

To : Members of Graduate Council

From : Christina Bryce  
Assistant Graduate Secretary

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The next meeting of Graduate Council will be held on **Tuesday February 11th at 9:00 am in GH-111**

Listed below are the agenda items for discussion.

Please email [cbryce@mcmaster.ca](mailto:cbryce@mcmaster.ca) if you are unable to attend the meeting.

## A G E N D A

- I. Opening Remarks
- II. Minutes of the meeting of January 14th, 2024  
*Approval*
- III. Business arising
- IV. Report from the Associate Deans, Graduate Studies
- V. Report from the Senior Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary
- VI. 2025-2026 Graduate Calendar Administrative Sections and Sessional Dates  
*Approval*
- VII. Revisions to Senate Bylaws pertaining to Graduate Council
  - a. Committee on Graduate Financial Support
  - b. Executive Committee
  - c. Scholarships*Approval*
- VIII. Progress Update on the Recommendations of the Taskforce on Graduate Funding  
*Information*
- IX. New Scholarships  
*Approval*

Tuesday January 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am in GH-111

Present: S. Hranilovic (Chair), D. Trigatti, K. Grandfield, B. Newbold, K. Mattison, N. Carter, M. Gough, B. Milliken, K. McCallum, F. Ma, S. Hanna, A. Prasad, T. Davidson, I. Jahan, M. Heath, K. Graham, P. Miu, E. Grodek, E. Zhou, M. Verma, Y.K. Shin, Y. Kim, C. Biruk, C. McLeod L. Side, C. Bryce (Assistant Graduate Secretary), S. Baschiera (Senior Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary)

Regrets: K. Bhatta, D. Emslie, C. Chakraborty, F. Homid, L. Parker, A. Gadsden, N. Wagner

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## I. Opening Remarks

Dr. Hranilovic reported on the following items:

- Introduction of the new graduate librarian Carly MacLeod;
- An update on the PAL context, noting they expected more information, including allocations and clarity on when they will be required, later in January;
- The terms of reference for the subcommittee on graduate funding matters, noting that the Secretariat has sent comments and the plan is to bring them forward for approval in February and other planned updates to the Graduate Council by-laws;
- Included with the terms of reference work will be a report on the work of implementing the recommendations of the task force generally..

## II. Minutes of the meeting of December 3rd, 2024

It was duly moved and seconded, 'that the Graduate Council approve the minutes of the December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 meeting, as circulated.'

The motion was **carried**.

## III. Business arising

There was no business arising.

## IV. Report from the Associate Deans, Graduate Studies

Dr. Grandfield (Faculty of Engineering) reported on the following items:

- Community Building Events from the Engineering Graduate Student Society;
- The establishment of a parental leave fund for M.A.Sc. students.

Dr. Hanna (Faculty of Health Sciences) reported on the following item:

- The approval by Quality Council of the new Graduate Diploma in Global Surgery.

Dr. Heath (Faculty of Social Sciences) reported on the following item:

- The Faculty's newly formed GSA is going to have its first gathering on Wednesday February 5<sup>th</sup>.

Drs. Newbold and Verma had no report.

## V. Report from the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

Ms. Baschiera reported on the following items:

- IT projects, noting graduate payments was moving forward and highlighting the complexity of the Records project;
- Work to set up the infrastructure for the international student deposit fee, including tracking tools and FAQs, noting they're working closely with immigration;
- The applicant census is now live on system and mirrors what's being done in undergraduate sphere for OUAC. Data won't be distributed to programs but will be kept by IRA and distributed out once the Data Governance group has established guidelines.

Members discussed how data would be released in the context of TRC recommendations. In response to a question Ms. Baschiera noted that they would be coming up with an institutional plan but that if a student or applicant identifies as Indigenous there is a current process in place for self-identification. Members discussed the difference between equity census data versus the facilitated admissions process.

In response to a question from a member about the graduate pay initiative about the equalization of payments, Ms. Side noted that that review will be incorporated into a later phase and that they're looking at a soft launch for the graduate payments later in the spring.

Dr. Hranilovic also highlighted a new training initiative being developed, Graduate Excellence in Supervision and Mentorship, and highlighted future updates at Graduate Council.

## VI. Faculty of Engineering Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee Report

Dr. Grandfield reported the following items:

- A change from Computing and Software to lower the number of courses students are required to complete after a transfer to align with direct entry;
- A change from Materials Science and Engineering to adjust the comprehensive examination format and to clarify language around 600-level courses;
- The School of Engineering Practice and Technology:
  - For MEEI/MTEI there were some program changes and changes to courses;
  - For MEPP some courses were introduced, and others amended or cancelled along with some changes to calendar text;
  - For MEST changes include the introduction 7 new technical electives into the program that already existed in another stream, Dr. Grandfield noted a minor correction on page 47 of the meeting package where there's a stray track changes that will need to be removed;
  - For MEME there were a number of courses moved from this degree to MEST, where the fit is better and two other technical electives were being added.

- The Career Planning requirement for the Faculty had been offered as a milestone and is now being changed to a zero unit course for better tracking and administration.

She also noted a number of new courses, changes to courses, new cross-listings for information.

In response to a question about the relationship with business on a course about organizational change management Dr. Grandfield noted that her understanding is that it might have been at the undergraduate level and that the graduate programs in SEPT had not had cross-listings with Business.

Members discussed the unit count for the career planning course, who is involved in administering it, and who is exempt from it.

In response to a question about backdating the request from Computing and Software, Dr. Grandfield responded that the change was intended to make it equitable for everyone and the program wants to backdate so that current Masters students don't have to take extra courses.

It was duly moved and seconded, **'that the Graduate Council approve, for recommendation to Senate as appropriate, the change proposed by the Faculty of Engineering, as described in the documents.'**

The motion was **approved**.

Sessional Dates ~~2024-2025~~2025-2026

DEADLINE DATES FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS	FALL TERM	WINTER TERM	SUMMER TERM
	September - December <del>2024</del> <u>2025</u> September - October, <del>2024-2025</del> (1HF) November - December <del>2024-2025</del> (2HF)	January - April, 202 <del>6</del> <u>5</u> January - February, <del>2025</del> <u>2026</u> (1HF) March - April, <del>2025</del> <u>2026</u> (2HF)	May - August, <del>2025</del> <u>2026</u> May - June <del>2025-2026</del> (1HF) July-August <del>2025-2026</del> (2HF)
On-Time Registration	Tuesday, June <del>25-24</del> to Thursday, August 1	Thursday, November <del>24</del> <u>20</u> to Thursday, December <del>54</del>	Thursday, March <del>27-26</del> to Thursday, April <del>409</del>
Class Start Dates *	Classes begin on or after September 1, <del>2024</del> <u>2025</u> - check with program for details	Classes begin on or after January 2, <del>2025</del> <u>2026</u> - check with program for details	Class start dates vary - check with program for details
Late Registration (late fees apply)	August 2 to September <del>6</del> <u>5</u>	December <del>6-5</del> to January 2	April <del>11-10</del> to April <del>25</del> <u>24</u>
Final Dates to Add Courses:			
Multi-term Courses	September <del>20</del> <u>19</u>		
Single-term or 1HF Courses	September <del>20</del> <u>19</u>	January <del>24</del> <u>23</u>	May <del>9</del> <u>8</u>
2HF Course	October <del>18</del> <u>17</u>	February <del>28</del> <u>27</u>	June <del>20</del> <u>19</u>
Final Dates to Drop Courses: **			
Multi-term Courses	February <del>24</del> <u>20</u>	July <del>25</del> <u>24</u>	
Single-term Courses	November <del>8</del> <u>7</u>	March <del>24</del> <u>20</u>	July <del>11</del> <u>10</u>
1HF Courses	October <del>4</del> <u>3</u>	February <del>7</del> <u>6</u>	June <del>6</del> <u>5</u>
2HF Courses	December <del>6</del> <u>5</u>	April <del>4</del> <u>2</u>	<del>August 4</del> <u>July 31<sup>st</sup></u>
Final Dates to Submit Grades:			
Multi-term Courses		May 1	September 1
Single-term Courses	January 6	May 1	September 1
1HF Courses	October <del>18</del> <u>17</u>	February <del>24</del> <u>20</u>	September 1
2HF Courses	January <del>3</del> <u>6</u>	May 1	September 1

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Final Date to Submit Results of Incomplete (INC) Grades for Previous Term with Permission of Associate Dean	March <del>30</del>	July <del>43</del>	November <del>36</del>
Deadline for Term Work to Be Submitted	December <del>21</del> <sup>19</sup>	April <del>25</del> <sup>24</sup>	August <del>29</del> <sup>28</sup>

## Thesis

	<b>FALL <del>2024</del><sup>2025</sup></b> <b>Convocation</b>	<b>SPRING <del>2025</del><sup>2026</sup></b> <b>Convocation</b>	<b>FALL <del>2025</del><sup>2026</sup></b> <b>Convocation</b>
Final Date to Initiate Thesis Defence in Mosaic***	June <del>24</del> <sup>20</sup>	January <del>17</del> <sup>16</sup> (Health Sci.) February <del>7</del> <sup>6</sup> (All others)	June <del>27</del> <sup>26</sup>
Final Date to Submit Master's Theses to Departments (Prior to Defense)	August <del>21</del>	March <del>36</del>	August <del>17</del>
Final Date to File Theses with Graduate Studies and Complete Degree Requirements****			
- Faculty of Health Sciences	September <del>27</del> <sup>26</sup>	April <del>5</del> <sup>2</sup>	September <del>26</del> <sup>25</sup>
- All Other Faculties	September <del>27</del> <sup>26</sup>	April <del>25</del> <sup>24</sup>	September <del>26</del> <sup>25</sup>

~~The University welcomes and includes students, staff, and faculty from a wide range of cultural, traditional, and spiritual beliefs. As per the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances, the University will arrange reasonable accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays. For more information, please refer to <https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-Observances.pdf>~~

Graduate students may only enroll in undergraduate courses with the approval of their supervisor or graduate program. Students are responsible for meeting the deadlines and requirements of the undergraduate course as presented in class and in the undergraduate calendar. Graduate students will be graded under the graduate grading scale.

Programs may establish earlier deadlines to add/drop courses but these dates must clearly be communicated to students. Students taking courses outside of their home program of study, must follow the rules of the program in which the course is offered. Please note that the last date to cancel a course or registration with no academic penalty is not the same as the last date to be eligible for a refund.

**Note:** The university will not be holding classes on September 30th in observance of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

\*The precise dates of commencement of courses are determined by the program; students are urged to contact their program for details. SGS maintains the 13-week graduate instruction period; however, if a course does not fall into the traditional 13-week period, the graduate program will inform students of important dates and deadlines in the course syllabus. There is no official fall break or reading week for graduate students (except MBA). Students should check

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with their program and their course instructor(s) as to whether classes will be held during these periods. Please see sections 1.3 (Responsibilities of Graduate Students to the University) and 2.5.8 (Vacations) of the calendar for more information.

\*\*All courses on a student's record after these dates will require a grade. Exceptions require submission of a Late Add Form. Graduate programs may establish earlier deadlines for completion of course work and may prescribe penalties for late completion of work and for failure to complete work, provided that these penalties are announced at the time the instructor makes known to the class the methods by which student performance shall be evaluated.

\*\*\*Please note the following black-out periods in which standard Ph.D. defences cannot be scheduled: ~~December 15<sup>th</sup> to January 9<sup>th</sup> inclusive and August 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> inclusive. December 14<sup>th</sup> to January 8<sup>th</sup> inclusive and August 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> inclusive.~~ Please refer to the SGS website for information about the timeline for scheduling your defence with these dates in mind. There is more flexibility with respect to when accelerated defences are initiated but they still must be scheduled with the Final Date to File Theses with Graduate Studies and Complete Degree Requirements in mind.

\*\*\*\*A final thesis is the corrected, approved version of the thesis which is uploaded to MacSphere following the Final Oral Examination. Note there is no grace period at the end of December or April for final thesis submission and completion of degree requirements.

## Convocation Dates

Please consult the link below for convocation dates:

<https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/grad/details/>

## Graduate Study at McMaster University

The Graduate Calendar (the "Calendar") is the primary contractual document between graduate students and McMaster University. Students are advised that in addition to the Calendar, students' relationships with the University are governed by University Policies, guidelines, and academic regulations that are established by the University under its governing bodies. Students are responsible for reviewing the regulations section of the Calendar.

When McMaster moved to its current graduate organization, the aims of graduate work were described as "the highest development of the powers of reasoning, judgment, and evaluation in intellectual concerns; specialized training in professional skills; initiation into research or scholarly work and development of a capacity for its successful and independent pursuit; the fruitful pursuit of research and scholarly work". This description remains as valid today as it was then.

Research is central to graduate work, and McMaster's strong research orientation has a pronounced effect on the character of its graduate programs. The numerous research achievements of McMaster faculty members have been recognized by grants, prizes, medals, and fellowships in academic societies. Such distinctions attest to the qualifications and dedication of faculty members in developing and disseminating knowledge. The education that McMaster faculty provide is valuable not only for the graduate student's career but also for the student's development as a person.

The following sections outline the general graduate academic regulations of the University. Students must read and comply with both these regulations and those set out by their Program elsewhere in this Graduate Calendar, as applicable.

Since the Academic Regulations are continually reviewed, the University reserves the right to change the regulations in this section of the Calendar. The University also reserves the right to cancel the academic privileges of a student at any time should the student's scholastic record or conduct warrant so doing.

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Faculties are authorized to use discretion in special situations by taking into account past practice, the spirit of the regulations, and extraordinary circumstances. Students who believe their situations warrant special consideration should consult the appropriate Program Office.

## 1.1 Programs of Study

In addition to ~~Masters~~Master's and Ph.D. degrees McMaster University offers graduate programs that lead to one of the following:

### Graduate Diploma

A Graduate Diploma is based on Graduate Degree Level Expectations (GDLEs) and prepares Students for employment requiring sound judgment, personal responsibility and individual initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments. Graduate Diplomas must include academic content equivalent to a minimum of four, three-unit (half) graduate courses at McMaster.

### Academic Microcredentials

A designation of achievement of a coherent set of skills, competencies, or knowledge, specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and potential need by employers and/or in the community.

### Academic Certificates

A Graduate Academic Certificate is a microcredential consisting of a program of study coherently organized around clear learning objectives. Graduate Academic Certificates must include academic credit courses equivalent to at least two, three-unit (half) graduate courses at McMaster.

### Specialized Pathways

#### *Dual Degree*

A program of study offered by two or more universities or by a university and a college or institute, including Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning, in which successful completion of the requirements is confirmed by a separate and different degree/diploma document being awarded by each of the participating institutions.

#### *Combined Degree*

A program of study that combines two existing degree programs of different types. The combination may, for example, consist of two existing graduate programs, or a graduate and an undergraduate program. In most cases, the combination will involve at least one professionally oriented program. As students normally pursue one degree program at a time, and if two qualifications are sought, the degree programs would best be pursued consecutively.

#### *Concurrent Registration*

Normally students are enrolled in a single full-time or part-time program of study. These programs can be offered in standard formats as well as combined, collaborative specialization, joint or dual programs or streams.

Additionally, with the permission of the graduate unit(s) and SGS, students may be simultaneously registered in more than one program. These are ~~stand-alone~~stand-alone programs and not approved as combined options. A student may enroll in one program as full-time and the other as part-time, or in both programs on a part-time basis. Enrollment in two full-time programs will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students are responsible for the fees charged for both programs. Students may not be enrolled concurrently in more than one program that are also offered in a combined or joint format (MD/PhD, PhD/OT, PT, SLP)

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Concurrent enrollment is different than combined, dual, joint and collaborative specialization programs as the two programs are pursued and distinct from one another. Academic work from one program may not be used to satisfy the requirements of another program and progression (or lack of progression) in one program does not impact the progression or standing of the other.

#### *Cotutelle*

A customized program of doctoral study developed jointly by two institutions for an individual student in which the requirements of each university's doctoral program are upheld, but the student working with supervisors at each institution prepares a single thesis which is then examined by a committee whose members are drawn from both institutions. The student is awarded two degree documents, though there is a notation on the transcripts indicating that the student completed his or her thesis under Cotutelle arrangements.

#### *Joint Degree*

A program of study offered by two or more universities or by a university and a college or institute, including an Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, in which successful completion of the requirements is confirmed by a single degree document.

#### *Collaborative Specialization*

An intra-university graduate field of study that provides an additional multidisciplinary experience for students enrolled in and completing the degree requirements for one of a number of approved master's and/or PhD programs within the collaborative specialization. Students meet the admission requirements of and register in the participating (or "home") program but complete, in addition to the degree requirements of that program, the additional requirements specified by the Collaborative Specialization.

For a complete listing of the programs offered please visit the School of Graduate Studies website, [gs.mcmaster.ca](http://gs.mcmaster.ca)

## 1.2 Responsibilities to Graduate Students

The principal responsibilities that McMaster University has for the academic endeavours of its graduate students are shared by the School of Graduate Studies, the Faculty, the Department, the Supervisory Committee, and the Faculty Advisor. The following summarizes the responsibilities of each of these bodies.

### 1.2.1 The School of Graduate Studies

The name "School of Graduate Studies" refers to the Vice-Provost & Dean and Associate Deans of Graduate Studies, the Graduate Council, and the registrarial duties associated with graduate administration.

The Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies provides leadership in maintaining and improving the standards of graduate scholarship in the University. These responsibilities include: being the School's voice in graduate matters concerning research and its funding, scholarships and assistantships, the development of graduate programs and policy statements affecting graduate work; being the designated chair of Ph.D. dissertation oral examinations; approving the nomination of external examiners for Ph.D. theses and receiving the examiners' reports. The Associate Deans of Graduate Studies routinely act as the Dean's delegates. They recommend revision or development of regulations or policies affecting graduate work, refer matters of policy and curriculum to the Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committees, and deal with student appeals. In addition to acting on behalf of the Graduate Admissions and Study Committees as described below, the responsibilities of the Associate Deans include the awarding of McMaster Graduate Scholarships.

The [Senior](#) Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary of the School administers the academic affairs of students enrolled in the School of Graduate Studies. These responsibilities include: registering graduate students; assessing

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tuition fees; maintaining records and files for applicants and new or in-course students and arranging Ph.D. oral examinations.

## 1.2.2 The Faculty

Either a Faculty Graduate Admissions and Study Committee or an Associate Dean Graduate Studies Faculty are responsible for matters concerning both incoming and in-course graduate students. More specifically, these responsibilities include:

- determining the admissibility of applicants;
- receiving reports on the progress of students and making decisions thereon, including recommendations to require a student to withdraw;
- ensuring that program requirements have been met prior to the awarding of degrees, where applicable;
- approving off-campus courses and leaves of absence; and
- deciding on applications from students for special consideration with respect to academic regulations.

In all of these matters, the Committee or the Associate Dean acts on recommendations made by departments.

## 1.2.3 The Department (or Graduate Program)

Typically, many of the duties of the Department in regard to graduate students are carried out by the Department Chair and the Graduate Advisor (in some programs these are referred to as Graduate Coordinators or Area Coordinators) for the Department. For some programs (e.g. interdisciplinary graduate programs), these duties are carried out by the Program Director, Co-Director or Associate Director and for some Health Science programs, the Assistant Dean. For purposes of graduate studies policies stated in sections 1 through 6 of the Graduate Calendar, all reference to Department Chair shall mean, in the graduate programs of the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Program Director, Co-Director, Associate Director or appropriate Assistant Dean. The departmental duties include making recommendations to the Graduate Admissions and Study Committee of the Faculty or to the Associate Dean Graduate Studies of the Faculty as noted above. The Department is responsible for matters such as:

- ensuring that every student has, at all times, a faculty advisor or supervisor or a properly constituted supervisory committee;
- reviewing annually each student's academic progress and reporting thereon;
- conducting comprehensive examinations and language examinations, when these are required;
- preparing and distributing guidelines and departmental regulations for supervisors and students;
- ensuring that each student is properly trained in all safety practices, guidelines, and policies for the use of any resources required in carrying out their work, where appropriate.

In performing those duties that relate to individual students, the Department relies on advice from the Supervisory Committee or the faculty advisor.

In those cases in which a Supervisory Committee or faculty advisor determines that a student's progress is unsatisfactory, and recommends that the student be required to withdraw, the Department is expected to verify the reasons for the recommendation in accordance with the regulations established for degree progression. If the recommendation is confirmed, the Department will forward the recommendation to the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, who will receive it and act on behalf of the Faculty Admissions and Study Committee.

If the Department is not convinced that the recommendation is appropriate, the Department may attempt to mediate between the supervisor and student, or may attempt to find an alternate Supervisory Committee or faculty advisor. If that is not possible because all members with expertise in the student's topic are already on the Supervisory Committee, then the Department may find it best to encourage the student to transfer elsewhere. If the student is very close to completion, the Department may advise the student to continue in the program despite the lack of Supervisory Committee support.

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## 1.2.4 The Supervisory Committee or Supervisor

The Supervisory Committee, or supervisor or the faculty advisor (Section 1.2.5) when no such committee is required, provides advice to the Department as noted above. Additional responsibilities include, where applicable:

- to assist in planning and to approve the student's program of courses and research;
- to approve the thesis proposal;
- to decide within departmental regulations, on the timing of the comprehensive examination (for doctoral students) and, where applicable, of the language and other examinations;
- to maintain knowledge of the student's research activities and progress;
- to give advice on research;
- to provide the student with regular appraisals of progress or lack of it;
- to perform such other duties as may be required by the department;
- to report on the above matters annually, in writing, on the approved form to the department, which in turn will report to the Faculty Graduate Committee on Admissions and Study where applicable;
- to initiate appropriate action if the student's progress is unsatisfactory, including any recommendation that the student withdraw, for approval by the department and the Faculty committee on Graduate Admissions and Study;
- to decide when the student is to write the thesis and to give advice during this process;
- to act as internal examiners for the thesis; and
- to act as members of the examination committee for the final oral defence when so appointed.

In FHS, committees may also include an Associate Member who would have a formal advisory role on the committee. Please click [here](#) for more details.

## 1.2.5 The Faculty Advisor

When a supervisory committee or supervisor is not required, a faculty advisor will be assigned by the Department. Like the supervisory committee, the advisor will provide advice to the Department as noted in Section 1.2.3 above. Their responsibilities will include: planning and approving the student's program of courses and research; deciding within departmental regulations, on the timing of the comprehensive examination, and language and other examinations; maintaining knowledge of the student's research activities and progress; giving advice on research; providing the student with regular appraisals of progress or lack of it (i.e., the student and student advisor have a mutual obligation to meet on a regular basis); initiating appropriate action if the student's progress is unsatisfactory, including any recommendation that the student withdraw. In course-based, professional or clinical programs, a program committee or the department chair for the program acts as the faculty advisor. The faculty advisor is expected to respond in a timely fashion to requests for clarification by the student on elements of academic and research progress.

## 1.2.6 The Graduate Course Instructor

As noted in the *Graduate Course Management Policy*, the course instructor is responsible for providing each student with evaluations of the student's academic performance at various stages during the course, and, whenever possible, a list of due dates. Although instructors are required to provide written course outlines at the beginning of courses, the Policy also provides instructors with the opportunity to alter a course's content to reflect shifting research interests as long as the students are informed of such changes promptly and in writing. Even in the case of changing content, best practice is for instructors to adhere to the original course outline in terms of the amount of work expected from the students, the schedule of assignments, due dates, and the evaluation scheme.

