Graduate Student Handbook

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

2024/2025

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Welcome to Electrical and Computer Engineering

The Graduate Student Handbook 2024/2025 outlines the policies and procedure followed by the Department of Electrical and Computer and Engineering. All graduate students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the policies, regulations and procedures within the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar, 2024/25](#), specifically the [General Regulations of the Schools of Graduate Studies section.](#)

Department Contacts

Department Leadership

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Dan Manolescu | manold@mcmaster.ca

Research Computer Specialist
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Engineering Support Services (The Hub)

Services include managing keys and access cards, meeting room coordination, printing, binding and lamination.
JHE 216A | thehub@mcmaster.ca

Disclaimer

In the event of a discrepancy between the information provided in the department's Graduate Student Handbook, 2024/2025 and the [School of Graduate Studies Academic Calendar](#), 2024/2025, the latter prevails.

General Information

Arrival

We're happy you joined the Fireball Family. Discover how the Faculty of Engineering and McMaster University can support you with a wide range of resources from starting graduate studies to moving to a new place.

Please refer to the arrival plan communicated by your Graduate Administrative Assistant prior to your arrival. Arrival processes will differ depending on term start.

Quicklinks

- [Incoming Graduate Students – Faculty of Engineering](#)

- [Housing and Student Life for Incoming Graduate Students](#)
  Listings for on campus and off campus housing.

- [Advice From Current Graduate Students](#)
  Hear what other students are sharing about their experience at McMaster and in Hamilton.

- [School of Graduate Studies – Graduate Student Orientation Hub](#)
  The Graduate Orientation Hubs provide step-by-step details to help you transition to graduate student life at McMaster University.

- [School of Graduate Studies – International Students](#)
  The information in this section is intended to help you find your footing at the beginning of your McMaster graduate journey.

Condition Clearing

Where applicable, students are responsible for complying with such conditions as indicated in the offer of admission. Conditions must be cleared by the date indicated on your offer letter. This does not restrict your current enrollment. Failure to clear conditions by the deadline will 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.

Desk Assignment and Graduate Student Office Policy

Desks are assigned to all full-time, in-time graduate MASc. 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 also 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 and group conversation outside. Meeting spaces can be book through The Hub or in ITB through the Grad Administrator. The Grad Lounge is also available JHE 328A.

Grad 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.

Building Access and Keys

Grad 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 Grad Admininstrator.

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 and candles); and
- Various household products

Mail Services

Mail Services processes all incoming mail from the Canada Post Corporation and delivers to each department. Grad mailboxes are located in ITB A113. Please check your mailbox frequently for mail. All items must have the following information:

First Name Last Name
McMaster University
Electrical and Computer and Engineering
1280 Main Street West, ITB A111
Hamilton, ON L8S 4L7

Incoming courier packages will first arrive at Mail Services and then be delivered to the department mail room (ITB A113). It is best to address all packages the department office (ITB A111). The department is not responsible for lost or stolen packages.

ECE Fiesta - Graduate Student Representatives

The ECE Fiesta is a group of graduate students elected to serve as liaisons between the graduate student body and the department faculty and staff. They host a number of events to bring ECE students together. Follow them on Instagram at ecefiesta_mcmaster

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 the department grad admin upon arrival at the university. International graduate students without valid study permits will not be allowed to enroll.

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

Verification Letter Request

Letter requests for the following can be obtained by completing a Letter Request Form through the School of Graduate Studies webpage under the **Forms and Policies** tab:

- Enrollment Letter
- Study Permit / Extension of Study Permit
- Approval to Graduate / Work Permit Application
- Degree Conferred

NOTE: Department staff cannot provide information about Visa or immigration. Students should contact the Immigration and Mobility Advisor via the university's international student services (ISS) website: https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/international-students/immigration-advising/

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Conduct Expectations

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

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

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.

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.

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.

Extreme Circumstances

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

Intellectual Property & 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 Page | 6 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.

