

CHEMICAL AND MATERIALS ENGINEERING
'CHEAT SHEET' FOR SUPERVISORS

(Some of the most important things to remember about graduate student supervision)

- The CME graduate student handbook, FGSR's graduate program manual and the university calendar contain most of the information on our responsibilities with respect to our graduate students and their programs. The exam procedures document in CME's forms cabinet also contains useful information.
- It is the supervisor's responsibility to schedule candidacy and final (defense) exams, and to ensure that students are not involved in the process. Supervisors can make use of their support staff to handle the logistics associated.
- FGSR requires that the supervisory committee for Ph.D. students be formed in the first year and that supervisory committee meetings be held at least once a year. It is recommended to file a report of the supervisory committee meeting in the student's file. Thesis-based students are required to complete a Progress Report every year.
- For Ph.D. students, the research proposal (i.e., candidacy report) must be submitted within 13 months of initial registration in the program, and the candidacy examination must be held within 16 months of initial registration. Please ensure that these program requirements are met, since failure to comply with these will result in termination or change of program for the student. Candidacy reports cannot be modified once they are submitted; therefore, please ensure that you coordinate with your students to have a satisfactory research proposal ready by the deadline.
- For MSc students, if they do not have a presentation at a conference or the FEGRS, they can (with the supervisor's approval) apply to make a substitution with a presentation at a different venue. There is a form available in the CME Supervisor Resources shared drive for making this application; note that approval is not automatic. Also, note that the presentation (or the substitution) must be approved before the final examination is scheduled.
- Please keep the deadline to submit the thesis approval form to FGSR for students to avoid paying the tuition fees for that semester when scheduling final examinations for your graduate students.
- Composition of committees:
 (The committee chair does not count as an examiner)
 - ❖ **MSc final:** Where there is a supervisor only, the examining committee is the supervisor and two university examiners (UE) or one university examiner and one specialized knowledge examiner (SKE). *Where there is a supervisory committee, the examining committee is the ex-officio examiners and one UE or one SKE.* At least half of the examiners must hold a master's degree or higher.
 - ❖ **Doctoral candidacy:** It is recommended that the examining committee consist of the ex-officio examiners and either two UEs or one UE and one SKE. At least half of the examiners must hold a doctoral degree.
 - ❖ **Doctoral final:** It is recommended that the examining committee consist of the ex-officio examiners and either two UEs or one UE and one SKE. The external reader is no longer an option. At least half of the examiners must hold a doctoral degree.
- FGSR states that university examiner must not be members of the supervisory committee (in the case of PhD exams), have not been connected with thesis research in a significant way, are not associated with the student (outside of normal course or other non-thesis activities), and are not close collaborators of the supervisor(s). The university examiner may be from the same department as the student and the supervisor. In the CME department, the following guideline is used to decide whether someone is a close collaborator of the supervisor: In the past two years, if the person has co-supervised students or was a co-investigator on a funded project or has co-authored refereed publications with the supervisor, they would be regarded as a close collaborator and not be eligible to act as a university examiner.
- *A specialized knowledge examiner is a person who has knowledge or professional expertise that is relevant to the thesis research (such as a health practitioner or an Indigenous community member) and does not have a full-time academic appointment at a university that confers graduate degrees. They must not be (or have been) a member of the supervisory committee, or have been connected with the thesis research in any way. The examiner should not have a close personal association with the student or the supervisor.*

- FGSR's minimum requirement to be eligible for scholarships is a GPA of 3.5 over the past 15 credits (or its full-time equivalent over the last two completed years of study, if based on the admission GPA). If students are below this value, they are not eligible for scholarships administered at the University of Alberta. Please check this condition when students request support letters for scholarships to ensure that you do not write letters in vain.
- If any part of the stipend comes from trust funds (e.g., supervisor's research grants), the maximum yearly stipend a student can receive from all sources (including scholarships) is \$36,000 (domestic) or \$40,000 (international). Of this amount, a maximum of \$30,000 can be from the supervisor's research funds. Minimum stipends are \$23,000 for Canadian/PR and \$27,000 for international students, respectively.
- Departmental policy is that we do not accept self-funded students; however, supervisors can bring individual cases to the Department faculty council for a vote to approve admission as a self-funded student. However, we recognize funding from a few established scholarship schemes (such as the China Scholarship Council and CONACYT).
- For the PhD final examination (i.e., the thesis defense), it is FGSR's requirement that the external examiner should receive the thesis at least four weeks before the date of the exam. Prior to this, the supervisory committee should have approved the thesis for distribution to the external examiner, and the external examiner should have been approved by the Associate Dean Graduate Students. Please keep this in mind when scheduling the defense – it is recommended to budget two months for this process.
- Once the external examiner has been approved for a Ph.D. final oral examination, all communications with the external should be conducted through cmegps@ualberta.ca (this includes providing the copy of the thesis and setting up travel/teleconferencing arrangements).
- Three weeks' notice is required when scheduling candidacy or final exams (this is not flexible). Please keep this in mind when planning the scheduling of these examinations. Also, copies of the thesis are to be provided to the examining committee three weeks in advance of the examination (except for the external examiner in a Ph.D. defence, who requires four weeks).
- Graduate students receiving a stipend are entitled to one week of vacation leave without a reduction in pay for each four-month university term, i.e., three weeks per year. For the purpose of calculating vacation leave, the year is from September 1 to August 31. Students must have their vacation approved in advance by their supervisors and vacation must be arranged so as not to adversely affect their duties.
- MSc students are guaranteed funding for 2 years and PhD students for 4 years (both are subject to the student maintaining satisfactory performance). FGSR requires that MSc students must pay the equivalent of at least one full year of program fees and PhD students the equivalent of at least three full years of program fees; therefore, it is possible for students to graduate in one or three years for a MSc or PhD, respectively.
- Before your students start working in a laboratory, please confirm that they have completed the following training courses related to safety (available on-line from EHS): CSL, WHMIS, Laboratory Safety, Chemical Safety.
- It is required to have a formal first supervisor-student meeting with new graduate students within a month of their arrival and record it on the form developed for the purpose (available in the department's forms cabinet).
- There are now two types of graduate assistantships related to research: the graduate research assistantship (GRA) and the graduate research assistantship fellowship (GRAF). According to the GSA's collective agreement with the University, "A GRAF is a form of financial assistance provided to graduate students to allow them to focus on their education and training, as it relates to their own thesis or directed research project. The relationship between the Assistantship Supervisor and GRAF is not an employment relationship." In contrast, the relationship between the Graduate Assistantship Supervisor and the GRA is an employment relationship, and the GRA is supposed to be "solely in support of a faculty member's own independent research". Students should be paid as GRAFs unless they are being paid for work not related to their thesis, in which case they should be paid as GRAs. The total amount of GRA+GTA (graduate teaching assistant) hours cannot exceed 12 hours/week.