McMaster University

SCIENCE

Faculty of Science Handbook

***Disclaimer: In the event of a discrepancy between the information provided in this handbook and The School of Graduate Studies Calendar, the latter prevails.*

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Important University Policies & Regulations

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- *The School of Graduate Studies Graduate Calendar (2025-2026)*
- General Regulations on Supervision
- Dates & Deadlines
- Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines
- Accommodations, Appeals and Petitions
- Student Appeal Procedures
- Student Code of Conduct
- Copyright Policy (MILO)
- Discrimination & Harassment Policy
- Research Integrity Policy
- Thesis Completion and Defence
- Collective Agreement for TA/RA in lieu of TA

University & Faculty Services

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation, or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

***Disclaimer:**
In the event of a discrepancy between the information provided in this handbook and The School of Graduate Studies Calendar, the latter prevails.

Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

Note: Approved accommodations of previous undergraduate students at McMaster **do not** automatically apply during graduate studies. Students needing accommodation should return to SAS soon after commencement of their graduate program to implement or update your student status and to activate accommodations.

Equity and Inclusion

The Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO) is a central resource where expertise is proactively drawn upon by administrators, faculty, staff, and students: to advance unit-specific and institutional equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility goals; to enact inclusive excellence principles; and to establish respectful living, learning, and working environments that are free from harassment and discrimination, and sexual violence including through timely and procedurally fair investigative and alternative dispute resolution processes.

Human Rights and Dispute Resolution (HRDR) Program

HRDRP is one of four intake offices listed in McMaster's Policy on Discrimination and Harassment: Prevention and Response and the Sexual Violence Policy. It is responsible for facilitating the resolution of concerns and complaints and for investigating formal complaints related to issues of discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence support.

The Education, Outreach and Support (EOS) engages students, staff and faculty members through education including workshops and special events. The ESP team works closely with on and off campus partners to advance equity and accessibility and to challenge rape culture on campus. EOS also provides support to the President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC), the Anti-Violence Network and the McMaster Accessibility Council.

International Student Services (ISS)

At McMaster, international students have access to accredited experts on staff who offer extra guidance on academics, health, wellness, immigration, finances, housing, cultural and social matters.

More information can be found on the International Student Services (ISS) website.

Mental Health

Resources on Campus

No issues are too big or small. Request support for depression, anxiety, grief, relationship problems, adjusting to life in a new country, addictions, mild substance abuse, educational conflict, disordered eating, and more.

There are many on-campus resources students can reach out to:

- Student Wellness Centre: Mental Health Resources
- Student Mental Health Support
- Mental Health Resources

It is not recommended that students email about a crisis. In a crisis you can call one of the following:

Good2Talk

This is a free, confidential helpline providing professional counselling and information and referrals for mental health, addiction and well-being to post-secondary students in Ontario. Available 24/7/365.

Call 1-866-925-5454 or dial 211 and ask to be connected to Good2Talk.

Empower Me

This is an accessible counselling service which includes crisis support, as well as mental health services. You can also speak to a life coach about things like personal performance, well-being and growth, career, relationships, and finances. Available 24/7/365.

Call 1-844-741-6389.

Crisis Support

If you have immediate safety concerns for yourself or others, call campus security at 905-522-4135 if you are on campus or call 911 if you are off campus. More information is available on Student Wellness Centre website.

School of Graduate Studies (SGS)

The School of Graduate Studies website provides robust pages of information and resources including academic services, contact information, awards and funding, news, and events. Select the Accepted My Offer tab to help you get started at McMaster and the Current Students tab for important information and resources to help you on your graduate journey.

Additional SGS resources can be found here:

- SGS Main Page
- Graduate Studies Forms and Policies for Graduate Students

Security

Emergency

In case of emergency, dial 88 from any campus phone. The McMaster Security office is in the E. T. Clarke Centre, room 201, and can be contacted at ext. 24281. This office is responsible for overall security on campus. In addition, they operate a Lost and Found service (ext. 23366). Any lost items will be held for 30 days.

Emergency First Response Team (EFRT)

In cases of serious injury or accidents, McMaster University's Emergency First Response Team (EFRT) can provide advanced emergency first aid. The EFRT team is staffed by trained, certified student volunteers. The team responds to incidents across campus. To access EFRT assistance, dial 88 and Security Services will dispatch EFRT to your location.

