The Graduate Student Experience

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What *is* graduate studies?

- Any form of post-baccalaureate credit study
- The process of transforming undergraduate students into independent researchers and academic colleagues
- Emphasis in graduate studies very strongly on:
  - Independent ideas, analysis
  - Self-directed study and research
  - New ideas; working at the leading edge (not just reporting what others have done)
How do I find the next step on the path?

- What path? There is no path! You get to decide how to spend your time.

- Graduate studies is about finding your own path, making mistakes, advancing knowledge

- Ways you can make the path easier:
  - Make a plan - time lines; tasks; who to be involved
  - Organize your resources (many available: Learning Commons, GSLI, World of Work, support services, etc.)
  - Seek advice early if you have questions or concerns
  - Remember to balance family, leisure, and work
Coursework + project master’s: 60-80 pgs; often just review of existing work, usually no primary research

Thesis master’s: 100-125 pgs; new tool or theory, not necessarily fully tested

Doctoral: 175-250 pgs; major contribution to the discipline; new tool or theory fully tested and explained
Who will guide me?

- *Your advisor!*
- Your advisory committee
- Your graduate coordinator
- Your graduate secretary
- If those options fail, try
  - Department chair
  - Other students, Graduate Students’ Association
  - Dean of Graduate Studies
Advisory Committees

- **Graduate Diploma**
  - No committee necessary (although one may be assigned)

- **Master’s**
  - Minimum of two members; often three
  - Coursework master’s: graduate coordinator/other

- **Doctoral**
  - Minimum of three members; often four – five

- **Defense committees** for MA/MSc and PhD/DVSc must be mainly at arm’s length
  - Doctoral exams include an external examiner from another university
Required Forms

- Advisory Committee Appointment Form
- Graduate Degree Program Form

Due at the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS) by middle of the second semester
Times to Completion

- **Graduate Diploma**
  - 2 to 4 semesters

- **Master’s**
  - 6 semesters

- **Doctoral**
  - 12 semesters
    - (16 with direct entry or transfer from master’s)

- **DVSc**
  - 9 semesters
What if I get into trouble?

- Trust me: it’s hard to surprise us!
- Start with your advisor (if you feel comfortable doing so), then grad coordinator
  - Aim to resolve the issue at the department level if possible – try the chair if necessary
- Some issues need other resources *(next slide)*
- When in doubt, send me an email - ask for advice *(but Pauline handles the money!)*
What if I get into trouble?

ISSUE OR PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED

Interpersonal conflict between student and advisor

Dispute over progress evaluation or failed qualifying exam or final oral examination; may include procedural irregularity, questions of academic merit or extenuating circumstances, including medical or compassionate.

Disruptive, abusive, or destructive behaviour on the part of the advisor.

Disruptive, abusive, or destructive behaviour on the part of the student.

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION GUIDE

NOTE: This flowchart represents current policies and procedures at the University of Guelph. University community members who believe they have a human rights complaint may, at any time, consult the University’s Human Rights Policy and the Human Rights and Equity Office.
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OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
University Centre, 3rd Floor
Department of Molecular & Cellular Biology

Office of Graduate Studies – 3rd Floor of University Centre