduate students hold the primary responsibility for the completion of their degree, and the supervisor must be available for mentoring, providing guidance, advice, and feedback to the student.

Due Date: Oct. 1st, Year 1. Fill out the form in consultation with your supervisor. Submit to colin.mckay@ubc.ca by the deadline.

Changing Supervisors. It may be necessary for a student to change committee members during the program. If a change in committee members is required, the student should first speak to their supervisor and then complete and submit the [Change of Student Supervisor Committee Member](#) form.

Courses & Registration

On the UBCO website, you can see courses available for the current academic year. Rest assured, I am here to help you if you have any issues finding or registering for your courses (colin.mckay@ubc.ca).

1. Follow this link <https://courses.students.ubc.ca/cs/courseschedule?campuscd=UBCO> and login using your campus-wide login (CWL) credentials (button at top right of screen)
2. Option 1: Under the “Search” tab at the top left of the screen, select “Courses”
3. Option 2: Under “Browse” choose the Subject Code for your program

You can find the details of your program requirements in the [Academic Calendar](#).

Thesis Proposal/Prospectus

Please note: these guidelines may be modified in accordance with the requirements of different disciplines. Students are expected to consult with their supervisors to identify the requirements in relation to their topics of study.

The proposal consists of an essay that outlines the research questions, the objectives of the thesis/dissertation project and its anticipated research contributions, and a bibliography that represents a synthesis of the relevant literature and provides essential context regarding the research question under investigation. The essay will discuss the issues to be addressed in the thesis/dissertation, the methodology and theoretical approaches the candidate will use, and the relation of that methodology/theory to recently published research. It will include an outline of the structure of the thesis/dissertation. Where relevant, the proposal will outline the experimental design and include methods of data collection, analysis, representation, and synthesis.

Due Date: The proposal should be developed in consultation with the supervisor and presented for comment, recommendations, and revision to the supervisory committee by May 8th of your first year of study for MA/MSc students. The committee as a whole will then meet with the candidate to discuss the proposal and to sign the [Thesis Approval Form](#).

For PhD students, your thesis proposal is known as a Prospectus and is typically completed at the end of the Comprehensive Exam process in Year 2, or sometime Year 3. The exact timeline will depend on the individual. For PhD students, presenting your Prospectus is normally the last requirement you must complete before you can Advance to Candidacy. For guidance in preparing your prospectus, please consult with your supervisor.

Length:	MA/MSc	2,500-4,000 words and a three-page+ bibliography
	PhD	5,000-7,500 words and a five-page+ bibliography

Behavioral Ethics Application. If your research entails working with human subjects in any manner you and your supervisor need to fill out a [Behavioural Ethics Application form](#) and undergo an ethics review prior to beginning your research. Your thesis will need to include a certificate number issued by the review board.

Annual Progress Report

The [Annual Progress Report](#) form is required by the College of Graduate Studies and is reviewed by your supervisory committee and program coordinator. It is used to track general progress of the student and ensure the program is progressing well.

Due Date: Completed (fully approved) APRs are due at CoGS June 1st of each year. Students should submit their report at least two weeks before this deadline so that it can receive all the necessary approvals in time to avoid being late. Submit to colin.mckay@ubc.ca.

Thesis Preparation & Defense

UBCO Thesis and Dissertation. <https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/academics/thesis-and-dissertation/>

In most fields, a Master's thesis will range from 24,000 to 30,000 words in length.

In most fields, a doctoral dissertation will range from 60,000 to 80,000 words in length, exclusive of footnotes, bibliography, and appendices. As a courtesy to examiners, if the dissertation will be over 100,000 words long the student or supervisor must notify the College of Graduate Studies when the [Notice of Doctoral Dissertation Oral Examination](#) is submitted.

Thesis Submission Procedure. It is crucial that everyone on the Supervisory Committee feels the thesis is ready to defend. Pressure to meet [graduation deadlines](#) must not determine the readiness of a thesis. When a student has finished the thesis work and is prepared to go forward to the defense, a series of forms must be completed and submitted to the Theme Coordinator.

Before a thesis goes to defense, it must be approved by the Supervisor and Supervisory Committee.

