University of Waterloo Faculty of Applied Health Sciences School of Public Health and Health Systems

Graduate Student Handbook for M.Sc. and PhD programs
University of Waterloo
Faculty of Applied Health Sciences
School of Public Health and Health Systems

Graduate Student Handbook for M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs

Last Update: August 08, 2019

RECENT UPDATES

Update to Comp Procedure- Pgs 27-31
This handbook is a valuable resource for new graduate students. It is designed to assist you and make your time within our graduate program as enjoyable as possible. Please become familiar with the handbook's contents and refer back to it when you have any questions. Also, refer to the current University of Waterloo Graduate Calendar for all formal curriculum, registration, fee and residence requirements, as well as course descriptions.

**Important Websites**

- [School of Public Health and Health Systems - M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees](#)
- [Faculty of Applied Health Sciences home page](#)
- [AHS Office of Computing Services](#)
- [UW Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs Office (GSPA)](#)
- [Graduate Student Association (GSA)](#)
- [Centre for Teaching Excellence (TA Information)](#)
- [UW Scholarships & Funding](#)
- [Travel to Conferences](#)
- [Thesis Regulations](#)
- [Electronic Thesis Submission](#)
- [LEARN: SPHHS Research Grad Community Group](#)
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A. Director’s Welcome

On behalf of all faculty, staff and students participating in graduate programs with the School of Public Health and Health Systems (SPHHS), I am very pleased to welcome you to the University of Waterloo. We hope your time and efforts here will be productive, enjoyable and very memorable.

You are now a member of a community of scholars that first began its work in 1978. The original Department of Health Studies was created in response to Federal Health Minister Marc Lalonde's landmark report entitled, A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians. We were the first multidisciplinary health program in Canada with emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion.

The BSc and M.Sc. degree programs in Health Studies were launched in 1978, followed by the Ph.D. program in 1989. In 1993, Health Studies merged with the program in Gerontology to create the new Department of Health Studies and Gerontology. The Health Studies and Gerontology program was one of the few graduate programs in Canada that offered a recognized graduate gerontology degree at the Ph.D. level. In 2006, we welcomed our first class of graduate students in the new course-based Master of Public Health (MPH) program. We launched our Master of Health Informatics (MHI) program in Fall 2013 and were pleased to welcome our inaugural class of Master of Health Evaluation (MHE) students in Fall 2015.

In September 2012, the department changed its name to become the School of Public Health and Health Systems (SPHHS) to better reflect the expansion of its undergraduate and graduate degree programs into new areas of public health education and training. In 2015, a comprehensive review of the School’s research-based graduate programs was completed and proposed changes to the curriculum will come into effect in the Fall of 2016. These changes reflect the depth and diversity of research capacity in the SPHHS and the varied interests and backgrounds of incoming students, ensuring that future graduates are well prepared for careers and further graduate education.

This SPHHS Graduate Handbook includes important information on our graduate programs, our faculty and university services, and the current M.Sc. and Ph.D. degree requirements for SPHHS graduate students. The handbook is revised each year and is available to all new graduate students in hardcopy and online. Please read the handbook as soon as possible (before classes begin) because it will likely answer many of your questions. Instructors and staff will expect you to be familiar with the handbook and will refer to it repeatedly as you proceed through the program.

Please note that the handbook is an informational supplement for our students and is not a replacement for the University of Waterloo Graduate Calendar. The Graduate Calendar dictates the formal policies concerning registration, fees, grading, degree requirements, etc. The Graduate Calendar can be found on the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office (GSPA) website.

Through our graduate orientation sessions, we will provide information to make your transition to graduate school and the University of Waterloo as smooth as possible. All SPHHS and AHS sessions are mandatory. You are strongly encouraged to attend the campus-wide orientation for all University of Waterloo graduate students.

We are proud of the hundreds of Public Health and Health Systems and Health Studies and Gerontology graduate students who have earned degrees and now apply their talents and knowledge in a wide array of fields and places throughout the world. Our School’s faculty, staff, and students have been nationally and
globally recognized for their accomplishments in teaching, research and service. Congratulations on becoming part of such a proud tradition of academic achievement. I look forward to meeting you in person during SPHHS Graduate Orientation week. My colleagues and I hope we can make your graduate studies a rewarding and successful experience. Congratulations on your admission and best wishes for your success during your time with us.

Craig R. Janes, Ph.D.  
Professor and Director  
School of Public Health and Health Systems

**B. Faculty, School, and Graduate Program Organization**

Most of the SPHHS faculty and staff offices, as well as graduate student offices for the SPHHS research-based programs, are located on the first, second and third floors of the BMH/LHN complex. The Interim Dean of the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences is Dr. Paul Stolee, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the Faculty is Dr. Rhona Hanning. The Director of the School of Public Health and Health Systems is Dr. Craig Janes.

The SPHHS Graduate Studies Committee is responsible for the operation of the M.Sc. and Ph.D. graduate programs including admission and scholarship decisions, approval of thesis and comprehensive examination topics and committees, curriculum and degree requirements, and monitoring student progress. The committee has the mandate to provide leadership for the M.Sc. and Ph.D. graduate programs and to ensure that faculty member responsibilities in regard to SPHHS graduate students are properly discharged.

There is a Faculty of AHS Graduate Studies Committee comprised of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, the Graduate Officers for each department/School, various faculty members and a graduate student representative for each of the three academic units. This committee establishes AHS Faculty-level graduate policies.

All of our M.Sc. and Ph.D. graduate students are automatically members of the School of Public Health and Health Studies Graduate Students’ Association and a new executive is elected each Fall to serve you. The SPHHS GSA has now been formalized within the Faculty and School with a mandate to actively promote and represent graduate student interests to the university administration and various levels of government.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) is a campus-wide association for all UW graduate students, which automatically includes all members of the School of Public Health and Health Systems (SPHHS) Graduate Students’ Association. At the beginning of the Fall term, the graduate students in each department/School elect representatives to a variety of committees and councils.

For the SPHHS graduate research programs, graduate student representatives are elected to serve on the following committees:

- SPHHS Meetings
- SPHHS Research Graduate Studies Committee
- AHS Faculty Graduate Studies Committee
- AHS Faculty Executive and Faculty Council Meetings
In addition, the Dean's office will appoint a graduate student representative from the Faculty of AHS to the University Senate Graduate Council.

**Staff Support in the School of Public Health and Health Systems**

The main office of the School of Public Health and Health Systems is located on the second floor of Lyle Hallman South (LHS) and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

- **Dan Rodgers**, Graduate Coordinator, M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs (ext. 38455, LHN 2707)- Responsible for all academic issues that may affect M.Sc. and Ph.D. graduate students, such as program registration, course enrolment, adding and dropping courses, thesis-related issues, annual progress reports, student records, tracking graduate student funding support, payroll, office keys and other administrative issues. He is the key link in every student’s ability to manage their academic program and thesis requirements in their graduate program.

- **Brian Mills**, Graduate Research Assistant- Assists Graduate Coordinator (ext. 33692, LHN 2734).

- **Dr. Ellen MacEachen**, Associate Director Graduate Research Programs - Administrative responsibility for the M.Sc. and Ph.D. research programs; academic advising.

- **Melissa Santo**, Professional Graduate Programs Coordinator- Assists SPHHS graduate students who are working as MPH, MHI and MHE course preceptors or markers or who are interested in enrolling in PHS courses as electives.

- **Tracy Taves**, Faculty Graduate Studies Coordinator (ext.36149, BMH 3110)- Office hours are 9:30-11:30 a.m., Monday/Wednesday/Friday. Course scheduling and Ph.D. Thesis Defence administration.

- **Carol West-Seebeck**, Administrative Officer- Graduate office assignments and travel claims.

- **Doris Makowich**, Administrative Coordinator, Undergraduate Studies- Assists SPHHS graduate students who are working as TA’s or markers for undergraduate courses.

**C. Important Information for New Students**

**Academic Calendar Dates and Deadlines**

The [Calendar of Events and Academic Deadlines](#) summarizes the important dates for each term. Information about holidays, convocations and study breaks is also included. Information on payment instructions and graduate student fees can be found on the [Finance website](#).

**Student offices and key permits**

Full-time students with Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) or Graduate Research Studentship (GRS) funding will be assigned a desk in a shared office or offered alternative arrangements. Teaching
Assistants (TAs) and all other students will have access to common space on the third floor of Lyle Hallman North (LHN). Meeting rooms will be bookable on a first come, first served basis for TA office hours. Day use storage space is available.

The Graduate Coordinator will provide you with a key and fob at orientation based on the office allocation assigned to your Supervisor.

As per the SPHHS space policy, student office space is re-evaluated each term. Your office assignment may change depending on your funding assignment for the term.

Mail boxes

All SPHHS graduate research students have access to a shared mailbox on the 2nd floor of LHN in the mailroom. It is the student’s responsibility to periodically check their own mail box. You will not be notified by staff when you receive mail. Note that faculty and staff mailboxes are also on the 2nd floor of LHN.

Forms

Administrative forms are available online through the Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs Office or from SPHHS Research Grad Community group on the LEARN site. You will be automatically enrolled in the site once you are admitted.

Photocopy services

Graduate students are permitted to use the office photocopiers and printers (located on the 2nd and 3rd floors of LHN) for program course-work and research-related work ONLY.

Use of School letterhead, stationery and business cards

Graduate students cannot use SPHHS letterhead stationery for personal correspondence. However, they can use School letterhead for letters pertaining to legitimate program activity. The letters must be typed to present a professional image and must display an indication of the student's program relationship (e.g., teaching assistant, research assistant, graduate student, etc.). Legitimate usage includes approved research projects, correspondence regarding publication and presentation of papers, correspondence related to duties as a teaching assistant.

Please note that the School is not responsible for providing office supplies for graduate student use. In the case of teaching assistants, the supplies required to fulfil those responsibilities will be given to the respective faculty members.

Graduate students who require a personalized business card for their paid work or thesis-related work should contact the Administrative Officer.
Use of office telephones

Some offices are equipped with telephones. If you require a telephone in your office, please ask your supervisor to contact the Administrative Officer.

Note that SPHHS no longer maintains a fax machine. Fax service is available through the Dean’s Office on the 3rd floor of BMH (in their photocopy room). See the AHS Receptionist for assistance. The Dean’s fax number is 519-746-6776. If you’re expecting a fax, please make sure the sender includes your name and contact information on the cover sheet.