The graduate course instructor may decide to recruit one or more faculty members or field experts to give special lectures during the course. Such an invitation should be made well in advance of the lecture date. Invited instructors

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usually are not expected to evaluate the students. However, there may be rare cases in which an invited instructor contributes some aspect of course evaluation. In that event, the official course instructor still bears ultimate responsibility for overall evaluation and course outcome. Students should be informed of the mechanism and mode of evaluation under these circumstances.

At the graduate level, students normally are expected to actively participate in courses (i.e., contribute to discussion, be encouraged to ask questions), and instructors often award marks for participation. The ultimate aim of any graduate course is not only to convey information to and exchange information with students, but also to equip students with the confidence and ability to exchange information with others, both in the spoken word and in writing.

Instructors shall calculate and provide grades to the School of Graduate Studies for all students by the date stipulated in the Graduate Calendar, as a final mark or as an "incomplete". Final marks shall be provided to the students in a timely manner. Although there may be rare instances in which the instructor may need to report grades before all work is complete for a student, instructors should be aware that a grade of "incomplete" will be converted to an "F" and recorded on the student's transcript after the stated sessional date: "Final Date to Submit Results of Incomplete (INC) Grades for Previous Term".

## 1.3 Responsibilities of Graduate Students to the University

Just as the University has responsibilities to graduate students, they have responsibilities to the University.

The student's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining current contact information with the University, including address, phone numbers, and emergency contact information.
- Maintaining status as an active student including enrolment in the academic year or following any necessary procedures for an authorized break or leave of absence.
- Using the University provided e-mail address or maintaining a valid forwarding e-mail address.
- Regularly checking the official University communications channels. Official University communications are considered received if sent by postal mail, by fax, or by e-mail to the student's designated primary e-mail account via their @mcmaster.ca alias.
- Accepting that forwarded e-mails may be lost and that e-mail is considered received if sent to the student's @mcmaster.ca account.
- Be geographically available and visit the campus regularly which normally means multiple times per week; written permission from the department/supervisor is required for studies to be off campus. In all such cases, Full Time Off Campus status must be formally submitted to SGS. Note, some programs may have different requirements (e.g., online, clinical placements).
- [Review the regulations in the Graduate Calendar and the Program Handbook \(if applicable\) for graduate studies at the University.](#)

Where applicable, students are responsible for complying with such conditions as indicated in the offer of admission. Students are also responsible for complying with the regulations governing graduate students at McMaster University with respect to full- and part-time status (see sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3). Students are further responsible for informing the School of Graduate Studies, which acts as the official keeper of student records, within two weeks of any change in personal information such as address, name, telephone number, etc. Students are also responsible for reporting through the department any change in student status, course registration, or withdrawal.

### Courses

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To receive credit for a course, each student is responsible for confirming in the Mosaic Student Center that their enrollment status is appropriate for that course. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have formally enrolled for the course through their department or graduate program.

#### Research-Based Programs

With regard to research and study, students are responsible for maintaining contact and meeting regularly with the faculty advisor, thesis/project supervisor or supervisory committee, for observing departmental guidelines, and for meeting the deadlines of the department and the School of Graduate Studies. If there is a problem with supervision, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Department Chair or Graduate Advisor. It is also the expectation that students will seek clarification when necessary on questions regarding elements of academic and research progress. The provisions for changing a supervisor are outlined in Section 3.1.

Students who undertake to write a master's or doctoral thesis assume responsibility both for creating drafts of the thesis, upholding copyright and intellectual property rights including any research agreements between the university and outside partners, and for responding to direction from the Supervisory Committee. The student shall have the responsibility to write and ultimately to defend the thesis, and the Supervisory Committee has the responsibility to offer guidance in the course of the endeavour, and to recommend or not recommend the completed thesis for defence.

Since enrollment permits access to libraries and certain other academic facilities (including off-campus facilities), it also implies a commitment on the part of each graduate student to use such facilities in accordance with applicable rules, including all safety practices, guidelines and policies. Inappropriate behaviour that is deemed to be in violation of such practices and/or policies may lead to denial of access to the facility. If such a denial of access to facilities means that a student can no longer fulfill their academic obligations, the student will be required to withdraw involuntarily from their academic program. (see also Section 5.2)

Full-time students are obliged to be on campus, except for vacation periods or authorized off-campus status, for all three terms of the university year. Vacation entitlement is discussed in Section 2.5.8. If this period of time exceeds two weeks, the approval of the supervisor or in the supervisor's absence a member of the supervisory committee is also required. In accordance with government regulations (see Section 2.5.2 students who will be away from campus for more than four weeks require not only permission from the Department but also that of the appropriate Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and must submit a Request to be Full Time Off Campus. Note that this permission is needed for conferences, field work or studies elsewhere in the world, in order to allow the University to comply with the regulation requiring that a written explanation for such absences be lodged in the Graduate School office. Students may arrange, through the Department and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, to be "full-time off-campus" for periods of up to a year. Students will also be required to complete the Risk Management Manual (RMM) 801 forms and gain approval through EOHSS. In cases of unauthorized absence the student will be deemed to have withdrawn voluntarily from graduate study and will have to petition for readmission and pay the readmission fee. No guarantee of readmission or of renewal of financial arrangements can be made and a decision on readmission is not subject to appeal. An exception to this policy would be programs described in the calendar as delivering their curriculum either partially or fully in on-line formats. Please refer to details in individual program descriptions.

In order to receive a degree, the student must fulfill all departmental or program requirements and all University regulations, including those of the School of Graduate Studies. Students who have outstanding financial accounts at the end of the academic year will not receive their academic results, diplomas, or transcripts.

## General Regulations of the Graduate School

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Please note: if there is any discrepancy between a department or program handbook and the School of Graduate Studies Calendar, then the School of Graduate Studies Calendar shall prevail.

#### Collection of Personal Information

Under the authority of the McMaster University Act, 1976, and by applying to McMaster or by enrolling in a program at the University, students expressly acknowledge and agree that the collection, retention, use and disclosure of relevant personal information is necessary for McMaster University to:

- establish a record of the student's performance in programs and courses;
- to assist the University in the academic and financial administration of its affairs;
- to provide the basis for awards and government funding; and
- to establish the student's status as a member of relevant student governmental organization.

Similarly, and in compliance with McMaster University's access to information and protection of privacy policies and Canadian and Ontario privacy laws, the University provides personal information to:

- the Canadian and Ontario government for the purposes of reporting purposes; and
- to appropriate student government organizations for the purposes of allowing such organizations to communicate with its membership and providing student government-related services consistent with the enrolment by a student at the University.

By applying and/or enrolling at McMaster University the student expressly consents to this collection, retention, use and disclosure of such personal information in this manner. Questions regarding the collection or use of personal information should be directed to the University Secretary, Gilmour Hall, Room 210, McMaster University.

#### Retention of Documents

All documentation submitted in support of an application for admission (including original transcripts) becomes the property of the University and is not returnable.

If an applicant is not accepted, or fails to enroll following acceptance, their documentation (including original transcripts) will be destroyed at the end of the admissions cycle.

## 2.1 Admission Requirements

McMaster University seeks candidates for graduate study who show high scholarly promise. Admission to a graduate program is based on a judgement by the University that the applicant can successfully complete the graduate degree program. The University's minimum requirements are identified in this section. Degrees and grades from foreign universities are evaluated for their equivalency to McMaster's. Departments or programs may establish additional requirements, such as scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Applicants should read the admission statement for the program or department, as well as the section here. Admission is competitive: meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission. Final decisions on matters of admission rest with the Graduate Admissions and Studies Committee for each Faculty or the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies. The admission decision is not subject to appeal. Deferring the starting term of an offer once issued is not normally permitted, please check with the program of application for more information.

### 2.1.1 Admission Requirements for a Graduate Diploma, Graduate Academic Certificate and Academic Microcredential

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Students who wish to enter a Graduate Academic Certificate or Graduate Diploma program must meet the admission requirements of a Master's level program.

Students who wish to begin an academic microcredential must meet its specified admission requirements.

(Note: A Graduate Diploma is distinct from a baccalaureate, undergraduate diploma, Master's or Ph.D. degree, or diplomas and certificates awarded by the Centre for Continuing Education at McMaster University).

## 2.1.2 Admission Requirements for Master's Degree

The majority of graduate programs at McMaster University require the holding of an ~~Honours~~ 4-year bachelor's degree from a recognized university or college with at least a B+ average (equivalent to a McMaster 8.5 GPA out of 12) in the final year in all courses in the discipline, or relating to the discipline, in which the applicant proposes to do graduate work. Programs which consider applications with a mid-B average identify this in the relevant section of the calendar. In a Master's program in the Faculty of Engineering the requirement is at least a B- average (equivalent to a McMaster 7.0 GPA). In the absence of a clear framework, a P for a P/F course will be considered a 51 percent when calculating the admission average. Strong letters of recommendation are also required. Some programs may have different admission requirements, for example, some programs may consider professional practice or experience within the application process so please consult the program section of the calendar for details.

In recognition of the changes taking place in the structure of university education as a consequence of the Bologna Accord, three-year, first-cycle degrees that meet the criteria of the "Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area" will be accepted in place of a four-year ~~Honours~~ degree. Standard admission requirements will still apply. A Diploma Supplement should accompany the official transcript [item (a) under Section 2.2].

Prospective applicants who lack some background in the discipline they wish to enter should consult the Undergraduate Calendar with regard to Continuing Student status. A continuing student is a university graduate who is not currently enrolled in a degree program, but who wishes to take one or more undergraduate classes.

## 2.1.3 Admission Requirements for Ph.D. Degree

Applicants may be admitted to a regular Ph.D. program at one of three stages in their academic work: (1) after completion of a Master's program; (2) Directly from a Master's program at McMaster without completing the Master's degree; (3) in exceptional cases, directly from a Bachelor's program. Students still enrolled in a Master's with thesis program beyond 22 months must complete the degree requirements including the thesis prior to admission to the Ph.D. program.

1. For applicants who hold a Master's degree, the primary requirements are distinction in their previous graduate work (equivalent to at least a McMaster B+. In the absence of a clear framework, a P for a P/F course will be considered a 51 percent when calculating the admission average.), and strong letters of reference.
2. Students enrolled in a Master's program at McMaster University may be transferred to the Ph.D. program at McMaster prior to completion of the Master's degree. Not sooner than two terms and no later than 22 months after initial registration in the Master's program here, students may request to be reclassified as Ph.D. students. After proper review, the department will recommend one of the following:
  - a. admission to Ph.D. studies following completion of the requirements for the Master's degree;
  - b. admission to Ph.D. studies without completion of a Master's program;
  - c. admission to Ph.D. studies but with concurrent completion of all requirements for a Master's degree within one term from the date of reclassification;
  - d. refusal of admission to Ph.D. studies.

In no case does successful completion of a Master's degree guarantee admission to Ph.D. studies.

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For students in (b), the recommendation for admission to Ph.D. must identify which if any courses taken as a Master's student can be credited toward the requirements for the Doctoral program.

A student in (b) may re-register as a candidate for the Master's degree, provided that work to date has met the standards for the Master's program.

Students in (c) who do not complete the requirements for the Master's degree within the one term will lose their status as a Ph.D. candidate and be returned to Master's status.

3. In certain programs, applicants with a Bachelor's degree only, may be admitted directly to Ph.D. studies. Such students must show sufficient promise, including at least an A average. Within one calendar year the progress of students admitted to Ph.D. studies directly from a Bachelor's degree will be reviewed by their supervisory committee and the program. The program then will recommend one of the following:
- a. proceed with Ph.D. studies;
  - b. not proceed with Ph.D. studies but re-register as a Master's candidate;
  - c. withdraw from the University.

A student admitted to a Ph.D. program who re-registers as a candidate for a Master's degree must meet all of the requirements for the Master's degree in order for it to be awarded.

There are no other pathways to Ph.D. admission.

### 2.1.4 Transfer to Ph.D.

Transfers to a Ph.D. program take effect at the start of the next term, or are retroactive to September 1st for students whose request to transfer is received by the School of Graduate Studies by the end of the second week of October. Students are encouraged to transfer early (i.e., well before the end of the 5th term of their ~~Masters~~Master's) given that the time-limit on transfers described in 2.1.3 above. [The process to transfer to Ph.D. varies from program to program and will be listed in the program handbooks.- Upon approval of the transfer, SGS will issue a new letter indicating the transfer and detail the funding package for the duration of the Ph.D.](#)

### 2.1.5 Admission Requirements for Part-Time Ph.D. Degree

Admission to a part-time Ph.D. program is possible only for an individual holding a Master's degree whose circumstances preclude uninterrupted full-time doctoral studies. Because of the divergent nature of academic disciplines, part-time doctoral work is not feasible in some areas. Accordingly, no Department or Program is obligated to offer part-time doctoral work. As part of their applications prospective part-time students are required to provide a plan of study, including a clear account of when and where the thesis research is to be conducted. If facilities at the place of employment are to be used for the research, the signed agreement of the employer, recognizing the conditions surrounding graduate work, is also required. In addition, departments may have other requirements for admission to a part-time doctoral program. A part-time doctoral student must be geographically available on a regular basis, and must be able to participate regularly in departmental seminars and colloquia.

### 2.1.6 Admission of Students to a Cotutelle Ph.D. Degree

A cotutelle is a single Ph.D. awarded by two post-secondary institutions, typically from different countries. A cotutelle degree promotes and structures research collaborations in a way that allows students access to a broader range of research experience than would be available at a single institution.

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Partner university arrangements may vary and students must investigate what is required to fulfill that institution's cotutelle requirements. For information on how to apply please view the Cotutelle Policy and the information available on the School of Graduate Studies website.

## 2.1.7 Admission of Students with Related Work Experience or Course Work Beyond the Bachelor's Degree

Some potential applicants may not satisfy our admission requirement. However, work experience and/or completed course work beyond the Bachelor's degree, may have some bearing on the applicant's ability to complete a graduate program. The admissions process will recognize these accomplishments as follows.

Admission to graduate studies for a student with related work experience and/or course work beyond the Bachelor's degree will be based on the following criteria:

1. References from reliable sources, which specifically identify the applicant's aptitude for research and graduate education.
2. University 4-year undergraduate degree or equivalent, completed more than 4 years ago, together with additional course work taken since that time.
3. Significant record of workplace experience, the relevance of which will be assessed by the graduate program of choice.

Submission of a complete resume is required to determine eligibility as a mature student. Such recommendations must be approved by the Graduate Associate Dean of the Faculty in question and evidence of ability to do graduate work will still be required.

## 2.1.8 Admission Requirements for Post-Degree Students

A Post-degree Student is one who has not been admitted to a graduate degree or diploma program but who holds a university degree and has been given permission to take a specific graduate course. Permission to take a course as a post-degree student requires the approval of the course instructor, the Department Chair, and the School of Graduate Studies. An application is required for each course. Students are allowed to take up to three courses as post-degree.

Although acceptance as a post-degree student carries no implications with respect to acceptance for a degree program in the School of Graduate Studies, the level of academic achievement expected for admission under this category is the same as that required of students admitted to a Master's program (Section 2.1.1). Courses taken as a post-degree student may be eligible for credit toward a Master's degree in a related program, to a maximum of one-half of the degree's course requirement, subject to the recommendation of the department or program to the relevant Faculty Graduate Admissions and Study Committee.

A student who has completed a relevant undergraduate degree and is not admissible to a program under current standards, may be admitted as a post-degree student with the approval of the Associate Dean to demonstrate admissibility. In such cases, any courses taken as a post-degree student will not be available for credit in a subsequent graduate program, should they be eventually considered to be admissible.

The deadline for registration is the same as for graduate degree programs (see Sessional Dates, Registration).

Post-degree students are not allowed to take graduate courses for Audit.

(Note: A Graduate Diploma is distinct from a baccalaureate, undergraduate diploma, Master's or Ph.D. degree, or diplomas and certificates awarded by the Centre for Continuing Education at McMaster University).

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## 2.1.9 Non-Credit Participants in Graduate Courses

Graduate courses are not normally open to "auditors" who attend a course without the usual qualifications and without seeking academic credit. Under some circumstances, however, people who are not registered graduate students and who do not meet the requirements for admission as Post-degree (see Section 2.1.8 above) may attend a graduate course. This requires the written permission of the course instructor, the Department Chair, and the School of Graduate Studies.

A fee is charged for each course taken as a non-credit participant (by persons who are not registered graduate students or for graduate students in a course-charged program). See Section 4.1, Fees for Graduate Students, for more information about fees.

### 2.1.10 Visiting Students

**Visiting Students** are individuals who are currently registered in a graduate degree program in another university, and who have made arrangements through both their home university and a graduate program at McMaster to spend some time at McMaster as part of their degree program at the home university. While they are visiting students, they will not be enrolled in a degree program at McMaster. They are not part of any official exchange agreement including Ontario Visiting Graduate Student (OVGS) arrangement, although there may be an agreement between the McMaster program and their home institution. For more information on Ontario Visiting Graduate Student arrangements please consult Section 5.10.

McMaster currently allows out-of-province and international students to visit and conduct research in a specific lab with a specific faculty member as a Visiting Research Student. They can be in this role for a maximum of ~~in one of three ways: to take course work in a specific program; to conduct research in a specific lab; or to participate in an internship with a specific program or faculty member. In any case, students will be enrolled as full time students for a maximum of~~ one year. Visiting Research -students do not normally pay tuition ~~unless taking courses~~ but in all cases, are expected to pay supplementary fees (see Section 4.1 Fees for Graduate Students). Visiting Research students must submit a visiting research student application and be considered for admission to a host program or department. Acceptance is on the recommendation of the department or program at McMaster. For every term that the student is here in residence they must register in SGS 302. Visiting Research students are not permitted to audit courses.

It is necessary for international Visiting Research students to enroll in the UHIP program to ensure adequate health insurance coverage during their stay. Information about how UHIP works for shorter term stays, can be found at [immigration@mcmaster.ca](mailto:immigration@mcmaster.ca)

It is the responsibility of all international Visiting Research students to ~~obtain the appropriate immigration status to conduct their intended activities (e.g. working in a lab conducting research, taking courses, etc.) for the specified time they are an active Visiting Research student at the university. It is the student's responsibility to abide by all necessary government processes and regulations.~~

Research conducted while visiting at McMaster cannot normally then be used towards a subsequent McMaster degree program.

### 2.1.11 Incoming Exchange Students

**Exchange students** are individuals who much like visiting research students, are enrolled in a graduate degree program in another university and are paying fees to that university. The difference between a visiting research student and an exchange student is that the exchange student participates in a formal exchange program between McMaster University and their home institution. A complete list of exchange agreements that McMaster participate in can be found on the Office of International Affairs webpage (<http://global.mcmaster.ca>).

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Students participating in a formal exchange program are not assessed supplementary, or course fees, and are entitled to take a full course load (assuming they are registered for a full course load at their home institution). It is necessary for them to enroll in the UHIP program to ensure adequate health insurance coverage during their stay.

Courses taken on exchange at McMaster cannot normally then be counted towards a subsequent McMaster degree program.

### 2.1.12 English Language Requirements

English is the language of instruction and evaluation at McMaster, except in the M.A. and Ph.D. programs in French. Hence it is essential that all students (except in the French program) be able to communicate effectively in English.

Applicants whose primary language is not English will be required to furnish evidence of their proficiency in the use of the English language. Such applicants are required to supply this evidence as part of their application. At the discretion of the graduate program, applicants may be exempted from this requirement if they have completed a university degree at which English is the language of instruction.

The most common evidence is a score on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Equivalent scores on other recognized tests may also be considered.

Students taking the IELTS are required to achieve a minimum score of 6.5 with a minimum score of 5.5 in each category.

TOEFL minimum requirements per Faculty are listed below, while individual programs may have higher published requirements.

- In most Faculties a minimum of 92 IBT (internet-based test) is required.
- In Business, Ph.D. and MBA programs require a minimum score of 100 with a minimum of 22 in the reading component, 22 in the listening component, 26 in the speaking component and 24 in the writing component on the IBT. The Master of Finance Program Requires a minimum score of 92.
- In Engineering the faculty requires a minimum score of 88 TOEFL (internet-based) or 6.5 IELTS. Please check with the program to see specific requirements, which may be higher.

Students who have completed an Academic ESL program through Canadian academic institutions may petition to have this considered in lieu of TOEFL.

## 2.2 Application for Admission

Enquiries about graduate work should be made directly to the department of interest. Our online application system is located at

<https://gs.mcmaster.ca/future-students/how-to-apply/>

Applicants should refer to the department or program to which they are applying for department specific deadlines.

Applications from outside Canada should be completed at least five months before the desired date of entry in order to allow for any delays and for completing the necessary government processes such as obtaining a Canadian study permit.

[Application Fee](#)

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Applications must be accompanied by the required application fee. This fee is non-refundable and must be paid in Canadian dollars. The fee is assessed for each program requested to review the ~~application.~~[The application.](#) The application is only assessed for the term to which the applicant applied; for additional terms, a new application must be submitted with all documents entered again and the fee paid again for review.

The following items are required before your online application will be considered complete.

- a. One official transcript of academic work completed to date, sent directly from the issuing institution. If the final transcript does not show that a completed degree has been conferred, an official copy of your diploma is also required. [This includes official documentation in the French language.](#) If the transcript is in a language other than English, official translations will be required.
- b. Two confidential letters of recommendation from instructors most familiar with your academic work or appropriate relevant experience. Please note that McMaster University uses the Electronic Referencing System. By entering the email address of your referee through the online application, the system will automatically send an eReference request on your behalf.
- c. see Section 2.1.12 - *English Language Requirements*
- d. Statement of interest in pursuing graduate studies.

Programs may have additional admission requirements including, but not limited to, interviews. Please consult your program for details.

A graduate of a university outside Canada may also be required to submit a description of undergraduate and graduate courses taken in the field of specialization and in similar fields.

## 2.3 Transfer/Advance Credit and Determination of Course Equivalency

### Transfer Credit

Application for transfer credit is normally done through the admissions process or via a Request for In-Program Course Adjustments before taking the course for in course students and in both cases requires ~~an Associate~~[Associate](#) Dean's approval. Credits from other institutions must have been received in the last 5 years with a minimum grade of B-. ~~In general, no credits used towards a previous degree or used as a basis of admission will be approved as credit toward a McMaster graduate degree.~~ Normally, a maximum of 50% of the course degree requirements only will be approved for transfer credit. Approved transfer credit appears as a course with a grade notation of T on the student's transcript. Official transcripts from the original institution are required to update the student's transcript.

Credits from other institutions can be used to substitute a specific McMaster University course requirement; however, the student is normally required to replace the course to meet the overall course requirement of the program. Students wishing to apply for advance credit or course requirement equivalency should normally inquire when they apply or accept an offer of admission. Requests after admission should be submitted to the program office for consideration using a petition for special consideration.

### Advance Credit

Eligible students enrolled in a program with an advanced credit option may request advance credit for up to two courses based on courses taken in their undergraduate degree at McMaster. For full details, please refer to descriptions of the individual programs. Requests for advance credit are ~~done~~[made](#) by petition to the Associate Dean of the Faculty once enrolled in the graduate program.

