

Guide to Graduate Studies

2025-2026



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Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a reference for graduate students, as well as the faculty and staff involved in graduate studies at StFX. **The StFX Academic Calendar is always the final authority in matters of academic regulations.**

The information has been compiled from various sources including the Academic Calendar, the previous (original) version of the Graduate Studies Handbook (2007) and departmental graduate handbooks and procedure guides. This document also draws on other policy information from across departments and faculties at StFX, which may change over time.

Graduate Studies at StFX is a decentralized faculty and department-based set of programs and there is diversity between regulations for specific graduate programs. For more detailed information on a particular graduate program, please contact your department Graduate Student Coordinator. See Appendix 4 for contact information.

Procedures and policies in this handbook apply to StFX graduate students; rules and regulations may differ from those for undergraduate students.

Welcome from the Associate Vice-President Research, Graduate & Professional Studies

Welcome to Graduate Studies at St. Francis Xavier University. By making your decision to pursue graduate work at StFX, you have joined a network of other students and alumni from around the world who have committed to the pursuit of academic excellence in a personalized and collegial environment. While StFX is best known for its strong tradition as a primarily undergraduate university, graduate students are a vital component of the StFX academic community. Graduate students enhance the StFX academic programs and contribute significantly to teaching, student mentorship, and research excellence.

Graduate students can excel in an intimate, primarily undergraduate university setting. StFX graduate students have received top national graduate scholarships from federal research granting councils such as NSERC and SSHRC. Our graduate students have gone on to stellar research careers and work in a variety of organizations. The StFX graduate student experience is a unique one, characterized by an opportunity to develop leadership skills, to interact with colleagues and faculty in a “peer-peer” setting, and to benefit from the kind of personal attention and camaraderie for which StFX is famous.

The administration of graduate studies and each student’s graduate program is a collaborative effort between my office and the individual departments and faculties offering graduate degrees at StFX. We work closely with the Offices of the Deans of Arts, Science, and Education, as well as the Registrar’s Office and the Office of the Vice-President, Academic & Provost in the oversight and administration of our graduate programs.

I hope you find this handbook a useful guide to help you navigate through your graduate program at StFX. Please be aware that your program may have a handbook of its own to provide program-specific information, and the Academic Calendar is the final authority on issues related to academic regulations. There are also other useful resources available on campus and many people who will be happy to help you excel while at StFX; see the *Contacts* section of this handbook for more resources.

Please accept my very best wishes as you pursue your graduate degree at StFX.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin Morton', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Erin Morton, PhD

Associate Vice-President Research, Graduate Studies
& Professional Studies

Graduate Studies Overview

St. Francis Xavier University currently offers courses of study leading to the following graduate degrees:

Master of Arts (MA)
Master of Science (MSc)
Master of Applied Computer Science (MACS)
Master of Adult Education (MAdEd)
Master of Education (MEd)
Ph.D. in Educational Studies

Master of Arts (MA)

The MA is offered in Celtic Studies and requires the completion of a thesis. Students must earn a total of 36 credits in graduate work to complete this degree; the thesis counts for 18 credits. All candidates must satisfy degree requirements as determined by the candidate's supervisory committee and approved by the department or program chair. A minimum residence of 12 months is required for candidates with an honours degree, and a minimum residence of 18 months for other candidates. Candidates may be required to demonstrate a reading knowledge of a second language relevant to the studies, and an examination in the designated language must be passed within six months after registration.

Master of Science (MSc)

The MSc is offered in Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, and Earth Sciences. Students must earn a total of 36 credits in graduate work to complete this degree; the thesis counts for 18 credits. All candidates must satisfy degree requirements as determined by the candidate's supervisory committee and approved by the relevant department or program chair. A minimum residence of 12 months is required for candidates with an honours degree, and a minimum residence of 18 months for other candidates.

Master of Applied Computer Science (MACS)

The MACS is a course-based degree that requires students to complete 36 credits of course work, including a 6-credit mandatory Computer Science Graduate Student Seminar. Students can select whether to complete the program in 16 months of continuous full-time study or in four semesters over two academic years. Beginning in September 2021, the MACS will have a Co-op education option.

Master of Adult Education (MAdEd)

The MAdEd is a distance degree aimed at working professionals. Candidates come from a wide variety of career areas such as literacy, health education, higher education, vocational education, human resources training and development, community development, and educational technology. Students must earn a total of 30 credits in graduate work. For successful completion of the degree, candidates must demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the area of study and an understanding of the principles and practices of adult education.

Master of Education (MEd)

The MEd degree is offered with specialization either in educational administration and policy or in curriculum and instruction. In both streams students must complete specified core courses, though they may also select classes appropriate to their own interests. There are two options by which a student may complete the requirements for the MEd: a thesis route or a course-based route. Students who choose the thesis route must complete 24 credits in graduate education courses and a thesis worth 12 credits. Those in the course-based route must complete 36 credits in graduate education courses. The MEd degree fulfils the requirements of the Nova Scotia Department of Education for an increase in level of teacher certification.

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The PhD degree is offered in Educational Studies through a partnership established by St. Francis Xavier University, Mount Saint Vincent University, and Acadia University. An Inter-University Doctoral Administrative Committee (IDAC) jointly administers this research-oriented doctoral degree. Applicants are admitted to one university and graduate from their home institution. Students can focus their studies on one or more of six interrelated themes: curriculum studies, educational foundations and leadership, inclusive education, lifelong learning, literacies, and the psychological aspects of education. Together, the partner institutions determine regulations for students enrolled in the Interuniversity PhD in Educational Studies. Additional information including rules and regulations are available in the [Interuniversity PhD in Educational Studies handbook](#).

Section 1: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

This section provides a framework for the decentralized administration of Graduate Studies at StFX. It clarifies the roles and responsibilities of individuals and areas of the university involved in supporting graduate students but does not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of all responsibilities associated with each position or group.

1.1 The Graduate Student

Graduate students play a unique and vital role in universities. Graduate students are completing a specific degree, just like other students, but they may also have roles as research assistants or collaborators, teaching assistants, and mentors to undergraduate students or to other graduate students. In some cases, our graduate students have just recently completed their undergraduate degree; in other cases, they are accomplished professionals returning to university to enhance their education. Graduate students can also have critical input into the decision-making activities of the university by serving on Students' Union, academic or advisory committees.

The primary responsibility of the graduate student is to complete the requirements of the degree while demonstrating a commitment to principles of academic integrity. The graduate student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that

- All relevant courses are taken and pre-requisites are met;
- All course, program, and university procedures and deadlines are met;
- Research and scholarly activity is conducted in accordance with the principles of academic integrity as described in StFX's Academic Integrity Policy;
- The Student Code of Conduct is honoured.

Although there are many individuals and university offices that can assist graduate students with their program progression, students must be actively involved in the design and administration of their academic experience. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that degree requirements are met in an appropriate and timely manner.

Graduate students must register for the appropriate courses, thesis and/or program phases and activities and maintain a satisfactory standing while meeting degree requirements. Students obtain all required approvals by their professor, supervisor(s), program coordinator, and Dean before registering, as required by their program.

If a graduate student anticipates that an interruption to the program may be required for any reason, it is the student's responsibility to discuss this with the thesis supervisor(s), Graduate Program Coordinator or department Chair as soon as this becomes apparent so as to initiate the process to request a leave of absence.

Graduate students are required to abide by all policies and procedures of the University, including, but not limited to, all academic regulations detailed in the Academic Calendar, and if applicable, the requirements of collaborative programs, such as the PhD in Educational Studies.

1.2 StFX Graduate Student Society

An important part of graduate school is making connections with other graduate students. Contact the StFX Graduate Student Society, or the graduate student representative on the Student's Union or the Committee on Graduate Studies to ensure you are added to the graduate students email listserv, and introduce yourself to your peers.