Computer facilities, email accounts, computer projectors, and services

Computer services for SPHHS graduate students are made available through the AHS Office of Computing Services. See their website for further information.

All graduate students are advised to login to WatIAM and verify their personal information. It is also advised to check the mail routing address. You can either select the UW provided account (Connect) userid@connect.uwaterloo or supply your own personal account. This function routes email sent to userid@uwaterloo.ca to either your Connect account or your personal account.

To check your email account login via https://connect.uwaterloo.ca. This is your life-line of communication from the faculty, fellow graduate students and the Graduate Coordinator. It is also advisable to ensure that your lab account is working. The SPHHS has a graduate computing lab located in BMH 2302. The username and password to login to this resource is the same as for WatIAM.

You are strongly advised to use your official UW email account for all university purposes, as it is more secure and has enterprise backup features compared to the free or commercial email servers.

The BMH/LHN complex has Wi-Fi for wireless connectivity with laptops and other mobile devices. Choose Eduroam as the network, use your full username (userid@uwaterloo.ca) and your password to authenticate.

A data projector and associated laptop is available for presentations and thesis defences. It is prudent for the student to contact the AHS Office of Computing Services for assistance with setup, well in advance, for any important presentations/meetings.

Important contact:
Lowell Williamson, IT Specialist (ext. 32326, BMH 1631, llwillia@uwaterloo.ca).

Payroll Procedures

If you are receiving a Teaching or Research Assistantship, you must complete a number of forms (e.g., federal and provincial tax worksheets, direct deposit, etc.) before you will be paid. If you complete this process before the cut-off date, you will be eligible for the first pay period at the end of September. Your pay will be deposited directly into your bank account on the last Friday of each month. Please contact the Graduate Coordinator if you have any questions.
Note to International Graduate Students: Please contact the International Experience Office (in the Student Success Office) with any questions about employment, obtaining a Social Insurance Number (SIN), mandatory health insurance (UHIP), etc.

Teaching Assistantships

Some time prior to your arrival, or shortly after you arrive, you will be notified if you have been assigned a Teaching Assistantship (TA). The course you have been assigned, the course instructor and a list of TA duties will be specified usually when you receive notification. The contract listing your responsibilities as a TA must be signed by you and returned to the Graduate Coordinator. Teaching assistants are expected to work an average of 10 hours per week for 16 weeks and it is strongly recommended that all graduate students perform at least one Teaching Assistantship within their degree.

NOTE: TAs are expected to be available to proctor and grade final exams (final examination periods, set by the Registrar’s Office, are scheduled after the end of term classes). Please refer to the Guidelines on Graduate Student Support policy in the calendar for the current TA rate of pay. A workshop on teaching assistantships is held during the fall orientation week. All new graduate students are expected to attend. An AHS Teaching Assistantship Manual will be handed out during this orientation workshop.

Research Assistantships

Graduate students may be assigned a Research Assistantship (RA) position instead of a TA. Normally RAs are also expected to work an average of 10 hours per week for 16 weeks. The duties for any given RA will be specified in writing, by the faculty member in charge. Students who are offered an RA position must sign and return the contract offer to the Graduate Coordinator before payment can be processed.

D. Registration and Tuition Payment Procedures

1. Hard copy fee bills are not mailed to you from Finance. Your up-to-date account information is available on QUEST. Enrolment and fee arrangement information is available on the Finance website.

In addition, the Graduate Studies Office website contains contact links to information for the following:

- Calendar of Events and Academic Deadlines
- Finance Office – Student Accounts
- Human Resources – Payroll
- WatCard Office
- International Student Office
- Graduate Student Association

2. Once fees are paid you can concentrate on selecting your course(s) for the term. The deadline for this is six weeks after the start of classes. Remember, you will not receive credit for the courses if you are not officially registered in them by the deadline. New students must register for any courses outlined in their admission letter. Each student is expected to consult with his/her faculty advisor regarding course selection each term. If you need permission to enrol in a graduate course, please start attending classes right away so you don’t fall behind while you’re waiting for approval.
3. Familiarize yourself with the regulations in the current on-line graduate calendar and check anything you are unsure of with the Graduate Coordinator. **By registering and paying fees, students assume responsibility for knowing the regulations and pertinent procedures as set forth in this handbook and the University of Waterloo Graduate Calendar.** Ultimately, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have met coursework and other requirements to complete your degree. Your faculty advisor, the graduate officer (through review of your annual progress reports) and the Graduate Coordinator are all there to assist you in this process. Some of these regulations are listed below.

**Notes:** Students are normally expected to maintain continuous registration (in each of the three terms each year). Failure to register and pay fees each term will mean you will have to apply for readmission. Special permission is required from the Faculty Associate Dean and the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office to change your registration status from full-time to part-time (or vice versa) or to go inactive, etc. If you do request inactive status, you must seek approval from your advisor, the Graduate Officer, and the Associate Dean. Requests for inactive status will not always be approved.

### E. University Policies Regarding Courses

#### Course Drop/Add Dates

See GSPA pages on course enrolment and course drop. **Incomplete Courses**

See GSPA guidelines on incomplete grade status (INC) and failure to complete (FTC). A failing grade in any course will necessitate a review of the candidate's status by the Department/School, and may result in the requirement to withdraw from the program. Please refer to the minimum degree requirements for Master’s and PhD degrees.

#### Auditing Courses

At present, you are not able to add an AUDIT course to your Quest record. You must obtain permission from the course instructor and approval from the Graduate Officer via a course drop/add form. In addition to regular attendance in the course, the instructor has the discretion to require class participation, preparation, and sometimes completion, of assignments and/or examinations. If you find yourself in difficulty while auditing a course, you should arrange to drop the course from your schedule before the exam period. An NMR or DNW (did not write exam) cannot be given for an Audit course. Should you fail to receive an “AUD”, the course will automatically be deleted from your transcript.

#### Taking Courses at Other Ontario Universities

See the GSPA pages on the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student plan (OVGS).
F. Other Important Policies and Regulations

Degree Time Limits and Extensions

All requirements for the Ph.D. and M.Sc. degrees in Public Health and Health Systems must normally be completed within the following time periods (beginning with the term of initial registration), as stipulated by the University Senate:

**Master’s** - Full-time (FT): 6 terms (2 years); Part-time (PT): 15 terms (5 years).

**Doctorate** - Full-time (FT) from master’s level: 12 terms (4 years); Part-time (PT): 21 terms (7 years).

**Transitional students** – time limits depend on their particular program requirements.

For computational purposes, a term of full-time enrolment is counted as 1.0, a term of part-time enrolment is counted as 0.5, and an inactive term is counted as 0. You will receive notification if you are nearing your time limit and must complete a "Petition for Extension of Program Time Limit" form indicating your plan of completion (see the GSPA website for more details). This form must be signed by yourself, your thesis supervisor, the SPHHS Graduate Officer, and the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. You have until the registration deadline to complete this form. Students who register, but fail to have their extensions approved may be asked to withdraw. **Students who have been granted an extension of time limit are considered to be on probation, and can be asked to withdraw from the program if progress is not deemed to be satisfactory.**

**Master’s:** It is recommended that full-time master’s students should complete most or all of their course work during the first two terms they are registered in the program (normally the Fall and Winter terms) and are encouraged complete their thesis proposal by the third term (Spring term). Please note that these are recommendations only; timelines may vary due to the multi-disciplinary nature of our School. It is ultimately up to your supervisor to provide guidance on an appropriate timeline for your project.

**Doctoral:** Normally, full-time doctoral students should complete their coursework by the end of the third term. They should normally begin their comprehensive examinations during the third term and have their oral examination completed sometime in the 4th term (Note: the Graduate Calendar stipulates that the comprehensive examination requirement must be completed within seven academic terms after initial registration). Once a student has successfully completed their comprehensive examination they may continue onto the proposal writing and defense.

Student Advising and Monitoring of Progress

All students are assigned an academic or faculty “advisor” when they enter the program. Together, the student and their advisor plan out course selection and set targets for completion of coursework and other degree requirements. While the advisor often becomes the “supervisor” for the thesis, this is not always the case. When a student chooses to work with a different faculty member to supervise their thesis, this individual will also become their general academic advisor. A “Change of Supervisor” form must be completed if you change supervisors at any point during your program. Forms can be obtained by visiting the GSPA website.

Students are expected to meet with their faculty advisors/supervisors on a regular basis. Your advisor should be regularly kept apprised of your progress and any problems arising (due to financial, health or
other personal circumstances). The student and faculty advisor should also feel free to consult with the Graduate Officer on any of these matters.

According to Applied Health Sciences Graduate Faculty Policy, the progress of graduate students is to be monitored and evaluated annually. Early in the Spring term, each student will be sent a the annual progress report template, which will be available to students on LEARN-SPHHS Research Grad Community Group. Students will be told to consult with their advisors and to complete these forms by a specified date. Both the student and his/her advisor must sign the form. These progress reports are then reviewed individually by the Graduate Officer and feedback is provided to both the student and his/her faculty advisor if necessary. A copy of each annual progress report is put in the student’s file. These reports may also be used by the graduate affairs committee for scholarship and other academic awards. Failure to complete and submit an annual progress report may result in the loss of guaranteed funding. Thus, it is to your advantage to complete these reports carefully and thoroughly. The information you provide is used to monitor your progress towards meeting your degree requirements in a timely fashion, to alert us to potential problems, as well as to reward you for initiatives such as conference presentations and submissions to refereed journals.

**Academic Integrity in Research and Scholarship**

The School is committed to the highest standards of integrity in research and scholarship by faculty, students, and staff. As a post-secondary institution, the value of the degrees the university awards deserving students at the end of their studies is dependent on the legitimacy of the education these students earn. A degree is valueless without integrity.

Every new UW graduate student must complete an online academic integrity module in their first academic term. Regardless of the term when the new student starts he/she will be automatically enrolled in the academic integrity module in LEARN. The student then has eight weeks to review the module and successfully achieve 75% to pass an academic integrity quiz.

Students who do not achieve 75% will have to retake the quiz until they attain the minimum score. Students who do not comply within the 8 weeks will be contacted by the Office of Academic Integrity and advised to complete the module within 14 days. Students who do not complete the module will not be allowed to enrol in future courses until they have completed this mandatory credit.