In some cases, ~~course~~[courses](#) taken for credit as part of a diploma program may be considered for advanced standing credit in subsequent master's programs.

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Courses taken at the 500-level in a student's undergraduate career at McMaster may be considered for advanced credit.

## 2.4 Acceptance

Graduate programs perform the initial assessment of completed applications. Applicants may be accepted conditionally before completing their present degree programs. Conditions must be cleared by the deadline date specified in the offer letter.

Official offer letters are sent only by the School of Graduate ~~Studies, and~~ Studies and are valid only for the program and term stated in the admission letter. Successful applicants are required to respond through the online application system Applicant Portal to the offer of admission prior to the response deadline. Some programs require a deposit fee All incoming international students are required to pay a ~~non-refundable~~ nonrefundable deposit ~~deposit~~. The value of the deposit fee will be deducted from the student's tuition fees. If circumstances develop making it impossible for a student to begin graduate work in the specified term, the department and the ~~School~~ school reserve the right to revoke the offer of admission, and any financial aid offered.

The graduate program and the University reserve the right to revoke an offer of admission if any submitted materials are falsified, if a final transcript does not meet admission requirements or if it contains an annotation about an academic integrity or code of conduct matter.

## 2.5 Enrollment

Normally students are enrolled in a single full-time or part-time program of study. These programs can be offered in standard formats as well as combined, collaborative specialization, joint or dual programs or streams. Please see section 1.1 for more information.

### 2.5.1 Continuity of Registration

All graduate students, in both the regular and part-time programs, are required to enroll and pay supplementary fees annually and tuition fees term by term (within the first month of the term) until they graduate or withdraw. If they fail to do so they do not retain the status of graduate student, will be withdrawn in good standing, and must apply for re-admission if they wish at a later date to continue their studies. If the department approves re-admission, a student may be allowed to begin graduate work in the winter or summer term (January or May), in which case they will first register at the start of that term, but in any following years will enroll in September for all three terms. A department's decision on readmission is not subject to appeal. A student can either be:

- readmitted to defend if all that remains is the thesis defence and student is readmitted for one term only
- if a student needs more than one term to complete - they should be readmitted to program and maintain continuous enrollment until they complete their studies

Progress is expected to be continuous and a student who does not enroll for each term of the academic year will be withdrawn in good standing unless the program has indicated that a one term break in study is permitted. Programs that include a scheduled break; will list it in the program-specific section of the calendar. Only one single term break per academic year is permitted and cannot be in the first or last term of the program. Scheduled breaks may be limited to a specific term in the academic year, or available in any of the three terms with approval of the program. Programs that are cohort based or which follow a specific course order, may not be suited to scheduled breaks. In these cases, students may be required to take a Leave of Absence for up to one year in order to return to the program at the appropriate time.

See also section 3 Regulations for Degree Progression for more information on program progression.

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## 2.5.2 Definition of Full- and Part-time Status

### Full-Time Status

A full-time graduate student must:

- a. have been admitted to a graduate program as a full-time student;
- b. be pursuing their studies as a full-time occupation;
- c. identify themselves as a full-time graduate student;
- d. be designated by the university as a full-time graduate student;
- e. for most programs (and all research-based programs) be geographically available and visit the campus regularly which normally means multiple times per week; written permission from the department/supervisor is required for studies to normally be off campus. Other programs may have different requirements and may be conducted fully on-line. ~~Please~~ Please refer to section 2.5.6 for information on being full-time off campus and 2.5.8 for information on vacations;
- f. be considered to be a full-time graduate student by their supervisor or equivalent (designated by the program office);
- g. understand that students who change status from full to part-time, do not receive any more time to complete their program and will continue to be charged tuition fees at the full-time level;
- h. understand that students who change part to full time will have their term count re-set on a ratio of 2:1.

All active graduate students other than full-time graduate students as defined above are part-time graduate students. See also section 3 Regulations for Degree Progression for more information on program progression.

### Part-Time Status

Part-time studies may or may not be possible in a graduate program; where possible, it will be listed in the program entry in the SGS Calendar. Normally a student's status in the program (full or part-time) is determined at the time of admission.

Students who are registered as part-time are expected to be pursuing their studies on a part-time basis and making commensurate progress.

Transfer from part-time studies to full-time studies requires the approval of the graduate unit and may not be permitted in some programs. This will be described in the individual program section of the Graduate Calendar.

See also Section 3 Regulations for Degree Progression for more information on program progression and Section 4 for financial information.

## 2.5.3 McMaster University's Regulations for Full- and Part-time Status

In accordance with the above provincial regulations, McMaster requires students to register annually, and to confirm their status as a full-time graduate student. Only full-time graduate students are eligible for scholarship support.

Full-time graduate students are expected to pursue their graduate degree on a full-time basis and make satisfactory progress toward timely completion of all program requirements. It is not possible, or desirable, for the university to monitor and enforce the employment activities of its graduate students outside the university. However, it is both possible and desirable for the university to ensure that it does not itself create a structural situation that jeopardizes the ability of the graduate student to make full-time progress towards the completion of graduate program requirements. Accordingly, it is recommended that full-time students who are participating in McMaster-based paid employment

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should work no more than an average of 20 hours a week to a maximum of 1005 hours in the academic year. Full-time graduate students are responsible ~~to-for~~ in ~~en~~ ge that any employment obligations do not interfere with academic progress and should be aware that employment obligations are not an acceptable basis for unsatisfactory progress.

As defined in Section 2.5.2, the University considers full-time students to be those that have their studies as their main activity. All full-time students must be available to conduct research (as appropriate), participate in courses and the other activities required by their program. In some cases, award holders may face employment restrictions, but it is the responsibility of the student to ensure their work arrangements are compliant with the terms of their awards.

Students admitted to a degree program on a part-time basis are responsible for maintaining close contact with faculty members and students in their field of study.

Transfers between full- and part-time status must be approved in the School of Graduate Studies based on a program recommendation

Normally, registration in a graduate program at McMaster and another institution is not allowed. Where there is no overlapping time component between two programs (McMaster and other institution's program), an application for an exception can be made to the Associate Dean responsible for the McMaster program. Note that where the MastersMaster's degree is also the basis of admission to the PhD, the MastersMaster's program must be completed prior to starting the PhD. Please note this regulation doesn't apply to students who are within one term of completing their MastersMaster's and concurrently starting their Ph.D. (where both degrees are at McMaster), as outlined in 2.1, subsection 2c.

## 2.5.4 Employment Regulations

International students must abide by the employment conditions indicated by the Government of Canada on their study permit.

## 2.5.5 Enrolment - International Students on Study Permits

The Government of Canada requires foreign nationals to obtain a study permit for engaging in academic, professional, vocational or other education or training that is more than 6 months in duration in Canada. A valid government-issued permit is required for employment on campus and to graduate from a degree program. A copy of your permit may be required by various offices at McMaster.

For the most up-to-date information about being an international student in Canada, visit the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) website. It is the student's responsibility to abide by all necessary government processes.

For information on status change to permanent resident status during the course of your study, please see section 4.1.14.

## 2.5.6 Full Time Off-Campus

On admission to a full-time program, the assumption is that a student will be full-time on-campus. This is known as being "in residence". If a student wants to spend a period of time away from the university in order to complete their research, they must apply to be full-time off campus and complete the form RMM 801. Requests for FTOC must be for

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the purpose of graduate study and research off-campus. Students who require to be off campus for personal or other reasons must request a leave of absence:

A student who is conducting any part of their thesis work, including research, and writing, without visiting campus regularly (whether- out of the country or while remaining in Canada/Hamilton) must request full-time off campus status.

Full-time students are obliged to be on campus, except for vacation periods or authorized off-campus status, for all three terms of the university year. Vacation entitlement is discussed in Section 2.5.8. If this period of time exceeds two weeks, the approval of the supervisor or in the supervisor's absence a member of the supervisory committee is also required, and should be documented by the supervisor and Department. If this period of time exceeds two weeks, the approval of the supervisor or in the supervisor's absence a member of the supervisory committee is also required. In accordance with government regulations (see Section 2.5.2), students who will be away from campus for more than four weeks require not only permission from the Department but also that of the appropriate Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and must submit a Request to be Full Time Off Campus even if only leaving for a long vacation. Note that this permission is needed for conferences, field work or studies elsewhere in the world, in order to allow the University to comply with the regulation requiring that a written explanation for such absences be lodged in the Graduate School office. Students may arrange, through the Department and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, to be "full-time off-campus" for periods of up to a year. Students will also be required to complete the Risk Management Manual (RMM) 801 forms and gain approval through EOHSS. In cases of unauthorized absenceabsenceabsence absence, the student will be deemed to have withdrawn voluntarily from graduate study and will have to petition for readmission and pay the readmission fee. No guarantee of readmission or of renewal of financial arrangements is made and a decision on readmission is not subject to appeal. An exception to this policy would be programs described in the calendar as delivering their curriculum either partially or fully in online formats. Please refer to details in individual program descriptions.

## 2.5.7 Leaves of Absence

Graduate students are required to be continuously registered to support the timely completion of their degree. Students may apply for a Leave of Absence in one of four categories (see below for the specifics for each type of leave):

1. Medical or disability leave;
2. Parenting leave;
3. Compassionate or personal leave; or,
4. No course available leave

### General Notes for Leaves of Absence

Leaves of Absence ("LOA") are normally granted on a term-by-term basis. Whenever possible the LOA should start and end at the beginning of a term (i.e., January 1, May 1, or September 1). During an LOA the student will not receive supervision or be entitled to use the University's academic facilities for the purposes of academic progression. No tuition will be charged, nor will the student be eligible for any scholarship support. Please note students on an LOA have to pay applicable supplemental fees and will be able to use the services associated with those fees (please direct questions to Student Accounts). The length of time for completing the degree, and for scholarship support eligibility (see qualifier below), will be extended by the duration of the LOA on the resumption of studies.

It is understood that when a student takes a LOA, the duration of the leave will not be counted as time towards the time limits in which the student is required to complete or make progress in his or her graduate studies program. On occasion a student may take a leave of absence starting mid-term. This may have impacts on tuition, pay and term count, students should contact their program office or the School of Graduate Studies for more information. It is the student's responsibility to check with the financial aid office to confirm any impact on OSAP.

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Students should be aware that in the event of an LOA, continuation of the same research project and/or supervisor cannot be guaranteed. In order that the student's supervisor and/or program can make suitable arrangements to cover ongoing responsibilities during the student's LOA, students are expected to provide as much notice as possible of the intention to take a LOA.

Note: Students who hold fellowships, scholarships or grants from NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR, or OGS should be aware that these agencies or any other external funding source may have policies governing the interruption and continuation of awards that may differ from the University's policy on LOA. Students holding such awards and who intend to keep them are responsible for ensuring that any LOA taken does not conflict with the granting agency's regulations. The appropriate agency should be contacted for details.

Students returning earlier than planned from an LOA must provide written notice to the School of Graduate Studies a minimum of four weeks in advance of the new return date.

LOA affecting Teaching Assistantship duties are covered by the Collective Agreement with Local 3906 (Unit 1) of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. Please refer to the collective agreement for additional information: <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/resources/collective-agreements-contracts/>

Alternatively, the student may request to withdraw (Change of Status Form). Should the student opt to withdraw, they may be eligible for reinstatement at the University's discretion upon reapplication.

Please note in all cases leaves of absence have the potential to impact term counts. Students on a leave will have their term counts adjusted - if they are off more than 50 percent of the term, the term is counted toward the overall term count. Term length is defined in the sessional dates

For international students with study permits, an authorized leave longer than 150 days may impact their ability to fulfil the conditions of their study permit. For more information about conditions for study permit holder in Canada and the possible consequences of not meeting these conditions, visit the Government of Canada's website.

#### 1. Medical or disability leave:

A medical or disability LOA is permitted for reasons of illness or disability, provided that the request is supported by adequate medical documentation. Students are limited to a cumulative total of 12 months of leave. Students who require consideration for a LOA, including for instances where their leave might exceed a total of 12 months due to a disability, are encouraged to visit the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) for an academic accommodation process.

Students wishing to return from a medical LOA must provide a medical note indicating they are fit to continue with their studies.

#### 2. Parenting leave:

A parenting LOA is intended to assist parents in successfully combining their graduate studies and family responsibilities with minimum financial and/or academic impact. The University will provide the following arrangement for parents requiring parenting leave from their studies at the time of pregnancy, birth or adoption and/or to provide care during the child's first year.

According to the Employment Standards Act 2000 - May 7, 2018 version Part XIV, a "parent" includes: "a person with whom a child is placed for adoption and a person who is in a relationship of some permanence with a parent of a child and who intends to treat the child as his or her own".

While students are not covered by the Employment Standards Act, McMaster grants students a Parenting Leave for a maximum of four consecutive terms. A student electing not to take the maximum amount of time available for Parenting Leave will not have the option of taking any unused portion at a later date. Students returning from a leave

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should consult with their programs and should note that course availability may be affected by the timing of their return.

Eligible students can also apply for a Parenting Grant. More information on this is available on the School of Graduate Studies Website at the following link: <https://gs.mcmaster.ca/awards-funding/parenting-grant>.

A parenting LOA or a portion thereof may be taken concurrently with a Pregnancy and/or Parental Leave from employment, in accordance with the Employment Standards Act, 2000, should the student also be an employee of the University.

### 3. Compassionate or personal leave:

Students who have successfully completed at least one full year in a graduate program may apply for an LOA once for up to one year for personal circumstances, or work experience provided that the student's supervisor and the department support the request.

An LOA will not be granted to pursue another program of study.

Under certain circumstances the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies may allow for a special leave of absence. In this case, application should be made directly to the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies.

### 4. No course available leave:

This leave is available only for graduate programs that have indicated on their website that the 'no course available leave' is an option. This leave is available to students who have yet to complete course work and no suitable course is offered in a given term; the student may petition for a 'no course available leave' for that term. This leave is not available if the student is registered in a program that requires a thesis/dissertation or a major research paper.

## 2.5.8 Vacations

Full-time graduate students are expected to be on campus for all three terms of the university year, as specified in Section 1.3. In addition to statutory holidays (see Sessional Dates) and the closure of the University normally late December until early January, normal vacation entitlement for a graduate student is two weeks of vacation during the year, to be scheduled by mutual agreement with the research supervisor or in the case of a course-based program by mutual agreement with your graduate chair or equivalent. If this period of time exceeds two weeks, the approval of the supervisor or in the supervisor's absence a member of the supervisory committee is also required, and should be documented by the supervisor and Department. An exception to this allotment requires approval from the supervisor or in the supervisor's absence a member of the supervisory committee. It is understood that any risks with travel taken during vacation time are the student's responsibility to ~~assess and~~ assess and consider potential impacts to their degree progression.

Students who are also employees of the University must seek vacation approval from their employment supervisor and are entitled to vacation time pursuant to the terms of their employment contract.

A period of absence longer than 4 weeks that is not Full Time Off Campus requires the student to withdraw in good standing or go on a leave of absence.

## 2.5.9 Petitions for Special Consideration

~~The University wishes to assist students with legitimate difficulties. It also has the responsibility to ensure that degree, program and course requirements are met in a manner that is equitable to all students. Please note that academic accommodation requests related to a disability are processed under the Academic Accommodation of Students with~~

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~~Disabilities policy. This includes accommodation requests for Permanent Disability, Temporary Disability, and Retroactive Accommodation.~~

~~In those instances where a student acknowledges that the rules and regulations of the University have been applied fairly, but is requesting that an exception be made because of special circumstances (compelling medical, personal, or family reasons) the student may submit, in a prompt and timely manner, a Petition for Special Consideration. The appropriate form is available on the School of Graduate Studies website. The student's supervisor and Associate Chair are normally required to provide their independent assessments of the student's statement in the petition. Supporting documentation will be required but will not ensure approval of the petition. The authority to grant petitions lies with the School of Graduate Studies and is discretionary. It is imperative that students make every effort to meet the originally scheduled course requirements and it is a student's responsibility to write examinations as scheduled.~~

~~In accordance with the Student Appeal Procedures, decisions made on Petitions for Special Consideration cannot be appealed to the Senate Board for Student appeals. Where any student feels there may have been discrimination on grounds in a protected social area as outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, they may contact the Equity and Inclusion Office to discuss initiating a complaint. In Health Sciences, Graduate Students should also consult the Advisor on Professionalism in Clinically-Based Education.~~

~~For more information on Appeals please refer to section 5.4~~

## 2.6 Academic Progression and Graduate Curriculum

This section pertains to course and milestone requirements for both Master's and Doctoral studies.

### 2.6.1 Definitions of 'Academic Standing'

#### Good Standing

To be considered to be in good academic standing a student must do the following as outlined in Section 1.3:

- enroll annually (excluding leaves of absence) until graduation, withdraw, or be withdrawn in good standing due to time limit;
- pay fees as required;
- comply with the regulations of the School of Graduate Studies as set out in this calendar and;
- make satisfactory progress toward the completion of the degree as outlined in section 3 Regulation for Degree Progression.

Failure to maintain ~~the~~ good academic standing may impact the students' ability to receive scholarship funding and/or continue in the program. Students may be required to withdraw or may be prevented from registering for the subsequent academic year if they do not comply with the regulations outlined in this calendar, including failure to maintain satisfactory academic progress.

#### Under Review

A student with this standing has failed to progress as expected, this may include but is not limited to a failure in a course or a marginal or unsatisfactory on a supervisory committee report.

#### Suspension

This status notes that a student has been suspended from study. The suspension may be related to a code of conduct violation or academic integrity issue.

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### Withdrawn in Good Standing

This standing indicates that a student has opted to withdraw from program and may return if approved for readmission.

This standing may also be used in the case of a student who has been withdrawn due to time limit. In those cases in which a student does not manage to complete the degree before the end of the time limit in 3.3.2, the University has no further obligation to provide supervision. Upon consultation with the department and on its recommendation, the student will be shown as having been "withdrawn in good standing due to time limit".

### Required to Withdraw

This standing indicates a student who was required to withdraw based on lack of expected progression and students with this standing are not normally permitted to return to studies.

### Approved to Graduate

This standing is used when a student has completed all of their degree requirements and is awaiting degree conferral.

## 2.6.2 Milestones

Milestones are non-course requirements that are part of the curriculum and required in addition to course work (e.g. seminars, workshops and comprehensive examinations etc.) Milestones are considered formal components of a student's academic progress and if not successfully completed will normally prevent a student from graduating.

There are two types of Milestones: graded and non-graded. Both types of milestones may be viewed on student progression reporting ~~tools~~tools, but normally only graded milestones will appear on the student's transcript (once graded or otherwise completed).

Graded milestones may be reported as Pass/Fail, letter grades or in the case of supervisory committee reports using a five-level descriptive scale. If the student receives a failing grade (which includes Unsatisfactory or Marginal for supervisory committee reports) in a milestone they may be required to withdraw, particularly for comprehensive examinations. Normally, students receiving two or more failures in any combination of milestones and courses must withdraw from their degree program.

Please refer to individual program descriptions for further details of non-coursework requirements.

## 2.6.3 Course Levels and Unit Values

A McMaster course is a body of work which is graded using the graduate student grading scale and consists of attending lectures, seminars or other organized activities (e.g. online discussions, experiential learning, etc.). Normally the beginning and end dates for courses should coincide with the beginning and end dates of University sessions.

Generally, graduate courses are numbered either at the 700- or 600-level and have a unit value, with the standard examples being 1.5 units (normally 12 to 19 hours of organized activity) for a course usually lasting for half a term, 3 units for a course usually lasting one term (normally 24 to 39 hours of organized activity), 6 units for a course usually lasting two terms (normally 48 to 78 hours of organized activity). Courses with zero-unit value are usually either core program requirements or meant for complementary learning activities. Courses are restricted in enrolment to graduate students, with the exception of undergraduate students enrolled in 500-level courses equivalent to graduate courses and those students registered for approved, accelerated ~~Masters~~Master's programs and with written permission of their department (or program) chair, director, or designate.

Graduate students may only enroll in undergraduate courses with the approval of their supervisor or graduate program and the host undergraduate department. Students are responsible for meeting the deadlines and requirements of the

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undergraduate course as presented in class and in the undergraduate calendar. Graduate students will be graded under the graduate grading scale. Students electing or required to take undergraduate courses may only register for a maximum of 12 units of such work throughout their graduate career. Regardless of whether the student achieves a pass or fail in the course the overall maximum unit count allowed throughout their graduate career remains 12 units. Students must provide their written approvals by email to sgsrec@mcmaster.ca so that enrolment can be added for them.

## 2.6.4 Course Requirement and Designations

Graduate students are normally required to complete their course degree requirements by taking courses from within their program. As a minimum, at least 50% of units taken for fulfillment of degree requirements must be listed or cross-listed in the calendar under the degree program. Those courses taken outside of the program and not listed as part of the degree requirements, require the permission of the Associate Dean of the faculty or their delegate to be counted towards the degree. No program may allow more than one-third of their course requirements to be filled at the 600 level.

Each program offers only a selection of its courses listed in the calendar in any given year. Students must select their courses for a term prior to the 'add course' sessional date and only after consulting with a program advisor or supervisor. The default for course enrolment is to assign the course towards the primary academic program of a student and as a Master's or Doctoral required course (described below). ~~This process does not determine whether the course will exceed the requirements outlined in the curriculum, and normally cannot be changed once a final grade is reported. Where a student wishes to designate a particular course towards a program other than their primary academic program (ex- Diploma Course or Certificate Course) or designate a particular course as an Extra Course, a special request is required during the normal add period outlined in the sessional dates. The Request for In-Program Course Adjustment form is available on the School of Graduate Studies website.~~

Courses are designated as being in one of the five categories:

**Master's** (Count towards the primary academic program requirements of a Master's degree)

This category identifies the courses that are to count towards the Master's degree requirements (including any additional graduate requirements or undergraduate courses specified by the supervisory committee or Department Chair).

**Doctoral** (Count towards the primary academic program requirements of a Doctoral degree)

This category identifies the courses that are to count towards the Doctoral degree requirements (including any additional graduate requirements or undergraduate courses specified by the supervisory committee or Department Chair).

**Extra Courses** (Extra Course)

This category identifies courses that do not count towards degree requirements. Students may request to extra take courses in addition to the requirements outlined for the program. The student ~~has~~ will need received the approval of ~~from~~ their supervisor or program advisor, and to designate the course as extra, by submitting a course designation request ~~during the normal add period of course enrollment in a particular term.~~ These additional courses must be relevant to the student's program. ~~Students may petition to change the designation of an Extra Course to a Master's or Doctoral course prior to the deadline to drop a course provided that this change is supported by the supervisor and program. Attempts to change the designation after the drop date will not be approved. For this category only, if a failing grade is received then the courses (and grade) will not appear on the student's transcript unless because of academic dishonesty.~~

Courses that are required by the supervisory committee or the Department Chair as additional requirements in excess of the stated minimum for the program ~~must be designated as Master's or Doctoral~~ are not considered to be extra.

**Diploma Course**

This category identifies courses that are to count towards the requirements for a diploma.

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### Certificate Course

This category identifies courses that the student is taking as individual courses not counting towards the requirements for a diploma. EDUCATN subject area courses are not normally counted toward degree requirements unless listed as an available elective in the program requirements.

### Program Completion

When a student has completed all of the program requirements (including the thesis defence) they are not normally permitted to enroll in additional courses or activities.

