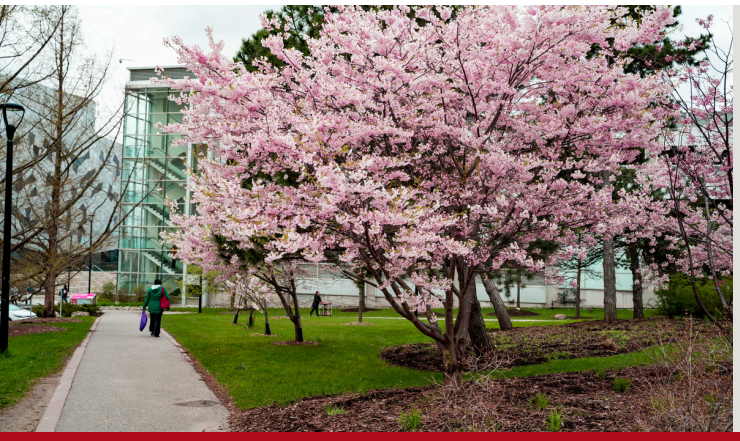
SPRING 2026 | ISSUE 5

THE SUPERVISION SCOOP

The YorkU Graduate Supervision Support Hub Newsletter



WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Graduation Supervision Guidelines & Values
- Supervision Handbook and Toolkit website
- Agile Supervision
- Neurodiversity-affirming Supervision
- Navigating the search for a graduate supervisor
- New and upcoming initiatives and events

The FGS Graduate Supervision Guidelines

The YorkU Faculty of Graduate Studies' Graduate Supervision Guidelines (pdf) represent an FGS regulation which describes the responsibilities of the supervisor, supervisory committee members and students. Enacting these roles is an expected component of an FGS appointment and being a graduate supervisee at YorkU. They are designed to support an environment in which a professional working relationship can flourish. Graduate supervisors are encouraged to review these with their students and supervisory committee members during the early stages of a committee's establishment. Together with the Strong Start to Supervision Checklist (pdf), conversations clarifying roles outlined in York's supervision guidelines set the stage for a supervision experience that supports the wellbeing of everyone.

Values Guiding Graduate Supervision at York

Complementing YorkU's Graduate Supervision Guidelines, are a set of key principles guiding this important academic relationship. These include:

Principle One: Dignity - The shared recognition of each person's history, background and inherent worth.

Principle Two: Respect - The acknowledgement of each person's right to a supportive working supervisory relationship built on earned trust, partnership and open communication.

Principle 3: Mutuality - The enactment of positive interactive relationships grounded in cooperation and shared goals, contributing to a beneficial and enjoyable academic journey for all.

Principle 4: Efficacy - The enactment of best practices to achieve the responsibilities attached to graduate supervisory roles including those attached to goal-directed learning and student progress.

Principle 5: Accountability - Holding oneself accountable to the highest standards of supervisory, intellectual, academic, research and relational integrity as related to graduate education.

Newly Released Graduate Supervision Handbook

December 4th, 2025 marked the official release of the FGS Graduate Supervision Handbook (pdf)– written specifically for graduate supervisors.

This handbook reflects FGS' commitment to supporting graduate supervision as both an intentional pedagogical strategy of graduate faculty and an academic relationship of mentorship and mutuality.

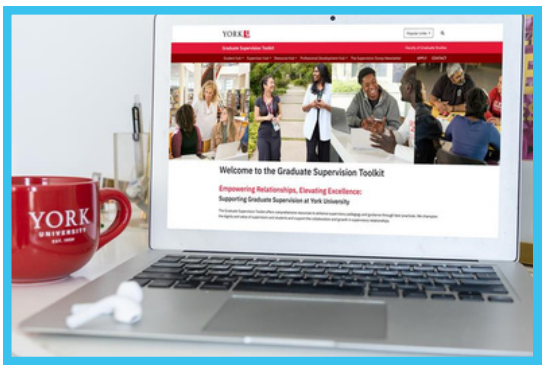
Serving as a companion to the Graduate Supervision Toolkit, graduate supervisors will find curated guidance to support the enactment of supervisory best practices. Topics include:

- Supervision styles, understanding supervision as mentorship and roles and responsibilities of everyone
- The Good Supervisory Practice Framework
- Communication, setting expectations and motivating and monitoring progress
- Agile supervision and planning for and having successful supervisory meetings
- Supervisor wellbeing and navigating conflict



Overhead view of three people sitting outdoors at a picnic table with two people reading books and one person writing in a notebook.

