

Graduate Officer Responsibilities

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

In consultation with departmental Graduate Studies Committees (where relevant) and the Department Head, the Graduate Officer facilitates or manages the activities necessary to ensure a good educational outcome for graduate students, from recruitment to graduation. The Graduate Officer serves as the key contact with offices of graduate student support outside the Department, notably through serving as a liaison between the Department, the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), and the Associate Dean (Curriculum and Programs). Where warranted, it is imperative that the Graduate Officer inform and consult the Department Head and Associate Dean regarding significant matters relating to graduate studies or graduate students.

Policies

The following policies regarding Graduate Officers are in effect:

- The Head cannot also hold the position of Graduate Officer. It is recognized, however, that the Head may need to be Interim Officer from time to time, particularly in small departments. This should be a temporary situation.
- The Graduate Officer must report to a committee on matters to be determined by the Department. The committee can be a committee of the whole department, or a separately constituted departmental Graduate Studies Committee (GSC).
- Graduate Officers are normally appointed by the Head for a period to be determined by the Department, but minimally of one-year duration. Upon appointment, the Graduate Officer and Head should meet to review the duties and responsibilities outlined in the Graduate Officer Handbook.

Responsibilities

Depending on departmental practice, some of the responsibilities listed below (in parentheses) are shared or carried out by other department members or organizations (e.g., the Head, supervisors, a departmental graduate studies committee, or administrative staff).

Recruitment and Admissions

- Developing and maintaining recruitment strategies in partnership with the Head and the departmental Graduate Studies Committee or the department as a whole.
- Replying to inquiries from interested students regarding application and admission procedures.
- Providing the departmental webmaster with updates about the graduate program to be posted on the departmental web site; proofing website and printed material regarding graduate students and the graduate program.
- Putting interested students in touch with potential supervisors.
- Overseeing the graduate student admissions process, in coordination with the Head, the departmental Graduate Studies Committee, SGS, and departmental administrative staff.
- Issuing Program of Study documents for admitted students in OnBase.

- Processing rejection decisions in OnBase.
- (Making recommendations to the Head concerning the transfer of students from Master's to Doctoral programs.) [Note that this responsibility is carried out by the supervisor or Head in some departments.]

Student Orientation

- Providing an orientation for new students in September. This should include a review of the duties, responsibilities, and ethical principles for supervisors and graduate students.
- Ensuring that new graduate students provide material for their departmental webpage.
- Working with the Head and administrative staff to arrange and assign graduate student office and/or study space (where possible!).
- Organizing or facilitating (in conjunction with the GSC and/or the Nexus Centre as appropriate) specialized graduate student workshops or events aimed at professional development and training on issues not ordinarily covered in courses (e.g., funding applications, conference presentations, job-seeking, knowledge mobilization, etc.).

Financial support

- Managing the departmental SGS baseline budget in consultation with the Head and SGS.
- Keeping the Head and departmental administrative staff specialist informed about all financial arrangements.
- Working with ASMs to allocate baseline funding in support of external funding applications.
- Departments can set their own practices for allocating baseline funding. SGS allocates \$8000 for MA students and \$14,000 for PhD students per year of in-program status. (Total baseline to each department is based on a three-year rolling average of Graduate enrolments). Supervisors can provide a stipend to 'top up' students, to maximum of \$35,000 for Master's, and \$50, 000 for PhD students.
- Making students and supervisors aware of funding opportunities in the department, at Memorial more widely, and beyond, such as:
 - Presidents Doctoral Student Investment Fund (PDSIF) for new ASMs provides a 'top up' of \$7500 in the first 3 years of appointment for their first PhD student
 - Tri-council funding (GSM-M and SSHRC Doctoral Awards)
 - SGS scholarships and awards
 - Travel funding for conferences from GSU and SGS

For more details on the administration of funding, see:

<https://www.mun.ca/sgs/guidelines-for-the-awarding-of-financial-support/>

Monitoring student progress

- Monitoring student progress, reviewing final course grades each semester, and, where progress is not satisfactory, notifying the student in writing with a clear statement of possible consequences. (This notification may also come from SGS if grades fall below funding cut-off, or if a student 'times' out of a part of their program, e.g., comprehensive exams.)

