



# Western Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

## GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL (GEC)

March 30, 2026

2:30 - 4:00pm

Western Interdisciplinary Research Building (WIRB), Room 3000

[Zoom link](#)

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order K. Siddiqui
2. Land Acknowledgement A. Waters
3. Confirmation of Quorum
4. Approval of Draft Minutes – **Exhibit A**

**Recommendation #1: That the Graduate Education Council approve its Draft Minutes of February 12, 2026 as presented in Exhibit A.**

5. Business Arising
6. New Business for Approval

6.1 School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Award for Excellence in Doctoral Supervision – **Exhibit B**

**Recommendation #2: That the Graduate Education Council approve the introduction of the SGPS Award for Excellence in Doctoral Supervision, effective March 30, 2026, as presented in Exhibit B.**

6.2 Policy for Convocation; Graduation Diplomas and Certificates – **Exhibit C**

**Recommendation #3: That the Graduate Education Council approve for recommendation to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy, and Senate that effective May 15, 2026, the Policy for Convocation; Graduation Diplomas and Certificates be revised as presented in Exhibit C.**



# Western Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

## 6.3 Policy for Registration in Graduate Programs – Exhibit D

**Recommendation #4: That the Graduate Education Council approve for recommendation to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy, and Senate that effective May 15, 2026, the Policy for Registration in Graduate Programs be revised as presented in Exhibit D.**

## 6.4 Policy for Assessing Student Progress in Multi-Year Research-Based Graduate Programs – Exhibit E

**Recommendation #5: That the Graduate Education Council approve for recommendation to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy, and Senate that effective May 15, 2026, the Policy for Assessing Student Progress in Multi-Year Research-Based Graduate Programs be revised as presented in Exhibit E.**

## 6.5 Business from the Academic Policy Committee

### 6.5.1 SGPS Membership Regulation - Exhibit F

**Recommendation #6: That the Graduate Education Council approve for information to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy, and Senate that effective May 15, 2026, the SGPS Membership Regulation be revised as presented in Exhibit F.**

### 6.5.2 Supervision Regulation - Exhibit G

**Recommendation #7: That the Graduate Education Council approve for information to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy, and Senate that effective May 15, 2026, the Supervision Regulation be revised as presented in Exhibit G.**

### 6.5.3 Policy for Graduate Degree Admissions – Exhibit H

**Recommendation #8: That the Graduate Education Council approve for recommendation to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy, and Senate that effective May 15, 2026, the Policy for Graduate Degree Admissions be revised as presented in Exhibit H.**



# Western Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies

7. Other Business

8. Adjournment

# SGPS AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DOCTORAL SUPERVISION

## Overview

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) will recognize supervisors who have demonstrated excellent supervision at the doctoral level at Western University through the SGPS Award for Excellence in Doctoral Supervision. The Award acknowledges supervisor's overall guidance and support to the academic success and welfare of graduate students, inspiring them to be successful scholars.

The award will be offered annually. A doctoral student who has completed all requirements for their doctoral degree can nominate their supervisor. These students are encouraged to consider nominating their outstanding supervisors for these awards. In defining excellence in supervision, students are also encouraged to consider supervisors who prioritized accessibility, equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, and indigenization.

Each Award recipient will be published on the SGPS website as a Western Doctoral Supervisor of the Year. The internal SGPS Award for Excellence in Doctoral Supervision will also support the nomination of a faculty member for the CAGS Dr. Suning Wang Award for Outstanding Graduate Mentorship (<https://cags.ca/outstanding-graduate-mentorship/>)

## A. Eligibility Criteria

- Demonstrate a sustained record of graduate supervision at the current institution (no less than 7 years)
- Be currently active as a graduate supervisor
- Previous winners of this award are ineligible

Nominations must provide information about supervisory support in these areas:

- The responsiveness of the supervisor to the student's needs.
- The provision of supervisor-student enabling environments that fostered the student's academic success and overall wellbeing.
- The availability and level of engagement of the supervisor in providing timely and meaningful feedback and guidance.
- The support and encouragement of the supervisor towards timely completion of the thesis.
- The willingness of the supervisor to support the student in learning the cultures of their discipline.
- The interest and willingness of the supervisor to introduce the student to relevant communities of scholars, thus helping to inspire in the student a strong sense of collegiality in and beyond Western.

- The encouragement by the supervisor for the student's participation in professional development, career planning, conference participation, and other scholarly and community engagement activities that enabled them to thrive.
- The engagement and willingness of the supervisor to foster a strong sense of academic integrity and commitment to the principles of accessibility, equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, and indigenization

## **B. Nomination Process**

Doctoral students will automatically be invited to nominate their supervisors upon completion of all the requirements for their doctoral degree. Students who have more than one supervisor may nominate both supervisors for the Award.

1. The nominating student(s) will complete a SGPS nomination form.
2. The nominating student(s) will provide a statement of nomination (1-2 pages) describing the supervisor's excellence in supervision and the supervisory environment. The letter should:
  - a. Address the supervisor's mentoring / supervision philosophy and style
  - b. Describe how the supervisor meets the eligibility criteria listed in section A of this document
  - c. Address the expectations and requirements for graduate student supervision at Western. See the [SGPS Regulations on Supervision](#).
3. The nominating students(s) will acquire at least two support letters from other doctoral students previously and/or currently supervised by the nominee.
4. The nominating student(s) will acquire a support letter from the Graduate Program Chair (or equivalent) or the Chair of the Department.
5. The nomination form and supporting material (items 2. through 4.) should be emailed as a single file PDF document to [thesis@uwo.ca](mailto:thesis@uwo.ca) with the email subject line 'NOMINATION FOR DOCTORAL SUPERVISION AWARD'.
6. Once the nomination is received by SGPS, the Committee Chair for this award will contact the nominee to confirm their consent to being considered for the award (nomination will be available for the current academic year as well as one additional academic year). If the nomination is accepted, an Associate Vice-Provost will work with the Grad Chair to obtain the following information by an annual deadline set by SGPS for the adjudication process:
  - a. The supervisor's most recent experiences with supervision, co-supervision, and/or mentoring of graduate students.
  - b. The supervisor's CV that includes details of scholarly activities jointly held or supported (e.g. presentations and publications co-authored with their graduate students).
  - c. Other relevant information demonstrating supervisory excellence. For example, the program expectations for graduate supervision (in addition to SGPS Regulations on Supervision) including the number of students supervised compared to the program's norms.

## **C. Important Dates**

The annual award cycle runs from January 1 to December 31 each year.

- Nomination process opens to students: Upon completion of ALL doctoral degree requirements
- Nomination process closes to students: Six months from the completion of their doctoral studies

#### **D. Adjudication**

The Graduate Education Council (GEC) Supervision and Mentorship Advisory Committee will adjudicate the award.

#### **E. Public Recognition of the Award**

The award will be announced in May each year for nominations received in the previous year. The awardee will be presented with an award certificate and their name will be published on the SGPS website.

#### **F. Other**

The proposed SGPS Award for Excellence in Graduate Supervision aligns with the objectives of the CAGS Dr. Suning Wang Award for Outstanding Graduate Mentorship (<https://cags.ca/outstanding-graduate-mentorship/>).