Escort Service (SWHAT)

During the months of September through April, students operate an escort service, “Students Walk Home Attendant Team” (SWHAT). After dark, if you call (905)525-9140 ext. 27500, you can arrange to be escorted to your car or residence by a male and a female student. During the months, May to

August, the Campus Security will look after escorting you to your car or residence. The extension remains the same: x27500.

McMaster Safety App

Download the McMaster Safety App for safety alerts, such as campus closures and emergency instructions. The app is available for free download on the Apple and Android app store. For more information, click here.

McMaster Security Office

McMaster Security Officers act under the authority of the Ontario Police Act to enforce federal and provincial regulations. They are here to protect, not to harass you. Students who violate these statutes and bylaws are subject to arrest, prosecution and/or disciplinary action under McMaster's Student Code of Conduct. The Security Office can be reached at ext. 24281.

University Technology Services (UTS)

UTS is McMaster's central IT department, providing IT services and support to students, faculty, and staff. Services include help with emails, passwords, Office 365, and more.

University Technology Services can be reached on ext. 24357, or via live chat or by submitting a service ticket here.

Health & Safety

Core Health and Safety Courses

All students must successfully complete *and abide by* the following core health and safety courses:

SAFE training *(replacing Slips, Trips and Falls, Asbestos Awareness, Fire Safety, Ergonomics)*
Health and Safety Orientation
Violence and Harassment Prevention
WHMIS 2015

McMaster University Laboratory Manual

This manual is intended to provide basic rules for safe work practices in a laboratory. The procedures may be supplemented with Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) where applicable and with information on roles, responsibilities and specific procedures outlined in the university's

Risk Management Manual (RMM). This is mandatory reading for all employees, graduate students and volunteers working in laboratories. This manual applies to all campus labs. The manual is available on the human resources website.

Eye Safety Regulations

All people entering an active laboratory must wear eye protection. The specific type of protection will be determined by the actual hazards present. Graduate students should discuss this with their Faculty Supervisor.

Fire Safety Procedure

In the case of fire, or the sounding of an alarm, "Get Out and Stay Out". Evacuate the building by the closest exit. You should be at least 50 feet away from the building and not return until the "All Clear" is given by the Fire Warden. Please become familiar with the closest fire exit to your lab, office and classrooms.

Chemical Waste Disposal

- Hazardous chemical waste will be picked up from your laboratory every Tuesday
- You must wait for the waste management company to arrive at your laboratory for the pickup.
- By Friday 9:00 AM prior to the pick-up on Tuesday, you are required to provide EOHSS with a copy of the chemical waste disposal record by e-mail at waste@mcmaster.ca.
- All waste must be identified and properly labeled. Unlabeled waste will not be accepted.
- Do not pour hazardous chemicals down the drains, including any organic solvent or acids/bases that have not been fully neutralized.
- Sharps, broken glass and pipette tips are disposed of as hazardous or biohazardous waste.
- Do not throw hazardous chemical waste into the garbage bins.

Full guidelines are available here.

IT Security

With an increase in online work, there is an increase in cyber threats. Email phishing and malware attacks are on the rise. Click here to learn more about email phishing, anti-virus software and tips for creating a strong password. Consider taking the UTS Phishing Course on Avenue to Learn.

Reporting of a Safety Incident

Any incident, which could have resulted in injury must be reported to the Department immediately, through your Faculty Supervisor. The University is required, by law, to report such incidents to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

The online Injury/Incident Report is available on the Human Resources website, under "Quick Links".

- Incident Report

Academics

Policies

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by university instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in Teaching and Learning

Please refer to the MacPherson Institute Guidelines regarding the use of generative AI (e.g. OpenAI's ChatGPT) in teaching and learning. These guidelines were developed by the Task Force on Generative AI in Teaching and Learning and will continue to be updated as the Task Force explores additional topics and as technology rapidly changes.

Provisional Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in Research

While generative AI offers promising new avenues for enhancing pedagogical approaches and advancing research, we approach its integration with thought and consideration. As we explore its applications, we continue to prioritize the informed engagement of our community. We invite our students, faculty, alumni, and partners to join us in this exploration, ensuring that our approach to AI remains rooted in our collective values and the broader interests of our community.

