

Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering

Graduate Program Handbook 2026/2027

Updated: August 2026



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WELCOME NOTE (2026/2027)

The ECE Graduate Program Handbook 2026/2027 outlines the policies and procedures followed by the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering. All graduate students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policies, regulations and procedures within the School of Graduate Studies Calendar 2026/2027, specifically the “General Regulations of the Graduate School” section.

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 Electrical & Computer Engineering.

Disclaimer:

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

An aerial photograph of a university campus. In the center is a large, modern building with a curved, light-colored facade and large glass windows. The building is surrounded by a paved area and green lawns. A large, dark spiral logo is painted on the lawn in front of the building. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red circular graphic on the left side. The text "GENERAL INFORMATION" is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

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 \(2026-2027\)](#)
- [General Regulations on Supervision](#)
- [Dates and Deadlines](#)
- [Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#)
- [Accommodations, Appeals and Petitions](#)
- [Student Appeal Procedures](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Copyright Policy \(FAQ IP and Commercialization\)](#)
- [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, Teams, 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.

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.

Students should review vacation entitlements in [Section 2.5.8](#) of the Graduate Calendar. International students should consult immigration@mcmaster.ca to understand implications of leaves of absence or extended vacations from study. Admissibility into Canada is assessed at every entry.

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 Faculty Office **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 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

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

[HRDR Program](#) 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.

[The Equity Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Program](#) specializes in providing education and support regarding race, equity and inclusion, and human rights.. The Equity Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Program

also provides support to the President's Advisory Committee on Building an Inclusive Community (PACBIC), the McMaster Accessibility Council and the Sexual Violence and Response Task Force

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 and Exchange Student Experience \(IESE\) 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 / Dialogue

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 1-855-853-0565

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 via live chat on [the SGS website](#).

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.
- 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 around disposal of chemical and other waste products can be found [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)

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). Use of GenAI without supervisor consent may be a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy.

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 Joint Intellectual Property 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

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.
- 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.
- 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 for Teaching Assistants](#)
- [Payment Schedules](#)
- [Pay Statement Guide](#)
- [Graduate 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 2026, Winter 2027 and Spring/Summer 2027 terms by August 1, 2026, your payments will be delayed until a correction is made.

Leaves of Absence (LOA)

Leaves of Absence are normally granted on a term-by-term basis. Whenever possible the LOA should start and end at the beginning of a term (i.e., January 1, May 1, or September 1). During an LOA the student will not receive supervision or be entitled to use the University's academic facilities for the purposes of academic progression. No tuition will be charged, nor will the student be eligible for any scholarship support. Please note students on an LOA have to pay applicable supplemental fees and will be able to use the services associated with those fees. The length of time for completing the degree, and for scholarship support eligibility, will be extended by the duration of the LOA on the resumption of studies. If an LOA begins or ends in the middle of a term, term count will be determined upon return in consultation with the Associate Dean. See the calendar for more details: [2.5.7 Leaves of Absence](#)

Note: Students who hold fellowships, scholarships or grants from NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR, or OGS should be aware that these agencies or any other external funding source may have policies governing the interruption and continuation of awards that may differ from the University's policy on LOA. Students holding such awards, and who intend to keep them, are responsible for ensuring that any LOA taken does not conflict with the granting agency's regulations. The appropriate agency should be contacted for details. Contact the School of Graduate Studies for questions on the administration of the Policy. Other Leaves of absence are medical, parenting and compassionate/personal. See the calendar for more details: [2.5.7 Leaves of Absence](#)

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 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 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 [McMaster's International and Exchange Student Experience website](#).

Vacation

Full-time graduate students are expected to be on campus for all three terms of the university year, as specified in [Section 1.3](#). In addition to statutory holidays (see [Sessional Dates](#)) and the closure of the University normally late December until early January, normal vacation entitlement for a graduate student is two weeks of vacation during the year, to be scheduled by mutual agreement with the research supervisor or in the case of a course-based program by mutual agreement with the graduate chair or equivalent. If this period of time exceeds two weeks, the approval of the supervisor or in the supervisor's absence a member of the supervisory committee is also required, and should be documented by the supervisor and Department. It is understood that any risks with travel taken during vacation time are the student's responsibility to assess and consider potential impacts to their degree progression.

Students who are also employees of the University must seek vacation approval from their employment supervisor and are entitled to vacation time pursuant to the terms of their employment contract.

A period of absence longer than 4 weeks that is not Full Time Off Campus requires the student to withdraw in good standing or go on a leave of absence.

