

Department of Computing and Software

Graduate Program Handbook 2025/2026

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WELCOME NOTE (2025/2026)

This is your all-in-one guide to helpful information for graduate students and other researchers in the Department of Computing and Software at McMaster University. Some of the information is specific to the Department of Computing and Software but other information generic for all graduate studies is also included, for your convenience.

Please note that this handbook is comprised of two sections: the first contains general information which graduate students in all Faculty of Engineering departments will find useful; the second includes information specific to the Department of Computing and Software.

Disclaimer:

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

The background of the page features a photograph of a historic building with a wall heavily covered in ivy. To the right, a stone archway is visible, through which a paved path and some greenery can be seen. A large, semi-transparent red graphic, consisting of two curved lines forming a partial arch, is overlaid on the image. The text "GENERAL INFORMATION" is centered in white, bold, serif capital letters.

GENERAL INFORMATION

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Quick Links

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and abide by the regulations, policies and procedures below.

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

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster graduate student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn,

WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Responsibilities of Graduate Students to the University ([Section 1.3 Of The Graduate Calendar](#))

Just as the University has responsibilities to graduate students, they have responsibilities to the University. The student's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Maintaining current contact information with the University, including address, phone numbers, and emergency contact information.
2. Using the University provided e-mail address or maintaining a valid forwarding e-mail address.
3. Regularly checking the official University communications channels. Official University communications are considered received if sent by postal mail, by fax, or by e-mail to the student's designated primary e-mail account via their @mcmaster.ca alias.
4. Maintaining contact and meeting regularly with the faculty advisor, thesis/project supervisor or supervisory committee, for observing departmental guidelines, and for meeting the deadlines of the department and the School of Graduate Studies.
5. Full-time students are obliged to be on campus, except for vacation periods or authorized off-campus status, for all three terms of the university year.
6. In cases of unauthorized absence, the student will be deemed to have withdrawn voluntarily from graduate study and will have to petition for readmission. No guarantee of readmission or of renewal of financial arrangements can be made and a decision on readmission is not subject to appeal.
7. Reviewing and complying with the University's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
8. Registering annually until graduation, withdrawal, or withdrawal in good standing due to time limit.
9. Paying fees as required.
10. If there is a problem with supervision, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Associate Chair (Graduate) with their concerns.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the [dates and deadlines](#) for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY AND 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 Graduate Administrative Assistant **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.

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 accommodations should return to SAS soon after commencement of their graduate program to implement or update your student status and to activate accommodations.

Engineering Support Services (The Hub)

Services include managing keys and access cards, meeting rooms, and more.

JHE 216A

Ext. 27291

thehub@mcmaster.ca

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](#)
- [TalkSpot: A Mental Health Service Exclusively for Mac Eng Students](#)

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, 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.

The School of Graduate Studies offices are located in Gilmour Hall, Room 212, or can be reached by phone at ext. 23679

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 located 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 AND 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

Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) Forms

All students must complete a [Job Hazard Analysis](#) with your supervisor and read and follow the appropriate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Note: In the context of safety, all graduate students are considered “workers”.

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”.

OTHER ACADEMIC 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

More than roughly 80% of the research carried out in the Faculty of Engineering is done with industry. 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.

GRADUATE PROGRAM REGULATIONS – ENROLLMENT

Matters With Regard to Enrollment ([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 [M.A.Sc. program: up to 15 terms from the original date of registration if student began as “part-time”; Ph.D. program: up to 24 terms from the original date of registration if student began as “part-time”]. 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 M.A.Sc. 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.

Engineering Co-op Program

The Engineering Co-Op Program for graduate students is an optional program for full-time domestic and international M.A.Sc., M.Sc., M.Eng., and Ph.D. students in good academic standing, that allows students to gain engineering work experience prior to graduation. Students have the option to complete 4 to 12 months of co-op experience. It is administered by the Career Development and Relationship Manager - Graduate Studies.

Centre for Career Growth and Experience Contact Information

Gerald Hatch Experiential Centre, Room JHE H301, ext. 22571

Email: gradcoop@mcmaster.ca

More information is available on the [Co-op for Graduate Students website](#).

Student Responsibilities

Students who are interested in the Co-op Program must follow the following steps:

1. Enrol in the Co-Op Program

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCES (SEAS) STUDENTS:

- a. Complete the [Graduate Supervisor Permission Form](#). The student's academic supervisor must indicate on the form which academic term(s) the student is approved to work.
- b. Submit the signed graduate supervisor permission form to gradcoop@mcmaster.ca.
- c. Enrol in ENGINEER 701 – C01 Work Term Preparation (Lecture) course via Mosaic.
- d. Complete the ENGINEER 701 co-op registration process (link available [online](#)).
- e. Complete the ENGINEER 701 – C01 Work Term Preparation (Lecture) course.

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING PRACTICE AND TECHNOLOGY (SEPT) STUDENTS:

- a. Enrol in ENGINEER 701 – C01 Work Term Preparation (Lecture) course via Mosaic.
- b. Complete the ENGINEER 701 co-op registration process (link available [online](#)).
- c. Complete the ENGINEER 701 – C01 Work Term Preparation (Lecture) course.

2. Engage in Job Search

Students will engage in co-op job search 4-6 months in advance of the term that has been approved for work. Students can work a maximum of 12 months. If they do not secure a job during their approved work term(s), they may submit an amended permission form to access jobs posted for future work terms

3. Register Your Co-Op and Drop Courses

- a. [Register the co-op](#) by completing and submitting the co-op confirmation form, and if applicable, the RMM-801 form (for co-ops taking place outside Canada) to thecentre@mcmaster.ca.
- b. Contact their Graduate Administrative Assistant (after receiving confirmation from the Centre that co-op is approved) to specify the course(s) they want to drop from their MOSAIC record while on work term.

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 thesis-based programs in McMaster Engineering 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 2025, Winter 2026 and Spring/Summer 2026 terms by August 1, 2025, your payments will be delayed until a correction is made.

Pregnancy/Parental Leaves

To address a gap in funding provided to MASc students during pregnancy and parental leave, the Faculty of Engineering invites eligible applicants to apply for support.

