

# Department of Mechanical Engineering

## Graduate Program Handbook 2025/2026

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## WELCOME NOTE (2025/2026)

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*Welcome to the Department of Mechanical Engineering! In our department, you will find an engaged graduate student community, supportive staff, and collaborative faculty. Our department offers a research-intensive graduate student experience and a fantastic training environment for you to learn and grow as an engineer. Whether you are working in advanced manufacturing, biomechanics, energy and fluid systems, mechanics and design, or smart systems, you will have access to the latest facilities, equipment, and research centres. Please browse our handbook and website to learn more about the program. Reach out to our Graduate Program Administrator and Graduate Chair at anytime for support, questions, or simply to say hello!*

*Please note that this handbook is comprised of two sections: the first contains general information which graduate students in all Faculty of Engineering departments will find useful; the second includes information specific to the Department of Mechanical Engineering.*

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### **Disclaimer:**

In the event of a discrepancy between the information provided in this handbook and The School of Graduate Studies Calendar, the latter prevails.



The background image shows a large, multi-story stone building with a significant portion of its facade covered in dense green ivy. Several windows with white frames are visible. In the foreground, there is a low, rustic stone wall. To the right, a decorative stone archway frames a view of a paved path where a few people are walking. The entire image is overlaid with a large, semi-transparent maroon graphic that forms a wide, shallow arch, framing the central text.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

# IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

## Quick Links

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and abide by the regulations, policies and procedures below.

- [The School of Graduate Studies Graduate Calendar \(2025-2026\)](#)
- [General Regulations on Supervision](#)
- [Dates and Deadlines](#)
- [Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#)
- [Accommodations, Appeals and Petitions](#)
- [Student Appeal Procedures](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Copyright Policy \(MILO\)](#)
- [Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Research Integrity Policy](#)
- [Thesis Completion and Defence](#)
- [Collective Agreement for TA/RA in lieu of TA](#)

## Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster graduate student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn,



WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

### **Responsibilities of Graduate Students to the University ([Section 1.3 Of The Graduate Calendar](#))**

Just as the University has responsibilities to graduate students, they have responsibilities to the University. The student's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Maintaining current contact information with the University, including address, phone numbers, and emergency contact information.
2. Using the University provided e-mail address or maintaining a valid forwarding e-mail address.
3. Regularly checking the official University communications channels. Official University communications are considered received if sent by postal mail, by fax, or by e-mail to the student's designated primary e-mail account via their @mcmaster.ca alias.
4. Maintaining contact and meeting regularly with the faculty advisor, thesis/project supervisor or supervisory committee, for observing departmental guidelines, and for meeting the deadlines of the department and the School of Graduate Studies.
5. Full-time students are obliged to be on campus, except for vacation periods or authorized off-campus status, for all three terms of the university year.
6. In cases of unauthorized absence, the student will be deemed to have withdrawn voluntarily from graduate study and will have to petition for readmission. No guarantee of readmission or of renewal of financial arrangements can be made and a decision on readmission is not subject to appeal.
7. Reviewing and complying with the University's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
8. Registering annually until graduation, withdrawal, or withdrawal in good standing due to time limit.
9. Paying fees as required.
10. If there is a problem with supervision, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Associate Chair (Graduate) with their concerns.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the [dates and deadlines](#) for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

## IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY AND FACULTY SERVICES

### Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO policy](#). Students should submit their request to their Graduate Administrative Assistant **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation, or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

**Note:** Approved accommodations of previous undergraduate students at McMaster **do not** automatically apply during graduate studies. Students needing accommodations should return to SAS soon after commencement of their graduate program to implement or update your student status and to activate accommodations.

### Engineering Support Services (The Hub)

Services include managing keys and access cards, meeting rooms, and more.

JHE 216A

Ext. 27291

[thehub@mcmaster.ca](mailto:thehub@mcmaster.ca)

### Equity and Inclusion

The [Equity and Inclusion Office \(EIO\)](#) is a central resource where expertise is proactively drawn upon by administrators, faculty, staff, and students: to advance unit-specific and institutional equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility goals; to enact inclusive excellence principles; and to establish respectful living, learning, and working environments that are free from harassment and discrimination, and sexual violence including through timely and procedurally fair investigative and alternative dispute resolution processes.

### **Human Rights and Dispute Resolution (HRDR) Program**

HRDRP is one of four intake offices listed in McMaster's Policy on Discrimination and Harassment: Prevention and Response and the Sexual Violence Policy. It is responsible for facilitating the resolution of concerns and complaints and for investigating formal complaints related to issues of discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence support.

## **Education, Outreach and Support**

The Education, Outreach and Support (EOS) engages students, staff and faculty members through education including workshops and special events. The ESP team works closely with on and off campus partners to advance equity and accessibility and to challenge rape culture on campus. EOS also provides support to the President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC), the Anti-Violence Network and the McMaster Accessibility Council.

## **International Student Services (ISS)**

At McMaster, international students have access to accredited experts on staff who offer extra guidance on academics, health, wellness, immigration, finances, housing, cultural and social matters.

More information can be found on the [International Student Services \(ISS\) website](#).

## **Mental Health**

### **Resources on Campus**

No issues are too big or small. Request support for depression, anxiety, grief, relationship problems, adjusting to life in a new country, addictions, mild substance abuse, educational conflict, disordered eating, and more.

There are many on-campus resources students can reach out to:

- [Student Wellness Centre: Mental Health Resources](#)
- [TalkSpot: A Mental Health Service Exclusively for Mac Eng Students](#)

**It is not recommended that students email about a crisis. In a crisis you can call one of the following:**

### **Good2Talk**

This is a free, confidential helpline providing professional counselling and information and referrals for mental health, addiction and well-being to post-secondary students in Ontario. Available 24/7/365.

Call 1-866-925-5454 or dial 211 and ask to be connected to Good2Talk.

### **Empower Me**

This is an accessible counselling service which includes crisis support, as well as mental health services. You can also speak to a life coach about things like personal performance, well-being and growth, career, relationships, and finances. Available 24/7/365.

Call 1-844-741-6389.



## **Crisis Support**

If you have immediate safety concerns for yourself or others, call campus security at 905-522-4135 if you are on campus or call 911 if you are off campus. More information is available on [Student Wellness Centre website](#).

## **School of Graduate Studies (SGS)**

The School of Graduate Studies website provides robust pages of information and resources including academic services, awards and funding, news, and events. Select the Accepted My Offer tab to help you get started at McMaster and the Current Students tab for important information and resources to help you on your graduate journey.

The School of Graduate Studies offices are located in Gilmour Hall, Room 212, or can be reached by phone at ext. 23679

Additional SGS resources can be found here:

- [SGS Main Page](#)
- [Graduate Studies Forms and Policies for Graduate Students](#)

## **Security**

### **Emergency**

In case of emergency, dial 88 from any campus phone. The McMaster Security office is located in the E. T. Clarke Centre, room 201, and can be contacted at ext. 24281. This office is responsible for overall security on campus. In addition, they operate a Lost and Found service (ext. 23366). Any lost items will be held for 30 days.

### **Emergency First Response Team (EFRT)**

In cases of serious injury or accidents, McMaster University's Emergency First Response Team (EFRT) can provide advanced emergency first aid. The EFRT team is staffed by trained, certified student volunteers. The team responds to incidents across campus. To access EFRT assistance, dial 88 and Security Services will dispatch EFRT to your location.

### **Escort Service (SWHAT)**

During the months of September through April, students operate an escort service, "Students Walk Home Attendant Team" (SWHAT). After dark, if you call (905)525-9140 ext. 27500, you can arrange to be escorted to your car or residence by a male and a female student. During the months, May to August, the Campus Security will look after escorting you to your car or residence. The extension remains the same x27500.

### **McMaster Safety App**

Download the McMaster Safety App for safety alerts, such as campus closures and emergency instructions. The app is available for free download on the Apple and Android app store. For more information, click [here](#).

### **McMaster Security Office**

McMaster Security Officers act under the authority of the Ontario Police Act to enforce federal and provincial regulations. They are here to protect, not to harass you. Students who violate these statutes and bylaws are subject to arrest, prosecution and/or disciplinary action under McMaster's Student Code of Conduct. The Security Office can be reached at ext. 24281.

### **University Technology Services (UTS)**

UTS is McMaster's central IT department, providing IT services and support to students, faculty, and staff. Services include help with emails, passwords, Office 365, and more.

[University Technology Services](#) can be reached on ext. 24357, or via live chat or by submitting a service ticket [here](#).

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## Core Health and Safety Courses

All students must successfully complete *and abide by* the following [core health and safety courses](#):

- SAFE training (*replacing Slips, Trips and Falls, Asbestos Awareness, Fire Safety, Ergonomics*)
- Health and Safety Orientation
- Violence and Harassment Prevention
- WHMIS 2015

## Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) Forms

All students must complete a [Job Hazard Analysis](#) with your supervisor and read and follow the appropriate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

*Note:* In the context of safety, all graduate students are considered “workers”.

## McMaster University Laboratory Manual

This manual is intended to provide basic rules for safe work practices in a laboratory. The procedures may be supplemented with Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) where applicable and with information on roles, responsibilities and specific procedures outlined in the university's Risk Management Manual (RMM). This is mandatory reading for all employees, graduate students and volunteers working in laboratories. This manual applies to all campus labs. The manual is available on the [human resources website](#).

## Eye Safety Regulations

All people entering an active laboratory must wear eye protection. The specific type of protection will be determined by the actual hazards present. Graduate students should discuss this with their Faculty Supervisor.

## Fire Safety Procedure

In the case of fire, or the sounding of an alarm, “Get Out and Stay Out”. Evacuate the building by the closest exit. You should be at least 50 feet away from the building and not return until the “All Clear” is given by the Fire Warden. Please become familiar with the closest fire exit to your lab, office and classrooms.

## Chemical Waste Disposal

- Hazardous chemical waste will be picked up from your laboratory every Tuesday
- You must wait for the waste management company to arrive at your laboratory for the pickup.



