



## **Department of Physiology and Pharmacology**

Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry  
The University of Western Ontario

# **Graduate Student Handbook**

Department Website: [www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm](http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm)

FGS Website: [www.uwo.ca/grad/](http://www.uwo.ca/grad/)

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## Overview

We train graduate students to develop skills as researchers in diverse fields of physiology and pharmacology researchers, including neuroscience, cardiovascular science, reproductive and developmental biology, endocrinology, cell biology, musculoskeletal biology, drug metabolism–pharmacokinetics, clinical pharmacology and pharmacogenomics. **M.Sc.** graduates may go on to become researchers, teachers and find employment in science and health care sectors, sometimes after additional training. Graduation from a **Ph.D.** program is essential for a career as an independent researcher and for many other career opportunities in academia, government, public policy, and the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors.

**Physiology** is the study of how the body works, and is the science of mechanical, physical and biochemical functions of tissues, organs and systems. In the biological sciences, physiology is a fundamental discipline defining the functions of organs and tissues and their inter-relationships. It encompasses numerous fields of biology including molecular biology, pharmacology, biochemistry, anatomy, cell biology, engineering and computing science.

**Pharmacology** is the study of how drugs interact with living organisms to produce a change in function, and encompasses drug composition and properties, interactions, toxicology, therapy, medical applications and anti-pathogenic capabilities. Substances with medicinal properties are pharmaceuticals, but pharmacology is not synonymous with pharmacy though they are sometimes confused. Pharmacology deals with how drugs interact within biological systems to affect function, while pharmacy is a science concerned with safe, effective use of medicines.

## Skill Sets and Academic Standards Expected of Our Students

### *Skill Sets Required Before Entering our Graduate Programs*

- High academic standing with an average of at least at 80% in undergraduate courses
- Strong commitment to pursuing research training in a selected subject area
- Enthusiasm and a high degree of interest in science and research
- Curiosity, and an open and enquiring mind
- Sound work ethic, integrity and moral standards
- Collegiality
- Perseverance and patience
- Maturity and reliability

### *Skill Sets Acquired in our M.Sc. and Ph.D. Programs*

- Excellent critical thinking skills
- Ability to integrate data and information from multiple sources, and to develop and test hypotheses rigorously
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Skills in a range of analytical techniques using sophisticated instrumentation
- Ability to work with equipment and instruments at tasks requiring precision
- Ability to co-ordinate or co-supervise the work of others
- Ability to identify problems, and to develop and implement innovative solutions
- Ability to work independently, and in teams with basic and clinical scientists

## The “Life of a Graduate Student”

While expectations of students enrolled in the M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs may vary, it should be recognized that graduate school represents a very different educational experience than that of undergraduate studies. Scientific discovery is seldom a linear process, and it is generally not possible to drive research directly towards a desired outcome. Discovery is a mixture of insight, effort, curiosity, and good fortune. All graduate students, regardless of whether they are in the M.Sc. or Ph.D. program, are expected to pursue hypothesis-based research that results in the generation of publication-quality data and to disseminate these findings to the scientific community.

**The M.Sc. program** provides an opportunity for students to explore their interest in pursuing research as a career. The normal time to completion of this degree is 2 years, but as it is important to produce a high-quality thesis, it can sometimes take longer to complete. It is not a requirement of Western’s School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) that the M.Sc. research be published, but it is a normal expectation in our M.Sc. programs that at least one high-quality publication be produced from data collected during the M.Sc. training period. Students are expected to display great enthusiasm and dedication towards pursuing their hypotheses and accomplishing the objectives that define their research projects. This generally requires working on their projects beyond a standard work week. Graduate studies are the type of vocation where the end result is nearly always determined by the effort and commitment of the student to the project. The reward for this is the opportunity to pursue research questions and lead discovery in diverse and important areas that are directed at reducing human suffering and improving our understanding of the biological world. M.Sc. students with guidance from their supervisors and Advisory Committees [see below] develop a research plan that can result in the production of significant research findings. Since research is an unpredictable enterprise it may be necessary to revise or pursue new objectives during the course of studies depending upon how productive the initial experiments are. Together the student, supervisor and Advisory Committee are all committed to producing the highest quality thesis possible and achieving this goal will always require a dedicated effort by the student. Over the course of the M.Sc. program, students also complete course requirements [details below] and normally have the opportunity to be Teaching Assistants (TA) in undergraduate courses. Graduate school can be, and often is, one of the highlights in a student’s life. Students are provided with an opportunity to work in exciting environments and share experiences with like-minded colleagues that can result in life-long friendships. Many former graduate students look back on this time in their life with fondness and realization that it represented an important period of personal development that laid the foundation for a rewarding career.