Eligibility: A parental leave fund of up to \$4,000 will be provided to eligible MASc students in the Faculty of Engineering who take an approved parental leave for one term or more, provided that:

1. The student is currently enrolled in a full-time MASc program in the Faculty of Engineering and is in receipt of McMaster Graduate Scholarship Funds;
2. The student has been enrolled in their current MASc program for a minimum of one term;
3. The applicant is in good standing at the time that this leave of absence is requested;
4. This leave of absence has been approved by the Department's Associate Chair (Graduate);
5. The student is ineligible for funding from either CUPE or NSERC/CIHR (whether that be directly through a graduate scholarship, or via a supervisor's grant);
6. The student has applied for funding from all other sources for which they are eligible;
7. The application below is completed and submitted to the Graduate Studies Administrator four weeks before the leave;
8. The student provides a medical note for their pregnancy or that of their partner from a licenced Canadian healthcare provider (i.e., the physician, midwife or nurse practitioner that is providing pregnancy care) or an adoption certificate issued from the Canadian government;
9. The student is the primary caregiver for the duration of the Parenting Leave

Important:

- This funding may be accessed by a student one time only

- Students receiving Tri-Agency scholarships are ineligible for this funding as they are eligible for Tri-Agency Paid Parenting Leave supplements
- Students who continue to receive research funding from their supervisor are ineligible for this funding
- Fund recipients who return to their program prior to the approved leave of absence end date may be required to return a portion of the funding
- Students who do not return to their studies after their leave must repay the amount received in full
- Multiple births on the same occasion (e.g., twins) do not increase funding duration or value
- If the student wishes to take a leave of less than one term, then the amount for which they are eligible is pro-rated to \$1,000/month
- The application should be initiated by the student, who will be responsible for obtaining the approval of their supervisor and Associate Chair (Graduate), before submitting it to the Graduate Studies Administrator at salehl5@mcmaster.ca for approval by the Associate Dean Graduate Studies

Note: PhD students should refer to the equivalent supports provided by the School of Graduate Studies [Parenting Grant](#).

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](#) and the [Engineering Funding & Awards 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

If you require a reimbursement for travel or other expenses, you may submit Travel and Expense claims through the Mosaic system by logging in with your Mac ID. To get to the Travel and Expense module use the following path: *Mosaic Home > Employee Self Service > Travel and Expenses*

Please note that these claims will require a valid chartfield string and approval from your supervisor.

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

- [Information for Incoming Graduate Students](#)
- [Housing and Student Life](#)
- [Graduate Student Orientation Hub](#)
- [Advice From Current Graduate Students](#)
- [Athletics and Recreation](#)

McMaster Engineering Graduate Society (EGS)

The EGS is a student run organization dedicated to supporting engineering graduate students in any way possible, including hosting fun events, running professional development workshops, and providing travel bursaries. The EGS has three major mandates:

- To represent the interests of Engineering Graduate Students to the Faculty and other organizations, making sure your voice is heard.
- To help create an open and welcoming community of Engineering Graduate Students
- To advance Academic and Professional Development at McMaster Engineering.

More information is available on the [Engineering Graduate Society 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 and 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 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.

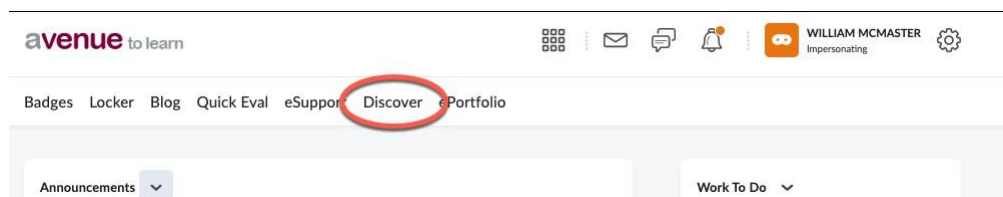
The app is available for free download on the Apple and Android app store. For more information, click [here](#).

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.

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING 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

Please refer to the arrival plan communicated by your Graduate Administrative Assistant prior to your arrival. Arrival processes will differ depending on term start. For helpful information on your journey to McMaster as an incoming student, please visit [McMaster Engineering Incoming Student Page](#). 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. A copy of the study permit must be submitted to their department upon arrival at the university. Incoming graduate students should email their Graduate Administrative Assistant a copy of their Port of Entry (POE) letter or Letter of Introduction (LOI) as soon as possible. Students will not be allowed to enrol without it.

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.

Career Planning Reports

Incoming graduate students to the Faculty of Engineering are required to complete a [career planning report](#) **within their first year of study**. Students must first book a career planning session with the faculty's career development specialist before submitting a career planning report. The report should not exceed 2 pages and must be submitted to their Graduate Administrative Assistant to be evaluated by the Associate Chair (Graduate).

Note: Industrial PhD students and students registered in the School of Engineering Practice and Technology are exempt from this requirement.

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 Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study 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](#).

Master of Applied Science (M.A.Sc.)/Master of Science (M.Sc.)

Supervision of graduate students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

M.A.Sc./M.Sc. Supervisory Committee Meeting

The supervisor shall meet with the student between 9 months to 12 months of commencement of the program for a formal review of progress. The student will complete the M.A.Sc./M.Sc. supervisory committee report form and submit to the supervisor at least one week in advance of the meeting. The supervisor will complete the form and submit it to the Department Graduate Administrative Assistant at the end of the progress review meeting.

Student Responsibility

1. Set up the meeting with supervisor within 12 months of starting.
2. Complete the student sections of the M.A.Sc./M.Sc. supervisory committee report form. (Details of progress towards meeting degree requirements since beginning of program).
3. Submit the form with a critical literature review of your research area to your supervisor at least one week before the meeting.