See the calendar for more details: [2.5.8 Vacations](#)

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 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 be 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](#)
- [Getting the Supervisory Relationship Off to a Good Start](#) Guide

Letter/Verification Requests

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

- [Degree verification](#)
- [Enrolment verification](#)
- [Graduation verification](#)
- [Letter Request Form](#)
- [Transcript request](#)

MacQuest

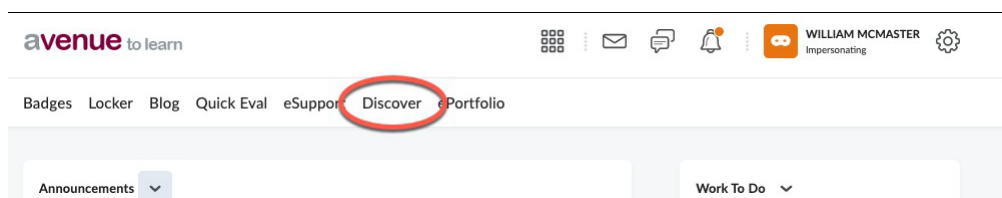
MacQuest provides on-campus searchable navigation, including indoor floor map visualization and other campus-related services. Users can use the app to navigate from class to class; it also lists last, next, and following bus arrival times near campus by bus stop and route number. It also allows users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

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 team at immigration@mcmaster.ca

SGS 101 / 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

Students are required to take [these online courses in Mosaic](#) only once during their graduate career at McMaster University. All students must pass and abide by these online SGS courses. Each course takes approximately one hour to complete and consists of watching an online presentation followed by a test. Anyone who has not completed either of the following courses by the deadline provided by SGS will be automatically assigned an F grade.

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.

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](#). There are two CARP (Career Action Report Planning) sessions held in each fall and winter term. Students must register for one session in OSCARplus and are required to attend - the recording is not sent out after. Students must complete the report and submit 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](#).

Supervisory Committee Meetings

Supervision of graduate 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 [this form](#) and submit it to the Department Graduate Administrative Assistant at the end of the

progress review meeting. For students enrolled in the M.A.Sc. beyond 24 months, an annual supervisory committee meeting should take place.

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.

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, 2026 or within ONE year of starting the PhD program, whichever comes **FIRST**.

Student start date of January or May 2026:	Deadline is November 30, 2026
Student start date of September 2026:	Deadline is November 30, 2027
Student start date of January or May 2027:	Deadline is November 30, 2027

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.

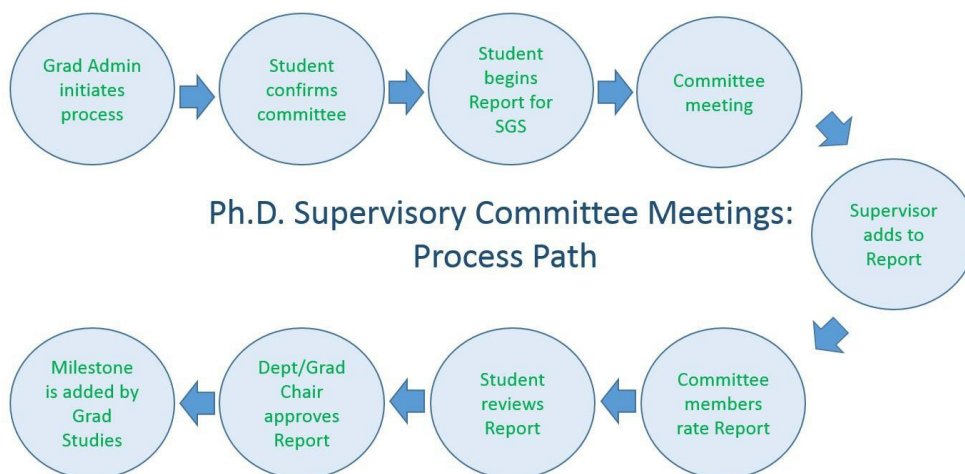
[Link to student's report]

Student Records

School of Graduate Studies

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
Akhbar-danesh	Noori	Member	daneshn@mcmaster.ca
Mickey	Colleen	Member	mckeyt@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.

Supervisory Committee Report

Select a Date to view report or New Meeting to start a new report

Please enter the meeting date: (YYYY-MM-DD)

The date you began this degree studies at McMaster: (YYYY-MM-DD)

Please indicate if you are a scholarship holder Other

With some qualifications, the Calendar (Section 2.7.3) 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.