1.3 Faculty Advisor/ Thesis Supervisor & Supervisory Committees

Most StFX graduate students are assigned a faculty member who acts as a primary advisor. This function varies depending on the type of program; however, the fundamental role of the advisor is to guide and mentor the student through the program. The advisor is referred to as a Thesis Supervisor in thesis-based programs and as a Faculty Advisor in other programs. (MEd students completing a course-based route do not have an assigned advisor; the Chair advises them).

Faculty Advisors and Thesis Supervisors are available to students for regular consultation. They monitor the student's progress within the program and are expected to meet with the graduate student on a regular basis. The frequency of these meetings varies in accordance to the student's progress and needs, but normally a meeting takes place at least once a semester.

The Faculty Advisor or Thesis Supervisor provides regular, frank and constructive feedback to the student on progress and, if warranted, bring concerns forward to the relevant Graduate Coordinator or department Chair, the relevant Dean or the AVPRGPS. It is the role of this advisor to notify the Graduate Coordinator in a timely manner of any changes to student status.

The Advisor/Supervisor is responsible to ensure that all grades, including the thesis grade, are submitted by university deadlines. In order for a student to be eligible for graduation, all grades must be entered at least one week prior to Convocation.

In graduate programs with a thesis requirement, the Thesis Supervisor provides advice and guidance to the student in research project design and thesis development. The Thesis Supervisor provides adequate, frank and constructive feedback on research work and communicates expectations in relation to academic scholarship and timelines. The Thesis Supervisor may offer guidance on course selection; however, the Graduate Coordinator (or equivalent, see below) should be considered the key authority in this area.

All thesis-based graduate programs at StFX require the formation of a supervisory committee for each graduate student. The supervisory committee normally consists of three faculty members including the Thesis Supervisor; sometimes, relevant experts from outside of StFX may be included to aid in the supervision of thesis research. The other members of the committee are usually seen as "secondary" supervisors who can provide advice and act as a sounding board for various aspects of the thesis research. It is recommended that a scheduled meeting of the supervisory committee and the student be held at least once a year to review progress and make recommendations on the research activities. Members of the supervisory committee usually serve as examiners (but not the external examiner) at the thesis defense. The Thesis Supervisor must

ensure that the university community is informed by the appropriate deadlines (i.e., at least 2 weeks prior to the defence date), of the date, time, and place of thesis defences, and that the Chair of the Committee on Graduate Studies is invited.

Thesis Supervisors and supervisory committees are required to be aware of StFX regulations concerning research ethics approvals, thesis requirements, and deadlines, and to ensure that their graduate students are informed of these requirements; to provide assistance in defining and refining research topics, and to ensure that the research undertaken is original and feasible given time limits and the availability of resources; and to provide the student with a clear indication of expectations, timelines and deadlines.

A faculty member or senior research professor holding a primary appointment in a department or program that does not have a graduate program may still be involved in the supervision or co-supervision of graduate students if they hold a cross-appointment with a department or program offering a graduate program. Alternatively, permission to supervise graduate students and participate on graduate supervisory committees may be granted by the Dean and both department/program Chairs in advance. In cases, where co-supervisory arrangements have been established for a graduate student, the co-supervisors shall equally share the teaching credit for graduate student supervision as outlined in the Collective Agreement. Individuals who hold adjunct appointments in a department or program offering graduate programs are also eligible to serve as primary supervisors of graduate students.

It is the responsibility of the Thesis Supervisor (in consultation with StFX Industry Liaison Office, if necessary) to ensure that any potential issues regarding the ownership of intellectual property or copyright are resolved before the student embarks on research.

1.4 Department Graduate Coordinators

Departments offering graduate degrees will normally have a faculty member who is assigned the responsibility of coordinating graduate studies. (In some programs, the department Chair assumes this role). Graduate Coordinators are extremely important to the functioning of graduate studies at StFX. All Graduate Coordinators are invited to attend regular meetings of the Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS) as observers (non-voting).

The Graduate Studies Coordinators make recommendations to the Dean or AVPRGPS, on behalf of the Department, for the admission of students; advise students on Graduate Studies degree requirements & processes; ensure that all entering graduate students are provided with a statement of both the University's and the department's policies and procedures on graduate studies, intellectual property rights and research ethics and refer students to the relevant individuals or offices, as required.

The Coordinators must ensure that the student's supervisor or supervisory committee submits an annual report on the student's progress in the program to their Dean and must notify the Dean's offices in a timely manner of potential changes to student status.

Coordinators also ensure that graduate students follow university or departmental rules or that they obtain an exemption from them from the appropriate individual or Committee. Finally, they ensure that students are aware of the procedures for complaints, appeals, and review, and to whom such appeals may be addressed.

1.5 Department Chairs

All graduate programs at StFX are currently delivered through department structures. The Chairs of these departments have specific responsibilities relevant to graduate programs under their auspices.

Department Chairs provide support and oversight to assist and encourage students to complete their degree requirements in a timely manner. They ensure that all graduate students accepted into a degree program will have effective supervision and that a supervisory committee (if required) is formed for each student, usually within 2 weeks of the student's first registration in the program. Chairs also ensure satisfactory faculty supervision of graduate students. Department Chairs generally ensure that graduate students have adequate facilities (including working space & library resources) available to them for the pursuit of their research and coursework. Chairs are responsible to ensure that any proposed changes to graduate courses and to the graduate program are forwarded to the appropriate Dean and the Committee on Graduate Studies for discussion and approval.

1.6 Deans of Faculties

The Deans of Faculties offering graduate degrees are responsible for approving the admission of students and communicating admissions decisions to the Registrar's Office. Deans may also offer funding assistance for graduate students, if available.

Deans play a role in following the progress of students in consultation with Chairs and Graduate Coordinators. For Arts and Science students, Deans accept and review annual progress reports to monitor the overall progress of graduate students in their faculty, including updating the Registrar's Office on student status. Deans can approve leaves of absence for students, and bring exceptional issues, such as requests for extensions, to the attention of the Associate VP Research and Graduate Studies and the Committee on Graduate Studies, as appropriate.

The Deans prepare lists of candidates for Convocation and seek the approval of the Committee on Graduate Studies for all proposed graduates.

The Dean, in close conjunction with departments, oversees significant changes to programs and brings recommendations for such changes to Committee on Graduate Studies, Senate, or the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), as appropriate.

1.7 Associate Vice President Research, Graduate & Professional Studies (AVPRGPS)

With advice from the Committee on Graduate Studies, the Associate Vice-President Research, Graduate & Professional Studies (AVPRGPS) oversees implementation of the overall strategic direction for graduate studies at StFX. The AVPRGPS chairs the Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS) and makes recommendations to Senate concerning graduate academic program requirements.

The AVPRGPS is responsible for Graduate Studies promotion and administers graduate student awards and scholarships allocated to StFX by external agencies. The AVPRGPS may attend and participate in thesis defences, or arranges for a member of the Committee on Graduate Studies to attend in place.

Upon referral from a Dean, Chair, or Graduate Coordinator, the AVPRGPS considers exceptional cases related to student progress, and may bring such matters to the Committee on Graduate Studies for deliberation. Examples of exceptional situations include, but are not limited to, the following: requests for extensions after the continuation period; approval of leaves of absence for situations other than those listed in section 3.9; appeals of grades or academic dismissals; consideration of possible offences to the Academic Integrity Policy.

1.8 Committee on Graduate Studies (COGS)

The Committee on Graduate Studies is the principal advisory and decision-making body overseeing Graduate Studies at StFX. The membership consists of the Associate Vice President Research, Graduate Studies & Professional (as Chair); the Deans of Faculties with Graduate programs; five members elected by the University Faculty from its own members (3-year terms); and 1 graduate student representative selected by the Students' Union (1-year term). Departmental Graduate Coordinators may attend as non-voting observers. The AVPRGPS (Chair) will call at least four meetings of the COGS during September to May of each year.