- By Friday 9:00 AM prior to the pick-up on Tuesday, you are required to provide EOHSS with a copy of the chemical waste disposal record by e-mail at [waste@mcmaster.ca](mailto:waste@mcmaster.ca).
- All waste must be identified and properly labeled. Unlabeled waste will not be accepted.
- Do not pour hazardous chemicals down the drains, including any organic solvent or acids/bases that have not been fully neutralized.
- Sharps, broken glass and pipette tips are disposed of as hazardous or biohazardous waste.
- Do not throw hazardous chemical waste into the garbage bins.

Full guidelines are available [here](#).

### **IT Security**

With an increase in online work, there is an increase in cyber threats. Email phishing and malware attacks are on the rise. [Click here](#) to learn more about email phishing, anti-virus software and tips for creating a strong password. Consider taking the UTS Phishing Course on Avenue to Learn.

### **Reporting of a Safety Incident**

Any incident, which could have resulted in injury, must be reported to the Department immediately, through your Faculty Supervisor. The University is required, by law, to report such incidents to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

The online [Injury/Incident Report](#) is available on the [Human Resources website](#), under “Quick Links”.

## OTHER ACADEMIC POLICIES

### Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by university instructors.

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

#### **Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in Teaching and Learning**

Please refer to the [MacPherson Institute Guidelines](#) regarding the use of generative AI (e.g. OpenAI's ChatGPT) in teaching and learning. These guidelines were developed by the Task Force on Generative AI in Teaching and Learning and will continue to be updated as the Task Force explores additional topics and as technology rapidly changes.

#### **Provisional Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in Research**

While generative AI offers promising new avenues for enhancing pedagogical approaches and advancing research, we approach its integration with thought and consideration. As we explore its applications, we continue to prioritize the informed engagement of our community. We invite our students, faculty, alumni, and partners to join us in this exploration, ensuring that our approach to AI remains rooted in our collective values and the broader interests of our community.

The guidelines can be reviewed [here](#). All graduate students are expected to engage in discussions with their supervisors around GenAI and confirm if or how GenAI may be used in their research or milestones. It is the student's responsibility to seek clarification from the Associate Chair (Graduate).

### Intellectual Property and Student Ownership

More than roughly 80% of the research carried out in the Faculty of Engineering is done with industry. The university signs intellectual property and ownership agreements with a company and hence the terms of these agreements apply to all members of McMaster, not just the project supervisor. Students are encouraged to talk to their supervisors about the terms covering their research project to understand how their contributions will be weighted in the intellectual property generated and whether any review of theses and papers is required by the industrial sponsor before public disclosure. Student should review the IP Policy [here](#).

### **Plagiarism-Checking Software (iThenticate)**

Effective December 1, 2023 the university requires all Master's and Doctoral theses to be reviewed by iThenticate, a plagiarism-checking software, before being seen by an external reviewer (Doctoral) or the finished copy submitted (Master's). This requirement can be found in the University's [Research Plagiarism Checking Policy](#), which can be found on the Secretariat website. This requirement is not meant to catch plagiarism but rather to prevent it. By helping students detect sections of text requiring revision before the document is released to the public, the use of this tool can avoid otherwise serious allegations.

Student and supervisor will work together to revise any sections of the thesis that may be overlapping with previously published content that the student does not have permission to copy; sandwich theses are expected to have a substantial amount of already published content, but in this case the student should have sought, and been granted, permission to use it in their document. The student's supervisor is responsible for confirming the thesis is ready to submit.



# GRADUATE PROGRAM REGULATIONS – ENROLLMENT

## Matters With Regard to Enrollment ([Section 2.5 Of The Graduate Calendar](#))

### **1. Full-Time Student**

A full-time student is one who is studying on a full-time basis; treating studies like a full-time job; attending to coursework and research in a professional manner; being in consultation with and available to their supervisor at regular intervals (daily and/or weekly by mutual agreement) to monitor progress.

### **2. Part-Time Student**

A part-time student is one who usually has a full-time job outside the university, but wants to work towards his or her graduate degree on a part-time basis. A part-time student is limited to 3 graduate courses (9 units) per academic session (Sept 1 – Aug 31) and will usually take more time to complete the degree [M.A.Sc. program: up to 15 terms from the original date of registration if student began as “part-time”; Ph.D. program: up to 24 terms from the original date of registration if student began as “part-time”]. Part-time students are not eligible for financial support from the department; nor teaching assistantships; nor scholarship equivalent.

### **3. Status Changes (FT to PT; PT to FT; Withdrawal; Re-admission to Defend; Program Transfers, Leaves of Absence and Parenting Leave; Full-time Off-Campus)**

Students who wish to change their status (full-time to part-time; part-time to full-time; transferring from M.A.Sc. to Ph.D.; withdrawal from the program; going on [leave of absence](#), [studying full-time off-campus](#)), and former students who wish to be readmitted to the program, are expected to complete paperwork within a timeframe that permits their change to be effective on the first day of the next term (September 1st, January 1st or May 1st). Paperwork should be submitted to SGS at least one month in advance of an expected transition. Please see the Graduate Administrative Assistant well in advance to ensure that all paperwork is completed in a timely manner.

## Engineering Co-op Program

The Engineering Co-Op Program for graduate students is an optional program for full-time domestic and international M.A.Sc., M.Eng., and Ph.D. students in good academic standing, that allows students to gain engineering work experience prior to graduation. Students have the option to complete 4 to 12 months of co-op experience. It is administered by the Career Development and Relationship Manager - Graduate Studies.

### **Centre for Career Growth and Experience Contact Information**

Gerald Hatch Experiential Centre, Room JHE H301, ext. 22571

Email: [gradcoop@mcmaster.ca](mailto:gradcoop@mcmaster.ca)

More information is available on the [Co-op for Graduate Students website](#).

## Student Responsibilities

Students who are interested in the Co-op Program must follow the following steps:

### 1. Enrol in the Co-Op Program

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCES (SEAS) STUDENTS:

- a. Complete the [Graduate Supervisor Permission Form](#). The student's academic supervisor must indicate on the form which academic term(s) the student is approved to work.
- b. Submit the signed graduate supervisor permission form to [gradcoop@mcmaster.ca](mailto:gradcoop@mcmaster.ca).
- c. Enrol in ENGINEER 701 – C01 Work Term Preparation (Lecture) course via Mosaic.
- d. Complete the ENGINEER 701 co-op registration process (link available [online](#)).
- e. Complete the ENGINEER 701 – C01 Work Term Preparation (Lecture) course.

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING PRACTICE AND TECHNOLOGY (SEPT) STUDENTS:

- a. Enrol in ENGINEER 701 – C01 Work Term Preparation (Lecture) course via Mosaic.
- b. Complete the ENGINEER 701 co-op registration process (link available [online](#)).
- c. Complete the ENGINEER 701 – C01 Work Term Preparation (Lecture) course.

### 2. Engage in Job Search

Students will engage in co-op job search 4-6 months in advance of the term that has been approved for work. Students can work a maximum of 12 months. If they do not secure a job during their approved work term(s), they may submit an amended permission form to access jobs posted for future work terms

### 3. Register Your Co-Op and Drop Courses

- a. [Register the co-op](#) by completing and submitting the co-op confirmation form, and if applicable, the RMM-801 form (for co-ops taking place outside Canada) to [thecentre@mcmaster.ca](mailto:thecentre@mcmaster.ca).
- b. Contact their Graduate Administrative Assistant (after receiving confirmation from the Centre that co-op is approved) to specify the course(s) they want to drop from their MOSAIC record while on work term.

# FINANCIAL MATTERS

## Quick Links

- [Payroll Information](#)
- [Payment Schedules](#)
- [Pay Statement Guide](#)
- [Tuition Fees](#)
- [Refunds](#)
- [Scholarships Database](#)
- [Graduate Students Association \(GSA\) Health and Dental Insurance Plan](#)
- [University Health Insurance Plan \(UHIP\) for International Students](#)
- [OSAP/Government Aid](#)
- [Social Insurance Number \(SIN\)](#)

## Cost of Living and Tuition Fees

Topics, such as cost of living and tuition fees, can be found on [The School of Graduate Studies' website under "Cost of Living"](#) or on [The Registrar's website under "Graduate Fees": Tuition and Supplementary Fees.](#)

## Grad Pay

Most full-time graduate students admitted to the thesis-based M.A.Sc. and Ph.D. programs in McMaster Engineering will receive financial support in the form of a teaching assistantship and a departmental scholarship. The minimum level of support varies from year to year.

Research scholarships and departmental scholarships are paid as one lump sum two or three weeks into the start of a new term; TA income is paid biweekly during the term(s) in which you are a TA.

**In order to receive research scholarships and TA income**, you will need to ensure that you are properly set up on the Student Centre module (under Graduate Studies' Banking webpage, click "If you are receiving a Research Scholarship, TA, and/or RA in Lieu of TA" to see instructions on how to [enrol in direct deposit](#))

In addition to the above, **to receive TA income**, ensure that you are properly set up on the Human Resources module (students must [submit their payroll information](#) via the online Employee Self-Service portal in Mosaic).

**If you do not see the Enrol in Direct Deposit (Student) tile on your Mosaic Homepage**, please log into University Technology Services' (UTS) [Client Services Portal](#) (again, using your MacID and password) and select:

1. "General Requests"; then
2. "Report a Problem".
3. Detail your issue in the blank field, then click "Create". Please monitor the portal for confirmation that the tile has been added to your Mosaic Homepage. Detail your issue in the blank field, then click "Create". Please monitor the portal for confirmation that the tile has been added to your Mosaic Homepage.

**\*IMPORTANT:** If you complete any of the previous steps improperly and/or are not fully enrolled in the Fall 2025, Winter 2026 and Spring/Summer 2026 terms by August 1, 2025, your payments will be delayed until a correction is made.

### Pregnancy/Parental Leaves

To address a gap in funding provided to MASc students during pregnancy and parental leave, the Faculty of Engineering invites eligible applicants to apply for support.