Completing the online Academic Integrity module alone does NOT meet the necessary milestone requirement. The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences offers a workshop on Academic Integrity in the Fall each year. New students are expected to attend and complete paperwork signalling the completion of this milestone. Students who do not attend this workshop will not be eligible to graduate.

The Writing Centre also provides resources to help you recognize and avoid plagiarism through one-on-one sessions and a workshop on paraphrasing and summarizing other people’s work.

**Human Research Ethics Training**

All undergraduate and graduate students, research/laboratory staff (including co-op or summer students and casual employees), project managers, and research assistants, will be required to complete a tutorial before submitting a research ethics application on which they are named. This includes applications for independent studies, course credit, fourth year and Master’s theses, Ph.D. dissertations, and faculty research.
All post-doctoral fellows and visiting scholars will be required to complete the tutorial upon arrival at the University of Waterloo and before submitting a research ethics application on which they are named.

**Maternity, Adoption and Parental Leave**

Graduate students who wish to take maternity, adoption, or parental leave may register for an inactive (full leave) or part-time (partial leave). Inactive status must be approved by the Supervisor, Graduate Officer, and Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The choice of registration status depends primarily on the amount of time you expect to be able to devote to your academic program during the leave, and must be made in consultation with your supervisor and Graduate Officer. Where external agencies are involved, as with visa students or those holding external scholarships, you should consult these agencies before applying for part-time or inactive registration. If you are approved to register “inactive”, you pay no tuition fees; if you register part-time, you pay part-time tuition fees. In either case the degree time limit is extended appropriately.

Full-time graduate students are eligible to receive a Bursary during a full or partial maternity or adoption leave provided that they have been registered as full-time graduate students at UW for at least two academic terms prior to the start of the leave. Part-time graduate students are eligible to receive a Bursary during a full four-month maternity or adoption leave provided that they have been registered as full- or part-time graduate students at UW for at least two academic terms prior to the leave, and are receiving financial support (TA, RA, scholarship, or bursary) during the academic term preceding the leave. For forms, please visit the GSPA Forms page, under Awards/Bursaries.

Students are advised to consult the Parental Leave Advisor in the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office at an early stage in planning for a maternity/adoption/parental leave. Please refer to the University policies for further information.

**Policies on Student Grievance and Academic Disciplines**

A graduate student who has a question or complaint is advised to follow normal administrative channels: 1) the student’s academic advisor/supervisor, and 2) the Graduate Officer. Do not go directly to the Department Chair/Director, the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and/or Associate Provost of Graduate Studies. The Graduate Officer for the program will consult these individuals as required. Student appeal procedures are set out in the Student Grievance Policy # 70.

If you have a grievance or question about an academic decision, you are strongly encouraged to first speak informally with the course instructor and/or graduate officer within the School.

Policy #71, Student Academic Discipline Policy, should also be referred to. Policy Guidelines of Graduate Student Support and other policy excerpts are listed in the document regarding UW Policies, Procedures and Committees.

**Financial Assistance**

Full-time (FT) students are eligible to receive teaching (TA) and research (RA) assistantships, as well as various university and external scholarships. The SPHHS graduate program commits to a minimum of 4 terms of funding (either TA and/or RA) for M.Sc. students, and 12 terms of funding for Ph.D. students. If you receive a major external scholarship, there is no guarantee of additional TA or RA funding support, but OGS and Tri-Council (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC) student scholarships will normally be matched to a
maximum of $10,000 per year through a combination of UW scholarships, Teaching Assistantships and Research Assistantships. Every attempt is made to assist all current full-time M.Sc. and Ph.D. students in good standing with additional TA and RA positions as needed, assuming adequate funds are available. Students are expected to apply for Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS) if they meet the eligibility criteria. More information is provided under the section “Financial Matters” and available from the Graduate Coordinator as well as from the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office (GSPA).

G. Description of Graduate Research Programs and Degree Requirements

The School of Public Health and Health Systems offers thesis-based programs leading to the Master’s (M.Sc.) and Doctoral (Ph.D.) degrees in Public Health and Health Systems. The M.Sc. and Ph.D. degree requirements are specified below. The SPHHS research programs provide strong methodological training, combining an interdisciplinary approach to public health and health systems together with opportunities for concentration in various methodological domains (including qualitative research methods, statistical approaches, epidemiology, and health informatics) and areas of interest. Students may request to undertake a joint degree with another academic unit at UW or may wish to complete the requirements of one of the collaborative programs. Descriptions of Ph.D. Collaborative Programs (involving several academic units in AHS) in Aging, Health, & Well-being; and Work & Health are provided later in this section.

Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Public Health and Health Systems - Degree Requirements

The intent of the M.Sc. program in Public Health and Health Systems is to produce graduates who have interdisciplinary training in areas including health promotion, disease prevention, public health biology, and health informatics and fundamental knowledge and research capabilities in public health and health systems. To obtain the M.Sc. degree, students must complete the required coursework, participate in the graduate seminars, and complete a Master’s thesis.

A list of all courses is available on the Graduate Academic Calendar.

The course offerings for each term are available in the Schedule of Classes.

Coursework: 5 one-term graduate courses (3 required, 2 free electives) (or equivalents approved by the Graduate Studies Committee) and the graduate seminars (0 credit, Fall and Winter terms) are the minimum requirements for the M.Sc. degree.

M.Sc. program course requirements (minimum 5 courses and graduate seminars):

- Required courses (1)
  - HLTH 601: Lifespan Determinants of Health and Disease

- Two (2) of the following methods:
  - HLTH 605A OR Equivalent or Advanced Statistics- Offered in Fall Semester
  - HLTH 625 OR Equivalent or Advanced Qualitative Methods- Offered in Fall Semester.
  - HLTH 606A OR Equivalent or Advanced Epidemiological Methods- Offered in Fall Semester.
  - HLTH 619 OR Equivalent or Advanced Methods in Health Informatics- Offered in Fall Semester.
  - It is highly recommended that M.Sc. students with a strong background or previous
training in one of these areas take the 700-level equivalent in place of the 600-level course requirement (e.g., those with a strong statistical background may opt to take HLTH 705). Such decisions should be made in collaboration with the supervisor.

- **Elective courses (2):**
  - 2 free elective courses, selected in consultation with the supervisor (may include courses outside SPHHS, or any courses offered by SPHHS, including additional courses from the required list, online courses, etc.)

- **Graduate Seminar** - All M.Sc. students must register and complete HLTH 600A and HLTH 600B (Graduate Seminar). Please note that these courses are designated as CR/NCR and do not count towards course requirements.

It is important to keep in mind that these are the minimum M.Sc. degree requirements. Both the student’s thesis advisor and their Thesis Advisory Committee may stipulate additional coursework if deemed necessary to ensure the student is adequately prepared. For instance, students who do not have strong methodological backgrounds may be required to take HLTH 433 (Experimental Methods).

At a minimum, and in accordance with University policy, students must obtain a final grade of at least a 70% in each of the courses presented in fulfillment of the M.Sc. degree requirements. A failing grade (<70%) in any course will necessitate a review of the candidate’s status by the SPHHS Graduate Officer, and may result in a candidate being required to withdraw from the M.Sc. program. A cumulative overall average of 75% is required in the courses presented in fulfillment of M.Sc. degree requirement. In addition, students are required to attend at least 75% of the graduate seminar classes to receive credit for completing this milestone.

**Master’s Thesis**

For the Master’s thesis, an approved topic is required and both the thesis proposal and final thesis will be defended in oral examinations. The M.Sc. thesis committee consists of a minimum of three faculty members and includes: the student's thesis supervisor and at least one other member of the School of Public Health and Health System’s faculty. One committee member may be from outside the School. If a committee member does not have a regular appointment with the University of Waterloo, they will need to have an Adjunct appointment with SPHHS to serve on a thesis committee. The composition of the Thesis Advisory Committee must be approved by the SPHHS Graduate Studies Committee prior to submitting notification of the M.Sc. Proposal.

Master’s theses previously published by SPHHS graduates are available online at UWSpace.

**Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Public Health and Health Systems - Degree Requirements**

The intent of the doctoral program in Public Health and Health Systems is to provide students with an interdisciplinary focus, specialized training, and advanced research skills in health promotion, disease prevention, health informatics and public health and health systems. The Ph.D. program will enable students to add depth and specialization to their work through the research apprenticeship model. To obtain the Ph.D. degree, students must complete required coursework, pass a comprehensive examination, and complete a doctoral thesis.
A list of all courses is available on the [Graduate Academic Calendar](#).

The course offerings for each term are available in the [Schedule of Classes](#).

**Coursework:** 9 one-term graduate courses beyond the Bachelor's degree, *including at least 4 courses* beyond the Master’s degree, constitute the normal minimum Ph.D. coursework requirement.

*Ph.D. program course requirements* (minimum 4 courses):

- **Required courses (2)**
  - HLTH 701 (not required for students in the Work and Health Collaborative Ph.D. Program)-Offered in Fall Semester.

  - **Plus one of the following required methods courses:**
    - HLTH 704- Advanced Qualitative- *Offered in Winter Semester.*
    - HLTH 705- Advanced Statistics- *Offered in Winter Semester.*
    - HLTH 706- Advanced Epidemiology- *Offered in Winter Semester.*
    - HLTH 719- Advanced Health Informatics- *Offered in Winter Semester.*

- **Elective courses (2)**
  - 1 methods elective course at the 600- or 700-level, selected in consultation with the supervisor *(may include courses outside SPHHS, or courses offered by SPHHS, including additional courses from the required course list)*

  - 1 free elective, selected in consultation with the supervisor. Students without a background in public health and health systems, and focusing in research areas other than Health Informatics, should take HLTH 601 (Lifespan Approaches to Disease Prevention and Health Promotion). Students focusing in Health Informatics may choose to take HLTH 611 (The Health Care System) or an equivalent course approved by the SPHHS Graduate Officer.

It is important to keep in mind that these are minimum requirements. Both the student’s thesis supervisor, thesis committee, and the SPHHS Graduate Studies Committee have the right to stipulate additional coursework as necessary to ensure the student is adequately prepared. Many students complete at least three courses within their area of research interest which may require the addition of one or more extra courses to the minimum coursework requirement.

At a minimum, and in accordance with University policy, students must obtain a final grade of at least a 70% in each of the courses presented in fulfillment of the Ph.D. degree requirements. A failing grade (<70%) in any course will necessitate a review of the candidate’s status by the SPHHS Graduate Officer, and may result in a candidate being required to withdraw from the Ph.D. program. A cumulative overall average of 75% is required in the courses presented in fulfillment of Ph.D. degree requirements.

**Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination:** Candidates must complete a comprehensive examination within seven terms of first registration. Students who have completed previous studies in another PhD program at the University of Waterloo or at another university, successfully complete the comprehensive exam not later than their fourth term of studies in their current program or their seventh term of study at the PhD level, whichever is longer. The comprehensive examination requirement is based on providing written responses to three questions and successfully completing an oral defense. The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to test the breadth and depth of the candidate’s comprehension of the
methodological and theoretical aspects of their field of study. The process is designed to enable candidates to acquire a solid grounding in their core area of public health research that will provide a foundation for undertaking dissertation research. The examination will also test the candidate’s ability to critically evaluate the literature and synthesize information from diverse sources to identify knowledge gaps and recommend solutions.

**Doctoral Dissertation:** A written Ph.D. thesis on an approved topic is required. Two oral examinations will accompany the written thesis. The first oral examination will be a defense of the thesis proposal; the second oral examination will be a defense of the complete thesis. Ph.D. research is to be conducted under the supervision of the student's Ph.D. thesis supervisor and the thesis advisory committee. The Ph.D. thesis advisory committee consists of at least three members, with the thesis supervisor and at least one other committee member being faculty from within the School of Public Health and Health Systems. Note that only two members of the student’s Comprehensive Examination Committee may serve on the thesis advisory committee. The proposal will be defended orally before the thesis committee. The complete thesis will be defended before a five-person Examination Board that includes an appointed faculty member from another UW faculty and an invited External Examiner from another university.

Ph.D. theses previously completed by SPHHS graduates are available at UWSpace. Also available on LEARN-SPHHS Research Grad Community Group are examples of paper based theses.

**Collaborative Ph.D. Program in Aging, Health, and Well-being**

The Collaborative Ph.D. Program in Aging, Health and Well-being provides students registered in any Department/School in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, with an interdisciplinary platform upon which to develop a broad understanding of issues related to the health and well-being of our aging population. The program affords the opportunity to cross departmental/School boundaries to access courses and resources including dissertation committee members who can add different perspectives to penetrating research problems. The program prepares doctoral students for careers in academic institutions as well as in the private sector and related non-university settings such as hospitals, research and policy institutes.

Students must fulfill the minimum requirements of the Ph.D. program in SPHHS as specified earlier. They will normally complete a minimum of four courses, consisting of a core/fundamentals course (HLTH 750), a graduate level statistics/research methods course, and two electives related to aging, health, and well-being. In addition, students will participate in the doctoral research seminar in Aging, Health, and Well-being (HLTH 751). Further information can be found at the Applied Health Sciences website.

**Collaborative Ph.D. Program in Work and Health**

The Collaborative Ph.D. Program in Work and Health provides students registered in any Department/School in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences with an interdisciplinary platform upon which to develop a broad understanding of issues related to work and health. The program affords the opportunity to cross departmental/School boundaries to access courses and resources, including dissertation committee members who can provide cross disciplinary perspectives on research questions related to work and health. The program prepares doctoral students for careers in academic settings or in other related non university settings, including Government Ministries of Labour or Health, policy analysis and workplace health and safety associations.
Students must fulfill the minimum requirements of the Ph.D. program in SPHHS. They will normally complete a minimum of four half-credit (0.50) courses, consisting of two core/fundamentals courses (HLTH 730, HLTH 731), a graduate level statistics/research methods course, and an elective which will be related to work and health. In addition, students will participate in the doctoral research seminars in work and health (HLTH 732A/B). Further information can be found at the Applied Health Sciences website.

Fast Track Option, Ph.D. Program

Occasionally, a student will enter the M.Sc. program with a clear intent to pursue the Ph.D. in Public Health and Health Systems. A Master’s student may be considered for fast-tracking into the Ph.D. according to the following criteria:

1. Evidence of prior research achievements (e.g., first author peer-reviewed publications, first author scientific conference presentations, or equivalent evidence of demonstrated scholarly achievement)

2. Review of original M.Sc. application materials.

3. Minimum of an 85 average in the M.Sc. program

4. Clear focus and support for Ph.D. research

Fast track applications are considered by the Research Grad Admissions Committee once annually. The applicant must submit to the Research Graduate Officer by July 1st, for admission to the fall term:

a. Letter of support from the proposed Ph.D. supervisor
b. Cover letter from the student explaining the rationale for fast-tracking, including a narrative addressing the above criteria
c. Up to date CV

The applicant must submit a Program Change form to the Graduate coordinator within two weeks of approval to fast-track to the Ph.D. program.

Please note that not all applications to fast-track will be approved. Applicants must be exceptionally strong and demonstrate clear research potential.

Note that, as above, 9 one-term graduate courses beyond the Bachelor's degree, including at least 3 courses beyond the Master’s degree, constitute the normal minimum Ph.D. coursework requirement.

Graduate HLTH course descriptions can be found in the Graduate Studies Academic Calendar

Selected Topics/Independent Studies (HLTH 620/720)

These are typically single enrolment courses that students will complete with their own supervisor or another faculty member in SPHHS. Topics can vary and are usually chosen to supplement the student’s proposed thesis topic.
The HLTH 620/HLTH 720 Selected Topics proposal form is available on LEARN in SPHHS Research Grad Community Group- Course Materials- content- see program for forms, and must be approved by the Graduate Officer before the course can be created on Quest and the student is able to enrol.

Practicum (HLTH 641 and 741) Description and Guidelines

Graded as Credit/No Credit

A practicum is a supervised field or lab experience designed to enhance research and analytical skills (either quantitative or qualitative). The practicum is not intended to replace, but rather to supplement and build upon, academic courses. The practicum must have an “application” or hands-on focus. A literature review alone is not sufficient. If your objective is to read and critique a body of literature, then you should be considering a special topics reading course and not the practicum.

Tasks involved may consist of research design, tool development/validation, or program development/evaluation and normally will include data collection and/or analyses, as well as report writing. Practicums can take place in research laboratories or a variety of organizational or community settings (e.g., industry, hospitals, public health units, schools, clinics, etc.). Practicums are intended to learn new methodological skills and/or enhance and extend current skills (and may involve pilot testing for a potential thesis project). HLTH 741 (Advanced Practicum) is intended to enhance basic or applied research skills as demonstrated through previous practicums (e.g., HLTH 641 project), RA’s or other research experiences.

A Practicum typically lasts 12 weeks (about 10 hours per week) over a term, similar to academic courses. It is permissible, however, for the work to take place in a more concentrated block of time (for instance, 20 hours/week for about 6 weeks; or 40 hours/week for about 3 weeks) if the project in question dictates this timeline, and provided the commitment does not interfere with other academic duties (such as on-campus courses, TAs or RAs). Not surprisingly, many students choose a practicum in the Spring term when fewer on campus courses are offered.

In addition to a well-defined project, another critical component for approving the practicum is the availability and willingness of a qualified field supervisor (someone who has the methodological training and time to oversee and train the student). Occasionally, an SPHHS faculty member acts as the field supervisor or co-supervisor on the project.

You cannot simply register for the practicum. Similar to an independent reading course, each practicum must be approved. A contract must be completed by the student, in conjunction with the field supervisor, outlining the nature of the project, describing the specific tasks the student will be responsible for (or involved in), specifying the timeline and meeting/supervision schedule, and finally, describing the final product (and due date) to be produced for assessment purposes. The student and field supervisor(s) must sign this form, which will then require the approval of both the student’s academic advisor(s) and the Graduate Officer. Be prepared to produce multiple drafts of this contract; clarifications are frequently required prior to approval. Make sure the specifics are agreeable to all parties (approval in principle) before getting signatures. Ethics approval through UW or sponsoring organization for the project in question must be obtained.

An electronic copy of the Practicum Proposal and Contract is available from the Graduate Coordinator, M.Sc. & Ph.D. Programs.

A written report by the student, together with a letter from the field supervisor (attesting to completion of the work by the student and evaluating the student’s performance in the project) must be submitted to the
Graduate Coordinator, M.Sc. & Ph.D. Programs in order to receive academic credit for the practicum. In most cases, the academic advisor will also want to review these materials. This documentation should be submitted at least two weeks before the grades are due for the term.

While raw data and other information of a confidential or proprietary nature may be restricted by the sponsor, sufficient information must be included in the practicum report for purposes of academic evaluation of the project.

For allowable travel expenses and insurance purposes, students must submit to their academic advisor, in advance, a Travel Claim form prior to any travel requiring university funds for reimbursement.

H. Policies on Thesis Committees, Proposals and Defences
Include, in a format with relevant and appropriately entitled headers, all of the elements shown below.

- Page limit for the proposal itself, excluding the title page, abstract, work plan, and references, is 10-12 full pages (normally single spaced, size 12 font, normal margins). You may add an Appendix with additional tables, figures or details.

Sections

Page with project title and abstract
- Abstract maximum 250 words
- Use these or equivalent headers: Background, Research Questions (and/or Hypotheses, if warranted), Methods, and Contribution (or Significance or Expected Outcomes).

Background
- Include a statement of the problem. Provide context about the problem, who it affects, its importance, and the need/gap that needs to be filled. Cite key literature. If appropriate for your thesis, introduce your theoretical/ conceptual lens.
- Include a statement of the purpose of your thesis (e.g., “The overall goal of this thesis is to…”). Provide the justification or rationale that underlies your thesis’s purpose.

Specific Aims
- Include a statement that begins: “The proposed research question[s] is: .....?” or “This thesis asks the question: .....?” or "The specific aims of the thesis are..." This section may (optionally) include two "layers" with the bottom layer to include, if appropriate, hypotheses or sub-questions.

Methods
- You may find it helpful to link particular methods to specific aims or objectives.
- It is helpful in this section to use some sub-headers. The following are a suggestion and may not fit every research study. If your thesis includes several studies, you may wish to replicate these headers for each study e.g, describe the design, data sources/procedures, etc. for Study 1, and then describe these things for Study 2, etc).
- Research design and approach. Label the type of research design. Link it to elements in your methods.
- Theoretical orientation [Optional; this might go in the Background or, for some kinds of qualitative studies, in its own section / with its own header.]
- Study site (setting), study population, and sample. Include sampling plan, sample size, and recruitment.
- Data sources and procedures. Mention collection instruments/guides if appropriate for your study. If appropriate, describe independent and dependent variables and measures.