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/funding/recognition-awards/supervisor.html><https://cags.ca/outstanding-graduate-mentorship/><https://postdocassociation.wordpress.com/supervisor-excellence-award/>[https://gradstudies.ontariotechu.ca/grad\\_admin/excellence\\_awards/outstanding-supervisor-award.php](https://gradstudies.ontariotechu.ca/grad_admin/excellence_awards/outstanding-supervisor-award.php)<https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/rocktheboat/><https://facultyandstaff.sgs.utoronto.ca/gfm/supervision-award-for-faculty-members/><https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies-postdoctoral-affairs/current-students/award-excellence-graduate-supervision>

## Convocation; Graduation Diplomas and Certificates

<b>Subject:</b>	Convocation; Graduation Diplomas and Certificates
<b>Sections:</b>	<a href="#">Convocation Ceremonies</a> ; <a href="#">Graduation Diplomas and Certificates</a> ; <a href="#">Degree Diploma Wording</a>
<b>Approving Authority:</b>	Senate
<b>Responsible Committee:</b>	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
<b>Related Procedures:</b>	*
<b>Officer(s) Responsible for Procedure:</b>	*
<b>Related Policies:</b>	<a href="#">Academic Records and Student Transcripts</a>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>TBD</b> <del>November 8, 2024</del>
<b>Supersedes:</b>	<b>November 8, 2024</b> ; September 2022; February 2020

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## CONVOCATION CEREMONIES

### Scheduling Convocation Ceremonies

- The in absentia February Convocation will normally be scheduled for the last Friday in February.
- June Convocation ceremonies will normally be scheduled from Monday to Friday in the second or third full week in June.
- The Huron University College (Theology) Convocation ceremonies will be scheduled in consultation with the Affiliated University College.
- October Convocation ceremonies will normally be scheduled in the first full week following Thanksgiving.

**Recipients of Certificates and Diplomas** will be listed in the Convocation Program and will be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremonies.

### Recipients of Two Degrees, Diplomas or Certificates

## Convocation; Graduation Diplomas and Certificates

When a candidate is to be awarded two degrees, diplomas or certificates (or any combination of these) during one convocation period, the Registrar will be permitted to release both diplomas to the graduand at the convocation ceremony of the first degree program scheduled in the convocation period.

### **Awarding Double Degrees at Convocation**

For students who are eligible to receive two degrees at convocation:

1. If both degrees are to be awarded at the same convocation ceremony, the student may cross the stage only once, and must make a choice as to the degree grouping with which they will process.
2. If the two degrees are to be awarded at different convocation ceremonies, the student may cross the stage in one or both ceremonies. Both diplomas will normally be given to the graduate at the first of the ceremonies in which they participate.

### **Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates [to be conferred officially at convocation ceremonies]**

Degrees, diplomas and certificates will be officially conferred or awarded at the appropriate convocation ceremony following successful completion of the program requirements and an application to graduate if required, or will be available for pickup by the graduate within three business days subsequent to the ceremony. Degrees, diplomas and certificates are retained in the Office of the Registrar for two years after Convocation.

Candidates who meet the requirements for graduation in diploma and certificate programs will be issued a Notification of Eligibility to Graduate (rather than an application to graduate, required of potential degree recipients).

Degrees, diplomas and certificates normally will not be awarded in advance of convocation ceremonies. A degree, diploma, or certificate may be released early at the discretion of the Office of the Registrar if the student demonstrates that the document is required by an employer or for a work visa, and if it is determined that the student is eligible and has applied to graduate. Students presenting an official offer of employment or deadline relating to an application for a visa may, by application and payment of the appropriate fee to the Office of the Registrar, request release of their document no sooner than four weeks prior to their scheduled convocation. The document released will bear the date of the appropriate scheduled convocation ceremony.

All other students who require notice of confirmation that their program has been completed (in addition to an official transcript) may apply to the Office of the Registrar with a request for a letter attesting to the fact that they have completed the requirements of their program.

If a student's degree, diploma or certificate has been lost, stolen or destroyed OR the student requires a duplicate or duplicates, subsequent diplomas can be

## Convocation; Graduation Diplomas and Certificates

produced by application and payment of the appropriate fee to the Office of the Registrar. All subsequent degrees, diplomas and certificates will be issued:

- using the current Western diploma printing standards and Officers
- with the words "Duplicate Copy" affixed to the parchment

**Degree Diplomas for DDS Graduates** (Exception for DDS graduates who satisfy requirements between June and October)

In order to practice dentistry, graduates of the DDS program must present a copy of their diploma to the Royal College of Dental Surgeons and thus obtain a certificate of registration. In April 1994, Senate approved that the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) be granted retroactively to June for students who satisfy all of the requirements for graduation after the June convocation date for Dentistry but before the October convocation. Based on this precedent, Senate approved procedures for granting a DDS degree to a student in the program who completes the degree requirements after Autumn Convocation in October. The date that will appear on the degree is the date on which all degree requirements were completed. The graduate's name and the date of the degree will appear in the Program of the Spring Convocation that next follows, and the graduate may request the opportunity to participate in the Spring Convocation next following.

### ***In Absentia* Convocation in February**

Senate approved the establishment of an *in absentia* convocation to be held in mid-February for students who complete their degree requirements by the end of the preceding fall term. Students who have their degrees conferred in February will be given the opportunity to participate in the appropriate June convocation ceremony.

### **Statement re Posthumous Degrees**

Contingent on approval by the Dean or Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), in consultation with the Provost, a posthumous degree may be granted at a Convocation ceremony.

## **GRADUATION DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES**

1. The designation of "Bachelor" will be used on diplomas with the designation of "Baccalaureate" approved for use on diplomas upon request by individual students. For diplomas of Masters and Doctoral degrees the designation "Master" or "Doctor" will be used.
2. Undergraduate students who qualify for Graduation "With Distinction" will receive the designation on diplomas.
3. All diplomas (for degree programs and diploma programs) and certificates (for certificate programs) will be in English.
4. All and only Honorary Degree diplomas will be in Latin.
5. Programs approved by Senate for diplomas/certificates not in English, e.g., the Certificat de Français Pratique, will be exceptions to this policy.

## Convocation; Graduation Diplomas and Certificates

For graduation diplomas, the wording of the program taken will follow this format:

Honours Degree	BACHELOR OF ARTS <i>Honours Philosophy</i>
Combined Honours Degree	BACHELOR OF ARTS <i>Honours Anthropology and English</i>
Honours Degree with an Area of Concentration in another Subject	BACHELOR OF SCIENCE <i>Honours Mathematics with French</i>
Three-Year Degree	BACHELOR OF ARTS <i>English</i>
Four-Year Degree	BACHELOR OF ARTS Four Year Program <i>Computer Science</i>
Four-Year Degree with an Area of Concentration in another Subject	BACHELOR OF ARTS Four Year Program <i>French with Philosophy</i>

When appropriate, all Bachelor/Baccalaureate degree diplomas will have the name of the degree with Honours Specialization, Major(s), or Specialization module(s) earned by the student and “With Distinction”, if appropriate. For example,

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Honours Specialization in Geology and Biology

BACHELOR OF ARTS

Major in English Language and Literature

Major in Film Studies

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Specialization in Environmental Science

If Minor modules have been successfully completed, this will show on students' transcripts and academic records only. They will not appear on the diploma. Students who have successfully completed the Dentistry Qualifying Program from 1999 to 2005 may return their Qualifying Program certificates and, following payment of a diploma replacement fee, receive a DDS degree diploma.

Students who have successfully completed the LLB program prior to 2009 be permitted to exchange their LLB diploma for a JD diploma, upon payment of an administrative fee for the replacement diploma.

### **DEGREE DIPLOMA WORDING**

Degree diplomas will have the following wording:

## Convocation; Graduation Diplomas and Certificates

"The Senate on the recommendation of the (Faculty/School/College) has conferred upon (graduate's name) the degree of (degree name) with all its rights, privileges and obligations.