Plagiarism-Checking Software (iThenticate)

Effective December 1, 2023, all graduate students who initiate their defence on or after this date, will be required to have their thesis run throught McMaster's new plagiarism checking software, iThenticate. This process will be initiated by your supervisor.This requirement is not meant to catch plagiarism; but rather, 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.

Quicklinks

- The School of Graduate Studies Academic Calendar (2024 – 2025)
  https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/index.php?catoid=55

- Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering – Graduate Student Resources
  https://www.eng.mcmaster.ca/ece/resources/

- Policies, Procedures and Guidelines (Academic Dishonesty, Appeals, etc.)
  https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/

- Student Code of Conduct
  https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Code-of-Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities.pdf

- Copyright Policy (MILO)
  https://research.mcmaster.ca/mcmaster-industry-liaison-office-milo/about-us/

- Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy
  https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Discrimination-and-Harassment-Policy.pdf

- Research Integrity Policy
  https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy-1-1.pdf

- Thesis Completion and Defence
  https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/completing-your-degree/

- Collective Agreement for TA/RA in lieu of TA
  https://cupe3906.org/tas-unit-1/collective-agreement/

FINANCIAL MATTERS

McMaster scholarship payments and refunds are paid via e-transfer. You will receive an e-transfer to your McMaster email. Research scholarships are paid in lump sum installments at the beginning of each term. All other scholarships are also disbursed to the student in lump sum installments via direct

deposit at the beginning of each term. Further information about student accounts, timing of payments and payment schedule is available on the School of Graduate Studies website [Scholarship/Payments Schedule](#) page.

Scholarships, Fellowships, Bursaries and Other Awards

Most graduate students admitted to the M.A.Sc. and Ph.D. programs in Electrical and Computer 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.

Graduate students are encouraged to apply for both internal and external funding opportunities that may be available to them. Visit the [School of Graduate Studies Scholarships](#) page and watch for internal communication by email; most of these opportunities will be advertised through those mediums. Awards—such as CGS, PGS and Vanier—are announced in the Fall term, as well as most donor-funded awards. OGS awards 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 an NSERC, CGS-M, CGS-D, PGS-D, OGS, QEII GSST or Vanier), the total stipend provided by the program cannot be reduced by more than $2,500 per term for each term in which the students holds the award. Any scholarship greater than $10,000 is considered a major scholarship.

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP

Teaching Assistantship First Time Teaching Assistants (TA)

All first time TA's 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 five (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](#)
2. [New TA Programming](#)
3. [Fireball Academy TA Training Materials](#)

Returning Teaching Assistants

If for any reason, a returning TA has not taken the pedagogy and anti-oppression training (away on a leave of absence or co-op placement), the TA will be required to take the two-hour anti-oppression training module through MacPherson and will receive two hours of pay accordingly. While additional training is encouraged, it will not be compensated.

Teaching Assistants for 2024/2025 Academic Year

A useful guide is provided here: https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/taguide/

You must complete all TA training. Before commencing your Teaching Assistantship duties, you need to complete the [TA Hours of Work form](#) following forms in consultation with the course instructor and submit the completed forms to the Graduate Administrator.

If you are to receive a TA, as indicated in your offer letter, you will be paid bi-weekly by direct deposit, based on when you are scheduled to work.

Receiving Payment

In order to receive research scholarships and TA income, you will need to submit payroll documentation. Setting up your banking details should be a priority to receive research scholarships and TA pay. International students will need to obtain their Social Insurance Number (SIN) first in order to open a Canadian bank account.

To receive your payments, you must submit your payroll information via the Employee Self-Service portal. Learn more: https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/payroll/teaching-assistants-payroll-information/

Research 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 graduate/department bursaries, you will need to ensure that you are properly set up for [Direct Deposit](#). Bursaries are paid as one lump sum two or three weeks into the start of a new term.

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.