The COGS acts as an advisory and decision-making committee regarding the overall structure, regulations, and consistency of Graduate Studies programs. The COGS sets policies and strategic direction for graduate studies and refers academic matters concerning graduate studies to the University Senate. The COGS also oversees the awarding of graduate student scholarships and prizes and advises the AVPRGPS on exceptional situations related to student progress as outlined in Section 3.6.

One meeting of the Committee per academic term (normally in the week before Convocation) will review and approve candidates who have fulfilled the requirements for graduate degrees to the University Faculty.

Section 2: [GETTING STARTED](#)

2.1 Admission

On the recommendation of the department Chair and Graduate Coordinator, offers of admission are made by the Associate Vice-President Research, Graduate & Professional Studies (for Master of Arts and Science) or the appropriate Dean (for Education programs).

Admissions criteria for each graduate program are described in the Academic Calendar. Students should consult the specific requirements, procedures and deadlines associated with each degree program, as well as basic information on StFX academic regulations, important dates, etc.

2.2 Academic Advising

The Academic Calendar specifies the requirements for programs and, in some cases, may indicate the recommended sequence of courses and research work to meet the requirements. The Graduate Coordinator is a key advisor on academic matters related to specific degree programs. For graduate programs that assign thesis supervisors early in the graduate program, the supervisor may also provide useful guidance.

2.3 Funding

Some faculties and departments may be able to offer internal funding to students in thesis-based graduate programs. Section 3.12 provides information on policies related to administering funding.

2.4 Forms and Checklists

There are a number of forms that must be completed throughout most graduate programs. These forms may vary in different programs. The Graduate Studies website contains downloadable guides, forms and checklists for the student and the supervisor in MA/MSc programs, including forms for thesis supervisory committee formation, plan of study, course agreement, MA/MSc annual progress reports, thesis defense, and program extension. Forms for key graduate scholarship applications and reports (e.g., Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarships) are also included on this site. These forms can change over time, so make sure to check the sites once a year for new forms and modifications.

2.5 Timelines and Keeping on Track

Pursing a graduate degree is an important step in a student's overall training and career development. Staying focused to complete in a timely matter can have significant professional benefits. It is highly recommended that graduate students be proactive in constructing personalized timelines that incorporate the various aspects of the program, as well as the details of required coursework and the thesis research project (if applicable). This helps students clarify program requirements and deadlines, helps keep expectations realistic, and helps avoid surprises and delays later in the program.

2.6 Student-Faculty Advisor Relationship

The relationship between student and faculty advisor (or thesis supervisor) varies between programs and individuals. In some programs and disciplines, the advisor's role is a sounding board or guide on whom the student can call when in need of advice or direction. In other programs and disciplines, the interaction between student and faculty advisor is more frequent, with the student and advisor interacting on a daily basis (especially in laboratory settings).

Regardless of the differences in approach, the following guidelines make for a good working relationship between student and faculty advisor: mutual respect; open communication; a good understanding of one another's roles and responsibilities in the pursuit of the research. For an overview of guidelines and procedures regarding this relationship, see Appendix 1 and Section 3.13

2.7 Health Benefits Plan

The StFX student health plan is administered by the StFX Students' Union and covers both health and dental benefits. Current information about the student health and benefits plan is available here: <https://www.mystudentplan.ca/stfxsu/en/home>

Canadian students who are studying full-time are automatically enrolled. Students may opt out if they have alternative coverage. The deadline to opt out is Sept 30 each year. Canadian students who are part-time are not automatically enrolled but may choose to opt into the program. The deadline is Sept 30 / Jan 31 each year. Depending on program of study, students may appear on registration lists as part time (less than 18 credits enrolled) when, because of the design of the specific program, they may be considered full time. **If you require health and dental benefits and/or wish to confirm your benefits coverage please contact the benefits office directly.**

To ensure accurate benefits coverage for your specific needs – please contact the benefits office directly.

P: (902) 867-2495

E: stfxplan@mystudentplan.ca

W: <https://www.mystudentplan.ca/stfxsu/en/home>

All **International Masters** students are automatically enrolled in the International medical and health benefits plans. After staying in Nova Scotia consecutively for 13 months, they may apply for provincial MSI health coverage and, if successful, they may opt out of the plan once they have obtained proof of MSI coverage.

Visiting Graduate Studies Research Students may enroll in the plan for a fee and should contact the Health Plan office directly for more information.

Section 3: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Information is provided here for reference. **The StFX Academic Calendar is always the final authority in matters of academic regulations.**

3.1 Program Types & Fees

Graduate programs at StFX are classified as either:

- *Flat-fee programs*, in which students pay a flat fee for their program (based on an expected time to completion). The fee is charged once at the beginning of the program, and is paid in instalments at designated intervals. Flat-fee programs at StFX currently include the Master of Arts, Master of Science and the PhD in Educational Studies.

OR

- *Per-credit fee programs*, in which students pay fees based on the number of credits in which they are enrolled in a given semester. The Master of Education, Master of Adult Education, and the Master of Applied Computer Science are per-credit fee programs.

3.2 Residency, Expected Time to Completion, Maximum Time to Completion

Each graduate program at StFX has a defined minimum residency, and defined expected and maximum times to completion. The residency period is the length of time during which the student is expected to be on campus working full-time toward the completion of program requirements. These timeframes are outlined in the following table.

Program	Minimum Residency	Expected time to complete	Maximum time to complete
MA	12 or 18 months*	24 months	5 years
MSc	12 or 18 months*	24 months	5 years
MACS	12 months	16 months or 2 years	6 years
MAdEd	n/a	36 months	36 months
MEd	n/a	24 months	6 years
PhD in Educational Studies**	14 months	4 years	6 years

* 12 months for candidates holding an honours degree and 18 months for all other candidates.

** Regulations for students enrolled in the **Inter-university PhD in Educational Studies** are determined jointly with the partner institutions. Please consult <http://www.nsphdeducation.ca/en/home/default.aspx> for registration and fee information.

3.3 Enrolment Status & Withdrawals

Students remain enrolled in the program and are charged all relevant fees until they formally notify the Dean's office that they are withdrawing from the program. Students who have withdrawn from a program must re-apply for admission before returning.

3.4 Continuing Status and Continuation Fees for Students in Thesis Programs

MA and MSc students who have not completed their degree requirements, but have passed the expected time to completion (24 months) are automatically registered as part-time, continuing students.

MEd and MAEd students completing the thesis route are considered continuing students once they have successfully completed their course work. These 'thesis-only' students pay the appropriate continuing student fee.

PhD in Educational Studies students pay full-time fees for the first two years and then pay a continuing fee for subsequent years.

Continuation fees

All continuing students are charged a continuation fee until they have completed their degree requirements or until they reach the maximum time to completion, at which point they must apply for an extension (and will be charged the extension fee.)

Information about the current cost of continuation fees is available at the Financial Services website: <https://www.stfx.ca/student-accounts>

International and domestic students pay the same continuation fee.

Students who have outstanding fees at the beginning of a continuation period will not be eligible for continuation status and will, if the situation is not resolved, be designated inactive. Inactive students lose their rights and privileges as StFX students. The Registrar's Office will notify students who are not eligible for continuation status through the student's webFX email account; students will have 7 days to resolve the issue with the Business Office.

3.5 Full-time and Part-time status

Students in the MA and MSc programs, maintain full-time status for the first 24 months. After the first 24 months, students are automatically classified as part-time until they have reached the maximum time to completion. In exceptional cases and for a limited period of time, MA and MSc students may apply to the AVPRGPS to be considered full-time after the first 24 months. In order for full-time status to apply, students must demonstrate **all** of the following:

- They are geographically available to campus.
- They visit the campus regularly.
- They are not engaged in full-time employment on or off campus.
- They are engaged in their academic work full-time.

If any of these conditions change, the student will no longer be considered full-time. The continuation fee for full-time students is the same as the continuation fee for part-time students.

MAdEd students maintain part-time status throughout the program.