Given at London, Canada, on the (date) day of (month), (year), in the (appropriate year, e.g., 2021 will be the one hundred and forty-third year) of the University."

The University of Western Ontario will be the only institution cited on the degree diploma unless specific approval is granted by Senate.

### **Degree Diploma Wording for Graduate Student Diplomas**

Degree diplomas for graduate students will state that "Senate on recommendation of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has conferred upon (graduate's name) the degree of (degree name) with all its rights, privileges and obligations."

Any student who graduated prior to June 30, 2008, will have the Faculty of Graduate Studies cited on their diploma.

### Exception for Programs offered in Collaboration with Fanshawe College:

Collaborative programs offered with Fanshawe College recognize both Western and Fanshawe on Western's graduation diplomas, e.g., "The Senate on the recommendation of the Faculty of Health Sciences in collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences and Human Services, Fanshawe College, has conferred upon (graduate's name) the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing."

### Exceptions for the Bachelor of Medical Sciences Program

The Bachelor of Medical Sciences program is offered jointly by the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and the Faculty of Science and as such, both names will appear on BMSc diplomas.

i.e., "The Senate on the recommendation of the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and the Faculty of Science has conferred upon (graduate's name) the degree of (degree name) with all its rights, privileges and obligations...."

### Exception for the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option

The degree awarded will appear on the parchment as: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, *Home Program and Partnering Program.*

### **Approvals and Signatures:**

On behalf of the Senate, the Provost approves the list of Candidates for Degrees upon the recommendation of the Registrar. The list of Candidates approved by the Provost is deemed to be those names identified electronically within the student records system. The list of Candidates for Degrees will be archived as appropriate.

Signatures required for degree and diploma program diplomas and for certificate program certificates are those of the Registrar, Dean of the relevant Faculty/School/Affiliated University College and President of the University.

## Convocation; Graduation Diplomas and Certificates

### **Format:**

The parchment used for degrees, diplomas and certificates will be of a format and quality commensurate with the stature of Western University.

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**Last Reviewed:**

**March 2026\***

**Registration and Progression in Graduate Programs**

<b>Subject:</b>	Registration
<b>Subsections:</b>	<a href="#">Initial Registration</a> ; <a href="#">Registration Requirements</a> ; <a href="#">Categories of Registration</a> ; <a href="#">Transfer from Master's to Doctoral Degree Status in a Program</a> ; <a href="#">Leave of Absence</a> ; <a href="#">Student Progress and Withdrawal</a> ; <a href="#">Admission After Withdrawal</a>
<b>Approving Authority:</b>	Senate
<b>Responsible Committee:</b>	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
<b>Related Procedures:</b>	<a href="#">Procedure for Registration in Graduate Programs</a>
<b>Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:</b>	Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies)
<b>Related Policies:</b>	<a href="#">Assessing Student Progress in Multi-Year Research-Based Graduate Programs</a> *
<b>Effective Date:</b>	TBD <del>November 8, 2024</del>
<b>Supersedes:</b>	<a href="#">November 8, 2024</a> ; May 17, 2024; March 15, 2024; September 16, 2022

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**1. Initial Registration**

A candidate whose application for admission has been approved by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) must register in the term indicated on the "Offer of Admission". In exceptional circumstances, registration may be deferred, with approval of the program and SGPS. The candidate should consult the appropriate program for details about registration.

**2. Registration Requirements**

## Registration in Graduate Programs

### a) **Continuous Registration**

Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in the SGPS in each successive term from initial registration until all requirements for the degree are completed.

### b) **Maximum Registration Period**

The maximum registration period for completing a Master's degree is three calendar years from initial registration and, in the case of a Doctoral degree, six calendar years from initial registration. For students who transfer from a Master's program to a Doctoral program without completing the Master's program or Direct-Entry to a Doctoral program, a maximum of seven calendar years from the initial registration in the Master's program or Doctoral program (Direct Entry) will be given to complete the Doctoral degree. For students admitted part-time to an approved part-time Master's program, the maximum registration period is four years.

The student will be withdrawn at the end of their maximum registration time limit unless the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) has approved an extension.

## 3. **Categories of Registration**

### a) **Full-Time Student**

To be registered as a full-time student, a student must meet the following criteria:

- Make satisfactory progress toward degree completion in alignment with full-time program expectations and requirements. Failure to meet progression requirements may result in being required to withdraw from the program.
- Be present on campus as required by their program.
- Have paid, or make arrangements to pay, full-time tuition fees.

### b) **Part-Time Student in Approved Part-Time Program**

Students may be admitted as part-time students in approved part-time programs as stipulated in the program's regulations. During the course of study, and with the approval of the program and SGPS, such a part-time registrant may be approved to register as a full-time student; they may then register as a part-time student at a later date by meeting the requirements as stipulated in (c) below. Students who begin as full-time students in programs that have an approved part-time course of study may only change to part-time registration as stipulated in (c) below.

Students registered part-time may take no more than two courses in a term. Undergraduate courses taken as extra courses or as degree requirements are to be included in the totals above.

### c) **Part-Time Students in Full-Time Programs**

## Registration in Graduate Programs

Part-time registration in full-time programs may be granted in exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of both the Graduate Program and the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). Examples of such circumstances are: admission to another full-time university program or medical or compassionate circumstances that make it impossible for the student to continue to devote full-time attention to their program of study. Supporting documentation must be submitted with the request for part-time status.

Part-time status is not to be used as a means for reducing or avoiding tuition fees. Being beyond the funding eligibility period will not, by itself, constitute grounds for a change from full-time to part-time status. Part-time status may be granted for up to a cumulative total of three terms.

Students registered part-time may take no more than two courses in a term. Undergraduate courses taken as extra courses or as degree requirements are to be included in the totals above.

### d) **Thesis Defense Only Student**

The purpose of this status is to allow a student who: a) has completed all program requirements (including thesis submission), but b) has not been able to defend their thesis before the end of term, to register at the University in the subsequent term without paying tuition fees. Thesis Defense Only registration (TDO) can be held for only one term.

- This registration category will not require payment of tuition fees; however, students will be required to pay part-time ancillary fees.
- In order to be considered for TDO status students must upload their thesis electronically.
- TDO status will be granted to those students who have submitted a thesis by the final official day of term but have not been able to secure an examination board and/or examination date that falls before the end of the term.
- Programs are required to inform SGPS as soon as possible (and in any case no less than 10 working days before the last working day of the term) when a thesis examination will need to be scheduled into the subsequent term.
- The thesis examination must be successfully completed, all required revisions done, and the final thesis submitted to SGPS prior to the end of the TDO term. A student who does not meet these conditions will be required to pay part-time tuition for the TDO term and will continue to be registered until the final thesis is submitted.
- TDO applies only to students in programs that have a thesis requirement.
- A student will be given TDO status for no more than one term.
- When the thesis examination is unsuccessful at either the preliminary or examination stages, the student will not have met the TDO conditions and will be required to pay part-time tuition and fees for the TDO term.

## Registration in Graduate Programs

### e) **Non-degree Part-time Student**

Non-degree part-time students must meet normal admission requirements. If a student in this category is subsequently admitted to a degree program, no more than 20% of the course requirements for the degree may be credited from courses taken while a non-degree student. Non-degree part-time students are not required to maintain continuous registration. For each term in which they are registered, however, they must inform their Graduate Chair before the start of the next term whether they plan to take courses during that term or whether they plan to withdraw. Without withdrawal, they will receive a tuition bill for the following term, as if they were in a degree program. Once withdrawn, they must apply for readmission to resume their non-degree part-time studies. In such cases, SGPS waives the readmission fee.