## 2.6.5 Courses Taken at Another Institution

It is possible for a graduate student registered at McMaster University to take a graduate course at another university for credit towards a McMaster degree. In all cases, the student must make a request of the Associate Dean prior to enrolling in the course to determine if it is possible to use the course towards their degree requirements. For courses at another Ontario University, a student must complete the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student (OVGS) form (see Section 5.10). For courses not covered by the OVGS agreement, a student must submit a Request for In-Program Course Adjustments form and provide documentation on the course (eg. course syllabus), an official transcript as well as confirmation by the department that the course is suitable for degree requirements. If the course is passed per the grading scheme of McMaster University (B- or higher) then a grade of "T" will show on the student's transcript. Students may not count a course taken at another institution while on a leave of absence or work term placement (co-op) or otherwise not have paid tuition at McMaster during the period that the course was scheduled and/or taken. At McMaster, there is a two-course maximum over the duration of the student's program

### 2.6.6. Audited Courses

Graduate Students may request to audit Graduate courses only; undergraduate courses may not be audited. Visiting students, exchange students, and post degree students may not audit a course. Audited courses have no academic credit and an audited course may not be retaken for credit. This requires a completed form, signed by the instructor and student's supervisor. Upon completion of the course, and subject to confirmation from the instructor that their expectations regarding the student's participation were met (i.e. that the student attended at least 80% of the class), a grade of "AUD" will be recorded on the transcript. No other grade will be assigned. Students in a course-charged program will be charged a fee to audit a course that is equivalent to the course charge of their program.

## 2.6.7 Required Supplementary Courses for All Graduate Students

All graduate students, including part-time students, exchange students and visiting students must complete and pass the course SGS 101 Academic Research Integrity and Ethics and SGS 201 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) ~~within~~ within the first month of their first term after their admission to graduate studies at McMaster. All students are required to take and pass SGS 101 and SGS 201 in order to graduate. Students may not graduate or register in subsequent academic years without having successfully completed this course.

### 2.6.8 Placeholder Courses

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To complete registration at least one course needs to be added for each term. If the student is not taking an academic course in a term, there are two different placeholder courses.

- SGS 700 - for students who are in programs that are costed on a per term basis
- SGS 711 - for students who are in programs that are costed on a per course basis

If a student does not add a course in each term the student will not have completed their enrollment. This will have impacts on all aspects of student life including scholarships, fee assessment and ordering transcripts. [Students transcripts. Students who enroll in the incorrect placeholder may be charged any fees owed as appropriate.](#)

If a student adds a placeholder course and subsequently adds an academic course the placeholder should be dropped. The placeholder will not be dropped if the only courses remaining include:

- SGS 101, and/or
- SGS 201, and/or
- Courses in the Education series - such as EDUCTN 750

For Visiting students there are two placeholder options: SGS 302 for Visiting Student/Research or SGS 303 Visiting Student/Course. In cases where the student will only be conducting research, they must enroll in 302. In cases where the student will be conducting research and taking a course, enrollment is SGS 303 is required, students on an exchange who are not enrolled in any academic courses will need to enroll in SGS 702.

## 2.6.9 Course Grading and Weighted Average Calculation

Instructors have the discretion of marking individual components of a course with either a letter or numerical grading scheme but final course grades taken at McMaster can only be reported as either Pass/Fail or letter grades. When numerical grading is used in a course, the final course average with decimal place of 0.5 or greater should be rounded up before conversion to a letter grade. The minimum passing grade for a graduate student in any course taken is a B-, including undergraduate courses or courses taken off campus.

Table (a): Graduate Student Grading Scale (except for MBA and Master of Finance):

Grade	Points	Equivalent Percentages	Pass/Fail
A+	12	90-100	P+
A	11	85-89	P
A-	10	80-84	
B+	9	77-79	
B	8	73-76	
B-	7	70-72	
F	0	69 and under	F

Note: Grades in graduate courses are reported as letter grades. Averaging of letter grades must be done using the McMaster 12-point scale.

MBA and Master of Finance Grading Scale:

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Grade	Points	Equivalent Percentages	Pass/Fail
A+	12	90-100	P+
A	11	85-89	P
A-	10	80-84	
B+	9	75-79	
B	8	70-74	
B-	7	60-69	
F	0	59 and under	F

Example of Weighted Average Calculation, using the grade points and units for courses completed:

Course Grade	Grade Points		Course Units		
A-	10	x	6	=	60
B	8	x	6	=	48
B+	9	x	3	=	27
F	0	x	3	=	0
		Total	18		135
To calculate Average: $135 \div 18$					
=7.5					

Note: Students are graded according to the type of course they are taking, for example non-MBA students who enlist in MBA courses are graded based on the MBA grading scale.

McMaster University's Policy on Graduate Course Management is available at:

<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

## 2.6.10 Incomplete Grades

For scheduled courses where the end date is known and aligns to sessional dates, a grade must be supplied by the end of the course. Under exceptional circumstances a course instructor may approve an extension for the student for the completion of work in a course but must assign an Incomplete grade (INC) at the end of the course. Normally this extension is in the range of a few weeks. A student who receives an incomplete grade must complete the work as soon as possible, and in any case early enough to allow the instructor to report the grade by the sessional deadline noted as 'Final Date to Submit Results of Incomplete Grades'. If the INC grade is not cleared by the deadline, normally an F

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grade will be entered. Milestones are not generally scheduled according to sessional dates and therefore, there is no allowance for an INC grade for such learning activities.

## 2.6.11 Failing a Course or Milestone

Failure in either a course or a milestone is reviewed by the appropriate Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study or the Associate Dean Graduate Studies in the Faculty. The Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study or the Associate Dean Graduate Studies requests a departmental recommendation on whether the student should be withdrawn or allowed to continue. The department's recommendation will include reasons for the recommendation, regarding the student, and this recommendation is given considerable weight. ~~In the absence of a departmental recommendation to allow the student to continue,~~ The Senior Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary will accept the recommendation upon reviewing the submission to ensure compliance with policy and make the determination to as to whether the student is required to withdraw or not. Any appeal will be reviewed by either. The Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies as it's designate. ~~will consider the recommendation and decide if the student will be required to withdraw or not.~~ Those allowed to remain in the program must either repeat or replace the failed course or milestone, per the decision of the Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study. A failing grade in a Certificate, Diploma, Master's or Doctoral course remains on the transcript. Students who fail a second course or milestone will not normally be allowed to continue in the program.

## 2.6.12 Repeated Courses

Graduate students may not repeat courses for credit. The only cases when a repeated course will show on the student's transcript is when remediating a failing grade (see 'Failing a Course or Milestone') or taking reading/special topics courses. Reading or special topics courses generally have a generic name in the program's calendar, but students may only have a repeated course show on their transcript if each time the topic was distinctly different from others previously taken.

## 2.6.13 Withdrawal

A student may withdraw voluntarily from their program at any point and be considered to be in good standing. There are exceptions where a student is being investigated for a breach of university policy and may not be allowed to withdraw until concluded, such as an investigation of academic dishonesty. The withdrawal will be recorded on the student academic record and reflected on the transcript. Re-admission for a student who has withdrawn in good standing will be made in competition with all other applicants.

Students withdrawn involuntarily will normally not be permitted to seek re-admission to the same program at any future time.

## 2.6.14 Outgoing Exchange Students

Students on exchange programs may take graduate courses that with approved transfer credit may count towards completion of course curriculum. Any credit for these courses will depend on the student achieving a passing grade based on the Graduate Grading Scale outlined in Section 2.6.9. Students are required to maintain enrolment at McMaster by registering for SGS 702.

## 2.6.15 Transferring Programs

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A student is accepted into a program through the admission process. With the exception of students transferring from Master's to PhD as outlined in 2.1.3 and 2.1.4 , students do not normally change programs. This transfer from Master to Ph.D. happens within the program the student was originally accepted to. If a student wishes to transfer into a program from a different department or faculty, they must follow the corresponding admissions process for the new program and withdraw from their original program.

## Regulations for Degree Progression

### 3.1 General Regulations on Supervision

It is the responsibility of the department/program to ensure that every graduate student has been assigned, at all times, a supervisor or a faculty advisor or a properly constituted supervisory committee, as appropriate. The supervisor must be declared within the first 5 months of registration into the program and for Ph.D. candidates, the supervisory committee must be declared within the first 12 months of starting the study. Master's candidate may or may not have a supervisory committee formed depending on the program.

The supervisory committee will consist of at least three members. Two, including the supervisor, must be from within the department/program. A third member, whose scholarly interests include the area of the student's main interest, may be from outside the department/program. One member may be appointed from outside the University with the permission of the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies. For more information please consult the policy mentioned below on Supervision of Graduate Work. A supervisor is an instructor, advisor, mentor, or advisor whereby the individual has primary oversight of studies, including responsibility for all formal duties of supervision as described in the Graduate Calendar and which may include financial support. In some cases, a co-supervisor may be declared, and this position is an instructor, advisor, mentor, or advisor who collaborates and supports the supervisor in their duties, including guidance associated with research or thesis work, ongoing consultation with the student, support in generating comments on research outputs/theses. Co-supervision may occur in cases where additional expertise is necessary.

The department/program should ensure that the members of a supervisory committee are sufficiently competent and experienced to serve at the required level. In identifying a supervisory committee, the department/program should consider the following, among other things: the balance of the committee by rank and experience; publications and other demonstrations of competence in scholarship or research on the part of the supervisor. Supervisory committees for Ph.D. candidates shall be reviewed annually by the department/program. Supervisory committee members must continue their participation on the student's committee, even while on sabbatical, unless otherwise replaced by the Department Chair or delegate.

From time to time it may be appropriate for non-McMaster faculty, e.g., industry experts to be considered for roles on the supervisory committee. In cases such as this, approval is required by the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies or delegate. Please refer to the policy at the following link.

<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/SPS-A11-Supervision-of-Graduate-Work.pdf>

In FHS, committees may also include an Associate Member who would have a formal advisory role on the committee. Please click here for more details.

For other Faculties, in ~~exceptional~~exceptional cases, a committee may also include an Associate Member who would have a formal advisory role on the committee. In all such cases, approval must be sought from the Vice-Provost and Dean, Graduate Studies or their delegate.

While the supervisor and student have a mutual obligation to meet on a regular basis, the department/program shall ensure there is a formal regular meeting of each Ph.D. supervisory committee at least once within the reporting year

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(December 1-November 30), and possibly more often, to discuss the student's progress. Each Ph.D. supervisory committee must report at least annually on the student's progress and the department/program chair must forward such reports to the School of Graduate Studies for completion of the milestone. The report formally documents the supervisory committee's assessment of the progress of the student's program.

#### Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting Timing

Ph.D. Students Transferring or Entering effective January 1st	Meeting no later than November 30 <sup>th</sup> of the same calendar year
Ph.D. Students Transferring or Entering effective May 1st	Meeting no later than November 30 <sup>th</sup> of the same calendar year
Ph.D. Students Entering September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Meeting no later than November 30 <sup>th</sup> of the next calendar year

The frequency of meetings is left to the discretion of the supervisory committee based on the progress of the student and provided that a minimum of one meeting occurs per year. A shorter duration between meetings is normal for students who are having difficulty in their academic progression and each meeting should involve an assessment of progress. Occasionally, an additional meeting that is not assessed may be requested by the supervisory committee, student, department, or Associate Dean when there is a major gap in supervision, for example upon returning from a leave of absence or if there is a change in supervisor. If a PhD student is returning from a Leave of Absence, it is suggested that the Supervisory Committee meet with the student upon their return and use the Non-Graded PhD Supervisory Committee form available on the SGS website as a tool to set goals for the coming term. A graded PhD Supervisory Committee meeting is required no later than 6 months upon their return to ensure that these goals are met or nearly completed.

The department/program should prepare a set of guidelines for supervisors and students. The guidelines should deal with the selection and functioning of supervisory committees and should cover the joint responsibilities of faculty members and graduate students. The guidelines may be attached to or incorporated in department/program handbooks which give regulations supplementary to those in the Calendar. Items relevant to graduate supervision should be approved by the appropriate Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study or [Graduate Associate Dean of the Faculty](#). A copy of the guidelines shall be given to each faculty member and each graduate student.

It is possible to change supervisors or the membership of a supervisory committee, although this is not the norm. If the direction of the research changes, membership can be changed by mutual consent of the parties involved. Supervisors and/or supervisory committee members may not resign without the department's/program's approval. A change in supervisor is at the discretion of the department/program, not the student or supervisor but if approved then the responsibility lies with the student to find the replacement, at which point a new thesis project commences. The duration of searching for a new supervisor is program specific but should not exceed more than one term in order to minimize the impact on degree progression. In such cases, any previous or on-going research involving shared intellectual property with the prior supervisor will not normally be included in the thesis due to McMaster's Joint Intellectual Property policy.

If a student feels that they are receiving unsatisfactory supervision, they should consult the Department/Program Chair or Graduate Advisor. If this avenue is not sufficient, the student is encouraged to speak with the appropriate Associate Dean of Graduate Studies about the problem. A student without supervision may be withdrawn due to the requirement of supervision to complete the degree.

Graduate students and supervisors are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the McMaster University Graduate Work Supervision Guidelines for Faculty and Students, which follow below and to list of policies, policies on accommodations available on the School of Graduate Studies website at <https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/resources>.

## 3.2 Theses

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This section pertains to the electronic thesis requirement for both research Master's and Doctoral studies. The oral examination is not described in this section and can be found in the corresponding sections for the specific degree, Master's (Section 3.3.3) and Doctoral (Section 3.4.4). Electronic theses (e-theses) are text-based PDF files and may contain non-text elements such as embedded videos and sounds. Normally, a printed paper version is no longer acceptable for degree completion.

No research for use towards the degree requirements of a Master's or Doctorate at McMaster may be treated as a secret or classified document indefinitely, but may be permitted to be embargoed for up to one year normally while the student seeks publication by a publisher or to patent their work. All e-theses will be available to readers through MacSphere.

### 3.2.1 Preparing a Thesis

A candidate must present a thesis which embodies the results of original research and mature scholarship. In some disciplines, the appropriate form of thesis is a book-length dissertation with chapters. In some disciplines, a "sandwich thesis" composed of journal length articles connected by general introductory and concluding chapters will be appropriate. In the case of sandwich theses involving papers with multiple authors, the student must make substantial and significant contributions to the composition of text in each paper, and to be judged to have an intellectual leadership role with respect to the overall body of work.

As a general rule, doctoral students are urged to limit their theses to three hundred (300) pages of text (Master's thesis to less than 200 pages). Doctoral students and their supervisors should keep in mind that theses of extraordinary length are to be discouraged. In cases where students and their supervisors believe that responsible scholarly treatment of the thesis topic requires substantially greater length than that specified above, a written approval from the appropriate Associate Dean of Graduate Studies must be obtained before the external examiner is contacted. Guidance documents on preparing acceptable theses are found on the School of Graduate Studies' website. McMaster University accepts both standard theses and 'sandwich' theses as formats for the dissertation.

Individual Departments or graduate programs may issue special instructions concerning the expected forms of graphs, tables, maps, diagrams, and sound and video files which may be included within the e-thesis. Hypertext links should be discouraged due to the limited duration that they remain active. Accepted forms of bibliographical reference in the particular discipline and other matters of format should be discussed with the thesis supervisor.

All copyrighted materials added into the thesis (text, figures, images, tables, etc.) exceeding 'fair dealing' requires written permission from the owner prior to thesis submission. This includes any publications by the student who has transferred ownership rights to a publisher. Students should consult with campus resources for assistance. See Section 5.4 for regulations regarding ownership.

### 3.2.2. Response Time for Theses Review

Supervisory committees should respond to the draft of a Ph.D. thesis within 2 months. Providing comments on individual chapters will take proportionately less time. Very long theses or chapters may take more time. There are busy periods within the academic year when the time taken to provide comments might be a bit longer than this norm. However, in no case should the response time exceed 3 months. Note that because timelines may vary from supervisor to supervisor, students and supervisors should discuss the expectation for a response time.

For Master's theses the corresponding times are 1 month and 2 months. Master's students are entitled to defend within 2 months of providing the final draft of the thesis to the department/program.

All theses must be checked in accordance with the Research Plagiarism Checking Policy. This is expected to occur prior to coordination of the defence.

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### 3.2.3 Submitting a Thesis for Defence

A completed draft of a thesis approved by the student's supervisor and/or supervisory committee for the defence may not be altered until after the defence; see Section 3.3.3 and Section 3.4.4 for acceptable time limits on review and editing by supervisors.

In those instances where an examiner requests a printed copy of the thesis, it is the student's responsibility to produce a print version well before the oral examination.

### 3.2.4 Revision of a Thesis after Defence

It is generally common that a thesis will require some minor modification as a result of examiners' comments at the defence. A student has four weeks after their defence date to complete these revisions and seek the approval of their supervisor and/or supervisory committee prior to submitting the final version to MacSphere. Fees may be levied past this period, but the student may still submit the document at any time afterwards.

### 3.2.5 Submitting a Final and Approved Thesis

All candidates for Master's or Doctoral degrees who have successfully completed their oral examinations and who have made all required revisions to the satisfaction of their supervisor must upload an electronic version of their final e-thesis to MacSphere. The e-thesis must be presented in a format acceptable to the School of Graduate Studies.

Please note that changes to an e-thesis will not be accepted after it has been uploaded to MacSphere and that the document uploaded should be the version approved by the supervisory committee after the defence. Theses may be embargoed normally for up to one year from the date of submission to MacSphere, if requested by the student and supervisor. This restriction on publication is meant to give the research team time to publish or secure the intellectual property related to their work.

Tuition fees continue to be assessed until all degree requirements are met, including the successful submission of the final approved thesis to MacSphere. If a student uploads their final thesis mid-term or -month, their tuition will be assessed to the end of that month and any future enrolment will be removed during the clear to graduate process (e.g., student uploads in February, they will be refunded for March and April). Note that there is no grace period at the end of December or April for final thesis submission and completion of degree requirements.

## 3.3 Regulations for Master's Degrees

Three types of Master's programs are available, although not all departments offer each type. The first is the thesis program, consisting of both course work and a research thesis. The second type entails a major research paper or project rather than a thesis, as well as course work. Finally, some programs offer a course work-only curriculum. The choice of curriculum for ~~Masters~~Master's students can either be determined at the time of application or after the student is admitted, please consult the departmental listings to see which options are available in a specific discipline.

If a department offers more than one of these types, the ability for a student to switch between them is not automatic, but is sometimes permitted. Approval of the supervisor and department chair (or graduate chair/advisor) is required. In many departments, there will be consequences for the level of financial support to the student. As well, there are likely to be consequences for the expected time to completion. Both financial support and expected time to completion should be clarified prior to approval of the change. If such a change is approved, notification should be sent to the School of Graduate Studies by the department or program, along with any change to the payroll authorization. Graduate Studies approval is not required.

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Master's programs are designed for those students who can devote their full time to graduate studies. (See Section 2.5.2 for the definitions of a full-time student.) Some departments also offer part-time programs. Consult the departmental listing in this Calendar for part-time program availability.

### 3.3.1 Program Requirements

A Master's program involving a thesis will normally be somewhat more specialized and will involve fewer courses than is the case in a Master's program without a thesis. A course-based Master's program is constructed by departments to contain a sufficient number of courses to make possible a diversified experience, for the student.

Each graduate program establishes its own minimum course requirement, subject to the approval of the appropriate Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee, and Graduate Council.

A student's Supervisory Committee, Supervisor, or Departmental Chair may also require those in thesis degree programs to take courses in addition to the minimum prescribed by the program's regulations. These additional courses must be relevant to the student's program. They may be taken in another academic unit/department and may be at either the undergraduate or the graduate level.

Students will be required to meet any additional requirements of the program, including special seminars or colloquia. All departmental assessment rules and practices are subject to consideration by the appropriate Faculty committee on Graduate Curriculum and Policy, and approval by Graduate Council.

Approved assessment procedures must be clearly communicated to graduate students at the earliest opportunity after registration, generally in the program handbook.

### 3.3.2 Program Progression

The amount of work in a regular (full-time) Master's program for a student with good preparation varies across the campus, but generally, programs involving a thesis are designed to take longer than those without a thesis. Programs with a thesis typically take sixteen to twenty-four months. Non-thesis programs are generally shorter in duration.

For students in a regular program, the permissible time for completion of a Master's degree program is limited to three years from their initial registration in the program. For those students admitted to a part-time Master's program, and who complete all degree requirements while registered part-time, the permissible time is limited to five years from their initial registration. Please note, students who start full-time and move to part-time continue to pay full-time tuition and time to completion does not get extended. Students who start part-time and move to full-time will then pay full-time tuition and the time to completion will be based on full-time status. The terms students spent as a part-time student will be adjusted for purposes of time to completion. For more information please see Section 2.5.3 Definition of Full/Part-Time Status.

Students who run past the allotted time for program completion can be considered either Overtime or Out of Time and the terms counts for each are as follows:

Students are considered Overtime when they reach more than:

- 6 terms for a full-time ~~Masters~~Master's
- 9 terms for a part-time ~~Masters~~Master's

- 12 terms for a full-time Ph.D.
- 18 terms for a part-time Ph.D.

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Students are considered Out of Time when they reach more than:

9 terms for a full-time ~~Masters~~Master's

15 terms for a part-time ~~Masters~~Master's

Term 11 is the final term possible for full-time enrollment in a ~~Masters~~Master's. Normally, after term 11, no additional enrollment is possible.

18 terms for a full-time Ph.D.

24 terms for a part-time Ph.D.

Term 20 is the final term possible for full-time enrollment in a Ph.D. No~~rmally~~ally, after term 20, no additional enrollment is possible.

Each student's progress is reviewed annually by the department and on a more frequent basis by the supervisor. A student whose work is felt to be unsatisfactory (e.g., as determined by unsatisfactory or marginal or supervisory committee reports, failed courses, unsuccessful remediation attempts, failure to successfully complete other mandatory components of their program) may at any time be required to withdraw from the University. In those cases in which a student does not manage to complete the degree before the end of the time limit specified above, the University has no further obligation to provide supervision. Upon consultation with the department and on its recommendation, the student will be shown as having been "withdrawn in good standing due to time limit".

In the case of a student who had withdrawn in good standing, if a completed thesis is submitted, and is acceptable to the department, the student can be readmitted to defend the thesis. However, thesis program students who have been withdrawn in good standing should be aware that they may be required to complete additional course work before being permitted to proceed to a defence of the thesis. In all cases, the department must first declare that the submitted thesis is ready for defense before the student will be readmitted. Students can only be readmitted to defend at the beginning of the academic term. If a student needs more than one term to complete they should be readmitted to the program and pay regular fees until all the program requirements are complete.

At the time of readmission to defend, the student will be required to pay a fee (equivalent to one term's tuition at the current part-time level 5 rate - see Section 4.1) to compensate for the costs of the defence and subsequent processing of the thesis. If a student needs more than one term to complete they should be readmitted to program and pay regular fees until all the program requirements are complete. All requests for readmission should be directed to the program for approval by the supervisor and program lead. Once approval is received, students are directed to pay the readmission fee and the department should submit the request for approval by the Associate Dean. The readmission decision is not subject to appeal.

A student enrolled in a course work or project program may also be readmitted if this is deemed acceptable by the student's department. However, course work and project program students who have been withdrawn in good standing should be aware that they may be required to retake courses in which the content is judged by their department to have changed significantly since first completion and/or may be required to take additional courses that are necessary to fulfill current program requirements.

