

[NOTE: Content is the same but reordered, and I added **highlights and underlines** to stress key points. Notes added in square brackets] – Rob

Graduate Supervision Policy

Approval: Senate

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Responsibility: Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

Purpose

High quality academic supervision is key driver of graduate education at Queen's. Productive supervisory relationships promote a thriving university research culture where students are supported to make meaningful contributions to their field of specialization. The purpose of this policy is to **outline the roles and responsibilities of Graduate Students, Supervisors, Supervisory Committees, Graduate Programs, and the SGSPA** regarding academic supervision for graduate studies within the SGSPA.

Scope of this Policy

This policy pertains to all members of the University community who are stakeholders in academic graduate supervision. Therefore, the scope of this policy includes the following stakeholders: Graduate Students registered in research-based Graduate Programs at the University (i.e., students in Pattern 1 and 2 Master's programs and all doctoral-level programs), graduate academic Supervisors, members of Supervisory Committees, Graduate Programs, and the SGSPA.

All stakeholders in the graduate supervisory relationship will be governed by the University's policies and relevant collective agreements.

NOTE I: For those Graduate Students who are also employees of the University (e.g., employees taking courses on a part-time basis, Graduate Teaching Assistants, Graduate Teaching Fellows, Graduate Research Assistants) **this policy applies only to their academic activities as Graduate Students** (e.g., all degree requirements including thesis/dissertation research).

NOTE II: This policy does not apply to graduate students who are not required to carry out a thesis/dissertation/major research paper/project as part of their degree requirements. Further, this policy excludes graduate internship or placement supervision. Supervision for graduate internships and placements is subject to program-specific guidelines and professional standards, where applicable.

Policy Statement

The University is committed to ensuring high-quality, effective supervision to support successful graduate education and research within an inclusive and positive scholarly environment. Consistent, high-quality supervision is essential for Graduate Student progress, success, and wellbeing, and for advancing the University's research profile.

As a foundation for effective graduate supervision at Queen's, this policy endorses the following principles for graduate supervision:

- **Mutual Respect:** Maintain a positive learning and research environment by treating one another – Graduate Student and Supervisor – with respect, exercising understanding in times of difficulty and extenuating circumstances, and support for the achievement of milestones.
- **Open Communication:** Early and ongoing communication between Graduate Students and Supervisors/Committee Members is essential to direct and re-direct Graduate Student work and respond to changes in planned activities.
- **Goal-directed Learning and Progress Monitoring:** Discussing and establishing learning and research goals in relation to expectations for advanced research, monitoring goal progress, and mutually revising goals when necessary has been shown to accelerate and encourage Graduate Student progress.
- **Responsive and Timely Feedback:** Be reasonably accessible to Graduate Students by providing descriptive, actionable, and timely feedback following program expectations. Inviting Graduate Students to respond to feedback is a fundamental academic skill that propels Graduate Student work forward.
- **Leveraging Resources for Wellbeing and Success:** Leveraging university-wide resources (e.g., SGS, Graduate Student Wellness Services, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Human Rights and Equity Office, Employee and Family Assistance Program) can support both Graduate Students and Supervisors in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

Roles and Responsibilities

Graduate Student:

The role of the **Graduate Student** is to **focus on learning and research to complete their academic requirements including their dissertation, thesis, or major research paper within the expected time frame** in accordance with enrolment status (i.e., full-time or part-time). By agreeing to work with a Supervisor, a Graduate Student enters **an academic partnership that will support the Graduate Student's academic development and contributions to their field of specialization.**

The primary responsibilities of the Graduate Student are to:

- **Be familiar with the policies, procedures, and regulations of the Graduate Program, the SGSPA, and the University and ensure all required training is obtained (e.g., lab safety, research ethics). [See also the Guide to Graduate Studies on the Biology website]**

