PhD GLOBAL HEALTH GRADUATE PROGRAM

DOCTORAL STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024

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Submitted July 27th, 2023

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QUICK REFERENCE – Expected Timeline and Milestones

YEAR 1

Term 1 (Fall)

- Complete Course Requirements
- Meet with Supervisor
- Confirm Supervisor by completing and submitting MOU to program by end of the 5th month

Term 2 (Winter)

- Complete Course Requirements
- Confirm committee members by completing and submitting the Education Plan to the program

Term 3 (S/S)

- Prepare for Comprehensive Evaluation to be completed by 20th month in the program.
- Annual supervisory committee report and meeting

YEAR 2

Term 4 (Fall)

- Absolute deadline to confirm committee members and hold meeting
- Prepare Comprehensive Evaluation

Term 5 (Winter)

- Complete Comprehensive Evaluation by the 20th month in the program
- Maintain regular meetings with Supervisor and Supervisory Committee
- Complete TCPS2 and required ethics approvals

Term 6 (S/S)

- Commence thesis research and data collection
- Annual Supervisory Committee Report and Meeting

YEAR 3

Term 7 (Fall)

- Thesis research, analysis, and writing
- Maintain regular meetings with Supervisor and Supervisory Committee

Term 8 (Winter)

- Maintain regular meetings with Supervisor and Supervisory Committee
- Thesis writing and editing

Term 9 (S/S)

- Annual Supervisory Committee Report and Meeting
- Prepare to defend by the end of the term

1. Land Acknowledgement

The Global Health program gives honour and thanks to the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe nations, the traditional inhabitants of the lands where McMaster stands. We acknowledge a debt to those who were here before us and recognize our responsibility, as guests, to respect and honour the intimate relationship Indigenous peoples have to this land.

2. Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to outline the policies and procedures for the PhD in Global Health Program at McMaster University. The PhD Program Handbook is intended to supplement the policies and procedures contained in the School of Graduate Studies Graduate Calendar. Additional PhD in Global Health Program information can be found on the Global Health program website. If there is any discrepancy between this Handbook document and the School of Graduate Studies Graduate (SGS) Calendar, then the SGS Calendar shall prevail.

3. Program Vision & Goals

The PhD in Global Health Program is a trans-disciplinary, cross-cultural, and inter-professional doctoral program that strives for synergy in global health by integrating education and research from health sciences, social sciences, and business. The PhD in Global Health Program is housed within the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University as a component of the Health Sciences Graduate Programs. Graduate studies in the Faculty of Health Sciences are administered by the Graduate Policy and Curriculum Committee under the auspices of the School of Graduate Studies as described in the School of Graduate Studies Calendar.

The goal of this doctoral program is to offer students a high-quality research doctoral program that will develop and enhance their understanding of the current and the emerging principles and practices of global health. In doing so, it will prepare students to deal with the complex problems they will face in health systems, undertaking research in global health, and analyzing complex policy and regulatory issues that shape the field of global health.

McMaster University has existing higher-education partnerships with Maastricht University in The Netherlands, the University of South-Eastern Norway, the Universidad del Rosario in Colombia, Manipal Academy of Higher Education in India, Thammasat University in Thailand, and Afhad University for Women in Sudan. These partnerships enable McMaster to deliver an international, collaborative learning experience for students in the MSc in Global Health Program and enable opportunities for students in the doctoral program to pursue a cotutelle, which is a joint degree, awarded in

combination between McMaster and another approved university, with Maastricht University being a natural fit (see Section 5.10).

4. Faculty and Program Contact Information

PhD in Global Health address:

Global Health Program
Faculty of Health Sciences,
McMaster University
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Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8S 4K1

Phone: +905 525 9140, ext. 22350

Email: askglobalhealth@mcmaster.ca

Academic faculty and program staff are listed in full on the Global Health program website.

5. Structure of the PhD in Global Health Program

The PhD in Global Health Program follows a conventional sequence for doctoral programs through:

1. Establishment of a supervisory committee in the first year.
2. Coursework in the first year.
3. Development of a dissertation research proposal with appropriate ethical considerations.
4. Comprehensive evaluation including the oral presentation of a comprehensive portfolio in the second year.
5. Gathering, processing, and analysis of data for a dissertation based on original research, and interpretation of findings, writing, and defence of the dissertation in the fourth year.

In consultation with their supervisor and supervisory committee, and with the proposed thesis area in mind, students will be required to complete coursework with a strong emphasis on research methods by the end of the third term followed by the submission of their finished Comprehensive Portfolio (including thesis proposal) within their sixth term in the program. Terms seven onward will typically be the data collection phase. During the remaining terms students will interpret the findings and prepare the dissertation.