Supervisor Responsibility

1. Complete Part A: Progress made towards meeting degree requirements.
2. Complete Part B: Specific goals for next number of months.
3. Complete Part C: Areas for improvement.
4. Provide an overall assessment.
5. Review the form with student, sign and submit to the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

M.A.Sc./M.Sc. Thesis Defence

Examination Committee

Each M.A.Sc./M.Sc. student must successfully defend their thesis in an oral examination before a committee proposed by the supervisor and approved by the Department Chair or their delegate. A member of the committee, other than the supervisor, will be appointed to chair the committee. The committee shall be composed of 3 (three) members, including the supervisor. In the case of co-supervision, the committee will consist of 4 (four) members including the supervisors.

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 candidate's presentation of the main elements of the thesis, including the relevance of their work, approach, samples of the most important findings, and contributions. The presentation should not exceed 20 minutes. This is followed by one round of questions and another round of follow-up questions, as appropriate. The duration of the Master's defence (including the candidate's presentation) is expected to vary from 1¼ to 1¾ hours, but it normally should not exceed 2 hrs. 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](#).

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

Transferring from M.A.Sc./M.Sc. to Ph.D. Without Completing M.A.Sc./M.Sc. Degree

Students currently enrolled in the M.A.Sc./M.Sc program may be transferred to the Ph.D. program before they complete their M.A.Sc/M.Sc. degree requirements. University-level regulations governing this scenario can be found in [Section 2.1.4 of the Graduate Calendar](#), and in the Departmental section below

Transferring from M.A.Sc./M.Sc. to Ph.D. While Completing M.A.Sc./M.Sc. Degree

If a student is granted permission to enter the Ph.D. program while concurrently completing the M.A.Sc./M.Sc. program, the School of Graduate Studies requires the student to complete all requirements for the M.A.Sc./M.Sc. program (including defence and submission of thesis for binding) within four (4) months of the date of entry into the Ph.D. program. Students who do not complete the requirements for the Master's degree within the four months will lose their status as a Ph.D. student and be returned to Master's status.

Accelerated M.A.Sc./M.Sc. Option

Refer to the department section of the handbook for details if an accelerated M.A.Sc./M.Sc. option is available.

Master of Engineering (M.Eng.)

Supervision of graduate students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

M.Eng. Project Examination

Examination Committee

The examination committee will be comprised of the student's academic supervisor and a second reader (faculty member).

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 project provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate that they can apply what has been learned in the program. Project selection and proposals will be discussed during the first term of studies with the supervisor, and possibly in collaboration with industry. If the project is in collaboration with industry, it could be completed at a company, but it must be conducted under the supervision of a faculty member. The duration of a project is typically four months. Students must submit the project, including all documentation, to the Examination Committee for evaluation before the end of the final term of the degree program. The project should be completed within 20 months of entry into the program. The student will orally defend their final project report to an examination committee, who will determine an outcome of a pass or fail. If the decision is a fail, comments must be provided to aid in a revision. The decision must be made within three weeks of receipt of the project. Once all corrections have been made as required by the examination committee, the student must submit an electronic copy of the final project (in a PDF format) to the Graduate Administrative Assistant. Once this document is received, the appropriate paperwork indicating the successful completion of degree requirements will be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Supervision of graduate 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 nine (9) 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 their report received with all signatures by SGS** before November 30th.. **Committee meetings should be planned and scheduled with this deadline in mind.** To insure this, the

CAS deadline for holding committee meetings is October 31st 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 SGS Receipt 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.

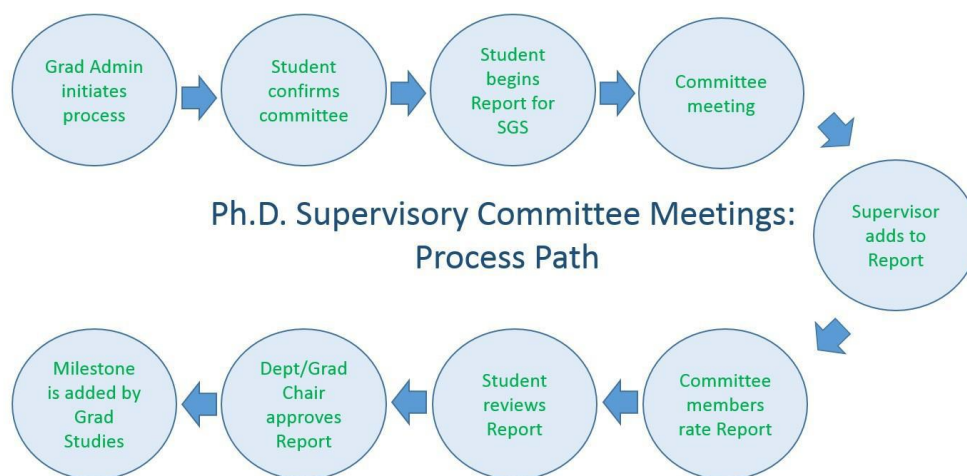
[Link to student's report]

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.

Supervisory Committee Report

Please make sure all the information listed below is correct. If you find anything incorrect, please contact your department graduate secretary PRIOR to the submission of your supervisory committee report.

Family Name	First Name	Title	Email
Markle-reid	Maureen Frances	Supervisor	mreid@mcmaster.ca
Akhtar-daneshi	Noori	Member	daneshi@mcmaster.ca
McKey	Coleen	Member	mckeyc@mcmaster.ca

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.

Supervisory Committee Report

Select a Date to view report or New Meeting to start a new report New Meeting ▼

Please enter the meeting date: (YYYY-MM-DD)

The date you began this degree studies at McMaster (YYYY-MM-DD)

Please indicate if you are a scholarship holder Select Scholarship ▼ Other

With some qualifications, the Calendar (Section 2.7.3) states that supervisors should respond to a draft of the PhD thesis within two months. Providing comments on individual chapters will take place proportionately less time.

Have you submitted draft research this year? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Details of progress made since the last report

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.

Supervisory Committee Report

Meeting Date:

The School of Graduate Studies Calendar states that the Comprehensive Examination for full-time students will normally have taken place between 12 and 20 months from commencement for studies with an upper limit of 24 months.