Have you submitted draft research this year? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Details of progress made since the last report

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: [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: 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 months:

Anticipated date for the completion of degree requirements: YYYY-MM-DD.

Comments:

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

Member	Rate	Title	First Name	Last Name	Email
☒	1	Supervisor	Markie-reid	Maureen Frances	mreid@uwaterloo.ca
☒	2	Member	Ambar-danesh	Nasir	daneshn@uwaterloo.ca
☒	3	Member	Mickey	Colleen	mickcol@uwaterloo.ca

[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: Member Name: [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: 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 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 supervision satisfactory? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

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: 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.

Supervisory Committee Meetings on Co-op or Leave of Absence

Students are not required to have a supervisory committee meeting while on an approved co-op or leave of absence (LOA). When returning from LOA, as required by **Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar**, they should have an **ungraded committee meeting** within three months of return, and a **graded meeting** within six months. Students on co-op should determine with their supervisory committee if a meeting before co-op or after would be appropriate based on timing. It is recommended that they have at a minimum an ungraded meeting three months after return, and a graded meeting to align with the annual cycle thereafter.

An aerial photograph of a modern building with a curved, light-colored facade. The building is surrounded by a paved area with a large spiral logo in the center. There are trees and landscaping around the building. A large, semi-transparent red banner is overlaid on the bottom half of the image.

DEPARTMENT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

Dr. Shahram Shirani (Department Chair)

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

Dr. Shiva Kumar (Associate Chair, Graduate Studies)

- Email: skumar@mcmaster.ca
- First point of contact for all graduate program academic matters.

Dr. Jun Chen (Associate Chair, Research)

- Email: chenjun@mcmaster.ca
- First point of contact for all research matters.

Shelby Gaudrault (Academic Department Manager)

- Email: gaudraus@mcmaster.ca
- Point of contact for all financial matters.

Brennan Conry (Assistant Academic Department Manager)

- Email: conryb@mcmaster.ca
- First point of contact for all financial matters.

Samantha Leung (Graduate Administrative Assistant)

- Email: ece_grad@mcmaster.ca
- First point of contact for all graduate program administrative matters.

Brittany Donovan (Administrative Assistant)

- Email: eceadmin@mcmaster.ca
- First point of contact for reimbursement and expense report submissions.

Tyler Ackland (Digital Technical Specialist)

- Email: acklant@mcmaster.ca

Ron Harwood (Facilities Manager)

- Email: harwood@mcmaster.ca

Dan Manolescu (Research Computer Specialist)

- Email: manold@mcmaster.ca

Stephane Olaizola (Research Computer Specialist)

- Email: olaizos@mcmaster.ca

Joe Peric (Instructional Computing Specialist)

- Email: pericj@mcmaster.ca

Steve Spencer (Instructional Facilities Engineer)

- Email: spencers@mcmaster.ca

Ali Abbasi (Graduate Student Representative)

- Email: abbasa46@mcmaster.ca
- Point of contact for graduate student networking events and department liaison.

GETTING STARTED: KEY DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

Building Access and Keys

Graduate office keys and desk keys will be assigned upon arrival. Lab keys will be assigned by your supervisor. There is a \$20 key deposit required for each physical key, and a \$5 deposit for desk keys. Keys and access cards are issued with a deposit as a charge to your student account. The monies will be credited to your account once keys or cards are returned. For safety and security, do not lend your keys or allow anyone else into your office after hours. External building keys are not permitted. Lost or stolen keys must be reported to Security Services, The Hub, and your Graduate Administrative Assistant.

Graduate Student Offices/Desks

Desks are assigned to all full-time, in-time graduate M.A.Sc. and Ph.D. students if available. While we do our best to provide overtime students a desk, this is not always possible, and we may ask you to vacate or relocate should you exceed your term count.

Graduate student offices are shared offices. The department tries to keep similar research/supervisor groups together. At times discussions can be louder than anticipated. Please be mindful of others working nearby, and if possible, take lengthy or group conversations outside.

Graduate offices are not maintained by McMaster custodial staff; therefore, students are responsible for the cleanliness of their desk space and encouraged to work together to keep the office clean. To avoid pests, household appliances (refrigerators, microwaves, kettles, etc.) and kitchenware (cups, mugs, utensils) should be kept clean and clear of food. Food should not be left in grad offices. Please dispose of waste or recycling in the proper bins located in the hallways or leave bags outside the office to be picked up by custodial staff at a later time.