Students are expected to conduct original and innovative research that expands upon existing knowledge and meets the rigorous criteria for peer reviewed scholarly publication.

6. Curriculum and Evaluation

6.1. Program Curriculum Overview

The doctoral program will follow a standard PhD timeline. Students will typically complete within 4 years and will have up to 6 years to complete. More information on program progression can be found in Section 3 of the Graduate Calendar.

The curriculum of the PhD in Global Health Program reflects the innovative, globalized, and trans-disciplinary constitution of the global health field. These elements are reflected in each of the program components: coursework, comprehensive evaluation, dissertation proposal, and defence.

6.2. Required Coursework

Students are required to complete a minimum of four courses for a total of 12.0 Units. The following research methods courses, or an alternative research methods course(s) if those below have already been completed, are required:

1. GLOBHTH 713 Research Methods: A Global Health Perspective (3.0 Units), or alternative research methods course in the event the course was previously completed.
2. BUSINESS C755 Analytics and Decision Making in Healthcare (3.0 Units)

The core research methodology courses will address the challenges in designing and conducting research in the field of global health, affording students the opportunity to design a research study in their field of interest and have it critiqued by experts in the field of research methodology. All course enrollment decisions beyond the required methodology courses, including alternative course selection if required, should be made in consultation with the students' supervisor. For students who have taken these courses as part of the MSc in Global Health, acceptable alternative courses in research methods are determined by the supervisory committee in consultation with the program.

Please note course offerings vary by year and term. Some courses require department approvals.

These are examples of courses offered at McMaster University that may be eligible alternatives:

- GEOG 734 Qualitative Approaches to Health Geography

- GLOBALST 709 Designing Global Research- Approaches, Methods, & Techniques
- HLTHAGE 714 Qualitative and Historical Methods in Studies of Health and Aging'
- HTHRSM 721 Fundamentals of Health Research & Evaluation Methods
- HTHRSM 702 Introduction to Biostatistics
- NURSING 745 Qualitative Research Methods
- PUBHLTH 704 Population and Public Health Research Methods
- SOCSCI 701 Critical Approaches to Community Based Research

The two remaining courses can be existing university courses or students can design and complete up to two independent study courses on separate topics based on consultation with their supervisor:

1. GLOBHTH 715 Independent Study Course I (3.0 Units)
2. GLOBHTH 716 Independent Study Course II (3.0 Units)

Independent Study courses are to be designed similar to other university courses in consultation with the course instructor. Course learning objectives, regular meeting times, formative and summative assessments, and final evaluations should be finalized in writing with the course instructor by the first week of classes in the term the course is to take place. Independent Study courses are to be evaluated with letter/number grades (i.e., they cannot be assessed as Pass/Fail).

Students must inform the Academic Advisor and complete this form by the first week of class to be added to the Class Roster in Mosaic. Additionally, students can complete courses offered at McMaster University that relate to the theoretical or substantive content of their thesis based on consultation with their supervisory committee. For example, the following courses are offered through the Global Health program and will be available to doctoral students:

1. GLOBHTH 707 Global Burden of Disease
2. GLOBHTH 708 Global Health Equity
3. GLOBHTH 709 Refugee Health Policies and Practice
4. GLOBHTH 717 Circumpolar Health: A Global Health Perspective

Corresponding to the diverse academic background and career goals of global health graduate students, the PhD Global Health Program offers students flexibility when determining an individualized curricular track. Students may elect, or may be required, to take additional courses beyond the four required based on consultation with their supervisory committee.

For full course listings, please refer to McMaster University's School of Graduate Studies Calendar page on Course Listings.

Upon completion of coursework, **students are expected to remain continuously enrolled in the PhD program by registering in SGS 700 each term in which they are not taking courses** and are instead focusing on doctoral research and writing. SGS 700 is a placeholder 'course' designating completion of thesis work.

In addition to coursework, all students will be required to participate in a research and professional development seminar. The seminar will be considered a milestone in the program and will therefore not be graded but will be required for students to progress on a pass/fail basis. The seminar will normally be scheduled at the beginning of the second year. Students will be invited to discuss the knowledge and skills relevant to their research project, including scholarship, proposal, grant and report writing, research reviewing, presentation of conference papers and articles for publication in scholarly journals, research networking, and the preparation of application letters and curriculum vitae.

6.3. Course Selections

For each academic term (Fall, Winter, Spring/Summer), there is a deadline date for registration and changes (i.e., drop/add). Students who register in or add a course after the deadline will not receive academic credit for that course. Students who drop a course after the deadline will receive a grade in that course, usually a failure. The deadlines for adding and dropping courses are outlined in the School of Graduate Studies Sessional Dates. Note: The School of Business may have different Drop/Add deadline dates. It is the student's responsibility to initiate and follow through on the completion of the "Drop and Add" features on MOSAIC. Failure to add/drop courses prior to the deadlines will mean the student must submit a "Request for Late Add and/or Late Drop form", this can be found on the forms and policies for graduate students, staff, and faculty page.