The Graduate Supervision Toolkit



An open laptop displaying the front webpage of the Graduate Supervision Toolkit and a red York coffee cup on the left side of the laptop.

The GSSHub continues to curate key resources for inclusion in the Graduate Supervision Toolkit. On the website, supervisors, committee members, program administrators, and graduate students will find guidance and practical tips and tools to help supervisory relationships thrive.

Visit the Toolkit to learn more about:

- Characteristics of effective supervision
- Preparing students for defence
- Supervising international graduate students
- Supporting graduate students with disabilities
- Supervisor wellness and Student Wellness
- Supervision communities of practice and events
- Navigating challenges and conflict

Agile Supervision: Accommodate, Adapt and Align

With most situations, a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective. While supervisors may have preferred styles and approaches, when possible, it is important to be responsive to the needs and preferences of graduate student learners. Given the close pedagogical nature of the graduate supervisory relationship, supervisors who adapt their supervisory approaches and practices to align with the specificities of their students' backgrounds, life contexts and learning styles is considered agile supervision and a best practice.

The Principles for Graduate Supervision at Ontario Universities, which York's Faculty of Graduate Studies Council endorsed, requires supervisors to consider issues of equity and the different individual circumstances of graduate students in providing supervision. This includes working to support students who, due to personal or social circumstances, may face obstacles or historical challenges to their graduate student success (e.g., considering accommodations for family responsibilities such as child or elder care, mental health, cultural challenges as a newly arrived international student or historical oppression of Indigenous communities). As well, Senate policy stipulates that York University, including the Faculty of Graduate Studies, shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations and adaptations to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. The nature and extent of accommodations shall be consistent with and supportive of the integrity of the curriculum and of the academic standards of programs or courses. For students registered with YorkU's Student Accessibility Services, or would benefit from such an arrangement, the supervisor is subsequently guided by the necessary accommodations laid out in the student's accommodation documentation as well as FGS' Accommodation Procedures.

With this in mind, the GSSHub has developed various guides inviting agile practices for supervisors working with diverse students, where best practices in graduate supervision requires us to accommodate, adapt and align.

Explore the Supporting Graduate Students section of the Supervisor Hub in the Graduate Supervision Toolkit for resources to foster inclusive, equitable and supportive environments that empower all graduate students to succeed.



Six people, dressed casually, are standing in a semi-circle indoors in a hallway and are smiling at each other and engaged in conversation.

Neurodiversity-affirming Supervison for Graduate Student Success Guide

FGS and the Graduate Supervision Support Hub (GSSHub) at YorkU strive to build a graduate community rooted in collaboration, innovation, creativity and belonging. The success of graduate supervision depends on meaningful and open exchanges of ideas that are deepened when neurodivergent perspectives and lived experiences are welcomed and structurally centred. To support this, it is essential that members of the graduate community experience meaningful inclusion through access, affirmation, and systemic accountability. Their contributions must be recognized, their voices listened to, and supervisors must actively foster equitable, respectful dialogue. This is a shared responsibility for everyone involved in graduate education and supervision.

We acknowledge that the guide cannot encompass the full range of neurodivergent graduate students' needs and experiences. It is offered as a contribution toward greater accountability, deeper understanding and care-rooted support within graduate education and supervision. We also recognize that each student's self-advocacy and lived experience is a critical source of knowledge, and listening to and learning from this is essential to building supervisory relationships grounded in access, care and respect for neurodivergent ways of being.

The Neurodiversity-affirming Supervision for Graduate Student Success Guide (pdf) aims to centre the lived realities of neurodivergent graduate students while fostering open, respectful dialogue between supervisor and student.



Five people sitting outdoors at a picnic table engaged in conversation with a travel mug, notebooks and open laptops on the table.

Where care lives, learning follows

Inside the guide, readers can find how graduate programs and supervisors can provide support, approaches to learning within supervision contexts, room, studio and lab setup, effective supervision practices, relational practices for inclusive defences along with insight points, 'try this!', helpful prompts and reflective questions.