ITB A113/A is reserved daily from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. as a space for lunch breaks.

Meeting Rooms

Meeting spaces in JHE can be booked through The Hub or through the Graduate Administrator for rooms in ITB. The Grad Lounge is also available in JHE 328/A.

Mail Services

Mail Services processes all incoming mail from the Canada Post Corporation and delivers to each department. Grad mailboxes are located in ITB A110. Please check your mailbox frequently for mail. All items must have the following information:

First Name Last Name

Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering
McMaster University
Information Technology Building ITB A110
1280 Main Street West
Hamilton ON L8S 4K1

Incoming courier packages will first arrive at Mail Services and then be delivered to the department mail room (ITB A110). It is best to address all packages to the department office (ITB A111). The department is not responsible for lost or stolen packages.

Scent Awareness

Persons entering McMaster University buildings are encouraged to use unscented products wherever possible. **Please minimize the use of, and exposure to, scented products in your office and when visiting the department office (ITB A111).** Scented products more commonly used include:

- Personal hygiene products (e.g., hairsprays, deodorants, colognes, after-shaves, fragrances, perfumes, lotions);
- Industrial and household chemicals and cleaners;
- Air fresheners (e.g., deodorizers, potpourri, oils);
- Various household products

Departmental Photocopying

Graduate students who are requesting ink for their lab must email eceadmin@mcmaster.ca and copy their supervisor on the same email. Please specify the room number where the printer is located, and the printer make and model in your email.

1. If the lab is "owned" by one supervisor, they will cover the full cost of the ink.
2. If the lab has multiple supervisors, the cost of ink will be divided according to the student-to-supervisor ratio in the lab (divided by percentage between # of students).

A chartfield must be provided in both scenarios.

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](#).

McMaster's Occupational Health and Safety Training Program is designed to provide mandatory and site-specific safety training for all employees, graduate students, volunteers and visitors working in the University. More information regarding training programs, McMaster's Risk Management system and resources can be found on the [Human Resources website](#).

Mandatory Health and Safety Requirements

The following Risk Management Manual (RMM) are mandatory readings and should be discussed with your supervisor.

- [Health and Safety Training Program - RMM Number 300](#)
You are encouraged to make an appointment with your supervisor to specifically discuss the roles, responsibilities, procedural guidelines, record keeping and mandatory safety training matrix.
- [Training Matrix](#)
The mandatory safety training matrix can be found [here](#). Additional safety courses such as machine guarding, gas cylinder and hydrogen fluoride (HF) are required if the hazard is present. Please discuss the need for additional safety training courses with your supervisor.

How to Complete Health and Safety Training

Talk to your supervisor about which additional safety courses you should take. Health and safety training can be completed online through Mosaic under “Regulatory Training”. Once you have registered for training your health and safety course is available in Avenue to Learn within one business day. Once you have successfully completed your training in Avenue to Learn you can view your training record in Mosaic one business day after completion.

- [Job Hazard Analysis Program - RMM Number 324](#)
Prior to commencing work (research-related or TA-related), a job hazard analysis (JHA) of your main activities must be completed and reviewed with your supervisor (research) or instructor (TA) to identify hazards and determine health and safety training requirements. Each main activity involved with the job requires a hazardous analysis, where common hazards and associated controls are identified. The goal is always to eliminate the hazard, however, if a hazard cannot be eliminated, then it needs to be minimized before the work is performed. Hazards can be minimized by implementing controls such as personal protective equipment, written procedures or training.

How to Complete Job Hazard Analysis

The JHA involves the review of existing forms (online), and newly created forms (offline) when required. To document that this analysis has been performed, a summary sheet listing all of the online JHA forms analyzed, complete with a hard copy of all newly created JHA forms, needs to be signed by both you the researcher/TA and your supervisor/instructor. You should retain a copy along with your supervisor/instructor. Existing JHA forms, along with detailed instructions of how to create a JHA form are available on the [Human Resources website](#).

- [RMM Number 304 – WORKING ALONE PROGRAM](#)
If your work (research or TA-related) involves working alone or after-hours, please review RMM 304 and create an approved Working Alone Policy with your supervisor. The plan must include procedures for obtaining assistance in the event of an emergency.
- Students should also review the [RMM website](#) and meet with their supervisor to discuss what other policies are mandatory reading, including, e.g., RMM 600 Biosafety, RMM 700 Radiation Safety, and RMM 403 Animals in the Workplace.

McMaster University Laboratory Manual 2019

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](#).