6.4. Methods of Delivery

The primary modes of delivery will be coursework, comprehensive evaluation, and individual student supervision for dissertation research.

Courses will be primarily delivered as seminars, which will require students to complete weekly reading assignments and engage in focused discussions on issues related to the readings. Instructors will be required to provide students with a course outline that specifies the material and topics to be covered, specific learning objectives and outcomes, expectations regarding student and instructor contributions, and the methods of evaluation. Supplementary teaching and learning methods, such as online information distribution and discussion forums, will be encouraged by the Global Health program.

The comprehensive evaluation will require students to integrate the major theoretical writings and pertinent substantive research with their selected research focus. Students will demonstrate an in-depth and broad understanding of the current scholarly literature and methodological approaches in their relevant field of study in global health. The evaluation will be assessed by the supervisory committee on a pass/fail basis.

All students will produce a doctoral dissertation based on original empirical research situated in relevant scholarly literature, which will become the reference point for conceptualizing and justifying a central research question and interpreting the significance of the principal findings. The thesis must be defended in a PhD Final Oral Examination as outlined in the School of Graduate Studies regulations for the Doctoral Degree.

6.5. Experiential Learning

The natural structure of a PhD program is such that experiential learning is a major component as students will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to formulate a novel research question and protocol, demonstrate this knowledge and skill in practice, and draw critical conclusions that contribute to the academic and public community. The program's structure aims to enrich graduate education by further fostering a multidisciplinary approach to learning. Each stage of the program will integrate the principles of experiential learning, including scholarship and career exploration. Equal emphasis will be given to establishing a broad and in-depth knowledge, as well as professional skills, both of which are necessary for graduates to become influential members of academia and the private or public sector. The program will encourage supervisors to view their role not only as the primary directors of a student's scholarship and research, but also as a personal and professional mentor. Students who decide to complete a cotutelle degree at Maastricht University will benefit from a global academic network; they will also be tasked with the challenge of utilizing various technologies to maintain continuous communication with supervisors and supervisory committees in multiple continents.

6.6. Methods of Assessment

Students will be evaluated throughout the doctoral program using a variety of methods. Courses may be evaluated using written assignments, final essays, or exams. A minimum grade of B- is required in each course to meet the requirements of the program. Should a student face an incomplete (INC) or failing grade, refer to Section 2.6 in the School of Graduate Studies Graduate Calendar.

The students' performance on the comprehensive evaluation will be assessed by the supervisory committee as Pass with Distinction (P+), Pass (P), or Fail (F). Students who fail the first attempt will have a second opportunity to complete the comprehensive evaluation. The results of the comprehensive evaluation will be recorded by the chair on

a form provided by the program. The form will identify whether the student has passed with distinction, passed with no revisions, passed with minor revisions, passed with major revisions, or failed. Depending on the results, the supervisor and/or committee will be required to sign the form and return it to the program with a clear plan of any necessary actions. Results (P+, P or F) will be communicated to SGS.

Students will be expected to meet with their supervisor on a regular basis. The program recommends at minimum once per month (see Section 5.9 of the Student Handbook below for more details). The program recommends meeting with the supervisory committee once per term. A supervisory committee meeting report must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies at least once within the reporting year (December 1 – November 30). Progress on the dissertation will be assessed and monitored through the Annual Supervisory Committee Reports. Links to these reports are initiated by the program upon notification of the students' meeting date. In case of technological issues, the PhD Supervisory Committee Report available on Avenue to Learn>Communication Hub can be used. The expectation is to complete the online SGS form initiated by the program administrator when meeting with the supervisory committee. Once a meeting takes place, the next annual meeting must take place within one year from the date of the most recent meeting. In this report, supervisors will evaluate progress based on a scale ranging from Excellent-Good-Satisfactory-Marginal-Unsatisfactory. Supervisors will also discuss specific goals as well as areas for improvement and additional direction using the standard SGS Committee Report (SGS Calendar Section 3.1).

According to Section 3.4.2 of the Graduate Calendar, students must receive a grade of at least satisfactory. If a marginal or unsatisfactory grade is given by any one member, another committee meeting must be held within **three months** to re-assess the student's progress. A student with unsatisfactory or marginal ratings on one or more supervisory committee reports may be required to withdraw from the Program.

Dissertation research, culminating in a defence at the end of the program, is the primary assessment of the student's ability to undertake novel research, and make an original contribution to knowledge. Students will be required to complete a written and oral defence of their thesis, in accordance with requirements as outlined in the School of Graduate Studies regulations for the Doctoral Degree.