The following is the process for submission of the thesis for defense:

1. Student submits thesis to supervisor for review.
2. Supervisor and student work on the thesis in a back and forth process of review and revision until supervisor feels it's ready for defense.
3. Supervisor forwards thesis to supervisory committee for review.
4. The Supervisory Committee has two weeks to consider the work and provide feedback.
5. Once feedback is addressed, the supervisor will have two weeks to review and provide additional feedback.
6. Masters: Once the supervisor and committee agree the thesis is ready for defense, the supervisor completes the [Notice of Master's Thesis Oral Examination](#) form and submits BOTH the form and a copy of the thesis document to the Graduate Program Assistant. The form is used to set the date and time of defense, and to identify the

members of the Examining Committee. In addition to the Supervisory Committee, the Examining Committee includes a Neutral Chair and a University Examiner. It is the supervisor's responsibility to form the Examining Committee.

7. Doctoral: For Ph.D. defences, an External Examiner is required. The supervisor will find an external examiner, and submit a [Request for External Examiner form](#) to the College of Graduate Studies.
 - a. Once the external examiner has been approved, the supervisor completes the [Notice of Doctoral Dissertation Oral Examination](#) form and submits BOTH the form and a copy of the thesis document to the Graduate Program Assistant **at least 6 weeks before the intended defense date.**

Thesis Defense. Normally, by the end of Year 2 or early in Year 3, Master's students are ready to defend their thesis. For PhD students it normally takes four or more years to reach the defense stage. See an [overview of expectations](#) of a thesis and the procedures for submission, examination and conferral.

Academic Integrity & Research Ethics

UBC Board of Governors Scholarly Integrity Policy SC6. The purposes of this [Policy](#) are: to meet the requirements set out in the Tri-Agency Framework: Responsible Conduct of Research; to articulate the responsibilities and standards required of UBC Persons engaged in Scholarly Activity; and to provide a process for dealing with allegations of Scholarly Misconduct.

Academic Integrity. Academic integrity is what all members of UBC's community, from first-year undergraduates to publishing professors, aspire to when they do research. Having academic integrity means taking responsibility for and having pride in your work, especially when it connects, through practices such as citation, to the work of others. These [guides](#) will help you understand what academic integrity is, and how to achieve it.

UBC Research Ethics Office. Oversees and manages the process of reviewing and monitoring research involving human participants, and US financial conflict of interest. Any research or study conducted at UBC facilities (including UBC's affiliated hospitals) or undertaken by persons connected to the University that involves human subjects, animals, bio-hazardous materials, or potential environmental impact must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate [UBC research ethics board](#). This must be done before you start your research. Of particular relevance is the [Behavioural Research Ethics page](#) and [guidance notes](#).

Academic & Research Support

Centre for Scholarly Communication (CSC). The [CSC](#) Supports faculty, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, and staff, at every stage of the research life cycle.

Scholarly Communications @ UBC. Supports UBC faculty and students through workshops, guides and one-to-one consultations on a range of scholarly communication issues, including: Open Access, Copyright, Data Management, Open Education & Research, Author rights, Publishing, cIRcle Digital Repository. <https://scholcomm.ubc.ca/>

Peer Writing Group Network. Our goal is to help facilitate the process of forming peer writing groups by providing a [point of connection](#) for UBCO graduate students.

Ph.D. Comprehensives Requirements

Comprehensive Examination Process for IGS Doctoral Students.

Within 2 months of completing coursework requirements, doctoral students should work with their supervisor to complete the [IGS Comprehensive Exam Plan](#) for submission to their theme coordinator for approval. Please send a fully signed and completed copy to colin.mckay@ubc.ca.

The comprehensive examination consists of two components—a written phase and an oral phase—each with its own options. The student must successfully complete both components. The content of these two components will vary by program of study within the overall IGS program. See the guidelines [here](#).

Recommendation for Advancement to Ph.D. Candidacy. The basic requirements for a doctoral student to be admitted to candidacy are: all required coursework has been successfully completed; the comprehensive examinations have been passed; and the supervisory committee has certified that the thesis proposal (prospectus) has been approved. The [Recommendation for Advancement to Candidacy](#) form should be completed and sent to colin.mckay@ubc.ca.

Timeline Table – Master’s

The first year of your master’s program will typically be spent completing your [coursework requirements](#) and submitting your thesis proposal.

The second year of your master’s program will typically be spent researching and writing your thesis, and preparing for your oral defense.

Here are some of the key forms students will need throughout their program:

- [Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor](#)
- [MA IGS Thesis Proposal](#)

Deadline	Task	Steps
October 1 st	Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor	Download and complete the Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor in consultation with your supervisor Submit to colin.mckay@ubc.ca You and your supervisor should each keep a copy for reference
December 1 st	SSHRC Masters Applications Due in your first year	Apply directly to SSHRC website. Find the link in awards database
April	Supervisory committee assembled	Your supervisory committee will be assembled and submitted with your first Annual Progress Report (June 1st).
May 8 th	Thesis Proposal Due	Form found here . Submit to colin.mckay@ubc.ca once all signatures, including theme coordinator signature, have been acquired.

