



SCHOOL OF  
GRADUATE STUDIES

# Interdisciplinary PhD Program Academic Year 2025–2026

## Program Handbook

<https://www.mun.ca/idphd/>

*The information provided in this handbook is accurate as of July 2025.  
However, the contents are subject to change.*

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## **1. Admissions Process**

Offers of admissions to the IDPhD program come after a multidisciplinary committee has assessed all the complete and eligible applications in any given year. Letters of admission (or rejection) come from the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), although the Program Director might indicate earlier the decision to come.

The IDPhD program normally accepts applications only for the Fall semester, with a deadline of January 15 to apply. Offers will normally be extended 6-8 weeks after this deadline. Once an offer of admission is extended, it is your responsibility to accept or decline.

If you decide to accept the offer, please review the information for new graduate students at Memorial page for information on what to do.<sup>1</sup>

If you are an international student, it is also your responsibility to secure any required visas and/or study permits. You should contact the Immigration Advising Team at the Internationalization Office for assistance with these processes.<sup>2</sup>

## **2. Start of Program**

Once you accept the offer of admission, you should arrange to meet with your supervisory committee to go through the details of your program. The Program Director will also meet with you, and the supervisory committee will communicate with the Program Director on the proposed arrangements.

Every IDPhD program will be different, and students and supervisors must be prepared for a few meetings, to establish all the program requirements and timelines for the completion of the program.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/sgs/new-students/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/international/students-and-alumni/immigration-advising/>

### 3. **Registration**

In your first semester, you will need to register for **INTE 9000 – Graduate Registration**. This is a placeholder course that tracks your registration as a graduate student at Memorial.

You will also need to register for the two-partner course **INTE 902A/B – IDPhD Colloquium** in your first and second semesters. This is a seminar course with the Program Director, where you will also be able to meet with the IDPhD cohort for the year.

In addition, you will need to discuss with your supervisory committee what courses it would be appropriate for you to take. This would be done usually through a Course Change Form (to add the course to your registration), and a Change of Program Form (to reflect the course in your program of study).

Please contact the Program Administrative Staff for assistance with registration.

Remember that you will be charged fees as long as your program registration (i.e. INTE 9000) continues. This will roll over every semester until you graduate, or go on an approved Leave of Absence.

### 4. **Funding and Employment**

#### *a. Baseline Funding*

If you are a full-time student admitted to the IDPhD, you may receive baseline funding in the amount of CAD\$16,000 per year. Not all students who are admitted receive funding. Part-time students are not considered for baseline funding.

Funding is contingent upon satisfactory progress, and is available for a maximum of four years.

#### *b. Conference Travel Funding*

Students are encouraged to present papers at conferences, either at Memorial or elsewhere. If you have been accepted to present a paper, financial support may be available from various sources at Memorial.

For more information, please see: <https://www.mun.ca/sqs/current-students/tuition-funding-and-employment/travel-funding/>.

### *c. Scholarships and Awards*

SGS maintains a searchable database of scholarships and awards you can apply for at Memorial University, and other related resources. You should consult this frequently for any opportunities you might wish to apply to.

For more information, please see: <https://www.mun.ca/sgs/current-students/tuition-funding-and-employment/awards-and-scholarships/>.

### *d. Student Employment*

There are a variety of jobs you can apply for through several different programs as a graduate student, including the GradSWEP (Graduate Student Work Experience Program), the Graduate Assistantships, and the Graduate Internship Program.

- Please note that full-time graduate students are permitted to work a maximum of 24 hours per week. If you are an international student, you may have restrictions on the number of hours you are permitted to work – check your study permit and with the Immigration Advising Team for this.
- More information on these programs on: <https://www.mun.ca/sgs/current-students/tuition-funding-and-employment/student-employment/>.

## **5. Payroll Deductions for Tuition**

If you want to have your tuition paid out of your bi-weekly financial support, please review the SGS webpage on Payroll Deductions.<sup>3</sup> This will be done through the Memorial Self-Service platform. To sign up for payroll deductions through Self-Service, students may click on **the “Employee Services”** tab, and then the **“Graduate Student Payroll Deduction Request”**.

In such a case, semester and ancillary fees will be allocated over the number of pay periods available within a given semester, and will be deducted from bi-weekly support.

Graduate students signing up for payroll deductions **must do so every semester**. Current students already on funding will be able to sign up for online payroll deductions 24 hours after they register. New students will be able to sign up for online payroll deductions once registered and funding has been set up.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://mun.ca/sgs/current-students/tuition-funding-and-employment/payroll-deduction/>

All graduate students must complete their online submissions before the last day to register (two weeks after the start of classes). After the last day to register, you will not be able to sign up for payroll deductions until the following semester.