The guidelines can be reviewed here. All graduate students are expected to engage in discussions with their supervisors around GenAI and confirm if or how GenAI may be used in their research or milestones. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification from the Associate Chair (Graduate).

Intellectual Property and Student Ownership

The university signs intellectual property and ownership agreements with a company and hence the terms of these agreements apply to all members of McMaster, not just the project supervisor. Students are encouraged to talk to their supervisors about the terms covering their research project to understand how their contributions will be weighted in the intellectual property generated and whether any review of theses and papers is required by the industrial sponsor before public disclosure. Student should review the IP Policy here.

Plagiarism-Checking Software (iThenticate)

Effective December 1, 2023 the university requires all Master's and Doctoral theses to be reviewed by iThenticate, a plagiarism-checking software, before being seen by an external reviewer (Doctoral) or the finished copy submitted (Master's). This requirement can be found in the University's Research Plagiarism Checking Policy, which can be found on the Secretariat website. This requirement is not meant to catch plagiarism but rather to prevent it. By helping students detect sections of text requiring revision before the document is released to the public, the use of this tool can avoid otherwise serious allegations.

Student and supervisor will work together to revise any sections of the thesis that may be overlapping with previously published content that the student does not have permission to copy; sandwich theses are expected to have a substantial amount of already published content, but in this case the student should have sought, and been granted, permission to use it in their document. The student's supervisor is responsible for confirming the thesis is ready to submit.

Enrolment – Section 2.5 of the Graduate Calendar

1. **Full-Time Student**

A full-time student is one who is studying on a full-time basis; treating studies like a full-time job; attending to coursework and research in a professional manner; being in consultation with and available to their supervisor at regular intervals (daily and/or weekly by mutual agreement) to monitor progress.

2. **Part-Time Student**
   A part-time student is one who usually has a full-time job outside the university but wants to work towards his or her graduate degree on a part-time basis. A part-time student is limited to 3 graduate courses (9 units) per academic session (Sept 1 – Aug 31) and will usually take more time to complete the degree. Part-time students are not eligible for financial support from the department; nor teaching assistantships; nor scholarship equivalent.

3. **Status Changes (FT to PT; PT to FT; Withdrawal; Re-admission to Defend; Program Transfers, Leaves of Absence and Parenting Leave; Full-time Off-Campus)**
   Students who wish to change their status (full-time to part-time; part-time to full-time; transferring from Master's. to Ph.D.; withdrawal from the program; going on leave of absence, studying full-time off-campus), and former students who wish to be readmitted to the program, are expected to complete paperwork within a timeframe that permits their change to be effective on the first day of the next term (September 1st, January 1st or May 1st). Paperwork should be submitted to SGS at least one month in advance of an expected transition. Please see the Graduate Administrative Assistant well in advance to ensure that all paperwork is completed in a timely manner.

FACULTY OF SCIENCE REQUIREMENTS

All Degrees

In order to receive a degree, students 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.

Upon Arrival

For information on your McMaster ID card, please visit MacCard.

Condition Clearing

Conditions must be cleared by the date indicated on your offer letter. This does not restrict your current enrolment. However, failure to clear conditions by the deadline may result in your offer being rescinded. Please follow the instructions as indicated by the Graduate Administrative Assistant and the School of Graduate Studies regarding condition clearing. More information can be found on the Conditions of Admissions page.

Student Authorizations (International Students Only)

International students admitted to graduate studies degree programs must have a valid study permit issued by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), provided that their program of study is longer than six months.

Student permit extensions take some time to process, so please plan accordingly. Last-minute requests do not constitute urgency. Canadian Social Insurance Numbers (SIN), study permits and passports have expiry dates. The responsibility for maintaining up-to-date documentation lies with you – the graduate student.

Note: Department staff cannot provide information about Visa or immigration. Students should contact the Immigration and Mobility Advisor via the university's international student services (ISS) website.

SGS 101 / SGS 201

Graduate students are required to complete the following two (2) online courses:

- SGS 101 – Academic Research Integrity and Ethics
- SGS 201 – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act – AODA Training

*Students are required to take these online courses in Mosaic only once during their graduate career at McMaster University. All students must pass and abide by these online SGS courses. Each course takes approximately one hour to complete and consists of watching an online presentation followed by a test. Anyone who has not completed either of the following courses by the deadline provided by SGS will be automatically assigned an F grade.

