

THE SUPERVISION SCOOP

The YorkU Graduate Supervision Support Hub Newsletter



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DEVELOPING YORKU'S NEW GRADUATE SUPERVISION SUPPORT HUB

Established with the help of a three-year grant from York's Academic Innovation Fund, the GSSHub will be rooted in principles of dignity, mutuality and effective supervisory practices. It will aim to enhance the graduate supervision process with best practices, capacity building, a centralized platform for support and guidance, and a toolkit of resources to help foster a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement in supervision methods.

It is our consultation and development year! By participating in consultations and sharing invaluable experiences and insights, people can help shape the development, initiatives and effectiveness of the proposed GSSHub, which will empower supervisors and students to thrive in the supervisory relationship.

Findings from local and global consultations, so far, include

- championing a suite of graduate supervision supports
- consensus that professional development, especially for new appointees is essential
- conflict mediation and best practices is viewed as a necessary topic to be had
- student mental health factors into graduate supervision
- additional layers of system navigation is necessary when supervising international students
- cross-disciplinary faculty and student meet-ups are vital

If you have ideas about what you would like to see the Hub include, please reach out to the program manager of the Hub, Tracy Bhoola tbhoola@yorku.ca

UPCOMING GRADUATE SUPERVISION CONFERENCE

Collaborative, Constructive, Considerate: Fostering Dialogue on Best Practices in Graduate Supervision in Canada

The Faculty of Graduate Studies is celebrating 60 years of knowledge creation. As a part of FGS's celebration, we are hosting a national Graduate Supervision Conference in partnership with Memorial University Newfoundland.

McGill award- winning supervisor, Dr. Bruce Shore, author of *The Graduate Advisor Handbook*, will share insights & pragmatic tips for the advising process



Ombuds, former litigator, author of *Supervising Conflict*, Heather McGhee Peggs will share strategies for resolving concerns in the moment, strategies that prevent conflict & conflict hotspots



Partake in an *amuse bouche* to discover current Graduate Supervision Support Examples from speakers across Canada

The free, virtual conference for supervisors will feature:

- ★ nation-wide graduate supervision award winners reflecting and sharing insights into common experiences and lessons learned
- ★ a presentation by the authors of the new Ontario Graduate Supervision Principles
- ★ a country-wide panel of graduate supervision support and services examples
- ★ a session on effectively navigating conflict in supervisory relationships, designed to encourage dialogue and reflection
- ★ a forward-thinking discussion on mobilizing a working group led by CAGS to establish Canadian graduate supervision principles

Graduate supervisors are invited to mark their calendars for **May 31, 2024 9:00AM-3:00PM**



Visit the Conference Page to register



<https://www.yorku.ca/gradstudies/grad-supervision-conference/>



PRINCIPLES FOR GRADUATE SUPERVISION

In June of 2023, the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies released the much-anticipated Principles for Graduate Supervision at Ontario Universities.

The document opens with, where “respectful and productive relationships between supervisors and graduate students promote a thriving university research culture where students are supported to make meaningful contributions to their fields of specialization” (OCGS, 2023, p. 1).

With values of Integrity, Inclusion, and Collaboration forming the basis from which the principles extend, the principles provide guidance related to the responsibilities of students, supervisors, graduate programs and universities proper.

Two key developments regarding this document are emerging since its successful launch at the 2023 meeting of the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies:

(i) Beginning conversations regarding their adoption nationally; and

(ii) their featured inclusion at the May 31st, 2024 York University Graduate Supervision Conference through a plenary session with insights from the principles’ key authors



“

High quality academic supervision is a key driver of graduate research-based education and is central to ensuring a positive and successful graduate student experience.

”

The Ontario Principles open with a focus on the important work and responsibilities of supervisors. We invite supervisors to review and reflect on the fine ways you are adhering to these principles and best practices.

1. Facilitate the graduate student's intellectual growth and contribution to a field of knowledge.

2. Hold regular meetings with the graduate student to discuss, clarify and document mutual expectations, and the graduate student's research and career goals.