## **6. Health and Dental Insurance**

If you are a Canadian (citizen or permanent resident) student, you are automatically enrolled into the Graduate Students' Union health insurance plan. If you have alternate coverage, you may be eligible to opt out. Please refer to the GSU website for more information.<sup>4</sup>

If you are an international student, you are automatically enrolled into the Foreign Health Insurance plan when you first come to Memorial. If you are eligible for provincial health insurance (MCP), you may be able to opt into the Graduate Students' Union plan, which has more comprehensive coverage. Check with the Internationalization Office on this.<sup>5</sup>

## **7. Program Milestones**

### ***a. Coursework***

Normally, you will be required to complete a number of graduate-level courses. In some instances, undergraduate courses may be added to a program with the approval of both the supervisory committee and Program Director. The general range of required courses is between 3-6 (but no more than 6).

Courses must be chosen based on the relevance to the research program, and graduate course availability. All IDPhD students need to seek permission to register in courses, and this can be done with the assistance of the Program Director (or lead supervisor) if needed.

Please also refer to the earlier section on Registration for more information.

### ***b. Ethics Approval***

Any research that uses materials from living subjects, including interviews and questionnaires, must be given an ethics review. This review must be undertaken before the research starts,

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gsumun.ca/health-dental>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/international/students-and-alumni/health-insurance/>

and before application for any relevant funding. You should ask the Program Director for details.

*c. Comprehensive Examinations*

Both you and your supervisor(s) must be familiar with General Regulation 4.8 – the School of Graduate Studies regulations for comprehensive examinations.<sup>6</sup>

### **Purpose**

The proposal defence satisfies Memorial University's General Calendar regulation 4.8.2 on PhD Comprehensive Examinations.

Students should begin the proposal defense process as early as possible and should complete the proposal defence examination no later than 3 semesters following the completion of their course work requirements.

The examination is meant both to prepare students to write their dissertations and to elicit committee approval of their readiness for the final stage of their doctoral program. The principal objectives are to:

- Test mastery and depth of knowledge of thesis dissertation area(s) specified in the dissertation proposal
- Show exceptional written and oral communication skills;
- Show ability to communicate research to a general (but informed) audience; and
- Show excellent bibliographic and citation skills.

The IDPhD program is unique in its design and application process. Normally, all IDPhD comprehensives shall be as follows:<sup>7</sup>

Because all successful applicants come into the program with *a substantial* draft research proposal at the point of application, the proposal defense shall serve to solidify and assess that proposal.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/university-calendar/school-of-graduate-studies/school-of-graduate-studies/4/8/>

<sup>7</sup> Other formats shall be permitted only in exceptional circumstances and only if the alternative format is approved by both the Program Director and the Dean of Graduate Studies, no later than the student's sixth semester. Approval requests must include the reasons for the exception as well as the same detail and timing information as this proposal defense format.

As such, the examination will have a written portion and an oral portion.

The student shall be notified of the timing of their examination process a minimum of 3 months prior to the deadline of the written proposal. This notification shall include the deadline for the written proposal, the date of the oral exam, and the composition of the examination committee (Program Director, 3 supervisors/faculty advisors, plus one other member).

The written proposal must be submitted to all members of the examination committee via email as a word document on or before the deadline. See below for details on proposal expectations.

The examination committee will have no more than 10 days to read the proposal and decide if the student shall proceed to the oral or if a revision is required.

If revision is required, details of what needs to be done must be conveyed to the student in writing. The revised document must be submitted to the examination committee no more than *3 months* following that written communication.

Once the revised document is submitted, the examination committee must assess if it is acceptable to go to oral examination or if the student's program will be terminated due to a failed examination.

The oral examination will be scheduled no more than six weeks following positive assessment of the written document and no less than two weeks.

The oral exam shall involve:

- 30 min pre-meeting of examination committee
- 15 - 20 minute presentation by candidate
- No more than 2 rounds of questions by the examination committee
- *In camera* session of committee only to assess performance on the exam.

### **Written and Oral Components**

The written part will consist of the student preparing a full research proposal. *The starting point of this full research proposal will be the original research proposal submitted at the time of the application.* It is understood and expected that the examination proposal document will be more advanced, more sophisticated, and more specific than the proposal submitted at the time of application.