- Early in the supervisory relationship, access resources and/or training offered by SGSPA, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, or equivalent to gain a thorough understanding of principles and practices for engaging in a successful Graduate Student-Supervisor partnership.
- Be familiar with and adhere to the Student Code of Conduct.
- Conduct research with the highest standard of ethical and scientific practice; adhere to the University and Tri-Council policies on research.
- Follow and adhere to principles of academic integrity as articulated in departmental/Faculty, SGSPA Academic Calendar, and the University's Academic Integrity policies, procedures, and regulations.
- Maintain an academic and professional Graduate Student-Supervisor relationship that abides by the SGS Conflict of Interest regulation as found in the Academic Calendar, University's Conflict of Interest policy, and the University's harassment and discrimination policies.
- Consult with Queen's Student Accommodation Services and review the SGS regulation on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities if an accommodation(s) is sought in connection with a disability and discuss all accommodation needs with your Supervisor and Graduate Program Chair.
- Follow the SGS Protocol for Short-term Academic Consideration if an extenuating circumstance impacts or has impacted their ability to fulfill academic requirement(s) in a timely manner.
- Complete annual progress reports [See Committee Report on Biology Website] as required by SGSPA and as applicable within the program/department/Faculty through annual progress monitoring and reporting procedures.

With the Supervisor, discuss [this is also covered in the Guide to Graduate Studies]:

- Graduate Program rules, regulations, and standards for coursework, proposal, proposal defense, thesis/dissertation research, and thesis/dissertation defense.
- A mutually agreeable communication approach that will work for the Graduate Student and Supervisor including frequency and form of communication and expectations for supervisory meetings.
- Goals for conference attendance, publishing, research, teaching, other employment opportunities, and engagement in academic community activities.
- Learning and research goals and develop a concrete plan to achieve these goals.
- Funding opportunities and apply for internal and external competitions that are mutually deemed beneficial and appropriate.
- Periods that the Graduate Student will be unavailable including vacation time (typically 10 business days in accordance with SGSPA Vacation Guidelines) to ensure there is minimal disruption to Graduate Student research and academic progress.

With the Supervisor and Supervisory Committee:

- Establish and discuss a research plan and timeline for progress monitoring, meetings, and sharing of work.
- Respond to constructive feedback in a timely manner.

- Discuss ownership of intellectual property and authorship on publications [see [CRT website for authorship roles, and note that ALL data and code must be made publicly available in most cases](#)] (and, where appropriate, establish in writing), following University guidelines and policies, relevant collective agreements, SGSPA regulations as found in the Academic Calendar, and guidelines in the SGSPA Graduate Supervision Handbook.

Promptly discuss changes in circumstances that could affect performance or progress [very important to be open and honest about this] in research or program of study; give serious consideration to the advice and constructive feedback offered by your Supervisor and/or Supervisory Committee. Seek advice from other department/Faculty, SGSPA, or University units or resources as needed.

Supervisor:

The role of the Supervisor is to serve as the primary academic mentor to the Graduate Student and provide oversight on their progress and research. By agreeing to work with a Graduate Student, the Supervisor will foster the intellectual and professional growth of their Graduate Students so that the Graduate Student can become competent contributors to their academic field of specialization.

In accordance with the policies and procedures of the faculty member's respective Graduate Program, their Faculty, the Queen's QUFA Collective Agreement and the SGSPA, the primary responsibilities of the Supervisors are to:

- Participate in graduate supervision orientation and training offered by SGSPA, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, or equivalent, normally within one year of appointment to the University.
- Be familiar with and follow the rules, procedures, and regulations related to supervision and graduate studies as outlined in the program, Faculty, the Queen's-QUFA Collective Agreement and SGSPA, including the sequence of program components and supervisory requirements.
- Discuss with the Graduate Student:
 - Graduate Program rules, regulations, and standards for coursework, qualifying/comprehensive examinations, research proposal, and thesis/dissertation research.
 - Learning and research goals in relation to expectations for advanced research.
 - Supports available to the Graduate Student in developing (or revising as needed) a plan to achieve their goals.
 - A mutually agreeable communication approach that will work for both parties including frequency and form of communication, including expectations for supervisory meetings.
 - Goals for conference attendance, publishing, research, teaching, other employment opportunities, and engagement in academic community activities, encouraging the Graduate Student (when applicable) to disseminate research findings through publication, presentation or creation of artistic or other works.