Check your Mosaic Student Centre to ensure that you are registered in these courses. If they do not appear in your course schedule or in Avenue to Learn, please contact the School of Graduate Studies at sgsrec@mcmaster.ca.

SGS 700 / SGS 711

Graduate students are required to enrol in the placeholder course, SGS 700 or SGS 711, if they are not taking another course in that term (SGS 700 for programs charged per term; SGS 711 for programs charged per course). If you do not add a course in each term, you may have impacts on aspects of your student life, including scholarships, fee assessment and ordering transcripts.

Additional Information

Academic Advisement Reports

Mosaic offers graduate students the Academic Advisement report tool as a method of tracking your progress towards graduation via completion of your curriculum requirements. A guide on how to use it can be found here.

Failing a Course or Milestone

The minimum passing grade in a graduate course is a B- (70-72%). Failure in either a course or a milestone is reviewed by the appropriate Program representative or the Associate Dean Graduate Studies in the Faculty, and may result in withdrawal from the program. 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. Further details can be found in Section 2.6.11 of the Graduate Calendar.

Regulations for Degree Progression

It is the student's responsibility to follow the academic calendar's degree progression in order to successfully obtain their degree. Further details can be found in Section 3 of the Graduate Calendar.

Masters's

Supervision of MSc/MA students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar.

Master's Supervisory Committee Meeting

It is recommended that all thesis-based Master's students have a supervisory committee meeting in the first 12 months of their program.

Thesis Defence

Examination Committee

The examination committee composition for each program can be found in the program-specific section of this handbook.

Plagiarism Check

Thesis candidates are required to use plagiarism-checking software, iThenticate, before submitting. Students must speak with their supervisor for directions on how to submit their thesis through the plagiarism-checking software.

The supervisor must sign off on the originality report of the student's thesis after they scan their theses for originality using iThenticate.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Supervision of Ph.D. students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar.

Ph.D. Supervisory Committee

As soon as possible, and no later than twelve (12) months after commencing doctoral studies, a supervisory committee for the student shall be approved by the Department Chair or their delegate, on the recommendation of the supervisor and in consultation with the student.

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.

Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting

The Ph.D. student's supervisory committee shall meet with the student a minimum of once a year **and submit their report** before November 30th. **Committee meetings should be planned and scheduled with this deadline in mind**. Note some programs may have earlier deadlines (see program-specific section of this handbook). Additional and/or subsequent meetings shall be held

to monitor progress towards the comprehensive exam as well as the completion of the thesis, as needed.

Supervisory Committee Report Deadlines

The deadline for completion of the supervisory committee report for students who have been in the program for one semester or more is November 30, 2025 or within ONE year of starting the PhD program, whichever comes **FIRST.**

Student start date of January or May 2025:	Deadline is November 30, 2025
Student start date of September 2025:	Deadline is November 30, 2026
Student start date of January or May 2026:	Deadline is November 30, 2026

Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting Procedures

Students must talk to the Graduate Administrative Assistant to initiate the report. Students will receive this message via email:

Dear Student Name,

All PhD students must meet at least once a year with their supervisor and committee.

Our records indicate that you should have a meeting this year. Please work with your supervisor, and/or graduate office to arrange a meeting date and time. Once a date has been fixed, please click on the link below to initiate the report to be submitted by you to your committee and supervisor, prior to the meeting.

[Link to student's report]