Is Comprehensive Examination completed? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Please justify an expected date of completion that exceeds 20 months in the program in the comments section

The Comprehensive Examination is expected to be completed by (YYYY-MM-DD)

Progress made in accomplishing goals set out in last report (or toward meeting degree requirements since student began program, if this is the first report)

Student:

Special goals for the next interval of months

Special goals:

Anticipated date for the completion of degree requirements: (YYYY-MM-DD)

Comments:

Please specify members who will rate student report by checking the checkbox beside each member below

All Members	Row #	Title	Family Name	Given Name	Email
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Supervisor	Wardle-rod	Maureen Frances	mfrance@mcmaster.ca
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Member	Akhtar-danesh	Nasir	danesh@mcmaster.ca
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Member	Wiley	Colleen	mcween@mcmaster.ca

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.

Supervisory Committee Report

Meeting Date: 2017-06-21 Member Name: Marie-ross, Laureen Frances View Student Report

☒ By checking this box the committee member acknowledges having read the student's report

Rating: Excellent

Comments:

Submit

The information below is for your review only:

Supervisor Report

The Comprehensive Examination requirement was completed on: YYYY-MM-DD Grade: Select Grade

Please justify an expected date of completion that exceeds 20 months in the program in the comments section

The Comprehensive Examination is expected to be completed by: 2020-01-02 YYYY-MM-DD

Progress made in accomplishing goals set out in last report (or toward meeting degree requirements since student began program, if this is the first report)

Special goals for the next interval of 5 months

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.

Supervisory Committee Report

Meeting Date: 2017-06-21

☒ By checking this box you acknowledge having read the completed report

Is the supervision satisfactory? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

Submit

The information below is for your review only:

Supervisor Report

The Comprehensive Examination requirement was completed on: YYYY-MM-DD Grade: Select Grade

Please justify an expected date of completion that exceeds 20 months in the program in the comments section

The Comprehensive Examination is expected to be completed by: 2020-01-02 YYYY-MM-DD

Progress made in accomplishing goals set out in last report (or toward meeting degree requirements since student began program, if this is the first report)

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. Students who transferred from M.A.Sc./M.Sc. to Ph.D. without completion of M.A.Sc./M.Sc. are expected to complete their comprehensive exam 2 years from initial start date of their M.A.Sc./M.Sc. Special exceptions require the approval of the Department Chair or designate and the Graduate School. Normally, course requirements will be completed before the Comprehensive Exam, but this is not a requirement. Likewise, preliminary research results are not required, but the student is expected to present and defend a viable research proposal including anticipated new contributions to the existing scientific literature.

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

Examination Result

- The candidate's achievement in each of the parts shall be judged as: Pass or Fail.
- **The candidate must pass all parts to successfully complete the comprehensive exam.**
- The committee chair shall communicate the result of the examination to the Graduate Administrative Assistant.
- Should the candidate fail any part, they may request a re-examination. **The re-examination will follow the same format, and must be completed within the amount of time specified in the regulations after the student was notified that they had failed the original assessment.** The candidate will be allowed only one re-examination of each part.
- Once the candidate completes all parts of the examination, the Graduate Administrative Assistant will submit the official result to SGS so that the student's academic record will be updated.

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 candidate's presentation of the main elements of the thesis, including the relevance of their work, approach, samples of the most important findings, and contributions. The presentation should not exceed 20 minutes. 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.

The background image shows a stone building with a large section covered in ivy. A stone wall with a decorative archway is in the foreground. A large, semi-transparent red arch shape is overlaid on the image. The text "DEPARTMENT SPECIFIC INFORMATION" is centered in white, bold, serif font.

DEPARTMENT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

Dr. Richard Paige (Department Chair)

- Email: chaircas@mcmaster.ca
- On leave until Jan 1st 2026
- Point of contact for any issues that cannot be resolved by the Associate Chair (Graduate).

Dr. Rong Zheng (Acting Chair)

- Email: chaircas@mcmaster.ca
- July 1st until Dec 31st 2025

Dr. Jacques Carette (Associate Chair, Graduate Studies)

- Email: carette@mcmaster.ca
- First point of contact for all graduate program academic matters.

Matt Vonk (Academic Department Manager)

- Email: vonkm@mcmaster.ca
- First point of contact for all graduate program administrative matters.

Connie Carrabs (Assistant Academic Department Manager)

- Email: carrabs@mcmaster.ca
- First point of contact for all financial matters and teaching assistant (TA) positions.

Stefanie Bittcher (Graduate Administrative Assistant)

- Email: gradcas@mcmaster.ca
- Point of contact for graduate student networking events and department liaison.

Derek Lipiec (Facilities Manager)

- Email: lipiec@mcmaster.ca
- First point of contact for laboratory or workshop matters.

GETTING STARTED: KEY DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

Building Access and Keys

All building and room access is authorized by Matt Vonk or Connie Carrabs.

Access cards are requested to Axiomrep: <https://css.mcmaster.ca/technology/>

Access Cards for graduate students who are not employees are authorized by Matt or Connie and are issued by the Hub (JHE 216A). Students will be required to pay a deposit for this card.

KEYS AND ID CARDS ISSUED TO YOU ARE FOR YOUR PERSONAL USE ONLY. DO NOT LEND THEM OUT. YOU ALONE WILL BE TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY CONSEQUENCES THAT MIGHT ARISE FROM USE OF YOUR KEYS AND CARDS, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF SECURITY. LOST KEYS OR ACCESS CARDS MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE DEPARTMENTAL OFFICE AS WELL AS THE UNIVERSITY SECURITY OFFICE.

Graduate Student Offices/Desks

Most full-time thesis-based students will be assigned a space in a graduate office. Some will be in ITB, and some will be in ABB. Students in the M.Eng program as well as part time students in other programs will be granted access to a shared hotel style office space in ITB. Please be reminded that these rooms are intended to provide students with a quiet study space. BE RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS. Noise should be kept to a minimum and visitors are discouraged. You are expected to maintain your space by keeping it clean and in good condition.

There is a Grad Student Lounge located in ITB 240 for food and beverage consumption. Any food in the grad room must be placed in a sealed plastic container. Students are responsible for keeping the room tidy and clean. Students are absolutely not allowed to use small appliances to cook food of any kind in their grad room. There is a zero-tolerance policy for small appliance use and will be confiscated if found. Alcohol of any kind, including those in closed containers, is not permitted inside grad rooms. Lastly, electric scooters and e-bikes are not allowed inside the building. The charging of lithium batteries for such transportation means is also not permitted in the grad rooms.