3. Assist in developing and executing a reasonable schedule for completing all milestones of the graduate student's program.

4. Inform the graduate student and others of any anticipated extended absences and arrange for alternative modes of communication or supervision.

5. Mentor the graduate student in all phases of research relevant to the discipline including, but not limited to: proposal development; data collection, analysis, interpretation; manuscript preparation; research dissemination; collaboration.

6. Provide timely, thorough, and constructive feedback and be reasonably accessible for meetings requested by the graduate student to ensure progress toward timely completion.

7. Discuss with the graduate student relevant university and external (e.g., Tri-Council) policies, guidelines, and deadlines.

8. Provide and support a safe, inclusive, healthy work environment in labs and/or research spaces. Encourage work-life balance and provide vacation time for graduate students.

9. Discuss authorship practices within the student's discipline, document intellectual property and joint authorship agreements with special sensitivity to differential practices and experiences of international students.

10. Direct the student to and assist in navigating appropriate resources regarding the financials of graduate studies.

11. Understand and discuss with the student financial commitments they may have agreed to for funding support throughout their time as a graduate student.

12. Follow university policy and provide students with appropriate time to read and understand agreements to be signed and provide the student with a signed copy.

13. Consider equity issues and unique circumstances of graduate students in providing supervision. Support students who, due to personal/social circumstances, may face obstacles/historical challenges to graduate student success.

14. Provide support to the graduate student, including writing letters of recommendation (where appropriate) and support the student's participation in research dissemination and professional development opportunities.

15. Chair and convene meetings of the supervisory committee, and complete all necessary records and reports for program progression.

16. Be aware of university policies that impact the daily supervisory relationship, including immediately disclosing conflict of interest with the student, and adhering to policies on research ethics, civility, workplace safety, and sexual harassment.

REFLECTIONS ON BEST PRACTICES

A 2022 study by Bailey, Parrott, Long, Brannan and Burtch stemming from research involving two large research-intensive institutions, sought to understand elements of (GA) supervision by graduate faculty that proved helpful and promoted mutual satisfaction.

In the study, these elements were identified as most helpful:

- taking a student-centred approach,
- cultivating a learning-focused experience,
- establishing effective communication with a focus on face-to-face interactions,
- developing self-awareness through intentional self-reflection regarding one's preferred or default supervisory style and
- striving to provide individualized supervision that was situational

Questions for our valued graduate supervisors and committee members

- Which do you already do?
- How have you adapted your strategies when student circumstances or preferred learning styles change?
- How do you communicate with your students so as to grow the relationship towards mutual respect?



Spotlight on York Policies

Gearing up for Defence: Timelines and Steps

Doctoral Dissertation & Defence Timelines – A Quick Guide for Faculty & Staff

GROUNDWORK



Dissertation Preparation

- › By the end of **term 5** the student must have a Supervisor on file with FGS.
- › By the end of **term 8** the student must have a full Supervisory committee (min 3 members) on file with FGS. (A GPA training module exists for completion of both supervisor and supervisory forms.)
- › Effective for the 2023 Entrance Cohort the student must submit the dissertation proposal (TD1) along with applicable ethics forms to FGS by the end of **term 9**.
- › The consequence for missing any of the milestones is a block on the student's registration until such milestones are achieved or information received.



Dissertation Research and Writing

- › The student, supervisor, and committee should [stay in close touch](#) throughout research and writing.
- › The student must be continuously registered every term, meet regularly with their supervisor/committee, and fill out an annual progress report each Winter term.
- › Significant changes to research may require a revised proposal and ethics form to be submitted.