Student Records

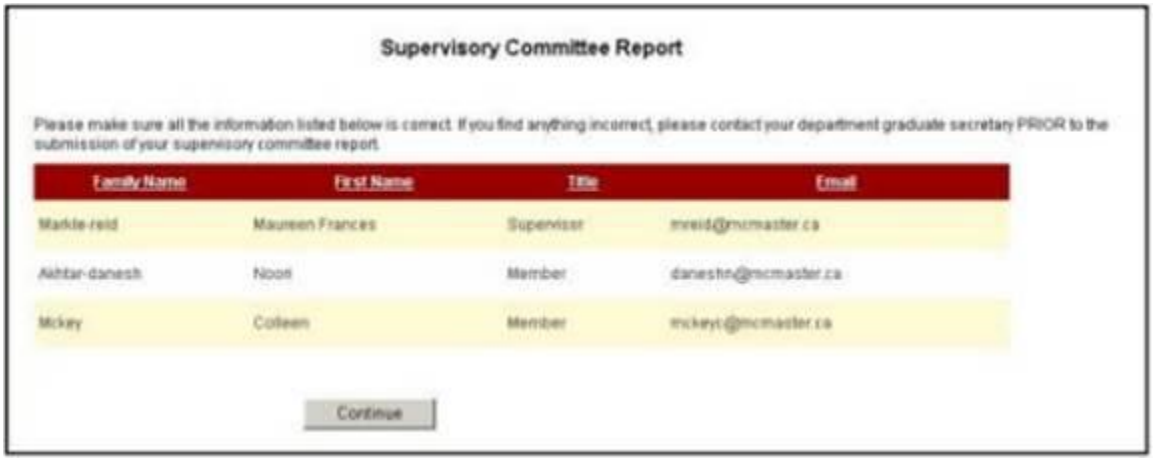
School of Graduate Studies

Follow the instructions at the link in the email to complete your Annual Supervisory Committee Report. (Images from the online report appear on the next page.)

Please refer to the department section of the handbook for program specific details of procedure and timelines.

Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting Online Report

The link will bring the student to the following screen.



- If the committee is correct, select Continue.
- If the committee is incorrect, close the page and contact the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

Student Begins Report

- Once the student confirms their committee, they'll be shown a screen where they will begin to enter information about their new meeting.

- They'll also be asked to report on their progress since their last report (or since they started their research if this is the first report).
- The student will click Submit, and the primary supervisor will receive an email.

Supervisor Adds to Report

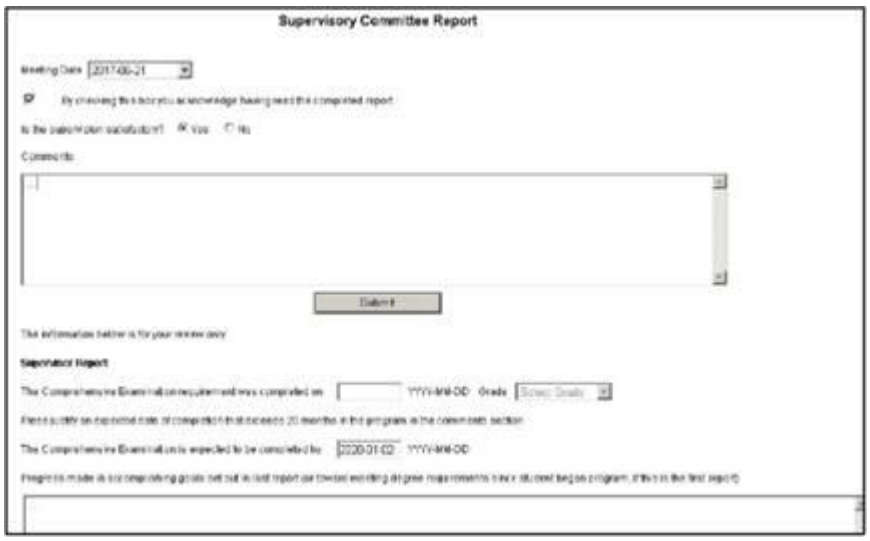
- After the student clicks Submit, the primary supervisor will receive an email inviting them to see what their student submitted.
- The supervisor will complete their portion of the report and select the members who will be signing off on the report. An email with a link will be sent to each selected member of the committee.

Committee Rates the Report

- When the supervisor clicks the Submit button, each selected committee members will receive an email with a link inviting them to review the report.
- The committee member can view the student's report and must click the tick box acknowledging they've read it.
- The committee member will also rate the report from the drop down. The default is Excellent.
- The system now sends the report back to the student to view.

Student Reviews the Report

- The student receives a final email to view their supervisor's report, committee rating and if they are satisfied with the supervision.
- When they select Submit, the report will be sent to the Department Chair/Associate Chair (Graduate) for approval.



Department Chair Approval

- An email is sent to the Department Chair/Associate Chair (Graduate). They can see the report and choose to approve it.
- The default is Yes.
- Clicking Submit will complete the report.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to test the breadth of knowledge and maturity of approach over a range of topics that are both within and peripheral to the student's discipline. The student's level of achievement in this examination will determine possible academic background deficiencies that the candidate may have. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination is a necessary requirement for the candidate to continue in the program.