**M.Sc. students may consider a transition to the Ph.D. program.** M.Sc. students have the opportunity to transfer their registration to the Ph.D. program without completion of the M.Sc. degree requirements. This normally occurs before the end of the fifth academic term of registration. About one year before the transfer would occur, the M.Sc. student should inform his/her supervisor and Advisory Committee of the interest in pursuing transition to the Ph.D. program. At that time, the Committee will assess the student’s progress and begin discussions about how the research project would be expanded to incorporate the increased scope of a Ph.D. program. Three primary conditions must be met to ensure the Department’s support for transition to the Ph.D. program from an M.Sc. program: (1) the student must be judged by the

supervisor and Advisory Committee to have displayed the necessary aptitude for completing a Ph.D. degree, (2) the research progress must be judged by the supervisor and Advisory Committee to be outstanding and sufficient for the production of a publishable manuscript, and (3) the proposed Ph.D. project must be of sufficient scope to clearly indicate that a Ph.D. program is warranted. These conditions indicate that not all students will be allowed to transfer to the Ph.D program. Alternatively, students can complete their M.Sc. degree requirements, and then be considered for entrance into the Ph.D. program after having successfully defended their M.Sc. thesis. The normal time for completion of a Ph.D. degree following transfer from the M.Sc. program is 4 years, although this is entirely dependent on the progress in research and is contingent on the time required to produce a high-quality thesis.

**Ph.D. students** are expected to display greater commitment, independence and maturity in research than M.Sc. students. The Ph.D. is the highest degree offered by a University and not all students are expected to have the desire or ability to successfully complete a Ph.D. program. This degree requires an extensive time commitment and expectations including the production of multiple, at least 3, high-quality publications. Students entering the Ph.D. program after finishing a M.Sc. degree normally spend 3 to 5 years completing requirements for the Ph.D. Conditions described above for M.Sc students and for transferring M.Sc. students also apply to Ph.D. students. Ph.D. students with guidance of their supervisors and Advisory Committees are expected to develop a research plan that will lead to production of significant research findings. As research is an unpredictable enterprise, it may be necessary to revise or pursue new objectives during the course of studies depending upon how productive the initial experiments are. Together the student, supervisor and Advisory Committee are all committed to producing the highest quality thesis possible and achieving this goal will always require a dedicated effort by the student. Over the course of the Ph.D. program students also complete course requirements [indicated below] and have the opportunity to work as a TA in undergraduate courses. Students considering applying to a Ph.D. program must reflect carefully on their future career goals, as taking up these studies indicates that the student has the necessary passion, ability, enthusiasm, determination and drive to not only complete the program but to pursue research as a career goal. Completion of a Ph.D. degree can be a life-enriching process that enables graduates to pursue their own research directions, but it is a demanding process that will stretch the capabilities of all students. However, as with completion of the M.Sc. degree, there are few activities that will be more enriching over the course of a person's lifetime.

Enrolment in the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Programs implies compliance with a set of regulations and criteria set out for graduate students by the Department and the SGPS. The specific requirements are listed on the following pages. Continued enrolment in the programs also involves a level of productivity that will enable successful completion of the degree requirements in the time-frame outlined above. While the working time commitment will differ amongst students, it is expected that a student will spend more than 40 hours per week engaged in laboratory, or laboratory-related, work.

## Beginning a Graduate Program in Physiology and Pharmacology

Each newly-enrolled M.Sc. and Ph.D. student with their supervisor will attend an individual Orientation Meeting with members of the Graduate Studies Committee during the first 2 weeks of the start of the program. These meetings will be about 15 minutes in duration, and serve to welcome students to the Physiology and Pharmacology graduate programs and ensure that program and course requirements are clearly outlined. This meeting also provides each student with an opportunity to meet the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Studies Committee Representative (GSR) that will be a member of his/her Advisory Committee.

It is also required that new students and their supervisors discuss the contents of this Graduate Student Handbook, using the Letter of Understanding prepared by SGPS as a guideline for this discussion. Each student and their supervisor will sign the Letter of Understanding to indicate that they this discussion has taken place. The Orientation Meeting will serve as an opportunity for students to ask additional questions related to the content of the Letter of Understanding.

## Function and Composition of the Graduate Student's Advisory Committee

Each graduate student has an Advisory Committee made up of their supervisor, GSR and from 1 to 3 other faculty members. These faculty members are selected on their research expertise, and on the knowledge and skills that they can bring to the graduate student's research project. They may be members of the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology or any academic Department at Western, and occasionally may be from another university. The Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee is an *ex officio* member of every Advisory Committee, but does not normally attend. The role of the Advisory Committee is to oversee a graduate student's progress in all aspects of their degree program, and particularly to monitor progress in their research project. This Committee is also available to advise the student, either as a group or as individuals, about career development, academic and research issues. The GSR is an advocate for the student and assists in ensuring that the project and the student's performance are consistent with Department expectations. Students are normally responsible for organizing the Committee meeting, although the supervisor, GSR, Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee or any member of a student's Advisory Committee can call a meeting at any time during a student's program as required. Students are also welcome to meet individually with their Advisory Committee members at any mutually convenient time over the course of their studies.