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, a Full-Time-Off-Campus form must be formally submitted to SGS.

Graduate Course Requirements

To receive credit for a course, each student is responsible for confirming in the Mosaic Student Center that their enrollment status is appropriate for that course. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have formally enrolled for the course through their department or graduate program.

The requirements listed apply to the 2026/2027 academic year (September 2026, January 2027 or May 2027 admits). For existing graduate students, please refer to the graduate course requirements stated in the School of Graduate Studies Academic Calendar and the department's Graduate Student Handbook issued for the academic year of your admission. For example, if you started in September 2022, January 2023 or May 2023, refer to the Academic Calendar and ECE Handbook for 2022/2023.

Department Course Offerings

A list of [course offerings](#) and course outlines will be available on the ECE webpage, under Resources, Graduate. Students are encouraged to consult with their research supervisor when selecting courses.

Courses Outside the Department

Graduate students are normally required to complete their degree course requirements by taking courses from within their program. As a minimum, at least 50% of courses taken must be listed or cross-listed by the department in order to be counted towards your degree; these courses have the ECE- prefix in the Graduate Calendar. Graduate students are encouraged to consult with their supervisor when choosing courses from areas beyond the focus of their research, including courses offered outside of the department. For courses to be taken for credit outside of the department, written approval from the supervisor is required through a [Request for In-Program Course Adjustment form](#) (to be submitted to the Graduate Administrative Assistant for graduate chair approval). The form will be then forwarded to the Associate Dean - Graduate Studies (Engineering) for approval.

The passing grades for all graduate courses outside of the Department are A+, A, A-, B+, B, and B-.

Extra Course(s)

This category identifies courses that a graduate student takes (with the approval of the supervisor) that are not necessary to meet the course requirements for the degree program. In order to designate a course as 'extra', graduate students need to submit a [Request for In-Program Course Adjustment form](#). The form is submitted to the department graduate office and once approved will have the designation added to the enrollment record for that course only. If a failing grade (i.e. less than B-) is received in a course taken as Extra, the courses (and grade) will not appear on the graduate student's transcript unless of academic dishonesty. Graduate students may petition to change the designation of an Extra Course to a M.A.Sc. or Ph.D. course prior to the deadline to drop a course provided that this change is supported by the supervisor

and program and approved by the Associate Dean – Graduate Studies (Engineering). Changes of designation after the drop date will not be approved.

Courses that are required by the supervisory committee or the Department Chair, as additional requirements in excess of the stated minimum for the program, must be designated as a M.A.Sc. or Ph.D. course.

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

Program Requirements

A candidate is required to complete successfully at least four graduate half courses (or equivalent), of which at least two must be from among the 700-level graduate courses offered by the Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering, and to prepare a thesis embodying the results of the research taken on by the candidate. M.A.Sc. students may take a maximum of one ECE 600-level course approved by the department towards their degree requirements.

The passing grades for a graduate level course are A+, A, A-, B+, B, and B-.

Additional Requirements

All M.A.Sc. students must fulfill the seminar requirement by registering in either ECE 792 / Advanced Communication Skills for Graduate Research in Electrical and Computer Engineering OR ECE 790 / Foundational Communication Skills for Graduate Research in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

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

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.

M.A.Sc. Defence Procedures/Timelines

Your first step regarding any questions with respect to writing your thesis is to consult the [School of Graduate Studies' Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses](#). All graduate theses must conform to the style and form requirements as detailed in the Guide.

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. One of the committee members may be from a department other than the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

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](#).

Overview

The defence covers material presented in the written thesis and the background material to the submitted thesis.

The student is responsible for ensuring that the format satisfies the University requirements. The sequence of events is as follows:

1. The student's supervisor gives him/her permission to prepare his/her thesis. The student is responsible for submitting a thesis, which is reasonably free of grammatical, typographical and technical errors. If the thesis is found to contain an excessive number of errors, it will be returned to the student and the oral examination postponed until a satisfactory thesis has been resubmitted.
2. It is strongly recommended that a student submit a first draft of his/her thesis, acceptable to the supervisor, before taking up full-time employment. Past experience has shown that students who do not follow this recommendation are seriously delayed in completing their theses, and in some cases never graduate.
3. The candidate should inform the Department of his/her intention to submit the thesis at least 4-6 weeks prior to the anticipated defense date so that an examining committee and an oral defense date can be set up.
4. An electronic copy and any requested printed copies must be submitted to the Department at least 2 weeks prior to the defense date.
5. The student's advisor(s) and two other faculty members, one of whom may be from a department other than Electrical & Computer Engineering, sit as an examining committee for the candidate. The Chair, with the advice of the research supervisor, appoints the examining committee. After the presentation (to be approximately 15-20 minutes in length) the examining committee will conduct an examination of the candidate on his/her thesis. The seminar presentation and this examination constitute the oral examination of the candidate.