Comprehensive Exams are private examinations, open only to the student and their comprehensive examination committee.

The student is expected to complete all requirements of the comprehensive examination **within 12 to 20 months of first registration in the Ph.D. program, with an upper limit of 24 months.** Part-time students must take the comprehensive examination by the end of their 36th month.
Please refer to the program section of the handbook for program-specific details of procedure and timelines.

Examination Result

- The candidate's achievement shall be judged as: Pass with Distinction, Pass, or Fail.

Ph.D. Thesis Defence

Plagiarism Check

Thesis candidates are required to use plagiarism-checking software, iThenticate, before submitting. Students must speak with their supervisor for directions on how to submit their thesis through the plagiarism-checking software.

The supervisor must sign off on the originality report of the student's thesis after they scan their theses for originality using iThenticate.

Procedure

The thesis defence starts with the student presenting an oral statement about their thesis of approximately 15 minutes duration (in no case more than 20 minutes). The student should stress the main points of the contribution to knowledge and the principal technical difficulties either of an experimental or theoretical nature which they have overcome. A simple summary of the thesis is neither necessary nor desirable. This is followed by one round of questions and another round of follow-up questions, as appropriate. The duration of the PhD defence (including the candidate's presentation) will not normally exceed three hours. If the examining committee is not satisfied with the candidate's performance in the thesis defence, the candidate must retake the defence after completing any thesis revisions which may be recommended by the examining committee. The student must be informed in writing of the conditions they must meet to be able to succeed in the second and final defence.

Regulations/guidelines for thesis writing, submittal and defence can be found here.

Review the following:

- Ph.D. Defence Flowchart
- SGS Final Submission – Final Thesis Checklist (PhD (Doctoral) > Step 3. Submit)

Please refer to the department section of the handbook for program specific details of procedure and timelines.

Financial Matters

Quick Links

- Payroll Information
- Payment Schedules
- Pay Statement Guide
- Tuition Fees
- Refunds
- Scholarships Database
- Graduate Students Association (GSA) Health and Dental Insurance Plan
- University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) for International Students
- OSAP/Government Aid
- Social Insurance Number (SIN)

Cost of Living and Tuition Fees

Topics, such as cost of living and tuition fees, can be found on The School of Graduate Studies' website under "Cost of Living" or on The Registrar's website under "Graduate Fees": Tuition and Supplementary Fees.

Grad Pay

Most full-time graduate students admitted to the thesis-based Master's and Ph.D. programs in McMaster Science will receive financial support in the form of a teaching assistantship and a departmental scholarship. The minimum level of support varies from year to year.

Research scholarships and departmental scholarships are paid as one lump sum two or three weeks into the start of a new term; TA income is paid biweekly during the term(s) in which you are a TA.

In order to receive research scholarships and TA income, you will need to ensure that you are properly set up on the Student Centre module (under Graduate Studies' Banking webpage, click "If you are receiving a Research Scholarship, TA, and/or RA in Lieu of TA" to see instructions on how to enrol in direct deposit)

In addition to the above, **to receive TA income,** ensure that you are properly set up on the Human Resources module (students must submit their payroll information via the online Employee Self-Service portal in Mosaic).

If you do not see the Enrol in Direct Deposit (Student) tile on your Mosaic Homepage, please log into University Technology Services' (UTS) Client Services Portal (again, using your MacID and password) and select:

1. "General Requests"; then
2. "Report a Problem".
3. Detail your issue in the blank field, then click "Create". Please monitor the portal for confirmation that the tile has been added to your Mosaic Homepage. Detail your issue in the blank field, then click "Create". Please monitor the portal for confirmation that the tile has been added to your Mosaic Homepage.

***IMPORTANT: If you complete any of the previous steps improperly and/or are not fully enrolled in the Fall 2026, Winter 2027 and Spring/Summer 2027 terms by August 1, 2026, your payments will be delayed until a correction is made.**

Pregnancy/Parental Leaves

Information can be found here, including regarding the parenting grant. Also note students who are paid out of an NSERC grant, and those receiving awards directly from NSERC, may be eligible to receive up to 12 months of paid parental leave. Further information can be found here.

Scholarships, Fellowships, Bursaries and Other Awards

Graduate students are encouraged to apply for any scholarships for which they are eligible. A list of scholarships available can be found on the Graduate Studies Scholarships page.