PhD in Educational Studies students must be full-time through the first 14 months of the program and then may opt to remain full-time or part-time students thereafter.

Students in per-credit fee programs (MACS, MEd) are considered full-time or part-time based on the number of credits in which they are enrolled in a given period. The full- or part- time status is assessed on a term-by-term basis, so a student can be full-time for part of the year and part-time for the remainder. A student is considered full-time when enrolled in 18 or more credits during the period of September to May. Students are also considered full-time when registered in 6 credits for the period May-June or for the period July-August (or 9 credits in the period May-September).

3.6 Academic Standing

To maintain satisfactory standing, graduate students in all programs must achieve a passing grade of 70 in each course. Students should consult Academic Calendar Section 8.6.6 for details about how and when academic standing is assessed, how students are notified, dismissals, and the appeal process.

3.7 Extensions

Students who have not completed their program requirements by the maximum time to completion (see Section 3.2) may apply to the AVPRGPS for a maximum one-year program extension.

An application for an extension will normally be submitted at least two months before the maximum time to completion. Extensions are deliberated on a case-by-case basis. They require a plan to outline how the program requirements will be completed in the extension year. If an extension is denied, no further registration or reinstatement will be permitted.

If the extension is approved, students who are using the extension to complete a thesis will be charged an extension fee (the equivalent of 6-credit undergraduate tuition) for the extension period. Students who are not completing a thesis, but are using the extension period to complete course-work, will pay tuition at course enrolment.

A student who does not complete the degree requirements by the end of the extension period will be declared inactive and removed from the program.

Students on extension are classified as part-time.

3.8 Inactive Status

Students who have not met the requirements for graduation by the maximum time for completion are automatically designated inactive unless they have applied for and been granted an extension. Inactive students lose their rights and privileges as StFX students. Once designated inactive, students must reapply for admission and are subject to all rules and procedures for new admissions. (Students on approved leaves of absence are temporarily designated inactive; they need not reapply for admission at the end of the leave.)

3.9 Leaves of Absence

Circumstances can lead to situations in which graduate students are obliged to step away from their study. A leave of absence may be granted for a specific length of time, up to a maximum of one year.

Examples of exceptional situations where a leave may be considered include:

- Medical reasons
- Family duress or unforeseen family responsibilities (including parental leave).
- Pursuit of an employment opportunity that makes a positive contribution to the student's graduate program.

Requests for leaves of absence will be reviewed by the appropriate Graduate Studies Coordinator or Chair (and Supervisory Committee when appropriate) and approved by the relevant Dean or AVPRGPS. Leaves of absence are usually dependent upon students previously showing adequate progress in their program of studies. The request must be supported by documentation explaining the exceptional circumstances that would prevent continuation of the program during the period for which the leave applies. In addition, the request should include a plan for the return to the program.

Once an initial leave of absence has been granted, additional leaves are only possible in extraordinary circumstances and require special approval by the AVPRGPS.

Students on leaves of absence are designated inactive, and the academic mentorship of the Supervisor and access to laboratories is suspended. Students on leaves are charged a nominal fee of \$100, which allows them to maintain a WebFX account.

Time that a student spends on a leave of absence does not count toward the maximum time for completion.

3.10 Graduation

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have registered for Convocation by the required date and that they have fulfilled all degree requirements by the requisite deadline. Supervisors must ensure that all grades (including the thesis grade) have been submitted at least one week prior to Convocation.

3.11 Visiting Graduate Studies Research Students

Visiting Graduate Studies Research Students (also called “non-degree visiting students”) are students enrolled in graduate programs at other universities, but who work with a supervisor at StFX to further their research. (Procedures vary for PhD students who are part of the MUN – StFX agreement. Questions should be addressed to the AVPRGPS.)

Visiting Graduate Research students do not normally take StFX courses and do not receive a stipend. (They may only be paid as research assistants through Payroll; international students who wish to be paid as research assistants must have visas that allow them to work.)

The process to apply as a Visiting Graduate Studies Research Student at StFX is as

follows:

- Complete the graduate application and pay the application fee. (Note: this category of students does not require references, transcripts, TOEFL scores, or other supporting documents.) The application must be sent to the Admissions Office.

The application also requires the following:

- One letter from the StFX faculty member intending to supervise the visiting student;
- One letter of support from the student's supervisor in their home university.

Visiting Graduate Studies Research Students must be recorded in the Student Information System. The hosting faculty member must inform the AVPRGPS Office about each term, or part thereof, that the student will be on campus. AVPRGPS will notify the Registrar's Office, who will register the student. This gives the student an active, current student status at StFX.

Visiting Graduate Studies Research Students do not pay tuition; however, they are charged a nominal fee for each term. This fee provides access to the libraries, Internet and computer labs.

International visiting graduate studies research students should visit the Immigration Canada website for information on applying for a visa as a visiting student.

Visiting Graduate Studies Research Students may enroll in the StFX Student's Union health and benefit plan for a fee. Contact the Health Plan office directly for more information.

3.12 Student Funding, Taxes & Payroll for Thesis Students

Graduate students in thesis-based programs may receive financial support from a number of sources. Offers of financial support are normally made with the offer of admission.

Students who work full-time for pay must disclose this information to the AVPRGPS Office and may not be eligible for scholarship support.

Types of Funding

i) StFX Graduate Scholarships: Up to \$8000 per year. Normally awarded at entry and eligible for renewal if student maintains good academic standing.

ii) External scholarships or fellowships: Students may be encouraged by their supervisors to pursue funding from external sources (e.g. NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR scholarships); provincial granting agencies such as Research NS; research foundations; individual government agencies and departments; nongovernmental agencies, charitable organizations, foreign governments).

iii) Internal StFX "named" scholarships or fellowships (e.g. departmental scholarship funds such as Ally-Heaps Scholarships or the Jeannine Deveau Equity Endowment Scholarship Fund)

iv) Stipends from thesis supervisors' research grants (Student Stipend)* Student Stipends (sometimes called Fellowships) are funded by research grants held by the Thesis Supervisor. These resources are only available to students whose supervisors hold such grants and are willing and able to budget such awards within the grant.

v) Salary from thesis supervisors' research grants (Research Assistant)* A student may be employed by a faculty member to work on research projects unrelated to the student's thesis. The income is treated as taxable employment.

vi) Salary from departmental teaching assistantships (TAs) Students may earn employment income by assisting with undergraduate courses in the student's department. TAs work an average of 6 hours per week for 12 weeks of the semester. The awards are valued at \$3000 per academic year.

**The difference between (iv) and (v) is discussed in more detail below.*

Tax Treatment

It is important to note the difference in the definition, payment process, and tax treatment of each category of funding to ensure the University, Faculties, departments, researchers, and administrators comply with appropriate taxation and reporting requirements.

Categories (i) through (iv) are handled under Paragraph 56 (1) (n) of the Canada Revenue Act (see <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/tchncl/ncmtx/fls/s1/f2/s1-f2-c3-eng.html>) and are considered "amounts paid or benefits given to persons to enable them to advance their education". Students normally receive a T4A slip for income tax purposes associated with income from these categories.

Categories (v) and (vi) are employment salary or wages "for services rendered". Students should receive a T4 slip for Income Tax purposes associated with income from these categories.

Students who receive full-time months on the T2202A qualify for the full-time education amount credit and, therefore, are exempt from income tax on scholarship/ bursary/ awards revenue. Students who receive part-time months on the T2202A qualify for the part-time education amount credit and will be limited to the tuition fees and costs incurred for program related materials plus the basic amount of \$500. Students who are not eligible for the part-time or full-time education amount credit may claim only the \$500 basic amount.

Payment of Awards

In general, once a student has been formally registered in courses, tuition charges and award funds will show up in their student account. Refund cheques, less any fees owing are issued in three installments: September, January and May.

(i) StFX Graduate Scholarships: Students must be registered in courses prior to being

able to access scholarship funds. They must remain in good academic standing to be able to access future installments.