Meeting Rooms

The department has a limited number of rooms available for meetings and seminars. Students wishing to reserve a meeting room must have written approval of their supervisor. Rooms are booked through our Administrative Assistant (Delcia) in the department office via email (casadmin@mcmaster.ca).

Departmental Computing Facilities

Your supervisor is responsible for providing a desktop computer or a laptop, as well as all other related tech or necessary accessories. Department provides and maintains computing

infrastructure to support instructional needs, as well as supporting research equipment purchased by individual research groups. For more information, click [here](#).

Departmental Photocopying

Please direct all queries to our Administrative Assistant. Departmental copiers are not available for student's personal use. Students needing to make copies directly related to their research or for a course to which they have been assigned as a teaching assistant must complete the Photocopier Services Request Form, available in the departmental office, and obtain their supervisor's approval before a copier account will be set up. Please discuss appropriate use of the copier account with your supervisor. Please note that copier codes are assigned to individuals and are not to be shared. Once in possession of a code, you can use the photocopier in ITB 203.

Departmental Seminars

The Department, as well as various departmental research groups, arranges series of seminars each year at which outstanding scientists and engineers address the faculty, students and research support staff. A code is given to students that are able to self-report their attendance on A2L. This self-reporting tool is in relation to degree milestone completion.

Outside Conferences

We encourage graduate students to report results of their research at Conferences held outside the university, many of which are attended by Computing and Software professors. The preparation involved with such presentations and financial assistance available should be discussed with your research.

Departmental Specific Lab Safety

Only CSA approved and labelled electrical and electronic equipment may be used in the labs and graduate offices. Any custom-built electrical equipment needs to be field evaluated by eSafe inspectors before deployment.

Each lab area has its own set of safety rules that you need to adhere strictly to. Please familiarize yourself with these rules and discuss lab safety with your supervisor prior to engaging in lab activities. Do not eat or drink or share food in the laboratory areas. Smoking (including vaping and cannabis) is not allowed anywhere on Campus.

For more Lab Safety information, refer to "McMaster University Laboratory Manual", "Reporting of a Safety Incident", "Eye Safety Regulations", and "Waste Chemical Disposal" under [General Information > Health and Safety](#).

Lab Safety Reports

Before the start of an experimental program, all graduate students, PDF's, plus all other researchers are required to submit a safety report to the Departmental Safety Committee. No one

can commence their experimental work until their report is submitted and approved. The report must be updated regularly or when a significant change in the experimental work occurs. Safety Report forms and instructions can be downloaded [here](#).

If you are carrying out computational work, you are still required to submit a safety report.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

As per [Section 1.3 of the Graduate Calendar](#), full-time students are obliged to be on campus, except for vacation periods or authorized off-campus status, for all three terms of the university year. Students must be geographically available and visit the campus regularly which normally means multiple times per week; written permission from the department/supervisor is required for studies to be off campus. In all such cases, Full Time Off Campus status must be formally submitted to SGS.

NSERC Highly Qualified Personnel form

All students must complete & return digital copies to Matthew Vonk (vonkm@mcmaster.ca), the CAS Dept. Manager an NSERC HQP waiver form:

https://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/OnlineServices-ServicesEnLigne/pdf/F100D_e.pdf

*NSERC requires this consent for not just grad students, but also undergrads who work on research projects.

MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.Sc.) Computer Science

Program Requirements

For full regulations, click [here](#).

Graduate courses in the Dept. of Computing and Software are grouped in three categories, i) Theory of computation and mathematics of computing (Theory), ii) Software and its engineering (Software), and iii) Computer systems and applications (Systems). Categorization of existing courses ([See Appendix A](#)). All students must successfully complete the equivalent of four one-term graduate courses in Computer Science, Software Engineering, or relevant areas such as Electrical and Computer Engineering or Mathematics. Among the four required courses,

1. One (1) Software course
2. Two (2) Theory courses and one (1) Systems course; or Two (2) Systems courses and one (1) Theory course
3. One (1) course may be substituted by a graduate course from outside the department subject to the approval of the student's thesis advisor and the graduate advisor
4. At most one (1) 600-level course
5. If requested by the Admission Authority (for candidates not fulfilling all the prescribed requirements for admission), or if the Supervisor identifies a deficiency, a student may be required to take additional courses, usually PUCs³, to supplement their education. In such cases the number of additional courses should normally be at most two, in some very exceptional cases at most 4. A PUC may be replaced, when appropriate, by a PGC⁴.
6. The student, with the approval of the Supervisor, proposes the course selection for approval by the Department Chair or delegate.
7. Outstanding M.Sc. students may be allowed to transfer to a Ph.D. program of the Department when they complete their course requirements with at least an A- average and demonstrate exceptional progress in their research project. Transfer procedures are determined by the respective Ph.D. programs.

Additional Requirements

1. Departmental seminar attendance: Full-time students are required to attend minimum 4 times or 50% per academic year, whichever is lower during the first year of the program.
2. Technical presentation: Full-time students are required to participate the graduate poster & demo competition once in the first two years of the program.
3. Supervisory meeting: A supervisor committee should be formed that consists of the student's supervisor and at least one other member of the department. Members from outside the department can be included upon approval by the graduate advisor. Supervisory meetings must be scheduled once a year.

Supervision

Supervision of graduate students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

Supervisory Committee Meeting

Refer to “M.A.Sc. Supervisory Committee Meeting” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Master of Applied Science \(M.A.Sc.\)](#)

M.Sc. Thesis Defence

Refer to “M.A.Sc. Thesis Defence” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Master of Applied Science \(M.A.Sc.\)](#)

M.Sc. Defence Procedures/Timelines

The student presents and defends his/her thesis. The Examination Committee evaluates both the scientific merit and presentation of the thesis and decides about awarding the degree to the candidate.