Keep an eye on your email; many of these opportunities will be advertised through that medium. Awards such as NSERC Canada Research Graduate Scholarships are announced in the Fall term, as well as most donor-funded awards. Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) applications are announced in the Winter term. Department-specific awards are often announced between the Winter and Spring terms.

If a graduate student holds a major award (such as NSERC, CGS-M, CGS-D, PGS-D, OGS, QEII GSST, Vanier, etc.), the total stipend provided by the program may be reduced by up to $2,500 per term for each term in which the student holds the award. Any scholarship greater than $10,000 is considered a major scholarship.

Teaching Assistantships

First Time Teaching Assistants (TA)

All first time TAs at McMaster are required to complete five hours of paid mandatory TA training which will include instruction on topics in pedagogy and anti-oppression. This mandatory training is a one-time requirement separate from, and in addition to, other training that you may be expected to complete as part of your employment (which may include general orientations, institution-wide mandatory health and safety training, and assignment-specific health and safety training required by your Employment Supervisor).

Self-registration for training courses is available through the Regulatory Training Tile on the Mosaic homepage. Once registered, carefully follow the directions under on the welcome page on Avenue to Learn. More detailed instructions will be emailed to students before the beginning of each semester.

Important notes:

1. Training should be completed within two weeks of your assignment.
2. A short quiz follows each module on Avenue to Learn, and a score of 100% is required on each quiz. These quizzes can be taken repeatedly until the required score is reached. *These quizzes trigger the payment process - if the quizzes are not successfully completed (i.e. 100%), you risk not being paid for these five hours.*
3. This training is a one-time requirement for the first time that you TA at McMaster. You will not be paid for more than 5 hours of training, even if you TA for multiple faculties.

For more information, please refer to the links below:

1. Mandatory TA/RA in Lieu Training (Anti-Oppression and Pedagogy)
2. MacPherson Institute New TA Programming

Returning Teaching Assistants

If for any reason, a returning TA has not taken the five-hours of mandatory training (due to being away on a leave of absence or co-op placement), the TA will be required to complete this training and will be compensated accordingly.

Resources and Useful Information for Teaching Assistants

Before commencing your Teaching Assistantship duties, you must complete all TA training and complete the following forms in consultation with the course instructor and submit the completed forms to the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

1. TA Hours of Work Form
2. TA Performance Expectations Form

A useful guide is provided here.

Travel and Expense Claims

Please consult the progam-specific section of this handbook for details.

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University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP)

UHIP is a mandatory, comprehensive health insurance plan that provides health coverage for international and incoming exchange students. UHIP covers medically necessary doctors and hospital visits within Ontario for international students, incoming exchange students and dependants (spouse and children).

For more information, click here.

Coverage

Through UHIP, your necessary medical costs are covered for the entire academic year, from September 1 to August 31 with a few exceptions for incoming exchange students and other students with plans to study at McMaster for fewer than 12 months.

Your UHIP coverage begins on the tenth day of the month before your academic term start date or your scheduled arrival date in Canada, whichever is later. If you plan to arrive in Canada before your UHIP coverage begins, the department recommends that you purchase additional medical insurance. This way, you'll be covered if you need to access health care before your UHIP coverage starts.

Enrolment of UHIP

If you're an international student, you're automatically enrolled in UHIP every year. However, it's your responsibility to ensure your coverage is correct. Check your account on your *Mosaic Student Center > Finances > Other Financial > View/Maintain UHIP*.

UHIP Card

In late August/early September, your UHIP provider, Sun Life Financial, will send an email to your McMaster email account with your UHIP card attached. To make sure you receive your UHIP card, please make sure you've activated your McMaster email account.

When you receive your UHIP card, print a copy, and always carry it with you. This way, you'll have it easily accessible in case you need to seek medical care.

If you have dependents living in Ontario with you, please contact the university's international student services (ISS) at uhip@mcmaster.ca for further information on how to register your dependents for UHIP. **Dependents must enrol in UHIP within 30 days of arrival in Canada.** More information is available on the university's international student services (ISS) website.

STUDENT LIFE

Quick Links

- Housing and Student Life
- Graduate Student Orientation Hub
- Athletics and Recreation

McMaster Science Graduate Student Association (SciGSA)

The Science Graduate Student Association (SciGSA) is a group of enthusiastic students bringing scientists from diverse fields together to make a difference in the graduate student experience at McMaster University. They run social events throughout the year, as well as their big event, The Alumni Social which happens annually around March.