**Eligibility:** A parental leave fund of up to \$4,000 will be provided to eligible MASc students in the Faculty of Engineering who take an approved parental leave for one term or more, provided that:

1. The student is currently enrolled in a full-time MASc program in the Faculty of Engineering and is in receipt of McMaster Graduate Scholarship Funds;
2. The student has been enrolled in their current MASc program for a minimum of one term;
3. The applicant is in good standing at the time that this leave of absence is requested;
4. This leave of absence has been approved by the Department's Associate Chair (Graduate);
5. The student is ineligible for funding from either CUPE or NSERC/CIHR (whether that be directly through a graduate scholarship, or via a supervisor's grant);
6. The student has applied for funding from all other sources for which they are eligible;
7. The application below is completed and submitted to the Graduate Studies Administrator four weeks before the leave;
8. The student provides a medical note for their pregnancy or that of their partner from a licenced Canadian healthcare provider (i.e., the physician, midwife or nurse practitioner that is providing pregnancy care) or an adoption certificate issued from the Canadian government;
9. The student is the primary caregiver for the duration of the Parenting Leave

#### **Important:**

- This funding may be accessed by a student one time only

- Students receiving Tri-Agency scholarships are ineligible for this funding as they are eligible for Tri-Agency Paid Parenting Leave supplements
- Students who continue to receive research funding from their supervisor are ineligible for this funding
- Fund recipients who return to their program prior to the approved leave of absence end date may be required to return a portion of the funding
- Students who do not return to their studies after their leave must repay the amount received in full
- Multiple births on the same occasion (e.g., twins) do not increase funding duration or value
- If the student wishes to take a leave of less than one term, then the amount for which they are eligible is pro-rated to \$1,000/month
- The application should be initiated by the student, who will be responsible for obtaining the approval of their supervisor and Associate Chair (Graduate), before submitting it to the Graduate Studies Administrator at [salehl5@mcmaster.ca](mailto:salehl5@mcmaster.ca) for approval by the Associate Dean Graduate Studies

**Note:** PhD students should refer to the equivalent supports provided by the School of Graduate Studies [Parenting Grant](#).

### **Scholarships, Fellowships, Bursaries and Other Awards**

Graduate students are encouraged to apply for any scholarships for which they are eligible. A list of scholarships available can be found on the [Graduate Studies Scholarships page](#) and the [Engineering Funding & Awards page](#).

Keep an eye on your email; many of these opportunities will be advertised through that medium. Awards such as NSERC Canada Research Graduate Scholarships are announced in the Fall term, as well as most donor-funded awards. Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) applications are announced in the Winter term. Department-specific awards are often announced between the Winter and Spring terms.

If a graduate student holds a major award (such as NSERC, CGS-M, CGS-D, PGS-D, OGS, QEII GSST, Vanier, etc.), the total stipend provided by the program may be reduced by up to \$2,500 per term for each term in which the student holds the award. Any scholarship greater than \$10,000 is considered a major scholarship.

### **Teaching Assistantships**

#### **First Time Teaching Assistants (TA)**

All first time TAs at McMaster are required to complete five hours of paid mandatory TA training which will include instruction on topics in pedagogy and anti-oppression. This mandatory training is a one-time requirement separate from, and in addition to, other training that you may be expected to complete as part of your employment (which may include general orientations,



institution-wide mandatory health and safety training, and assignment-specific health and safety training required by your Employment Supervisor).

Self-registration for training courses is available through the Regulatory Training Tile on the [Mosaic](#) homepage. Once registered, carefully follow the directions under on the welcome page on [Avenue to Learn](#). More detailed instructions will be emailed to students before the beginning of each semester.

**Important notes:**

1. Training should be completed within two weeks of your assignment.
2. A short quiz follows each module on Avenue to Learn, and a score of 100% is required on each quiz. These quizzes can be taken repeatedly until the required score is reached. *These quizzes trigger the payment process - if the quizzes are not successfully completed (i.e. 100%), you risk not being paid for these five hours.*
3. This training is a one-time requirement for the first time that you TA at McMaster. You will not be paid for more than 5 hours of training, even if you TA for multiple faculties.

For more information, please refer to the links below:

1. [Mandatory TA/RA in Lieu Training \(Anti-Oppression and Pedagogy\)](#)
2. [MacPherson Institute New TA Programming](#)

**Returning Teaching Assistants**

If for any reason, a returning TA has not taken the five-hours of mandatory training (due to being away on a leave of absence or co-op placement), the TA will be required to complete this training and will be compensated accordingly.

**Resources and Useful Information for Teaching Assistants**

Before commencing your Teaching Assistantship duties, you must complete all TA training and complete the following forms in consultation with the course instructor and submit the completed forms to the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

1. [TA Hours of Work Form](#)
2. [TA Performance Expectations Form](#)

A useful guide is provided [here](#).

**Travel and Expense Claims**

If you require a reimbursement for travel or other expenses, you may submit Travel and Expense claims through the Mosaic system by logging in with your Mac ID. To get to the Travel and Expense module use the following path: *Mosaic Home > Employee Self Service > Travel and Expenses*

Please note that these claims will require a valid chartfield string and approval from your supervisor.

## University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP)

UHIP is a mandatory, comprehensive health insurance plan that provides health coverage for international and incoming exchange students. UHIP covers medically necessary doctors and hospital visits within Ontario for international students, incoming exchange students and dependants (spouse and children).

For more information, click [here](#).

### **Coverage**

Through UHIP, your necessary medical costs are covered for the entire academic year, from September 1 to August 31 with a few exceptions for incoming exchange students and other students with plans to study at McMaster for fewer than 12 months.

Your UHIP coverage begins on the tenth day of the month before your academic term start date or your scheduled arrival date in Canada, whichever is later. If you plan to arrive in Canada before your UHIP coverage begins, the department recommends that you purchase additional medical insurance. This way, you'll be covered if you need to access health care before your UHIP coverage starts.

### **Enrolment of UHIP**

If you're an international student, you're automatically enrolled in UHIP every year. However, it's your responsibility to ensure your coverage is correct. Check your account on your *Mosaic Student Center > Finances > Other Financial > View/Maintain UHIP*.

### **UHIP Card**

In late August/early September, your UHIP provider, Sun Life Financial, will send an email to your McMaster email account with your UHIP card attached. To make sure you receive your UHIP card, please make sure you've activated your McMaster email account.

When you receive your UHIP card, print a copy, and always carry it with you. This way, you'll have it easily accessible in case you need to seek medical care.

If you have dependents living in Ontario with you, please contact the university's international student services (ISS) at [uhip@mcmaster.ca](mailto:uhip@mcmaster.ca) for further information on how to register your dependents for UHIP. **Dependents must enrol in UHIP within 30 days of arrival in Canada.** More information is available on the [university's international student services \(ISS\) website](#).

# STUDENT LIFE

## Quick Links

- [Information for Incoming Graduate Students](#)
- [Housing and Student Life](#)
- [Graduate Student Orientation Hub](#)
- [Advice From Current Graduate Students](#)
- [Athletics and Recreation](#)

## McMaster Engineering Graduate Society (EGS)

The EGS is a student run organization dedicated to supporting engineering graduate students in any way possible, including hosting fun events, running professional development workshops, and providing travel bursaries. The EGS has three major mandates:

- To represent the interests of Engineering Graduate Students to the Faculty and other organizations, making sure your voice is heard.
- To help create an open and welcoming community of Engineering Graduate Students
- To advance Academic and Professional Development at McMaster Engineering.

More information is available on the [Engineering Graduate Society website](#).

## Graduate Students Association (GSA)

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) advocates for the needs of the collective, acts as a resource, and provides support and services that improve the graduate student experience. Some of the service available include Health and Dental, HSR Bus Pass, and Empower Me. The GSA also hosts a number of events, clubs and recreational activities throughout the year. Visit the [Graduate Student Association page](#) for more details.

## **Studentcare Health Plan/Dental Plan**

Initiated by your student association, the Studentcare Health Plan provides students with unique health benefits. The Plan was designed by students for students to provide many important services and cover expenses not covered by a basic health-care plan (i.e. OHIP), or the equivalent (e.g. UHIP for international students) such as prescription drugs, health practitioners, medical equipment, travel health coverage, and more. A comprehensive dental plan was added to cover those graduate students who were not covered by the CUPE 3906 plan (except for Divinity students).

Please note all GSA members are automatically enrolled in the Studentcare dental plan and are assessed the fees as part of their supplementary fees paid in September. Students who have a TA, or an RA in lieu, will be covered by the CUPE 3906 dental plan and are automatically opted out of the Studentcare dental plan and will receive a reimbursement cheque.

Graduate students who are covered by an alternative health and/or dental plan can upload proof of coverage using the [Studentcare's secure website](#).

Please remember that you need to pay the Studentcare plan fees on your student account. As mentioned above, once you are opted out, you will receive your reimbursement cheque directly from Studentcare. More information, including opt out dates, is available on the [Graduate Student Association website](#).

## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### Quick Links

- [Campus Map](#)
- [Accessibility Floor Plans](#)
- [Parking and Transit Services](#)
- [OMBUDS Office](#)
- [Supervisory Relationships](#)

### Letter/Verification Requests

Please refer to the list below for instructions on requesting various letters and verifications:

- [Degree verification](#)
- [Enrolment verification](#)
- [Proof of graduation](#)
- [Study permit /Extension of study permit](#)
- [Transcript request](#)

### MacQuest

MacQuest provides on-campus searchable navigation, including indoor floor map visualization and other campus-related services. Users can use the app to navigate from class to class; it also lists last, next, and following bus arrival times near campus by bus stop and route number. It also allows users to look for nearby bathrooms, stairs and elevators.

The app is available for free download on the Apple and Android app store. For more information, click [here](#).

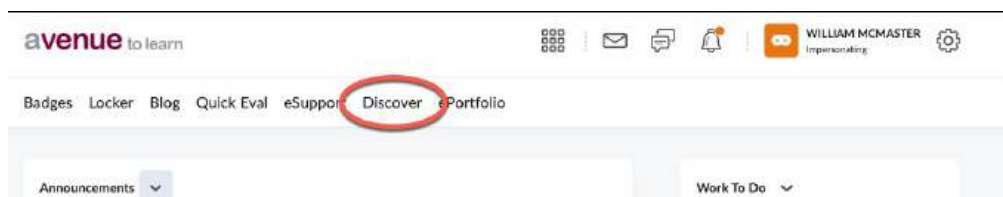
### Professional Development

#### **Build Professional and Technical Skills**

Discover the Technical Communications for Graduate Students module on Avenue2Learn: The Art and Science of Persuasion, Audience Analysis, Writing for Publications, Proposing and Reporting a Project, Presentations and Visualizing Data, How to Give an Oral Presentation. All essential skills for success in today's competitive market.