(ii) External Scholarships and Fellowships

Payment of funds provided from external scholarships may be handled in two ways:

- a. The funding agency/organization may deposit the money with StFX and the University will oversee its disbursement to students. Payments will be posted to the recipient's student account. A refund cheque will be issued (less any fees owing).
- b. The external granting agency may send the money directly to the student, normally in the form of a cheque. Students who receive such an award, must inform the Research Services Group (RSG). The RSG would like to recognize the accomplishment and would also like to know about such funding for statistical purposes.

(iii) Internal 'named' Scholarships or Fellowships

These funds are supplied internally from StFX. The University oversees the disbursement to students. Payments will be posted to the recipient's student account. A refund cheque will be issued (less any fees owing).

(iv) Stipends from thesis supervisors' research grants

Stipends paid from research grants are subject to approval by the Associate Vice President, Research and Graduate Studies. The StFX Finance Office may perform a final verification to release the payment. The funding agency/organization may deposit the money with StFX and the University will oversee its disbursement to students. Payments will be posted to the recipient's student account. A refund cheque will be issued (less any fees owing).

(v) Salary from thesis supervisors' research grants (Research Assistantships)

These funds are paid as a salary for services rendered that are not directly related to the student thesis research (e.g. data analysis for a supervisor's research project which is not a component of the student's thesis research). The student is normally employed as a casual employee by the supervisor and is paid through StFX Payroll Services. The supervisor is responsible for submitting the appropriate paperwork to Payroll.

(vi) Salary from departmental teaching assistantships (TAs)

Deans are able to allocate money for departments to hire graduate students as teaching assistants, normally in undergraduate laboratories and classes. These funds are administered by the Office of the Associate VP Research, Graduate & Professional Studies in consultation with the Dean's Office, and are paid directly to the students through StFX Payroll Services.

Payments from Faculty Research Grants

Student Stipends - category (iv)

A student stipend is money paid to a student (typically at the graduate level) from a faculty member's research grant for the purpose of allowing the student to further his/her own research/thesis or other program or academic requirement. It is not considered employment income.

As noted in the Income Tax Act (IT-75R4),

“this work is undertaken by the student because participation in it will assist the student in qualifying for a degree or other scholastic recognition in the field in which the research is being carried on.”

Such work may include research collaboration with the supervisor or others, developing techniques and methodologies, or gaining knowledge of scientific or scholarly ideas or materials – as long as the objective is the student's advancement toward educational goals for the desired degree

As a result, student stipends are treated as a scholarship/ bursary/ award and recipients will be issued a T4A slip for this type of income. Please see categories (i) through to (iii) listed above. To avoid confusion, StFX uses the term “fellowship” when referring to this type of funding.

Conditions:

- 1) *The recipient of a student stipend must be duly registered as a student at StFX and does not hold academic/professorial rank as an additional appointment at StFX.*
- 2) *The primary purpose of the student stipend is to support the student while undertaking responsibilities that directly relate to his or her training and studies as a student.*
- 3) *The faculty member's grant or award must have sufficient funding to support the full stipend for the designated period.*
- 4) *The payment must adhere to the specific granting agency guidelines and comply, where applicable, with the stipend minima or maxima set by some research councils.*

Faculty members select the student(s) to whom they will pay a stipend. Stipend money must be requested in a faculty member's research grant (or other research funding) application. Faculty members should budget for the maximum allowed amount at the time of grant application. In cases where an agency does not specify a minimum or maximum rate for a stipend, it is recommended that faculty consult with their departments/programs in order to review possible pre-established rates, as well as referencing the Federal Council guidelines for their discipline (i.e. CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC) for additional information.

Research Assistantships – category (v) above

Student stipends are not to be confused with research assistantships. A research assistantship is an employment category and provides a student with payment for work performed. Though the work performed in a research assistantship may provide a student with valuable research, scholarly, or work experience, the activity is not required as part of an academic program or to advance the student's own research/thesis, or progress toward a degree. As these payments are employment income, a 4% vacation indemnity (required by law) will be added to each payment and all payments will be

subject to statutory deductions at source. Research assistantships are processed through StFX payroll and the income and deductions are reported on T4.

3.13 Successful Student-Supervisor Relationships

The relationship between student and supervisor is key to the success of students in thesis-based graduate programs. To support the success of such relationships, StFX Graduate Studies adheres to the “Guiding Principles for Graduate Student Supervision” as endorsed by the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (see Appendix 1). These Guiding Principles “underscore that at the core of successful supervisor-graduate student relationships are mutual respect and professionalism.” Listed below are the principles; full descriptions of each principle may be found in Appendix 1.

1. A Supervisor should be identified in a timely fashion.
2. Supervisory committees or equivalents should be established early.
3. Expectations, roles and responsibilities of graduate students and supervisors should be made clear.
4. Supervisors should be readily accessible to their students, and regular monitoring and feedback should be ensured.
5. Student-supervisor relationships should be professional.
6. Intellectual debate and challenge should be encouraged and supported.
7. Supervisors should be mentors.
8. Issues of intellectual property and authorship should be made clear.
9. Conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level possible.
10. Continuity is important in graduate supervision.
11. Alternative supervision should be available.
12. Students have substantial responsibilities for managing their own graduate education.

The main role of a supervisor is to provide purposeful support, instruction and encouragement regarding a graduate student’s research activities. To provide excellent guidance, supervisors are satisfactorily acquainted with the graduate student’s area of research, and/or have an inclination to increase that knowledge before agreeing to take on this role. While providing help and guidance, supervisors also encourage graduate students to develop independence as researchers and early career professionals. Supervisors should be prepared to help graduate students at every stage of their program, and, ideally, information related to key stages associated with programs must be communicated to graduate students by supervisors at the outset of, and throughout, a graduate student’s studies (adapted from *Handbook on Graduate Supervision: Nurturing and Managing the Supervisor and Doctoral Student Relationship*, prepared by the Nova Scotia Inter-University Doctoral Administrative Committee April 2014.)

If issues arise in the supervisory relationship that impede the student’s progress, the student may need to be proactive to seek advice and solutions (see Appendix 1 - Principle 12). Conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level possible, meaning that the student and supervisor should first try to resolve the issues themselves (Principle 9). If a resolution is not achieved, normally the student will move to the next administrative level: first the department graduate coordinator, secondly the department Chair, and finally the Dean. This normal path may be modified when there are conflicts of interests related to the small size of some Graduate programs. In such situations, the student will normally

proceed to the next administrative level. The Associate Vice-President of Research & Graduate Studies is able to serve as a resource by helping students determine appropriate next steps; the student may seek out guidance from the Associate Vice-President of Research & Graduate Studies.

3.14 Supervisor Eligibility

Faculty members or Senior Research Professors holding a primary appointment in a department or program that does not have a graduate program may still be involved in the supervision or co-supervision of graduate students if they hold a cross-appointment with a department or program offering a graduate program. Alternatively, permission to supervise graduate students and participate on graduate supervisory committees may be granted by the Dean and both department/program Chairs in advance. In cases, where co-supervisory arrangements have been established for a graduate student, the co-supervisors shall equally share the teaching credit for graduate student supervision as outlined in the Collective Agreement. Individuals who hold adjunct appointments in a department or program offering graduate programs are also eligible to serve as primary supervisors of graduate students.

Section 4: RESEARCH & THESES

4.1 Safety, Animal Care and Research Ethics Approval

Depending on the nature of research undertaken for a graduate studies thesis, students may require prior ethics approval by the StFX Research Ethics Board (REB), as well as training or advice on suitable ethical practices. Appropriate workplace safety knowledge and training may also be required, including basic occupational health and safety, awareness of specific laboratory safety requirements, and attendance at a safety seminar (scheduled as needed). In addition, for certain graduate students, field safety, dive safety, or biosafety rules may apply, and training may be required. If research requires use of animals, students will need animal care training. The level of training needed will depend on the research protocol involved. Faculty Supervisors and Graduate Studies Coordinators associated with each program can help guide students to the right resources for training and approvals.