See Section 2.5.1 for information on continuity of registration.

### 3.3.3 Master's Thesis Defence

A thesis may be submitted at any time but a thesis defence may not be initiated until all other degree requirements are complete. The final date for submitting a thesis to the department for Fall or Spring Convocation is found in the Sessional Dates Section. The thesis will be examined by a committee of not fewer than three members (including the supervisor and an examiner external to the supervisory committee) who will be appointed by the department/program

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chair; the thesis will be defended by the candidate in an oral examination before this committee. An oral defence is a mandatory requirement for degree completion. The Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies may appoint members to these committees. The time of the defence will be set by the department/program chair; normally this will be about two weeks after the completed thesis (as an electronic file; see section 2.8) has been submitted to the department for examination.

Defences can take place either completely remotely, hybrid or fully in-person. Students must discuss these options with their Supervisor prior to scheduling their defence and the two must agree on the format of the defence. In cases where no consensus can be reached between the student and the supervisor, the defence shall occur in person.

After a discussion of the examination, the student will be dismissed for the deliberation period and the Chair will ask for a vote on the success or failure of the defence. If the examiners approve the defence, the Chair will ask the examiners to complete the Examination Report by initialing appropriately. The student will be invited back into the exam for a decision. In the event that revisions are required to the thesis, the Chair of the examination committee is responsible for ensuring that (1) the candidate is advised of the revisions, (2) the candidate receives and understands the 'Final Thesis Submission form' to be used by the Supervisor to confirm that the revisions have been made, and (3) the supervisor is also aware of the form. The Chair will complete and sign the Examination Report and return it to the School of Graduate Studies.

However, if there are two or more negative or abstaining votes, with at least one of these votes being from a member of the supervisory committee, the candidate will be deemed to have failed the defence, and a reconvened oral defence must be held at a later date. The candidate should be told as clearly as possible by the Chair and the examining committee what he/she must do to improve the defence. The reconvened defence is the candidate's final opportunity to complete the degree. Membership on the reconvened examining committee should be the same as that for the original defense, except that one or two substitutions are permitted in order to expedite scheduling of the reconvened defence. If the defense fails a second time, that decision is final, and is not open to appeal.

After a successful defense, the candidate must make the revision suggested by the examining committee to the satisfaction of the Supervisor and the majority of the committee and then submit an electronic copy to the School of Graduate Studies via MacSphere (see Section 3.2.5). Students are normally expected to submit their final thesis within four weeks of a successful defence.

Please note: when a thesis is submitted and published to MacSphere students must be aware that their name will appear as author of the document. In exceptional circumstances a pen name may be used subject to written approval of the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies.

### 3.3.4 Project

In departments where there is the option of submitting a project, the department regulations must be observed. If the project is to be submitted to the University Library, preparation of the associated report shall follow the rules governing theses. Projects can be treated as courses or milestones rather than theses in this Calendar and their associated evaluation component is due by the end of term.

## 3.4 Regulations for the Doctor of Philosophy Degrees

The regular doctoral programs at McMaster have been designed for students who can devote full time to their studies. However, some departments at McMaster University will consider individual applicants to undertake Ph.D. studies on a part-time basis. No Department or Program is obligated to offer part-time Ph.D. work. Consult the department listings for information as to whether a part-time program is available in any particular department, or correspond with the department directly.

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### 3.4.1 Program Requirements

Each graduate program has to establish its own minimum course requirement, subject to the approval of the appropriate Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee, and Graduate Council.

A student's supervisory committee or Departmental Chair may also require a student to take courses in addition to the minimum prescribed by the program's regulations. These additional courses must be relevant to the student's program. They may be taken in another program and may be at either the undergraduate or the graduate level.

Students will be required to meet any additional requirements of the program, including special seminars or colloquia. All departmental assessment rules and practices are subject to consideration by the appropriate Faculty committee on Graduate Curriculum and Policy, and approval by Graduate Council.

Approved assessment procedures must be clearly communicated to graduate students at the earliest opportunity after registration, generally in the program handbook.

### 3.4.2 Program Progression

The minimum time in which to complete a Ph.D. program at McMaster is 9 terms beyond the bachelor's level or 6 terms beyond the master's level. However, the minimum time may be reduced by up to one year for graduate work beyond the Master's level taken in a university or research institution approved by the Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study or Associate Dean.

Completion of the Ph.D. degree is normally limited to 18 terms from initial registration in a regular doctoral program at McMaster. The time for completion of the Ph.D. program for those admitted to a part-time program is normally limited to 24 terms from initial registration at McMaster as a Ph.D. student.

Each student's progress is reviewed annually by the department and on a more frequent basis by the supervisory committee. The committee will assess the student's progress in their program. Students must receive a grade of at least satisfactory. If the committee reports that progress is marginal one or more times the student may be required to withdraw from the University. A student who encounters difficulties arranging a meeting of this committee should consult the chair, director, or graduate coordinator of the graduate unit in advance of the relevant deadline for doing so.

In those cases in which a student does not manage to complete the degree requirements before the end of the time limit specified above, the University has no further obligation to provide supervision. Upon consultation with the department and on its recommendation, the student will be shown as having been "withdrawn in good standing due to time limit".

Please note, students who choose to move from part-time to full-time or from full-time to part-time will be governed by the time to completion and fees associated with the degree to which they were admitted. For more information please see Section 2.5.3 - Definition of Full/Part-Time Status.

If a completed thesis is submitted, and is acceptable to the department, the student can be readmitted in order to defend the thesis. Students who have been withdrawn in good standing should be aware that they may be required to complete additional course work before being permitted to proceed to a defence of the thesis. In all cases, the department must first declare that the submitted thesis is ready for defence before the student will be readmitted. Students can only be readmitted to defend at the beginning of the academic term.

At the time of readmission to defend, the student will be required to pay a fee (equivalent to one term's tuition at the current part-time level 5 rate - see Section 4.1) to compensate for the costs of the defense and subsequent processing of the thesis. If a student needs more than one term to complete they should be readmitted to program and pay regular fees until all the program requirements are complete. All requests for readmission should be directed to the program for approval by the supervisor and program lead. Once approval is received, students are directed to pay the readmission

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fee and the department should submit the request for approval by the Associate Dean. The readmission decision is not subject to appeal.

### 3.4.3 Comprehensive Knowledge

All Ph.D. candidates at McMaster are expected to acquire, during the course of their studies, a comprehensive knowledge of the discipline or sub-discipline to which their field of research belongs. The School of Graduate Studies does not prescribe any particular way to assess this knowledge, whether by a Comprehensive Examination or by some other format. All doctoral programs are expected to assess and provide feedback to the Ph.D. candidates, as early as possible and as frequently as possible, on the breadth or depth of their knowledge, critical thinking and independent research skills. This assessment and feedback will normally begin and be completed between the 12th and 20th month after the student begins doctoral-level work at McMaster University, with an upper limit of 24 months. For a part-time Ph.D. student the upper limit is 36 months. The approach to assessment and its administration are the responsibility of the program in which the student is registered, not of the student's supervisory committee.

A Comprehensive Examination or alternative assessment of comprehensive knowledge must include a provision for second opportunity for assessment should the student fail the first attempt. This second assessment is given in place of any "re-read" of a comprehensive evaluation, which is explicitly excluded from the Student Appeal Procedures. The second opportunity will normally occur between one to six months after the student was notified that they had failed the original assessment. It is preferred that it occur within the first month of a term. A failure at the second assessment will require the student to withdraw from the program. If the student decides not to take up the option of the second attempt then the failure stands.

Departments may hold transfer, qualifying, or entrance exams at the start of a student's doctoral program, but those exams are distinct from the assessment of comprehensive knowledge

### 3.4.4 PhD Thesis Defence

An oral defence conducted by an examining committee is a mandatory requirement for degree completion. Normally the thesis will be distributed to committee members and examiners in an electronic format (see Section 3.2 - Theses). The oral defence will not be arranged until a majority of the supervisory committee has approved the thesis for defence and an agreed date of defense has been received.

Please note that thesis defences may not be initiated until all other degree requirements, including Comprehensive Examinations, have been completed.

Defences can take place either completely remotely, hybrid or fully in-person. Students must discuss these options with their Supervisor prior to scheduling their defence and the two must agree on the format of the defence. In cases where no consensus can be reached between the student and the supervisor, the defence shall occur in person.

#### Selection of the Examining Committee

Normally the examining committee will consist of the following members: the student's supervisor, at least two members of the supervisory committee and an external examiner. ~~The~~ The Examining Committee must not exceed five voting members. If there are more than four members on the student's supervisory committee, the additional members are welcome to attend the defence and ask questions in the time allotted for audience members. Ahead of the oral defence the external examiner will provide a written report to the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies judging whether the written thesis is satisfactory for defence. ~~→~~ An Examining Committee Chair will also be present at the defence but is not considered part of the examining body. An eligible Examining Committee Chair is a tenure ~~track~~ d faculty member (~~tenure-track~~, tenured, or Professor Emeritus) who has supervised a doctoral student to completion, and who has also participated previously in the McMaster Ph.D. defence process. ~~The Chair of the defence is normally~~

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nominated by the supervisor, or determined by the program, -and -cannot be a member of the student's supervisory committee.

Selection of an external examiner is the responsibility of the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies or their delegate. To aid in that selection, the supervisory committee may be required to provide, through the student's supervisor or Chair of the Department (or equivalent), the names and contact information for potential examiner/s. In all cases the nominees must be approved by the Department Chair (or equivalent).

The nominees for external examiner must have no current primary appointments at McMaster University/affiliations or within the past 6 years, and must be at arm's length from all members of the supervisory committee and the student. The definition of 'arm's length' is as follows: The nominees should not have been a research supervisor or student of the supervisor or the student within the last 6 years; should not have collaborated with the supervisor or the student within the past 6 years, or have made plans to collaborate with these individuals in the immediate future. There also should be no other potential conflicts of interest (e.g., personal or financial).

If the external examiner, after agreeing to participate in the defence, can no longer attend the defence, the examining committee will appoint an internal examiner. An internal examiner is McMaster faculty that will read the thesis and attend the defence as an examiner. An internal examiner does not attend the defence as a proxy for the external examiner but as an ancillary examiner.

The external examiner will still provide a report and if their report includes questions for the candidate they will be assigned to someone on the committee to ask by the chair. The chair will normally assign these questions to the primary supervisor or the internal examiner who will ask them in addition to their own questions.

An internal examiner can be from the same department or another department but should have some breadth of knowledge on the topic in order to thoughtfully participate in the defence. The internal examiner must be at arm's length from the candidate and committee. The internal examiner must be selected no later than 48 hours prior to the defence for it to proceed.

#### Scheduling and Conducting the Oral Examination (Oral Defence)

There are blackout periods over the course of an academic year that affect defences coordinated by SGS. Please refer to the SGS sessional dates to prepare your defence appropriately.

Dates scheduled for doctoral defences assume that the external reviewer will conclude that the written thesis is acceptable and ready for oral examination. When the external reviewer concludes otherwise, the defence date may no longer be held on the planned date and the situation reviewed in accordance with the process around a negative external report as outlined below. Any travel and/or employment arrangements made by the candidate based on the original defence date are entirely at their own risk.

The external examiner must provide a report to the School of Graduate Studies with a written assessment of the thesis at least one week before the scheduled defence. The identity of the External Examiner should not be communicated to the student until the External Examiner Report has been received by the School of Graduate Studies to maintain the integrity of the process, and the student may not contact the External Examiner unless granted permission by the School of Graduate Studies. If the report is not received in time, candidates will be given the option to postpone their defence. Whether the assessment is positive or negative, the School of Graduate Studies will send the report of the external examiner to the supervisory committee. The committee must provide a copy of the report to the student. Should the assessment be negative, the appropriate Associate Dean will communicate with the supervisory committee and student to discuss the outcome of the review. This is normally followed by a supervisory committee meeting to discuss the situation and proposed plan going forward if the external examiner indicates that the thesis is not acceptable for defence. The supervisory committee and candidate (in consultation with the Associate Dean) may wish to revise and resubmit the dissertation and proceed to the defence with the participation of the same external examiner. A second possible outcome of the review is that the associate dean will recommend to the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies that the thesis (in its original format or revised) be reviewed by a different external examiner. A candidate may revise and resubmit the thesis only once. In all cases, despite a negative assessment, a candidate has the right to proceed to a defence.

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If the external report has not been received five business days before the defence, the candidate and the committee will be notified that the defence is at risk of being cancelled.

If the external report has not been received two business days before the scheduled examination, SGS will notify the candidate that the defence will be rescheduled.

Subsequent to the receipt of the external examiner's report, an oral defence will be convened by the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies, chaired by themselves or their delegate and conducted by all members of the Examining Committee. Quorum for the examination will be the Chair of the examining committee and the supervisory committee plus one additional examiner. Normally, the presence of the external is mandatory at the defence, either in person or electronically. The oral defence will be open to members of the university community and the public who wish to attend as observers, unless the student requests a closed defence. The Ph.D. defence presents the culmination of a number of years of scholarly work which are publicly funded. It is important, therefore, that in all but exceptional circumstances the student presents the result of this effort to the public. The examination proper will be conducted only by the members of the examining committee. When they have completed their questions, the Chair may permit a few minutes of questioning by visitors. Normally the student will attempt to answer visitors' questions, but these are not to be considered part of the examination for the degree. Normally, examination of the candidate will not take more than two hours. In no case should it take more than three hours. The Candidate and observers will withdraw prior to the committee's deliberations on the student's performance at the defence. After a discussion of the examination, the Chair will ask for a vote on the success or failure of the defence.

If the examiners approve the defence, the Chair will ask the examiners to complete the Examination Report by initialing appropriately. The student will be invited back into the exam for a decision. In the event that revisions are required to the thesis, the Chair of the examination committee is responsible for ensuring that (1) the candidate is advised of the revisions, if any, (2) the candidate receives and understands the 'Final Thesis Submission form' to be used by the Supervisor to confirm that the revisions have been made, and (3) the supervisor is also aware of the form. The Chair will complete and sign the Examination Report and return it to the School of Graduate Studies.

On the other hand, if there are two or more negative or abstaining votes, with at least one of these votes being from a member of the supervisory committee, the candidate will be deemed to have failed the defence, and a reconvened oral defence must be held at a later date. The candidate should be told as clearly as possible by the Chair and the examining committee what he/she must do to improve the defence. The reconvened defence is the candidate's final opportunity to complete the degree. Membership of the reconvened examining committee should be the same as that for the original defence, except that one or two substitutions are permitted in order to expedite scheduling of the reconvened defence. If the defence fails a second time, that decision is final, and is not open to appeal.

After a successful defense, the candidate must make the revisions suggested by the examining committee to the satisfaction of the Supervisor and the majority of the ~~committee~~committee. The changes will be noted as Major or Minor and the details will be described to the student by the committee. Once the committee has approved the changes, and the student will then submit an electronic copy to the School of Graduate Studies via MacSphere (see Section 3.2.5). Students are normally expected to submit their final thesis within four weeks of a successful defence.

Tuition fees continue to be assessed until all degree requirements are met, including the successful submission of the final approved thesis to MacSphere. If a student uploads their final thesis mid-term or -month, their tuition will be assessed to the end of that month and any future enrolment will be removed during the clear to graduate process (e.g., student uploads in February, they will be refunded for March and April).

Please note: when a thesis is submitted and published to MacSphere students must be aware that their name will appear as author of the document. In exceptional circumstances a pen name may be used subject to written approval of the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies.

## Financial Matters

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The full time/part time enrollment status stated in the offer letter, determines the amount of tuition and fees paid by the student. It also determines eligibility for funding and awards. Any changes to enrollment or status as a student may have impacts on tuition, funding and financial aid. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that they are aware of these impacts prior to making any changes to their enrollment or status.

## 4.1 Fees for Graduate Students

(The Board of Governors reserves the right to amend fees after the printing of this statement.) These regulations apply to tuition and mandatory supplemental fees. They cover the various charges which would be incurred for reasons of late payment or late registration. The ~~2024~~~~2025-2025-2026~~ fees schedule is in effect for a period of September 1, ~~2024~~~~2025~~ to August 31, ~~2025-2026~~ and applies to all graduate students whether registered in regular or part-time degree programs. Please consult the Registrar's Office website for the official graduate fees.

### Notes:

Students promoted to a Doctoral program from a Master's program will be considered as new admissions for the purpose of time limits for completion of the degree requirements, eligibility for financial assistance, and fee assessment.

Some international students may be eligible to pay Canadian fees depending on various immigration policies, and the Ministry Funding Manual.

#### Program Fees assessed on a term-by-term basis

Most students will pay regular tuition fees and these fees are assessed on a term-by-term basis. Part-time fees apply only to those students originally offered admission to a part-time program. If students change status from full-time to part-time, they will still be required to pay regular (full-time) fees. In most cases part-time fees will allow registration in up to 3 half courses per academic year, in programs where fees are costed on a term-by-term basis. Students registering in more than 3 half courses will be assessed full-time fees. In situations where a student in a part-time program completes the degree or withdraws from the university, fees for the academic session will be assessed by the number of terms or number of half courses (whichever is the greater). Term count is adjusted if student changes status from part-time to full-time at a ratio of 2:1.

If a full-time student wishes to change their status from full-time to part-time, they will still continue to pay full-time tuition fees for the entire program. The most common occurrence of this situation would be when a student gains full-time employment, changes in status to part-time will be effective at the start of term. Their mandatory supplementary fees however would be reduced to the part-time rate at the start of the next academic year.

#### Program Fees assessed on a course basis

Students enrolled in programs with course costed tuition will be assessed tuition fees for each course that they take. They will pay supplemental fees based on their status at the time of program entry. Course load restrictions may be required by the program based on status, please check the program handbook for these limitations.

Part-time students may not gain financial advantage over full-time students with respect to the overall cost of fees for their program as a function of their part-time status. The total cost of the part-time program cannot be less than the full-time.

Ph.D. students who have been registered as full-time for longer than the normal period of funding eligibility (as defined in 4.2.1 Financial Support for Graduate Students) will be assessed discounted tuition fees. Discounted fees only apply to Ph.D. programs.

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A fee is charged for each course (including extra courses or audited courses) taken on the basis of Section 2.1.8 by persons who are not registered in a term-charged graduate program. The tuition fee for certain courses may be higher.

#### Leave of Absence

Students on leave of absence do not pay tuition fees for any complete months that they are on leave but do pay mandatory supplemental fees. Students who are on leave for a complete academic year do not pay mandatory supplemental fees.

#### Readmission

Students who have "withdrawn in good standing due to time limit" do not pay fees until readmission. Students must pay the readmission application fee to have their request considered for approval. Readmission will only take place at the start of a term for students being readmitted to program and tuition fees will be calculated based on the return date. Students readmitted to defend will be readmitted at the point that they are ready to defend. See Section 4.1.5 (Readmission Tuition Charges).

#### Mid-Year Admissions

Students admitted in January or May, will have a slightly different schedule of fees for tuition and mandatory supplemental fees.

Enquiries should be referred to Student Services: <https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/fees/>

### 4.1.1 Payment of Fees

In order to register a student must pay their tuition balance and all additional fees by the deadline. Details for payment methods and due dates can be found on the [Student Affairs Office of the Registrar](#) website.

### 4.1.2 Non-payment of Fees or Charges

Students with outstanding accounts will:

- a. not receive academic results, including but not limited to exams, grades, transcripts, diplomas; and
- b. not be permitted to register for the next academic year until the account is settled.

~~b-c.~~ [May not receive their scholarships as per the payment schedule](#)

### 4.1.3 Discounted Fees - Ph.D. Students

Full-time Ph.D. students (domestic and international), who have reached term 13 or greater of their Ph.D. studies, will be charged tuition at a discounted fee rate.

### 4.1.4 Change in Residency

Changes in residency that occur when a student becomes either a permanent resident or Canadian citizen will have an impact on fees. These changes can only be accepted at the start of term and cannot be applied retroactively.

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## 4.1.5 Readmission Tuition Charges

Students who do not register and pay tuition fees for any academic session are deemed to have withdrawn. These students and those who have been withdrawn in good standing due to time limit are required to apply for readmission. Master's or Ph.D. students withdrawn in good standing who are being readmitted to defend their thesis pay fees at the "Readmission to Defend" rate and are not eligible for a refund. If students do not defend in the term in which they were readmitted, their tuition reverts to the typical charges for their term count in their program including charging supplemental fees.

Students who withdrew voluntarily or did not register for an academic session and wish to apply for readmission to their academic program are readmitted at the registration status they were at the time of withdrawal and charged the current calendar rate of tuition and supplemental fees accordingly. Readmissions in this category are not eligible for the part-time rate unless the student was registered in a part-time program at the time of withdrawal.

## 4.1.6 Refund of Tuition Fees

A student, who completes the degree requirements, withdraws from the program, or takes a leave of absence prior to the end of the academic year will be entitled to a refund, based on the method of payment per section 4.1.1 above. If a student uploads their final thesis mid-term or -month, their tuition will be assessed to the end of that month and any future enrolment will be removed during the clear to graduate process (e.g., student uploads in February, they will be refunded for March and April). (Note: a refund does not apply to students who are readmitted to defend.) Mandatory supplemental fees are not refundable.

## 4.2 Financial Assistance

### 4.2.1 Financial Support for Graduate Students

McMaster University aims to provide competitive funding offers to highly qualified candidates recommended for admission to our research-based graduate programs. Each program is responsible for determining the level of funding in their offers, although the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) sets a minimum level of funding for full-time doctoral studies for the first four years of full-time enrolment.

Financial support for Doctoral studies will normally be provided for the first four years of full-time enrolment, and will be comprised of funds from the admitting Faculty or graduate program, including departmental scholarships/awards, research scholarship support, and possibly employment (e.g. teaching assistant). The annual level of financial support will meet or exceed the minimum level of support set by SGS, provided all conditions stated in the Financial Support subsections below are satisfied.

Funding for students enrolled in most research-based Master's programs will normally be provided for the nominal duration of the program. There is no minimum level of funding stipulated by SGS for Master's programs.

[Should a student's tuition change from International to Domestic, their funding may change as well to reflect the lower cost of tuition.](#)

Teaching Assistantships (TA) (or Research Assistantship-in-lieu under the collective agreement between Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3906, Unit 1 and McMaster University) and contract employment income are offered to many graduate students registered in full-time programs. TA duties vary according to department but will normally consist of performance in connection with undergraduate teaching, such as leading tutorials, demonstrating labs, and marking assignments. The award of a TA may vary but should not exceed 10 hours per week, plus three hours of training per term. Multiple TAs can be taken in a term, normally not exceeding 20 hours per week. TA funding is

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contingent on fulfillment of the employment obligations and maintaining satisfactory work performance, as stated in the letter of offer or employment contract. Please refer to section 2.5.3 regarding guidelines for maximum hours of work. Employment is paid as earned over the period in which the work is performed.

### 4.2.1.1 Minimum Academic Requirement for Financial Support

Only registered full-time students who maintain regular attendance on campus and meet program conditions for progression towards their degree shall continue to receive the funding outlined in their offer of admissions.

### 4.2.1.2 Duration of Financial Support

Normal duration for financial support in a research-based Master's programs varies from two to six terms of full-time registration, depending on the program.