Smart Questions, Strong Matches: Navigating the Search for a Graduate Supervisor

One of most frequent questions asked during the various pan-university workshops hosted by FGS for prospective, newly admitted and current graduate students is “How do I find a supervisor?” The GSSHub has created the Smart Questions, Strong Matches guide (pdf), answering this important question with step-by-step guidance. This guide helps graduate students navigate the search for a supervisor by asking thoughtful questions that foster alignment, clarity and successful supervisory relationships.

In addition to advising students to consult with their respective program first to understand programmatic norms associated with securing a graduate supervisor, the guide covers several best practices for securing a graduate supervisor including:

- Aligning research, scholarly and/or creative interests
- Consulting reliable sources
- Inviting discussion related to supervision style and expectations
- Transparently meeting with several prospective supervisors
- How to approach a potential supervisor
- Example questions to ask a potential supervisor

A complementary guide assisting supervisors contemplating requests from prospective supervisees has also been developed. The Questions to Ask Before Accepting a Graduate Student (pdf) prompts faculty to reflect on capacity, fit, wellbeing and readiness before saying yes to supervision.

The guide is to support faculty in making thoughtful, values-aligned decisions because graduate supervision and its related teaching and mentorship requires a significant investment of time and effort. When graduate students or programs ask graduate faculty to take on a supervisory role, faculty are encouraged to consider several connected factors first. This guide offers practical considerations to support decision-making that balances supervisory responsibilities with supervisor wellbeing.



A person with curly hair and eyeglasses stands with her arms crossed in front facing the camera. In the background are people standing around or sitting at a long table with open laptops and coffee cups.

A New Certificate Just Launched!

The new Graduate Student Certificate in Decolonization, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEDIA) from the Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion (CHREI), in partnership with FGS and the Teaching Commons is now available. Visit the CHREI for details and read Guidelines for DEDIA Graduate Certificate (pdf).

This multi-year, fully online certificate is designed to provide graduate students and post-docs with the knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to integrate DEDIA principles into their academic, research, and professional practices. Through a combination of self-guided learning, workshops, and applied practice, students will strengthen their ability to foster inclusive environments and engage in equityfocused leadership within higher education.

The certificate is designed for maximum flexibility and may be completed in as little as one semester, or over the course of three years.

The Graduate Supervision Capacity-building Professional Development Fund

You pitch it, we fund it, you share the learning!

Funded through the Academic Innovation Fund Grant associated with the FGS GSSHub, graduate faculty are invited to apply for a professional development grant to support growth in graduate supervision.



Two people are standing together, facing each other and smiling. One person is dressed in casual clothing and one person is dressed in business clothing. They are outdoors with a building, trees and people in the background.

Available only in 2026 on a first-come, first-served basis, faculty are invited to identify a professional development opportunity that you believe essential to your graduate supervisory efforts. Pitch how it will build your skills and approaches, how it fits with your discipline-specific (or interdisciplinary) supervisory role, and tell us how you'll mobilize what you learn over coffee with peers or through another informal venue at YorkU. Any full-time graduate faculty can apply and can receive up to $500 (CAD). Please read the FAQs and information about how to apply (pdf).

Writing Centre Drop-in

For Graduate Supervisors and Supervisory Committee Members

Supervising graduate students is a shared joy of most graduate faculty. It can also be challenging when it comes to supporting dissertation development and the co-requisite skills related to clear writing.

The Writing Centre now offers dedicated consultation services and a weekly drop-in for graduate supervisors who are looking for tips on how to support the continued growth of their graduate student's writing. Geared specifically to graduate supervisors, graduate supervisory committee members and graduate program directors, the Writing Centre's new dedicated graduate faculty support provides strategies for assessing work, providing meaningful feedback and enhancing academic milestone completion through individual consultations and a Faculty Drop-in Hour (11 am on Thursdays via Zoom) to help you help your students.

Remember to read the Writing Centre Guide for Graduate Student Support (pdf) that highlights what supervisors and students can do and their responsibilities along with writing challenges, an interactive writing model, templates and resources.