- Ownership of intellectual property and authorship on publications (and, where appropriate, establish in writing), following University guidelines and policies including Academic Integrity policy, relevant collective agreements, the SGSPA regulations as found in the Academic Calendar, and the SGSPA Graduate Supervision Handbook.
- Respond to Graduate Student's submitted or presented work with constructive and actionable feedback to support/ensure continuous progress and in a timely manner following departmental expectations and as agreed upon between student and supervisor.
- Monitor the Graduate Student's progress as required by SGSPA and as applicable within the student's department/program/Faculty through annual progress monitoring and reporting procedures, assessments of Graduate Student work, and regular communication with the Graduate Student.
- In consideration of the Graduate Student's merits, encourage and support the Graduate Student in any reasonable internal or external funding applications and particularly those sanctioned by the University (e.g., tri-council funding).
- In collaboration with the Graduate Student, facilitate the establishment of a Supervisory Committee (when required) and facilitate program milestones (e.g., coursework selection, qualifying/comprehensive exam, proposal defense, thesis/dissertation defense).
- Work to negotiate differences of opinion; when conflicts or differences in expectations arise, seek department, Faculty, or SGSPA support to resolve conflicts.
- If a Graduate Student expresses distress, direct them to Queen's [Student Wellness Services](#), other units within the [Division of Student Affairs](#); [Campus Security and Emergency Services](#), or other University resources as appropriate following the University's guidelines.
- In the event that a Graduate Student makes a disclosure of sexual violence, adhere to requirements as detailed in the [Policy on Sexual Violence Involving Queen's University Students](#).
- In coordination with the department/Faculty and Queen's Student Accessibility Services (where relevant, ensure Graduate Students receive appropriate academic considerations for extenuating circumstances and/or disability-related accommodations following the [SGS Protocol for Short-term Academic Consideration](#) and the [SGS regulation on Accommodation for Graduate Students with Disabilities](#).
- Maintain an academic and professional Graduate Student-Supervisor relationship that adheres to all applicable University policies and applicable collective agreements, including but not limited to, the [SGS Conflict of Interest](#) regulation as found in the Academic Calendar, University's Conflict of Interest policy, and the University's harassment and discrimination policies and procedures.

Supervisory Committee Members:

The primary role of the Supervisory Committee is to broaden and deepen the Graduate Student's experience and range of expertise. The Supervisory Committee assists the Supervisor in providing guidance, consultation, and advice on the Graduate Student's dissertation, thesis, or major research paper.

The primary responsibilities of Supervisory Committee Members are to:

- Be familiar with and follow the rules, procedures, and regulations related to supervision and graduate studies as outlined in the program, department, Faculty, and SGSPA, including the sequence of program components and supervisory requirements.
- **Monitor the Graduate Student's progress** in conjunction with the Supervisor by assessing and providing feedback on the Graduate Student's submitted or presented work (e.g., proposal).
- Broaden and deepen the Graduate Student's experience and range of expertise.
- **Respond with constructive and timely feedback** to work submitted by the Graduate Student to support continuous improvement following student's program/departmental expectations and as agreed upon between student and supervisor.
- Discuss with the Graduate Student (and where appropriate establish in writing) ownership of intellectual property and authorship on publications following University guidelines and policies, SGSPA regulations as found in the Academic Calendar, and guidelines in the [SGS Graduate Supervision Handbook](#).
- If a Graduate Student expresses distress, direct them to Queen's [Student Wellness Services](#), other units within the [Division of Student Affairs; Campus Security and Emergency Services](#), or other University resources as appropriate following the University's guidelines.
- If a Graduate Student makes a disclosure of sexual violence, adhere to requirements as detailed in the [Policy on Sexual Violence Involving Queen's University Students](#).

Graduate Programs:

The role of the Graduate Chair or Faculty Associate Deans in non- departmentalized faculties in Graduate Student supervision is to create a supportive, welcoming, and inclusive departmental learning environment to facilitate effective supervision, Graduate Student learning, and research.

The primary responsibilities of the Graduate Chair or Faculty Associate Deans in non- departmentalized faculties are to:

- Be familiar with and support current rules, procedures, and regulations related to supervision and graduate studies as outlined by the program, department, Faculty, and SGSPA, including the sequence of program components and supervisory requirements. Engage in SGSPA and other training for Graduate Chairs and Graduate Assistants, as needed, to keep informed about changes in graduate rule, procedures, and regulations.
- Inform and orient new and continuing Graduate Students of program expectations, policies, funding (where relevant), and requirements including supervision process and procedures.
- Annually monitor progress of Graduate Students in conjunction with Graduate Students' Supervisors.
- With support of the Dean or Department Head in departmentalized units, ensure that arrangements are made for an Alternate Supervisor if the regular Supervisor either departs, is absent for an indefinite period, or when a conflict of interest cannot be resolved to the point of dissolution of the supervisory relationship.