*IMPORTANT: If you complete any of the previous steps improperly and/or are not fully enrolled in all three (3) terms - Fall 2024, Winter 2025 and Spring/Summer 2025 - your payments may be delayed until a correction is made.

Quicklinks

- [Payroll Information for Teaching Assistants (TA)](#)
  TAs play a crucial role in the academic environment. This page provides essential information on all aspects of TA payroll, ensuring you understand your payment details and processes.

- [Pay Statement Guide](#)
  Students can view their pay statements in Mosaic. Understand your pay statement by reviewing the Statement Guide. Teaching Assistantships are subject to Federal and Provincial tax deductions.

- [Tuition, Fees and Scholarships](#)
  Tuition fees are based on a term-by-term basis. Supplementary fees are fees charges in addition to tuition and are paid in full at the start of term.

CUPE 3906 Collective Agreement

Your TA position is unionized by CUPE Local 3906 bargaining unit 1, and subject to the terms of the Unit 1 Collective Agreement (the "CA"). Under this agreement, the Employer will:

(i)   Make copies of the revised collective agreement available within one month of the printing of this agreement in all Human Resources Services offices and academic units; and

(ii)   Provide direct access, via an email link, one month after the start of each semester, to a copy of this collective agreement to each newly hired employee, at no cost to the employee upon commencement of his/her initial assignment, unless a printed copy is requested by the employee.

The [Collective Agreement](#) is available on your local CUPE website.

MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES & STUDENT LIFE

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.

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, developed by certified ESL and EAP experts to meet the needs of McMaster students of all academic backgrounds and levels of the English language proficiency.

The School of Graduate Studies – Graduate Writing Resources

Whether you are at the beginning of your graduate journey, nearing the end, or somewhere in between, The School of Graduate Studies has a variety of writing resources including on-one-on-one support with a graduate writing expert, workshop, quiet study space and more.

Engineering Graduate Society

The Engineering Graduate Society (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.

Build Professional & Technical Skills

Discover the Technical Communications 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.
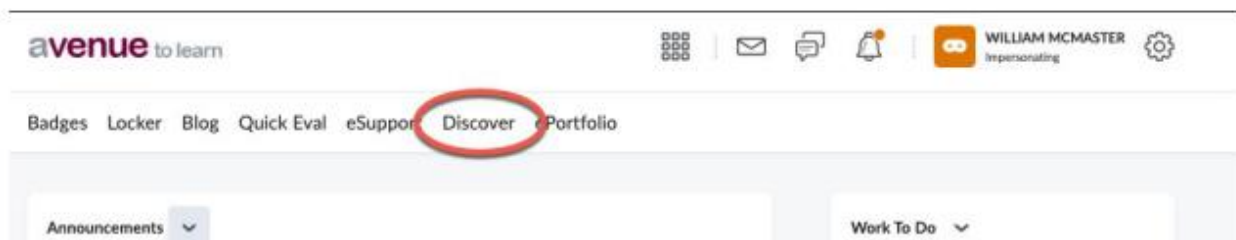
RESPONSIBILITIES OF GRADUATE STUDENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY

Matters With Regard to Student Responsibilities

[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 the University's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities

If there is a problem with supervision, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Associate Chair (Graduate).

Research-Based Programs

With regard to research and study, students are responsible for 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. If there is a problem with supervision, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Department Chair or Graduate Advisor. It is also the expectation that students will seek clarification when necessary on questions regarding elements of academic and research progress. The provisions for changing a supervisor are outlined in [Section 3.1](#).

Students who undertake to write Master or Doctoral theses' assume responsibility both for creating drafts of the thesis and for responding to direction from the Supervisor and the Supervisory Committee (in the case of Doctoral Students). The student shall have the responsibility to write and ultimately to defend the thesis and the Supervisor/Supervisory Committee has the responsibility to offer guidance in the course of the endeavor, and to recommend or not recommend the completed thesis for defense. 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. Since registration permits access to libraries and certain other academic facilities, it also implies a commitment on the part of each graduate student to use such facilities in accordance with applicable rules.