### f) **Concurrent Degree Student**

Students in the following programs will be registered in both programs and are eligible to receive degrees in each:

- MD-PhD
- MBA-LLB in Business and Law

### g) **Doctoral Flex-time Registration**

Students must select flex-time registration prior to commencing their program of study and cannot alter their registration status once selected.\* Students enrolled in flex-time studies pay full-time tuition fees for the first four years of their registration, and part-time fees until they complete their program. As the flex-time option is intended for working professionals, Western's doctoral funding guarantee does not apply to students in flex-time studies. Flex-time enrolment will normally require two additional years of study for students to complete the program, in comparison to students in a regular full-time enrolment status. Completion within six to eight years while in flex-time enrolment is expected.

\*Please note that the flex-time registration option is available only for doctoral programs with an approved flex-time option.

### h) **Interdisciplinary Combined PhD**

A Western Interdisciplinary Combined PhD entails the completion of the combined degree requirements of two Western doctoral programs (Home Program and Partnering Program) ~~simultaneously under the supervision of a faculty member from each program.~~ The Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Program duration is the same as a regular PhD Program.

## DEFINITIONS

**Home Program:** ~~For the purposes of the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree~~

## Registration in Graduate Programs

~~Agreement Form, "Home Program" will~~ refers to the graduate program in which the student is registered and which ~~that~~ has administrative responsibility for the student, including, if appropriate, providing work/office space, assignment of GTAships, completion of annual progress reports, etc. The Home Program is also the "fall-back" program in the event that the student wishes to discontinue in the combined option.

**Partnering Program:** refers to the second graduate program. ~~For the purposes of the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Agreement Form, "Partnering Program" will~~ refers to the second graduate program.

To enrol in an Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Program, students must meet the entrance requirements of both the Home Program and Partnering Program and be admitted by both. The registration in the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Program must be completed prior to the first term but no later than two terms into the student's registration in the Home Program.

Although the Partnering Program should reasonably contribute to the student's funding package, the Home Program has ultimate responsibility for the student's funding. If one program has a higher funding level, the student should receive the higher level, shared appropriately by the Home and Partnering Programs. The funding eligibility period for the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Program is the same as regular PhD Programs.

### i) Program Structure

- A student in an Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Program participates in two (2) doctoral programs, a Home Program and a Partnering Program, and is required to progress toward and meet the respective requirements of the two (2) doctoral programs concurrently.
- The student shall have two supervisors – one supervisor with doctoral membership in each graduate program. In exceptional circumstances, a single supervisor, with doctoral membership in both programs may be approved by SGPS, conditional upon the supervisory committee representing both programs. If variation in the structure of the supervisory committee is warranted, such variation must be clearly described and must be in alignment with SGPS Regulations.
  - All thesis submission and examination-related forms must be completed and submitted to SGPS by the designated Home Program.
- ~~One of the two programs will be identified as the "Home Program" for the purpose of registration and administration.~~
- ~~Programs are encouraged to~~ It is expected that programs "share" or "merge" some of their usual requirements. ~~For example, a required course in one~~

## Registration in Graduate Programs

~~program can also be counted as an optional or elective course in the second program.~~

- For example, comprehensive/qualifying examinations can be restructured to meet the expectations of both programs.
- One thesis is to be completed; the thesis must meet the expectations of both programs; the content of the thesis should represent a blending of the disciplines. The composition of the Thesis Examination Board for the dissertation will include representation of both participating programs and disciplines to ensure that the examination board appropriately represents the research conducted in the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Program. If variation from the usual PhD Examination Board structure is necessary (e.g. adding an additional member), approval by SGPS is required. Composition and approval of the Thesis Examination Board, the public presentation, and examination date will be administered by the Home Program, in consultation with the Partnering Program.
- ~~The composition of the examining board for the dissertation will include representation of both participating programs and disciplines. Some variation from the usual PhD Examination Board structure may be needed to achieve this; such variation must be approved by SGPS.~~
- The student's individual program (structured in the same way as regular PhD programs ~~to support completion in 4 years~~) must be determined and agreed upon by the two programs (Graduate Chairs or equivalent, Supervisors and student) normally no later than by the second term, including: The student's individual program design, timeline and plan must meet the learning outcomes of both programs and include:
  - ~~All courses to be completed to meet the learning outcomes of both programs~~
  - The topic of the dissertation/research
  - The course requirements
  - The nature and timing of comprehensive(s)/qualifying exams ~~to satisfy both programs (if feasible, the comprehensive exam requirements of the two programs can be merged into one exam)~~
  - Any additional milestones ~~required to meet the learning outcomes of both programs~~
  - ~~The topic of the dissertation/research~~

### ii) ~~Inclusion on Transcripts and Degrees~~

- ~~One degree/parchment will be awarded; it will list both graduate programs.~~
- ~~The student's transcript will note registration in both graduate programs, with one degree awarded upon completion of all requirements.~~
- ~~The student's transcript will read under "Academic Program History":~~
- ~~Program: Home Program  
Plan: Interdisciplinary Combined Doctor of Philosophy  
Home Program and Partnering Program  
Status: Active in Program (or later, "Completed Program")~~

## Registration in Graduate Programs

- ~~The final degree awarded will appear on the parchment as: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, Home Program and Partnering Program~~

### 4. Transferring between Graduate Degree Levels

Transferring refers to a situation where a student leaves an unfinished degree program and registers in a different degree-level in the same graduate program. Students are normally given recognition for prior work in these instances. Transferring can occur from a lower-level degree program to a higher-level degree program (e.g., Graduate Diploma (GDip) to Master's or Master's to Doctoral) or from a higher-level degree program to a lower-level degree program (Doctoral to Master's). When transferring, the credential from the former degree program is not granted to the student, as they have not completed all requirements of the former degree program. Transfers must be approved by the graduate program and SGPS.

### 5. Laddering to another Graduate Degree

Laddering refers to an established process where a student completes a program and is given recognition for this prior work towards a subsequent degree program via this approved pathway. In the case of laddering, a student has completed the lower-level program and has been awarded the credential (e.g., a student completes a GDip program and is provided credit for prior work in a specific Master's program with an approved laddering process). The remaining requirements for the higher-level degree in these cases are also pre-determined. Students must apply for admission to the laddering degree program; admission is not guaranteed.

### 6. Leave of Absence

The Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) may grant a leave of absence on pregnancy/parental, medical or compassionate grounds normally to a maximum of three terms or 12 months, on the recommendation of the program.

When recommending a leave of absence to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), programs should contact SGPS about any academic considerations for outstanding coursework.

While on leave, students are expected to be away from normal activities as graduate students (e.g., attending classes, conducting research). However, students and supervisors may negotiate ongoing communication during this period. Before the end of the approved leave of absence, students notify the Graduate Chair/Director, the Graduate Assistant and, where relevant, the Supervisor(s), to discuss the transition back to their studies. If students are applying for an additional leave of absence, it is important that the program and SGPS be notified as soon as possible.

## Registration in Graduate Programs

To ensure that they are optimally supported throughout their degree, students requiring leaves of absence that extend beyond three terms are encouraged to communicate with programs about potential professional, academic or research implications of the extended period away from their studies.

The start and finish of the leave may begin or end at any point in the term; normally the leave will coincide with the start and end of terms. Students are advised to consult with their graduate program to make special arrangements especially if taking courses during this period.

The date for degree completion and funding of the degree program will be extended by the duration of the time taken on leave, i.e., one, two or three terms as appropriate.