After logging in, click on the 'Discover' link, and search for 'Technical Communications for Graduate Students' to find the course.





### **Thesis Writing and English Language Skills Development**

If you are having difficulty with the English language and thesis writing, there are several on campus resources available to help you. The following are particularly useful:

McMaster Office for the Development of English Language Learners (MODEL). This is a FREE service designed to help students with the English Language. They offer training, workshops and support to meet student needs of all academic backgrounds and English language proficiency. You can get more information at [MODEL | MELD Office](#).

The School of Graduate Studies also offers help with Thesis writing. Often, the Thesis writing can be the stumbling block for students to graduate on-time. Using their resources at the start of one's graduate study can significantly help with the writing process. Please check out their resources at [Graduate Writing – School of Graduate Studies](#).

The [Student Success Centre](#) also has resources to support student development and careers.

# FACULTY OF ENGINEERING REQUIREMENTS

## All Degrees

In order to receive a degree, students must fulfill all departmental or program requirements and all University regulations, including those of the School of Graduate Studies. Students who have outstanding financial accounts at the end of the academic year will not receive their academic results, diplomas, or transcripts.

## **Upon Arrival**

Please refer to the arrival plan communicated by your Graduate Administrative Assistant prior to your arrival. Arrival processes will differ depending on term start. For helpful information on your journey to McMaster as an incoming student, please visit [McMaster Engineering Incoming Student Page](#). For information on your McMaster ID card, please visit [MacCard](#).

## **Condition Clearing**

Conditions must be cleared by the date indicated on your offer letter. This does not restrict your current enrolment. However, failure to clear conditions by the deadline may result in your offer being rescinded. Please follow the instructions as indicated by the Graduate Administrative Assistant and the School of Graduate Studies regarding condition clearing. More information can be found on the [Conditions of Admissions page](#).

## **Student Authorizations (International Students Only)**

International students admitted to graduate studies degree programs must have a valid study permit issued by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), provided that their program of study is longer than six months. A copy of the study permit must be submitted to their department upon arrival at the university. Incoming graduate students should email their Graduate Administrative Assistant a copy of their Port of Entry (POE) letter or Letter of Introduction (LOI) as soon as possible. Students will not be allowed to enrol without it.

Student permit extensions take some time to process, so please plan accordingly. Last-minute requests do not constitute urgency. Canadian Social Insurance Numbers (SIN), study permits and passports have expiry dates. The responsibility for maintaining up-to-date documentation lies with you – the graduate student.

**Note:** Department staff cannot provide information about Visa or immigration. Students should contact the Immigration and Mobility Advisor via the [university's international student services \(ISS\) website](#).

## **SGS 101 and SGS 201**

Graduate students are required to complete the following two (2) online courses:

- SGS 101 – Academic Research Integrity and Ethics
- SGS 201 – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act – AODA Training

[These online courses in Mosaic](#) are mandatory at the start of a student's program only. All students must pass and abide by these online SGS courses. Anyone who has not completed either of the following courses by the deadline provided by SGS will be automatically assigned an F grade. Each course takes approximately one hour to complete and consists of watching an online presentation followed by a test.

Check your Mosaic Student Centre to ensure that you are registered in these courses. If they do not appear in your course schedule or in Avenue to Learn, please contact the School of Graduate Studies at [sgsrec@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sgsrec@mcmaster.ca).

### **SGS 700 / SGS 711**

Graduate students are required to enrol in the [placeholder course, SGS 700 or SGS 711](#), if they are not taking another course in that term (SGS 700 for programs charged per term; SGS 711 for programs charged per course). If you do not add a course in each term, you may have impacts on aspects of your student life, including scholarships, fee assessment and ordering transcripts.

### **Career Planning Reports**

Incoming graduate students to the Faculty of Engineering are required to complete a [career planning report](#) **within their first year of study**. Students must first book a career planning session with the faculty's career development specialist before submitting a career planning report. The report should not exceed 2 pages and must be submitted to their Graduate Administrative Assistant to be evaluated by the Associate Chair (Graduate).

*Note:* Industrial PhD students and students registered in the School of Engineering Practice and Technology are exempt from this requirement.

### **Additional Information**

#### *Academic Advisement Reports*

Mosaic offers graduate students the Academic Advisement report tool as a method of tracking your progress towards graduation via completion of your curriculum requirements. A guide on how to use it can be found [here](#).

#### *Failing a Course or Milestone*

The minimum passing grade in a graduate course is a B- (70-72%). Failure in either a course or a milestone is reviewed by the appropriate Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study or the Associate Dean Graduate Studies in the Faculty, and may result in withdrawal from the program. Those allowed to remain in the program must either repeat or replace the failed course or milestone, per the decision of the Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study. Further details can be found in [Section 2.6.11 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

#### *Regulations for Degree Progression*

It is the student's responsibility to follow the academic calendar's degree progression in order to successfully obtain their degree. Further details can be found in [Section 3 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

## **Master of Applied Science (M.A.Sc.)**

Supervision of M.A.Sc. students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

### **M.A.Sc. Supervisory Committee Meeting**

The supervisor shall meet with the student between 9 months to 12 months of commencement of the program for a formal review of progress. The student will complete the M.A.Sc. supervisory committee report form and submit to the supervisor at least one week in advance of the meeting. The supervisor will complete the form and submit it to the Department Graduate Administrative Assistant at the end of the progress review meeting.

#### *Student Responsibility*

1. Set up the meeting with supervisor within 12 months of starting.
2. Complete the student sections of the M.A.Sc. supervisory committee report form. (Details of progress towards meeting degree requirements since beginning of program).
3. Submit the form with a critical literature review of your research area to your supervisor at least one week before the meeting.

#### *Supervisor Responsibility*

1. Complete Part A: Progress made towards meeting degree requirements.
2. Complete Part B: Specific goals for next number of months.
3. Complete Part C: Areas for improvement.
4. Provide an overall assessment.
5. Review the form with student, sign and submit to the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

### **M.A.Sc. Thesis Defence**

#### *Examination Committee*

Each M.A.Sc. student must successfully defend their thesis in an oral examination before a committee proposed by the supervisor and approved by the Department Chair or their delegate. A member of the committee, other than the supervisor, will be appointed to chair the committee. The committee shall be composed of 3 (three) members, including the supervisor. In the case of co-supervision, the committee will consist of 4 (four) members including the supervisors.

#### *Plagiarism Check*

Thesis candidates are required to use plagiarism-checking software, iThenticate, before submitting. Students must speak with their supervisor for directions on how to submit their thesis through the plagiarism-checking software. The supervisor must sign off on the originality report of the student's thesis after they scan their theses for originality using iThenticate.

#### *Procedure*

The thesis defence starts with the candidate's presentation of the main elements of the thesis, including the relevance of their work, approach, samples of the most important findings, and

contributions. The presentation should not exceed 20 minutes. This is followed by one round of questions and another round of follow-up questions, as appropriate. The duration of the Master's defence (including the candidate's presentation) is expected to vary from 1¼ to 1¾ hours, but it normally should not exceed 2 hrs. If the examining committee is not satisfied with the candidate's performance in the thesis defence, the candidate must retake the defence after completing any thesis revisions which may be recommended by the examining committee. The student must be informed in writing of the conditions they must meet to be able to succeed in the second and final defence.

Regulations/guidelines for thesis writing, submittal and defence can be found [here](#).

Please refer to the department section of the handbook for program specific details of procedure and timelines.

### **Transferring from M.A.Sc. to Ph.D. Without Completing M.A.Sc. Degree**

Students currently enrolled in the M.A.Sc. program may be transferred to the Ph.D. program before they complete their M.A.Sc. degree requirements. Regulations governing this scenario can be found in [Section 2.1.4 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

M.A.Sc. students transferring to Ph.D. will need to have:

1. completed a minimum of TWO terms of study in the M.A.Sc. program;
2. completed a minimum of TWO half courses at the 700 level with a minimum average of A- (McMaster 10/12);
3. completed their M.A.Sc. supervisory meeting and received a rating of EXCELLENT on their report;
4. garnered a strong letter of support from their supervisor.

If a student would like to transfer to Ph.D., their supervisor will have to inform the Graduate Administrative Assistant via email with their letter of support attached.

### **Transferring from M.A.Sc. to Ph.D. While Completing M.A.Sc. Degree**

If a student is granted permission to enter the Ph.D. program while concurrently completing the M.A.Sc. program, the School of Graduate Studies requires the student to complete all requirements for the M.A.Sc. program (including defence and submission of thesis for binding) within four (4) months of the date of entry into the Ph.D. program. Students who do not complete the requirements for the Master's degree within the four months will lose their status as a Ph.D. student and be returned to Master's status.

### **Accelerated M.A.Sc. Option**

Refer to the department section of the handbook for details if an accelerated M.A.Sc. option is available.



## Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Supervision of Ph.D. students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

### **Ph.D. Supervisory Committee**

As soon as possible, and no later than nine (9) months after commencing doctoral studies, a supervisory committee for the student shall be approved by the Department Chair or their delegate, on the recommendation of the supervisor and in consultation with the student.

The supervisory committee will consist of at least three members. Two, including the supervisor, must be from within the department/program. A third member, whose scholarly interests include the area of the student's main interest, may be from outside the department/program. One member may be appointed from outside the University with the permission of the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies.

### **Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting**

The Ph.D. student's supervisory committee shall meet with the student a minimum of once a year **and submit their report** before November 30th. **Committee meetings should be planned and scheduled with this deadline in mind.** Additional and/or subsequent meetings shall be held to monitor progress towards the comprehensive exam as well as the completion of the thesis, as needed.

### *Supervisory Committee Report Deadlines*

The deadline for completion of the supervisory committee report for students who have been in the program for one semester or more is November 30, 2025 or within ONE year of starting the PhD program, whichever comes **FIRST**.