6.7. Comprehensive Evaluation

6.7.1. Overview

Following the completion of coursework, students will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of their specific area of study through the presentation and evaluation of their comprehensive portfolio. The Comprehensive Evaluation will consist of two components: the completion and submission of the comprehensive portfolio and the oral evaluation of the portfolio. Students will be able to compare and synthesize

different perspectives and interpretations of current issues in global health as they relate to the thesis research, and clearly communicate these ideas to both academic and lay-people in a creative and stimulating way. The comprehensive evaluation will strengthen students' confidence in their understanding and will be used to assess their ability to derive and develop a viable research project from critical engagement with the scholarship in their area of study. The comprehensive evaluation will require students to integrate major theoretical writings together with substantive research pertinent to their selected research focus. The aim of the comprehensive evaluation is to demonstrate—through a variety of modalities—the student's development: a) over time, b) in the context of actual practice, and c) in relation to the student's own understanding of their growth.[1]

6.7.2. Comprehensive Portfolio Overview

Global Health scholars are unique in terms of their chosen area of study, their fields of professional expertise, and thus also their manner of conducting scholarship. The comprehensive portfolio process allows for sufficient flexibility affording students greater autonomy to demonstrate their scholarly preparation in a meaningful way while providing the supervisory committee an integrated assessment and evaluation process. It is expected that submitted portfolios may look somewhat different from one another, the outline presented below is intended to help clarify the common characteristics and values shared by global health scholars. The final content of the portfolio will be determined by the supervisory committee in accordance with the elements outlined below. The comprehensive evaluation will be supported by the completion of a portfolio that consists of:

1. A short essay will preface the portfolio describing the content of the portfolio and its alignment with the student's academic and professional goals[2].Additional content of the portfolio **must include, but is not limited to,** the following:
    a. A literature review comprised of an independent study reviewing a body of published literature and critically summarizing the findings.
    b. A review of completed courses describing their contribution to developing the student's trans-disciplinary skills and knowledge related to current issues in global health and the thesis research.
    c. A description of any relevant publications authored by the student over the course of the program and contributing to the thesis research; and
    d. The dissertation proposal.

[1] Wolf in Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (2017), "Re-Imagining PhD: Doctoral Comprehensive Exam", page 4.

[2] Unless stipulated otherwise, and aside from published works, writing conventions and formatting for components of the comprehensive portfolio should conform to the School of Graduate Studies Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses.

The focus of the portfolio is a demonstration of depth of knowledge and methodological rigour in the chosen field of study presented in a flexible format.

The portfolio allows the doctoral student to document academic growth in an organized, coherent, and selective manner that facilitates evaluation by the student's Supervisory Committee. It provides both a formal mechanism for self-reflection and a comprehensive account of the student's experiences and ongoing progress toward their academic and professional goals.

6.7.3. Progression

Upon admission into the program and throughout the coursework period, the student works with their supervisory committee to develop a plan for the content and completion of the portfolio. Students collaborate with their supervisory committee to identify foundational literature and establish scholarly tasks suited to supporting the development of the comprehensive portfolio. Meeting regularly with the supervisor and supervisory committee during the first 12 -18 months of the program provides an opportunity to review these plans as the student progresses through the program. The evaluation of the portfolio will consist of presenting the portfolio for joint discussion with the Supervisory Committee.

The timeline for completion of the comprehensive evaluation will align with the School of Graduate Studies policies and will normally be between the 12th and 20th month after the student begins doctoral-level work, with an upper limit of 24 months. The evaluation will be assessed by the supervisory committee on a pass/fail basis, the outcome of which will be reported to the School of Graduate Studies. Students must demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the current scholarly literature and methodological approaches in their relevant field of study in global health. Through the transdisciplinary and cross-cultural nature of the program, students will be able to analyze topics through various lenses and critically reflect, reason, and communicate their knowledge in different and innovative ways.

Progress towards the completion of the comprehensive portfolio is an important component of the Annual Supervisory Committee Meetings and Reports with failure to demonstrate either timely or substantive progress constituting grounds for academic probation or involuntary withdrawal from the program.

6.7.4. Components of the Comprehensive Portfolio

The focus of the portfolio is a demonstration of depth of knowledge and methodological rigour in the chosen field of study presented in a flexible format.

Content of the portfolio **must include, but is not limited to,** the following:

1. *Preface essay*

To prepare the supervisory committee to evaluate the comprehensive portfolio, a short essay will preface the portfolio. The essay will describe the content of the portfolio and its alignment with the student's academic and professional goals. Relevant research, conference proceedings, academic service, public intellectual, or additional activities supporting demonstrations of knowledge acquisition are also to be included in this essay. Students are also expected to explain how the scholarly tasks outlined in the comprehensive portfolio provide evidence of their knowledge development in relation to the evaluation criteria listed below and they must include a rationale for how this material helps prepare them to engage in a doctoral dissertation.