1. The defense is open to the public.
2. The student presents the main results of his/her thesis in a 20-minute conference-like presentation.
3. The members of the Examination Committee ask questions about the material presented in the thesis, related issues, the impact of the results, and future research.
4. The Chair of the Examination Committee should allow time for questions from the public, up to a maximum of 15 minutes.
5. The defense normally takes about one hour and not longer than two hours.
6. The Examination Committee evaluates the student's performance in a closed meeting after the defense. If the student is required to make changes to the thesis, the Examination Committee should give the student a description of what needs to be changed within a few days of the defense.

MASTER OF APPLIED SCIENCE (M.A.Sc.)

Program Requirements

For full regulations, click [here](#).

Graduate courses in the Dept. of Computing and Software are grouped in three categories, i) Theory of computation and mathematics of computing (Theory), ii) Software and its engineering (Software), and iii) Computer systems and applications (Systems). Categorization of existing courses ([See Appendix A](#)).

All students must successfully complete the equivalent of four one-term graduate courses in Software Engineering, Computer Science, or relevant areas such as Electrical and Computer Engineering or Mathematics. Among the four required courses,

1. Two (2) Software courses
2. One (1) course from Theory
3. One (1) course from System
4. One (1) of the non-Software courses may be substituted by a graduate course from outside the department subject to the approval of the student's thesis advisor and the graduate advisor
5. At most one 600-level course
6. If requested by the Admission Authority (for candidates not fulfilling all the prescribed requirements for admission), or if the Supervisor identifies a deficiency, a student may be required to take additional courses, usually PUCs3, to supplement their education. In such cases the number of additional courses should normally be at most two, in some very exceptional cases at most 4. A PUC may be replaced, when appropriate, by a PGC4.
7. The student, with the approval of the Supervisor, proposes the course selection for approval by the Department Chair or delegate.
8. Outstanding M.A.Sc. students may be allowed to transfer to a Ph.D. program of the Department when they complete their course requirements with at least an A- average and demonstrate exceptional progress in their research project. Transfer procedures are determined by the respective Ph.D. programs.

Additional Requirements

1. Departmental seminar attendance: Full-time students are required to attend minimum 4 times or 50% per academic year, whichever is lower during the first year of the program.
2. Technical presentation: Full-time students are required to participate the graduate poster & demo competition once in the first two years of the program.
3. Supervisory meeting: A supervisory committee should be formed that consists of the student's supervisor and at least one other member of the department. Members from outside the department can be included upon approval by the graduate advisor. Supervisory meetings must be scheduled once a year.

Supervision

Supervision of graduate students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

Supervisory Committee Meeting

Refer to “M.A.Sc. Supervisory Committee Meeting” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Master of Applied Science \(M.A.Sc.\)](#)

M.A.Sc. Thesis Defence

Refer to “M.A.Sc. Thesis Defence” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Master of Applied Science \(M.A.Sc.\)](#)

M.A.Sc. Defence Procedures/Timelines

The student presents and defends his/her thesis. The Examination Committee evaluates both the scientific merit and presentation of the thesis and decides about awarding the degree to the candidate.

1. The student must give a public seminar on his/her thesis research at least four weeks prior to the desired defense date. Copies of the thesis must be distributed to the members of the Thesis Examination Committee prior to the seminar. Members of the Thesis Examination Committee are expected to attend the seminar. The seminar normally lasts 60 minutes (including questions from the public).
2. On the basis of the thesis contents and the seminar, the Thesis Examination Committee decides whether the thesis is ready for defense. This decision must be made within two weeks of the public seminar. If the decision is to withhold approval, comments must be provided to aid in a revision.
3. Once the student has addressed the committee’s concerns, the thesis is again considered by the committee. This procedure is repeated until approval is given. In the event of a disagreement between the student and the Thesis Examination committee, the case may be referred to the Chair for resolution.
4. The defense is open to all interested individuals.
5. The student first gives a 15 minute summary of their work.
6. The audience and members of the Examination Committee ask questions about the material presented in the thesis, related issues, the impact of the results and future research.
7. The defense normally takes no more than 90 minutes.
8. The Examination Committee evaluates the student’s performance and determines whether or not the requirements for the M.A.Sc. degree have been met in a closed meeting after the student has left the room

MASTER OF ENGINEERING (M.Eng.)

Program Requirements

For full regulations, click [here](#).

A student in the M. Eng. program must complete six half (one-term) graduate courses. Students must complete:

1. At least four 700 level courses.
2. At most two courses may be at the 600 level.
3. At most two courses, subject to the approval of the supervisor and graduate advisor, can be from another department in the Faculty of Engineering or the Dept. of Mathematics and Statistics, or the School of Computational Science and Engineering. The two 600 level courses may be taken as an Advanced Credit in the last year of undergraduate studies in McMaster University (see Section 1.1)

Advanced Credit Option

Students in McMasters Computer Science, Software Engineering, and Mecha tronics Engineering undergraduate programs may apply for the Advanced Credit Option upon enrolling in the program immediately after completion of their undergraduate study. Students taking the Advanced Credit Option are allowed to take two 600 level courses while in level 4 of the respective undergraduate program. A student may be admitted to the advanced credit option of the M. Eng. program after

- completing level 4;
- completing the advanced credit courses with a minimum of B- for each; and
- 1 achieving at least a B- sessional average in level 4 of their under graduate program.

Supervision

Supervision of graduate students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

All students will have a supervisor from the Department to guide them through the program. Students are strongly encouraged to indicate the intended supervisors in their application materials. The supervisor will be assigned in the o er of admission and serve as the project supervisor (see Section 1.5).

M.Eng. Project Defence

Refer to “M.Eng Project Defence” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Master of Engineering \(M.Eng.\)](#)

The project provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate that they can apply what has been learned in the program.