Student start date of January or May 2025: Deadline is November 30, 2025

Student start date of September 2025: Deadline is November 30, 2026

Student start date of January or May 2026: Deadline is November 30, 2026

### **Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting Procedures**

Students must talk to the Graduate Administrative Assistant to initiate the report. Students will receive this message via email:

---

*Dear Student Name,*

*All PhD students must meet at least once a year with their supervisor and committee. Our records indicate that you should have a meeting this year. Please work with your supervisor, and/or graduate office to arrange a meeting date and time. Once a date has been fixed, please click on the link below to initiate the report to be submitted by you to your committee and supervisor, prior to the meeting.*

**[\[Link to student's report\]](#)**

---

Follow the instructions at the link in the email to complete your Annual Supervisory Committee Report. (Images from the online report appear on the next page.)

Please refer to the department section of the handbook for program specific details of procedure and timelines.



### **Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting Online Report**

The link will bring the student to the following screen.

**Supervisory Committee Report**

Please make sure all the information listed below is correct. If you find anything incorrect, please contact your department graduate secretary PRIOR to the submission of your supervisory committee report.

Family Name	First Name	Title	Email
Markle-reid	Maureen Frances	Supervisor	mreid@mcmaster.ca
Akhtar-daneshi	Noori	Member	daneshi@mcmaster.ca
McKey	Coleen	Member	mckey@mcmaster.ca

If the committee is correct, select Continue.

If the committee is incorrect, close the page and contact the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

### *Student Begins Report*

Once the student confirms their committee, they'll be shown a screen where they will begin to enter information about their new meeting.

They'll also be asked to report on their progress since their last report (or since they started their research if this is the first report).

The student will click Submit, and the primary supervisor will receive an email.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Supervisory Committee Report". At the top, it says "Select a Date to view report or New Meeting to start a new report" with a "New Meeting" button. Below this, there are two date input fields: "Please enter the meeting date:" with a date of "2017-06-19" and "The date you began this degree studies at McMaster" with a date of "2015-09-01". Both date fields have "(YYYY-MM-DD)" as a placeholder. Next is a section for scholarships: "Please indicate if you are a scholarship holder" with a "Select Scholarship" dropdown and an "Other" text input field. A note follows: "With some qualifications, the Calendar (Section 2.7.2) states that supervisors should respond to a draft of the PhD thesis within two months. Providing comments on individual chapters will take place proportionately less time." Then, a question "Have you submitted draft research this year?" is followed by radio buttons for "Yes" and "No", with "No" being selected. Below this is a large text area labeled "Details of progress made since the last report:". At the bottom right of the form is a "Submit" button.

### *Supervisor Adds to Report*

After the student clicks Submit, the primary supervisor will receive an email inviting them to see what their student submitted.

The supervisor will complete their portion of the report and select the members who will be signing off on the report. An email with a link will be sent to each selected member of the committee.

**Supervisory Committee Report**

Meeting Date: 2017-06-19 [View Student Report](#)

The School of Graduate Studies Calendar states that the Comprehensive Examination for full-time students will normally have taken place between 12 and 20 months from commencement for studies with an upper limit of 24 months.

Is Comprehensive Examination complete? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Please justify an expected date of completion that exceeds 20 months in the program in the comments section.

The Comprehensive Examination is expected to be completed by: 2020-01-02 YYYY-MM-DD

Progress made in accomplishing goals set out in last report (or toward meeting degree requirements since student began program, if this is the first report):

Notes:

Special goals for the next interval of 6 months:

Anticipated date for the completion of degree requirements: 2021-01-02 YYYY-MM-DD

Comments:

Please specify members who will rate student report by checking the checkbox beside each member below:

Member	First Name	Last Name	Grade	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1	Supervisor	Marie-ross	Marie-ross
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	Member	Amber-danesh	Amber-danesh
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3	Member	Wiley	Wiley

[Submit](#)

### Committee Rates the Report

When the supervisor clicks the Submit button, each selected committee members will receive an email with a link inviting them to review the report.

The committee member can view the student's report and must click the tick box acknowledging they've read it.

The committee member will also rate the report from the drop down. The default is Excellent.

The system now sends the report back to the student to view.

**Supervisory Committee Report**

Meeting Date: 2017-06-21 Member Name: Marie-ross, Laureen Frances [View Student Report](#)

☒ By checking this box the committee member acknowledges having read the student's report

Rating:

Comments:

[Submit](#)

The information below is for your review only:

**Supervisor Report**

The Comprehensive Examination requirement was completed on: YYYY-MM-DD Grade:

Please justify an expected date of completion that exceeds 20 months in the program in the comments section.

The Comprehensive Examination is expected to be completed by: 2020-01-02 YYYY-MM-DD

Progress made in accomplishing goals set out in last report (or toward meeting degree requirements since student began program, if this is the first report):

Special goals for the next interval of 6 months:

### Student Reviews the Report

The student receives a final email to view their supervisor's report, committee rating and if they are satisfied with the supervision.

When they select Submit, the report will be sent to the Department Chair/Associate Chair (Graduate) for approval.

**Supervisory Committee Report**

Meeting Date:

☒ By checking this box you acknowledge having read the completed report.

Is the supervisor satisfied? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

The information below is for your review only

**Supervisor Report**

The Comprehensive Examination requirement was completed on:  Grade:

Please justify an expected date of completion that exceeds 20 months in the program in the comments section.

The Comprehensive Examination is expected to be completed by:  YYYY-MM-DD

Progress made in accomplishing goals set out in last report or toward meeting degree requirements since student began program, if this is the first report:

### *Department Chair Approval*

An email is sent to the Department Chair/Associate Chair (Graduate). They can see the report and choose to approve it.

The default is Yes.

Clicking Submit will complete the report.

### **Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam**

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to test the breadth of knowledge and maturity of approach over a range of topics that are both within and peripheral to the student's discipline. The student's level of achievement in this examination will determine possible academic background deficiencies that the candidate may have. Successful completion of the comprehensive examination is a necessary requirement for the candidate to continue in the program.

Comprehensive Exams are private examinations, open only to the student and their comprehensive examination committee.

The student is expected to complete all requirements of the comprehensive examination **within 12 to 20 months of first registration in the Ph.D. program, with an upper limit of 24 months**. Part-time students must take the comprehensive examination by the end of their 36<sup>th</sup> month. Students who transferred from M.A.Sc. to Ph.D. without completion of M.A.Sc. are expected to complete their comprehensive exam 2 years from initial start date of their M.A.Sc. Special exceptions require the approval of the Department Chair or designate and the Graduate School. Normally, course requirements will be completed before the Comprehensive Exam, but this is not a requirement. Likewise, preliminary research results are not required, but the student is expected to present and defend a viable research proposal including anticipated new contributions to the existing scientific literature.

Please refer to the department section of the handbook for program specific details of procedure and timelines.



### *Examination Result*

- The candidate's achievement in each of the parts shall be judged as: Pass or Fail.
- **The candidate must pass all parts to successfully complete the comprehensive exam.**
- The committee chair shall communicate the result of the examination to the Graduate Administrative Assistant.
- Should the candidate fail any part, they may request a re-examination. **The re-examination will follow the same format, and must be completed between one to six months after the student was notified that they had failed the original assessment.** The candidate will be allowed only one re-examination of each part.
- Once the candidate completes all parts of the examination, the Graduate Administrative Assistant will submit the official result to SGS so that the student's academic record will be updated.

### **Ph.D. Thesis Defence**

#### *Plagiarism Check*

Thesis candidates are required to use plagiarism-checking software, iThenticate, before submitting. Students must speak with their supervisor for directions on how to submit their thesis through the plagiarism-checking software.

The supervisor must sign off on the originality report of the student's thesis after they scan their theses for originality using iThenticate.

#### *Procedure*

The thesis defence starts with the candidate's presentation of the main elements of the thesis, including the relevance of their work, approach, samples of the most important findings, and contributions. The presentation should not exceed 20 minutes. This is followed by one round of questions and another round of follow-up questions, as appropriate. The duration of the PhD defence (including the candidate's presentation) will not normally exceed three hours. If the examining committee is not satisfied with the candidate's performance in the thesis defence, the candidate must retake the defence after completing any thesis revisions which may be recommended by the examining committee. The student must be informed in writing of the conditions they must meet to be able to succeed in the second and final defence.

Regulations/guidelines for thesis writing, submittal and defence can be found [here](#).

Review the following:

- [Ph.D. Defence Flowchart](#)
- SGS Final Submission – Final Thesis Checklist ([PhD \(Doctoral\) > Step 3. Submit](#))

Please refer to the department section of the handbook for program specific details of procedure and timelines.



The background image shows a stone building with a large section covered in ivy. A stone wall with a decorative archway is in the foreground. A large, semi-transparent maroon arch is overlaid on the image. The text "DEPARTMENT SPECIFIC INFORMATION" is centered in white, bold, serif font.

# DEPARTMENT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

## DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

### Dr. Gregory Wohl (Department Chair)

- Email: [wohlg@mcmaster.ca](mailto:wohlg@mcmaster.ca)
- Point of contact for any issues that cannot be resolved by the Associate Chair (Graduate).

### Dr. Andrew Gadsden (Associate Chair, Graduate Studies)

- Email: [gadsden@mcmaster.ca](mailto:gadsden@mcmaster.ca)
- First point of contact for all graduate program academic matters.

### Mrs. Michelle McKnight (Academic Department Manager)

- Email: [mcknim@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mcknim@mcmaster.ca)
- First point of contact for all financial matters.

### Mrs. Diane Siv-Parr (Graduate Administrative Assistant)

- Email: [mechgrad@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mechgrad@mcmaster.ca)
- First point of contact for all graduate program administrative matters.

### Mr. John Colenbrander (Facilities Manager)

- Email: [colenbjw@mcmaster.ca](mailto:colenbjw@mcmaster.ca)
- First point of contact for laboratory or workshop matters.

### Mr. Nicholas Grzelak & Ms. Wenlin Zhang (Mech Eng Graduate Society Co-Presidents)

- Email: [megs@mcmaster.ca](mailto:megs@mcmaster.ca), [grzelakn@mcmaster.ca](mailto:grzelakn@mcmaster.ca), [zhanw9@mcmaster.ca](mailto:zhanw9@mcmaster.ca)
- Point of contact for graduate student networking events and department liaison.