- With support of the Dean or Department Head in departmentalized units, ensure that arrangements are made for an Interim Supervisor should the regular Supervisor be on leave (e.g., parental, academic, medical).
- Arrange for or facilitate consultation and mediation when a conflict arises within the supervisory relationship, referring to University partners, when necessary or appropriate.
- In consultation with the Supervisor, coordinate and oversee interim forms of supervision or changes to supervision when the need arises.
- With support of the Dean or Department Head in departmentalized units, promote a safe, welcoming, and inclusive working environment for Graduate Students and Supervisors.
- In coordination with the Supervisor and Queen's Student Accommodation Services, ensure all Graduate Student accommodation needs are met to the maximum extent possible following the SGSPA Accommodation for Graduate Students with Disabilities policy.
- If a Graduate Student expresses distress, direct them to Queen's [Student Wellness Services](#), other units within the [Division of Student Affairs; Campus Security and Emergency Services](#), or other University resources as appropriate following the University's guidelines.
- In the event that a Graduate Student makes a disclosure of sexual violence, adhere to requirements as detailed in the [Policy on Sexual Violence Involving Queen's University Students](#).

School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA):

The role of the SGSPA in Graduate Student supervision is to ensure systemic policies and procedures that facilitate effective and positive graduate supervision are in place and are known to and accessible by all stakeholders. The SGSPA will work closely with Graduate Students, departments, and faculties and other partners both within and outside the University to promote excellence and foster an enriched and collegial environment for the pursuit of graduate education.

The primary responsibilities of the SGSPA are to:

- Ensure policies and resources are available to support graduate supervision across departments and faculties; develop new policies and resources as conditions evolve to ensure the University continues to facilitate graduate supervisory success.
- Provide support and training for new and continuing faculty on graduate supervision.
- Annually monitor Graduate Student program progress and consider requests for extension, changes in study status, and other extenuating circumstances.
- In consultation with the Graduate Chair or Faculty Associate Deans in non-departmentalized faculties, arrange for consultation and mediation when a conflict arises within the supervisory relationship, referring to University partners, when necessary.
- Promote a safe and inclusive learning environment for Graduate Students and Supervisors.
- In coordination with the Supervisor, department/Faculty, and Queen's Student ensure all Graduate Student accommodation needs are met to the extent possible following the SGSPA Accommodation for Graduate Students with Disabilities policy.

- If a Graduate Student expresses distress, direct them to Queen's [Student Wellness Services](#), other units within the [Division of Student Affairs; Campus Security and Emergency Services](#), or other University resources as appropriate following the University's guidelines.
- In the event that a Graduate Student makes a disclosure of sexual violence, adhere to requirements as detailed in the [Policy on Sexual Violence Involving Queen's University Students](#).

Definitions

Academic Supervision: Guidance in the development and completion of Master's theses, major research papers, or doctoral dissertations and in completing academic program milestones by School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) designated faculty members with appropriate expertise.

Alternate Supervisor: Appointed in cases where the primary supervisor is no longer able to act in their supervisory capacity. The primary academic mentor to the Graduate Student in the supervisory relationship. Normally, the Alternate Supervisor must be a University faculty member and member of the SGSPA and member of the student's home department.

Co-Supervision: Joint primary academic mentorship of the Graduate Student by two supervisors.

Faculty Associate Dean (Graduate): The main person of contact between a Faculty Dean, Faculty office personnel, Graduate Chair in departmentalized faculties, Graduate Students, and the SGSPA.

Graduate Chair: The main person of contact between Graduate Students, the Faculty Associate Dean (Graduate) in departmentalized faculties, and the SGS. May also be known as Graduate Coordinator or Associate Director (Graduate).

Graduate Program: Academic programs of study at the graduate level grouped by departments and faculties.

Graduate Student: A student registered in a program falling under the auspices of the SGSPA.

Interim Supervisor: Appointed in cases where the primary supervisor is temporarily unable to act in their supervisory capacity. Serves as the primary academic mentor to the Graduate Student in the supervisory relationship on an interim basis. Normally, the Interim Supervisor must be a University faculty member and member of the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) and member of the student's home department.

School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA): The body that oversees Graduate Programs within the University, or the physical office of this body.