### a) **Pregnancy and/or Parental**

Pregnancy/Parental Leave is intended to recognize the need for leave at the time of pregnancy, birth or adoption, and to permit a pause in studies in order to provide full-time care in the first year of parenting a new child. Either parent may request up to three terms of leave, which must be started within twelve months of the date of birth or custody.

Provided the student has been a registered full-time graduate student for at least one term and is not receiving additional Tri-Agency benefits, they are entitled to a \$1,500 pregnancy and parental bursary per leave.

During a Pregnancy/Parental leave international students can opt into UHIP for up to 12 months.

### b) **Medical**

Graduate students may apply for a medical leave by providing a Medical Certificate completed by a health care practitioner. During a Medical leave, international students can opt into UHIP for four months in a 12-month leave period. It is possible to extend UHIP for another four months subject to the approval of the insurance provider.

### c) **Compassionate**

Graduate students may apply for a compassionate leave for care and support of a seriously ill family member. This leave is not intended to cover circumstances related to travel, employment or other financial concerns.

### d) **Internship**

Graduate students in programs without an internship requirement who secure an internship through Western's Internship Program may apply for an internship leave.

## Registration in Graduate Programs

Students may apply for a leave of absence by completing an online request via the Graduate Student Web Services Portal. The request is then reviewed by the graduate program. If approved by the program, it is reviewed by SGPS.

Once on leave, students are not registered with the University nor will they be required to pay tuition and ancillary fees for this period; however, they are entitled to receive/maintain certain benefits as described in the related Procedures.

### 7. Progression and Withdrawal

To maintain good standing in their program, graduate students must meet program expectations toward degree requirements for the timely completion of the degree.

To support students in meeting program expectations, graduate programs are expected to (i) communicate degree requirements and program expectations to students (for example, through a program handbook), (ii) monitor and assess student progress toward the degree over the course of the program.

~~The Graduate Chair of a program:~~

- ~~• Must approve the student's plan of study.~~
- ~~• Must ensure the preparation and filing of an annual progress report for each student.~~

Graduate faculty must (iii) provide students with timely feedback on their progress with respect to courses, milestones, examinations, or other program expectations and degree requirements, and (iv) guide students to appropriate support and resources available at the University, as applicable.

When a student fails to meet program expectations and/or degree requirements, program withdrawal may be warranted. More specifically, graduate programs, ~~The program~~ may require a students to withdraw from the program if ~~they~~ the student fails to meet the following standards:

- students must make satisfactory progress toward the degree by meeting course and milestone requirements, as set out by the graduate program, according to the program timeline.
- ~~Students~~ students must maintain a cumulative average of at least 70% calculated each term over all courses taken for credit, with no grade less than 60%. Individual graduate programs may have grade requirements that are different from this standard and may exceed this standard.
- ~~• Students must make satisfactory progress towards the degree according to milestones set by the program.~~

Withdrawal from a graduate program can occur in two ways. A student can voluntarily withdraw, ~~following formal notification to the program~~. Alternatively, the program or SGPS can withdraw a student for failure to meet admission conditions, progression

## Registration in Graduate Programs

expectations and/or degree requirements, specified deadlines for degree completion, or failure to pay fees. Once withdrawn from a graduate program (and SGPS), the person withdrawn is no longer a student of the University and may not attend classes, receive supervision, or have access to any resources of the University.

### 8. Admission After Withdrawal

Students who have voluntarily withdrawn or who have been withdrawn and wish to complete their program must formally re-apply for admission. Credit for previous work completed must be approved by the program and SGPS.

Students who are withdrawn for non-payment of fees will be considered for admission under the following payment conditions:

- Any student who has withdrawn or has been withdrawn may be required to pay fees for the terms in which registration has lapsed if readmitted.
- Payment of all fees owing at the time of withdrawal including all penalty fees incurred as a result of the default.
- Prepayment of full fees for the term in which admission is sought.
- ~~These payments must be money order, cash, direct debit, or certified cheque.~~

### 9. Time Away From Studies and Vacation Time

Full-time graduate students in research-based programs are expected to be active in their program for all three terms of the university year, as specified in Section 2. While engaging in their program, we recognize that personal time (i.e., time away from studies) is beneficial for student health, well-being and academic achievement. It is acceptable and expected that Supervisors, Supervisory Committee Members and Graduate Chairs will discuss expectations around students' study and research schedules; they will mentor students and support their need for time off and their pursuit of work/life balance. Time away from studies must take into account the impact on timely progression and the impact on research and other responsibilities.

It is expected that students devote a reasonable number of hours each weekday to study and to research. It is acceptable for students to take days off. In making these time management decisions, it is expected that students will learn to discern when time away from studies supports academic productivity, and when it undermines timely progression.

Graduate Chairs are encouraged to ensure that both student and supervisor needs and expectations are met. See SGPS Regulation regarding supervisor expectations.

In addition to the above, students are entitled to be away from their studies and research responsibilities during:

- the closing of the University from late December until early January
- statutory holidays when the University is closed
- religious holidays in accordance with University policy

## Registration in Graduate Programs

Graduate students are also entitled to at least two weeks of vacation time from their studies per year.

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**Last Reviewed:** March 2026\*

## Assessing Student Progress in Multi-Year Research-Based Graduate Programs

<b>Subject:</b>	Assessing Student Progress in Multi-Year Research-Based Graduate Programs
<b>Sections:</b>	<a href="#">Overview</a> ; <a href="#">Meeting Program Expectations</a> ; <a href="#">Annual Progress Evaluations</a>
<b>Approving Authority:</b>	Senate
<b>Responsible Committee:</b>	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
<b>Related Procedures:</b>	<a href="#">Procedure for Assessing Student Progression in Multi-Year Research-Based Graduate Programs</a>
<b>Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:</b>	Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies)
<b>Related Policies:</b>	<a href="#">Registration and Progression in Graduate Programs</a>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	TBD <del>September 19, 2025</del>
<b>Supersedes:</b>	<del>September 19, 2025</del> ; September 16, 2022

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### ~~1. Overview~~

The progression requirements in this policy are applicable to students in multi-year research-based programs. Students must also meet the progression requirements in the [Registration and Progression in Graduate Programs](#) policy.

~~To maintain good standing in their program, graduate students are expected to meet program expectations for the timely completion of the degree.~~

~~Monitoring and assessing student progress are key to maximizing graduate student engagement and success, timely completion of the degree, and graduate program quality. Regular student progress assessment helps programs and students identify~~

## Assessing Student Progress in Multi-Year Research-Based Graduate Programs

~~academic excellence. It also helps to make visible and address problems or challenges students are experiencing that may interfere with thriving and with degree completion.~~

To support student progress, programs ~~are expected to clearly communicate their degree requirements and the expected timing of these requirements to students.~~ They are **also** required to monitor and assess student progress at least annually, and to communicate these results to their students.

### **21. Meeting Program Expectations**

~~It is expected that e~~ Degree requirements across the duration of the program are clearly communicated to students in progress meetings, via program web pages, program guides and ~~or~~ through the online Pathfinder degree planning portfolio.

~~Throughout their time in the program,~~ It is the responsibility of students **to make themselves** ~~are expected to be~~ aware of how degree expectations for maintaining good standing in the program align with their own progress.

At a minimum, supervisory committee members and Graduate Chairs (or equivalent) will support their students' timely progression by regularly (at least annually) assessing and documenting student progress and then by discussing these outcomes with students.

### **32. Annual Progress Evaluations**

At regular intervals, and at least ~~yearly~~ **annually**, graduate programs ~~will~~ request that ~~their~~ students submit a Pathfinder Portfolio for review, evaluation, and feedback. Submitting a Pathfinder Portfolio is ~~considered~~ a degree requirement; and to maintain good standing in a graduate program, a Pathfinder Portfolio must normally be completed by the assigned due date.