The thesis proposal document must include the following but need not necessarily use the following headers or categories. It is understood that some deviation of the following may be necessary to accommodate individual research projects. Nonetheless, the following content must appear in the proposal in some form:

1. Topic – this section must introduce the topic, a justification of the primary sources, an explanation and contextualization of key terminology, and – most importantly – a set of research questions that clearly focus and delineate the direction of the research project.

2. Conceptual Framework – this section must place the research project inside existing frames of reference, theoretical models, or similar frameworks. The purpose of this section is to situate the research project inside a framework/perspective for pursuit of the research questions.

3. Methodology – this section indicates the process, method, stages of the research and/or a chapter breakdown of the dissertation. Any research requiring ethical clearance needs to be stated in this section as well as the type(s) of ethical approval required.

4. Scholarly significance/contribution to knowledge – this section must survey the existing scholarship on the dissertation topic and position the dissertation topic within that critical history. This section must also offer a clear indication of how the dissertation adds to that scholarship or addresses gaps or advances knowledge.

- If there are any initial findings, results, publication, or presentation of original work already done by the student then, this is the place to describe and document that information. Initial results might include a new theoretical argument, a preliminary output of a statistical analysis, an assessment of literature reviews, etc.

5. Chapter outline – this section indicates a proposed breakdown of chapter content.

6. Timeline to completion. Students are asked to very carefully consider a timeline that is realistic and feasible. Students are also expected to provide a detailed timeline.

7. Working bibliography – this section should be divided into primary and secondary texts and must conform scrupulously to the most recent citation guidelines that the supervisory committee agrees is appropriate.

The written document must be a minimum of 20 pages (double spaced, 12pt font), not including the Bibliography, and should be no more than 40 pages of same format.

The oral part of the exam will consist of questions that relate to the written part.

## Assessment

Based on the quality of both the written and oral components, the examination committee may recommend one of the following outcomes:

- Pass (A simple majority vote is required. *Please note that the Chair of the committee has a vote*)
- Re-examination required (Re-examination means the student will sit a second oral component, no more than 4 weeks from the date of the first.). *A detailed report shall be given to the student in which areas of improvement are clearly indicated.*
- Fail (Failing grades require unanimous support of the Committee. Re-examination is not permitted)

No candidate shall be permitted more than two oral examinations in total.

*All thesis work needs to abide by ethical guidelines. It is highly advisable that even for the thesis proposal, ethics clearance has been sought. Without ethics clearance, research questions contained in the thesis proposal may not be deemed feasible by the committee.*

### d. Thesis Examinations

Both you and your supervisors should be familiar with General Regulation 4.10.4 - the School of Graduate Studies regulation for evaluation of Ph.D. and Psy.D. theses.<sup>8</sup>

All IDPhD students are strongly encouraged to compile a manuscript style thesis. Details on that style can be found on the SGS website.<sup>9</sup>

The thesis examining board will have four members. In most cases, they'll consist as follows:

- the candidate's supervisor (a non-voting member)
- one external examiner (a specialist who is well acquainted with interdisciplinary work from outside Memorial University)
- two internal examiners

With the exception of the supervisor, no one who has been involved in the preparation of the thesis is allowed to serve on the Thesis Examining Board. Members of the comprehensive

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/university-calendar/school-of-graduate-studies/school-of-graduate-studies/4/10/#4.10.4>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/sgs/faculty-and-staff/theses-and-reports/>

examination committee who have not been directly involved in the preparation of the thesis are eligible to serve on the Thesis Examining Board.

As the thesis nears completion, the supervisor or the supervisory committee discuss with the candidate the names of possible examiners. The supervisor or supervisory committee then makes recommendations to the Director.

The Director considers the recommendations made by the supervisory committee, prepares a proposed list of examiners, and makes preliminary inquiries concerning the potential examiners' willingness and ability to serve.

The proposed list is then forwarded by the Director to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who approves the composition of the Thesis Examining Board and issues the official invitations to serve. When the supervisory committee approves the thesis for submission, it goes to the examiners for reading.

If the examiners approve the thesis for oral examination, a tentative date for the public oral defense is set by the Dean of Graduate Studies. It is generally understood that no contact among the various parties is permitted during the reading of the thesis in the time leading up to the oral defense.

The program is completed only when three copies of the finished, corrected thesis have been received and approved by the supervisory committee, the Director, and the School of Graduate Studies.

The student should be available for the crucial last stages of thesis completion. It is important to observe all the deadlines as fees can be charged if the registration has to be carried forward for an extra semester because of late work.

## **8. Professional Preparation**

The IDPhD program encourages you to involve yourself in preparation for university teaching, and other professional careers.

