Graduate Student Information Session

University of Waterloo
September 12th 2018

James Taylor
Graduate Officer, Physics and Astronomy
taylor@uwaterloo.ca,
phygrado@connect.uwaterloo.ca
Outline:

1. Who are we?
2. Where to get information
3. What you need to do
4. Dealing with problems
5. Some parting thoughts
(Questions)
1. Who are we?

Grad Secretary: Judy McDonnell  
office PHY 245 (F18: 345/345A)
Grad Officer: James Taylor  
office: PHY 256 (F18: 232)

Associate Grad Officer: Anton Burkov  
office: PHY 369 (F18: 205)

GSP Director: Melanie Campbell  
office: PHY 353 (F18: 316)
Assistant to GSP Director: Kiley Rider  
office: PHY 259 (F18: 345)

GraduateSecretary.Physics@uwaterloo.ca  
GraduateOfficer.Physics@uwaterloo.ca  
or taylor@uwaterloo.ca

physics.g.associate@uwaterloo.ca  
TAs

course progress,  
committee meetings,  
thesis defense;

melanie.campbell@uwaterloo.ca  
gwp@uwaterloo.ca  
admissions,  
qualifying exam
2. Where to get Information

**U Waterloo information site:**  [https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/](https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/)

**Graduate Studies Guide:**  
[https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/sites/ca.graduate-studies/files/uploads/files/A%20Guide%20for%20Graduate%20Research%20and%20Supervision%20at%20the%20University%20of%20Waterloo%202011_2.pdf](https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/sites/ca.graduate-studies/files/uploads/files/A%20Guide%20for%20Graduate%20Research%20and%20Supervision%20at%20the%20University%20of%20Waterloo%202011_2.pdf)

**Physics Graduate Studies:**  [https://uwaterloo.ca/waterloo-guelph-physics-graduate-studies/](https://uwaterloo.ca/waterloo-guelph-physics-graduate-studies/)
- course offerings
- program requirements (link to GSP graduate handbook)
- Forms

**Physics & Astronomy site:**  [https://uwaterloo.ca/physics-astronomy/graduate-studies](https://uwaterloo.ca/physics-astronomy/graduate-studies)
- Events (like this one!)
- Scholarship information hub, forms
- Teaching Assistant information (including online forms for preferences)
- Thesis Defense Information
- Training and learning (TA training, Grad Writing Center)
3. What you need to do

1. Apply for scholarships
2. Set up an advisory committee
3. Meet with your advisory committee
   (in the first six months, and then at least 1/year thereafter)
4. Submit a degree program form (in the first eight months)
5. Settle on QE topics (PhDs; at your first committee meeting)
6. Complete your course requirements and milestones
7. Do your TA work
8. Sit and pass your QE (PhDs)
9. Complete your thesis research
10. Submit and defend your thesis
11. Graduate!
Scholarships

There are many scholarship opportunities; they will increase your overall income, but more importantly look very good on a CV.

Contact point:
Judy McDonnell

Source of information:
UW scholarship database https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies/awards/database
GWPI web page

NSERC/OGS ... fellowships:
get an early start, contact potential referees now
→ have them to agree to serve as referee for you!
Scholarship Overview

(The following are the main scholarships you may be eligible for; there are many other smaller ones as well; numbers and dates approximate; see Judy for details.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dom/internat.</th>
<th>MSc/PhD</th>
<th>Application Date</th>
<th>Approximate Amount</th>
<th>Typical (Undergrad) Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OGS, QEII</td>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>domestic</td>
<td>MSc &amp; PhD</td>
<td>December/January</td>
<td>15K</td>
<td>~85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGS, QEII</td>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>international</td>
<td>MSc &amp; PhD</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>15K</td>
<td>~85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSERC-CGSM</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>domestic</td>
<td>MSc</td>
<td>November</td>
<td>17.5K</td>
<td>~90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSERC-Doctoral</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>domestic</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>21K</td>
<td>~90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(PGSD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSERC-CGSD</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>domestic</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>(same as PGSD</td>
<td>35K</td>
<td>~92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>application)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSERC-Vanier</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>both</td>
<td>MSc &amp; PhD</td>
<td>July/August</td>
<td>50K</td>
<td>~95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advisory Committee

It is your responsibility to set this up!
- Discuss it with your supervisor
- need at least one regular member of Physics and Astronomy (at Waterloo) in addition to the supervisor
- have it set up so that you can have the first meeting this term!
- to meet once every year thereafter
- no program extension without up-to-date meeting

Role:
- advise you
- help you to keep things on track
- discuss and sign off on Qualifying Exam topics
Advisory Committee Meetings

It is your responsibility:
- to schedule them (once you have agreed on a date with your committee, notify Judy who will book a room and print off the forms)
- to bring all the necessary forms to sign

Typical Committee meeting: (total duration ~ 1 hour)
- academic progress report (Graduate Degree Program Form)
- scientific progress report
- scientific outlook
- Qualifying Exam topics?
- feedback, signing of Committee Report

Schedule it for this term!
**Graduate Degree Program Form**

**Instructions**
It is required that the student, in consultation with the advisory committee, complete and file this form in the department not later than the end of the student’s second registered semester. This signed form represents a contract between the student and the university program; if changes are required to the original contract, a revised form should be filed.