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Last Reviewed: **March 2026** ~~September 19, 2025~~

## SGPS Membership

**Effective Date:** TBD June 20, 2023, superceding June 20, 2023 previous regulation

**Approval Authority:** Graduate Education Council; Senate (for information)

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In accordance with [The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' Composition and Rules of Procedure](#), only members of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) may be involved in graduate student education, supervision and formal teaching. Meeting minimum requirements does not guarantee that membership will be granted.

### 1. Categories of Membership

The categories of membership are:

- Teaching/Advisory
- Associate
- Master's
- Doctoral

### 2. Duration

Master's and Doctoral memberships are permanent in the home department. Master's or Doctoral memberships held outside of the home department are not permanent and may be subject to audit and inactivation at each Institutional Quality Assurance Process review or at other timelines specified by the program. Consideration will be given to the potential for conflict of interest or bias in situations that may arise in the context of membership.

Teaching/Advisory Membership (TAM) is temporary up to a maximum of three years, renewable.

Associate Membership is temporary, up to a maximum of five years, renewable.

### 3. Privileges, Criteria and Qualifications

Summary of Privileges by Membership Level

	Teaching/Advisory	Associate	Master's	Doctoral
Supervise Doctoral Students	No	Yes*	Yes*	Yes
Supervise Master's Students	No	Yes*	Yes	Yes
Chair Doctoral Thesis Exam	No	No	Yes	Yes
Chair Master's Thesis Exam	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participate as Thesis Examiner	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participate as Supervisory Committee Member	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teach Graduate Course	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

\*Only alongside another Supervisor holding the appropriate Master's/Doctoral Membership

#### Summary of Criteria and Qualifications Required by Membership Level

	Teaching/Advisory	Associate	Master's	Doctoral
PhD or Equivalent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Faculty Appointment	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Satisfactory Supervision Record	No	No	No	Yes
Nomination by Program	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Complete criteria for, and privileges associated with each category are listed below:

#### [Teaching/Advisory Membership \(TAM\)](#)

##### Criteria and Qualifications

- Nomination by a Western graduate program offering a Quality Assurance Council approved graduate degree
- Ph.D. degree or qualification appropriate to the discipline

- Appropriate expertise and experience commensurate with program activities and responsibilities
- Elders, Indigenous knowledge keepers and practicing professionals are eligible for SGPS Membership

### **Privileges May Include**

- Teach graduate courses
- Serve as member of thesis supervisory committee
- Participate as thesis examiner
- Chair master's thesis examinations
- May be involved in graduate student education (i.e., student advisor, teaching, non-thesis research paper second reader) except sole thesis supervision.

### **Responsibilities**

- A commitment to adhere to Senate Graduate Academic Policies and SGPS Regulations
- A commitment and willingness to support graduate student learning with professionalism and integrity

### Associate Membership

#### **Criteria and Qualifications**

- Faculty appointment including adjunct, at Western or an Affiliate University College
- Nomination by a Western or Affiliate University College graduate program offering a Quality Assurance Council approved graduate degree
- Ph.D. degree or qualification appropriate to the discipline
- Appropriate expertise & experience commensurate with program activities and responsibilities

#### **Privileges**

- Supervise thesis (with another Supervisor holding appropriate membership (Master's or Doctoral) in the student's program)
- Teach graduate courses
- Serve as member of thesis supervisory committee
- Participate as thesis examiner

- Chair Master's thesis examinations
- May be involved in graduate student education (i.e., student advisor, teaching, non-thesis research paper second reader) except sole thesis supervision

### **Responsibilities**

- A commitment to adhere to Senate Graduate Academic Policies and SGPS Regulations
- A commitment and willingness to support graduate student learning with professionalism and integrity

### Master's Membership

#### **Criteria and Qualifications**

- Nomination by a Western graduate program offering a Quality Assurance Council-approved graduate degree with a Master's thesis
- An established program of research or performance and, where appropriate, research funds from an external source
- A record of successful participation in graduate education
- A Full-time Academic Appointment at Western as Assistant Professor or higher, OR a current Full-time Academic Appointment with a Western Affiliated University College as Assistant Professor of higher with a Western [Adjunct Academic Appointment](#).
- Nomination by a Western graduate program offering a Quality Assurance Council-approved graduate degree
- Ph.D. degree or equivalent qualification appropriate to the discipline
- Appropriate scholarly and/or professional record commensurate with program activities and responsibilities

#### **Privileges**

- Supervise Master's Students theses
- Supervise Doctoral Students Theses (with another Supervisor holding Doctoral membership in student's program)
- Supervise Master's Visiting Graduate Students - Research Only
- Supervise Doctoral Visiting Graduate Students - Research Only (with another Supervisor holding Doctoral membership in Student's program)

- Chair Doctoral/Master's Thesis Examinations
- May be given access to Graduate Application System
- Teach graduate courses
- Serve as member of thesis supervisory committee
- Participate as thesis examiner
- Other facets of graduate student education (i.e., student advisor, non-thesis research paper second reader)

### **Responsibilities**

- A commitment to adhere to Senate Graduate Academic Policies and SGPS Regulations
- A commitment and willingness to support graduate student learning with professionalism and integrity
- Expected to serve as Chair of Thesis Examination Board at least once a year or as requested by Graduate Program or SGPS

### Doctoral Membership

#### **Criteria and Qualifications**

- A Full-time Academic Appointment at Western as Assistant Professor or higher, OR a current Full-time Academic Appointment with a Western Affiliated University College as Assistant Professor of higher with a Western [Adjunct Academic Appointment](#).
- Nomination by a Western graduate program offering a Quality Assurance Council approved graduate degree
- Ph.D. degree or equivalent qualification appropriate to the discipline
- Appropriate scholarly and/or professional record commensurate with program activities and responsibilities
- Nomination by a Western graduate program offering a Quality Assurance Council approved graduate degree with a Doctoral thesis
- Satisfactory supervision of at least one Master's candidate.

#### **Privileges**

- Supervise Doctoral/Master's Student's theses

- Supervise Doctoral/Master's Visiting Graduate Students - Research Only
- Chair Doctoral/Master's Thesis Examinations
- May be given access to Graduate Application System
- Teach graduate courses
- Serve as member of thesis supervisory committee
- Participate as thesis examiner
- Other facets of graduate student education (i.e., student advisor, non-thesis research paper second reader)

### **Criteria and Qualifications**

- A Full-time Academic Appointment at Western as Assistant Professor or higher, OR a current Full-time Academic Appointment with a Western Affiliated University College as Assistant Professor of higher with a Western [Adjunct Academic Appointment](#).
- Nomination by a Western graduate program offering a Quality Assurance Council approved graduate degree
- Ph.D. degree or equivalent qualification appropriate to the discipline
- Appropriate scholarly and/or professional record commensurate with program activities and responsibilities
- Nomination by a Western graduate program offering a Quality Assurance Council approved graduate degree with a Doctoral thesis
- Satisfactory supervision of at least one Master's candidate.