M.Sc and Ph.D. students must hold their first meeting with their Advisory Committee before the end of the first academic term of study and should then meet every 6 months until completion of their degree. Each Committee meeting is chaired by the GSR who also records the meeting minutes and is a liaison for the student with the Department Graduate Studies Committee. The first Advisory Committee meeting does not require preparation of a full written report, and it provides an opportunity for students to meet with their Advisory Committee to outline their proposed research project. Subsequent meetings will occur every 6 months and will require the preparation and distribution of a complete advisory committee report by the student. This report should be distributed to the committee at least one week before the meeting.

The following information is designed to give newer graduate students an overview of the typical format of the Advisory Committee meeting, and to outline expectations for how students' should prepare for these meetings. The GSR begins each meeting by providing a brief

overview of the student's progress in fulfilling program and course requirements, time in program, funding, TA positions and other relevant general information. This allows development of a meeting agenda to ensure that sufficient time is given to addressing specific issues or concerns. The first Advisory Committee meeting for each student is held before the end of the first academic term of study, and focuses on a review of the student's course requirements and initial research project objectives; a written report is not required. Discussion should revolve around the specific research questions to be investigated, development of specific research objectives, and identification of experimental methods to be used. At subsequent Advisory Committee meetings [held at least every 6 months thereafter until completion of the degree requirements], students are required to distribute a written Advisory Committee report to each member of the Committee at least one week before the scheduled meeting that outlines research progress and goals for the next few months. **Additional information and a template for preparation of this report is on the Department website at [http://www.physpharm.fmd.uwo.ca/doc\\_form/Form\\_Advisory\\_Committee\\_Report.pdf](http://www.physpharm.fmd.uwo.ca/doc_form/Form_Advisory_Committee_Report.pdf)**

Students are also required to prepare an oral presentation for the meeting that outlines research progress made since the previous meeting. After the opening comments by the GSR, the student is invited to begin his/her slide presentation. This is not considered to be a formal presentation, and therefore members of the Advisory Committee may interject frequently to discuss the experimental data or approaches as they are presented. This ongoing discussion and clarification makes the presentation seem more like a conversation that generates constructive input for the student and challenges the student to think more broadly about the research project and data interpretation. For example, discussions may focus on how to trouble-shoot a technical problem, or input may be requested regarding additional avenues of research related to the overall objective. In cases where progress is limited or in cases where insurmountable concerns arise, the Committee may be of assistance in defining ways to improve progress or to refocus research objectives in a way that may be more feasible. Students and their Committees should act together to ensure that program goals for completion of the degree are met with a high level of performance. A typical Advisory Committee meeting should last about 1 hour but may extend up to 2 hours. At the completion of the meeting, notes taken by the GSR regarding progress and any challenges that have been encountered are reviewed and signed by all present. The goal of the meeting is such that students should feel they have received clear direction regarding their progress and the next stage of their research project.

The Advisory Committee also has an important role in recommending if a student should transfer from the M.Sc. to the Ph.D. program, identifying topics and examiners for the Ph.D. comprehensive examination, and in the selection of thesis examiners. The Committee provides an appraisal to the student regarding whether, in their judgment, the research is ready to be written in thesis format and submitted for defense. The Advisory Committee normally reads the thesis after the student, with the supervisor, has prepared it for submission to provide the student with additional feedback regarding its suitability for examination. At the final Advisory Committee meeting prior to thesis submission, the Committee may conduct a "mock" defense to assist the student with preparation for the thesis examination. Thus, Advisory Committee meetings serve several purposes and are designed to assist the student and supervisor in achieving the program and research goals. The Advisory Committee is an essential component of our graduate training programs, with the aim of ensuring that steady progress is achieved.

## School of Graduate and PostDoctoral Studies (SGPS) Requirements

The following information is from the SGPS website ([www.uwo.ca/grad](http://www.uwo.ca/grad)), where the most up-to-date information can be found.

Each student is expected to:

1. maintain a cumulative average of at least 70% calculated each term over all courses taken for credit, with no grade less than 60%.
2. actively pursue their research and course work at Western, except under the following conditions. A student may be absent from Western while visiting libraries, attending a graduate course at another institute, doing field work and the like. If such periods exceed four weeks in any one academic term, then formal approval is required from both the Graduate Studies Chair of the degree program and the Vice Provost of SGPS.
3. pay or make arrangements to pay all fees by the established deadline each term (see fee bill for deadline) in order to maintain registration in the program. Failure to pay fees will result in deregistration. See "Withdrawal and Readmission after Withdrawal" process.
4. maintain continuous registration in SGPS, either full-time or part-time, in each successive term from initial registration until the end of the term in which all requirements for the degree are completed.
5. complete all degree requirements within a period not exceeding, in the case of the M.Sc. degree, 3 calendar years from initial registration and, in the case of a Ph.D. degree, 6 calendar years from initial registration. For students who transfer from a M.Sc. to a Ph.D. program without completing the M.Sc. program, a maximum of 7 calendar years from initial registration in the M.Sc. program will be given to complete the Ph.D. degree. For students admitted part-time to an approved part-time program, maximum registration is 4 years. The student will be withdrawn at the end of his or her maximum registration time limit unless the Vice Provost of SGPS has approved an extension.
6. meet the following criteria to be registered as a full-time student according to guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities:
  - be pursuing graduate studies as a full-time occupation.
  - be geographically available and visit the campus regularly. It is understood that a graduate student may be absent from the University as outlined in point #2 above.
  - must not be employed by the University for **more than an average of ten hours** per week in any academic term.
  - be considered a full-time graduate student by the graduate program.
  - must have paid, or made arrangements to pay, full-time tuition fees.
  - identify himself or herself as a full-time graduate student in a degree program.