June 1 st	Annual Progress Report Due	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get started early as this can take a while to complete 2. The form is found on the College of Graduate Studies forms database 3. Choose Report A (thesis)
April 30 th after first year	GTA Applications Due	<p>After your first year, you will have to apply for GTA positions.</p> <p>Fill out application and submit online (these will be distributed over email)</p> <p>If you are successful you will receive a confirmation email in the summer</p> <p>To accept, follow the steps outlined in your confirmation email</p>
Various	College of Graduate Studies Awards	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to College of Graduate Studies awards database 2. Browse awards and follow listed procedures

Timeline Table – PhD

The first year of your doctoral program will typically be spent completing your [coursework requirements](#) and working with your supervisor to plan your comprehensive examinations.

The second year of your doctoral program will typically be spent completing your comprehensive examinations and your dissertation proposal.

The remainder of your program will be spent researching and writing your dissertation, and preparing for your oral defense.

Here are some of the key forms students will need throughout their program:

- o [Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor](#)
- o [PhD IGS Comprehensive Exam Plan](#)

Deadline	Task	Steps
Year One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for SSHRC • Complete Supervisor-Supervisee Agreement • Complete coursework • Form supervisory committee • Complete first Annual Progress Report • Complete and submit Comprehensive Exam Plan with supervisor • Form comprehensives committee 	
Sept 1 st	SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship applications due	<p>Deadline for students is either Sept or Oct; different each year</p> <p>The College of Graduate Studies communicates this information to students, who apply through UBC</p> <p>More information on Doctoral SSHRC eligibility, guidelines, and application form can be found in the College of Graduate Studies awards database</p>
October 1 st	Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor	Download and complete the Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor in consultation with your supervisor

		<p>Submit to colin.mckay@ubc.ca</p> <p>You and your supervisor should each keep a copy for reference</p>
April 30 th	GTA Applications Due	<p>After your first year, you will have to apply for GTA positions.</p> <p>Fill out application and submit online (these will be distributed over email).</p> <p>If you are successful you will receive a confirmation email in the summer</p> <p>To accept, follow the steps outlined in your confirmation email</p>
April	Assemble supervisory committee	Your supervisory committee will be assembled and submitted with your first Annual Progress Report (below).
June 1 st	Annual Progress Report Due	<p>Get started early as this can take a while to complete</p> <p>The form is found on the College of Graduate Studies forms database</p> <p>Choose Report A (thesis)</p>
May/June of first year (or, within 2 months of completing your coursework)	Comprehensive Exam Plan	Work with your supervisor to complete the Comprehensive Exam Plan and submit with all signatures to colin.mckay@ubc.ca
Year Two No set deadlines	Comprehensive Examinations	<p>Complete a set of written papers and/or oral exams</p> <p>Once comprehensives are done, complete your prospectus (also known as research proposal or thesis proposal)</p>
Year Three No set deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Prospectus • Advance to Candidacy 	

<p>Year Four</p> <p>No set deadlines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete dissertation. • Dissertation oral defense

Funding

Support for Grant Applications. Master’s and Ph.D. students are supported through the CGS (e.g. Master’s and Doctoral SSHRC, Vanier) grant application process.

College of Graduate Studies Awards List. The College of Graduate Studies maintains a [Tuition, Awards, and Finance](#) page on their website, with information about a variety of funding opportunities. In particular, you may wish to browse their [Award Opportunities](#) listing for CGS and many other awards.

Vanier Doctoral Award. The [Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships](#) (Vanier CGS) program is designed to attract and retain world-class doctoral students by supporting students who demonstrate both leadership skills and a high standard of scholarly achievement in graduate studies in the social sciences and humanities, natural sciences and engineering, and health-related fields.

Killam Doctoral Award. The [Killam Scholarship and Prize](#) Programmes were established in memory of Izaak Walton Killam through the will of his wife, Dorothy J. Killam, and through gifts made during her lifetime. The UBC Killam Doctoral Scholarships are provided annually from the Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Fund for Advanced Studies.

University Graduate Fellowship. University graduate fellowships do not require an application. Eligible students who have made satisfactory progress in their program will be automatically considered. Eligible students are those who have been in the program for 24 months or less and have submitted a complete satisfactory Annual Progress Report by the deadline.