Normal duration for financial support in a Doctoral program is the first twelve terms of full-time registration.

Full-time students transferring from a Master's program to a Doctoral program are eligible for financial support at the level of their original offer or at the minimum funding level set by SGS, whichever is higher, for an additional twelve consecutive terms from the time of their transfer to PhD.

There is no obligation for continued financial support ~~exists~~ for full-time students transferring from a Doctoral program to a Master's program.

### 4.2.1.3 Minimum Level of Financial Support for Doctoral Students

All full-time Doctoral students who meet the stated criteria under Section 4 shall receive financial support of a minimum of full-time tuition plus \$17,500. OSAP is excluded in the calculation of the financial support package. Examples of situations where the minimum financial support does not apply or ceases to apply are:

A student may decline all or part of the funding offer without prejudice to their admission. Where a newly enrolling student declines part of the funding package, the program must retain a copy of the written statement (either hardcopy or electronic) sent to the student acknowledging the change in financial support, which remains in effect for the length of the program. The program is not obligated to provide additional funding in compensation for the declined part(s) of the funding package.

In rare cases where a student is terminated from their employment duties (e.g. teaching assistantship), the program bears no obligation to compensate for the lost funding.

Where a successful applicant has been made an offer based on funding external to the university, the support committed to the student (by the university) for the nominal duration of their degree will be the difference between the funding minimum and the external scholarship value. In cases where an external scholarship ceases to be paid out in whole or in part, the university is not obliged to increase its financial support package.

## 4.2.2 Financial Payments to Graduate Students

International students must provide a clear demonstration of their means of financial support in order to obtain a study permit.

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The University is required by law to deduct Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance premiums on all employment income and any appropriate union dues and deductions. Income Tax will be assessed on employment income only. Net earnings will be deposited bi-weekly, directly into a Canadian Bank account. A statement of your earnings is available online after each pay. The direct deposit method of payment is mandatory.

Enquiries about employment should be referred to Human Resource Services (hr.mcmaster.ca) 905-525-9140 ext. 22247.

If the student withdraws or graduates from the program part way through an academic year, the student is not entitled to any further portion of the award. Note that funding monies owing to McMaster, such as award/scholarship/bursary repayments, will show as an outstanding balance on their student account.

## ~~Additional~~ University Regulations Affecting Graduate Students

### 5.1 ~~Senate~~ University Policy Statements~~ies~~

The University has defined its expectations of students in both the academic and non-academic life of the University community and has developed procedures to ensure that all members of the community receive equitable treatment.

Policies that govern academic and student life at McMaster can be found on the University Secretariat's Policies, Procedures and Guidelines webpage at the following address: <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>.

As policies are reviewed and revised on a regular basis, students are advised to check the Policies, Procedures and Guidelines webpage for the most up-to-date information (on the website select "students" in the Categories search field). Following are some of the policies most relevant to graduate students, available at the website above:

- ~~Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities~~
- Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)
- ~~Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities~~
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Alcohol Policy
- Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities
- ~~Discrimination and Harassment Policy~~
- ~~Graduate Course Management Policy~~
- ~~Graduate Examination Policy~~
- ~~Ownership of Student Work~~
- ~~PhD Supervision~~
- ~~Professional Behaviour Code for Graduate Learners, Health Sciences~~
- ~~Research Integrity Policy~~
- ~~Research Plagiarism Checking Policy~~
- Residence Admissions Policies and Priorities
- Sexual Violence Policy
- Storm Emergency Policy
- Student Appeal Procedures
- Student Groups (Recognition, Risk Assessment and Event Planning), Policy on

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- Tobacco & Smoke Free University Policy
- ~~Graduate Course Management Policy~~
- University Aid and Awards Policy

## • 5.2 Accommodations and Appeals

### • 5.2.1 Academic Accommodations: Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances

The University welcomes and includes students, staff, and faculty from a wide range of cultural, traditional, and spiritual beliefs. The Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous, and Spiritual Observances (RISO) ensures that students at the University can observe their religious, Indigenous, or spiritual practices without facing academic disadvantages. For more information on how to request RISO accommodations please refer to ([link to the policy landing page](#))

### 5.2.2 Academic Accommodations: Permanent Disability, Temporary Disability, and Retroactive Accommodation

## 5.6 McMaster University Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Below are excerpts from the Academic Accommodation of Student with Disabilities policy:

McMaster University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning. The University strives to ensure every student is afforded an academic environment that is dedicated to the advancement of learning and is based on the principles of equitable access and individual dignity. At McMaster we nurture and support a culture of acceptance, inclusion and the celebration of diversity. Creating a learning environment that is accessible to all students is a value embedded within the University's fabric as well as our policies, services and practices.

Students must meet University and program/degree requirements, including participation in classes, labs, clinical or practicum placements, tutorials, etc. Students seeking an Academic Accommodation related to a permanent or temporary disability, or a retroactive accommodation, are expected to read the *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy and are required to participate fully in the Academic Accommodations process.

This participation includes: a) when the student is aware of their disability and the need for Academic Accommodation, contacting Student Accessibility Services before classes or academic work begins; b) providing the information required so that Student Accessibility Services can assess the duty to accommodate and develop Accommodation Plans; c) after the approval of the Accommodation Plan, should the student have any questions they may choose to speak with their instructor, SAS advisor or Faculty Office to review steps for the implementation of the Accommodation Plan; d) notifying Student Accessibility Services of any changes that may impact already established Accommodation Plans in a timely fashion.

Student Accessibility Services requires adequate time to review requests and coordinate needed arrangements. Some accommodations take longer to arrange than others (e.g. sign language interpreters and transcriptions), and students with these types of requests should be particularly cognizant of the timing of their requests. Failure to make a request or

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supply the required documentation in a timely manner may delay the approval and/or implementation of the requested accommodation.

New students and transfer students are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services and submit their accommodation request as soon as possible after they receive their offers of admission, or by August 1st of the academic year, whichever comes first.

The complete Academic Accommodation of Student with Disabilities Policy, which includes Roles & Responsibilities, Guidelines and Procedures, Appeals and related legislation can be found here.

Important excerpts from the policy include:

- students are not to seek accommodation directly from their professors, instructors, and/or teaching assistants. Accommodation requests should be directed to **Student Accessibility Services** or the School of Graduate Studies;
- students are not required to reveal their private medical information, such as the cause of the disability, diagnosis, symptoms or treatment (unless these clearly relate to the accommodation being sought) to register with Student Accessibility Services, or receive accommodations or supports;
- students may request interim accommodations for disabilities (this includes mental health disabilities) pending receipt of medical documentation;
- **Permanent Disability** is where a functional limitation will occur for more than one academic term or as defined by a regulated health professional.
- **Temporary Disability** may be a short-term injury or illness (such as mononucleosis, a broken limb or concussion) or an episodic condition (e.g. mental illness) where a functional limitation generally occurs within one academic term or less or as defined by a regulated health professional.
- requests for accommodation should be submitted in a prompt and timely manner. Requests made after a deadline has passed may be considered Retroactive Accommodations. A **Retroactive Accommodation** may be for either a Permanent or Temporary Disability when the request is made after the fact (e.g. after a course has been completed), as the result of the discovery or diagnosis of an existing disability of which the student was previously unaware

Workplace Accommodations for graduate students who have Teaching Assistantships and other campus employment are processed through Human Resources. For the related policy, requests, and procedures, refer to Human Resources.

## 5.2.34 Appeal Procedures

The University has a responsibility to provide fair and equitable procedures for the lodging and hearing of student complaints arising out of University regulations, policies and actions that affect students directly. The procedures described in the Student Appeal Procedures are intended to provide a mechanism to fairly address alleged injustices.

Students who wish to raise questions or who have a concern are strongly encouraged to communicate informally with their instructors, the Chair of their Supervisory Committee (or the Department Graduate Advisor where no committee exists), the Department Chair and/or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, the University Ombuds, or the appropriate administrative officer *before* seeking a review under the formal procedures. Experience has shown that many complaints can be resolved satisfactorily through informal communication. Students are requested to speak with the University Secretary regarding a complaint before submitting a formal application.

Students should seek remedies for their grievances as promptly as possible and must do so within the time limitations set out in the Student Appeal Procedures.

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A Master's or Ph.D. thesis, and a Ph.D. comprehensive exam are specifically excluded from the re-read procedures identified in the Student Appeal Procedures. If a student does poorly in any of these examinations, the original examining committee is required to allow the student a second opportunity at the examination after at least a week. If the student fails on that second attempt, no additional examinations are permitted.

The Student Appeal Procedures may be found at:

<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

Students who seek special consideration should submit a Petition for Special Consideration. Petitions for Special Consideration (Petition) and the decisions made on them are not part of this Policy. Students wishing to bring a Petition should consult the appropriate section 2.5.9 of the calendar.

## 2.5.95.2.4 Petitions for Special Consideration

The University wishes to assist students with legitimate difficulties. It also has the responsibility to ensure that degree, program and course requirements are met in a manner that is equitable to all students. Please note that academic accommodation requests related to a disability are processed under the Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy. This includes accommodation requests for Permanent Disability, Temporary Disability, and Retroactive Accommodation.

Students may submit, in a prompt and timely manner, a Petition for Special Consideration to the School of Graduate Studies in those instances where a student acknowledges that the rules and regulations of the University have been applied fairly but is requesting that an exception to the regulations be made because of special circumstances (compelling medical or personal circumstances).

Requests related to temporary or permanent disabilities, or for retroactive accommodations related to a disability are excluded from petitions and must be processed under the Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

Petitions should be submitted in a prompt and timely manner for the relevant term. When the petition is directly in response to course work or work completed in a term, they may, but be no later than July 31 immediately following the Fall/Winter Term or November 15 immediately following the Spring/ Summer Term.. Petitions that are not related to work or activity related to a specific term (ie comprehensive exam or committee report) may be eligible for filing outside of these dates.

In those instances where a student acknowledges that the rules and regulations of the University have been applied fairly, but is requesting that an exception be made because of special circumstances (compelling medical, personal, or family reasons) the student may submit, in a prompt and timely manner, a Petition for Special Consideration. The appropriate form is available on the School of Graduate Studies website. The student's supervisor and Associate Chair are normally required to provide their independent assessments of the student's statement in the petition. Supporting documentation will be required but will not ensure approval of the petition. The authority to grant petitions lies with the School of Graduate Studies and is discretionary. It is imperative that students make every effort to meet the originally-scheduled course requirements and it is a student's responsibility to write examinations as scheduled.

In accordance with the Student Appeal Procedures, decisions made on Petitions for Special Consideration cannot be appealed to the Senate Board for Student Appeals. However, should students believe that a decision may be a violation of their human rights, they may wish to contact the Equity and Inclusion Office to identify appropriate avenues of recourse as per the Discrimination and Harassment Policy. Where any student feels there may have been discrimination on grounds in a protected social area as outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, they may contact the Equity and Inclusion Office to discuss initiating a complaint. In Health Sciences, Graduate Students should also

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~~consult the [Advisor on Professionalism in Clinically Based Education](#).~~Office of Respectful Conduct in Clinical and Academic Environments (ORCCA).

~~For more information on Appeals please refer to section 5.4~~

## 5.2-3 Academic and Research Integrity

The following brief statements are excerpted in part from the ~~McMaster~~University's Academic Integrity and Research Integrity Policies. For guidance on how to proceed in the case of suspected academic dishonesty or research misconduct, please consult the Office of Academic Integrity and the complete policies at <https://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/>. The Associate Deans of Graduate Studies are available for confidential consultations on matters related to academic and research integrity.

### Academic Work

Academic work includes any academic paper, term test, proficiency test, essay, thesis, research report, evaluation, project, assignment or examination, whether oral, in writing, in other media or otherwise and/or registration and participation in any course, program, seminar, workshop, conference or symposium offered by the University.

For graduate students, comprehensive/qualifying exams, any research work, and thesis work (a thesis proposal, or thesis draft, or draft of one or more chapters) also constitute academic work and must adhere to standards of academic integrity.

### Academic Dishonesty

#### Definition

**Academic dishonesty** is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage.

Wherever in this policy an offence is described as depending on "knowingly," the offence is deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known.

Students and applicants to graduate programs are responsible for being aware of and demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work. Such behaviour includes:

- adhering to the principles of academic integrity when submitting application materials
- following the expectations articulated by instructors for referencing sources of information and for group work;
- asking for clarification of expectations as necessary;
- identifying testing situations that may allow copying;
- preventing their work from being used by others, e.g., protecting access to computer files; and
- adhering to the principles of academic integrity when conducting and reporting research.

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Students are responsible for their behaviour and may face penalties under the Academic Integrity or Research Integrity policies if they commit academic dishonesty or research misconduct.

Graduate students, having been deemed admissible to higher studies, are expected to be competent in the acknowledgement of other people's work, whether that work is in print or electronic media.

Graduate students are expected to understand the demands of ethical conduct of research and reporting research results and behave ethically and responsibly in conducting and reporting research. All graduate students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the definition of research misconduct in the University's policy, namely, "a researcher must be honest in proposing, seeking support for, conducting, and reporting research; a researcher must respect the rights of others in these activities."

#### Research Integrity

The University states unequivocally that it demands research integrity from all of its members. Research misconduct, in whatever form, is ultimately destructive to the values of the University and society; furthermore, it is unfair and discouraging to those who conduct their research with integrity. This Policy applies to all institutional personnel. The Office of Academic Integrity is the administrative office responsible for the receipt and processing of allegations of misconduct at the investigation stage. A complete list of Policy violations can be found within the Research Integrity Policy.

#### Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity Policy explains the expectations the University has of its scholars. Some departments and instructors have also developed more specific rules and regulations designed to maintain scholarly integrity. It is the responsibility of each instructor to make students aware of these expectations. The main purpose of a university is to encourage and facilitate the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. The attainment of this purpose requires the individual integrity of all members of the University community, including all graduate and undergraduate students.

The University states unequivocally that it demands scholarly integrity from all its members. Academic dishonesty, in whatever form, is ultimately destructive of the values of the University; furthermore, it is unfair and discouraging to those students who pursue their studies honestly.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. In an academic setting, this may include any number of forms such as:

- copying or the use of unauthorized aids in tests, examinations and laboratory reports,
- plagiarism, i.e., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and was deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course,
- aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty,
- giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit,
- giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines, and
- forging or falsifying McMaster University documents.

For a complete definition and examples, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3. Students are encouraged to view: [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity) for further information on academic integrity and how to avoid academic dishonesty. Allegations of academic dishonesty will be handled according to the procedures described in the Academic Integrity Policy.

#### Research Integrity

The Research Integrity Policy explains the expectations the University has of its institutional personnel to maintain research integrity. One of the main purposes of a university is to encourage and facilitate the pursuit of research (e.g., an undertaking intended to extend knowledge through a disciplined inquiry or systematic investigation). The University states unequivocally that it demands research integrity from all of its members. Research misconduct, in whatever

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form, is ultimately destructive to the values of the University; furthermore, it is unfair and discouraging to those who conduct their research with integrity.

This Policy applies to all faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and undergraduate students taking part in research, directly or indirectly, and other research support staff. All institutional personnel who are involved in research have a responsibility to report what they, in good faith, believe to be research misconduct. The Office of Academic Integrity is the appropriate office to receive concerns and questions regarding an allegation of research misconduct. Responsible allegations, or information related to responsible allegations, should be sent directly to the Office of Academic Integrity in writing. For the complete definitions and examples, please refer to the Research Integrity Policy: [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity)

## 5.3 Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities

McMaster University is a community dedicated to furthering learning, intellectual inquiry, and personal and professional development. Membership in the community implies acceptance of the principle of mutual respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it.

The *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* outlines the limits of conduct considered to be consonant with the goals and the well-being of the University community, and defines the procedures to be followed when students fail to meet the accepted standards.

Copies of the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* may be obtained from the website at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities.pdf>

For Health Sciences graduate students, a supplementary guideline, Professional Behaviour Code of Conduct for Graduate Learners, applies to learners in health care professions and research. This guideline outlines the professional behaviours in all academic and clinical settings that must be understood and followed.

Copies of the Professional Behaviour Code may be obtained from the website.

## 5.4 Appeal Procedures

The University has a responsibility to provide fair and equitable procedures for the lodging and hearing of student complaints arising out of University regulations, policies and actions that affect students directly. The procedures described in the *Student Appeal Procedures* are intended to provide a mechanism to fairly address alleged injustices.

Students who wish to raise questions or who have a concern are strongly encouraged to communicate informally with their instructors, the Chair of their Supervisory Committee (or the Department Graduate Advisor where no committee exists), the Department Chair and/or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, the University Ombuds, or the appropriate administrative officer before seeking a review under the formal procedures. Experience has shown that many complaints can be resolved satisfactorily through informal communication. Students are requested to speak with the University Secretary regarding a complaint before submitting an application.

Students should seek remedies for their grievances as promptly as possible and must do so within the time limitations set out in the *Student Appeal Procedures*.

A Master's or Ph.D. thesis, and a Ph.D. comprehensive exam are specifically excluded from the re-read procedures identified in the *Student Appeal Procedures*. If a student does poorly in any of these examinations, the original

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~~examining committee is required to allow the student a second opportunity at the examination after at least a week. If the student fails on that second attempt, no additional examinations are permitted.~~

~~The Student Appeal Procedures may be found at:~~

~~<https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>~~

~~Students who seek special consideration should submit a Petition for Special Consideration. Petitions for Special Consideration ("Petition") and the decisions made on them are not part of this Policy. Students wishing to bring a Petition should consult the appropriate section 2.5.9 of the calendar.~~

## 5.5 Ownership of Student Work

In Canada, the author is the immediate owner of the copyright in an original work, except when the author is employed to create such material. 'Copyright' is an exclusive property right to publish, produce, reproduce, translate, broadcast, adapt or perform a work, as defined in the Copyright Act (R.S.C. 1985, c. C-42, as amended). For work done by a graduate student, McMaster has the following policies related to the interpretation of copyright and other aspects of intellectual property rights. These policies distinguish in general between items done solely by the student and those undertaken as part of a joint research effort.

In the former case, the intellectual property is primarily the student's, but the University reserves certain rights as detailed in the remainder of this section. In the latter case, the intellectual property rights involve the student, the research supervisor, (and possibly other individuals as well), the University, and on occasion the financial sponsor of the research. If the work is anticipated to have commercial possibilities, it is recommended that the parties involved agree in writing beforehand on the sharing of any financial returns. The Associate Deans of Graduate Studies are available for confidential consultations on matters of ownership of student work involving faculty and/or other individuals.

### 5.5.1 Examinations, Reports and Papers Done as Part of Course Requirements

When work that is eligible for copyright is submitted to meet a requirement of a course, the University acknowledges the student's ownership of the copyright, but places the following conditions on the submission of the work to meet course requirements.

- a. The original physical document becomes the property of the University. This applies particularly to examination answer scripts, and may also be applied to term papers and other course work.
- b. Except for examination scripts, the University receives a royalty-free, non-exclusive licence to make copies of the work for academic purposes within the University, and to circulate the work as part of the University library collection.

### 5.5.2 Theses and Master's Project Reports

As with other papers, the University recognizes that the student holds copyright to the finished thesis. Copies of the thesis shall have on them in a prominent place on the title page the international copyright notice.

The student is required to sign a licence to the University library (and for Ph.D. students an additional licence to the National Library). (See Section 2.8.3) These licences grant the two libraries permission to reproduce the thesis and to circulate it, but do not affect ownership of the copyright.)

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However, the University also recognizes that the ideas in the thesis will often arise from interaction with others. In some cases, this interaction will have been solely with the thesis supervisor; in other cases, a larger research team will have been involved. For this reason, it is understood that the copyright refers only to the written document of the thesis. The ideas, or commercial exploitation of the work may or may not be the exclusive property of the student. For the student who has worked closely with a supervisor, or as part of a research group, the rights to publish, the ownership of original and secondary research records, patent, or commercially exploit the results of the research are shared with the supervisor and/or the research group, and with the University. In those cases in which the work has been supported in part by research grants or contracts, there may be other conditions affecting any patent or commercial exploitation. (The student should be made aware of any such conditions before work begins.)

### 5.5.3 Computer Programs

Computer programs written as part of employment duties, as for example by a teaching assistant, are the property of the employer, as specified in the Copyright Act. Computer programs written as part of course work, a project or a thesis may also have value as a potentially marketable intellectual property. The University recognizes that such software may arise in two different ways, and accordingly has two policies. In setting forth these policies, it is understood that in those cases in which software development draws upon other software owned or licensed by the University, the terms and conditions of the licence or purchase must be followed.

- a. Where a student develops such software at the direct request of a supervisor, and under supervision, it is assumed that there is joint ownership of the intellectual property rights. In such cases, it is recommended that the individuals involved co-author a working paper documenting the software, rather than including it as an appendix to a thesis or report. Prior agreement between the student and supervisor that this is to be the case would be helpful, but is not mandatory.
- b. Where a student develops such software on their own, as for example for an independent project in a course, copyright remains with the student. As a condition of using University computing facilities, the student is required to grant the University a royalty-free licence to use the software. This includes the right of the University to distribute copies of the software to McMaster faculty, staff, and students for the University's administration education and research activities. This licence does not include the right to use the software for commercial purposes or to distribute the software to non-McMaster people.

### 5.5.4 Research Data

As with computer software, the University recognizes that research is conducted and data are acquired in two different fashions. When the data are acquired as part of a joint or collaborative effort, such as one relying on the equipment within a laboratory, they are not solely the property of the student, although some of the data may ultimately appear in tables or appendices in a completed thesis. As a general rule, such data are the joint property of the student and the research supervisor, either of whom has the right to make them available to other individuals as well. Both student and supervisor are responsible for insuring that proper acknowledgement of the contributions of the student, supervisor, and other members of the research team is made when the data are released in any form. Students are responsible for ensuring that there is adequate documentation of their research work and findings and that their records meet granting agency, program and supervisor expectations. While original research records are normally the property of the faculty supervisor overseeing the work, students are expected to generate and properly secure adequate, original documentation, in addition to keeping personal copies, in order to ensure the integrity of their records.

When the data are acquired through the student's individual effort, and without the use of University laboratories or funding, then they are usually the property of the student making that effort. However, exceptions may occur when the student collects data using research instruments, including interview schedules and questionnaires, developed wholly or in part by the research supervisor or by some other person or agency. In such instances the right to ownership and/or use of the data may be shared among the parties involved. Given the range of possible alternatives it is not possible to set absolute guidelines in advance covering all such situations. Consequently, it is recommended that students and

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supervisors make clear agreements in advance concerning the ownership and use of data collected in this fashion. Ownership of data may also be affected by the terms of a research contract that has supported the work.

## 5.5.5 Equipment

If University resources have been applied to the construction or design of equipment, it is not the property of the student, but of the University. Equipment constructed or designed as part of course or thesis work is the property of the student if the work, materials, and workroom space have been provided by the student or other non-University source. Ownership of newly constructed equipment may also be specified in a research contract that has supported the work.