**Analysis Plan**

**Limitations and Mitigation Strategies**
- Outline the main limitations of your proposed methods, and what you can do to help mitigate the impacts of these limitations on your results/conclusions.

**Contribution (or Significance or Expected outcomes)**
- What kind of a difference your work may make and to whom.

**References**
- Begin the references on a separate page. Use a standard reference format that is appropriate in your field.

**Workplan and Timeline**
- Map out the main elements and timeline expected for each element. This should not exceed one page.
- Your work plan/timeline is normally presented as a figure, graphic, or table.

**Your thesis committee will consider the following:**

1. Is the background about the research problem, its context, and gaps in knowledge clear and appropriately elaborated? Is the importance of the research problem clearly described?
2. Is the research purpose clear and persuasively described? Is the relevance of the research convincingly explained?
3. Does appropriate prior research inform the study and are key references from peer-reviewed literature cited?
4. Are the research questions or specific aims/objectives well defined, appropriate, and clearly stated? If the study questions/aims can be articulated as hypotheses, are hypotheses included and appropriate?
5. Is a theoretical perspective used, and if so, is it adequately described and appropriate for the research purpose and question(s)?
6. Is the type of research design clearly stated? Is it appropriate to meet the objectives? Is it adequately and appropriately explained?
7. Are the methods appropriate to meet the objectives? Is the methods section sufficiently detailed? For instance, is the sampling plan appropriate and clearly described? Are procedures and the analysis plan explained and appropriate?
8. Does the project appear to meet expectations of other relevant parties, including the Office of Research Ethics, and any other relevant bodies for your research, such as partner organizations funding the research?
9. Is the combination of elements of the proposal, from the statement of the problem on through to methods, coherent? Do the pieces make sense and work together in terms of design and methodology?
10. Are the main limitations considered and ways to mitigate these limitations explained?
11. Is the proposed schedule of tasks described in a clear, feasible workplan or timeline?
12. Is the writing grammatically correct, free of typos, well organized, and clear?
13. Is the reference format a standard one, and is it used consistently and correctly?
M.Sc. Thesis Proposal Notification Form

University of Waterloo guidelines for Master’s Theses stipulate that the committee must consist of at least three faculty members: the supervisor (from the home department/school in which the student is enrolled) and two other committee members (at least one of whom has an academic appointment in the home department/school). Occasionally, two faculty members act as co-supervisors on the three-person committee. Your academic advisor/supervisor will assist you in identifying and approaching the most appropriate faculty members to serve on your committee. Only one committee member may participate remotely.

Once your topic has been chosen, and your committee selected (and agreeable to serve), you need to complete the “M.Sc. Thesis Proposal- Notification Form” (Available on LEARN in SPHHS Research Grad Community Group- Course Materials- content- see program for forms) submit this form to the Graduate Coordinator.

Master’s Thesis Proposal Presentation Checklist

Once you and your supervisor agree that the written proposal is ready for presentation, there are a number of steps you must follow:

1. The student must contact all members of the committee to determine possible dates and times for the presentation.

2. The student must book a room for a two-hour period and inform all committee members of the date, time and room booking. The AHS Receptionist (ahsreception@uwaterloo.ca) can assist with room bookings. Any necessary A-V equipment must be booked in advance as well.

3. The student must complete the “M.Sc. Thesis Proposal- Notification Form” (Available on LEARN in SPHHS Research Grad Community Group → Content → Forms) and submit it to the Graduate Coordinator, M.Sc. & Ph.D. Programs or Graduate Research Assistant at minimum two weeks in advance of the proposal. Note: the information provided in the Thesis Proposal- Notification Form will be used to draft the email announcement and the thesis proposal paperwork.

4. The student must provide each member of the committee, as well as the Graduate Coordinator, with a copy of the proposal, at least two weeks in advance of the presentation. The student should ask the committee members and the Graduate Coordinator if an electronic copy is sufficient.

SPHHS Policy on Absent Committee Members for Master’s Proposal Defences

The thesis supervisor will chair the proposal presentation, questioning period and deliberations. It is expected that all committee members will make every attempt to be present at the proposal presentation. Teleconference participation can be arranged if necessary. The presentation cannot take place unless at least two committee members, one of whom must be the supervisor or co-supervisor, are present. If one committee member (other than the supervisor) cannot attend (and provided reasonable efforts have been made to accommodate scheduling), it is permissible to proceed. If this situation is known in advance, the supervisor must contact the absent member and obtain his or her written questions, desired responses, assessment of proposal acceptability, and suggestions for modifications. The supervisor is responsible for relaying this information during the meeting. If a committee member is unable to submit questions in advance, or fails to attend as planned due to unforeseen circumstances, the supervisor must obtain written feedback from the absent member prior to reaching a final decision.
concerning the acceptability of the proposal and permission for the student to proceed with data collection.

It is up to the supervisor to ensure that any and all concerns of the committee members (whether present at the proposal or not) are adequately addressed by the student prior to approval of the proposal and permission to proceed. As a means of documenting changes to the original proposal, particularly the methods, the candidate can be asked to develop a brief addendum which is given to all members of the committee (and to the Graduate Coordinator for the student’s file). In extreme cases, the proposal may need to be totally rewritten and another presentation meeting scheduled.

Note: If a committee member is unable to continue serving on a thesis committee, a replacement should be found. The Graduate Coordinator and Grad Officer should be informed of any and all changes to the composition of a student’s thesis committee when, and if, such changes occur.

UW Ethics Approval Requirements and Process

Ethics clearance from the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo is required for all research projects (involving either human participants or animals; as well as for using secondary data not in the public domain) undertaken by either faculty and/or students. Such approval must be obtained before any data collection takes place. Your supervisor will assist you with this process and must sign your application form. Consent forms acknowledging ethics approval must be developed and contained in your application. Allow at least 2-4 weeks for this approval process to take place. Please note that The online ethics applications for human and animal research and instructions for completion are available from Office of Research Ethics.

Master’s Thesis Final Defence

Once your committee decides you are ready to proceed to defence, there are a number of things that need to be done, similar to the steps prior to the proposal presentation.

1. The student must contact all members of the committee re: available dates and times.

2. The student must book a room for the date and time agreed to by all committee members. Book the room for at least a two-hour period. Notify all committee members of room and time.

3. The student must complete the “Thesis Defence- Notification Form” (Available on LEARN in SPHHS Research Grad Community Group ➔ Content ➔ Forms), and return this form to the Graduate Coordinator or Research Assistant a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the scheduled defence.

4. The student must provide each member of the committee as well as the Graduate Coordinator with a copy of the thesis at least two weeks in advance of the defence date.

5. The Graduate Coordinator will announce the upcoming thesis defence to SPHHS faculty and graduate students, as well as the Associate Dean. The thesis supervisor will chair the defence.

6. The Graduate Coordinator will put a copy of the thesis on public display for at least two weeks prior to the scheduled defence.
Note: the GSPA strongly discourages holding thesis defences during holiday periods or close to the end of term.

### SPHHS Policy on Absent Committee Members for Master’s Thesis Defence

The policy of SPHHS is that no more than one committee member, and not the thesis supervisor, may be absent for the M.Sc. thesis defence to take place. The absent member must be contacted in advance by the thesis supervisor and submit a list of questions, desired responses, as well as a final recommendation (refer to decision categories below), including a list of revisions that need to be made, to the GSC and the supervisor at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled defence. Questions from an absent committee member, which must be submitted in advance for the defence to take place, will be read by the Chair (a copy will be provided by the Graduate Coordinator in the defence folder). Note: the supervisor should email a description of the decision categories to the absent member if she/he is from outside the School. In contrast to the proposal defence, feedback from an absent committee member cannot be submitted after the defence has taken place. If the above stipulations cannot be met, the defence will have to be cancelled and rescheduled.

In the event that a committee member fails to attend as scheduled, allow at least 30 minutes and have someone attempt to contact the individual. If 30 minutes have elapsed and no contact has been made, the chair and supervisor should consult the Graduate Officer or the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. In most cases, the defence will have to be rescheduled.

### Decision Categories for Master’s Thesis Defences

I. **Accepted:** The thesis may require typographical or minor editorial corrections to be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor.

II. **Accepted conditionally:** The thesis requires more substantive changes, but will be acceptable when these changes are made to the satisfaction of those members of the committee designated by the committee. The supervisor’s report will include a brief outline of the nature of the changes required, the maximum timeline of two months, and the consequences (examination failure) if the student fails to comply.

III. **Decision deferred:** The thesis requires modifications of a substantial nature which makes the acceptability of the thesis questionable. The supervisor’s report will contain a brief outline of the modifications expected, the date by which the changes are to be completed, and the consequences if the student fails to comply. The revised thesis must be resubmitted to the Graduate Studies Committee of the department for re-examination. The re-examination will follow the same procedures as for the initial submission except that the display period may be reduced or eliminated at the discretion of the Graduate Officer. Normally, the same committee will serve. A decision to defer is open only once for each candidate.

IV. **Rejected:** The thesis is rejected. The supervisor will report the reasons for rejection and advise the student on the suitability of the candidate continuing in the program. Master’s Thesis Examination Report Form

The Graduate Coordinator will supply the Chair of the thesis defence with a copy of this form prior to the defence. Following deliberations of the examining committee, and upon reaching a decision on the thesis (as described above), the chair will indicate the committee’s decision on this form. All committee members present the day of the defence will sign the examination report form. This form will be returned immediately following the defence (or the next working day in the event that the office is closed for the day) to the Graduate Coordinator. If the decision is other than “Accepted”, the Chair must also submit a list of required changes, or reasons for rejections as stipulated for each category above.
If the decision is ii to iv, the designated committee members must be satisfied that the changes requested of the student have been made to their satisfaction. The supervisor will then sign on behalf of the committee to indicate that the thesis is now considered accepted. Then the Graduate Officer and Associate Dean will give their approval. The student can then proceed to complete an Intention to Graduate Form and any other “end of program” forms required by the School (see the Graduate Coordinator for these forms).

Master’s Thesis Submission

Once approved, the M.Sc. thesis must meet the specifications as outlined in the Thesis Regulations which can be found on the web under the Graduate Studies home page. Take your thesis over to be checked by the GSPA before you make any copies. Note: The School does not require a bound copy of your thesis but some committee members may request one. Students may be required to submit additional copies if they have more than one academic department and/or supervisor (please check prior to ordering bound copies).