Graduate Teaching Assistantship. Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) are paid employment/learning opportunities for graduate students. Incoming students are automatically considered for GTA positions, while continuing students must apply in order to be considered for placement. Under the supervision of the faculty member teaching a course, students selected for GTA positions support the learning of undergraduate students, get paid, and get teaching experience to add to their CVs. For more information on GTA opportunities and other paid student employment.

Bamfield Marine Science Centre Bursary. In normal years (sans the spectre of COVID) Dr. Greg Garrard offers an environmental literature course **In Pursuit of the Whale** through the [Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre](#). The Centre was established in 1972 as a field lab for those studying marine biology. But for literature students, leaving the hallowed halls of learning for the coastal environs of Bamfield is a unique proposition. Students who enrol in Dr. Garrard's course have access to [funding](#).

Student Rights, Responsibilities & Grievances

UBCO COGS Graduate Policy & Procedure Manual. Many student rights (eg. vacation) and responsibilities are outlined in the [manual](#).

BCGEU Collective Agreement. Students who are hired as Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants or in other positions at the university typically have rights under the [Collective Agreement](#) between the University of British Columbia and the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU). Of particular relevance are Letters of Understandings #1 to #3.

UBC Board of Governors Graduate Student Teaching Policy AP7. This [Policy](#) sets out conditions to support the graduate student's engagement with his or her own program of studies and to ensure that the undergraduates he or she teaches are being educated by a well-qualified instructor.

UBC Board of Governors Sexual Assault and Other Sexual Misconduct SC17. This [Policy](#) articulates UBC's duty and commitment to support members of the UBC community who are impacted by sexual misconduct, to provide a central site for information regarding the resources and options available to those affected by sexual misconduct, to create and make available programs and resources to educate its community on the prevention of sexual misconduct, and to provide a process to respond to and to investigate allegations of sexual misconduct.

UBC Board of Governors Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (LR7) UBC is committed to providing Accommodation to promote human rights, equity and diversity, and to comply with its duty under the British Columbia Human Rights Code to make its services and facilities available in a manner that does not discriminate. Students will be Accommodated in a way that respects their dignity, privacy and autonomy. The purpose of this [Policy](#) is to outline the principles, responsibilities and processes for the provision of Accommodation for Students with Disabilities.

To resolve disagreements, begin by discussing the issues with your supervisor. The next, or alternative, steps would be to involve the Program Coordinator and then the Associate Dean. If these are not viable strategies, the following independent student advocacy bodies can be contacted for support:

[Office of the Ombudsperson for Students](#)

Okanagan Campus
217 University Centre
3272 University Way
Kelowna, BC Canada V1V 1V7
Email ombuds.office.ok@ubc.ca

The University of British Columbia Students' Union Okanagan
Sarah Furgason, Advocacy & Governance Coordinator
[Contact Sarah Furgason](#)

UBCO Student Supports

There are a number of general and specialized student support services available: Aboriginal Programs & Services (APS). Provides community and culturally appropriate [services and support](#) to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Students. You belong here.

International Programs and Services (IPS). Offers [international student advisors](#) to assist with a wide range of concerns. They have created the UBCO International Student Guide to help navigate the complexities of immigration, employment and health that international students encounter.

Disability Resource Centre (DRC). Offers [programs and services](#) to foster an accessible and welcoming campus, providing access to accommodations for students to overcome disability-related challenges that impede academic success.

UBCSUO Pride Resource Centre (PRC). A [space on campus](#) where LGBT and Ally students can come and talk about issues and challenges they face on and off campus.

UBCSUO Peer Support Network (PSN). A [space on campus](#) where students can come and speak with a peer about a challenge, struggle, and/or personal hardship they may be facing.

UBCSUO Women's Resource Centre (WRC). A [safe place on campus for women](#) to come to find a supportive environment and connections to other resources on and off campus.

Health

UBC Health & Wellness. [Resources](#) promoting student wellness in body, mind, and spirit.

UBCSUO Health plans. [Information](#) on iMED for international students and BC Medical Services Plan

Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office (SVPRO). A safe place for faculty, staff, and students to access education and support for themselves and others. [SVPRO](#) can assist with medical and reporting options, connecting survivors with community resources, and providing education and training.

Emergencies

Emergency financial aid. If you find yourself in an emergency situation or faced with an unexpected expense, contact Student Services. You can make an appointment with an advisor to review your current financial situation and explore funding options. For inquiries regarding emergency financial aid, please email: sis.ubco@ubc.ca or call [250 807 9100](tel:2508079100) (Toll-free: [1 866 596 0767](tel:18665960767)).

UBC Pantry. A [student food bank](#).