

Biology Graduate Studies Committee (BGSC)

A Standing Committee within the Department of Biology
Terms of Reference
Updated 13 April 2022

Committee membership and terms

The BGSC shall consist of: Deputy Head, Graduate Studies (appointed by the Head, Biology Department); at least 3 additional faculty members appointed by the Head; one graduate student, elected by the Biology Graduate Student Society. The faculty members should represent the breadth of Biology sub-disciplines as much as possible and comprise members at different career stages. The committee should also reflect MUN's EDI principles.

Terms shall be: Deputy Head, Graduate Studies, maximum of two consecutive 3-year terms; other faculty members, typically three years and renewable as desired and appropriate; graduate student representative, one year.

Mandate

Oversee and manage policies, procedures, and operations of the Department's graduate program.

Provide a forum for discussing direction, success, and development of the Department's graduate program.

Responsibilities

Evaluate suitability of applicants to the graduate program that are put forward by prospective supervisors.

Ensure that the Biology graduate program operates in accordance with regulations and procedures of the School of Graduate Studies and Faculty of Science, by regularly reviewing, assessing, and updating BGSC procedures.

Maintain updated information (websites, links, documents) for current or prospective graduate students by yearly reviewing and revising/updating the Biology Graduate Handbook, Biology Department's website and links for graduate students (<https://www.mun.ca/biology/graduate-students/>), and any other relevant documents.

Review applications for scholarships and awards and make recommendations to SGS and/or FoS as appropriate.

Review proposed internal and external thesis examiner suggestions and comprehensive examination committee memberships and topics.

Develop, review, and approve procedures about development of the Department's graduate program (course requirements, course offerings, comprehensive exam procedures, etc.).

Make recommendations for calendar changes and other regulations governing the Department's graduate program.

Reporting and communicating

The BGSC reports to the Head of the Biology Department and shall communicate regularly with them.

The BGSC shall detail its activities orally at faculty meetings of the Biology Department and by email as appropriate.

Meeting minutes will be recorded and archived.

Meeting frequency and procedures

The first meeting of each academic year shall be held in September to review the mandate, responsibilities, and operating procedures of the BGSC, and to orient new committee members. Committee members who are not on campus may participate remotely by phone or internet connection. Any member of the committee may call a meeting at any time.

The BGSC shall meet in person monthly (or more frequently as needed), except for the months of May through August. In the summer months, communication among BGSC members will take place electronically, as needed.

Agendas and minutes from the previous meeting shall be circulated in advance.

All BGSC members are voting members.

The quorum shall be >50% of the voting members. If a vote is tied, with less than the full committee in attendance for a vote, then non-attending members should be asked to vote electronically to break the tie.

Roles of the Deputy Head - Graduate Studies

The Deputy Head, Graduate Studies shall meet with the Head regularly.

The Deputy Head, Graduate Studies will normally chair meetings but may delegate this responsibility to another committee member as needed.

The Deputy Head, Graduate Studies is responsible for the following: representing the BGSC with regards to committee business at faculty meetings; with other members of the BGSC, providing advice to graduate students or supervisors on any matters of concern to them; facilitating discussion within the Department (on an annual basis) about the graduate program; being a link between the BGSC and SGS.