4.2 Research Integrity and Conflict of Interest

Of particular importance to all researchers at StFX is the Policy on Research Integrity. This Policy identifies the responsibilities of all researchers at StFX in carrying out research ethically and with integrity. The Policy defines scholarly misconduct and outlines the procedures for investigating allegations of scholarly misconduct. It is available for review on the StFX website.

The Expert Committee on Research Integrity by the Council of Canadian Academics has outlined several Fundamental Principles of Research Integrity:

1. Conduct research in an honest search for knowledge.
2. Foster an environment of research integrity, accountability and public trust.
3. Know your level of competence and your limitations; act accordingly.
4. Avoid conflicts of interest, or if they cannot be avoided, address them in an ethical manner.
5. Use research funds responsibly.
6. Review the work of others with integrity.
7. Report on research in a responsible and timely fashion.
8. Treat data with scholarly rigour.
9. Treat everyone involved with research fairly and with respect.
10. Acknowledge all contributors and contributions in research.
11. Engage in the responsible training of researchers.

4.3 Submission and Examination of Theses

The following is a summary of the usual steps involved in the development, submission and examination of theses. Some regulations vary within programs; confirm with your graduate coordinator.

Thesis Proposal

Candidates must make a formal presentation of their thesis proposal. The presentation is normally made to the faculty of the department for which the thesis is being written, and it is open to members of the Committee on Graduate Studies, interested faculty members, and graduate students. In some departments, it may be open to the public. The department Chair or Graduate Coordinator (and/or the candidate's faculty advisor) will ensure that at least 2 weeks notice is given of the date, time, and place of the presentation of the thesis proposal.

Following presentation of the proposal, after obtaining the approval of the appropriate ethics committee(s), and on the recommendation of the candidate's thesis supervisory committee, and the department Chair /Program Coordinator the candidate will be permitted to register in the thesis.

Submission and Examination

Students often underestimate the amount of time required between submitting a thesis for defense and having it examined, defended, revised, and finalized. Students need to be realistic in considering the time needed to complete all requirements; otherwise, meeting the deadlines for graduation can be very stressful.

When completed, the thesis is submitted to the candidate's supervisory committee for approval. The thesis is read by at least one other faculty member, designated by the department Chair. The thesis is also read by an external examiner chosen by the department Chair or Graduate Coordinator after consultation with the candidate's supervisory committee. The external examiner is a faculty member external to the candidate's department and may be external to the university. After consultation with the candidate's supervisory committee, the Chair will appoint a thesis examination committee consisting of the external examiner, the candidate's faculty advisor, and at least one (but no more than three) other members of the department (members of the supervisory committee may serve as members of the examining committee). The

AVPRGPS or her/his designate from the Committee on Graduate Studies will be a non-voting member of the examining committee *ex officio*.

The external examiner must submit a report on the thesis, which is sent to the student's supervisor and supervisory committee. A public presentation and defence of the thesis is undertaken by the candidate after receipt of the external examiner's report and following the approval of the supervisory committee. Normally, at least two weeks notice is given to the University Community concerning the date, time, and place of the presentation and defence.

Immediately following the public presentation of the thesis, an examination of the candidate is held. Normally, the public presentation and examination will not exceed 120 minutes. The examining committee will then, *in camera*, arrive at a unanimous decision, agree on any changes to be made to the thesis, determine who will be responsible for ensuring that these changes are made, and consider whether the student is to be nominated for the StFX Outstanding Graduate Student Research Award. Should the Committee not be able to arrive at a decision on the disposition of the thesis, the matter will be referred to the Committee on Graduate Studies for review and resolution.

The decision of the examining committee, along with their names and, as appropriate, signatures, will be recorded on the COGS Graduate Thesis Approval Form, with a copy retained by the Department and a second copy sent to the relevant Dean (cc'ed to the AVPRGPS).

A final corrected copy of the successful thesis must be submitted to the supervisory committee for approval within a timeframe established by the examining committee in consultation with the candidate. The names of successful candidates must be provided to the appropriate Dean.

4.4 Preserving Theses

Students are responsible for providing an electronic copy (in PDF format) of the approved thesis to be deposited with the StFXScholar. Students must also complete and submit the required 'StFX Thesis Non-exclusive License Form.' Please consult the Library website for instructions on how to do this:
<https://stfx.libguides.com/theses/depositinggradtheses>

4.5 Thesis Formatting

There is no single format requirement for thesis preparation or submission at StFX; each department/program tends to have different acceptable formats and conventions. Students should discuss acceptable formatting practices, conventions and approaches with their supervisor and committee.

4.6 Graduate Student Research Award

Each year, the Committee on Graduate Studies considers nominations for the Outstanding Graduate Student Research Award. Two awards are available, one for graduates of the Faculty of Education and one for the Faculties of Arts & Science. Eligible students must have completed a thesis. The thesis should represent the highest level of scholarship and represent a significant contribution to fostering the understanding of current issues, problems, or interests in the field. Guidelines and procedures for the award are included in Appendix 3.

4.7 Access to Equipment and Rental Vehicles (for research travel only)

With appropriate training, graduate students can access specialized equipment needed to support their research studies. Graduate students are allowed to rent vehicles for research travel under the university contract with Enterprise Rentals. The student must have a valid full driver's license and be at least 21 years old. Students do not need the insurance package, but must notify Procurement Services in advance so they can be added to the university's fleet insurance policy (notification should include name, date of birth for out-of-province license holders, and driver's license number and jurisdiction). Rentals can be booked online using the StFX group code available through the Procurement Services website http://sites.stfx.ca/financial_services/procurement and clicking the service agreement menu item. You will need a StFX user name and password to access the site.

Appendix 1. Guiding Principles for Graduate Student Supervision

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A. Introduction

Post-baccalaureate graduate studies are extremely important to the economic and social well-being of Canadians and have an ever increasing role in higher education in Canada. Over the 10-year period between 1995 and 2004, graduate student enrollment increased from approximately 113,000 to 149,000 in Canada. Graduate studies are not only a life and career enhancing activity for students, but also a vital component of research and scholarship in Canada, important drivers of the nation's productivity and essential for global competitiveness. The role of supervisors and supervisory committees, as well as the relationship between students and their supervisors, are key components affecting the success of research-stream students in their programs.

Superimposed upon the student-supervisor relationship are the roles of supervisory committees, graduate program committees, departmental bodies, and offices of faculties/schools of graduate studies. Further complicating the issue of graduate student supervision is the diversity in supervision culture across the University, where the relationship may range from a very structured "master to apprentice" scenario to a very unstructured, "subtle guide of an independent scholar."

Despite the complexity and diversity surrounding supervision of graduate students, the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies felt it important that guiding principles for graduate student supervision be identified and endorsed at a national level. While many excellent guides on graduate student supervision exist within various graduate handbooks, senate or faculty by-laws, and websites within graduate schools across Canada, these are often highly specific to individual departments or graduate programs.

This document is meant to identify, at a high level, guiding principles, which can apply to all graduate supervisors and students. These principles can be a stand-alone resource or a precursor for graduate schools and programs to customize to their particular academic environment. It is also intended that the document be applicable to defining roles and responsibilities of graduate students in the student-supervisor relationship as well as for graduate supervisors and administrators of graduate programs across Canada.

Various documents have been utilized and are cited in the preparation of these guiding principles, but in particular, a document from the University of Western Ontario has been

used as a “template” for many of the principles identified here.

The principles are intended mainly for research masters and doctoral programs, though they may have relevance to “professional” graduate programs where the student works with a supervisor.