2. *Literature Review*
   The literature review is an independent study reviewing a body of published literature and a critical summary of the findings. In consultation with the supervisory committee, the student will determine the specificity and structure of a literature review that will best support the student's learning objectives and knowledge development in their chosen area of global health. The literature review may be incorporated into the final dissertation proposal.

   Specific focus may be on, but is not restricted to, the following:
   - A review and critique of concepts, theories and issues relevant to the area of global health that forms the field of study of the dissertation;
   - A review and critique of research methodologies, methods, or analytic frameworks with an aim of outlining that which will be applied in the dissertation research.

3. *Review of Completed Courses*
   Within the preface essay, students are expected to include a summary of course descriptions and assessments completed. Particular emphasis should be placed upon a critical reflection of how the two methods courses and the two additional study courses contributed to an interdisciplinary approach to Global Health and the relationship between the course work and the overall thesis direction. In consultation with the supervisor, the student will determine whether or not including transcripts or course work assignments in the portfolio is relevant.

4. *Relevant Student-Authored Publications*
   Included in the portfolio, students are expected to attach all relevant publications completed since entering the program. Publications can include peer-reviewed journal publications as well as reports, policy briefs, critical commentaries, or blog posts and news articles they have authored related to their chosen area of global health studies. In consultation with the supervisor, the student will determine whether or not co-authored and publications submitted to journals should be included and how they will be contextualized in the portfolio.

5. *Dissertation Proposal*

The dissertation proposal will identify a viable project of research, which is grounded in a developed body of scholarly literature.

The proposal will include:

- An outline of the project's theoretical perspective and relevance,
- Key research questions,
- Hypothesis and/or arguments,
- The appropriate methodology and methods, and
- Relevant ethical, cultural and practical considerations.

The dissertation proposal will be presented by the student and assessed by the supervisory committee. The dissertation proposal will be submitted as part of the comprehensive evaluation portfolio, thus due within 18-20 months in the program with an upper limit of 24 months. Dissertation research may not commence until the student has successfully passed their comprehensive evaluation, which includes approval of the dissertation proposal, and necessary ethics clearance has been granted by the appropriate university research ethics board, and by other relevant organizations, agencies, or individuals associated with the proposed research, including completion of the TCPS2: CORE course. The student is expected to submit the certificate of completion of the TCPS2: CORE course to the program.

Once the student's dissertation proposal has been approved and appropriate research ethics board approval obtained, students can begin research. Annual (at minimum) meetings with the supervisory committee will provide guidance and support the student as they write their dissertation and prepare for a defence.

6.7.5. Presentation of the Comprehensive Portfolio

Once the portfolio is determined by the supervisor to be ready for evaluation, a mutually agreeable date will be determined with the supervisory committee members, the student, and the program office. The supervisor, taking into consideration the student's opinion, and in consultation with the program office, will determine a suitable faculty member to act as Chair to the evaluation session. The role of the Chair is to ensure a fair and smooth running of the evaluation session. The Chair may be from any affiliated program or department and does not have to have disciplinary knowledge of the comprehensive portfolio topic.

At least **two weeks prior** to the date set for the evaluation of the Comprehensive Portfolio, the supervisor ensures that the student makes copies available of the portfolio to the members of the supervisory committee and to the Program Office.

Typically, the evaluation will include a presentation of the portfolio contents as a means of demonstrating expertise in relation to the evaluation criteria and to the portfolio material. The presentation should be approximately 20 minutes in length. Taking into consideration the student's opinion, the supervisory committee will determine whether the evaluation be open or closed to community members beyond the supervisory committee. Following the presentation, the Chair will open the floor allowing members of the supervisory committee to ask questions of the student. The aim of the evaluation is to determine student readiness for dissertation research. The question-answer exchange is expected to be of a conversational nature.

The evaluation, including presentation, will last no more than two hours. Successful completion of the presentation and evaluation of the comprehensive portfolio marks a milestone for doctoral students in this program. From the time of successful completion of the comprehensive evaluation, they are considered doctoral candidates rather than doctoral students.

6.7.6. Evaluation of the Comprehensive Portfolio

The evaluation will be assessed by the supervisory committee on a pass/fail basis. Students should take into consideration the following criteria applied by the supervisory committee in their evaluation. Students are also expected to relate these criteria in their explanation of the components of the comprehensive portfolio and their contribution to knowledge development, as part of their preface essay.

