

**PART 2: GRADUATE STUDENTS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY**

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## 2.1 Welcome:

Dear Biology Graduate Students.

Welcome to part two of the handbook. While the first part of the handbook contains the rules and regulations that you need to follow in the course of your studies at UWO, this section contains more general information about day-to-day survival in the department and your role within that. We hope it proves useful.

*Revised by E. Churchman & J. Martin, SOBGS, 2020.*

## 2.2 In the Department:

### A) LUNCH AND READING ROOM

A small lunchroom and kitchenette are located in BGS 2044. The Western Science “library” (3rd floor, WSC) may also be used for lunch and break time when not in use as a meeting room (available 11:30 – 1:30 daily).

### B) PAY

Pay cheques are deposited directly into bank accounts on the second last banking day of each month. (Some components are paid out once per term, i.e. WGRS and international stipend differentials if applicable. See [http://www.uwo.ca/biology/graduate/prospective/financial\\_support.html](http://www.uwo.ca/biology/graduate/prospective/financial_support.html) for details of what gets paid when. Initially, you will need to set up your direct deposit information via the human resources webpage ([http://www.uwo.ca/hr/my\\_hr/](http://www.uwo.ca/hr/my_hr/) Log in > Payroll and Compensation > Direct Deposit Account)

### C) WESTERN GRADUATE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP (WGRS)

Western’s WGRS grade qualifications are set at 70%. However, the Departmental grade requirement for entry into our graduate program is 78%. WGRS amount for domestic and international students are described in detail at [http://www.uwo.ca/biology/graduate/prospective/financial\\_support.html](http://www.uwo.ca/biology/graduate/prospective/financial_support.html). The amount of this scholarship may vary in any given year depending on the availability of WGRS funds provided by the Faculty of Science.

### D) TRAVEL FUNDS

Subject to the availability of funds, the Department of Biology endeavours to provide partial support for graduate students to attend a scientific meeting during their degree candidacy, with the understanding that grant funds are being or will be used in at least equal amount for the same purpose. Each M.Sc. student is eligible to receive up to a maximum of \$500.00, and each Ph.D. candidate is eligible to receive up to a maximum of \$1,000 (maximum of \$500 per award) during their program. These travel awards are administered on a competitive basis; in any particular year, funds may be limited and not all requests for funds can be

accommodated. Travel award application deadlines for summer and winter are available at <http://www.uwo.ca/biology/pdf/graduate/travelcriteria.pdf>.

#### E) TRAVEL AND RESEARCH CLAIMS

Fill out one expense report for each trip or group of expenses within 60 days. You will need a speed code for your expenses, check with your supervisor or other appropriate person.

1. Go to Financial Services: <http://finance.uwo.ca>.
2. Login to 'Financials & Grants'
3. Under 'Employee Self-Service' click 'Travel and Expense Center'.
4. Click 'Expense Report' then 'Create/Modify'. Note: you can save an expense report at anytime by clicking 'Save For Later', it can be accessed again by clicking 'Find an existing value' then 'Search'.
5. Click 'Add' under 'Add a new value'
6. Indicate your expense report's purpose under 'Business Purpose' and add a detailed title in 'Report description'. For default location, hit magnifying glass and select the appropriate option. Do not fill out reference. Add your speedcode to the 'Enter Speed Code Here' link below the default location box.
7. Under Expenses, have one line for each receipt/expense. Select the most appropriate expense type and select the date of the expense. Include a description of the expense and how it was used or related to the research and/or travel in the expense description box. Add additional expense lines by clicking the + button.
8. Click 'Summary and submit'. This will take you to the summary page. You can add notes here by clicking 'Event details and Research documentation'. be sure to include, purpose of travel, dates, affiliation to the grant holder.
9. Read and confirm the statement by checking off the certification box, and click 'Submit'. Print a copy of the 'Cover Page'. Attach your receipts to this page and deliver to Hillary Bain in the Main Biology Office in BGS.

Detailed instructions can be found at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/finance/training\\_reference/index.html](https://www.uwo.ca/finance/training_reference/index.html)

#### F) VEHICLE INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLING ON UNIVERSITY BUSINESS

When traveling on University business you are encouraged to use one of the University owned vehicles in Biology, if they are available and you are listed on the Drivers List housed in Corporate Insurance, (please note forms and copies of your license are to be submitted to the Biology Operations Manager (Hillary Bain) for approval and submission).