## 5.6 ~~McMaster University Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities~~

~~Below are excerpts from the Academic Accommodation of Student with Disabilities policy:~~

~~McMaster University is committed to excellence in teaching and learning. The University strives to ensure every student is afforded an academic environment that is dedicated to the advancement of learning and is based on the principles of equitable access and individual dignity. At McMaster we nurture and support a culture of acceptance, inclusion and the celebration of diversity. Creating a learning environment that is accessible to all students is a value embedded within the University's fabric as well as our policies, services and practices.~~

~~Students must meet University and program/degree requirements, including participation in classes, labs, clinical or practicum placements, tutorials, etc. Students seeking an Academic Accommodation are required to participate fully in the Academic Accommodations process. This participation includes: a) when the student is aware of their disability and the need for Academic Accommodation, contacting Student Accessibility Services before classes or academic work begins; b) providing the information required so that Student Accessibility Services can assess the duty to accommodate and develop Accommodation Plans; c) after the approval of the Accommodation Plan, should the student have any questions they may choose to speak with their instructor, SAS advisor or Faculty Office to review steps for the implementation of the Accommodation Plan; d) notifying Student Accessibility Services of any changes that may impact already established Accommodation Plans in a timely fashion.~~

~~Student Accessibility Services requires adequate time to review requests and coordinate needed arrangements. Some accommodations take longer to arrange than others (e.g. sign language interpreters and transcriptions), and students with these types of requests should be particularly cognizant of the timing of their requests. Failure to make a request or supply the required documentation in a timely manner may delay the approval and/or implementation of the requested accommodation.~~

~~New students and transfer students are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services and submit their accommodation request as soon as possible after they receive their offers of admission, or by August 1st of the academic year, whichever comes first.~~

~~The complete Academic Accommodation of Student with Disabilities Policy, which includes Roles & Responsibilities, Guidelines and Procedures, Appeals and related legislation can be found here.~~

~~Workplace Accommodations for graduate students who have Teaching Assistantships and other campus employment are processed through Human Resources. For the related policy, requests, and procedures, refer to Human Resources.~~

## 5.76 Student/Faculty Non-Disclosure Agreements

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The School of Graduate Studies encourages the cooperation of faculty with the private sector. Often cooperation will permit the involvement of graduate students. When this happens, it is not unusual for a company to protect its interests by asking the faculty member and the student to sign a confidential Non-disclosure Agreement. Such agreements are signed by the McMaster Industrial Liaison Office (MILO) and apply to all members of the university including students involved in the work. These agreements can restrict conditions for a number of matters important to students, such as their wish to publish research results, the thesis defence, and the deposit of the thesis with libraries. In all cases, the restrictions are reasonable and do not clash with academic principles that require the presentation of research findings for peer assessment.

Students should be advised to discuss any non-disclosure waivers or comparable agreements with the department chair, graduate advisor, or the School of Graduate Studies, if they are concerned with the conditions.

It has been common practice, in cases where a corporation wishes to protect its interests in a discovery, to delay placing copies of a thesis in libraries for up to twelve months after the oral defence, but not for longer periods.

It has not been common practice in these same cases to limit attendance at oral defences to only examination committee members; nor has it been common practice to have examination committee members agree to non-disclosure agreements. The pertinent guiding principle is that oral defences are public events.

Students in doubt about how these norms of academic activity apply to their circumstances should approach the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies.

## 5.8.7 Conflict of Interest Guidelines, School of Graduate Studies

### 5.8.7.1 General

There shall be no prohibition on the grounds of family relationship against the admission of persons as full- or part-time graduate students or against the eligibility for financial awards of such persons. Faculty members normally shall not take part in any proceedings at any level which affect the graduate standing of a spouse or other relative (including admission, financial assistance, promotion, courses of instruction, supervisory, thesis and examining committees). It is understood that the merits of each individual shall be the overriding consideration in all such cases.

### 5.8.7.2 Conflict of Interest in the Evaluation of Graduate Students

All faculty members responsible for the evaluation of graduate students have a general responsibility to the University to ensure that they are not in a position of conflict of interest (or the appearance of a conflict of interest) in their obligations to the University with regard to the nature of their relationships with graduate students. Specifically, a faculty member may not be involved in the evaluation of a graduate student if the faculty member has a close family relationship with the student (including spouse, parent, child, sibling, niece/nephew or spouses of the foregoing), if the faculty member is, or has been engaged to be married to the student, or if the faculty member has (or has had) an intimate personal relationship with the student. Evaluation includes grading course work or examinations (including the defence of a thesis) and supervision, whether as the principal supervisor or as a member of a supervisory committee.

A faculty member should question the propriety of evaluating a graduate student if there exists a distant family relationship with the student, or if the faculty member and the student maintain or have had a business relationship or any other relationship which should reasonably give cause for concern.

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Questionable cases should be referred to the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies for a decision.

## 5.9.8 Student Academic Records

Student academic records are the property of the University. The University has developed procedures designed to protect the confidentiality of student records. A student may have access to their file, but documents received from a third party in confidence will not be disclosed. Physical copies of student records are destroyed 10 years after the time of graduation, only the electronic record will remain.

Transcripts are issued only with the consent of the student.

## 5.10.9 McMaster University Workplace and Environmental Health and Safety Policy

McMaster University is committed to provide and maintain healthy and safe working and learning environments for all employees, students, volunteers and visitors. This is achieved by observing best practices which meet or exceed the standards to comply with legislative requirements as contained in the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, Environmental Protection Act, Nuclear Safety and Control Act and other statutes, their regulations, and the policy and procedures established by the University. To support this commitment both McMaster University and its employees are responsible jointly to implement and maintain an Internal Responsibility System directed at promoting health and safety, preventing incidents involving occupational injuries and illnesses or adverse effects upon the natural environment.

The University is responsible for the provision of information, training, equipment and resources to support the Internal Responsibility System and ensure compliance with all relevant statutes, this policy and internal health and safety programs. Managers and Supervisors are accountable for the safety of workers within their area, for compliance with statutory and University requirements, and are required to support Joint Health and Safety Committees. Employees are required to work in compliance with statutory and University requirements, and to report unsafe conditions to their supervisors.

Contractors and subcontractors undertaking to perform work for McMaster University must, as part of their contract, comply with all relevant workplace and environmental health and safety statutes and to meet or exceed the University's Workplace and Environmental Health and Safety Program requirements.

In addition to the above stated managerial responsibilities, Deans, Directors, Chairs, Research Supervisors and other Managers are also accountable for the safety of students, volunteers and visitors who work and/or study within their area of jurisdiction. Students are required by University policy to comply with all University health, safety and environmental programs.

### Implementation:

The authority and responsibility for the administration of procedures and programs to provide for the implementation of this policy is assigned to the Office of the Vice President, Administration.

The Risk Management Support Group is responsible for facilitating the development, implementation and auditing of the Health and Safety Programs effective under this policy. This is achieved through the implementation of a risk management system that is directed at supporting the Internal Responsibility System through the application of best practices for the management of occupational, environmental, public health and safety related risks.

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The Office of the Vice President, Administration will provide reports to the University Board of Governors concerning the status and effectiveness of the Workplace and Environmental Health and Safety System and any notices of violation issued to the University regarding breaches of workplace health and safety or environmental protection statutes.

## **5.11-10 Inter-University Cooperation - Ontario Visiting Graduate Student (OVGS)**

It is possible for a graduate student registered at McMaster University to take a graduate course at another Ontario university for credit toward the McMaster degree. To do so, the student must review the Information Booklet, complete the form for an Ontario Visiting Graduate Student (OVGS) (available on the SGS website under Current Students - Forms and Policies). Students must describe the course to be taken (including all relevant course codes), the term in which it will be taken, and the reasons for taking the course. Approval of the student's Department Chair and Supervisor are required before the form is submitted for approval to the School of Graduate Studies via Service Request, which will send it to the host university once approved by SGS. The course selected must be required for the student's program, must be a graduate level course, and must not be available at McMaster University. Auditing of courses or registration for "extra" courses is not permitted. The student is subject to any regulations of their Home University with respect to the maximum number of courses which may be taken at another Ontario university. At McMaster, there is a two course maximum over the duration of the student's program. Once complete, an official transcript must be sent to the student's program office so that it can be uploaded to the Service Request for the student's record to be updated.

### **General Information**

#### Counselling Services

Student Wellness Centre - <https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/>

Equity and Inclusion Office - <https://equity.mcmaster.ca/>

International Student Services - <https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/international-students/>

Ombuds Office - <http://www.mcmaster.ca/ombuds>

Office of Academic Integrity - <http://mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/index.html>

Student Accessibility Services - <http://sas.mcmaster.ca/>

Office of the Registrar - Student Services - <https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/aid-awards/>

Student Success Centre - <http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/>

#### Health Services

University Health and Safety- Tel . 905-525-9140 Ext. 24352

Ontario Health Insurance Card - Tel . 905-521-7825 (Service Ontario)

University Health Insurance Plan - <https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/international-students/health-insurance;>  
uhip@mcmaster.ca

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Coverage for Graduate Students - <https://hr.mcmaster.ca>

#### Housing and Conference Services and Hospital Services

Conference and Event Services - <https://housing.mcmaster.ca/conference-event-services/>

Hospitality Services - <http://hospitality.mcmaster.ca>

Off-Campus Housing - <http://macoffcampus.mcmaster.ca> (Off-Campus Resource Centre)

On-Campus Housing - <http://housing.mcmaster.ca> (Housing and Conference Services)

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#### Student Associations

Graduate Students Association (GSA) - <https://gsamcmaster.ca>

McMaster University Alumni Association - <http://alumni.mcmaster.ca/>

#### Other University Services/Facilities

Athletics and Recreation - <http://www.marauders.ca>

Bookstore - <https://campusstore.mcmaster.ca/>

Day Care Facilities at McMaster

- McMaster Children's Centre Incorporated - <https://mcmasterchildrenscentre.wordpress.com>
- McMaster Students' Union Child Care Centre - <https://msumcmaster.ca/service/childcare/>

Parking Services - <http://parking.mcmaster.ca>

Security Services - <http://security.mcmaster.ca>

University Chaplain Centre - <https://mcmasterchaplaincy.org/>

#### Special Resource Services/Facilities

McMaster Continuing Education - <https://continuing.mcmaster.ca/>

MacPherson Institute - <http://mi.mcmaster.ca>

McMaster Media Production Services - <https://mps.mcmaster.ca/>

McMaster Museum of Art - <https://museum.mcmaster.ca>

Office of International Affairs - <https://global.mcmaster.ca/>

University Library - <http://library.mcmaster.ca>

University Technology Services (UTS) - <https://uts.mcmaster.ca/>

## Graduate Scholarships, Bursaries and Other Awards

(<https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/scholarships/>)

### 6.1 Overview

The University and the School of Graduate Studies supports the financial wellbeing of students in the delivery of aid and award programs, ensuring equity, consistency, and transparency in administration.

The following information is intended to provide details about the various forms of scholarship support available at McMaster. Students with questions regarding financial support should contact their department or graduate program (hereafter referred to as the department) directly for assistance.

All efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of information of awards on the School of Graduate Studies website. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of ~~fellowship-scholarship~~ and award applicants themselves to verify program deadlines and/or requirements with external agencies. The School of Graduate Studies cannot be held responsible for any error or omissions, but would appreciate being informed of these, for correction or addition in the next edition.

#### 6.1.1 General Regulations

Graduate students at McMaster University are expected to apply annually for external funding opportunities that may be available to them and as directed by their department.

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Scholarships (including fellowships, prizes, medals and awards), academic grants and bursaries may be cancelled without notice if the conditions under which they are granted are not upheld. To hold an award at McMaster University, students must:

- Have been unconditionally admitted into the eligible graduate degree program for which funding was granted;
- Be registered full-time and progressing satisfactorily in the eligible graduate degree program; part-time students are normally not eligible to receive scholarship support;
  - A student who withdraws, is on approved leave, changes academic load from full to part-time, reduces course load or units, has approved to graduate status or otherwise alters their program of study may be required to forfeit all or part of their funding.
- Accept the terms and conditions of the award;
- Comply with all academic regulations of McMaster University and the requirements of the scholarship and/or award;
- Agree to have McMaster University administer the award in accordance with its policies and procedures.

In accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and McMaster University's Statement on the collection of Personal Information and the Protection of Privacy, where notice is given, the University is permitted to publish an individual's name, faculty, program and award information. McMaster University reserves the right to publish the names of recipients of most scholarships and awards. Note: If a student chooses to revise their consent, they must contact the School of Graduate Studies at [graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca](mailto:graduatescholarships@mcmaster.ca). ~~It is the~~ The School of Graduate Studies ~~will be responsibility responsible~~ to update Mosaic and AwardSpring accordingly.

For the purpose of Aid and Award criteria and eligibility, references to "Woman" or "Female" include all students who identify as Woman or Female and references to "Man" or "Male" include all students who identify as a Man or Male.

## 6.1.2 Value and Duration of Award

The value and duration of scholarships and awards are detailed in the terms of the letter of offer or award letter. Should a successful applicant receive an internal scholarship or external award subsequent to the letter of offer, McMaster's normal practice is to adjust the contributions to the applicant's offer in such a way that the applicant benefits from the additional award, but not to the extent that it simply adds the value of the award to the original offer. The fractional financial benefit of an internal scholarship or external award varies by program but is consistent within a given program.

Any approved change in degree, program, registration, supervisor or research area must be reported to the School of Graduate Studies and may result in a change to the value and/or duration of the award. The value of some external awards ~~must be refunded~~ may be required to be repaid, if conditions of the awards are not met.

## 6.2 Graduate Scholarships

Upon admission to McMaster, graduate students are automatically considered for funding by the various departments. Offers that include funding will state the amount and duration of funding, conditions for renewal (if any), terms of continued funding, and other relevant details. All funding for graduate students from the University or from individual programs will be based on satisfactory progress of the student in their program as determined by academic criteria or as specified in an offer of funding. If the student has been awarded a Graduate or Departmental Scholarship, they should be aware that the funds for this scholarship might come from funds awarded by the School of Graduate Studies and/or from the department. The student may also receive a Research Scholarship provided by funds from the supervisor. Students that have been awarded an Entrance Scholarship, should be aware that it is ~~for-paid in~~ the first term of study only and is not renewable. All funding is contingent on enrolment of the student.

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## 6.2.1 Internal Awards

The University Senate, acting on behalf of generous benefactors and donors to the University, bestows academic awards, bursaries, academic grants, and travel awards on graduate students. In recognizing financial need and/or academic and/or research merit, the University requires all recipients of awards to fulfill a set of general conditions, in addition to meeting the particular terms attached to individual academic awards. The general conditions and terms have been established to ensure equity in competition and a high academic standing. Any interpretation of the conditions attached to academic awards is solely the prerogative of the Graduate Council. The University reserves the right not to grant an award in the absence of a suitable candidate, or to limit the number of awards where too few suitable candidates exist. The University also reserves the right to withdraw, or amend the terms of, any award, and/or to suspend granting of an award or to adjust the stated value of an award in years in which insufficient investment income is available due to fluctuations in investment markets. Where the terms of such an award become impossible to fulfill through obsolescence, then the University may amend the terms to carry out the nearest possible intent of the donor while still ensuring that the benefit of the award continues.

### Bursaries

Bursaries are granted on the basis of demonstrated financial need according to the principles of the Province of Ontario's Student Access Guarantee. They are intended to supplement a student's own financial contribution, parental assistance, government aid, and personal loans/lines of credit to help the student to complete the academic year.

In order for students to be considered for any donor bursary, they must have completed a full-time OSAP application or another provincial government student aid application, or a standard university need profile, and they must apply to the Graduate General Bursary through AwardSpring.

### Academic Grants

Academic Grants are granted on the basis of academic excellence and demonstrated financial need as stated above.

In order for students to be considered for an academic grant, they must have completed a full-time OSAP application or another provincial government student aid application, or a standard university need profile.

### Internal Scholarships (including travel awards)

Internal scholarships support students registered in a specific program or Faculty through the generous contributions of our benefactors and donors, and initiatives from the School of Graduate Studies. Selection is based on academic merit and/or research excellence. Students can apply to most of the internal scholarships through AwardSpring. A small number of scholarships don't have applications as they are awarded by departmental nomination as per the terms of the award. It is critical that students consult with their departments regarding eligibility, application procedures, and deadlines as each department will have its own process for internal review. Departments forward their recommendation to the School of Graduate Studies for final approval.

## 6.2.2 External Awards Tenable at the University

External awards tenable at the University are given by federal and provincial government agencies and other private organizations that rely on McMaster University to recommend candidates, facilitate payments, and ensure compliance of terms and conditions of the award. Examples include the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS).

The application process for the majority of these awards is usually held one year in advance of receipt of the award (for example, competitions are held in the fall for awards starting in May, September or January of the subsequent academic

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year). Applications and eligibility requirements are usually indicated on respective government agency web sites by late August. Deadlines vary by agency but normally occur in the fall of each academic year.

As the recipient of a CIHR, NSERC, SSHRC, OGS or similar award, the student may be required to complete additional acceptance/refusal forms, and provide copies to their department and the School of Graduate Studies. If the student changes their status, or is granted a leave of absence, the student may be required to notify the external agency as outlined in the guidelines (or terms and conditions) of the award. It may also be the case that the external award is subject to restrictions that require altered terms of the original letter of offer, or offer or forfeit the award.

## 6.3 Funding Application Deadlines

Students interested in applying for scholarships and awards should contact their home departments for specific details on the application process and department internal deadlines. Dates and information from external agencies may be updated periodically and without notice. Changes to internal due dates within departments or programs, and the School of Graduate Studies, will be updated accordingly.

## 6.4 Financial Planning

A financial plan is an essential part of a university career. It can be helpful to consult with family members, a banking representative or financial aid counsellor to research financial options. Graduate students who are eligible are encouraged to apply for OSAP. For more information about OSAP, please visit the following sites: Office of the Registrar, Aid & Award and Government of Ontario - OSAP.

## Governing Bodies

### 7.1 Senate

The University Senate consists of approximately 65 members, including the Chancellor, the President (Chair), the Vice-Presidents and Vice-Provosts, the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies, the Faculty Deans, three members from the Board of Governors, four members from the Alumni Association, and 32 faculty members. In addition, there are 12 student members, one graduate and one undergraduate from each of the six Faculties. The students are elected by and from the students in their respective Faculties.

The Senate has ultimate responsibility for determining academic policy, which includes new academic programs, changes in curriculum, standards for admission to the University, matters arising in connection with the award of scholarships and prizes, examination policy, academic regulations, procedures for student appeals, criteria and procedures for granting tenure and promotion to faculty members, the codes of conduct for students and so on. Website: <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/>

### 7.2 Graduate Council

The Graduate Council is a deliberative, administrative, and executive body responsible directly to Senate but otherwise autonomous. Its membership consists of the Chancellor, the President and Vice-Chancellor, the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies (Chair), the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies, the Faculty Deans, the University Librarian, the University Registrar, the Secretary of Senate, the Vice-President (Research and International Affairs), ~~Manager~~ Manager of Finance and Administration of the School of Graduate

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Studies, the Associate Graduate Registrar and Secretary of the School of Graduate Studies, eighteen faculty members (three from each faculty), and twelve graduate students (two from each faculty).

The responsibilities of the Graduate Council have been specified in some detail by Senate and are outlined in the By-laws of the Senate of McMaster University and the Senate Resolutions. The more significant ones may be summarized by noting that it regulates matters concerning graduate work of common concern to the entire University, acts upon recommendations concerning graduate work from each Faculty upon matters of particular concern to that Faculty, reports to Senate on graduate matters, recommends candidates for graduate degrees, stipulates conditions for the awarding of graduate scholarships, and stipulates the departments eligible to offer graduate work.

### 7.2.1 Executive Committee of Graduate Council

The Executive Committee of Graduate Council is composed of the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies (who acts as Chair), the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies as Deputy Chairs, the President and Vice-Chancellor, the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), one faculty member from each Faculty, and the Associate Graduate Registrar and Secretary of Graduate Studies.

The Executive acts as nominating committee, academic policy committee, and on any other matters put before it by Graduate Council or the Vice-Provost & Dean. This body acts on behalf of Council in instances where there is some urgency (e.g., during the summer months when there are no regularly scheduled meetings).

### 7.2.2 Scholarships Committee of Graduate Council

The Scholarships Committee of Graduate Council is composed of the Associate Deans of Graduate Studies (who act as co-chairs) and faculty members (representing all six faculties). This committee is responsible for acting upon all recommendations and applications for internal endowed fellowships and scholarships, and external scholarships.

## 7.3 Standing Committees

### 7.3.1 Faculty Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committees

Each of the six Faculties has a Committee on Graduate Curriculum and Policy which is responsible for dealing with matters of policy and curriculum affecting the Faculty, including new developments, course changes, changes in degree requirements, and new programs and fields of study arising from departmental proposals. The Faculty then acts upon the recommendations of this committee.

### 7.3.2 Faculty Graduate Admissions and Study Committees

A Faculty may have a Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study responsible for determining admissibility of any applicant on the recommendation of the department, approving each student's course program, reviewing annually the progress of each student, making necessary decisions there on, recommending awarding of degrees, deciding upon applications from students for special consideration, and acts on the final decisions from a hearings committee for student appeals and cases of alleged academic dishonesty and research misconduct. In Faculties that do not have a Graduate Admissions and Study Committee the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for the Faculty handles the matters

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listed above. The Secretary of all Committees, to whom business items may be addressed, is the Associate Graduate Registrar and Secretary of Graduate Studies.

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## **THE COMMITTEE ON GRADUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

1. The Committee on Graduate Financial Support shall consist of seven members, including the following membership:

### ***Ex Officio Member***

Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies

### ***Members***

Two Associate Deans (Graduate Studies)

Two student members from Graduate Council

Two faculty members from Graduate Council

### ***Observers***

President, Graduate Students Association

### ***Consultants***

Director, Institutional Research and Analysis, or delegate

Senior Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary, School of Graduate Studies

Manager, Finance and Administration, School of Graduate Studies

Four members of the Committee consisting of at least one Associate Dean, one Faculty member and one student constitute a quorum.

2. The Chair of the Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of Graduate Council and shall be one of the faculty members or Associate Deans for a term of one year which is renewable.

3. The membership of the Committee shall be appointed by the Executive Committee of Graduate Council for a term of one year which is renewable. The Executive Committee will ensure that all Faculties have representation on the Committee over a four-year period.

4. The Secretary of the Committee shall be the Senior Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary.

5. The Graduate Financial Support Committee shall be responsible for:

- a) producing an annual report on aggregated graduate student financial support data, in partnership with the Office of Institutional Research & Analysis, for Graduate Council. After consideration by Graduate Council, the data will be presented publicly;
- b) considering questions arising from issues of financial support for graduate students at McMaster; and,

- c) recommending revisions to academic policies that affect graduate funding when deemed appropriate to Graduate Council. Collective agreements and employment matters are not within the committee's scope.

**Draft February 4, 2025**

## **DRAFT ToR for the Graduate Council Executive Committee**

### THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Executive Committee shall consist of seven members, including the following membership:

#### ***Ex Officio Member***

Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies (Chair)

#### ***Members***

Two Associate Deans (Graduate Studies)

Two faculty members from Graduate Council

Two graduate student members of Graduate Council

#### ***Observers***

President, Graduate Students Association

Four members of the Committee consisting of at least one Associate Dean, one Faculty member and one student constitute a quorum.

2. The Chair of the Committee shall be the Chair of Graduate Council. In their absence, an Associate Dean of Graduate Studies shall be the Chair.