### Leave of Absence

The Vice Provost of SGPS may grant a leave of absence on medical or compassionate grounds, normally to a maximum of 3 terms, on the recommendation of the student's graduate program. The period of leave is not counted toward the student's funding period and maximum registration period. During the leave, no use can be made of University facilities or resources, including the student's supervisor and members of the student's Advisory Committee.

### **Withdrawal and Readmission after Withdrawal**

Withdrawal from a graduate program can occur in two ways. A student can withdraw voluntarily following formal notification to the graduate program. Alternatively, the program or Vice Provost of SGPS can withdraw a student from the program for failure to meet admission conditions, progression requirements, specified deadlines for completion, or failure to pay fees.

Students who have withdrawn voluntarily or who have been withdrawn and wish to complete their program must formally apply for readmission. Credit for previous work completed will be considered by the Vice Provost of SGPS upon recommendation of the graduate program. Students who are withdrawn for non-payment of fees will be considered for readmission under the following payment conditions:

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

### **Department of Physiology and Pharmacology Requirements**

The following are the basic requirements laid out by the Department for both the Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Programs. Additional information can be found on the Department website at [www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm](http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm)

#### **General Information for all Graduate Students**

Each student is expected to:

1. form an Advisory Committee during the first 6 weeks of registration in consultation with his/her supervisor subject to approval by the Department's Graduate Studies Committee.
2. meet with his/her Advisory Committee at least every 6 months. Discussions and recommendations from each meeting is to be reported to the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology Graduate Studies Administrator on the appropriate form bearing the signatures of the members of the Committee and the student. [Appendix A – Graduate Studies Representative (GSR) Report and Appendix B – Advisory Committee Report]
3. achieve an average of 78% or higher on course work to be eligible for financial support from the University in the form of a Teaching Assistantship (TA) and Western Graduate Research Scholarship (WGRS). A minimum average of 80% is required for domestic students to qualify for a Schulich Graduate Scholarship (SGS).
4. have written approval from his/her advisory committee to begin writing the thesis. This written approval is added to the student's file.
5. maintain a level of productivity that will enable successful completion of the degree requirements in the time frame established by SGPS.
6. observe all safety regulations and policies established by the University.

### **Additional Information for International Students**

International students must show original study permits to SGPS and the Department Graduate Studies Administrator upon arrival at Western. Students must also apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN) through the London Human Resources Centre of Canada located at 120 Queens Ave., London. This application requires the Study Permit/Student Authorization and a "Contract of Employment for International Students at the University of Western Ontario" provided by the Department Graduate Studies Administrator. The Graduate Studies Administrator should be notified as soon as the SIN is received.

## **Program Details: Course Information**

### **General Requirements**

SGPS requires that all courses taken by the student be approved by the Graduate Studies Chair of the student's program and the Graduate Studies Chair of the Department or unit offering the course (if the course is not from the student's program) and recorded within 1 month after the beginning of each term. Credit cannot be given for courses in which a student is not properly enrolled or for courses completed during terms in which the student has not registered.

The Graduate Studies Chair must approve requests from students to withdraw from courses. If a course is dropped in the first 4 weeks of the term in which the course begins, no record of the course will appear on the student's transcript. Between weeks 4 to 8 of the term in which the course begins, a dropped course will appear as a WDN (withdrawn) on the transcript. After the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the term in which the course begins, dropped courses will be recorded as F (failure).

Students may audit graduate courses with approval for this from the Graduate Studies Committee, Course Manager, Graduate Advisory Committee and their supervisor. The student must declare an intention to audit a graduate course at the initial registration for the course, i.e., within 1 month of the official beginning of the term. See the Graduate Studies Administrator to obtain the "Graduate Course Audit" form.

When a student does not complete the work required for a one-term half course or a two-term full course in time for the grade submission deadline, a grade of INC (incomplete) will appear on his/her transcript. INC will be changed to the grade obtained if the course work is completed prior to the grade submission deadline in the term after the one in which the INC was awarded. If a grade is not submitted by this deadline, the INC becomes an F (failure). A numerical grade submitted for an INC grade, or an F grade resulting from an INC, is final. FGS will not consider a subsequent revision of either of these grades, except on documented medical or compassionate grounds. The INC grade does not apply to full courses that are longer than two terms (in these courses an interim grade of IPR stands until the student completes the course).