Supervisor: The primary academic mentor to the Graduate Student in the supervisory relationship. Normally, the Supervisor must be a University faculty member and member of the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA) and member of the student's home department.

Supervisory Committee: A committee of Queen's faculty or appointed members who assist the Supervisor in providing guidance, consultation, and advice on the Graduate Student's comprehensive examination (or equivalent), dissertation, thesis, or major research paper. Normally, Supervisory Committee Members are from the Graduate Student's home department but may also be faculty members in other departments with membership in SGS or may include approved appointed members outside Queen's University.

University: Refers to Queen's University.

Leaves

Throughout a Graduate Student's program, a Supervisor, Committee Member, or Graduate Student may take leave (e.g., maternity and parental or medical, and in the case of faculty members, academic) from their primary responsibilities as outlined above.

If a Supervisor takes leave, depending on the duration and nature of the leave, the Supervisor will, in coordination with the Graduate Chair or Faculty Associate Deans in non-departmentalized faculties, as applicable, communicate with the Graduate Student their intentions to either (a) continue to offer supervision, or (b) propose that an Interim (or when appropriate and Alternate) Supervisor be appointed. In the latter case, the Graduate Chair or Faculty Associate Deans in non-departmentalized faculties may arrange for an Interim or Alternate Supervisor or may serve as the Interim or Alternate Supervisor. Members of the Supervisory Committee may also be called upon to take a more active role in cases where Supervisors are absent for extended periods of time.

If a Supervisory Committee Member takes leave, the Committee Member will, in consultation with the Graduate Chair, as applicable, discuss with the Graduate Student and Supervisor their intentions to either (a) continue to offer Supervisory Committee support, or (b) propose that an alternate Committee Member be appointed. In the latter case, the Supervisor and Graduate Student will discuss and select an alternate Committee Member.

If a Graduate Student takes leave (see leave options), the Graduate Student will notify their Supervisor and the Graduate Chair or Faculty Associate Deans in non-departmentalized faculties of their decision and subsequently follow SGSPA procedures. It is assumed that the Graduate Student's academic work will be primarily suspended during their leave period.

Complaint Resolution Process:

Should an individual – Graduate Student, Supervisor, or Committee Member – wish to pursue a complaint regarding this Policy, they may do so by lodging their complaint with SGSPA **after the conflict resolution and mediation procedures have been followed as outlined in the [SGS Graduate Supervision Handbook](#)**. Complaints must be brought forward in good faith and confidentially. The University has the responsibility for putting in place appropriate protections for all parties, and must be especially mindful of the needs of those complainants who may be vulnerable due to an imbalance of power. To lodge a complaint with SGSPA, Graduate Students, Supervisors, or Committee Members should submit their concerns in relation to the Policy in writing to SGSPA with relevant documentation, if applicable. The SGSPA will respond to the complaint within 3 business days to acknowledge receipt of the complaint. Within 10 business days of receipt of the complaint, an SGSPA Associate Dean or delegate will complete an initial review of the complaint in relation to the Policy, which may involve inviting the complainant to a meeting to discuss the nature of the complaint. SGSPA will employ a consultative process to work towards mutual resolution of complaints involving those parties directly involved in the complaint, which, unless the details of the complaint must be addressed pursuant to a superseding University policy and/or collective agreement, will not be grounds for disciplinary action. Participation in such a process will not preclude the Graduate Student, Graduate Supervisor, and/or Committee Member from availing themselves to applicable procedures pursuant to other relevant University policies and/or collective agreements. The SGSPA Associate Dean or delegate will meet with the parties to discuss concerns and possible resolutions. In collaboration with relevant campus partners, through open communication between all parties, and according to relevant University policies, guidelines, and/or collective agreements, the SGSPA Associate Dean or delegate will recommend steps for resolution. If the complaint does not fundamentally pertain to the Supervisory Policy statement, but rather, to a superseding University policy and/or collective agreement, the complaint will be forwarded to the relevant University office. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the SGSPA may involve various campus partners to resolve the dispute including, for example, Human Resources, the Human Rights and Equity Office, Faculty Relations Office, Office of the University Ombudsman, and the Dean's Office of the Graduate Student's home department. Further, if a complaint pertains to harassment or discrimination, the complainant should file their complaint under the [Harassment/Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure](#).