**In order to drive a University owned vehicle you MUST be listed with Corporate Insurance on our approved drivers list for the department.**

**To be added to the list the following must be true:**

1. You are on University payroll or are enrolled as a student of the University
2. You are 21 years of age or older, and hold a full 'G' Licence.

**Alternately you can rent a vehicle--below are the guidelines in relation to renting a vehicle under the University Corporate Insurance Policy.**

You must have a current paid appointment on the University's Payroll System to rent a vehicle and register the insurance through the University's Non-Owned Auto Insurance. **To be covered under the university's insurance, you MUST complete the on-line Vehicle Rental Registration Form at [http://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/insurance/rental\\_reg.html](http://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/insurance/rental_reg.html) prior to booking your vehicle rental.**

Language below is from the website--We have also included the link for more information - <http://www.uwo.ca/hr/safety/insurance/rentals.html>

### **Who Can Rent a Vehicle?**

The University's Non-Owned Auto Insurance is applicable to University employees traveling on University business. The University employee must be a licensed and qualified driver over the age 21. An "employee" is one who has been appointed officially to the University as academic or administrative staff. Coverage is extended to individuals who have a current appointment on the University's Payroll System. This would include Graduate Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants and Post-Doctoral Fellows. If in doubt as to the status of an appointment, please contact the Western Corporate Insurance office.

**If you are going to use a personal vehicle for University business it is important to note the following:**

The Western Corporate Insurance policy does not cover the use of personal vehicles for university business and with that our insurance company confirmed that the individual's personal auto insurance policy would be responsible to pay any claims - whether on or off campus. The employee must discuss the extent of "business use" with their broker and a determination will be made if an additional premium or change in rating is warranted.

**In addition you should NOT be driving your own personal vehicle to do pick up or deliveries to either the Chembiostores loading dock or any loading area on campus.**

G) OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

The Biology website provides a list of internal and external Scholarships and Awards offered to graduate students on the basis of academic merit and/or financial need. Please visit the website <http://www.uwo.ca/biology/graduate/current/> for descriptions of awards offered and eligibility requirements. In particular, see the links for Financial Support, Scholarships and Awards, Research Grants and Thesis Awards.

H) MAIL

The mail is picked up and delivered at approximately 11:30 a.m. Graduate student mail is grouped alphabetically by surname and distributed to mailboxes located in BGS 2025J. For outgoing mail, students are expected to pay for their own postage; for research related mail a speed code could be used (check with your supervisor first). Outgoing mail can be sent via the Biology office in BGS 2025. Departmental letterhead and envelopes may be obtained from BGS 2025

I) MEETING ROOMS

For reserving rooms in BGS (2084 and 3026), or NCB (301L, 340, 446A, 446B and 454) see Diane Gauley ([dgauley@uwo.ca](mailto:dgauley@uwo.ca); BGS 2025, Ext. 82542). Keys for the BGS meeting rooms can be signed out at BGS 2025. Keys for NCB meeting rooms can be signed out at NCB 301. The meeting room WSC 337 is reserved for use as a lunchroom between 11:30 and 1:30PM, at other times the room may be reserved by filling out the sign-up calendar on the door. There is also a meeting room available for meeting with undergrad students in Collip 114 with a sign-up calendar on the door.

J) AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT

For those who are preparing seminars, presentations and so on, Power Point Projection Systems are available in BGS 2084 and 3026, as well as NCB 301L, 340, 446A and 454. For other rooms, equipment may be borrowed through Diane Gauley ([dgauley@uwo.ca](mailto:dgauley@uwo.ca); BGS 2025 Ext. 82542). Equipment may be in heavy demand, so please reserve ahead and return the item(s) as soon as possible. For rooms that have projector systems permanently installed, only a laptop computer (and Mac adaptor or PC adaptor if applicable) may be required.

K) DUPLICATING AND POSTER PRINTING

Equipment is available in BGS 2025 and NCB 301 for copying a wide variety of materials. It is suggested that you ask the office staff for assistance on how to use the equipment. At present, duplicating material for research will require the pre-approval of your supervisor who will give you a copy code to use. Personal copies (e.g. copying associated with your graduate coursework) will have to be made at other facilities on campus either through the copy centre, library (cash card) or off campus. Teaching assistant related copying should use course specific copy codes (available from instructor). Poster printing facilities are available in the department through Digital Imaging Specialist Mitch Zimmer ([mzimmer4@uwo.ca](mailto:mzimmer4@uwo.ca); BGS 2026, Ext. 86778)