Evaluation criteria include:

- Depth of understanding of concepts, theories, and issues in global health with ability to specify links to particular areas of focus related to the dissertation topic;
- Breadth of knowledge of current literature and research methods in global health with ability to specify links to particular areas of focus related to the dissertation topic; and
- Demonstrated ability to analyze, synthesize, and critique research literature and related research paradigms in global health with ability to specify links to particular areas of focus related to the dissertation topic.

Numerous opportunities have been built into the comprehensive portfolio development process for students to seek and receive feedback, and to address any potential deficiencies before the end of the comprehensive evaluation process. Should a student be deemed by their supervisory committee to have failed to demonstrate comprehensive knowledge development, the student will be provided with a second chance to demonstrate their knowledge of the material. This second opportunity will be in compliance with regulations outlined in Section 3.4.3 of the Graduate Calendar.

6.7.7. Approval of the Dissertation Proposal

Acceptance of the proposal is a component of the comprehensive portfolio evaluation process (Section 5.7.3. above).

6.7.8. Comprehensive Evaluation Blackout Periods

Please note, the Comprehensive Evaluation cannot be scheduled during the following blackout periods:

- April 15-30
- September 1-September 15

6.8. Doctoral Dissertation

Research data collection for the dissertation cannot commence until the dissertation proposal has been defended to the satisfaction of the comprehensive portfolio evaluation committee, and ethical clearance has been granted by the relevant university research ethics board, as well as by other institutions, agencies, or individuals associated with the proposed research.

Students will produce original empirical research, situated in relevant scholarly literature, which will become the reference point for conceptualizing and justifying a central research question and interpreting the significance of the principal findings in a dissertation. Students should refer to Section 3.2 Thesis and Section 3.4 Regulation for the Doctor of Philosophy Degrees in the School of Graduate Studies Calendar.

Students should consult the following resources for information about thesis formats (including sandwich theses), referencing, and other style and form requirements:

GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL THESES

https://gs.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/10/Prep_Guide_Masters_and_Doctoral_Theses_August-2021.pdf

McMaster University's Graduate Thesis Toolkit

https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/macgradthesistoolkit/

Prior to commencing research, students should complete the TCPS 2: CORE (Course on Research Ethics) and submit the certificate to the program. The online course is an introduction to the 2nd edition of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2)*. Students shall also comply with McMaster University ethics procedures relevant to their research design and in consultation with their Supervisor.

The program will then culminate with the defence of the student's thesis. The dissertation must be defended in a PhD Final Oral Examination as outlined in the School of Graduate Studies regulations for the Doctoral Degree. The oral defence will follow standard University procedures.

Student Guide to the Thesis Defence Process
https://gs.mcmaster.ca/resources/student-guide-to-the-thesis-defence-process/

6.9. Supervision & Supervisory Committee

The supervisor, supervisory committee, and student should ideally meet within the first six months from the time the student enters the program.

Supervisors should be confirmed to the program by the student, by means of completing, signing, and submitting the MOU during the initial meetings between the Supervisor and the student but must be completed by the end of the 5th month in the program. At minimum, monthly meetings between the student and supervisor are advised.

Requirements on the composition of the supervisory committee are outlined in Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar. The student must confirm the supervisory committee members to the program by completing and submitting the Education Plan by the 12th month in the program. At the first committee meeting, the student should provide a brief overview of their background, education, and thesis plan. The supervisory committee should discuss with the student timelines for completion of PhD program requirements. The student's education plan can then be revised and resubmitted to the program. The PhD Education Plan and Supervisor Memorandum of Understanding is available in Avenue to Learn (under *Forms*).

The program recommends that the student meets with the supervisory committee at least twice per year. At minimum, SGS requires that the student meet with the supervisory committee once per year recorded as an official degree Milestone. The first annual meeting is to take place by 30 November following the student's first year of study. By notifying the program of upcoming meetings, more frequent meetings can be recorded using the online form.

A supervisory committee report must be submitted for every committee meeting held. The student and supervisor should ensure that a committee report is completed by the student in advance of each supervisory committee meeting and distributed to the committee members by notifying the program so that a link can be generated in advance of the meeting. The committee reports are to serve as official documentation of each committee meeting and used as reference points for students and the supervisory committee to monitor students' academic progress throughout the program.

Students may benefit from resources such as Getting the Supervisory Relationship Off to a Good Start. Graduate students and faculty are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the expectations and responsibilities of graduate students, supervisors, and committee members outlined in McMaster University Graduate Supervision Guidelines for Students. For further details regarding supervision and supervisory committee, please refer to Section 1.2.4 and Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar.

Quick reference:

- List of approved doctoral supervisors (available on the program website).
- Use the MOU (contract between student and supervisor available in the Avenue to Learn Communication Hub) to confirm the Supervisor by end of the 5th month (January) in the program.
- Confirm Committee members by using the Education Plan form available in the A2L Communication Hub, by the 12th month in the program at the latest though it is **strongly suggested** that committee members be confirmed earlier.
- Annual Meetings recorded as Degree Milestones initiated by the program with online form to be completed by November of fourth term in the program.
- It is recommended to meet with Committee regularly: at least every term.