### Prescribed Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please indicate: [ ] Degree by THESIS  [ ] Degree by Course Work/Minor Paper (list course # above)

### Additional Courses

In addition to the prescribed courses listed above, the candidate may undertake to achieve satisfactory standings in suitable course(s) supportive of the special disciplines. These courses may be at either the undergraduate or the graduate level. The standings obtained in them will be included in the student’s overall average grade. It is understood that passing grades (minimum 60%) will be required in all additional courses. Please list additional courses below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required Signatures**

Committee Chair (student’s supervisor):

Co-Supervisor (if applicable):

Graduate Officer:

Dean, Graduate Studies:

Student’s Signature:

Date: ________________ Date: ________________ Date: ________________ Date: ________________ Date: ________________

---

- Plan your courses!
- waiving core courses:
  - Current instruction to verify equivalence
  - Contact Judy for process
  - Need to replace core course by other course
- Any changes in courses need a revision of this form!

(but you can revise it as often as you like, with your committee’s consent)
Funding

Main Principles:

Graduate funding is designed allow a single graduate student to survive and pay tuition, given the cost of living in Waterloo. There is a commitment on the part of the department to bring every student up to a minimum level.

In most cases, funding is paid out in approximately equal amounts every term, around the start of term.

Funding comes from several sources, including external scholarships, internal scholarships, departmental funds, TAs, and a Graduate Research Stipend from the supervisor.

A minimum level of funding should have been guaranteed you in your letter of letter; this is limited to the nominal duration of your program.
Teaching Assistantships (TAs)

- 110 h/term for full TA
  - typically includes time for proctoring, marking of exams
- up to instructor and TA to stay within the allotted time frame for task
  - discuss tasks and associated times
  - warning: will still need to be flexible
- opportunities for additional hours for proctoring & marking closer to midterm/final exams

Note:
- no holidays during TA duties
- short conference trips possible (talk to instructor, need to find replacement)
- TA duty time includes exam periods!
TA Assignments

1) Basic rule
   • All students who receive department-controlled funds are *in principle* required to do a TA
   • All other students in the program are eligible to TA if jobs are available

2) We will try to honour all buy-out requests, based on number of previous TAs, funding, and/or special circumstances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1:</th>
<th>Group 2:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>students who rely on TA funding to reach minimum funding (TA term)</td>
<td>students who rely on TA funding to reach minimum funding, but have their term off</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 3:</th>
<th>Group 4:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scholarship students who do not rely on TA for minimum funding</td>
<td>externally funded students, special funding arrangements, no department support needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

highest priority to be assigned T
required to TA if needed

ma volunteer for TA
Research Assistantships (RA)

www.research.uwaterloo.ca/finance/documents/GRSvsGRA_000.pdf

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequently Asked Questions</th>
<th>GRS (Graduate Research Studentship)</th>
<th>GRA (Graduate Research Assistantship)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the primary motivation of the professor in appointing the student?</td>
<td>To assist his/her student financially and to bring the student up to the guaranteed level of funding.</td>
<td>To hire an individual to assist in completing the tasks necessary for the professor's own research and for the professor's own academic and professional gain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the primary motivation for the student in accepting this role?</td>
<td>To assist in his/her training to become an independent researcher, to assist in qualifying for his/her degree, financial assistance to enable the student to focus on his/her graduate studies.</td>
<td>Employment income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will be the nature of the activities to be performed by the student?</td>
<td>Research will relate to student's own academic pursuits (still will contribute to the professor's overall research); tasks will include all those necessary to learn to become an independent researcher, may be in receipt of GRS funds even when primarily involved in coursework.</td>
<td>Unrelated to his/her own thesis, tasks may be more basic in nature and not of assistance in developing the student (e.g. reference checking, data entry, photocopying papers, etc. for professor's research).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will be the nature of the interactions between the professor and the student?</td>
<td>More collaborative in nature; professor as academic mentor.</td>
<td>Student takes direction and instructions from the professor, as an employer/employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What degree of independence will the student have?</td>
<td>Low – will take instruction from professor and possibly others in the lab/team.</td>
<td>As much as can be expected for current level of training of the student.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based upon the answers to these questions you will be able to determine whether the funds are paid as GRS (student) or whether the individual is to be paid as an GRA/GRN (employee).

Immigration consequences for VISA students:
GRA is part time work ➔ might be useful for Permanent Residency Applications.
Milestones:

**Safety**
Department Safety Contact: Kathleen St. Laurent F18:ESC 311

- Incoming students need to complete safety modules
  ➔ contact supervisor & Trish van Berkel
- Sign Safety Training Form

**Academic Integrity**

- UW online module
  ➔ mandatory, first term
- also: mandatory Academic Integrity Workshop

**Equity and Harassment:**
new; TAs need to read on-line material; check your email for details)
4. Dealing with Problems

In general, keep in touch by:
- Checking your UW email account regularly, as all official correspondence will be sent to this address (if you use another account, forward your UW mail to this account)
- Checking for mail in your physical mailbox in the Physics department
  (Judy will usually let you know if she sees something there)
- Advising Judy of any changes in supervisor, committee, thesis topic, or status
- Advising Judy if you plan to be away from campus for work (in Canada) for more than one month, plan to travel internationally for work for any length of time, or if your advisor is going to be away for more than one month (if you are travelling internationally for work, you will be required to take a safety course before you go)

If you run into problems, contact:
- your supervisor or advisory committee for research issues
- the graduate staff (Judy/Kiley) or officers (Melanie/James/Anton) for administrative issues
- counselling services or health services for personal problems; Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs for maternity leave etc., the Writing Centre for writing/English problems
5. Some parting thoughts...

The graduate staff and officers are here to support you. We want everyone in the program to succeed.

That said, you should take responsibility and take initiative in your degree. I will be what you make of it.

In particular, take responsibility for your own learning. Make sure you have the training and resources you need to learn what you need to know (including teaching/management training - see Gradventure website: https://uwaterloo.ca/gradventure).
Questions?