## GETTING STARTED: KEY DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

### Building Access and Keys

Graduate students will have card access to JHE Hatch external entrance & 3rd Floor SE Hall & Stairs. If students would like access to JHE-311 (grad room okay for meetings) & JHE-313 (quiet study grad room), they will need to complete a Waiver-Key Request Form. Please contact the Graduate Administrative Assistant for this form.

### **Key Requests**

All key requests (other than for JHE-311 & JHE-313) should come directly from the Supervisor. Instructions & information required can be found on the Resources page of our website, under “Internal” > “Key & access card requests”.

### Departmental Photocopying

Students can request a Photocopy ID. Instructions & information required can be found on the Resources page of our website, under “Internal” > “Photocopy ID request”.

### Departmental Specific Lab Safety

Each lab area has its own set of safety rules that you need to adhere strictly to. Please familiarize yourself with these rules and discuss lab safety with your supervisor prior to engaging in lab activities. Do not eat or drink or share food in the laboratory areas. Smoking (including vaping and cannabis) is not allowed anywhere on Campus.

For more Lab Safety information, refer to “McMaster University Laboratory Manual”, “Reporting of a Safety Incident”, “Eye Safety Regulations”, and “Waste Chemical Disposal” under [General Information > Health and Safety](#).

## ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

As per [Section 1.3 of the Graduate Calendar](#), full-time students are obliged to be on campus, except for vacation periods or authorized off-campus status, for all three terms of the university year. Students must be geographically available and visit the campus regularly which normally means multiple times per week; written permission from the department/supervisor is required for studies to be off campus. In all such cases, Full Time Off Campus status must be formally submitted to SGS.

# MASTER OF APPLIED SCIENCE (M.A.Sc.)

## Program Requirements

The minimum course requirement is four half-courses (50% of which must have the MECHENG course code); three of the four courses must be at the 700 level. A half-course is classified as 3 units. Courses delivered by departments in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (listed [here](#)) do not require a petition to count toward degree requirements; however, they cannot replace a MECHENG course.

Students are required to present a thesis that embodies the results of original work that the candidate has completed and demonstrates competence in Mechanical Engineering. Only the standard format thesis, as described in the document [“Guide for the Preparation of Master’s and Doctoral Theses”](#), will be accepted for examination. An oral defence of the thesis is required.

## **Degree Requirement Checklist**

Incoming graduate students will be given a [Degree Requirement Checklist](#) at the beginning of their academic career. The completion of this checklist is mandatory and should be completed throughout the duration of your studies.

### *Student Responsibility*

1. Keep the checklist up-to-date as you complete your studies.
2. Bring the checklist with you to your [Supervisory Committee Meeting](#) to discuss your progress.

### *Supervisor Responsibility*

1. Discuss the checklist with the student at the Supervisory Committee Meeting to ensure the student is on track.
2. Once all academic requirements are fulfilled, sign the checklist. **The completed signed checklist must be submitted to the graduate administrator before initiating the defence.**

## Additional Requirements

- ME 758 “Graduate Seminars in Mechanical Engineering.”: Mandatory annual registration in Mosaic for Term 1 and Term 2 of every academic session. Please visit [Avenue to Learn](#) for more details. MASc students are required to make one 7-minute presentation with a 3-minute Q&A period.
- SGS 101, SGS 201, Career Planning Report (details can be found in the [Faculty Of Engineering Requirements](#) section of the handbook)



## Supervision

Supervision of M.A.Sc. students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

### **Supervisory Committee Meeting**

Refer to “M.A.Sc. Supervisory Committee Meeting” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Master of Applied Science \(M.A.Sc.\)](#)

## M.A.Sc. Thesis Defence

Refer to “M.A.Sc. Thesis Defence” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Master of Applied Science \(M.A.Sc.\)](#)

### **M.A.Sc. Defence Procedures/Timelines**

Before Defence Initiation	<p><b>Supervisor:</b></p> <p>Sign off on the DEGREE REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST.</p> <p>Set up the examination committee by selecting two additional faculty members (internal or external) who are adequately familiar with the thesis research area.</p> <p><b>Student:</b></p> <p>Return the following completed forms to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <p>i. DEGREE REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST</p> <p>Follow the instructions in the <i>Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses</i> found on the SGS website under Current Students &gt; Completing your degree &gt; Masters – Thesis &gt; Quick Links</p> <p><b>Graduate Administrator:</b></p> <p>Confirm all information provided in the Degree Requirement Checklist is accurate and the student is clear to defend.</p>
At least 2 weeks before the proposed defence date	<p><b>Supervisor:</b></p> <p>Inform Graduate Program Administrator of upcoming defence by submitting APPROVAL OF M.A.Sc. DEFENCE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE FORM for approval. The form can be found on the Resources page of our website, under “Graduate” &gt; “MASc info and forms”.</p>

	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Have examination committee approved by the Department Graduate Associate Chair.</p>
After approval of the examination committee	<p><i>Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Check room availability and email committee confirming defence, including date, time and room location.</p> <p>Sign off on the originality report of the student's thesis after they scan their theses for originality using iThenticate (plagiarism-checking software). A guide on how to use iThenticate is available in the Resources section of our website, under "Internal".</p> <p><i>Student:</i></p> <p>Thesis candidates are required to use plagiarism-checking software, iThenticate, before submitting. Students must speak with their supervisor for directions on how to submit their thesis through the plagiarism-checking software. Distribute the thesis to the examining committee, normally at 14 days, but no later than 10 days, before the defence date. Submissions later than 10 days before the defence date shall require consent of all members of the defence committee.</p>
After approval of the examination committee, at least one day prior to the defence	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Provide the following forms to the Examination Committee Chair:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. REPORT OF EXAMINING COMMITTEE ON MASTER'S THESIS EXAMINATION</li> <li>ii. NSERC APPENDIX D (FORM 100)</li> <li>iii. MASTER'S THESIS – FINAL SUBMISSION SHEET</li> <li>iv. MCMASTER UNIVERSITY LICENCE</li> </ul>
One week prior to defence	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Email defence announcement to Faculty, Graduate Students, and Postdoctoral Fellows.</p>

After Defence	<p><i>Chair of Examining Committee:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed forms to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. REPORT OF EXAMINING COMMITTEE ON MASTER'S THESIS EXAMINATION</li> </ul> <p>Return the following completed forms to the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. MCMASTER UNIVERSITY LICENCE</li> </ul> <p><i>Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed forms to the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. MASTER'S THESIS – FINAL SUBMISSION SHEET</li> <li>ii. NSERC APPENDIX D (FORM 100)</li> </ul> <p><i>Student:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed forms to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. MASTER'S THESIS – FINAL SUBMISSION SHEET</li> <li>ii. MCMASTER UNIVERSITY LICENCE</li> <li>iii. NSERC APPENDIX D (FORM 100)</li> </ul> <p>Review the SGS Final Submission – Final Thesis Checklist (<a href="#">Masters – Thesis &gt; Step 3. Submit</a>)</p> <p>Submit your electronic thesis to MacSphere. Please follow the link and click on 'Sign on to my MacSphere' to deposit your thesis.</p>
Once signed paperwork has been received	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Submit Clear to Graduate paperwork to SGS for processing.</p> <p>Send student notification to complete DEPARTMENT EXIT CHECKLIST.</p> <p><i>Student:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed forms to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. DEPARTMENT EXIT CHECKLIST</li> </ul>

### Accelerated M.A.Sc. Option

An Accelerated Option is also available to students currently enrolled at McMaster as undergraduate students in the Mechanical Engineering Department whereby the M.A.Sc. degree may be completed in 16-20 months of fulltime study. In exceptional circumstances, students from other Engineering departments in McMaster may apply for entry into the accelerated option by contacting the Mechanical Engineering Department's Associate Chair (Graduate). Application for entry into the Accelerated Option through the Associate Chair (Graduate) occurs in the penultimate year of undergraduate studies. Applicants must have maintained a minimum CGPA of 9.5 for their undergraduate course work with a sessional average of 9.5 at the time they are applying for the option. The Accelerated Option requires students to complete at least one term of their research project with a supervisor from the department prior to completion of their undergraduate degree. A one-term 600-level course is required under the Accelerated Option in the final undergraduate year for graduate credit provided it is listed within the department. For students enrolled in the Accelerated Option, research conducted in MECHENG 4X04 may count towards the Accelerated Option and therefore towards partial fulfillment of the graduate M.A.Sc. thesis work. Entry into the M.A.Sc. program under the Accelerated Option must occur less than one year after completing one's undergraduate degree and must meet the same requirements for admission as other candidates. For more information, please visit [this link](#) (scroll down to "Accelerated M.A.Sc. Option").

# DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.)

## Program Requirements

**Program start date between September 1, 2015 and September 1, 2019:** The minimum course requirements for this degree are two half-courses at the 700 level beyond the Master's degree, **OR** six half-courses, at least five of which should be at the 700 level, beyond the Bachelor's degree. A half-course is classified as 3 units. Half of your courses are required to have "MECHENG" in the course code. Only courses delivered by departments in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (listed [here](#)) do not require a petition to count toward course requirements; however, they cannot replace a MECHENG course.

**Program Start Date of September 1, 2019 or later:** The minimum course requirements for this degree are two half-courses at the 700 level beyond the Master's degree, **OR** four half-courses, at the 700 level, beyond the Bachelor's degree. A half-course is classified as 3 units. Half of your courses are required to have "MECHENG" in the course code. Only courses delivered by departments in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (listed [here](#)) do not require a petition to count toward course requirements; however, they cannot replace a MECHENG course.

Ph.D. students are required to pass a comprehensive examination designed to test their breadth of knowledge and ability to integrate ideas.

Students are required to present a thesis that embodies the results of original work that the candidate has completed and demonstrates competence in Mechanical Engineering. Only the standard format thesis, as described in the document ["Completing Your Thesis - Ph.D."](#) (available from the School of Graduate Studies website), will be accepted for examination. An oral defence of the thesis is required.

## **Degree Requirement Checklist**

Incoming graduate students will be given a [Degree Requirement Checklist](#) at the beginning of their academic career. The completion of this checklist is mandatory and should be completed throughout the duration of your studies.