3. The membership of the Committee shall be appointed by Graduate Council, based on the recommendations of the Chair of Graduate Council, for a term of one year which is renewable.

4. The Committee serves as the School of Graduate Studies primary advisory group, advising Graduate Council and Graduate Council standing committees on strategic and complex issues.

5. The Committee shall act for Graduate Council between Graduate Council meetings on matters pertaining to the affairs of Graduate Council. Such actions shall be reported at the next regular meeting of Graduate Council.

6. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for:

- a) coordinating the activities of the standing committees and Graduate Council;
- b) providing advice to Committee Chairs on policy items and work undertaken in committees;
- c) receiving reports from the Graduate Student Association (GSA);
- d) providing advice to the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies on strategic areas for the School of Graduate Studies;

- e) recommending to Graduate Council the establishment, the terms of reference and the disbandment of committees and ad hoc committees;
- f) nominating members and the chairs of the standing committees of Graduate Council, with the exception of the Executive Committee, and reporting such nominations for approval by Graduate Council;
- g) reviewing its own terms of reference as necessary and recommending changes to be approved by Graduate Council; and,
- h) considering and reporting to Graduate Council on any other matter which may from time to time be referred to it by the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Graduate Council, or by any committee of Graduate Council.

7. The committee will provide an annual general report to Graduate Council with respect to its activities and decisions.

**Draft February 4, 2025**

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**ARTICLE X: THE GRADUATE COUNCIL**

10. There shall be a Graduate Council with the following membership:

***Ex Officio Members (with vote)***

Chancellor  
President  
Provost  
Vice-President (Research)  
Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies  
The Dean of each Faculty offering graduate work  
The Associate Deans of Graduate Studies

***Ex Officio Members (without vote)***

Deputy Provost  
University Librarian  
University Registrar  
University Secretary  
Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary

***Members***

Three full-time faculty members from each of the Faculties of Business, Engineering, Humanities, Science, and Social Sciences and three full-time graduate faculty members from the Faculty of Health Sciences, elected by the members of the Faculty, from the Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors

Two full-time graduate students from each Faculty offering graduate work, elected by and from the graduate students in that Faculty with the proviso that in any Faculty engaged in doctoral studies at least one of the graduate students shall be registered in a PhD program

***Observers***

Observers (as defined in clause 2(i)) named from time to time by the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies to attend Graduate Council's meetings

One-third of the voting members shall constitute a quorum at any meeting thereof.

11. The Chair of the Graduate Council shall be the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies or, in the absence of the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, an Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.
12. The Secretary of the Graduate Council shall be the Associate Registrar and Graduate Secretary.
13. The faculty members elected from each Faculty offering graduate work shall be elected in accordance with the requirements of clause 15.



14. The term of office of faculty members on the Graduate Council shall commence on the first day of July following their election, and shall be for three years, subject to the proviso that faculty members who are to be absent from the University for a year or more shall resign their seats before leaving and be replaced at an ensuing election. Terms of office are renewable.
15. The election of faculty members of the Graduate Council shall be conducted by the University Secretary.
16. The term of office of graduate students on the Graduate Council shall commence on the first day of September annually, and shall be for two years, subject to the requirement that a vacancy occurring when six or more months remain in the term of office shall be filled by an appointment by the appropriate Faculty Dean. Terms of office are renewable.
17. The student members of the Graduate Council shall be elected by and from the graduate students in their respective Faculties, in accordance with procedures determined by their Faculties.
18. The Graduate Council may declare vacant the seat of any elected member who, without being granted leave of absence by the Council, fails to attend three consecutive regular meetings of the Council. Whenever a seat is declared vacant, the vacancy shall be filled through a by-election in the constituency which elected the person whose membership is vacant, unless the person is a graduate student, in which case the requirement stipulated in clause 152 for filling a vacancy shall apply.
19. The Graduate Council may, upon written request of a member, grant leave of absence to any member for a period not to exceed six consecutive months for illness or for other reasons deemed appropriate by the Council.
20. The powers and duties of the Graduate Council are:
  - a) to make rules and regulations for governing its proceedings;
  - b) to establish standing and ad hoc committees. The standing committees shall include, but are not limited to:
    - (i) the Executive Committee (see Schedule XX),
    - (ii) ~~the Scholarships Committee; the Committee on Graduate Financial Support (see Schedule YY);~~
    - (iii) the Joint Committee on Certificates, Diplomas and Microcredentials (see Schedule E1)
  - c) to regulate matters concerning graduate work of concern to the University as a whole;

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- d) to act upon recommendations concerning graduate work from each Faculty, upon such matters as are of particular concern to each Faculty;
  - e) to transact such business as is placed on its agenda by one or more of the Chair, the Secretary of the Graduate Council, or a Dean of a Faculty offering graduate work;
  - f) to recommend to the Senate the names of graduate students who have completed all requirements for a degree, diploma or certificate;
  - g) to determine the eligibility of Departments, Units, Schools, Institutes, Centres, or the like, to offer graduate work, and to make recommendations to the Senate for the administration of graduate work in areas not clearly lying within the jurisdiction of a single Faculty;
  - h) to report to the Senate upon such matters as may be judged necessary by the Graduate Council or as required by the Senate;
  - i) subject to final approval by the President, to stipulate the conditions of award of all fellowships, scholarships, assistantships, bursaries, prizes and other awards established for graduate students, having due regard for the wishes of the donor;
  - j) to arrange for action upon all applications or recommendations for fellowships, scholarships, assistantships, bursaries, prizes and other awards for graduate students;
  - k) to meet at least twice per academic year;
  - l) to post the agenda and the minutes of its meetings electronically.

Notwithstanding any of the above, the following matters must be referred to the Senate for decision:

- establishment of new graduate programs;
- closure of existing graduate programs;
- substantial revisions of admission standards;
- substantial revisions to degree, diploma and certificate requirements and/or academic regulations.

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**Revised: June 7, 2023**

## PROGRESS UPDATE TASK FORCE ON GRADUATE STUDENT FUNDING February 2025

Steve Hranilovic, Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies



Steven Hanna, Vice-Dean of Health Sciences & Associate Dean of Graduate Studies  
(Health Sciences)

### INTRODUCTION

In February 2023, McMaster's *Graduate Council* endorsed the Provost's call to form the *Task Force on Graduate Funding*. The group, which was chaired by the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies, included six students, six Faculty Associate Deans and the Deputy Provost.

### Task Force Membership

- Chair: Steve Hranilovic, Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies
- Steven Hanna, Vice-Dean & Associate Dean Graduate Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Martin Horn, Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research, Faculty of Humanities
- Manish Verma, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Faculty of Business
- Bhagwati Gupta/Bruce Newbold, Associate Dean Graduate Studies, Faculty of Science
- Melanie Heath, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences
- Michael Thompson, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Faculty of Engineering
- Matheus Grasselli, Deputy Provost
- Alisha Anand (M.Sc. Candidate), Graduate Council Student Representative, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Natasha Malik (PhD Candidate), Graduate Council Student Representative, Faculty of Humanities
- Shamik Pushkar (PhD Candidate), Graduate Council Student Representative, Faculty of Business
- Xiaobing Li (PhD Candidate), Graduate Council Student Representative, Faculty of Science
- Joseph Antwi-Boasiako (PhD Candidate), Graduate Council Student Representative, Faculty of Social Sciences

- Hassan Abdulhussain (PhD Candidate), Graduate Council Student Representative, Faculty of Engineering

The work of the Taskforce included the analysis of graduate student payroll data, 19 roundtable meetings involving more than 90 people, an online survey of the McMaster community, and a town-hall meeting. The [final report of the Taskforce](#) was submitted to the Provost on 11 March 2024. The report included recommendations in five key areas. The recommendations are reproduced below, with commentary that provides an update on the status of each, as of February 2025.

## FINANCIAL STRUGGLES

1. *Remove limitations on the number of hours that students can work for pay both inside and outside the university.*
  - This was implemented September 2023.
2. *More clearly articulate that the financial supports provided to graduate students, which includes scholarships and bursaries, are only one component of a student's finances and are not intended to cover all living expenses.*
  - This is now explicitly stated in the Letter of Offer of Admissions (see Appendix)
  - Some Faculties also address this in orientation meetings, forums, and on program websites or student handbooks.
3. *Support efforts of graduate students to seek out affordable housing (in addition to recently increasing the number of housing units through the new Graduate Student Residence). This would be achieved by:*
  - a. *Exploring opportunities for housing bursaries targeted to students who are most disadvantaged.*
  - b. *Working with McMaster's Off-Campus Housing office to help identify housing options (raise awareness/help promote their services to graduate students).*
  - McMaster maintains a resource link for off-campus housing.
  - The Letter of Offer of Admissions provides a link to resources regarding the [Cost of Living in Hamilton Ontario](#).
  - Faculties work directly with *McMaster Housing and Conference Services* to provide information about the 10 Bay Residence and other HCS services.

4. *Explore the introduction of an alternate funding payment schedules to create more predictability and account for the variability in support over different terms in an academic year.*

- The *School of Graduate Studies* is currently engaged in a Graduate Payment System Project to improve the current payroll systems and processes. Given the complexities of planned system changes involving the integration of multiple payment systems, a consideration on modifying the frequency of payments to students will be considered in the next phase of the project

## CLARITY ON FUNDING PACKAGES

1. *Share aggregated data on graduate funding annually with the McMaster community. This would make McMaster one of a few Ontario institutions to provide this level of transparency to existing and prospective students.*

- A new dashboard is under development in partnership with IRA to provide annually updated summary data of student funding. This is expected to be published in the Winter Term 2025.

2. *Form a Subcommittee on Graduate Funding within Graduate Council, to oversee the analysis of funding data and generate a publicly available annual report. The committee would provide recommendations annually to Graduate Council and the six Faculties on matters related to graduate funding.*

- Draft terms of reference were circulated to *Graduate Council* in November 2024 for comment. The Terms of Reference for the Sub-Committee have been revised and are slated to be presented for approval at *Graduate Council* in February 2025.

3. *Introduce regular reviews of letters of offer to ensure that the funding information provided not only continues to be accurate and complete but is also understandable and accessible by students.*

- Letters of Offer of Admission are reviewed annually.
- A new process ensures that student funding is clarified again when they transfer from master's to PhD studies, when applicable.

4. *Increase awareness of descriptions of all awards and scholarships available to students, including eligibility and number of awards. The process of how scholarships and bursaries are adjudicated should be made transparent by each Faculty and SGS.*

- Letters of Offer of Admission provide a link to the [SGS Scholarship webpage](#), with a comprehensive listing of scholarship and bursary opportunities.

- The Faculties supplement this information through program handbooks, orientations, and Faculty websites and newsletters.
5. *Inform graduate students of the array of sources from which funding is provided in each Faculty recognizing that these sources may differ substantially between Faculties.*
- Students receive a comprehensive breakdown of their funding sources updated annually.
  - Funding details, including the annual updates, are now provided centrally from the *School of Graduate Studies* at the time of promotion or transfer from master's to PhD student, ensuring clarity and standardization of the information provided.
  - Programs may supplement this information in program handbooks and orientations.
  - The new Graduate Pay System will be integrated into the Campus Solutions platform to allow students to see their student account alongside the funding they receive. A goal of this consolidated view is to help students with financial management. Support from employment (e.g., Teaching Assistantships) will continue to be provided through *Human Resources*.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BARRIERS

1. *Provide a resource with links for up-to-date local information on housing (both on and off campus), transit, medical, social, and government matters targeted to international students.*
- SGS provides a [webpage of comprehensive and up-to-date information for international students.](#)
  - *International Student Services* collaborates with *McMaster Housing and Conference Services* to deliver webinars on “off-campus housing” each term. These are recorded and available online for those who cannot attend.
  - Other orientation webinars include “Living in Hamilton”, “Healthcare in Canada”, “Banking in Canada” among others.
  - McMaster’s immigration advisors conduct monthly webinars regarding topics relevant to immigration and work, including “Working in Canada”, post-graduation work permits, study permits, visa extensions, permanent residency, and other issues.

2. *Ensure international students are aware of scholarships, bursaries, and other resources to which they are eligible.*

- We maintain an [SGS Scholarship webpage](#), with a comprehensive listing of scholarship and bursary opportunities, including those for international students.
- Faculties and programs highlight discipline-specific opportunities through orientations, program manuals, and newsletters, including those that may be oriented to international trainees.

3. *Develop opportunities through SGS and partner units to improve career readiness skills as well as advertise on- and off-campus employment opportunities for international students.*

- General information about work is provided at the [webpage of comprehensive and up-to-date information for international students](#) and through the program of webinars outlined above.
- The *Student Success Centre* provides guidance about [opportunities for on-campus work](#).
- It is likely that part-time work most aligned with a graduate students' studies is best identified within program and supervisor networks.
- Faculty initiatives provide discipline-specific opportunities. For example, the Faculty of Engineering maintains a *Centre for Career Growth and Experience* and has introduced a zero-unit course requirement relevant to career development in Engineering, across its graduate programs. The Faculty of Science provides similar opportunities for its graduate students.
- The *McMaster Office for the Development of English Language Learners* (MODEL) is a service offered free-of-charge to both undergraduate and graduate students who may need help with studying and living in an English-language environment. MODEL offers English-language training, workshops, and support, developed by certified ESL and EAP experts, to meet the needs of McMaster students of all academic backgrounds and levels of English language proficiency.
- *McMaster English Readiness for Graduate Excellence* (MERGE) is an intensive certificate program for current or prospective graduate students who are looking to improve their English-language skills. This comprehensive summer program is taught by the highest-qualified ESL/EAP instructors who have experience teaching in a university environment. The focus is to prepare graduate students for success in both the academic and professional world.

4. *Offer workshops to help international students understand the rules on employment associated with their study permits.*
  - As outlined in (1).
5. *Enlist support from University Advancement to seek out additional opportunities for scholarships that can be targeted to international graduate students.*
  - *School of Graduate Studies* senior staff work collaboratively with *University Advancement* in the development of new donor awards. They also work with the advancement teams in the Faculties to promote the development of opportunities for graduate students.

## **GRADUATE FUNDING ADJUSTMENTS FOLLOWING MAJOR EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS**

1. *Ensure that graduate students who win major external scholarships are better off financially after winning such an award, regardless of the funding adjustment practice in effect.*
  - All Faculties now have policies on graduate student funding that meet this requirement, as outlined below.
2. *Ensure there are strong incentives for graduate students to apply consistently to major external scholarships.*
  - As outlined in (1), (3), and (4), all Faculties now have policies by which a student must benefit financially if they win a major external scholarship.
  - Faculties and programs may have workshops or other supports for students writing Tri-Council agency and other major awards. These supports are not provided centrally, in part because the elements of a successful award vary somewhat by discipline. The *School of Graduate Studies* provides administrative support for students' applications, including advice about eligibility.
3. *Communicate clearly to graduate students the funding adjustment practices that are in place in advance of being asked to prepare scholarship applications.*
  - Each Faculties now has a policy that governs how funding packages may be adjusted following a major scholarship. The Faculties communicate their policy as follows:
    - *Engineering*. The policy is published under Graduate Student Resources on the Faculty [website](#), in program handbooks and communicated to the supervisor at the time of the award.



- *Health Sciences*. The policy is published by the [FHS Secretariat](#) and by the [Office of Health Sciences Graduate Studies](#). Every program is required to state its practices in their program handbook, which must conform to the FHS requirements.
  - *DeGroote School of Business* informs students about the adjustment policy in the PhD Program Student Handbook given to each student at the start of the program and on the [PhD Program website](#).
  - *Humanities* [publishes their policy online](#) and communicates the policy during student orientations.
  - *Social Sciences* [publishes their policy online](#) and in Letters of Offer of Admission.
  - *Science* has established a faculty-wide policy which is in the process of posting to their [graduate resource webpage](#).
4. *Develop uniform policies on funding adjustments for each Faculty and communicate them to their graduate students.*
- See (3).

## FOUR-YEAR FUNDING MODEL FOR PHD STUDENTS

1. *Review McMaster's PhD programs, examining curricular requirements to completion times, graduation rates, time to completion and employment prospects for its doctoral graduates, and compare these to other universities when possible.*
  - These issues are a significant focus of McMaster's Institutional Quality Assurance Process, involving periodic reviews of every graduate program. Program leaders must complete a self-study report that includes completion times and graduation rates. Programs are encouraged to survey alumni regarding post-graduation outcomes. External reviewers frequently focus on these issues, particularly when metrics appear out of line with disciplinary expectations. Comparison data for other institutions is generally not available.
2. *Investigate disciplinary cultural expectations around scholarly work, publication and thesis format as there are some disciplines that may encourage projects in excess of four years in length.*
  - The disciplinary norms are generally well-understood.

- In health sciences and STEM disciplines, four-year doctoral programs are almost universally considered the norm. Thesis-based master's programs are generally designed for two-year completion but transfer to PhD prior to completing the master's is frequently allowed, with the master's research applied to the PhD.
  - Five-year PhD completion is more likely to be considered normal in some areas of the humanities, social sciences, and business. One-year master's degrees are more common.
  - Comprehensive examinations may be a significant influence on PhD completion times. Contemporary frameworks for PhD training provide an opportunity to rethink the value, form, and function of these exams to address completion times.
3. *Explore ways to enhance the time management and writing skills of PhD students through targeted activities such as workshops and dissertation-writing bootcamps delivered by SGS and partners in the Faculties, aiming to support timely program completion.*
- The McMaster Student Success Centre provides [writing supports to graduate students](#).
  - This portal also points to resources for financial management, career counselling, and international student support
4. *Encourage programs to think of creative ways to support timely completion. An example would be integrating field research placements, community-engaged projects, internships, and fellowships that provide experience and financial support as fulfilling partial requirements for the PhD degree.*
- Relevant initiatives are underway in some Faculties:
    - In *Social Sciences*, some PhD programs offer co-op and internship opportunities. The Faculty is considering ways to expand these.
    - *Business* is reviewing its PhD fields of specialization to identify common bottlenecks to progress.
    - In *Engineering*, Co-ops and internships are an option for graduate students, with opportunities available with over 129 employers.
    - *Humanities* has been reviewing program requirements and has designed a paid internship program for fifth-year PhD students, to be piloted in 2025.

- *Science* has been discussing opportunities for Work Integrated Learning.
  - The emphasis on experiential training should be considered in relation completion times, if such training does not replace existing curriculum requirements (such as comprehensive examinations).
  - A policy on Graduate Microcredentials and Progressive Curricula will be presented for approval to governance committees in winter of 2025. The policy sets out regulations for how graduate microcredentials, coursework, and certificates can be combined progressively to meet the requirements of graduate degrees. It is intended to be a student-centred framework, whereby students may undertake graduate programming flexibly, but also provides that students who have done relevant work can apply it to accelerate completion of advanced degrees.
5. *Enlist Graduate Council and all Faculty Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committees to evaluate proposals for new program requirements in the context of completion times.*
- New program development requires the completion of a self-study in which completion times, student support, and resources relevant to student success and timely completion must be explicitly addressed.

## APPENDIX

### Excerpts: Letters of Offer of Admission International:

At the beginning of each academic year, you will receive a comprehensive breakdown of your funding schedule.

McMaster's competitive graduate funding support packages help reduce the cost of undertaking full-time graduate studies and reduce financial barriers for students but may not replace full-time employment income. For an estimation on living expenses in Hamilton, please visit this webpage: [Cost of Living in Hamilton, Ontario](#).

For more information on possible Scholarship opportunities at McMaster, please visit our webpage: <https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/scholarships/>

**\*NOTE\*** Your funding support package may be adjusted due to the following factors:

- If you are successful in winning a major external scholarship or award, the funding support above may be subject to change.
- Any changes during your program of study including but not limited to residency status and program status changes, your funding package may be adjusted.

### Domestic:

At the beginning of each academic year, you will receive a comprehensive breakdown of your funding schedule.

McMaster's competitive graduate funding support packages help reduce the cost of undertaking full-time graduate studies and reduce financial barriers for students but may not replace full-time employment income. For an estimation on living expenses in Hamilton, please visit this webpage: [Cost of Living in Hamilton, Ontario](#).

We encourage you to apply each year, if eligible, for major external scholarships and awards (e.g. OGS, SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR). For more information on Scholarship opportunities, please visit our webpage: <https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/scholarships/>

**\*NOTE\*** Your funding support package may be adjusted due to the following factors:

- If you are successful in winning a major external scholarship or award, the funding support above may be subject to change.
- Any changes during your program of study including but not limited to residency status and program status changes, your funding package may be adjusted.

# **February 2025 Graduate Council**

## **New Awards – For Approval**

### **Award Name: Dr. Irwin Feuerstein Graduate Scholarship in Chemical Engineering**

#### **Terms:**

Established in 2024 in memory of Dr. Irwin Feuerstein by his former students To be awarded by the School of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the Department of Chemical Engineering to a master's or doctoral student in the Department of chemical Engineering who demonstrates academic and research excellence. Preference will be given to students whose research is in Biochemical Engineering.

### **Award Name: The Ralph M. Barford Foundation Scholarships in Canadian History**

#### **Terms:**

Established in 2024 by the Ralph M. Barford Foundation. To be awarded by the School of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the Department of History, to a student entering a PhD program in the Department of History specializing in Canadian History who demonstrates academic and research excellence. The scholarship may be renewable for up to an additional 4 years or until completion of their PhD studies, providing the recipient maintains satisfactory progress.

### **Award Name: The Huque Family Graduate Scholarship**

#### **Terms:**

Established in 2024 by the Huque family. To be awarded by the School of Graduate Studies, on the recommendation of the Department of Political Science, to a graduate Student in the Department of Political Science who demonstrates academic and research excellence. Preference will be given to international students.

### **Award Name: The Bob Pelton Graduate Scholarship**

#### **Terms:**

Established in 2024 by friends, colleagues and students to honour the research legacy of Dr. Robert H. Pelton, a pioneer in these fields and a great mentor and friend to the department of chemical engineering. To be awarded by the School of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the Department of Chemical Engineering, to international graduate students who demonstrate academic and research excellence in the field of microgels, cellulose, polymer, or related research.

## **Term Change – For Approval**

### **Dr. Don Goellnicht Memorial Award**

#### **Current Terms:**

Established in 2020 in loving memory of Dr. Don Goellnicht by his family. The Department of English & Cultural Studies at McMaster was a significant part of Don's life. He completed his MA (1975-76), Ph.D. (1976-81), and SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship (1983-84) there before becoming a full-time faculty member (1984-2019). He will be greatly missed by many. To be awarded by the School of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the Department of English and Cultural Studies to graduate student(s) entering or in a Master's program or Ph.D. English program in the Department of English and Cultural Studies who demonstrate(s) a commitment to humanitarianism and social advocacy.

#### **Revised Terms:**

Established in 2020 in loving memory of Dr. Don Goellnicht by his family. The Department of English & Cultural Studies at McMaster was a significant part of Don's life. He completed his MA (1975-76), Ph.D. (1976-81), and SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship (1983-84) there before becoming a full-time faculty member (1984-2019). He will be greatly missed by many. To be awarded by the School of Graduate Studies on the recommendation of the Department of English and Cultural Studies to graduate student(s) entering or in a Master's or Ph.D. program in the Department of English and Cultural Studies who demonstrate(s) a commitment to humanitarianism and social advocacy.

#### **Reason for Change:**

Department/program name change.