B. Guiding Principles

1. A Supervisor should be identified in a timely fashion

One of the most important aspects of graduate training is the timely, clear identification of a supervisor for each graduate student. This individual plays a key role in setting the direction of the graduate student’s research. There are wide variations in the practices of finding such a supervisor, and in the timing of when supervisors are normally assigned to students across discipline, research field and graduate programs. In some fields, students are assigned supervisors before they begin their programs (e.g. commonly the case in engineering, the natural sciences, and some fields in the social sciences), while in others; supervisors are normally assigned after one or more semesters. Whatever the norm for the discipline, field or graduate program, procedures for assigning a supervisor in a timely fashion should be in place and should be followed. Such procedures should also be clearly documented and known to students and faculty.

2. Supervisory committees or equivalents should be established early.

In most graduate programs, a supervisory committee (or an equivalent, such as “second reader”) is also assigned to the graduate student. The supervisory committee normally acts as a supplementary resource for graduate students’ research, helps monitor program progress of graduate students, and approves the thesis for defense. Supervisory committees or their equivalent also can play vital roles in managing/mitigating conflict between supervisor and student should it arise. In order to obtain the maximum benefit from such a committee, it should be established as early as possible in the student’s program.

3. Expectations, roles and responsibilities of graduate students and supervisors should be made clear. The University and/or individual graduate programs should provide guidelines on the roles of the supervisor and the graduate student. Some faculties/schools of graduate studies recommend that a written agreement or “contract” be signed by supervisor and graduate student on such issues. In these cases, it is important that students have informed consent and are not coerced into signing contracts with which they are not in agreement. Universities should provide workshops for supervisors and graduate students at which the roles of students and supervisors can be discussed.

4. Supervisors should be readily accessible to their students, and regular monitoring and feedback should be ensured. Graduate study can be a very unfamiliar environment for new graduate students and students who are new to Canada. Graduate programs tend to be much less structured than undergraduate programs. Also, the rich cultural diversity in our Universities means that the cultural background of graduate students can be quite different from the norms found within the institution. Because of these realities, it is important that supervisors are highly accessible to provide guidance and feedback to graduate students, but particularly to students for whom both graduate programs and Canada are new. Frequent meetings with graduate students at which academic, research and other issues are addressed, progress is reviewed, evaluation is provided, and future activities are identified are extremely important for the success of students. Most graduate programs require a written report on student’s progress to be submitted to

departmental, school or faculty offices at least once per year. Such formal procedures, while essential, should not preclude more frequent evaluation of student activities and progress on a more informal basis, such as office or lab meetings, email communications and telephone conversations. When supervisors will be absent from the university for extended periods of time (e.g. field seasons; sabbatical leaves), steps need to be taken to ensure continuation of quality supervision during these absences.

5. Student-supervisor relationships should be professional.

The relationship between supervisors and students, however friendly and supportive it may become, should always be academic and professional.

Relationships that are at odds with an arm's length criterion (e.g., romantic, sexual, family ties) are unacceptable between supervisors and students. If a substantial conflict of interest arises (e.g., when supervisors develop emotional, financial and/or business arrangements with the student) mechanisms should be in place to initiate a change of supervisor.

6. Intellectual debate and challenge should be encouraged and supported.

Intellectual debate is a fundamental component of university activity. Every effort should be made by both the student and supervisor to recognize and acknowledge that a robust element of academic challenge and questioning is a normal, and indeed, healthy aspect of the student-supervisor relationship.

7. Supervisors should be mentors

Supervisors have responsibilities beyond the academic supervision of research and writing. Although the mentoring role will vary across disciplines, and will depend on the needs of the individual student, supervisors should be responsible for mentoring students in the following areas: development of appropriate professional skills; applications for funding; networking opportunities with colleagues in academia and beyond; assistance with publications; and career development.

8. Issues of intellectual property and authorship should be made clear.

Supervisors are responsible for informing students about university policies that govern intellectual property, and about any specific intellectual property issues that are likely to arise from their research. Even when issues are not clearly defined, it is important that students and supervisors have a discussion and reach an agreement early in their relationship regarding issues including rights of authorship, the order of authorship on multi-authored publications, and ownership of data. It is inappropriate for thesis supervisors to ask students to sign over their intellectual property rights as a condition of pursuing thesis research under their supervision.

9. Conflicts should be resolved at the lowest level possible.

From time to time, conflicts may emerge between the supervisor and the student. Involving more people and higher levels of authority in a conflict can result in exaggeration of the original problem. This makes it harder to resolve and causes more damage to the participants and those around them. Conflicts should be resolved as close as possible to the source of the problem (i.e., at the lowest level of administration). If the student and supervisor cannot find a solution after discussing the problem, they should then involve the supervisory committee or equivalent. If the problem cannot be resolved at the student-supervisor level, it may be dealt with by the program. The University should ensure that appropriate resources (e.g. ombudsperson, equity office) are available to assist. If no satisfactory resolution can be found at the program level, the problem may be referred to the higher administrative levels. All parties should follow procedures congruent with established policies of their universities.

10. Continuity is important in graduate supervision.

The relationship between the student and supervisor is often critical to the student's successful completion of the degree. Continuity of supervision is an integral component of this relationship, since it provides (or should provide) stability, security, an opportunity to establish sufficient mutual knowledge and trust to facilitate effective intellectual debate, and generally an environment that allows optimal focus on the goals of the graduate program. As a consequence, a change in supervisor should be made only for strong and compelling reasons such as a mutually agreed major shift in academic direction of the research, major academic disagreements and/or irreconcilable interpersonal conflicts. It is recognized that some programs may place each new incoming student with an initial or temporary supervisor. In these cases, a subsequent timely change in supervisors, as the student clarifies research interests, is generally a routine matter.

11. Alternative supervision should be available.

Policies and practices should cover situations in which a supervisory relationship cannot be continued, so that the student can continue in the program. These should cover situations beyond the control of the student (e.g. temporary or permanent absence of supervisor), situations that may arise from conflict of interest, and situations that result from personal relations between supervisor and student. Notwithstanding possible delays in time to completion, policies and practices should ensure that a student is not penalized if a change in supervisor is necessary.

12. Students have substantial responsibilities for managing their own graduate education

Students share in the responsibility for the goals that they successfully complete their program, and that it be of high quality. They are responsible for knowing and conforming to the various policies and procedures that may concern academic and research conduct, intellectual property, human subjects, animal welfare, health and safety, as well as degree and program requirements and timelines. They may need to be proactive and take responsibility for ensuring good communication with supervisory committee members, in the meeting of timelines and other program requirements, and in seeking effective advice on academic and other matters. If problems arise in the supervisory relationship, it may be the student who needs to take action and seek advice and remedy from the department or the school. The university, graduate department and supervisor are responsible for providing an appropriate environment for high-quality graduate education, but success is ultimately in the hands of the student. It is therefore essential that universities inform students of their responsibilities, and provide them with the information and support that they need to carry out their responsibilities

C. Conclusion

As noted in these principles, successful supervision of graduate students depends on a healthy and productive relationship between the supervisor and graduate student, within a milieu that involves several other parties and conditions. At the core of successful supervisor-graduate student relationships are mutual respect and professionalism. When combined with clarity on the respective roles of students, supervisors, and others involved in the students education, and information on the policy and procedures relevant to a student's graduate program, these features will serve students, supervisors and the rest of the University community well. Our goal is to ensure the success of graduate students in their programs and in their future endeavours.

D. References

1 Canadian Association of Graduate Studies, 2007. 36th Statistical Report, 1992-2004. CAGS, Ottawa, Canada.

2 Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Western Ontario, 2007. Principles and Guidelines Regarding Graduate Student Supervision.
<http://grad.uwo.ca/supervis/supervis.html>

Appendix 3: Guidelines and Procedures for the StFX Outstanding Graduate Student Research Award (Updated July 2025)

Overview

One StFX Outstanding Graduate Student Research award will be made available for the Faculty of Arts & Faculty of Science and one award for the Faculty of Education (up to two awards annually). The awards will consist of a certificate, a letter of commendation from the President of the University, and a cash prize of \$500.00. The awards are presented at Spring convocation. All nominees receive a letter of commendation signed by the President and mailed directly to them.