New Support for Navigating Graduate Supervision Challenges

Pilot Initiative Launching in May 2026

Graduate supervision is among the most meaningful, and complex, parts of academic work. Alongside mentoring and research collaboration, supervisors often navigate communication challenges, evolving expectations, and at times, difficult conversations. To support you in navigating these professional relationships, FGS, in partnership with the Centre for Human Rights Equity & Inclusion, is excited to announce the upcoming pilot of the Supervisory Conflict Consultation Service (SCCS).

This confidential, non-evaluative service will offer early support through one-on-one consultations, practical tools, conversation strategies and facilitated conversations when communication becomes strained. Whether you are dealing with a simple communication breakdown or looking for a neutral sounding board to help get a project back on track, SCCS is designed to support successful supervisory relationships and help prevent issues from escalating. More details on how to access the service will be shared soon.



Two people are seated on a sofa, engaged in conversation. One person, holding a clipboard, is looking towards the other who is gesturing with their hands. There is a green plant, floor lamp and a tablet on a table.

Coming Soon! Asynchronous Modules

The Graduate Supervision Journey, a series of asynchronous modules, is being developed to equip graduate supervisors with foundational knowledge and practical skills to excel in their role, supporting successful, productive graduate experiences while strengthening York's broader research culture. Future modules will explore foundations of effective supervision, including cultivating mutual respect and open communication, supporting progress and timely completion, providing responsive feedback and leveraging resources that foster wellbeing. The series will also invite reflective learning on supervisory practices and introduce key supervision policies and supports within the YorkU context and beyond.

Gaswéñdah

A Framework for Graduate Supervision with Indigenous Graduate Students

After extensive consultations locally and nationally, at the FGS Council meeting on April 2, 2026, the GSSHub was pleased to release a guide for non-Indigenous supervisors of Indigenous graduate students. Titled Gaswéñdah or Two Row Wampum, the guide's name symbolizes two boats floating side by side on the River of Life bound together by friendship, respect and peace without steering the other- intentionally reflecting the relationship of supervisor and student.

In the Gaswéñdah framework, we hold up and offer a humility-grounded supervisory approach of mutual respect, peace and friendship. The guide is grounded in key considerations associated with the Five Rs (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Restoule, 2008) of respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationship, which facilitate the shared responsibilities required within efforts to decolonize graduate supervision and truly co-create space for Indigenous scholars within Canadian academe.
Graduate supervision must explicitly recognize, support, understand and therefore respect the values of their Indigenous students, which may include:

- Respect for all relations
- Everything is alive and interconnected
- Traditional Knowledges that are Nation specific
- Balance between mind, body, spirit and emotion
- Relational accountability
- The impacts of colonization are both political and personal

As such, the framework and considerations guiding non-Indigenous supervisors of Indigenous graduate scholars are intended to invite graduate supervisors to stop, pause and reflect on the ways in which their role can enable work that gives way to the thinking outside the box, while living within the circle approach and enacted in a good way, i.e. with sincerity, intentionality and ways of being that benefit 'all my relations'.

It is with deep humility and gratitude that this graduate supervisory-relationship framework is offered to the York University graduate community. It represents our deep commitment to the relationships and guidance that have developed with Indigenous colleagues both at YorkU and across the geopolitical nation-state now known as Canada. We acknowledge the meaningful conversations and guidance generously provided by Dr. Susan Dion, Dr. Ruth Green, Dr. Sean Hillier, Dr. Angele Alook, Dr. Dean Ray and Dr. Jackie Ottman.

Graduate Faculty Meet Up

Supervising with Care: Neurodiversity-Affirming Approaches for Graduate Students

Join the Graduate Supervision Community of Practice for a conversation on neurodiversity-affirming supervision, co-hosted by FGS and Faculty Affairs. During this meet up, Dr. Gillian Parekh and Dr. Nancy Marshall will share reflections from their supervision relationship followed by an open group discussion, questions and shared learning. We will also feature the Neurodiversity-Affirming Supervision for Graduate Student Success Guide in a brief guided walkthrough with its author.