1. Projects will be speci ed by the supervisor in the department, possibly in collaboration with industry.

2. The duration of a project is typically four months. A project could be completed at a company, but it must be conducted under the supervision of a faculty member.
3. An Examination Committee is formed, consisting of the supervisor(s) and at least one faculty member from CAS. The supervisor(s) nominate the Examination Committee and should be approved by the Chair or delegate.
4. Students must submit the project, including all documentation, to the Examination Committee for evaluation before the end of the final term of the degree program.
5. The Examination Committee decides on the outcome: pass or fail. If the decision is fail, comments must be provided to aid in a revision. The decision must be made within three weeks of receipt of the project.
6. If the initial decision was fail, the student may resubmit the project after addressing the committee's concerns. If the subsequent decision is fail, the student is dismissed from the program.

M.Eng. Defence Procedures/Timelines

1. All courses should be completed within 16 months of entry into the program.
2. The project should be completed within 20 months of entry into the program.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) Computer Science

Program Requirements

For full regulations, click [here](#).

Graduate courses in the Dept. of Computing and Software are grouped in three categories, i) Theory of computation and mathematics of computing (Theory), ii) Software and its engineering (Software), and iii) Computer systems and applications (Systems). Categorization of existing courses can be found in ([See Appendix A](#)).

All students must successfully complete at least 4 one-term graduate courses (beyond those taken for a Master's degree) Computer Science, Software Engineering or other relevant areas, such as Electrical and Computer Engineering or Mathematics. Among the four required courses,

1. At least two (2) Theory courses or two (2) Systems courses
2. At least one (1) course from a category differing from (i)
3. At most one (1) graduate course from outside the department subject to the approval of the student's supervisor and the graduate advisor
4. At most one (1) 600-level course
5. If requested by the Admission Authority (for candidates not fulfilling all the prescribed requirements for admission), or if the Supervisor identifies a deficiency, a student may be required to take additional courses, usually PUCs², to supplement their education. In such cases the number of additional courses should normally be at most two, in some very exceptional cases at most four. A PUC may be replaced, when appropriate, by a PGC³.
6. The student, with the approval of the Supervisor, proposes the course selection for approval by the Department Chair or delegate.

Additional Requirements

1. Departmental seminar attendance: Full-time students are required to attend minimum 4 times or 50% per academic year, whichever is lower during the first two years of the program.
2. Technical presentation: Full-time students are required to participate the graduate poster & demo competition once in the first two years of the program.
3. Supervisory meeting: Supervisory meetings must be scheduled once a year. Students should submit a supervisory report online at least 1-week before supervisory meetings (except during the years for thesis proposal and dissertation in lieu of supervisory meetings per SGS policies). Suggested content for the

Supervision

Supervision of graduate students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

Supervisory Committee Meeting

Refer to “Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#).

As soon as possible, and in any case within the time limit specified in the Timeline section, a Supervisory Committee is appointed by the Department Chair or delegate.

The Supervisory Committee consists of at least three faculty members:

1. The Supervisor(s).
 2. At least two additional faculty members, satisfying the following constraints:
 - a. At least one of the additional members must be from the Department.
 - b. One of the additional members may be from another McMaster department.
 - c. With permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies, one of the additional members may come from outside McMaster.
- At least one Committee member must be a regular member of the Department.
 - The external member(s) are experts in the student’s area of research.
 - Committee members are proposed by the Supervisor who is responsible for verifying their willingness and availability to serve.
 - The Committee is appointed by the Department Chair or delegate.
 - The Committee must meet at least once a year to monitor the student’s grades and progress in research.
 - Additional duties of the Supervisory Committee are outlined in the McMaster Graduate Calendar

Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

Refer to “Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#).

Structure of Examination Committee

As soon as possible, and in any case within the time limit specified in the Timeline section, a Supervisory Committee is appointed by the Department Chair or delegate.

1. The Supervisor(s).
 2. At least two additional faculty members, satisfying the following constraints:
 - a. At least one of the additional members must be from the Department.
 - b. One of the additional members may be from another McMaster department.
 - c. With permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies, one of the additional members may come from outside McMaster.
- At least one Committee member must be a regular member of the Department.
 - The external member(s) are experts in the student’s area of research.
 - Committee members are proposed by the Supervisor who is responsible for verifying their willingness and availability to serve.
 - The Committee is appointed by the Department Chair or delegate.
 - The Committee must meet at least once a year to monitor the student’s grades and progress in research.

- Additional duties of the Supervisory Committee are outlined in the McMaster Graduate Calendar.

Part I

The Comprehensive Examination consists of two parts. In Part I, Ph.D. candidates must demonstrate “graduate level” understanding of the undergraduate computer science material. There is a separate document describing the examination.

Part II: Thesis Proposal

This part of the Comprehensive Examination is based on the student’s thesis proposal. This examination is intended to ensure that the student understands both the theoretical and practical issues in the research area and that he/she is well prepared to carry out the research described in the thesis proposal.

1. Part II of the Comprehensive Examination is open to the public.
2. The Supervisory Committee serves as the Examination Committee. The Computer Science Graduate Advisor chooses a member of the Supervisory Committee, who is not the supervisor, to be the Chair of the Examination Committee.
3. The student submits his/her written thesis proposal, about 20–30 pages in length, to the Examination Committee four weeks prior to the date of the Examination.
4. The thesis proposal should include a clear definition of the intended research problem(s), a careful survey of previous related work, discussion of the methodology to be used, and a timetable.
5. The proposal should demonstrate that successful pursuance of the research will yield a substantial contribution to the body of knowledge of Computer Science.
6. The student presents his/her research plan (at most 20 minutes) and gives answers, by means of oral presentation, to the Committee’s questions.
7. The student defends his/her answers and justifies the choice of research topic.
8. The Chair of the Examination Committee should allow time for questions from the public, up to a maximum of 15 minutes.
9. The entire examination typically takes two hours.
10. The Examination Committee will provide critical comments and/or suggestions.
11. The Examination Committee recommends a result to the Computer Science Graduate Committee. The result of the Examination is normally pass with distinction, pass, or fail. In case of failure, the Examination Committee determines whether the student can continue, what actions are needed, and whether re-examination is necessary. The Computer Science Graduate Committee makes a recommendation to the Department based on the Examination Committee’s recommendation.

Ph.D. Thesis Defence

Refer to “Ph.D. Thesis Defence” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#)

Ph.D. Defence Procedures/Timelines

The Ph.D. Thesis defense will be conducted by the School of Graduate Studies. The student and the Supervisory Committee are referred to the School of Graduate Studies regulations.