6. Upon successful completion of this examination, the candidate is requested to correct any misprints that may exist in the thesis and to submit the thesis to the School of Graduate Studies. Upon completion of all degree requirements, the student is required to “Sign out” from the Department. A checklist is available in the office.

Response Time for M.A.Sc. Theses

Supervisors should respond to the draft of a thesis within 2 months. Providing comments on individual chapters will take proportionately less time. Very long theses or chapters may take more time. There are busy periods within the academic year when the time taken to provide comments might be a bit longer than this norm. However, in no case should the response time exceed 3 months. For master's theses, the corresponding times are 1 month and 2 months.

Sandwich Theses

If some of the research undertaken expressly for the degree has previously been published or prepared by the student as one or more journal articles, or parts of books, those items may be included within the thesis subject to the School of Graduate Studies regulations and to obtaining permission from the supervisory committee. Please consult the [Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses](#) for more detailed information on sandwich theses.

After the Defence

After a successful defence, the student must correct any errors identified in the written report identified by the examination committee to the satisfaction of the supervisor. Once approved by the supervisor, the student must submit an electronic copy of the final thesis to the School of Graduate Studies via MacSphere. Students are normally expected to submit their final thesis within four weeks of a successful defence.

Students requiring a verification letter (clear to graduate, degree completion) for work or Post Graduate Work permit, should be planned in advance. Last minute requests for verification letter are not guaranteed. See information about [verification letters](#).

More information is available on the [School of Graduate Studies website](#).

Important: It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have met all course requirements and milestones prior to initiating the defence.

Clear to Graduate (Thesis-Based)

Once all required forms from the supervisor and/or defence chair are received, the Graduate Administrative Assistant submits them to the School of Graduate Studies. The forms are then processed, and the student reviewed for clear to graduate. Please note the administrative process to clear to graduate may take up to 4-weeks.

The final defence date is the date which the thesis was uploaded to MacSphere.

Tuition fees continue to be assessed until all degree requirements are met, including the successful submission of the final approved thesis to MacSphere.

In order to receive a degree, the student 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.

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 completed a minimum of TWO academic terms of study in the M.A.Sc. program, and the transfer must occur within 22 months from initial registration in the M.A.Sc. program. Transfers will take effect at the start of an academic term.

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.

MASTER OF ENGINEERING (M.Eng.)

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

Program Requirements

A candidate for the M.Eng. degree may proceed with the course-based stream or the project-based stream.

For the course-based M.Eng., a candidate is required to successfully complete a program of seven graduate half courses (or equivalent), of which at least four must be 700-level courses within ECE. The three remaining courses may be taken as 700-level courses outside of ECE and/or up to two 600-level courses within ECE, with prior approval by the department.

For the project-based M.Eng., a candidate is required to successfully complete six graduate half courses (or equivalent), of which at least four must be 700-level courses within ECE. The two remaining courses may be taken as 700-level courses outside of ECE and/or up to two 600-level courses within ECE.

Additional Requirements

M.Eng. students registering for ECE 701 must also register in either ECE 792 / Advanced Communication Skills for Graduate Research in Electrical and Computer Engineering, or ECE 790 / Foundational Communication Skills for Graduate Research in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Supervision

Supervision of M.Eng. students is governed by the School of Graduate Studies regulations as outlined in [Section 3.1 of the Graduate Calendar](#). M.Eng. students do not have a research supervisor, and the Associate Graduate Chair acts as an academic advisor for all M.Eng. students.

Optional Scheduled Break for M.Eng. Students

Graduate students enrolled in the M.Eng. program may apply for a scheduled break of one term per academic year in the Spring/Summer term only.

While a scheduled break is distinct from a leave of absence, term counts, fees, and supports during a scheduled break would mirror those of a leave of absence. Students should note that supplemental fees are charged annually and taking a term off via a scheduled break will not decrease the amount of supplemental fees to be paid. Students should also be aware of the potential implications for not maintaining enrollment as it relates to their scholarship funding. Students on a scheduled break cannot take courses at other universities to be counted toward their degree at McMaster.