GRADUATE PROGRAM REGULATIONS – ENROLMENT

Matters With Regard to Enrolment (Section 2.5 Of The Graduate Calendar)

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.

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 five years (60 months) from the original date of registration if student began as "part-time"; Ph.D. program: up to eight years (96 months) 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.

Status Changes (FT to PT; PT to FT; Withdrawal; Re-admission to Defend; Program Transfers, Leaves of Absence; 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). Please see the graduate program administrator at least one month in advance of an expected transition 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. 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 & Relationship Manager - Graduate Studies. For more information, please visit: https://www.eng.mcmaster.ca/co-op-career-experience/how-co-op-works/graduate/

Industrial Ph.D. Program

The Industrial Ph.D. program allows full-time doctoral students the unique opportunity to work in the field and complete study toward their doctoral degree simultaneously. For more information on the Industrial stream, please visit the Faculty of Engineering's page on the "Industrial Ph.D." program.

Leaves of Absence, Parenting Leave, Full-Time Off Campus, Vacation Time

Graduate students are required to be continuously registered to support the timely completion of their degree. On admission to a full-time program, the assumption is that a student will be full-time on-campus. Failure to be on campus on a full-time basis may result in automatic withdraw of the program.

Leaves of Absence (LOA)

Students may apply for a leave of absence in one of four categories:

1. Medical or disability leave
2. Parenting leave
3. Compassionate or personal leave
4. No course available leave

Full Time Off Campus (FTOC)

Graduate students who will be off campus for more than two-weeks for purposes related to research must apply to be full-time off campus and complete the required form. Forms can be found on the School of Graduate Studies website, Current Students, Forms and Policies.

Vacation

Graduate students are expected to be on campus for all three terms of the university year. Normal vacation entitlement is two weeks, to be scheduled by mutual acceptance with the supervisor. An exception to this allotment requires approval from the supervisor.

Optional Scheduled Breaks for M.Eng Students

Graduate students enrolled in 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 begin 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, a leave of absence would be the path.

Health Insurance Information

All registered students are required to have approved hospital and medical insurance. Medical costs in Canada are very expensive; therefore, having health insurance covered is essential. Ontario residents and permanent residents must have Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) coverage. International, visiting and exchange students must have individual coverage under the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) and coverage for any dependents.

Permanent Residents (OHIP)

Health coverage for Canadian and Permanent residents is covered by OHIP. You must apply at a ServiceOntario Centre. Please visit www.ontario.ca for information.

International Students (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 dependents (spouse and children). For more information, please visit:
https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/international-students/health-insurance/

Other 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.

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.

Enrollment 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 enroll in UHIP within 30 days of arrival in Canada.** More information is available on the university's international student services (ISS) website:
https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/international-students/health-insurance/

Dental Plan

All full-time graduate students who are receiving a Teaching Assistantship (TA), or a Research Assistantship (RA) in lieu of a TA of 130 hours or greater, will have dental plan premiums deducted each month for the full academic year (September 1 to August 31). Provisions for opting out of the dental plan, or for obtaining family coverage, are covered in a separate document that describes the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3906 dental plan. Dental claim forms and opt out forms are available in PDF-format on the CUPE Local 3906 website

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) also provides Studentcare Dental Plan. Please refer to the "Graduate Students Association" section further in this handbook for more information.

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 http://www.studentcare.ca/

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: https://gsa.mcmaster.ca/services/health-and-dental/

International Student Services (ISS)

International Student Services (ISS) is a division of the Student Success Centre that provides additional services and programs for international undergraduate, graduate, visiting and exchange students. International students are a valued part of our community. We encourage you to explore these services, as well as our other services through the Student Success Centre. If you're unsure where to get support for your specific concerns, check out our success coaching services.