Students registered at Western may take courses at other Ontario universities under the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student program, without having to pay additional tuition fees. Courses taken under this agreement must be required for the student's degree and must be taken for credit, and may not comprise more than 20% of the course requirements of any particular graduate degree.

## **Physiology and Pharmacology Program Requirements**

### **M.Sc. students**

1. Full-credit course in “Communication Skills and Critical Thinking”
2. One half-credit subdiscipline topic course
3. Suitable progress in research as assessed by the Advisory Committee
4. Thesis

### **Ph.D. students (transfer from the M.Sc. program or following completion of an M.Sc. degree)**

- 1: “Communications and Critical Thinking Course” or an equivalent course if not taken during the M.Sc. program [decisions about equivalency of courses from other graduate programs are made by the Graduate Studies Committee at the time of the students acceptance].
2. One half-credit subdiscipline topic course [a credit taken during the M,Sc. program fulfills this requirement]
3. One half-credit course in grant writing with completion of an acceptable CIHR proposal **within 12 months after starting the Ph.D. program**
4. Non-course requirements – students must complete the written and oral comprehensive examinations **within 12 months after starting the Ph.D. program** and the Department Seminar within the last year of studies
5. Suitable progress in research as assessed by the Advisory Committee
6. Thesis

### **Direct-entry Ph.D. students**

1. Full-credit course in “Communication Skills and Critical Thinking”
2. One half-credit subdiscipline topic course
3. One half-credit course in grant writing with completion of an acceptable CIHR proposal **within 18 months after starting the Ph.D. program**
4. Non-credit requirements – students must complete the written and oral comprehensive examinations **within 18 months after starting the Ph.D. program** and the Department Seminar within the last year of studies
5. Suitable progress in research as assessed by the Advisory Committee
6. Thesis

### **Notes:**

1. Additional graduate courses are available, but are optional based upon the student’s desire to take specific courses and the Advisory Committee's recommendation
2. PhysPharm 640 [Department Seminar] is no longer a course, and is replaced by a non-credit program requirement.
3. Components of PhysPharm 510-610 and Pharmacology 556b will be incorporated into the “Communications and Critical Thinking” (CCT) graduate course. All students entering the Physiology or Pharmacology Graduate Programs will take the CCT course in place of the former 510/610 and 556b courses.
4. In addition to the course requirements above, **all graduate students** are expected to attend Department Seminars during each academic year for the duration of their residency period.

### **Department Course Offerings**

Please refer to the Department Website for a listing and description of all required courses for the M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs in Physiology or Pharmacology & Toxicology. The Graduate Studies Administrator registers students in courses and specific deadlines for registration apply. Students must be registered in graduate courses (course number 9500 or higher) before the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> month of the appropriate academic term (i.e. Sept 30, Jan 31 or May 31).

Graduate students wishing to take “extra” courses (i.e. undergraduate courses) will be charged at a rate per course that is established by Western, in addition to their normal graduate student tuition. This amount is not covered by the WGRS or SGS, and payment of this additional tuition fee is the responsibility of the student. Students must register during the normal undergraduate add/drop period (roughly Sept. 15 and Jan. 18 – see Graduate Studies Administrator for exact dates). The student will also require a form, available from the Graduate Studies Administrator, to register for these courses. Students wishing to audit a graduate course must declare their intent at the initial registration for the course, i.e. within 1 month of the official beginning of the academic term when the course is offered. Please see the Graduate Studies Administrator to obtain the required form.

### **Transferring from the M.Sc. to the Ph.D. Degree**

Based on outstanding progress in the M.Sc. program, students may be considered for transfer of their registration from the M.Sc. to Ph.D. degree in the same program, without completion of all of the academic requirements for the M.Sc. degree. The Vice provost of SGPS will consider these requests on the recommendation of the student's graduate program. Transfers from the M.Sc. to the Ph.D. program must take place before the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> term of registration in the M.Sc. program. Students that complete this transfer may not subsequently transfer back to the M.Sc. program. Criteria used to determine a student's eligibility for transfer are:

- outstanding progress in the research project demonstrated by having acquired sufficient data to produce a publishable manuscript,
- development of a research project of sufficient scope to yield a Ph.D. thesis and multiple published manuscripts. This is presented in a written report to the Advisory Committee prior to discussion with members of the Advisory Committee,
- demonstrated aptitude for laboratory work,
- potential to develop as an independent investigator based on intellectual contributions to research carried out in the M.Sc. program,
- a reasonable likelihood of continuing funding to support the student and research costs

### **Program Details: Thesis Information**

Up-to-date information on the preparation and submission of the thesis is available on the SGPS website [www.uwo.ca/grad/index\\_curr.html](http://www.uwo.ca/grad/index_curr.html). The Department does not have specific requirements for literature references included in the bibliography, but it is suggested that the student use the style of a peer-reviewed scientific journal appropriate to the discipline. Other requirements for thesis formatting are defined by SGPS. Documents required for binding of the completed thesis following examination are available from the Graduate Studies Administrator.