A scheduled break is intended to be for one full term and as such must match the beginning and end date of the academic term where the break is requested. Mid-term breaks will not be approved. Scheduled breaks are, by definition, 1 term in length. No additional paperwork is required to end the scheduled break. In cases where students require more time and/or an off-cycle absence, they should submit a request for Full-Time Off Campus or a Leave of Absence.

Clear-to-Graduate (Non-Thesis)

Students must complete the Non-Thesis Clear to Graduate Form and submit to the Graduate Administrator by the deadline set by the department. The form is then processed, and the student is reviewed to be cleared to graduate. Please note the administrative process for clear to graduate may take up to 4 weeks.

In order to receive a degree, the student 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.

Students requiring a verification letter (clear to graduate, degree completion) for work or Post Graduate Work permit, should be planned in advance. Last minute requests for verification letter are not guaranteed. See information about [verification letters](#).

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.)

Program Requirements

The minimum number of graduate courses required for students who began the Ph.D. program prior to September 2020 is four half courses (or equivalent) if they have a master's degree, or eight half courses (or equivalent) if their last degree was a bachelor's degree. Ph.D. students entering in September 2020 or after are required to take 3 half courses (or equivalent) if they have a master's degree. Also as of September 2020, students who transfer from M.A.Sc. to Ph.D., or do not have a master's degree require a total of 6 half courses.

The passing grades for graduate level course are A+, A, A-, B+, B, and B-.

Additional Requirements

All Ph.D. students must fulfill the seminar requirement by registering in either ECE 792 / Advanced Communication Skills for Graduate Research in Electrical and Computer Engineering OR ECE 790 / Foundational Communication Skills for Graduate Research in Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Ph.D. students who completed ECE 790 or ECE 792 during their master's degree studies here at McMaster are exempt from completing it again for their Ph.D. studies.

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 \(Ph.D.\)](#).

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 36th month. Students who transferred from M.A.Sc. to Ph.D. without completion of M.A.Sc. are expected to complete their comprehensive exam 2½ 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.

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).

The objectives of the examination are to ensure that the student can:

1. Demonstrate his/her knowledge and skills necessary to pursue research at the doctoral level, respond to questions related to them, solve problems when faced with an unfamiliar situation related to them and know how to apply them to practical problems.
2. Understand a specific problem involving the integration of ideas with imagination and innovation, research on the state-of-the-art related to it, envision new ways to solve it, conduct preliminary theoretical analysis and/or experiments, write a formal report on the findings, present the findings in an effective manner and defend them in front of a committee of experts.

The comprehensive examination committee will consist of four faculty members including the thesis advisor and at least one regular ECE faculty member outside the supervisory committee who will act as the chair. The chair, who needs to be approved by the Department Chair, is responsible for all administrative aspects of the exam in ensuring that all proper procedures are upheld. The chair should also ensure that the student is examined rigorously, while also being treated fairly and with respect. All committee members, including the thesis advisor and the chair, will play an active role in the examination. Up to three supervisory committee members can be part of the examination committee. At most one adjunct faculty member can be part of the committee.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the examination will consist of two parts, respectively:

- Part A: Oral examination on any two courses chosen by the examination committee out of those the student has already taken at McMaster or elsewhere at the graduate level with questions on theory and application. The committee may choose particular skills or topics within the combined scope of the graduate courses the student has already taken instead of two separate courses if they are deemed more appropriate to assess the student's ability to integrate ideas.
- Part B: A report and a presentation on a specific problem involving the integration of ideas related, but not the same as the student's thesis topic, specified by the examination committee.

The examination will normally be attempted not later than 20 months, and definitely not later than 24 months, from the student's start date in the PhD program, but after the first supervisory committee meeting.

The whole examination will last no more than two hours with at most 50 minutes for Part A, 60 minutes for Part B and 10 minutes for a break between the two parts.

Four weeks before the examination date, the chair of the committee will provide the student with the two courses or skills or topics, as appropriate, for Part A and the problem involving integration of ideas for Part B.

For Part A, no questions will be given to the student prior to the examination. If specific courses are selected for Part A, the scope of the questions during the examination will be restricted to the syllabi of those courses and their application to the student's research area or to general engineering problems. If a skill or topic is suggested for Part A, its scope will be defined clearly along with at least one reference material.

The integration problem in Part B will generally be open-ended with scope for imagination and innovation. However, at least one reference material will be suggested as the starting point.