Student Wellness Centre

The Student Wellness Centre is the place on campus to address your wellness needs. They provide a range of counselling options, medical services and wellness programs so that you can get the most out of your McMaster experience, academically and personally! If graduate students have questions about any of the support programs available, they are free to email wellness@mcmaster.ca and the response time is normally within 24 hours. More information is available on the website: https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/

Counselling

At some point just about everyone finds they have major concerns on their mind that may interfere with their success, happiness, and satisfaction at university. Often, students mention that a helpful way of dealing with problematic situations and feelings is to start by talking them through with an experienced counsellor.

Medical Care

Our medical team of doctors and nurses provide a range of health services to support your emotional, physical, and personal wellbeing while studying at McMaster.

Health Promotion

Our health promotion team provides health and wellness prevention and awareness programs to connect you with information, resources and services in the McMaster and Hamilton community.

Mental Health – Empower Me Program

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.

Though Empower Me, counselors are completely qualified to support students in crisis. What's great about Empower Me is that you don't need to be in crisis in order to take advantage of their services. You could speak to a life coach about subjects like personal performance, well-being and growth, career, relationships, and finances.

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

Good2Talk - 1-866-925-5454 or dial 211 and ask to be connected to Good2Talk
This is a free, confidential helpline providing professional counselling and information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being to post-secondary students in Ontario, 24/7/365.

EmpowerMe – 1-844-741-6389, 24/7
This is a 24/7 accessible counselling services to empower you to thrive, crisis support, mental health and well-being services.

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: https://wellness.mcmaster.ca/crisis-support/

[TalkSpot](https://...)
A mental health service exclusively for McMaster Engineering students. They offer informal, confidential consultation with a counsellor. You can share what's on your mind to get perspective, problem-solve and receive suggestions for resources or support. What you share with the TalkSpot counselor is completely confidential and will not be disclosed to faculty, staff, friends, or family.

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 & Professional Development at McMaster Engineering.

More information is available on the Engineering Graduate Society website: https://egs.mcmaster.ca/

Health and Safety Training Program

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 Recourse website:
https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/health_safety_well-being/#tab-content-our-safety

Mandatory Health and Safety Requirements

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

- **Training Matrix (APPENDIX A)**
  The mandatory safety training matrix is reproduced in Appendix A. 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.

- **RMM Number 300 - HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM**
  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.

  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.

- **RMM Number 324 – JOB HAZARD ANALYSIS PROGRAM**
  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:
  https://hr.mcmaster.ca/app/uploads/2019/01/Creating-a-JHA.pdf

- **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:
https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/health_safety_well-being/our-safety/lab-safety/

Reporting of a Safety Incident

Any incident, whether it did or could have, resulted in injury must be reported to the department immediately. Please advise your supervisor/instructor as soon as possible and complete the online Injury/Incident Report. This form is available on the Human Recourses website:
https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employees/health_safety_well-being/our-safety/

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. More information can be found in RMM 1201 Fire Safety Plan

Security Services

Developing a safe and secure environment in this academic institution is the responsibility of the entire community. The primary responsibility for the protection of persons and property within the McMaster community is assigned to the Security Services Department.

Security

Please be security conscious. Do not leave personal valuables in your office or desk. Keep all books, notes, etc. locked in your locker. Do not share your keys or invite others to the graduate student offices or other department facilities. So that no rooms are left unattended, the last person leaving an office should lock the door. Do not give your copier code to anyone. Do not reveal your computer password to anyone. If you suspect that it is compromised, change it immediately.

Emergency

The McMaster Security office is located in E. T. Clarke 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 by them for 60 days. ****IN CASE OF EMERGENCY DIAL 88***

Safety App

McMaster's SafetyApp is the official safety app of McMaster University. It is the only app that integrates with McMaster's safety and security systems. McMaster University has worked to develop a unique app that provides students, faculty and staff with added safety on the McMaster campus. The app will send you important safety alerts, including campus closures and emergency instructions and provide instant access to campus safety resources. A "Friend Walk" option allows someone to watch your travel route home, which enhances the existing Student Walk Home Attendant Team

Learn more about the Safety App and how to download it to your devices.