L) LIBRARIES

Western's libraries may be vast and foreboding places for the uninitiated. The holdings are large and are spread among a number of divisional and professional libraries. Western has a newly expanded Health Sciences library located in the Natural Sciences Building. Graduate students may borrow journals for one-week periods, and books for four weeks upon presentation of their student card. On-line literature searches, inter-library loans, microfilm reading and more are all available. The libraries provide guided tours early in the school year. <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/>

**2.3 IN THE UNIVERSITY:**

A) GRAD CLUB

Run by the Society of Graduate Students, the Grad Club is a bar in the basement of Middlesex College, open to the campus community but frequented by graduate students and faculty. In addition to a range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, the Grad Club serves food, including breakfast. It also has TVs showing many sports and an outdoor patio for use in the summer. Its proximity to Collip, BGS, and the Western Science Centre make it an ideal spot to have lunch or gather after a hard day, as well as for collaborative working. Many members of the biology department can be found there, particularly after 4pm on a Friday. <http://www.uwo.ca/sogs/gradclub/>

#### B) UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY CENTRE

The UCC - the modern looking maze located between the Social Science Building and the D.B. Weldon library - is the focus of student activities on campus, where a variety of services are located. These include The Wave restaurant, The Spoke pub, a food court, the Chaplain's office, the campus radio station, cash machines, duplication facilities, and a small mall in the basement with a post office, computer store, the university book store (also the place to find any item of clothing you can imagine with a Western logo on it), the pharmacy and a variety of other small stores.

It can be confusing to navigate, so don't hesitate to ask around for help if you are lost. Or go for a wander and discover something new.

#### C) HEALTH SERVICES

Health Services in the University Community Centre (UCC) offers a full range of medical and social services to graduate students. Canadian students applying for coverage under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan may obtain an application here, and return it to the Ministry of Health office (217 York St., 5th Floor, London, Tel. No. 433-4651) to get signed up. International students who have not made alternative arrangements are covered by UHIP, more information is available from SOGS.

#### D) HEALTH AND WELLNESS

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, students are encouraged to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre (more information contained below). Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. For example, please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/>, and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>. Information regarding health and

Wellness related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/resources.html](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html).

#### E) SPORTS AND RECREATION

A variety of sports, some more organized than others, are played by graduate students in this department. Registered full time graduate students have paid an activity fee and can use their UWO Student ID card to access facilities and programs offered through Campus Recreation (<http://campusrec.uwo.ca/>). This includes access to the cardio and weight rooms, aerobics classes, squash courts, the pool, etc. During the year competitive and recreational intramural leagues for volleyball, baseball, soccer, basketball and hockey are organized through Campus Rec. Keep your eyes open for Biology teams! Other graduate students cycle, dance, sail, scuba dive, fish, hunt, run, etc., so there is a wide variety of means by which one may burn off steam between (or instead of!) bouts of work. Just ask around and find out who is doing what. In general, teams always need players, so don't be shy!

#### F) PARKING

Parking at UWO is a perennial source of complaints, and the parking authority has no qualms about towing cars away (which can be expensive!). Graduate students may park only in peripheral (green) non-reserved lots, and ONLY if that student has acquired a parking permit. Permits can be purchased in the Support Services Building, but get them early as there is a rush in August and a long waiting list is soon established.

#### G) MUSIC

Throughout the year, various musical groups frequent Alumni Hall, the Grad Club, The Spoke, The Wave, the Faculty of Music, and a number of off-campus nightspots. World-class concerts are available free of charge every Friday at noon at the Music School. These are advertised in the Gazette or the Western News, along with ticket information. The university radio station, CHRW, broadcasts on 94.7 FM and 106.5 cable. In addition, a number of graduate students invariably sport hidden amateur musical talent.

#### H) MOVIES

Throughout the year, the Western Film Community shows relatively current feature films in the McKellar Room (UCC) on weekends at reasonable



prices. The UCC also offers a film program and video matinee gratis or for a minimal fee.

I) OFF-CAMPUS

Not all activities of interest take place on the UWO campus. London boasts a variety of night-spots and eateries to suit most tastes. The better places are best discovered by asking around the resident graduate students, faculty and staff. The city boasts numerous parks ideal for "dandelion breaks" and those times you need a little solitude.

Cycling is popular and enjoyable in London (though at times you take your life in your hands). Mild, snowy winters make X-country skiing a possibility most years. Finally, frequent excursions are planned to locations ranging from Point Pelee for bird watching, to Toronto (for museums and Big City fun). Just keep your eyes and ears open and ask around, the more you put into life at UWO, the more you'll enjoy it.