SPHHS Regulations for the Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination

Comprehensive Examination Step-by-Step Guide:

1. Supervisor and candidate select 2 committee members adhering to the below criteria in 1A.
2. The Supervisor and committee members develop three questions with reading list, adhering to 1B.
3. The Supervisor completes the “Ph.D. Comprehensive examination- Notification form” and submits it to the Graduate Officer and Graduate Coordinator 1 week before the examination proposed start date. All sections of the form must be completed. See 1C.
4. The Graduate Coordinator will distribute the questions and reading list on the examination start date.
5. The candidate will have 1 week to ask clarification questions, submitted to their Supervisor see 1D.
6. At the end of the 8 week written period the candidate will send their written answers to the Graduate Coordinator. See 1D.
7. The Graduate Coordinator will distribute the answers to the committee members.
8. The Graduate Coordinator will then assign an Examination Chair to manage the conduct of the exam: oral exam and any subsequent revision.
9. The candidate will complete an Oral defence of their comprehensive exam within 4 weeks of submitting the written questions. See 1D.
10. The Oral defence will consist of a 20 minute presentation by the candidate, followed by questions from the committee about any component of the exam. See 1E.
11. After the question period, the candidate will be asked to leave the room during the committee’s deliberation. Immediately following the deliberation, the student will be notified of the decision.
12. Refer to Section 1F for examination decisions.
13. The Examination Chair will notify the Graduate Coordinator of the examination result. If revisions are required, the Examination Chair will notify the Graduate Coordinator of the final examination result. The Graduate Coordinator will complete a milestone completion form and submit it to the Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs office.
Comprehensive Examination Process

Students with no previous studies at the PhD level must successfully complete the comprehensive exam not later than the end of their seventh term of studies. Students who have completed previous studies in another PhD program at the University of Waterloo or at another university, must successfully complete the comprehensive exam not later than their fourth term of studies in their current program or their seventh term of study at the PhD level, whichever is longer.

Creating the Comprehensive Examination Committee- 1A

The committee will consist of three voting members and an Examination Chair. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to assemble the committee members. It is expected that the student’s supervisor will be one of the three committee members. He or she can satisfy the requirement that at least one committee member have Approved Doctoral Dissertation Supervisor (ADDS) status. In addition to the supervisor, one committee member must have a primary appointment in the School (at least a 0.51 appointment). It is recommended that the third member of the committee be external to the School (another academic unit, or an external agency/university). As well, only two of the three members of the committee may serve on the student’s Dissertation Advisory Committee. The composition of the comprehensive examination committee will be decided by the supervisor and candidate and must be approved by the Associate Director, Graduate Research Programs (Graduate Officer).

The Chair is responsible for ensuring the School’s procedures are followed at the oral defence. The Chair will be assigned by the Graduate Coordinator. To meet university regulations, the Chair will be a tenured or tenure-track member of the School (at least a 0.51 appointment) with ADDS status. It is not necessary for the Chair to have a background or expertise in the candidate’s field of study as their function is administrative only. This is a rotating faculty role (all faculty members share the Chair work).

Developing the Comprehensive Exam Questions- 1B

The Comprehensive Examination Committee will assess the student’s background and areas of interest prior to developing the examination questions. The Committee will develop three questions along with a brief reading list (5-10 relevant or key readings) that will be provided to the candidate on the day the written component of the examination is to begin. The comprehensive examination questions are developed independently of the candidate; i.e. the candidate does not know the questions before the exam. It is the responsibility of the committee as a whole to create the three examination questions. Although in practice it is often the case that each committee member will develop one exam question, the questions are presented to the candidate as created by the committee, not by individual members. Each of the three questions will have a different focus:

- **a)** One question will require the candidate to demonstrate broad, substantive knowledge germane to their stream or discipline.
- **b)** One question will focus on methodology and study designs used in public health or health systems research. This question may require the candidate to understand methods that will not likely be utilized in his/her dissertation research.
- **c)** The final question will allow the candidate to develop a deeper understanding of theories, concepts, or methods that are relevant to his/her dissertation research.

The questions and reading list will be reviewed by the Comprehensive Examination Committee, and ultimately must be approved by the Associate Director.
Comprehensive Examination Form Submission- 1C

The “Ph.D. Comprehensive examination- Notification form” (Available on LEARN in SPHHS Research Grad Community Group → Content → Forms) must be completed once exam questions have been determined and sent to the Graduate Coordinator and the Associate Director, who must approve the committee members and questions. All sections of the form need to be completed, including the date for the oral defence (which must take place within 30 days of the submission of the written exam component).

Procedure for the Comprehensive Examination- 1D

The Graduate Coordinator will distribute the questions and reading list to the candidate on the day s/he begin the written examination. During the first five working days of the written examination period, the candidate may ask for clarification of examination questions by directing questions to their Supervisor by email.

Each examination question is to be answered separately. Each question is limited to 3000 words (not including references, tables, and appendices), and must be double-spaced using a 12-point font size (Times New Roman is recommended).

Written responses must be submitted by e-mail to the Graduate Coordinator within eight weeks for full-time students (12 weeks for part-time students). It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that their examination responses meet the University of Waterloo’s academic integrity standards. The student must consult the GSPA guidelines, “Academic Integrity and the Comprehensive Exam.” Among other GSPA requirements, the student must employ the University’s plagiarism detection software.

The oral examination will typically take place within four weeks of submission of the written responses. The candidate is responsible for reserving the room and scheduling the examination. No feedback will be provided to the Candidate prior to the oral examination. The Graduate Coordinator will assign an examination chair for the Oral Defence.

Extensions to Comprehensive Examination deadlines are not normally permitted. The only acceptable procedure is student registration with AccessAbility, with whom the Associate Director, Research Graduate Studies may negotiate a revised comprehensive examination deadline. In rare circumstances, a Verification of Illness Form is sufficient. Any requests for accommodation must occur prior to the comprehensive examination deadline.

Comprehensive Oral Examination- 1E

The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the comprehensive oral examination: both the oral exam and the revision process for any required revisions. The conduct of the oral examination will be similar to that of a Ph.D. thesis examination as described in the document “Guide for Chairing a Ph.D Thesis Examination”. The oral examination usually takes two hours. It begins with an oral presentation by the candidate that should be no longer than 20 minutes in duration. The presentation is followed by questioning in accordance with the usual procedures for a Ph.D thesis defence: each committee member asks questions about any component of any exam question. All committee members will have read all
exam responses. It is expected that the majority of questions will pertain to the candidate’s written responses; however, general questions will also be asked to evaluate the candidate’s depth and breadth of comprehension of leading literature and perspectives in their field.

At the end of the oral question period, the candidate will be asked to leave the room and the examining committee will deliberate in a closed session. During the closed session, the Chair will call for a formal vote before any discussion begins. A simple majority of the examiners will be sufficient to select the appropriate allowable decision. The allowable decisions are based on the both the candidate’s written work as well as their responses to questions at the oral defence.

**Comprehensive Exam Decision- 1F**

This section defines permitted outcomes of comprehensive exams at the University of Waterloo. On a candidate’s first attempt at the comprehensive exam, the outcome shall be one of:

- **Passed:** the candidate successfully completed all requirements of the exam;
- **Passed conditionally:** the candidate will be considered to have completed the exam successfully upon having satisfied conditions established by the examining committee. The conditions shall:
  - Be communicated by the Examination Chair to the student in writing;
  - Instruct the student to submit the revised exam to the Graduate Coordinator, Exam Chair, and Comprehensive Examination committee members within two weeks of the oral examination date*;
  - Identify the member(s) of the examining committee responsible for determining that the conditions have been met. Normally, this determination will be made by at least one member of the committee other than the student’s supervisor or co-supervisors. Failure to satisfy the conditions within the designated time limit will result in an outcome of Re-examination.

  *For extenuating circumstances, a resubmission date more than two weeks after the oral examination may be approved by the Associate Director Graduate Studies.

- **Re-examination:** the candidate will be required to repeat the exam. In this case, the student shall be provided written communication by the Examination Chair that identifies the deficiencies in the exam that led to this outcome and the deadline by which the re-examination must take place. In the case of re-examination, it is anticipated that the examination committee membership will be the same as the initial committee. Any change in membership must adhere to committee guidelines and be approved by the student’s Associate Dean Graduate Studies or delegate.

When a candidate is re-examined, the outcomes are limited to:

- **Passed**;
- **Exam Unsuccessful:** the candidate will be deemed to have failed to satisfy the program’s comprehensive exam requirement. In this case, the student shall receive written communication identifying the deficiencies in the exam that led to this outcome.
A student who is deemed to have failed to satisfy the comprehensive exam requirement (Exam Unsuccessful) may not continue in the current PhD program. The student’s status will change to Required to Withdraw in the term immediately following the term in which the examination took place. The student may seek admission to another PhD program or to any Master’s degree program at the University of Waterloo.

The outcome of the exam is determined by the majority vote of the examining committee. The following rules govern the voting process:

- In the case where the student is co-supervised, the co-supervisors’ votes shall count collectively as one vote. In the case where co-supervisors vote for different outcomes, these votes shall count as 0.5 votes for each outcome.
- In the case where only two outcomes receive votes and the number of votes is equal for both outcomes, the decision shall be for the less positive outcome, provided that outcome is not exam unsuccessful.
- If the previous case results in an exam unsuccessful outcome, or if no majority is obtained, the case shall be referred to the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, who shall make the final determination of the outcome of the exam.

Those members of the examining committee who are voting members shall be clearly communicated to the candidate.

In programs where the comprehensive exam involves multiple components, a student may obtain different outcomes on each component of the exam. The comprehensive exam will be considered satisfied when the candidate has passed all components of the exam. The comprehensive exam will be considered failed if the candidate receives an exam unsuccessful outcome on any component. No component may be repeated more than once.

A student may seek reassessment of the exam evaluation under certain conditions. See the GSPA policy on “Re-examination” for details.