### *a. Teaching Skills Enhancement Program*

All students are encouraged to consider taking the Teaching Skills Enhancement Program (TSEP), offered by the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning.<sup>10</sup> For more information about TSEP, please contact [educatordev@mun.ca](mailto:educatordev@mun.ca).

- Any student who plans to apply for teaching work in a university should prepare a teaching dossier. This record of teaching should include letters from faculty who have observed classes, comments from teaching mentors, course outlines, samples of assignments, teaching evaluations, and a general statement on teaching.

### *b. Enhanced Development of the Graduate Experience*

The Enhanced Development of the Graduate Experience (EDGE) is a comprehensive collection of professional development programs and services, that help provide students with the complementary skills required to be successful in their lives after graduate studies.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.mun.ca/edge/>

## **9. Leaves of Absence and Program Extensions**

### *a. Leaves of Absence*

You can apply for a leave of absence if there are good reasons preventing you from making progress on your program requirements. If you are approved for a leave of absence, you cannot work towards your degree requirements during that period. Any funding you may receive would also be stopped for that period.

Leaves of absence are governed by General Regulation 4.3.6 of the University Calendar.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/citl/teaching-support/professional-development/teaching-skills-enhancement-program/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/university-calendar/school-of-graduate-studies/school-of-graduate-studies/4/3/#4.3.6>

- The request form, including general information, is available here: <https://www.mun.ca/sgs/media/production/memorial/academic/school-of-graduate-studies/school-of-graduate-studies/media-library/loa.pdf>.
- Your supervisor(s) and the Program Director will need to review and sign off on your leave.
- **If you are an international student, your leave may have immigration implications, including future Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) eligibility.** Please ensure that you consult with the Immigration Advising Team before applying for a leave ([immigrationadvising@mun.ca](mailto:immigrationadvising@mun.ca)).

*b. Program Extensions*

If your program will exceed 7 years (i.e. 21 semesters), and you have good grounds on which to do so, you can request a waiver to General Regulation 4.3.5.2, which sets out the maximum limit of a graduate program at Memorial.<sup>12</sup>

- Note that any period on an approved Leave of Absence would not be counted towards this limit.
- Your supervisor(s) and the Program Director will need to review and sign off on your leave.
- The request form, including general information, is available here: [https://www.mun.ca/sgs/media/production/memorial/academic/school-of-graduate-studies/school-of-graduate-studies/media-library/c5b\\_waiver.pdf](https://www.mun.ca/sgs/media/production/memorial/academic/school-of-graduate-studies/school-of-graduate-studies/media-library/c5b_waiver.pdf).

## **10. Conflict Resolution**

The Graduate Students' Union offers helpful guidelines on sexual harassment, discrimination, student complaints, and academic appeals. Students who have concerns in any of these areas are encouraged to consult the GSU guidelines on conflict resolution.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.mun.ca/university-calendar/school-of-graduate-studies/school-of-graduate-studies/4/3/#4.3.5>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gsumun.ca/>

SGS supports the GSU's position that potential conflicts between students and their teachers or supervisors should be handled as early and as informally as possible. Students who feel that they have been treated unfairly are encouraged to address their concerns in the first instance to the teacher or supervisor or committee involved.

If, however, students feel that their concerns cannot be handled at this level, they should refer their concerns to Program Director. If the Program Director cannot address the concerns to the students' satisfaction, they may go to the School of Graduate Studies.

## **11. The IDPhD Society**

The IDPhD Society was first proposed on March 25, 2025.

The Society has, as its purpose, the enrichment of the intellectual experience of the IDPhD programme participants (and other graduate students) and to that end, the Society aims initially to organize two seminars per semester with interdisciplinary speakers. The Society will aim to invite speakers with an active research profile.

Although ultimately the seminars will be open to all IDPhD and graduate students, we do propose, in a first stage, to open the seminars to (current and past) IDPhD students only. Every event will have coffee/tea and a small bite to eat. Every seminar needs to be pre-booked (i.e. we need to keep a tally of all attendees registering for the seminar - so we can book a room and other sufficient coffee/tea and small bites).

The founding members of the Society will suggest names of speakers across any interdisciplinary field - for each semester. We will host speakers for both Fall and Winter semesters. All events will be held on the St. John's Campus, and will have a Zoom connection. Of course, we encourage in-person attendance. Attendees at the interdisciplinary seminars may want to become members of the Society. Members do not pay dues.

For information on upcoming events, please see: <https://www.mun.ca/idphd/the-idphd-society/>.

**12. Contact information**

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