6.10. Cotutelle

Doctoral students can complete a joint degree, or cotutelle, at any eligible institution, but Maastricht would be a natural choice. Maastricht is a full-service university with Global Health housed in the Faculty of Health, Medicine, and Life Sciences Maastricht. It is a leading institution in global health research.

Building on the relationship established in the MSc in Global Health Program, resources are already in place to support students choosing to complete a cotutelle with Maastricht with a memorandum of understanding signed by the two institutions to this effect. Students completing the cotutelle with Maastricht would be enrolled as doctoral students in the PhD in Global Health Program at McMaster, and as external PhD students in the Faculty of Health, Medicine, and Life Sciences at Maastricht University. Students who choose to do the cotutelle with Maastricht will have members of their committee from both McMaster and Maastricht, with a primary supervisor at each of the universities. Students will be required to submit a cotutelle Letter of Intent to the School of Graduate Studies for approval within the first twelve months of the proposed program and will be assigned a supervisor at Maastricht University. The Maastricht PhD supervisor will provide academic support for the duration of the program in conjunction with the supervisor at McMaster. In order to comply with the cotutelle requirements, students will first defend their thesis in Maastricht and then hold a second defence at McMaster.

More information on McMaster University's cotutelle process can be found in Section 2.1.6 of the Graduate Calendar and on the cotutelle website of the School of Graduate studies.

7. Funding, Employment and Benefits

7.1. Student Financial Support

Consistent with standard funding practices for doctoral studies at McMaster University, each incoming student will receive funding from a combination of graduate scholarship, teaching assistantship, and research scholarships obtained through external funding sources or from the supervisor's program of research.

Funding for international (visa) students will come primarily from faculty grants.

For additional information about scholarships, please refer to Section 6 of the Graduate Calendar and visit this link for a list of Awards & Funding.

Students hired as teaching assistants (TAs) or research assistants (RAs) are subject to the School of Graduate Studies guidelines for employment of graduate students.

All eligible students are required to apply for external support such as CGS-D. If awarded a competitive external scholarship, funding support will be adjusted as per the formula outlined in Table 1:

Table 1. Funding adjustment for doctoral students based on external awards

External Award Value	Graduate Scholarship	TA/RAship
$0-25,000	$6,000	If part of graduate guarantee
$25,001-35,000	$3,000	If part of graduate guarantee
$35,001+	$0	If part of graduate guarantee

Please note that if you are successful in winning a major external scholarship or award, your financial support may be adjusted partially according to the policies of your incoming program and of McMaster University. You will be provided with official correspondence from the program reflecting the change in your financial support.

7.2. Working at McMaster

Collective Agreement for TA/RA in lieu of TA

https://hr.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/02/CUPE-Local-3906_Unit-1-Collective-Agreement_FINAL.pdf

For Doctoral Students wishing to work at McMaster outside of their TA / RA appointment, please refer to Section 2.5.4 of the Graduate Calendar.

7.3 Health Benefits

A Medical Plan is provided by your Graduate Students Association (GSA) for full year coverage (September 1 to August 31) and can be automatically paid through your payroll deductions. You can opt-out of this plan if you provide proof of other equivalent coverage.

For more information go to: http://studentcare.ca/rte/en/McMasterUniversity_Home

8. Vacations, Leave of Absence, and Petitions for Special Considerations

8.1. Vacations

As outlined in Section 2.5.8 of the Graduate Calendar, full-time graduate students are expected to be on campus for all three terms of the university year. In addition to statutory holidays (see Sessional Dates) and the weeklong closing of the University from late December until early January, normal vacation entitlement is two weeks of vacation during the year, to be scheduled by mutual agreement with the research supervisor and the employment supervisor. An exception to this allotment requires approval from the supervisor or in the supervisor's absence a member of the supervisory committee.

8.2. Leave of Absence

If students require a leave of absence for specific reasons (health, parental, or family circumstances), students must seek approval from the School of Graduate Studies. For details on policy and the approval process, please refer to Section 2.5.7 of the Graduate Calendar.

8.3. Full Time Off Campus

When admitted to a full-time program, the assumption is that a student will be full time on campus. If a student requires to be away from campus for an extended period of time in order to complete their research, they may be required to apply to be full-time off campus by contacting the program. For details please refer to Section 2.5.6. of the Graduate Calendar.

8.4. Petitions for Special Considerations

If students encounter situations requiring a Petition for Special Consideration, such as compelling medical, personal, or family reasons, please consult Section 2.5.9 of the Graduate Calendar.