**SPHHS Policy on Absent Committee Members for Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination**

Normally, all Comprehensive Examination Committee members are present at the oral examination. If a committee member cannot attend, they will normally join by telephone. In extreme circumstances, it may be permissible to hold the examination with the Chairperson and two of the three committee members present where the absent member is not able to join by telephone. In such cases, written questions and comments must be submitted by the absent member and addressed at the defence by the Chairperson. The Associate Director, Graduate Studies must be informed and give approval for the defence to proceed with only two committee members present. If such approval is not received, the oral examination will have to be rescheduled. If a member becomes unable to continue to serve on a Comprehensive Examination Committee, or cannot agree to an examination date within a reasonable length of time after being approached, the Chair of the Comprehensive Examination Committee and Graduate Officer should be consulted concerning possible replacement of the committee member.
Milestone completion form

The Examination Chair will notify the Graduate Coordinator of the examination result. The Graduate Coordinator will complete a milestone completion form and submit it to the Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs office.

Intellectual Property

According to university policy (refer to Policy # 73), the comprehensive examination papers are the student’s intellectual property. As such, these papers must not be shown to anyone (released or disseminated in any fashion) without the explicit written permission of the student (the author). If the student plans to publish articles stemming from his/her authorship with his/her supervisor, some references on guidelines are listed below.


The Ph.D. Dissertation Proposal and Advisory Committee

As noted in the previous section, students are expected to successfully complete their comprehensive exam (meaning subjected to oral defence, passed and a credit approved) before proceeding to the formal presentation of the dissertation proposal.

According to AHS guidelines (found at the Applied Health Sciences website, Graduate Studies, the Ph.D. Advisory Committee should be formalized soon (normally within one month) after passing the Ph.D. Comprehensive exam. The Ph.D. Advisory Committee may (and typically does) include some or all of the members of the comprehensive committee (on the related topic).

The Ph.D. Advisory Committee comprises a minimum of 3 faculty members, and must include:

i. a Supervisor (normally from SPHHS; otherwise an SPHHS faculty member must agree to act as co-supervisor);

ii. 2 other faculty members (at least one of whom must be from SPHHS or have a cross-appointment in the SPHHS program; the other committee member must also be from UW, but can be from outside the School or faculty). Additional members may be added, up to a maximum of 2 co-supervisors and 3 other faculty members. Note that co-supervisors count as TWO members of the committee.

NOTE: The supervisor (or co-supervisor) must have Approved Doctoral Dissertation Supervisor (ADDS) status.
A Ph.D. Thesis Proposal - Notification Form (Available on LEARN in SPHHS Research Grad Community Group → Content → Forms) and a bound copy of your proposal must be completed and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks prior to scheduling the Ph.D. Proposal Defence meeting.

There is often confusion regarding the distinction between the Ph.D. Advisory and Examining Committees. The Ph.D. Advisory Committee is your internal committee whom you will work with from the beginning (i.e., developing and approving your proposal) to the end (i.e., completing your dissertation). The Ph.D. Examining Committee, meanwhile, is formed for the explicit purpose of your final defence. The Ph.D. Examining Committee, which includes two individuals in addition to your Advisory Committee (namely, an independent external examiner and what is called an internal/external), is not appointed until 8-12 weeks prior to the final Ph.D. defence. There are university and faculty policies concerning the composition of both these committees and procedures which must be followed in regards to the Ph.D. Proposal and Final Defences.

Caution: Students may begin planning their dissertation before completing the comprehensive exam. Some students may even pilot-test tools or protocols they are considering. Others may be involved in prospective or longitudinal research projects involving waves of data collection which they wish to include in their dissertation project. What must be kept in mind is that you have not been granted formal permission to proceed with data collection and/or analyses until the dissertation proposal has been successfully defended and approved by all members of your dissertation advisory committee. Your advisory committee may request minor or major modifications to the proposed study rationale, objectives and/or methodology (design, sampling, instruments, data collection procedures, analyses, etc.), regardless of work conducted prior to the proposal defence. It is also very important to keep in mind that UW Ethics Approval is required for all research projects, including student thesis research, prior to data collection. Thus, students are strongly advised to proceed with caution, ensure their supervisor is aware of all activities, and obtain formal approval for their dissertation project as soon as possible.

SPHHS Guidelines Regarding the Use of Primary vs. Secondary Data for Dissertations

The proposal may include results of pilot studies, and with the approval of the Advisory Committee, such work may also be included as part of the actual dissertation.

Typically, data collection for the dissertation does not proceed until: a) the Advisory Committee has approved the dissertation proposal; and b) UW ethics clearance has been obtained. The rationale for this is twofold: (1) to protect the student from carrying out work in advance that may not be approved by the committee; and (2) to ensure that doctoral students have the capability to carry out the full research process (from independently developing the study design and research questions to choosing appropriate methods of data collection and sampling procedures to actually collecting, analysing and interpreting the resulting findings). In other words, the School wants to ensure that doctoral students have adequate training regarding the “core competencies” involved with conceptualizing and carrying out an independent research project from start to finish.

While most dissertation projects will involve original data collection that takes place after the formal approval of the proposal, it is permissible to also conduct secondary data analyses and meta-analysis of existing data sets for the dissertation under certain circumstances. We recognize that in the fields of population health and health informatics, to name a few, the large data sets currently available present opportunities for scientific advances. The supervisor must ensure that the student in question already has the “core competencies” (described above) concerning carrying out the full research process and
provide evidence in this regard (i.e., previous scholarship and research experience). The supervisor should contact the graduate officer for guidance if the student’s program of research or experience do not meet these core competencies.

Procedures for Ph.D. Proposals and Final Defences
As noted above, doctoral students must complete the Ph.D. Thesis Proposal Notification Form and submit this form to the Graduate Coordinator at least two weeks prior to scheduling the Ph.D. Proposal Defence meeting. The steps for scheduling the proposal defence and booking rooms are the same as for the Master’s Thesis Proposal, as are the policies regarding absent committee members (refer back to this section). Similarly, the supervisor of the committee acts as the Chair for the Ph.D. Proposal Defence and Meeting. At the end of the meeting, the Ph.D. Advisory Committee decides whether or not to grant the student approval to proceed and the conditions of such approval. Similar to the Master’s’ Proposal, an addendum may be required stipulating changes to the original proposal.

As would be expected, the procedures for the Final Ph.D. Dissertation Defence are more rigorous and set by the university. The Ph.D. Examining Committee (Board) must be arranged at least 8 weeks prior to this defence. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to work with the faculty graduate studies personnel to obtain approval of the external examiner as well as the internal/external member of the examining committee (a UW faculty member from outside the School who is not on the Advisory Committee) from the Associate Dean of Graduate Affairs and members of the faculty graduate affairs committee. A Chair for the final Ph.D. defence will be appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies for the university. While you and your supervisor can discuss suitable experts in your field who may potentially serve as external examiners, the student is not involved in any way with contacting the external examiner.

It is the student’s responsibility, however, to:

1. Contact members of your advisory committee concerning possible dates for the final defence;

2. Book a room, in consultation with the GSC in the Dean’s Office (most Ph.D. Defences are in BMH 3119);

3. Provide copies of the dissertation to all members of your advisory committee, including the appointed internal/external (as well as two additional copies to the GSC—one for the public display and one for the external examiner) at least five weeks in advance of the scheduled Ph.D. defence.

There are a number of policies regarding Ph.D. Defences. For instance, a brief written report prepared by the external examiner is required one week in advance and sent to the Associate Dean’s Office. The supervisor will be allowed to convey general concerns that are outlined in this report to the student. The student is only allowed to read the external’s report, however, after the defence upon request. The current university policy on absent members of the Ph.D. Examining Board for defences can be found in the appendix.

Important notes:

1. The dissertation format must follow university guidelines. The Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office will look over your dissertation to ensure it is formatted correctly. Please refer to Graduate Studies website for more information.
2. Ph.D. Dissertation Abstracts. Due to budget constraints, and effective 1990, the University of Waterloo will no longer bear the cost of Ph.D. thesis abstracts publication in "Dissertation Abstracts", a journal circulated as a subscription basis from Ann Arbor, Michigan. Students who wish to have their abstract published in this journal must pay a fee. Cash or a cheque payable to the University of Waterloo should be submitted with the abstract and permission form to the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office after the thesis is accepted and prior to graduation. Permission and payment forms are available in the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office, Needles Hall.

**SPHHS Policy on Absent Committee Members for PhD Proposal Defences**

The thesis supervisor will chair the proposal presentation, questioning period and deliberations. It is expected that all committee members will make every attempt to be present at the proposal presentation. Teleconference participation can be arranged if necessary. The presentation cannot take place unless at least two committee members, one of whom must be the supervisor or co-supervisor, are present. If one committee member (other than the supervisor) cannot attend (and provided reasonable efforts have been made to accommodate scheduling), it is permissible to proceed. If this situation is known in advance, the supervisor must contact the absent member and obtain his or her written questions, desired responses, assessment of proposal acceptability, and suggestions for modifications. The supervisor is responsible for relaying this information during the meeting. If a committee member is unable to submit questions in advance, or fails to attend as planned due to unforeseen circumstances, the supervisor must obtain written feedback from the absent member prior to reaching a final decision concerning the acceptability of the proposal and permission for the student to proceed with data collection.

It is up to the supervisor to ensure that any and all concerns of the committee members (whether present at the proposal or not) are adequately addressed by the student prior to approval of the proposal and permission to proceed. As a means of documenting changes to the original proposal, particularly the methods, the candidate can be asked to develop a brief addendum which is given to all members of the committee (and to the Graduate Coordinator for the student’s file). In extreme cases, the proposal may need to be totally rewritten and another presentation meeting scheduled.

*Note:* If a committee member is unable to continue serving on a thesis committee, a replacement should be found. The Graduate Coordinator and Grad Officer should be informed of any and all changes to the composition of a student’s thesis committee when, and if, such changes occur.

**University of Waterloo Policy on Absent Committee Members for PhD Final Defence**

See information on the GSPA website: [https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies-postdoctoral-affairs/current-students/phd-thesis-examination-regulations](https://uwaterloo.ca/graduate-studies-postdoctoral-affairs/current-students/phd-thesis-examination-regulations)

**I. Financial Policies**

Full-time students are eligible to receive teaching assistantships or research assistantships, subject to availability.

**Policy on Support for Graduate Students**
There are, generally, three sources of money for supporting students:

- **Teaching Assistantship (TA)** - this source of money comes from University Operating Funds allocated to the School
- **Research Assistantship (RA)** - this source of money is awarded to faculty in the School of Public Health and Health Systems through research grants and contracts
- **Scholarship** - this source of money is applied for and carried by the student.

For TA and RA positions, an average of ten hours per week of work is expected over the term (16 weeks). For students classified as full-time the maximum you can work, according to Provincial Government Policy, is ten hours per week. Please refer to the Policy Guidelines on Graduate Student Support.