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.

Scholarships and Awards

The School of Graduate Studies provides funding to our **full-time** graduate students so they can devote their time and energy to the successful completion of their studies. Doctoral students who meet the criteria under Section 4 in the Graduate Calendar, receive financial support which meets or exceeds an annual minimum value equal to full-time tuition plus $17,500. As well, the majority of Masters students in research-degree programs receive substantial funding packages.

The Faculty of Engineering has a policy ensuring that the gross pay minus tuition of any newly hired full-time, nonovertime Ph.D. students is a minimum of $21,000. There is no such policy for students in M.A.Sc or M.Eng programs. There are three types of additional funding available to graduate students:

1. External major scholarship and awards that have an associated application process.

2. Internal (department) scholarships and awards that have an associated nomination process.

3. University travel awards (limited number) that have an associated application process. The department strongly encourages graduate students to apply for all eligible internal, external, Government, Indigenous, and travel scholarships, awards and bursaries.

Application procedures vary,however most are communicated by email from the department. Applicants are responsible to check government award pages, as well as the agency websites, for complete details on eligibility, how to apply, and competition deadlines. Please visit the Graduate Studies Scholarships page for a full list of scholarships and awards. Additional awards are available from McMaster's Engineering Graduate Society (EGS) and Graduate Student Association (GSA)

Change in status: If your status as a student changes – you graduate, take a leave of absence, withdraw from the program – your eligibility for bursaries, academic grants, travel awards, and scholarships may be affected.

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 2024/2025 academic year (September 2024, January 2025 or May 2025 admission). For in-course 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 2020, January 2021 or May 2021, refer to the Academic Calendar and ECE Handbook for 2020/2021. In the event of a discrepancy between the information provided in the Graduate Student Handbook and the School of Graduate Studies Calendar, the latter prevails.

M.Eng. Degree (Electrical and Computer Engineering)

A candidate for the M.Eng degree may proceed by the course or project stream.

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. Up to two 600-level ECE courses can be taken in the final undergraduate year at McMaster for graduate credit. All courses toward the M.Eng. degree in ECE may be taken on a part-time basis.

Students choosing M.Eng research stream, must take first find a willing supervisor and must enroll in ECE 701.

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

M.A.Sc. Degree (Electrical and Computer Engineering)

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 Electrical and Computer Engineering Department, and to prepare a thesis embodying the 19 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−.

Ph.D. Degree (Electrical and Computer Engineering)

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

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

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 supervisor when selecting courses.

Courses Outside the Department

Graduate students are normally required to complete their course degree requirements by taking courses from within their program (Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering). As a minimum, at least 50% of courses taken must be listed or cross-listed by the Department's (Electrical and Computer Engineering) program 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 to select some of their 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, but within the Faculties of Engineering, Science and Health Science, written approval from the supervisor is required (to be submitted to the Graduate Administrative Assistant for record keeping purposes). For any other courses to be taken for credit require approval from the Associate Dean – Graduate Studies (Engineering).

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 Adjustments](#) during the normal add period of enrollment in a particular term. The form is submitted to the program 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.

The passing grades for an Extra Course are A+, A, A−, B+, B, and B−.

Failing a Course or Milestone

The minimum passing grade in a graduate course is a B−. Failure in either a course or a milestone is reviewed by the appropriate Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study or the Associate Dean. The Faculty Committee on Graduate Admissions and Study or the Associate Dean acting on its behalf requests a departmental recommendation regarding the student, and this recommendation is given considerable weight. In the absence of a departmental recommendation to allow the student to continue, the student will be required to withdraw. 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. A failing grade in a Certificate, Diploma, Master's or Doctoral course remains on the transcript. Students who fail a second course or milestone will not normally be allowed to continue in the program.