### **Privileges**

- Supervise Doctoral/Master's Student's theses
- Supervise Doctoral/Master's Visiting Graduate Students - Research Only
- Chair Doctoral/Master's Thesis Examinations
- May be given access to Graduate Application System
- Teach graduate courses
- Serve as member of thesis supervisory committee

- Participate as thesis examiner
- Other facets of graduate student education (i.e., student advisor, non-thesis research paper second reader)

### **Responsibilities**

- A commitment to adhere to Senate Graduate Academic Policies and SGPS Regulations
- A commitment and willingness to support graduate student learning with professionalism and integrity
- Expected to serve as Chair of Thesis Examination Board at least once a year or as requested by Graduate Program or SGPS

## **4. Retirement**

Upon retirement:

- Faculty members with continuing students and masters or doctoral membership, who hold an adjunct appointment and emeritus status can supervise their continuing students for a maximum of two years while the student(s) complete their degree without changing their membership status of doctoral or masters.
- Faculty members without continuing students will have their current membership converted to TAM membership, which would need to be renewed every three years.

To supervise students for more than two years after retirement, the following must be in place:

- an adjunct appointment, and
- emeritus status, and
- nomination from the program for Associate Membership or higher\*, and
- an additional supervisor holding the appropriate membership.

\*Two years after retirement, with program nomination, emeritus faculty can only hold Associate Membership.

To be a supervisory committee member, emeritus faculty must have TAM membership or higher. TAM membership does not require an adjunct appointment.

## **5. Faculty Members Who Leave Western for Reasons Other Than Retirement**

Membership status is automatically terminated for faculty members who leave Western. To continue to supervise continuing or new students, the following must be in place:

- an adjunct appointment
- nomination from the program for Associate membership
- an additional supervisor holding the appropriate membership

## Supervision

**Effective Date** ~~Updated: TBD~~ ~~September 16, 2022~~, superceding ~~September 16, 2022~~ ~~previous regulation~~  
**Approval Authority:** Graduate Education Council; Senate (for information)

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One of the most important aspects of graduate training is the timely, clear identification of a Supervisory Committee for each graduate student participating in a research program. Although there are wide variations in the pattern of finding a Supervisory Committee, it is this group who plays a key role in the direction of the graduate student's research. ~~Although reasonable effort will be made to accommodate individual student research preferences, the graduate program cannot guarantee to provide a particular supervisor or particular committee members, nor can the program accommodate every topic of research proposed by a graduate student. As one illustration, some programs may only accept students to work on specific projects that are funded by a faculty member's research grant or contract-based funding.~~

### 1. General

Although reasonable effort will be made to accommodate individual student research preferences, the graduate program cannot guarantee to provide a particular supervisor or particular committee members, nor can the program accommodate every topic of research proposed by a graduate student.

As one illustration, some programs may only accept students to work on specific projects that are funded by a faculty member's research grant or contract-based funding.

A supervisor is required for all **thesis-based** ~~research~~-degree students. At admission, students are given an offer letter that outlines the contractual obligations between the student and the program.

~~Each program will ensure that students receive appropriate supervision.~~

When the supervisor is determined (either at admission or some later point) the supervisor commits to assuming the roles and responsibilities specified by the School for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and the program.

### 2. Graduate Program's Role

Each program will ensure that students receive supervision as appropriate.

The program must document the supervisory assignment in the appropriate student record (e.g. Peoplesoft).

If there is any change to the supervisory relationship, the program must inform the supervisor(s), the student, and any other relevant person(s) about the change and document it in the appropriate student record.

### **3.2. Supervisory Roles**

A Supervisory Committee consists of at least one Supervisor and at least one Committee Member (who is not also one of the supervisors).

The Supervisory Committee may:

- assist in the development of the candidate's research plan and thesis proposal
- provide advice and constructive feedback on the planning and writing of the thesis
- evaluate progress

All members of the committee must hold the appropriate level of SGPS Membership as outlined herein.

#### **Supervisor**

- This designation indicates that the faculty member(s) have primary responsibility for overseeing the ~~Master's or Doctoral~~ student's thesis research program.
- Up to two Supervisors can participate in a Supervisory Committee.
- Supervisors must meet the following SGPS membership requirements:
  - For doctoral students, a Supervisor must have Doctoral Membership in the student's home program.
    - An additional Supervisor could have Doctoral, Master's or Associate membership in any program.
  - For Master's students, a Supervisor must have Doctoral or Master's Membership in the student's home program.
    - ~~For Master's students, a Supervisor must have Doctoral or Master's Membership in the student's program.~~
    - An additional Supervisor could have Doctoral, Master's or Associate membership in any program.

#### **Committee Member**

- All supervisory committees must contain at least one Committee Member (in addition to Supervisor(s)).

- This designation indicates that the Committee Member has a secondary responsibility for the ~~Master's or Doctoral~~ student's thesis research program.
- Up to three Committee Members can participate in a Supervisory Committee.
- Committee members must have any level of SGPS membership in any program.

### **4.3. Expectations and Requirements of Supervisors**

#### **4.3.1 All supervisors are expected to:**

- adhere to standards of ethical behaviour, academic integrity, and professionalism
- commit the time, energy, and focus reasonably necessary to enable students to achieve the progress expected in their program
- demonstrate effective management and leadership skills
- demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills
- respect diversity and demonstrate intercultural competency
- endeavor to develop insights into their strengths and weaknesses as a supervisor and to pursue opportunities to build further strength, particularly in areas of weakness
- recognize the supervisor—student power differential and demonstrate respect for the student's rights and goals
- respect and provide support for the student's academic and career goals
- respect the student's personal circumstances (e.g., the student's need to fulfill personal obligations), such as childcare)
- differentiate between their own and their students' needs
- explicitly discuss with the student expectations regarding authorship on publications and ownership of intellectual property

#### **4.3.2 All supervisors are required to:**

- provide continuous supervision through the duration of the student's studies. This includes ensuring that supervision continues through periods of supervisor absence from campus (e.g., maintaining full supervision during sabbatical; securing co- supervision if needed/appropriate)
- adhere to the academic requirements of the program and SGPS regulations, and Senate Academic Policies
- contribute to the program's evaluation of the student's progress as required by the program and SGPS

- ensure regular meetings of the student with the **full Thesis** Supervisory Committee as per the program's and/or SGPS's regulations
- actively involve **Thesis** Supervisory Committee in the process of guiding the student.
- meet with their graduate student no later than one month after assignment of supervision, or initial registration as a student at Western, with the purpose of discussing and clarifying expectations for the role of the supervisor and the role of the student in the supervisory relationship.
- provide timely feedback on documents/reports/**thesis-related** materials/scholarship applications, **etc.** – normally 2 weeks is reasonable for a thesis chapter or equivalent
- provide timely response (whether acknowledgment or a substantial reply) when contacted by students, for example responding to emails within 72 hours
- in collaboration with the student, set and adhere to reasonable timelines for all aspects of the student's academic work, consistent with the program's milestones to completion
- respect interpersonal boundaries and demonstrate professional behaviour with the student
- respect appropriate times and means for communication with the student
- as far as allowed by the logistics of the research setting, allow and respect the student's right to set their own daily schedule
- make good-faith efforts to provide the resources needed for the student's work
- allow and not undermine the student's engagement in professional development
- adhere to all health and safety policies  
([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section3/mapp31.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section3/mapp31.pdf))
- adhere to all policies related to research ethics  
([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section7/mapp712.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section7/mapp712.pdf) and [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section7/mapp714.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section7/mapp714.pdf))
- adhere to Non-Discrimination/Harassment policy  
([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section1/mapp135.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp135.pdf))
- adhere to the University policy on Academic Integrity in Research Activities  
([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section7/mapp70.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section7/mapp70.pdf))
- adhere to the University policy on Accessibility  
([https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section1/mapp147.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp147.pdf))
- adhere to SGPS Policy  
([http://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral\\_scholars/current/policies\\_procedures.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral_scholars/current/policies_procedures.html))