9. Grades & Appeals

Should a student face an incomplete (INC) or failing grade, refer to Section 2.6.11 of the School of Graduate Studies Calendar.

Students wishing to appeal a course grade or other matters (academic or nonacademic) should consult the University Policy on Student Appeals.

10. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

In the spirit of Global Health theories and practice, Global Health students are expected to uphold the program's support principles of equity, diversity and inclusion. To review policies and support services, visit McMaster's Equity and Inclusion Office.

Related information can be found in McMaster's Discrimination and Harassment Policy

11. Accessibility and Accommodations

The program aims to maintain the highest standard of accessibility for its students and staff by complying with the objectives set-out by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the McMaster University Accessibility Plan 2011-2025. Accessibility efforts are made specifically in areas related to customer service, built environment, information and communication systems, transportation, and employment. Active steps continue to be taken at all stages to identify and remove any program related or environmental barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing any element of the program. Program staff and faculty consult with McMaster Accessibility Hub (AccessMac) on related matters, and work to accommodate students and staff whenever possible. All program staff and faculty involved in the provision of educational and non-educational services to members of the public complete mandatory training provided by McMaster University regarding accessibility policies and practices.

Related information is available through McMaster's Policy on Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities and McMaster's Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances.

12. Academic Integrity & Professionalism

12.1 Academic Integrity

Students are obliged to act ethically in conducting graduate work. This includes, but is not limited to, following McMaster University policies on the ethical conduct of research and academic integrity. The student is required to document and honestly report research data, to conscientiously cite information and data sources, and to seek guidance on any data exclusions. He/she must acknowledge contributions of the supervisor/advisor, committee members and others, in accordance with the norms of their academic discipline. For more information, please refer to Section 5.1 of the Graduate Calendar.

For guidance on how to proceed in the case of suspected academic dishonesty, please consult the complete policy from the Office of Academic Integrity. The Associate Deans of Graduate Studies are available for confidential consultations on matters related to academic integrity.

12.2. Professionalism

The Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) is committed to ensuring an environment where students, faculty and staff of all FHS schools and educational programs can learn and work in an inclusive environment that fosters respect, diversity and collaboration.

Professionalism is defined as: “the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person.” It is the standard of behaviour by which the profession is judged by our colleagues. Professionalism is one of the most important aspects of global health research and practice.

In the context of the Global Health graduate program, students in the program are called upon to demonstrate professionalism for the duration of their involvement in the program. The nature of blended learning and intercultural negotiation pose additional challenges which include appropriate behaviour of information and communication technologies.

For further information, review the FHS Policy on Professionalism for Graduate Learners.

12.3. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

While we acknowledge that the use of Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, may be helpful to your learning, we require you to act with academic integrity when being assessed. Currently, Global Health assessments have not been designed with Generative AI tools in mind and using them threatens the integrity of the assessment.

The main purpose of a university is the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. As a student at McMaster University, you are expected to practice intellectual honesty and to fully acknowledge the work of others by providing appropriate references in your scholarly work. You must not take credit for work that is not your own. Please note that McMaster University Academic Integrity policy states under item 18(c) that “It shall be an offence knowingly to ... submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source”.

Please check with your course coordinator and the course outline for each Global Health course, as course coordinators will provide additional guidance for specific assessments. In general, the direct use of text originating from a Generative AI tool, beyond using the tool to correct grammar/spelling, should be included in quotation marks or equivalent and cited using a citation style appropriate for the context. Should the use of an AI assistant like ChatGPT be permitted for a particular assessment, you must be transparent by including a Generative AI statement as an appendix. This statement needs to declare the specific Generative AI tool used, the instructions/queries/code used to create the submitted content, and for which sections/tasks in the assessment you used the tool. If you use Generative AI but do not declare this, the Course Coordinator will refer the case to the Office of Academic Integrity.

13. Helpful Resources at McMaster

Spark

Spark is a centre for social research innovation with McMaster’s Faculty of Social Sciences connects researchers to the people, skills, and tools needed to stand at the forefront of social research innovation. Spark offers a plethora of research support services including a plethora of training workshops throughout the year. For more information please visit their website here.

Data Analysis Support Hub (DASH)

The DASH program assists with data analysis and software applications such as Excel, SPSS, and other statistical software. This program is available to students, staff, and/or faculty members from any discipline, either taking a course in statistics or working on a research project with inquiries about data analytics and software programming. For more information, please visit their website here.

MacPherson Institute

The MacPherson Institute provides leadership in teaching and learning by encouraging, supporting, and collaborating with McMaster University’s teaching community. For more information, please visit their website here.

Health Sciences Library: GH Website

Explore library resources for the Global Health Program at McMaster here.