SGS 700 Research/Writing (Full-Time)

Mosaic requires graduate students to be enrolled in a course in all three terms, even if you plan on finishing before the year ends. Students must have one course in each term. If you do not have any courses in a term you must enroll in the placeholder course SGS 700. Failure to enroll a course in each term may result in payment delays or prevent the student from moving onto the next academic year. This does not apply to graduate students who are on a leave of absence.

Graduate student fees in the department are assessed on a per-term basis.

Career Planning Milestone Training & Report (CARP)

All graduate students are required to complete a career planning exercise within the first three terms (12 months) of full time study. Graduate students will participate in a planning session with a career specialist within the Faculty and subsequently produce a report before completion of the first three terms (12 months) of full time study. The report must be submitted to the Graduate Administrative Assistant for approval by the Associate Chair (Graduate). Courses are only offered in Fall (Term 1) and Winter (Term 2) of the academic year.

SGS Mandatory Courses: SGS 101 / SGS 201

Graduate students are required to complete the following two (2) on-line courses available within Avenue to Learn (A2L) McMaster's web-based course management system:

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

Anyone who has not completed either of the following courses by the deadline provided by SGS will be automatically assigned an F grade. Each course takes approximately one hour to complete and consists of watching an online presentation followed by a test.

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

Notes

- Passing grade for SGS 101 is 14/20 and students have three (3) attempts.
- Passing grade for SGS 201 is 6/6 and currently there is no limit to the number of attempts.
- Graduate students who have taken SGS 101 and 201 for a previous graduate degree do not need to take the course again.
- Graduate students, who have taken an AODA equivalent course, either previously at McMaster (e.g. undergraduate welcome week representative) or at another institution, may be exempt from taken SGS 201. They should contact aoda@mcmaster.ca to confirm that the course in question is an OADA equivalent course. Once confirmation is provided, it needs to be forwarded to sgsrec@mcmaster.ca.

M.A.Sc. Degree Requirements (Excluding Course Work)

Annual Supervisory Committee Meeting (SCM)

The relationship between the graduate student and supervisor/advisor is unique and provides a remarkable opportunity to guide and mentor the student engaged in advanced academic learning. Learn about the guidelines and expectations for graduate students, supervisors and building a good supervisory committee relationship.

M.A.Sc. students will need to fill out a Supervisory Committee Report form with their supervisor/co-supervisor (if applicable). Using the M.A.Sc. supervisory committee meeting report form, a faculty member must give each of their Masters students (M.A.Sc.) a mid-program progress review and submit that form to their department (and ultimately to SGS). The review should come within 6 months for students who are considering transferring to the Ph.D. program. Otherwise, the review occurs within the first 12 months . Part-time students must also receive a review after their first year. A student starting in September must have the report done by September 1 the following year; starting in January it is due January 1; starting in May it is due May 1

Download and complete the form here.

Timeline
Students completing a 24-month program including Part-Time students are expected to have a meeting within the first 12-months of their program. Students on an approved Leave of Absence is extended by the duration of the leave beyond the nominal deadline.

Program Start Date:	SCM Deadline:
Prior to September 1, 2024	November 30, 2024
September 1, 2024	November 30, 2025
January 1, 2025	November 30, 2025
May 1, 2025	November 30, 2025

M.A.Sc. Defence

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.

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 thesis, 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 can be struck and an oral defense date set.

3. An electronic copy and any requested printed copies must be submitted to the Department at least 2 weeks prior to the defense date.

4. The student's advisor(s) and two other faculty members, one of whom may be from a department other than Electrical and 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.

5. 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.

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 to the School of Graduate Studies via MacSphere. Students are normally expected to submit their final thesis within four weeks of a successful defence.

Ph.D. Degree Requirements (Excluding Course Work)

Annual Supervisory Committee Meeting (SCM)

The relationship between the graduate student and supervisor/advisor is unique and provides a remarkable opportunity to guide and mentor the student engaged in advanced academic learning. [Learn about the guidelines and expectations](#) for graduate students, supervisors and building a good supervisory committee relationship.