1. The Ph.D. thesis in Computer Science must contain sufficient results for at least a refereed publication in a respected journal or prestigious conference proceedings.
2. The external examiner should not be a member of the McMaster faculty and is encouraged to be present at the defense.
3. It is the student's responsibility to present a complete thesis in time.
4. The Supervisory Committee must evaluate the thesis in the shortest possible time, but in any case within a three-month period, and request the necessary improvements.
5. The Supervisory Committee certifies that the thesis is at an appropriate level and that it meets the standards of the thesis requirements.
6. The final version of the thesis must be submitted to the Department's Administrative Coordinator or delegate at least three weeks before the date of the defense. The thesis will then be made available to the faculty members of the Department

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) Software Engineering

Program Requirements

For full regulations, click [here](#).

Graduate courses in the Dept. of Computing and Software are grouped in three categories, i) Theory of computation and mathematics of computing (Theory), ii) Software and its engineering (Software), and iii) Computer systems and applications (Systems). Categorization of existing courses can be found in ([See Appendix A](#)).

Regular Track

All students must successfully complete at least 4 one-term graduate courses in Software Engineering, Computer Science, or other relevant areas, such as Electrical and Computer Engineering or Mathematics. Among the four required courses,

1. Two (2) Software courses
2. At least one (1) course from a non-Software category
3. At most one (1) graduate course from outside the department subject to the approval of the student's supervisor and the graduate advisor
4. At most one (1) 600-level course
5. If requested by the Admission Authority (for candidates not fulfilling all the prescribed requirements for admission), or if the Supervisor identifies a deficiency, a student may be required to take additional courses, usually PUCs2, to supplement their education. In such cases the number of additional courses should normally be at most two, in some very exceptional cases at most four. A PUC may be replaced, when appropriate, by a PGC3.
6. The student, with the agreement of the supervisor, proposes the course selection; the Chair or delegate must approve the selections. Necessary changes must be proposed and approved in the same way.

Additional Requirements

1. Departmental seminar attendance: Full-time students are required to attend minimum 4 times or 50% per academic year, whichever is lower during the first two years of the program.
2. Technical presentation: Students are required to participate the graduate poster & demo competition once in the first two years of the program.
3. Supervisory meeting: Supervisory meetings must be scheduled once a year. Students should submit a supervisory report online at least 1-week before supervisory meetings (except during the years for thesis proposal and dissertation in lieu of supervisory meetings per SGS policies).

Supervision

Supervision of graduate students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

Supervisory Committee Meeting

Refer to “Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#).

Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

Refer to “Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#).

Part I

The Comprehensive Examination consists of two parts. In Part I, Ph.D. candidates must demonstrate “graduate level” understanding of the undergraduate software engineering material. There is a separate document describing the examination.

Part II: Thesis Proposal

At the start of the thesis research, each student must submit a research proposal to the Supervisory Committee and defend that proposal. The proposal should identify an open question about Software Engineering such that answering that question is a significant research contribution and that an answer could lead to improvements in software development.

1. The proposal should include:
 - a. an introduction to the question,
 - b. an explanation about why an answer to the question would be important,
 - c. the reasons to believe that there is an answer to the question,
 - d. how the research will demonstrate the applicability of the results in Software Engineering,
 - e. a schedule expressed in terms of clearly defined milestones and deadlines.
2. The defense is open to the general public.
3. At the defense, the Supervisory Committee members should confirm that the student has:
 - a. familiarity with the industrial solutions or approaches to the problem
 - b. a good understanding of earlier research that is relevant to the problem
 - c. the appropriate theoretical background that might be useful in solving the problem.
4. The proposal should be submitted to the Supervisory Committee two weeks before the defense.
5. The Supervisory Committee may reject the proposal in which case a revised proposal must be submitted and defended.

Structure of Examination Committee

A supervisor will be assigned to all students to guide them through the program. Two faculty members may jointly act as the supervisor. In addition, each student will be assigned a Supervisory Committee that will review and assess the student's progress.

1. The supervisors will normally be faculty members who have agreed to provide financial support and are experts in the student's intended area of research.
2. Students with financial support from government, international agencies, or other reliable sources can be admitted without a permanent supervisor. A temporary supervisor will be named for such cases and a permanent supervisor found as soon as possible.

3. The Supervisory Committee consists of the supervisor(s) and at least two additional faculty members:
 - a. at least one of the additional members must be from CAS
 - b. one member might be from another McMaster department
 - c. with permission of the Dean of School of Graduate Studies, one member might come from outside of McMaster.
4. The student and the supervisor nominate the committee. The committee is appointed by the Chair or delegate.

Ph.D. Thesis Defence

Refer to “Ph.D. Thesis Defence” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#)

Ph.D. Defence Procedures/Timelines

The thesis presents the results of the student’s research. The defense provides the final opportunity for evaluation of the student’s work.

1. It is the student’s responsibility to present a complete thesis to the supervisor when the work is finished. The supervisor and student may jointly decide to discuss the work in smaller units.
2. The supervisor must evaluate the thesis and specify any necessary improvements. The supervisor may reject the thesis without detailed comments if the English is not correct or understandable. It is the student’s responsibility to provide a well-written thesis.
3. The supervisor is responsible for determining that the thesis is at an appropriate level, and that it meets the standards of the program.
4. After the supervisor is satisfied with the thesis, it will be evaluated by the Supervisory Committee. In the event of a disagreement between the supervisor and the Supervisory Committee about the acceptability of the thesis, the Chair may ask other faculty members for opinions. If necessary the Chair may appoint a new Supervisory Committee.
5. After the Supervisory Committee is satisfied with the thesis, the student may submit it to the graduate school
6. The Ph.D. Thesis defense will be conducted by the School of Graduate Studies following its usual procedures.

DEPARTMENT SOCIALS

Life in Computing and Software (LICS)

[General](#) | [Life in Computing and Software](#) | [Microsoft Teams](#)

Department Social Media

Connect with us!



<https://www.eng.mcmaster.ca/cas/>