The student will submit to the examination committee a report on the problem involving integration of ideas in Part B at least one week prior to the examination. The double-spaced report should be no longer than 20 letter-sized pages in length when typeset in 12-point Times Roman fonts with 2.54 cm margin on all sides. All figures, tables and other supporting material excluding references must be within these 20 pages. The report should address in sufficient detail the motivation for the problem, include a thorough literature search on it, present the student's proposed solutions, any preliminary theoretical and/or experimental analysis, and conclusions. The student shall give an overview of the report in a 10–15-minute oral presentation at the start of Part B of the examination. A pass/fail decision on the student's performance in each part of the examination will be made at the completion of that part, but will not be conveyed to the student until the completion of both parts. If the student fails one or more parts of the examination, he/she needs to re-do only the ones that he/she failed.

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.

Ph.D. Defence Procedures/Timelines

Your first step regarding any questions with respect to writing your thesis is to consult the [School of Graduate Studies' Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses](#). All graduate theses must conform to the style and form requirements as detailed in the Guide. This is an oral exam administered by the Department. This is a public examination open to all interested persons.

Students close to submitting their Ph.D. thesis (about 2 months) should initiate their defence through Mosaic. You will be asked for your thesis title and estimated date of thesis submission. Your supervisor will be asked to submit the name of an external examiner which must be approved by your supervisory committee and department. A final date and time of the defense will be scheduled and approved by the student, supervisory committee and external examiner. The student will then submit an electronic copy of the thesis to the School of Graduate Studies and Supervisory Committee members.

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](#).

Doctoral students and their supervisors should keep in mind that theses of extraordinary length are discouraged. The preparation of a lengthy Ph.D. thesis almost certainly extends the time that the student takes to complete his or her degree. As a general rule, doctoral students are suggested to limit theses to no greater length than three hundred (300) manuscript pages. In cases where students and their supervisors believe that responsible scholarly treatment of the thesis topic requires substantially greater length than that specified above, they are expected to receive written approval from the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (Engineering) before the thesis is submitted for the defense.

Response Time for Ph.D. Theses

Supervisors should respond to the draft of a thesis within 2 months. Providing comments on individual chapters will take proportionately less time. Very long theses or chapters may take more time. There are busy periods within the academic year when the time taken to provide comments might be a bit longer than this norm. However, in no case should the response time exceed 3 months. For master's theses, the corresponding times are 1 month and 2 months.

Sandwich Theses

If some of the research undertaken expressly for the degree has previously been published or prepared by the student as one or more journal articles, or parts of books, those items may be included within the thesis subject to the School of Graduate Studies regulations and to obtaining permission from the supervisory committee. Please consult the [Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses](#) for more detailed information on sandwich theses.

All questions about Ph.D. defences should be sent via email to the Thesis Coordinator at gthesis@mcmaster.ca.

After the Defence

After a successful defence, the student must correct any errors identified in the written report identified by the examination committee to the satisfaction of the supervisor. Once approved by the supervisor, the student must submit an electronic copy of the final thesis to the School of Graduate Studies via MacSphere. Students are normally expected to submit their final thesis within four weeks of a successful defence.

Students requiring a verification letter (clear to graduate, degree completion) for work or Post Graduate Work permit, should be planned in advance. Last minute requests for verification letter are not guaranteed. See information about [verification letters](#).

More information is available on the [School of Graduate Studies website](#).

Important: It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have met all course requirements and milestones prior to initiating the defence.

Clear to Graduate (Thesis-Based)

Once all required forms from the supervisor and/or defence chair are received, the Graduate Administrative Assistant submits them to the School of Graduate Studies. The forms are then processed, and the student reviewed for clear to graduate. Please note the administrative process to clear to graduate may take up to 4-weeks.

The final defence date is the date which the thesis was uploaded to MacSphere.

Tuition fees continue to be assessed until all degree requirements are met, including the successful submission of the final approved thesis to MacSphere.

In order to receive a degree, the student 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.

DEPARTMENT SOCIALS

McMaster ECE Grad Connect Club – Graduate Student Representatives

ECE Grad Connect is a team of elected graduate students who serve as liaisons between the ECE graduate student community and the department's faculty and staff. They organize events and initiatives designed to foster connection, collaboration, and a stronger sense of community among ECE graduate students. Follow them on Instagram at [McMaster ECE Grad Connect](#).

Department Social Media

Connect with us!



Website: <https://www.eng.mcmaster.ca/ece/>



Instagram: [@ece.mcmaster](#)



LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ece-mcmaster-university-311932126/>