## *Student Responsibility*

1. Keep the checklist up-to-date as you complete your studies.
2. Bring the checklist with you to your [Supervisory Committee Meetings](#) to discuss your progress.

## *Supervisor Responsibility*

1. Discuss the checklist with the student at the Supervisory Committee Meeting to ensure the student is on track.
2. Once all academic requirements are fulfilled, sign the checklist. **The completed signed checklist must be submitted to the graduate administrator before initiating the defence.**

## Additional Requirements

- ME 758 “Graduate Seminars in Mechanical Engineering.”: Mandatory annual registration in Mosaic for Term 1 and Term 2 of every academic session. Please visit [Avenue to Learn](#) for more details. PhD students are required to make one 7-minute presentation with a 3-minute Q&A period in their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year.
- SGS 101, SGS 201, Career Planning Report (details can be found in the [Faculty Of Engineering Requirements](#) section of the handbook)

## Supervision

Supervision of Ph.D. students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#).

### **Supervisory Committee Meeting**

Refer to “Ph.D. Supervisory Committee Meeting” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#).

## Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

Refer to “Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#).

### *Structure of Examination Committee*

The comprehensive examination committee shall consist of:

1. Committee chair;
2. Student’s supervisor;
3. At least one (1) member of the supervisory committee (apart from the student’s supervisor);
4. An additional member who has scholarly interest in the student’s area of specialization; and
5. An external committee member (cannot be supervisor or committee chair).

### **Program Start Date Prior to September 01, 2022**

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to recommend and notify the graduate administrator that a candidate will take the examination **at least two months in advance**. In consultation with the supervisory committee, the supervisor nominates a comprehensive examination committee and submits the nomination for approval by the Department chair or their designate. This is done by submitting two forms: APPROVAL OF PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE FORM and PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION – EXAMINATION COMMITTEE FORM. These forms can be found on the Resources page of our website, under “Graduate” > “PhD info and forms”. Once the committee is approved, it is the **responsibility of the examination committee chair** to initiate and oversee all administrative arrangements of the examination, including the exact dates of the written and oral parts of the exam.



### *Format of the Examination*

The comprehensive examination will consist of **two parts**, which are outlined below.

#### *Part A: Breadth and Depth of Knowledge*

The objective of this part of the exam is to test the student's comprehension as well as breadth and depth of knowledge of their discipline area, normally at the senior undergraduate/junior graduate level. Although the written exam focuses primarily on the student's understanding of fundamental concepts in two technical areas related to their research topic, the scope of the oral part extends to examining the depth of knowledge in the student's discipline area and possible deficiencies in their academic background.

#### *Part B: Research Proposal*

The candidate shall submit a report on the research program: **up to a maximum of 40 pages in length, INCLUDING all figures, graphs, illustrations, tables and appendices (but not including the list of references)**. The report should be typed double-spaced; 12 point Times New Roman; one inch margins on all sides. IF THE REPORT DOES NOT CONFORM WITH THESE GUIDELINES, IT MAY BE RETURNED TO THE CANDIDATE FOR REVISION AND CAN RESULT IN DELAYING THE EXAMINATION SCHEDULE. The report must include: (i) a critical survey of the directly related literature in the field; (ii) an outline of the proposed research program including its justification, the approach to be taken, specific analytical or experimental methods, perceived or anticipated problems, preliminary results (if available); (iii) an account of expected contributions the proposed research will bring to the existing scientific literature; and (iv) a proposed timetable to accomplish the task. A copy of the report must be made available to each member of the Examination Committee at least two weeks prior to the date of the oral examination.

### *Procedures and Timeline*

At least 8 weeks before written part of the exam	<p><i>Examination Committee:</i></p> <p>Meeting of examination committee takes place to discuss comprehensive exam. The committee will decide two subject areas in which candidate will be examined on, and decide which two committee members will write the two questions that will be given to the student.</p> <p><i>Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed form to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <p>i. APPROVAL OF PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE</p> <p>The form can be found on the Resources page of our website, under "Graduate" &gt; "PhD info and forms".</p>
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At least 7 weeks before written part of the exam	<p><i>Examination Chair or Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed form to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION – EXAMINATION COMMITTEE FORM</li> </ul> <p>The form can be found on the Resources page of our website, under “Graduate” &gt; “PhD info and forms”.</p> <p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Have examination committee approved by the Department Graduate Associate Chair.</p>
6 weeks before the written part of the exam	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Provide a written notice of the two subject areas and dates of the written and oral parts of the exam to the student, as well as a notification to examination committee members indicating/confirming same. The examination notice to the student must also include the names of the examination committee members.</p>
At least two weeks before the written part of the exam	<p><i>Committee Members:</i></p> <p>The two committee members preparing the written questions will circulate the questions to the exam committee.</p> <p><i>Examination Chair:</i></p> <p>Seek feedback from the exam committee and reach consensus on the two questions.</p>
At least one week before the written part of exam	<p><i>Examination Chair:</i></p> <p>Submit finalized questions to the graduate administrator.</p> <p>If oral examination is virtual, set up the link and distribute to the supervisor, committee, and student.</p> <p><i>Student:</i></p> <p>Submit research report to graduate administrator.</p> <p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Prepare the examination questions in standard format. Distribute copies of the research report will to the comprehensive examination committee.</p>

Day of written part exam	<p><i>Student:</i></p> <p>Student to receive questions from Graduate Program Administrator and return answers within 7 hours.</p> <p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Distribute copies of answers to the 2 questions to comprehensive examination committee.</p>
Day of oral part of exam (one week after the written exam)	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Send the following form to the Examination Chair for completion:</p> <p>i. COMPREHENSIVE RESULTS TO BE RECORDED ON GRADUATE STUDENT TRANSCRIPT</p> <p><i>Examination Committee and Student:</i></p> <p>Part B of the oral exam will be approximately 1.5 hours. The candidate will be required to present their proposal in a summary fashion (20 minutes) to the committee followed by questions directly related to the proposal and the candidate's specific area of research. The candidate is free to choose whether to start with Part A (the two questions) or Part B (the research proposal). To initiate the questions for Part A of the examination, the candidate should provide a brief synopsis (maximum of 5 minutes) of his/her answers to the two written questions.</p> <p><i>Examination Chair:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed form to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <p>i. COMPREHENSIVE RESULTS TO BE RECORDED ON GRADUATE STUDENT TRANSCRIPT</p>

### *Roles and Responsibilities*

#### *Supervisor:*

- Set up the examination committee & give notification of committee to Graduate Administrator for approval by department chair/graduate chair via APPROVAL OF PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION COMMITTEE FORM **(8 weeks before written exam)**.
- Setup the organizational meeting of the examining committee.

#### *Chair of Examining Committee:*

- The Chair is meant to be an objective member outside of the supervisory committee. They moderate the examination and ensure proper pacing, and that all aspects of the examination are covered. They are supposed to sign the paperwork.

- During the organizational meeting, finalize date and time of written and oral examinations **(8 weeks before written exam)**.
- Check room availability and email all members of the examination committee confirming examination, including date, time and location of written and oral examination.
- Provide information to Graduate Program Administrator, including committee members, 2 examiners that will set the written questions, dates of written and oral exams, areas of study of examination questions via *PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION – EXAMINATION COMMITTEE FORM* **(7 weeks before the written exam)**.
- Send email reminder to committee requesting written questions **(at least two weeks before written exam)**.
- Circulate questions to committee members once received from the examiners.
- Send finalized questions to Graduate Program Administrator **(at least one week before the written exam)**.
- If oral examination is virtual, set up the link and distribute to the supervisor, committee, and student **(at least one week before the oral exam)**.

*Examiners Setting the Written Questions:*

- Send questions to Chair **(at least two weeks before the written exam)**.
- Be available (by phone if not in person) during the written part of the exam in case the student needs some clarification on the question.

*Graduate Program Administrator:*

- Get approval of examination committee from department chair/graduate chair.
- Give the timeline/information letter with the subject areas to the student **(6 weeks before the written exam)**.
- **One week before the written exam**, collect from the student and handout the research proposal to the examination committee.
- Prepare the exam questions once received from the chair in the Department examination format.
- Handout exam questions to the student on the morning (9:00 AM) of the written exam; collect the answers to the written exam questions from student on the afternoon (4:00 PM) of the written exam. Circulate the student's report and answers to exam questions to the examination committee.
- Prepare the (oral) examination result form and give to the Chair **(1 day before the oral exam)**. Once complete, the result form is submitted to the School of Graduate Studies so that the student's academic record will show the completion of this milestone.
- If the student does not pass, provide the student with a written letter of the result of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination.

### **Program Start Date of September 01, 2022 or Later**

Refer to “Comprehensive Exam” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#).

#### *Format of the Examination*

The comprehensive examination will consist of **two parts**, which are outlined below.

##### *Part A: Breadth and Depth of Knowledge*

The objective of this part of the exam is to test the student's comprehension as well as breadth and depth of knowledge of their discipline area, normally at the senior undergraduate/junior graduate level. Although the written exam focuses primarily on the student's understanding of fundamental concepts in two technical areas related to their research topic, the scope of the oral part of the examination extends to examining the depth of knowledge in the student's discipline area and possible deficiencies in their academic background. The student is expected to complete **Part A within 8 to 14 months of first registration in the PhD program**. Part-time students must complete Part A by the end of their 24<sup>th</sup> month. Students who transferred from M.A.Sc. to Ph.D. without completion of M.A.Sc. are expected to complete Part A of their comprehensive exam within 2-8 months from their transfer date. The examination committee for Part A will comprise of the Student's PhD Supervisory Committee, with the Supervisor acting as the Chair. The student's supervisor will be responsible for the administration of this part of the exam. The two committee members will set the two written questions in subject areas related to the student's research in consultation with the supervisor. The student should be informed of the two subject areas by the supervisor at least six weeks before the written exam. The student will have a total of seven hours to complete the written exam in an open book format. An oral exam will follow one week after the written exam and will normally be held during the student's first PhD Supervisory Committee meeting. The duration of the oral exam will be 1.5 hours. To initiate the questions for the examination, the candidate should provide a brief synopsis (10 minutes for each question) of his/her answers to the two written questions. Once the date of Part A is established, the supervisor should complete the **PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (PART A) – EXAMINATION FORM** and send it to the Graduate Administrator. The form can be found on the Resources page of our website, under “Graduate” > “PhD info and forms”.