### Timing

**To avoid incurring additional tuition costs, all thesis requirements including submission of the final examined and accepted thesis to SGPS must be completed by the end of each academic term** (i.e. Apr. 30, Aug. 31 or mid-Dec. due to the Christmas closing). SGPS allows one week for completion of revisions to the thesis following examination, indicating that the last date for an exam is approximately Apr. 23, Aug. 24 or Dec. 15 (exact dates are available from SGPS website or Graduate Studies Administrator). If academic requirements for the degree are not completed by the end of a given academic term, tuition can be prorated by the Fees Office for the proportion of the final term that a student is registered (see Registrar's website, [www.registrar.uwo.ca/GraduateStudents/Layout\\_GraduateStudents.cfm](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/GraduateStudents/Layout_GraduateStudents.cfm)).

When the thesis is considered to meet the scholarly standards recognized for the discipline and degree and is ready for examination, the supervisor, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, will assemble a list of proposed examiners. The GSR will submit these names to the Graduate Studies Committee, through the Graduate Studies Chair, for approval. Following approval, the supervisor contacts the potential examiners to discuss availability and identifies a proposed date for the thesis examination, obtains provisional consent from the members of the Thesis Examination Board and submits a completed "Proposed Master's Thesis Examination Board" form (Appendix C) or "Proposed Doctoral Thesis Examination Board" form (Appendix E) to the Graduate Studies Administrator. **For an M.Sc. student**, the "Proposed Master's Thesis Examination Board" form should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Administrator **at least 6 weeks** before the proposed examination date. As well, the M.Sc. candidate must submit a "Master's Thesis Supervisors Approval" (Appendix D) form at the same time as the proposed exam board or at the time of submission of the thesis for examination. The student is responsible for delivering the required number of copies of the thesis to the Graduate Studies Administrator **at least 3 weeks** before the examination. **For Ph.D. students**, the "Proposed Doctoral Thesis Examination Board" should be submitted to the Graduate Studies Administrator **at least 8 weeks** before the proposed date of the examination. As well, the Ph.D. candidate must submit a "Doctoral Thesis Supervisor Approval" (Appendix F) form at the same time as the proposed exam board or around the same time of submission of the thesis for examination. The student is responsible for delivering the required number of copies of the thesis to SGPS **at least 6 weeks** before the examination. Examination Board forms and Supervisor Approval forms are available from the SGPS website ([www.uwo.ca/grad/index\\_curr.html](http://www.uwo.ca/grad/index_curr.html)).

## Program Details: Roles and Responsibilities

### The Program

The graduate program should:

1. implement and follow the policies set out by SGPS.
2. provide sufficient information in the letter of offer of admission to new students, including details about sources and amount of financial support (e.g., TA, scholarship, supervisor funding) and any initial program expectations. Information should also be provided about supervision arrangements, and location of laboratory and work space.

3. provide orientation / information sessions for new and continuing graduate students. This includes an overview of program policies and requirements, expected performance and timelines for completion of degree requirements, intellectual property policies, publication and authorship issues, funding, scholarship and TA information (for international students - visa requirements and employment regulations), information on policies regarding proper conduct of research, sexual harassment and race relations, information about safety and work place regulations, procedures for complaints and appeals, and information on help lines, advisory offices, and counselling services.
4. ensure that each new graduate student has an identified supervisor, and an Advisory Committee is in place within 6 weeks following initial registration.
5. ensure that arrangements are made for an alternate supervisor if the regular supervisor departs or is absent for an extended period.
6. provide written guidelines of program policies and notification of changes.
7. assess and review each student's academic and research progress, at least on an annual basis. This would include performance on course work and research / thesis progress. The program should provide feedback to the student that may include outlining specific goals and timelines for completion of various components of the degree requirements. Feedback may also take the form of a written contract of expectations. Areas of concern and lack of progress must be clearly identified for the student.
8. identify paths / resources available to students for assistance, and if they wish to raise concerns about their program, supervisor, etc.
9. encourage open communication and feedback between students and supervisors on all issues, including supervisory practices.
10. strive to maintain an atmosphere conducive to scholarly work by graduate students, and help enhance their creativity and productivity.
11. provide mechanisms for monitoring and resolving problems that may arise between graduate students, supervisors and/or members of the Advisory Committee, and do so in a timely manner. Programs should ensure that these mechanisms are congruent with the established appeals policies and procedures laid out by SGPS and Western.
12. ensure a safe working environment for students, and inform them of all relevant safety and work regulations.
13. ensure that a supervisor has only as many students as he/she can properly supervise.
14. ensure that students are aware of evaluation criteria for all work before it commences.

### **The Supervisor**

The supervisor should:

1. make and maintain a strong commitment to devote the time and energy needed to successfully engage in graduate student supervision. As part of this commitment, the supervisor should display the highest ethical standards of behaviour at all times.