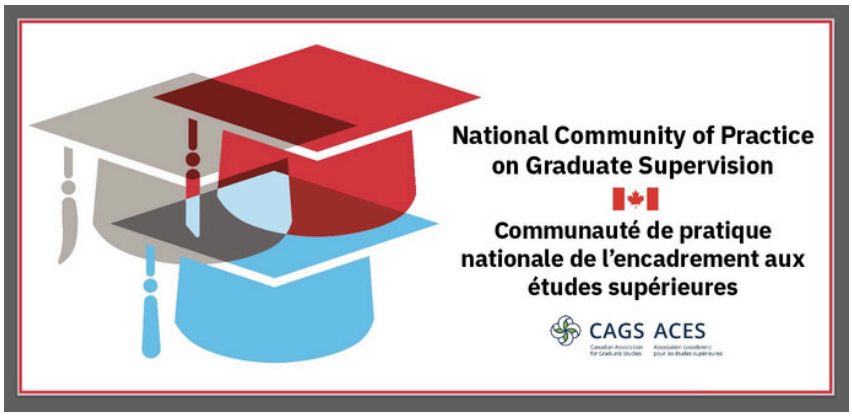


Five people in an outdoor setting. Three people are standing in a semi-circle engaged in conversation and smiling. Two people are sitting nearby on a concrete step looking at each other and engaged in a conversation.

Date: Tuesday, April 28, 2026
Time: 11:30am-1:30pm (ET) with light refreshments
Location: York Lanes 305
Registration is required
RSVP link: forms.office.com/r/RjA7hc4ui3 (click link)

National Community of Practice Webinar

Supervision and Graduate Student Mental Health and Wellbeing



Logo for the National Community of Practice on Graduate Supervision in English followed by a Canadian flag icon and underneath is Communauté nationale de pratique sur la supervision des étudiants diplômés in French with the CAGS logo at the bottom. There are 3 graduate caps with tassels in blue, red and gray on the left side of the logo.

The National Community of Practice on Graduate Supervision is hosting the next conversation focusing on Supervision and Student Mental Health & Wellbeing. Join supervisors from across Canada as we learn from Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos, UCalgary; Dr. Sandra Bucerius, UAlberta; and Dr. Lisa Hughes, UCalgary.

Date: Friday, May 1, 2026
Time: 1:00pm-2:30pm (ET)
Location: Online via Zoom and Registration is required (click link)

Graduate Supervision Sparkshop

Guiding Graduate Writing

This Sparkshop with Marlene Bernholtz, Associate Professor in the Writing Department will highlight how reciprocal, considerate writing processes, and clear supervisory communication help students and supervisors meet academic and developmental goals. During the Sparkshop, we will:

- Reflect on the often-hidden aspects of graduate writing
- Review and receive a copy of the Writing Centre Guide for Graduate Student Support
- Discuss strategies for establishing reciprocal writing processes, including shared expectations, timelines, and feedback
- Share practical tips supervisors can use for themselves and with students to support drafting, revision and momentum

Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2026
Time: 11:00am-11:30am (ET)
Location: Online via Zoom
Registration is required (click link)

3rd Annual Online Graduate Supervision Conference

Relationship Matters: Strategies for Inclusive and Supportive Supervision



McGill University Conference logo with 3 people icons walking upwards on clouds holding each others' hands on the right side and on the left side is the title Relationship Matters: Strategies for Inclusive and Supportive Supervision on May 8 from 12:00-3:45pm ET

McGill University Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies invites graduate supervisors from across the country to the third annual online graduate supervision conference. Recognizing supervision as the backbone of graduate student success and satisfaction, this year's conference offers practical strategies for fostering inclusion and robust support for students. Visit the conference website.

What's on the Agenda?

- Constructive and effective feedback techniques for improving supervisory relationships and promoting student success
- Supervisor-Supervisee panel sharing lived experiences of building inclusive and supportive supervisory relationships
- Strategies for supporting graduate student professional development

Date: Friday, May 8, 2026
Time: 12:00pm-3:45pm (ET)
Location: Online and free
Registration is required (click link)



Three people are walking together on grass with cherry blossom trees on the left side and behind them. They are looking at each other and smiling and are dressed casually.

The GSSHub is here to support graduate supervision. Programs often invite us to help make supervision clearer and to encourage students to take an active role in shaping their supervision experience. Tracy Bhoola, GSSHub Manager, can visit student cohorts or seminar classes to talk about working effectively with supervisors and committee members. We can also meet with graduate faculty to clarify role expectations and walk through new tools in the Graduate Supervision Toolkit. Contact us below.

Read past issues of The Supervision Scoop Newsletter.

Reach out to the GSSHub Team

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