#### **5.4. Expectations and Requirements of Students in Thesis-Based Programs**

54.1 All students are expected to:

- adhere to the highest standards of ethical behaviour, academic integrity, and professionalism
- commit the time, energy, and focus necessary to achieve the progress expected in their program
- engage in self-directed learning
- endeavor to develop insight into their strengths and weaknesses as a student and to pursue opportunities to build further strength, particularly in areas of weakness
- demonstrate effective interpersonal communication skills
- give supervisor, ~~Thesis~~-Supervisory Committee members, and other faculty members sufficient notice and time to provide constructive feedback or to write thoughtful letters of reference
- seek and give serious consideration to constructive feedback and advice.
- provide timely response (whether acknowledgment or a substantial reply) when contacted by supervisor or department, for example responding to emails within 72 hours
- respect the work, environment, and equipment/materials of others, and show tolerance and respect for others sharing the same environment, equipment and materials
- openly discuss with the supervisor expectations regarding authorship on publications and ownership of intellectual property

54.2 All students are required to:

- adhere to the program's progression requirements
- be aware of the requirements and timelines of their program
- adhere to all program and SGPS regulations, and Senate Academic Policies
- communicate regularly with the supervisor and the ~~Thesis~~-Supervisory Committee with respect to progress in the thesis
- give serious consideration and response to comments and advice from the supervisor and/or ~~Thesis~~ Supervisory Committee
- know who else to go to for advice and guidance, in addition to the supervisor, when needed (for example, ~~Thesis~~-Supervisory Committee members, the Graduate Program Chair, the Department Chair, the Associate Dean-Graduate Studies in the Faculty, an Associate Vice-Provost or the Vice-Provost in SGPS, the Ombudsperson, and Equity and Human Rights Services)
- set their own daily schedule within the logistics of the research setting, which includes working reasonable hours and informing their supervisors of any change in their schedule that could affect the work of others
- explore and articulate academic and career objectives and goals

- notify the program of any request for accommodation
- adhere to all health and safety policies  
([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section3/mapp31.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section3/mapp31.pdf))
- adhere to all policies related to research ethics  
([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section7/mapp712.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section7/mapp712.pdf) and [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section7/mapp714.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section7/mapp714.pdf))
- adhere to Non-Discrimination/Harassment policy  
([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section1/mapp135.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp135.pdf))
- adhere to the University policy on Academic Integrity in Research Activities  
([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section7/mapp70.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section7/mapp70.pdf))
- adhere to the University policy on Accessibility  
([https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies\\_procedures/section1/mapp147.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp147.pdf))
- adhere to SGPS Policy  
([http://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral\\_scholars/current/policies\\_procedures.html](http://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral_scholars/current/policies_procedures.html))

## 6.5. Changing a Supervisor

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies is committed to resolving any conflicts between students and supervisors as early as possible. When the process breaks down, the following apply:

- Students have the right to request a change of supervisor. If the student requests a change, they should contact their Graduate Program Chair.
- Supervisors cannot unilaterally terminate the thesis supervisory relationship. If a supervisor initiates this change, then the appropriate processes must be followed. Questions about the process should be directed to the Graduate Chair or the Associate Dean (Graduate) of the Faculty.
- Student and faculty member requests for changing the supervisory relationship will be reviewed by the Graduate program. ~~If the supervisor and student agree that a change to the supervisory relationship is needed, normally t~~The Graduate Chair will work with the student and supervisor to find a solution as early as possible. It is not necessary that the supervisory relationship will change based on such requests. If the supervisory relationship is changed, it is the responsibility of the Graduate Chair to document and inform the supervisor(s), the student, and any other relevant person(s) about the change. Although reasonable effort will be made to accommodate student's preference for the new supervisor, the graduate program cannot guarantee to provide a particular new supervisor or research topic.
- The new supervisor, normally from the student's program, will assume the roles and responsibilities specified by SGPS and the program.
- Normally, the normal duration of the degree program for the student will not be increased.

## Graduate Degree Admissions

<b>Subject:</b>	Graduate Degree Admissions
<b>Sections:</b>	<a href="#">General</a> ; <a href="#">Proficiency in English</a>
<b>Approving Authority:</b>	Senate
<b>Responsible Committee:</b>	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
<b>Related Procedures:</b>	<a href="#">Procedure for Admission Application</a>
<b>Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:</b>	Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies)
<b>Related Policies:</b>	*
<b>Effective Date:</b>	<del>September 1, 2025</del> TBD
<b>Supersedes:</b>	September 1, 2025; September 13, 2024; March 15, 2024; September 16, 2022

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### 1. General

~~The Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) grants admission to graduate students, only o~~ Upon the recommendation of the program in which the applicant intends to pursue studies, the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) grants admission to graduate students. Admission to graduate programs at Western University is competitive. Thus, applicants meeting or even exceeding minimum admission standards, as described below, are not guaranteed admission to any of Western's Graduate Programs. Admission decisions are not subject to appeal.

For purposes of admission, the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) determines accreditation, degree, and standing equivalencies for all non-Western degrees.

For students undertaking a thesis as part of their degree requirements, the Graduate Chair ~~must~~ determines the availability of an appropriate thesis supervisor(s). ~~that an~~

~~appropriate thesis Supervisor is available for the student's declared field of research before offering the student admission.~~

For admission to Master's programs, applicants must possess a four-year degree from a recognized university or college. SGPS requires at least a 70% average in senior level academic courses, as determined by SGPS taken in the last two full-time years of the undergraduate degree. Equivalent qualifications may be considered based on the standards of the discipline or profession.

For admission to most Doctoral programs, applicants must possess a Master's degree or equivalent from a recognized university or college, and provide evidence of research potential. SGPS requires at least a 70% average in the Master's degree, as determined by SGPS. Some Western programs provide transfers from Master's to Doctoral degree status without achieving a Master's degree. Some Western programs offer direct entry to begin a doctoral degree without having a completed Master's degree. Consult the program's regulations for details.

Individual programs commonly have higher admission standards than the minimum. Applicants should contact their program of choice to get information on its admission requirements.

SGPS may rescind an admission offer or deny admission, in consultation with the Graduate Program for misrepresentation in the application or other instances that compromise the authenticity of the application.

## 2. Proficiency in English

Applicants whose first language is not English must provide evidence of their proficiency in the use of the English language by a satisfactory\* achievement within the last two years in one of the following:

The Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). iBT (internet-Based Test): The minimum acceptable score is 86, with no individual score below 20 for TOEFL scores before January, 2026. As of January, 2026 the new range is 1-6 and the minimum acceptable score is 4.5 with no individual score below 4.

- The International English Language Testing Service (IELTS Academic). The minimum acceptable score is 6.5 out of 9.
- The Duolingo English Test. The minimum acceptable score is 115.
- The Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL Assessment). The minimum acceptable score is 60.
- Western English Language Centre. The requirement is successful completion of the High-Advanced level.
- Fanshawe College's EAP Program. The requirement is graduation from Level 10, English for Academic Purposes, with a minimum 80% in all components.

## Graduate Degree Admissions

\*Programs at Western may require a higher minimum score than those listed above.

Applicants who are required to present evidence of proficiency in English must make their own arrangements to complete one of the above tests or programs and to have the official results sent directly to SGPS by the testing agency.

### Exemptions:

Applicants may request an exemption from English proficiency requirement by contacting their graduate program(s) of interest.

For the French Studies program only, evidence of proficiency in English is a degree requirement but not a requirement for admission.

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Last Reviewed: March, 2026 ~~June 6, 2025~~