Award Criteria

Eligible students must have completed a thesis. The thesis should represent the highest level of scholarship and represent a significant contribution to fostering the understanding of current issues, problems, or interests in the field. The conclusions of the research should advance theory, knowledge, and/or professional practice. The scope of the research should be adequate for the problem or issue under consideration. The thesis should demonstrate a high calibre of writing.

Award Procedures

The thesis should be nominated by the faculty advisor with a letter of support from one other faculty member and an external evaluator. The faculty advisor should ensure that the Committee is supplied with (i) a summary (not to exceed 500 words) concerning the significance of the thesis, (ii) the Table of Contents, and (iii) a representative chapter from the thesis. External assessors of theses will be requested to indicate on their evaluations whether the thesis meets the criteria for the award.

Deadline

Nominations and supporting documentation will be received throughout the year, though they will be held for adjudication in advance of Spring convocation. Nominations of graduate students who are conferred degrees at Fall convocation will be adjudicated the following Spring.

The Associate VP Research and Graduate Studies must receive complete nomination packages no later than April 15th of each academic year.

Adjudication

Nominations will be considered by a committee of judges consisting of:

1. The Dean of the Faculty in which the student is a degree candidate.
2. The Associate VP Research, Graduate & Professional Studies, as chair of the Committee on Graduate Studies
3. One member from each Faculty offering graduate programs, selected by the Committee on Graduate Studies.

Guidelines for Adjudication

To be considered for an award, the thesis must normally be judged to be in the top 10% of recent theses in the field. The judges may solicit an additional external evaluation. The judges will have access to recent theses in the discipline should it be useful in arriving at a decision.

Judges will be encouraged to consider the following questions in reviewing the application:

1. Is this a significant contribution to the field (e.g., would the thesis rank in the top 10% of Masters theses you have examined)?
2. Is there reason to conclude that this thesis could be built upon either by the author or by future researchers? Does it hold long term potential for further systematic investigation?
3. Is the methodology and theory used appropriate and well applied?
4. Are the findings, conclusions, recommendations, or emergent questions both clear and significant to the field?
5. Does the thesis indicate mastery of the literature relevant to the topic?
6. Does the thesis demonstrate a high calibre of writing?

Award

The recommendation of the judges will be forwarded to the Committee on Graduate Studies for approval in time for Spring Convocation.

If possible, nominated candidates will be notified of the Committee's decisions prior to Spring Convocation.

Announcement of the awards will be made at Spring Convocation.

Appendix 4: Contacts (as of July 2025)

The Graduate Student Coordinator in your department will normally be your first point of contact with questions about your program.

Program Contacts

		phone	email	office
MA in Celtic Studies	Dr. Ranke deVries <i>Graduate Coordinator</i>	902-867-2206	rdevries@stfx.ca	Immaculata 207B
	Shim Pang <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	902-867-2300	celtic@stfx.ca	Immaculata 207
MSc in Biology	Dr. Ricardo Scrosati <i>Graduate Coordinator</i>	902-867-5289	rscrosat@stfx.ca	JBB 335J
	Dr. Russell Wyeth <i>Department Chair</i>	902-867-3886	rwyeth@stfx.ca	JBB 222/221
	Rakiba App / Chrissy Pelrine <i>Administrative Assistants</i>	902-867-2137	biology@stfx.ca	JBB 208
MSc in Chemistry	Dr. Shah Razul <i>Graduate Coordinator</i>	902-867-2116	sgrazul@stfx.ca	PSC 3007
	Dr. Brian J. MacLean <i>Department Chair</i>	902-867-2826	bjmaclea@stfx.ca	PSC 3060
	Lisa Sampson <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	902-867-2196	lsampson@stfx.ca	PSC 2052
MSc in Computer Science	Dr. Tasmeen Darwish <i>Graduate Coordinator</i>	902-867-2416	tdarwish@stfx.ca	PSC 1017
	Dr. Man Lin <i>Department Chair</i>	902-867-5402	mclin@stfx.ca	Annex 10A
	Breagh MacDonald / Rhonda MacDonald <i>Administrative Assistants</i>	902-867-3972	csci@stfx.ca	Annex 103/104
MSc in Earth & Environmental Sciences	Dr. Hugo Beltrami <i>Graduate Coordinator</i>	902-867-2326	hbeltram@stfx.ca	Nasso 2028
	Dr. James Braid <i>Department Chair</i>	902-867-5142	jbraid@stfx.ca	PSC 2007
	Lisa Sampson <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	902-867-2196	lsampson@stfx.ca	PSC 2052
Masters in Adult Education	Dr. William Walters <i>Department Chair</i>	902-867-3735	wwalters@stfx.ca	Xavier Hall 303
	Denise Morrow <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	902-867-2247	aesecret@stfx.ca	Xavier Hall 218

Masters in Education

Dr. Dan Robinson <i>Chair, Dept of Leadership & Curriculum</i>	902-867-5569	drobinso@stfx.ca	Coady 268
Rhiannon Smith <i>Program Assistant</i>	902-867-3906	med@stfx.ca	MacDonald 214B

PhD in Education

Dr. Dan Robinson <i>StFX Doctoral Coordinator</i>	902-867-5569	drobinso@stfx.ca	Coady 268
Jennifer Connors <i>Program Assistant</i>	902-867-4957	jconnors@stfx.ca	Xavier Hall 304

Other Points of Contact

Office of the Associate Vice President Research, Graduate, and Professional Studies

Dr. Erin Morton <i>Associate VP, Research, Graduate & Professional Studies</i>		emorton@stfx.ca	NT 718
Jacqueline Beaton <i>Research Admin Coordinator</i>	902-867-2393	jbeaton@stfx.ca	NT 717

Office of the Dean of Arts

Dr. Wojciech Tokarz <i>Dean of Arts</i>		wtokarz@stfx.ca	NT 305
Navneet Kaur <i>Assistant to the Dean</i>	902-867-2165	nkaur@stfx.ca	NT 307

Office of the Dean of Education

Dr. Lace Marie Brogden <i>Dean of Education</i>		lbrogdan@stfx.ca	
Jennifer Connors <i>Program Assistant</i>	902-867-4957	jconnors@stfx.ca	Xavier Hall 311

Office of the Dean of Science

Dr. Joe Apaloo <i>Dean of Science</i>		japaloo@stfx.ca	
Sheila MacMillan <i>Assistant to the Dean of Science</i>	902-867-3903	smacmill@stfx.ca	NT 308

Office of the Dean of Business

Dr. Lisa Watson <i>Dean of Business</i>		lwatson@stfx.ca	
Rachel Fraser <i>Assistant to the Dean of Science</i>	902-867-4979	rfraser@stfx.ca	NT 308

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? WHERE TO GO FOR HELP...

The following is a list of first points of contact and resources available to graduate students:

For **Academic Advising** (e.g. courses, thesis defense procedures): Contact the appropriate graduate coordinator (see Contacts section of this guide).

For **thesis research** questions: Contact your thesis supervisor, other members of your thesis supervisory committee (if applicable), or your graduate coordinator.

For questions on **Intellectual Property** matters, or if you are interested in commercializing your research, contact the Industry Liaison Office, Hana Nelson, x2393, hnelson@stfx.ca)

For questions on **Information Technology** (IT) Services (e.g. computer connectivity), visit ITS Help Desk located on the first floor of the Library.

For questions on **Student Life** (i.e. services designed to support students' psychological, physical, cultural, spiritual, emotional and educational development), contact Student Life, x3934, studentlife@stfx.ca

International students: For questions and support email: international@stfx.ca

StFX Students' Union Health plan: contact x2495, stfxplan@mystudentplan.ca

Financial Aid email financialaid@stfx.ca

Confirmation of enrolment: Office of the Registrar: registr@stfx.ca