2. have sufficient familiarity with the field of research to provide guidance and supervision, or indicate a willingness to gain that familiarity before agreeing to act as supervisor.
3. discuss with the student at the beginning of his/her program: (a) degree requirements and deadlines, (b) sources of research funding, (c) policies on conduct of research, (d) safety and/or workplace regulations, (e) policies on authorship of publications, (f) ownership of intellectual property, patents and licenses, and (g) race relations, sexual harassment, appeals and any other relevant work place policies and regulations. This may involve a written agreement between the supervisor and student covering these issues.
4. communicate clearly with the student, in writing, details of the financial support provided by the supervisor, including the amount and length of time of financial support and any specific conditions pertaining to this financial support.
5. discuss and formulate with the student at the beginning of his/her program a plan of study for completion of degree requirements and thesis work, with clear milestones denoting progress. This would include, for example, assisting the student in selecting and planning a suitable and manageable research project, as well as setting a viable time schedule and adhering to it for thesis progress and completion.
6. be available for regular consultation with the student. The supervisor and student should discuss and agree on an appropriate schedule for supervision meetings, and the supervisor should provide constructive and timely feedback to the student. More generally, the supervisor should maintain open communication and feedback with the student on all issues, including supervisory practices.
7. provide regular evaluations and assessments of the student's progress and academic performance. This would include a review with the student and his/her Advisory Committee of progress on thesis research and any other relevant degree requirements.
8. make reasonable arrangements to ensure that adequate and appropriate research resources are available for the student's thesis project.
9. help ensure that the research environment is safe, healthy, free from harassment, discrimination and conflict. To this end, the supervisor should be aware of all pertinent regulations and policies covering these issues.
10. provide guidance, instruction and encouragement regarding the research activities of the student. The supervisor should help ensure that the student has access to intellectual resources and research opportunities, and should also encourage the dissemination of research results by publications and conferences.
11. monitor major discrepancies in advice given to the student by the Advisory Committee and/or supervisor, and attempt to achieve resolution and consensus on the issues.
12. be familiar with graduate program, SGPS and Western policies-procedures on graduate students and supervision, and information on graduate student financial support.
13. make satisfactory alternative supervisor arrangements if away for a prolonged period.

14. inform the program (Graduate Studies Chair or Department Chair), in a timely manner, of serious difficulties that may arise in supervision, including major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

### **The Advisory Committee**

Advisory committee members shall:

1. in conjunction with the supervisor, help the student develop a program of study, and report on the progress of the student's work by completion of the GSR Report and Advisory Committee Report. Members of the Advisory Committee thus serve to broaden and deepen the range of expertise and experience available to the student and for assessment of the student. As such, membership on this Committee should be determined by consultation between the supervisor, student, and Graduate Studies Committee and Graduate Studies Chair.
2. include a member of the Department's Graduate Studies Committee who serves the role of Graduate Studies Representative (GSR). This individual acts as chair during the Advisory Committee meetings, and is responsible for recording discussions and recommendations resulting from the Committee meeting on the required forms. The GSR also serves as chair and coordinator of the comprehensive examination in the case of PhD students.
3. assist the supervisor with the monitoring process. This includes meetings between the student, supervisor and Advisory Committee at about 6 month intervals to review progress on the degree requirements and research.
4. provide additional guidance and advice on the student's thesis research project, thus complementing the expertise of the supervisor. The Advisory Committee members should be available to provide other sources of information to the student, and also provide constructive criticism and discussion of the student's ideas as they develop.
5. be reasonably accessible to the student when called upon for discussion of the student's academic progress, consultation on issues related to the thesis research project, and for general guidance. Advisory Committee members should be reasonably available to meet at the request of the student or supervisor.

### **The Student**

The student should:

1. make and maintain a strong commitment to devote the required time and energy needed to engage successfully in graduate work and research, write a thesis, and contribute fully to the scholarly and intellectual life of the University. The student should show dedicated efforts to gain the background knowledge and skills needed to pursue graduate work successfully, and adhere to the highest standards of ethical behaviour to assure academic integrity and professionalism.
2. discuss with the supervisor at the beginning of the program: (a) degree requirements and deadlines, (b) sources of research funding, (c) policies on conduct of research, (d) safety and/or workplace regulations, (e) policies on authorship of publications, (f) ownership of

intellectual property, patents and licenses, and (g) race relations, sexual harassment, appeals and any other relevant work place policies and regulations. This may involve a written agreement between the student and supervisor covering these issues. Thus, the student should become familiar with relevant policies in these domains.