More information is available on the SciGSA Website.

Graduate Students Association (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) advocates for the needs of the collective, acts as a resource, and provides support and services that improve the graduate student experience. Some of the service available include Health and Dental, HSR Bus Pass, and Empower Me. The GSA also hosts a number of events, clubs and recreational activities throughout the year. Visit the Graduate Student Association page for more details.

Studentcare Health Plan/Dental Plan

Initiated by your student association, the Studentcare Health Plan provides students with unique health benefits. The Plan was designed by students for students to provide many important services and cover expenses not covered by a basic health-care plan (i.e. OHIP), or the equivalent (e.g. UHIP for international students) such as prescription drugs, health practitioners, medical equipment,

travel health coverage, and more. A comprehensive dental plan was added to cover those graduate students who were not covered by the CUPE 3906 plan (except for Divinity students).

Please note all GSA members are automatically enrolled in the Studentcare dental plan and are assessed the fees as part of their supplementary fees paid in September. Students who have a TA, or an RA in lieu, will be covered by the CUPE 3906 dental plan are automatically opted out of the Studentcare dental plan and will receive a reimbursement cheque.

Graduate students who are covered by an alternative health and/or dental plan can upload proof of coverage using the Studentcare's secure website.

Please remember that you need to pay the Studentcare plan fees on your student account. As mentioned above, once you are opted out, you will be receive your reimbursement cheque directly from Studentcare. More information, including opt out dates, is available on the Graduate Student Association website.

MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Quick Links

- Campus Map
- Accessibility Floor Plans
- Parking and Transit Services
- OMBUDS Office
- Supervisory Relationships

Letter/Verification Requests

Please refer to the list below for instructions on requesting various letters and verifications:

- Degree verification
- Enrolment verification
- Proof of graduation
- Study permit /Extension of study permit
- Transcript request

MacQuest

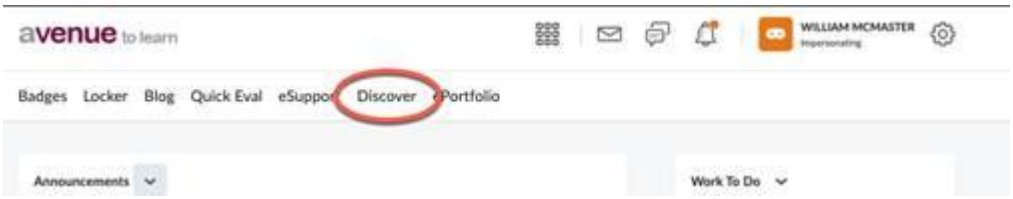
MacQuest provides on-campus searchable navigation, including indoor floor map visualization and other campus-related services. Users can use the app to navigate from class to class; it also lists last, next, and following bus arrival times near campus by bus stop and route number. It also allows users to look for nearby bathrooms, stairs and elevators.

The app is available for free download on the Apple and Android app store.

Careers & Professional Development

Build Professional and Technical Skills

Discover the Technical Communications for Graduate Students module on Avenue2Learn: The Art and Science of Persuasion, Audience Analysis, Writing for Publications, Proposing and Reporting a Project, Presentations and Visualizing Data, How to Give an Oral Presentation. All essential skills for success in today's competitive market.
After logging in, click on the 'Discover' link, and search for 'Technical Communications for Graduate Students' to find the course.



Thesis Writing and English Language Skills Development

If you are having difficulty with the English language and thesis writing, there are several on campus resources available to help you. The following are particularly useful:

McMaster Office for the Development of English Language Learners (MODEL). This is a FREE service designed to help students with the English Language. They offer training, workshops and support to meet student needs of all academic backgrounds and English language proficiency. You can get more information at MODEL | MELD Office.

The School of Graduate Studies also offers help with Thesis writing. Often, the Thesis writing can be the stumbling block for students to graduate on-time. Using their resources at the start of one's graduate study can significantly help with the writing process. Please check out their resources at Graduate Writing – School of Graduate Studies.

The Student Success Centre also has resources to support student development and careers. The Science Careers & Experience Centre runs events and workshops all year to help students prepare for careers outside of Academia. They also offer 1-on-1 consultation.