ASSESSMENT



Oral Exam - Preparation

| Time before the exam (minimum) | Activity |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 6-8 Weeks Prior | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervisory committee confirms that draft is examinable• Supervisor establishes Examining committee (External Examiner; Internal External; Chair)• GPD approves External Examiner and Internal Examiner• GPA checks that Proposal is on file; Petition to Reinstate to Complete (or other relevant petitions submitted) if necessary; Any outstanding debt cleared |
| 5 Weeks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program (usually GPA) emails examination draft (PDF) to all members of the examining committee, including (templated) preliminary instructions to the EE |
| 20 Business Days | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GPA submits signed Recommendation of Examination (ROE) to FGS. <p><i>Important Note:</i> For an ROE to be approved by FGS there must be a) an approved proposal on file, b) the student must be registered active (or demonstrate intent to be registered through a petition), and c) the Committee must be complete and comprised of the same membership as was declared in Term 8 or amended thereafter. Any discrepancies will cause the ROE to be sent back to the student/program for clarification/amendments.</p> <p><i>A GPA training module exists for completion of ROEs.</i></p> |
| 2 Weeks | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FGS sends official examination memo to the Examining Committee and official instructions to the External Examiner |
| 1 Week | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• External Examiner report is due to FGS, sent to AD, circulated to Examining committee <p><i>A GPA training module exists for completion of ROEs.</i></p> |
| 5 Days | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GPD polls Examining committee to verify examinability |

EXAM occurs online or in-person.

Gearing up for Defence: Timelines and Steps

ASSESSMENT



Post Exam - Oral Exam Report

- › The Oral Exam Report is to be filled out and signed by every member of the Committee. The Report is recorded for information at the Program level, and then submitted by the Program to FGS.
- › The Oral Exam Report details whether the thesis or dissertation has been a) approved without revisions, b) approved with revisions (major or minor), or c) failed. When major revisions are necessary, either the Committee will reconvene, or the dissertation will be re-circulated within 12 months following the Exam in order to be approved and sent to FGS.



Post Exam - Dissertation Upload

- › Once the thesis/dissertation has been approved and the form submitted to FGS, the student will receive in return a link to the York Library electronic theses and dissertations repository where the student will upload their document.
- › There may be some further communication between FGS and the student in order to ensure proper formatting regulations have been followed. The upload is considered complete once the formatting meets the regulations and is finalized by the student.

Important note: A student may embargo their dissertation for a number of specific reasons (publication contract, patent, safety). They should request a [Delay of Publication/Restricted Access through FGS](#).



Dissertation Completion and Convocation

- › **Completion:** The date of the final upload (**NOT** the date of the Oral Exam) is considered the date of completion for the student. This date is entered by FGS into the Graduate Event Module which details student milestones in their graduate journey. The date of completion must be the term **BEFORE** the next convocation.
- › **Graduation and Convocation:** Following completion the student applies to graduate online, which leads to the GPA completing a degree audit to ensure all requirements of the degree are met. The GPA then submits the name for convocation before the Registrar's deadline.



June Convocation Deadlines

- › All student work must be completed (including upload to ETD) by **April 30**.
- › Students must apply to graduate before **April 30**.
- › All grades must be submitted by the Program to the Registrar's office by **May 15**.
- › Final confirmation of successful graduates must be submitted by the Program to the Registrar's office by **May 20**.

October Convocation Deadlines

- › All student work must be completed (including upload to ETD) **August 31**.
- › Students must apply to graduate before **August 31**.
- › All grades must be submitted by the Program to the Registrar's office by **September 15**.
- › Final confirmation of successful graduates must be submitted by the Program to the Registrar's office by **September 20**.

February Convocation Deadlines

- › All student work must be completed (including upload to ETD) by **December 31**.
- › Students must apply to graduate before **November 30**.
- › All grades must be submitted by the Program to the Registrar's office by **January 15**.
- › Final confirmation of successful graduates must be submitted by the Program to the Registrar's office by **January 20**.

COMPLETION

INTERESTED IN ALL THINGS GRADUATE SUPERVISION?

Name our Newsletter

We are searching for a word or phrase that best represents graduate supervision here at YorkU to use for the name of our Grad Supervision Newsletter.

Are you feeling creative? Tell us some ideas you have for a one or two-word potential title.



Feel free to reach out to the GSSHUB Team

- Tracy Bhoola, Program Manager, GSSHUB tbhoola@yorku.ca
- Cheryl van Daalen-Smith, Associate Dean, Academic fgsadacd@yorku.ca