3. discuss and formulate with their supervisor at the beginning of the program, a plan of study for completion of the degree requirements and thesis work, with clear milestones denoting progress. This would include, setting a viable time schedule and adhering to it for all graduate work, including thesis progress and completion. Any variations to this schedule, including prolonged absences by the student, should be discussed. More generally, the student should maintain open communication and feedback with the supervisor on all issues, including supervisory practices.
4. discuss and agree on, with the supervisor, an appropriate schedule for supervision meetings. This discussion should also include agreement regarding appropriate time-frames for the submission of student materials to be reviewed by the supervisor, and the supervisor providing feedback to the student.
5. be reasonably available to meet with the supervisor and Advisory Committee as requested, and able to report fully and regularly on thesis progress and results. Appendix A has suggestions on format and content for written Advisory Committee Reports.
6. give serious consideration and response to comments and advice from the supervisor and committee members.
7. maintain registration throughout the program and ensure, that where required, visas and employment authorization documents are kept up to date. The student should be aware of and conform with guidelines and requirements from the graduate program, SGPS and Western on deadlines, thesis style, award applications and other academic requirements.
8. pay due attention to the need to maintain a workplace that is safe, tidy and healthy. The student should respect the work and equipment of others, and show tolerance and respect for others sharing the same facilities. This would include cleaning up work space when finished, and complying with all safety and work regulations.
9. be thoughtful and reasonably frugal in using resources, and assist in obtaining resources for the research of other group members, when applicable.
10. comply with all ethical policies and procedures governing human or animal research.
11. meet agreed performance standards and deadlines of funding organizations, to the extent possible, when financing has been provided under a contract or grant. This would include adherence to any contractual terms under which the thesis research is conducted.
12. meet terms and conditions of any financial contractual agreements, such as a TA position.
13. inform the program (Graduate Studies Chair or Department Chair), in a timely manner, of any serious difficulties that arise in supervision, such as major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

## Additional Information

### Scholarships and Awards

Each year students who are eligible may apply for external awards to cover all or part of their stipend. Relevant agencies include, but are not limited to, CIHR, NSERC, OGS / OGSST, HSFO and NCIC. The application submission deadlines are not provided here as they can change annually, but many deadlines are during the autumn academic term. In addition, the Department has internal deadlines for NSERC, OGS and OGSST applications that precede the agency deadlines as Department rankings of these applications must be submitted.

CIHR applications for Masters and Doctoral Research Awards are submitted directly by the student to CIHR. The deadlines and application process can be found at (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/193.html>). The Department does not have an internal deadline for this application.

NSERC applications are submitted through the Department to FGS following internal ranking. After pre-screening and ranking at SGPS, applications are forwarded to NSERC. Application forms can be found at (<http://www.nserc.ca/>). The deadline is in Sept. / Oct.

OGS applications, like NSERC are submitted through the Department following internal ranking. Application forms can be found at (<http://www.nserc.ca/>). The deadline is in Sept. / Oct.

OGSST is also submitted through the Department following internal ranking. Application information can be found at (<http://www.nserc.ca/>). The deadline is in Feb. / Mar.

### Contact Information

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Society of Graduate Studies	University Community Centre, Room 260 Telephone: (519) 661-3394, Ext. 83394 Fax: (519) 661-3374 Monday-Thursday, 9 am - 4 pm Friday, 9 am - 12 noon Web site: <a href="http://www.uwo.ca/sogs">www.uwo.ca/sogs</a>
Office of the Registrar	Room 190 Stevenson-Lawson Building Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday - 9am - 4pm Wednesday - 10am - 5 pm Web site: <a href="http://www.registrar.uwo.ca">www.registrar.uwo.ca</a>
Campus Recreation	Room 67, lower level UCC Telephone: 661-3090 Fax: (519) 661-3385 Web Site: <a href="http://www.uwo.ca/campusrec">www.uwo.ca/campusrec</a>
Computer Store	University Community Centre in Rm. 36B. Telephone: (519) 661-3520 Fax: (519) 661-3989 Web Site: <a href="http://www.uwo.ca/ccstore">www.uwo.ca/ccstore</a>
ITS Help Desk	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Natural Science Building Telephone: (519) 661-3800, Ext. 83800 Web Site: <a href="http://www.uwo.ca/its/helpdesk">www.uwo.ca/its/helpdesk</a>
Student Health Services	Room 11, Lower level, University Community Centre Telephone: 661-3030, Ext. 83030 Web Site: <a href="http://www.shs.uwo.ca">www.shs.uwo.ca</a>
International Student Advising	Room 210, University Community Centre Telephone: 661-3031 or 661-3559 Fax: 661-3949 Web Site: <a href="http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/int">www.sdc.uwo.ca/int</a>
Office of the Ombudsperson	Room 251 University Community Centre Monday - Friday: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Telephone: (519) 661-3573 Fax: (519) 661-3924 Web Site: <a href="http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds">www.uwo.ca/ombuds</a>

Student Development Centre

Room 210 University Community Centre  
Telephone: (519) 661-3031 or (519) 661-3559  
Fax: (519) 661-3949  
Web Site: [www.sdc.uwo.ca](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca)

Services for Students with  
Disabilities

Room 210 University Community Centre  
Telephone: (519) 661-2147  
Fax: (519) 850-2584  
Web Site: [www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd)

Parking Services

Room 15 Services Building  
Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4:30 pm  
Telephone: (519) 661-3973  
Fax: (519) 850-2330  
Web Site: [www.uwo.ca/parking](http://www.uwo.ca/parking)