

GRADUATE EDUCATION COUNCIL (GEC) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

Mandate

The GEC Professional Development Advisory Committee is responsible for advising the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) on the needs and trends related to graduate student professional development. The Committee advises SGPS in creating and delivering programming that equips graduate students with the skills and knowledge needed for successful academic and non-academic careers.

Responsibilities

The Committee is responsible for:

1. Gathering and disseminating information on trends, emerging best practices, and needs in graduate professional development.
2. Advising SGPS on the design, implementation, and evaluation of programming that support career preparation and professional skills development.
3. Recommending and fostering partnerships with Faculties, campus units - including the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Student Success, Western Libraries - external organizations, industry partners, and professional associations.
4. Supporting and encouraging graduate students to engage in professional development opportunities.
5. Reviewing and advising on SGPS policies, regulations, and frameworks (e.g., Own Your Future) related to graduate professional development.
6. Reporting to GEC on summarizing activities, recommendations, and outcomes.

Composition:

Elected Members:**

- Three Graduate Students (1 PhD, 1 research Master's, 1 professional Master's), elected by GEC **
- One Graduate Assistant, elected by GEC
- Two Graduate Program Chairs, elected by GEC
- Two Associate Deans-Graduate, elected by GEC
- At least three expert advisors from Student Experience and Centre for Teaching and Learning

Ex Officio Members:

- * Graduate Professional Development Coordinator, SGPS
- Vice-Provost, SGPS
- *Associate Vice-Provosts, SGPS
- Postdoctoral Services Coordinator, SGPS
- Director, Leadership & Learning, Student Experience (or designate)

*The Graduate Professional Development Coordinator and an Associate Vice-Provost, SGPS, will serve as co-Chairs.

Terms of Appointment:

All elected members for two-year terms with the exception of graduate students whose term of appointment is one year. All appointments are renewable once. Ex Officio members serve by virtue of their position.

** Every effort must be made to have an equitable and transparent process for identification of candidates, to ensure breadth of disciplinary representation and that the elected/appointed members reflect Western's commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Decolonizing-Indigenization.

Meetings:

The Committee meets at least two times per academic year, or more frequently as needed..

Additional working groups or subcommittees may be established for specific initiatives.

The Committee may seek advice from external partners such as graduate alumni, industry or community partners, etc., as relevant, who may also be invited to attend Committee meetings.

Revised November 2025 (Supersedes April 2023; March 2014)