Ph.D. students are assigned a supervisory committee. The supervisor must be declared within the first 5 months of study and the supervisory committee must be declared within the first 12 months of study.

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 scholar 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 and Dean of Graduate Studies. In this instance, please contact the Graduate Administrative Assistant for more information.

Overview
The objective of the meetings is to assess progress towards meeting degree requirements and to set goals to complete all remaining degree requirements.

Timeline
Ph.D. students are required to meet with their supervisory committee on an annual basis (a minimum of four times over the typical length of the Ph.D. program).

Program Start Date:	SCM Deadline:
Prior to September 1, 2024	November 30, 2024
September 1, 2024	November 30, 2025
January 1, 2025	November 30, 2025
May 1, 2025	November 30, 2025

Comprehensive Examination

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 PhD 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.

Ph.D. Defence

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.

Ph.D. Thesis Students close to submitting their Ph.D. thesis (about 2 months) should complete on-line the Thesis Defense System (TDS). You will be asked for your thesis title and estimated date to submit your thesis. 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.

Thesis Doctoral students and their supervisors should keep in mind that theses of extraordinary length are to be 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 urged 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 before the thesis is submitted for the defense.

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:
https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/completing-your-degree/masters-thesis/

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

General Information about Defence and Clear to Graduate

Response Time for Ph.D. And Master's 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 Thesis

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 Theses for more detailed information on sandwich theses: https://gs.mcmaster.ca/current-students/completing-your-degree/

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

Clear to Graduate (Thesis Based Programs)

The Graduate Administrative Assistant will receive all required forms from the supervisor and/or Chair and submit to the School of Graduate Studies. The forms are then processed, and the student reviewed to 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.

Clear to Graduate (Non-Thesis Based Programs)

Student must complete the Non-Thesis Clear to Graduate Form to the Graduate Administrator by the deadline set by the department. The form is then processed, and the student is reviewed to clear to graduate. Please note the administrative process to 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.

APPENDIX A – Training Matrix

McMaster University Training Matrix - Teaching/Research Assistants					
	Training Frequency (may be more frequent as per OH&S guidelines)	Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant - Category 1: Strictly Marking and office work, classroom presence	Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant - Category 2: Marking, office work, classroom presence, other duties, lab work with chemicals	Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant - Category 3: Marking, office work, classroom presence, other duties, lab work including chemical use and machine/equipment operation	Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant - Category 4: Marking, office work, classroom presence, machine/equipment use with no chemicals
Asbestos Awareness	5 yr	X	X	X	X
Chemical Handling & Spills	3 yr		X	X	
COVID-19 Awareness	Once	X	X	X	X
Ergonomics	5 yr	X	X	X	X
Fire Safety	3 yr	X	X	X	X
Gas Cylinder	Once		⊗	⊗	⊗
Health & Safety Orientation	Once	X	X	X	X
Hydrogen Fluoride	3 yr		⊗	⊗	
Machine Guarding Awareness	3 yr			⊗	X
Slips, Trips & Falls	5 yr	X	X	X	X
Violence & Harassment Prevention in the Workplace	3 yr	X	X	X	X
WHMIS 2015 ~	5 yr	X	X	X	X
Other Specific Training	Various	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗

Legend

X Mandatory

* Mandatory if currently working on campus or before your return to campus for work purposes.

⊗ Required if working with the hazard or supervising staff who work with the hazard

~ As New products, equipment and technology take place training is required

All training to be completed as soon as practicable upon hire and prior to working with hazard.

Supervisors may request at their discretion the worker to complete refresher training of the current health and safety courses offered by the University on a more frequent basis as is deemed necessary, ie. conditions change, new information or hazards are introduced.

Supervisors please note RMM #300 (Safety Training & Orientation) all undergraduate students (and placement students) shall have safety orientation training prior to commencing labs