##### *Part B: Research Proposal*

**Part B may only be completed once Part A has been successfully completed.**

Part B will comprise the submission and defence of the student's research proposal. The student is expected to complete this part **within 20 months of first registration in the Ph.D. program, with an upper limit of 24 months**. Part-time students must complete Part B by the end of their 36<sup>th</sup> month. Students who transferred from M.A.Sc. to Ph.D. without completion of M.A.Sc. are expected to complete Part B of their comprehensive exam within 14-18 months from their transfer date. The candidate shall submit a report on the research program: **up to a maximum of 40 pages in length, INCLUDING all figures, graphs, illustrations, tables and appendices (but not including the list of references)**. The report should be typed double-spaced; 12-point Times New Roman; one inch margins on all sides. IF THE REPORT DOES NOT CONFORM WITH THESE GUIDELINES, IT MAY BE RETURNED TO THE CANDIDATE FOR REVISION AND CAN RESULT IN DELAYING THE EXAMINATION SCHEDULE. The report must include: (i) a critical survey of the directly related literature in the field; (ii) an outline of the proposed research program

including its justification, the approach to be taken, specific analytical or experimental methods, perceived or anticipated problems, preliminary results (if available); (iii) an account of expected contributions the proposed research will bring to the existing scientific literature; and (iv) a proposed timetable to accomplish the task. A copy of the report must be made available to each member of the Examination Committee at least two weeks prior to the date of the oral examination. The duration of the oral examination will be 1.5 hours.

The examination committee for Part B will consist of the PhD Supervisory Committee and an additional member who has a scholarly interest in the candidate's research specialization. The additional member will serve as the Chair of the examination committee. Once the date of Part B is established, the supervisor should complete the **PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (PART B) – APPROVAL FORM** and send it to the Graduate Administrator. The form can be found on the Resources page of our website, under "Graduate" > "PhD info and forms".

### *Procedures and Timeline*

#### *Part A:*

At least 8 weeks before written part of the exam	<p><i>Examination Committee:</i></p> <p>Meeting of examination committee takes place to discuss comprehensive exam. The committee will decide two subject areas in which candidate will be examined on, and decide which two committee members will write the two questions that will be given to the student.</p>
At least 7 weeks before written part of the exam	<p><i>Examination Chair / Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed form to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION (PART A) – EXAMINATION FORM</li> </ul> <p>The form can be found on the Resources page of our website, under "Graduate" &gt; "PhD info and forms".</p> <p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Have Comprehensive Examination Form (Part A) approved by the Department Graduate Associate Chair.</p>
6 weeks before the written part of the exam	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Provide a written notice of the two subject areas and dates of the written and oral parts of the exam to the student, as well as a notification to examination committee members indicating/confirming same. The examination notice to the student</p>

	must also include the names of the examination committee members.
At least two weeks before the written part of the exam	<p><i>Supervisory Committee Members:</i></p> <p>The two supervisory committee members preparing the written questions will circulate the questions to the exam committee.</p> <p><i>Examination Chair / Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Seek feedback from the exam committee and reach consensus on the two questions.</p>
At least one week before the written part of exam	<p><i>Examination Chair / Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Submit finalized questions to the graduate administrator.</p> <p>If oral examination is virtual, set up the link and distribute to the supervisor, committee, and student.</p> <p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Prepare the examination questions in standard format.</p>
Day of written part exam	<p><i>Student:</i></p> <p>Student to receive questions from Graduate Program Administrator and return answers within 7 hours.</p> <p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Distribute copies of answers to the 2 questions to comprehensive examination committee.</p>
Day of oral part of exam (one week after the written exam)	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Send the following form to the Examination Chair for completion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (PART A) – RESULT FORM</li> </ul> <p><i>Examination Committee and Student:</i></p> <p>In the oral part of the exam, the candidate will have their first Supervisory Committee Meeting. The candidate should provide a brief synopsis (maximum of 5 minutes) of his/ her answers to the two written questions.</p> <p><i>Examination Chair / Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed form to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (PART A) – RESULT FORM</li> </ul>



*Part B:*

At least 7 weeks before oral exam	<p><i>Supervisor:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed form to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (PART B) – APPROVAL FORM The form can be found on the Resources page of our website, under “Graduate” &gt; “PhD info and forms”.</li> </ul> <p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Have Comprehensive Examination Form (Part B) approved by the Department Graduate Associate Chair.</p>
6 weeks before oral exam	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Provide a written notice of the oral examination to the student, as well as a notification to examination committee members indicating/confirming same. The examination notice to the student must also include the names of the examination committee members.</p>
Two weeks before oral exam	<p><i>Student:</i></p> <p>Submit research report to graduate administrator.</p> <p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Distribute copies of the research report will to the comprehensive examination committee.</p>
At least one week before oral exam	<p><i>Examination Chair / Supervisor:</i></p> <p>If oral examination is virtual, set up the link and distribute to the supervisor, committee, and student.</p>
Day of oral exam	<p><i>Graduate Administrator:</i></p> <p>Send the following form to the Examination Chair for completion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (PART B) – RESULT FORM</li> <li>ii. COMPREHENSIVE RESULTS TO BE RECORDED ON GRADUATE STUDENT TRANSCRIPT</li> </ul>

	<p><i>Student:</i></p> <p>In the oral part of the exam, the candidate will be required to present your report in a summary fashion (20 minutes) to the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examining Committee.</p> <p><i>Examination Chair:</i></p> <p>Return the following completed form to the Graduate Administrator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAM (PART B) – RESULT FORM</li> <li>ii. COMPREHENSIVE RESULTS TO BE RECORDED ON GRADUATE STUDENT TRANSCRIPT</li> </ul>
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### *Roles and Responsibilities*

#### *Supervisor:*

- Set up the examination committee & give notification of committee to Graduate Administrator for approval by department chair/graduate chair on attached form; finalize date and time of written and oral examinations (**Part A: 8 weeks before written exam; Part B: 8 weeks before oral exam**).
- Setup the organizational meeting of the examining committee.
- Check room availability and email all members of the examination committee confirming examination, including date, time and location (**Part A**).
- Provide information to Graduate Program Administrator, including committee members, 2 examiners that will set the written questions, dates of written and oral exams, areas of study of examination questions in the form attached (**Part A: 7 weeks before the written exam**).
- Send email reminder to committee requesting written questions (**Part A: at least two weeks before written exam**).
- Circulate questions to committee members once received from the examiners (Part A).
- Send finalized questions to Graduate Program Administrator (**Part A: at least one week before the written exam**).
- If oral examination is virtual, set up the link and distribute to the committee and student (**Part A: at least one week before the oral exam**).

#### *Chair of Examining Committee:*

- The Chair is meant to be an objective member outside of the supervisory committee. They moderate the examination and ensure proper pacing, and that all aspects of the examination are covered. They are supposed to sign the paperwork.
- During the organizational meeting, finalize date and time of oral examination (**Part B: 8 weeks before written exam**).
- Check room availability and email all members of the examination committee confirming examination, including date, time and location (**Part B**).

- Provide information to Graduate Program Administrator, including committee members, 2 examiners that will set the written questions, dates of written and oral exams, areas of study of examination questions in the form attached (**Part B: 7 weeks before the oral exam**).
- If oral examination is virtual, set up the link and distribute to the supervisor, committee, and student (**Part B: at least one week before the oral exam**).

*Supervisory Committee Members Setting the Written Questions (Part A):*

- Send questions to Chair/Supervisor (**at least two weeks before the written exam**).
- Be available (by phone if not in person) during the written part of the exam in case the student needs some clarification on the question.

*Graduate Program Administrator:*

- Get approval of examination committee from department chair/graduate chair (Part A & B).
- Give the timeline/information letter with the subject areas to the student (**Part A: 6 weeks before written exam; Part B: 6 weeks before oral exam**).
- Prepare the exam questions once received from the chair in the Department examination format.
- Part A: Send exam questions to the student on the morning (9:00 AM) of the written exam; collect the answers to the written exam questions from student on the afternoon (4:00 PM) of the written exam. Circulate the student's answers to exam questions to the examination committee.
- Collect from the student and send the research proposal to the examination committee (**Part B: two weeks before the oral exam**).
- Prepare the examination result form and give to the Chair (**Part A & B: at least 1 day before the oral exam**). Once complete, the result form is submitted to the School of Graduate Studies so that the student's academic record will show the completion of this milestone.
- If the student does not pass, provide the student with a written letter of the result of the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination.

## Ph.D. Thesis Defence

Refer to “Ph.D. Thesis Defence” under [Faculty of Engineering Requirements > Doctor of Philosophy \(Ph.D.\)](#)

### **Ph.D. Defence Procedures/Timelines**

- The supervisor must go through the [Degree Requirement Checklist](#) with the student to ensure they have completed all academic requirements. **The completed signed checklist must be submitted to the graduate administrator before initiating the defence.**
- Thesis candidates are required to use plagiarism-checking software, iThenticate, before submitting. Students must speak with their supervisor for directions on how to submit their thesis through the plagiarism-checking software.
  - The supervisor must sign off on the originality report of the student’s thesis after they scan their theses for originality using iThenticate.
  - A guide on how to use iThenticate is available in the Resources section of our website, under “Internal”.

## DEPARTMENT SOCIALS

### Mechanical Engineering Graduate Society (MEGS)

Mechanical Engineering Graduate Society (MEGS) is a student-run organization dedicated to supporting the academic, professional, and social needs of mechanical engineering graduate students at McMaster University. Since the society started in Fall 2024, they have organized activities, including social events, academic and career-oriented panel discussions, to support our students. In addition to event organization, they have represented graduate students in departmental discussions and participated in administrative tasks, serving as a communication bridge between graduate students and department administration. Their goal is to create a supportive environment where graduate students can thrive academically while building lasting professional and personal connections.



[megs@mcmaster.ca](mailto:megs@mcmaster.ca)



[@megs\\_mcmaster](https://www.instagram.com/megs_mcmaster)

### Department Social Media

Connect with us!



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