- With the department's administrative staff, coordinating the collection of, reviewing, and submitting to SGS the annual Supervisory Report Forms for all students. This annual report is required for all graduate students, and it is especially critical for students who are receiving external funding (Tri-council funding will be paused if reports are not submitted).
- Providing advice to graduate students on matters of academic concern to them arising from the Supervisory Report Forms or other matters.

Monitoring graduate programs

- Chairing the departmental Graduate Studies Committee (where relevant).
- Facilitating and developing calendar change proposals with ASMs for special topics courses and other new graduate courses, and obtaining approval for them
- Monitoring the graduate programs offered by the Department on an ongoing basis; consulting with the Head regarding graduate course offerings.
- Ensuring that graduate course offerings will allow students to complete degree requirements without undue delay.

Graduate Assistantships (GAs)

- Assisting the Head with the allocation of graduate assistants to specific courses and/or faculty members. [In some departments, the call is sent by the GO and the allocation is done by the Head, in consultation with the GO and the administrative staff.]

Note: The Head, not the GO, should be responsible for the following items, as they are staffing issues and can be contentious:

- Ensuring compliance with the TAUMUN Agreement.
- Settling disputes regarding the allocation of GA units to faculty members.

Graduate funding and awards

- Representing the Department in all matters pertaining to graduate student awards, including serving on selection committees as required, directly submitting nominations for awards, and/or recommending nominations for awards to the Head. Where appropriate, nominations and recommendations can be made in consultation with the GSC.
- May assist with coordinating graduate student-oriented requests for SITA funding as needed by department.
- (Overseeing the submission of internal and external grant applications by graduate students.)
- Providing advice on scholarship, fellowship, and grant application processes. Reviewing draft applications by students if they have been submitted in a timely manner according to internal departmental deadlines.

Note: Either the Head or the GO is responsible for writing the departmental evaluation component of SSHRC scholarship/fellowship applications. The Head should write the evaluation in the case of a conflict of interest (the GO is the applicant's supervisor, or has been involved significantly in the development of the application).

SITA (Scholarship in the Arts) Funding

Criteria to be updated for 2024-25

- Developing departmental SITA applications to support graduate programs in HSS (in consultation with GSC or graduate student groups where available).
- Administering graduate studies-oriented SITA initiatives (in conjunction with GSC).
- Examples of graduate studies-related SITA initiatives supported in the past:
 - Reimbursement of eligible graduate student research costs (conference travel when presenting, travel for research related workshop participation, out of province field research expenses, software, books, other research expenses);
 - Funds for Graduate Awards (e.g., best dissertation, MA thesis, and/or MA major paper completed in a department in a given academic year);
 - Support for graduate student-organized research activities (e.g., symposia, workshops, guest speakers)

Liaison

- Liaising with the Head of the Department about matters related to graduate students.
- Representing the Department on external committees related to graduate studies and regular SGS meetings of the GOs.
- Acting as liaison between SGS, the Office of the Dean of HSS, and the Department.
- (In consultation with SGS administrative staff, dealing with all requests from graduate students for Leaves of Absence, waivers of regulations, incomplete grades, graduation requirements, etc.)

Graduate examinations, proposals, and presentations

- Recommending (or forwarding supervisor's recommendations) to the Head potential members of PhD comprehensive examination committees and ensuring that proper examination procedures are followed (<https://www.mun.ca/university-calendar/school-of-graduate-studies/school-of-graduate-studies/4/8/#4.8.2>)
- Securing examiners for thesis and dissertation defenses; completing and sending paperwork to SGS.
- Arranging PhD defenses in consultation with SGS administrative staff, the examining board, and the supervisory committee.)
- Arranging dates for the defense of comprehensive exams (where applicable)
- Acting as a delegate for the Head as required, as the Chair of PhD comprehensive committees, at PhD defenses, and at PhD and MA proposals and seminars.
- Organizing graduate student presentations (e.g., MA thesis proposals, post-fieldwork presentations, graduate symposia).

This framework was developed in consultation with Heads and Graduate Officers in 2012-13 and 2013-14. Last updated in July 2024.