In assigning a TA, the first priority must be to assign the TA to a student who can function effectively within a particular course. The questions of student need and overall excellence are secondary to the School’s teaching requirements. The same principles apply to RAs where the requirements of the research are the first consideration.

While the above outlines our priorities in assigning TAs, you may receive financial support from other sources. The exceptions to this are part-time students, non-regular graduate students (i.e., qualifying, post-degree, non-degree), and students who decide to come after being informed that financial support is not available. **If a student declines the offer of a TA position (for any reason), the School will have met its obligation to provide funding for the term in question.**

Full-time M.Sc. students are guaranteed three terms of support at a level that corresponds to the University defined amount of maximum TA support. Full-time Ph.D. students are guaranteed twelve terms of support. **If you receive an external scholarship, we do not guarantee TA or RA support.** That funding will replace guaranteed support from the School. This is to enable us to provide financial assistance to as many students as possible.

Normally, teaching assistantships are available during the Fall and Winter terms. Depending on the number of undergraduates enrolled in the Spring term, some TAs may be available in the Spring as well.

While the School of Public Health and Health Systems guarantees the above minimum support, occasionally a student will receive additional support for a variety of reasons: the student may have a particular research skill of value or a faculty member might employ a student on a research grant or contract or the student may have a unique ability to fill needs created by the teaching activities of the School. While there is a minimum amount of guaranteed support for a defined length of time, you should not be surprised if you learn that another student at the same stage in his/her academic career is earning more money than the minimum funding.

**Research Assistantship Support**

Research Assistantships (RAs) are often available from individual faculty members. The RA amount is usually similar to the current TA rate, but can vary. You should make known to your supervisor and the Graduate Coordinator your interest in becoming a Research Assistant, and the skills you can bring to this task. The needs of any particular faculty member with a research project may vary considerably, and the amount of research funding available from faculty members changes constantly due to the irregular availability of grants and contracts. Also note that it is completely up to the individual faculty member as to whom he or she hires as his or her RA. The decision also depends on your expertise and the nature of the project.
If a student declines the offer of a RA position (for any reason), the School will have met its obligation to provide funding for the term in question.

SPHHS Program Criteria for UW Graduate Scholarships

The Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office (Second Floor, Needles Hall) maintains a database file of all scholarships and fellowships available to graduate students. You can search this database on the Graduate Studies website. Awards are based on full-time registration in a graduate program with a minimum 80% average, and other scholarly activity as required by the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office. The SPHHS Graduate Studies Committee also considers other evidence of outstanding scholarship (e.g., presentations at conferences, publications, outstanding practicum reports, etc.) and demonstrated progress towards completion of the degree.

External Scholarships/Types of Support for Graduate Students

Refer to the Scholarship Information website for current information. In addition, you should check your School mailbox, watch the SPHHS Graduate Student Bulletin boards and the Faculty Graduate Notices Board (BMH 3110) for notices concerning forms/deadlines for scholarships, bursaries and fellowships. Please see the Graduate Coordinator for more information, or contact the GSPA. An informational session on scholarship applications is normally given by the GSPA in September.

Undergraduate Course Teaching

Doctoral students are encouraged to participate in teaching at least one undergraduate course at some time during their program of study. This will generally be a third or fourth year course in the student’s area of research interest. While undergraduate teaching is negotiated between the student and Chair/Director, and is based on the undergraduate program needs as well as graduate student interest. You may wish to let the Graduate Officer and/or the Undergraduate Officer know if there are specific courses that you would like to teach. The graduate student’s supervisor will often act as a mentor to assist with this first teaching experience. Assistance is also available through the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE).

Research Grants

Sometimes it is possible to obtain a research grant from an agency that is interested in your thesis topic. This is especially true if you are working on a project with a supervisor who has obtained a grant. When you are developing your thesis proposal, ask your thesis supervisor where you (or he/she) may apply for financial assistance. Once again, for further information, check with the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office.

Travel Assistantship for Students Presenting Papers at Conferences

Students are eligible for these assistantships if they are presenting the results of research they conducted while at the University of Waterloo at professional or academic meetings. Students are normally expected to be the first author and must be the conference presenter. Confirmation of presentation and abstract do not need to be submitted prior to handing in the application.

There are three deadlines to receive completed Research Travel Assistantship applications during the year:
April 1st = Spring
August 1st = Fall
December 1st = Winter

Only graduate students currently registered in a degree program at Waterloo and registered at the time of the travel are eligible. Priority will be given to Doctoral students who have not used the award twice and Master’s students who have not received this award previously.

**Graduate Travel Assistantships** are cost shared by the student’s Supervisor (if possible), the School, the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences and the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office. Current stipends from the Faculty are $100 for Master’s students and $150 for doctoral students. The Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office will normally pay expenses up to the total amount paid within the Faculty, with a maximum of $300. These dollar amounts may be adjusted from time to time depending on the budget available and the number of travel requests.

Students are encouraged to acknowledge the assistance of funding from the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office in their abstract and/or presentation.

Please note that a student will not normally receive funds more than **once per fiscal year**.

1. The student should reserve funds in advance of the conference by completing a Research Travel Assistantship form, obtain the necessary signatures and funding support from Supervisor and School. Submit the request form to the Faculty Graduate Studies Coordinator, with the following information:
   i. the name, place and date of the conference;
   ii. a budget outlining the expected costs to be incurred;
   iii. students must also submit a one-page summary of research experience and significance of the conference you attended.

2. When more than one student is presenting at the same conference, the applications for funds should be sent to the University Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office at the same time.

It should be clearly understood that the sum total of support from the Director of the School, Dean, Supervisor and Dean of Graduate Studies may not add up to the predicted budget. Hence, students must understand that they may incur personal expenses. In this regard, students should be sure that they seek places where accommodation and meals are cheap (i.e., university residence). Where this is not possible, students should double or triple up in hotel rooms. Receipts (hotel, travel, etc.) will be required.

**Salaries for Student and Non-Student Assistants**

**Graduate Student Research Assistants (RA)**

Graduate student RA’s should be viewed as support for students while they are working on their academic program(s). The amount of the RA may vary depending on the research project. It is understood that research grants may be insufficient to allow for payment of salaries according to the maximum rates. Thus, it is inevitable that different rates of pay will be determined by individual faculty members in
meeting their own requirements with the grant funds available to them. Rates established for individual RA’s should take into account their earnings from all sources. Applicants for research grants should apply for the "maximum" in all cases so as not to penalize graduate earnings unless such maximum application would jeopardize the awarding of the overall grant. If an RA is to be employed full or part-time during a non-academic or summer term, his or her wages may be calculated on an hourly basis as for an Assistant.

**Assistants**

A person employed to work on a research project is classified as an Assistant in the following cases:

i. If a faculty member is hiring someone to work full or part-time on a project and that person is a graduate student, but the work is not directly related to the student's program, then the employee is classified as an Assistant, rather than a Graduate Student Research Assistant (RA). Normal UW personnel policies must be followed. The approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies must be secured prior to hiring.

ii. If a faculty member is hiring someone to work full or part-time on a project and that person is not registered as a full-time student, during the period of employment, then the employee is classified as an Assistant and the normal UW personnel policies must be followed. For example, a student who has been employed as an RA during the academic term would be paid as an Assistant for work undertaken during a non-academic term or in the summer.

**Thesis Regulations/Expenses**

Many of the theses currently being done in the School, especially those which involve data collection, are complex and costly projects. While many students opt to do thesis research that is directly related to a faculty member's research grant or contract award, some do not. In either case, it is very important that the costs of performing the study, reducing and analysing data, and typing the document be estimated at the proposal stage. How these expenses are to be met must also be determined with your supervisor.

It is recognized that unforeseen expenses may occur on any project; however, you cannot expect the School or your supervisor to cover costs or cost overruns.

**J. Additional Information about the University of Waterloo**

**Access to Building after Hours**

A building key is not necessary as B.C. Matthews Hall is open 24 hours a day except during the Christmas break. Corridor doors are locked between 4:30 p.m. and 8:30 a.m. on weekdays and all day on weekends, but your office key will give you access to the School’s main hallways. Access to other buildings (e.g., Math & Computer, Physical Activities Complex etc.) is possible most hours that you would have need to use these facilities.

The information in this section is relatively up-to-date. If you require more accurate details, please refer to the latest edition of the [UW Graduate Calendar](http://example.com).

**Living Accommodations for Graduate Students**

Please refer to the current [UW University of Waterloo Graduate Calendar, Housing & Residences](http://example.com) for complete details. UW has many different styles of residences; grad students have options to live with their families in townhouses. UW also helps with providing information regarding [Off-Campus Housing](http://example.com).
Graduate Student Association and the Graduate House

All graduate students are automatically members of The Graduate Student Association. The Grad House is situated in the centre of campus and serves lunches, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages at moderate prices. More information can be found at the Graduate House website.

Libraries

There are a number of libraries on campus. The Dana Porter Arts Library, which is located in the centre of the campus, is the main library for arts humanities and social/behavioural sciences materials. The Davis Centre Library is located in the Davis Centre and contains materials related to mathematics, engineering, biological and health sciences, physical sciences, and so on. For manuals and other materials related to computer software and its application, the IST has a special CHIP service centre located on the bottom (1st) floor of the Math and Computer Building. You may also view books, articles and other pieces of literature using the online library.

The University is linked to the Ontario Inter-University Library System whereby it is possible to obtain a copy of a book or journal which is not available in our library within 48 hours. Inter-library loan (ILL) service reaches across North America. The Interlibrary Loan (RACER) system allows you to obtain items not available at the TUG libraries, including the UW Library. You may login to RACER to request books, journal articles, etc. not held in the TUG libraries.

The Faculty operates the Lois Matthews Reading Room in BMH 3035. It is available to faculty and graduate students for informal meetings and conversation as well as browsing.

Writing Centre

The Writing Centre is an excellent resource to assist you in meeting the demands of academic and professional writing which is one key to success in your M.Sc. or Ph.D. program. They offer workshops, one-on-one appointments and a variety of other supports.

Parking on Campus

You may park in any of the visitor parking lots and pay each time you enter. The current rate is between $3.00 and $6.00. You may pay by the term in selected lots (depending on the availability of space), in which case you need to contact the Parking Office in the Security Department which is located in the Commissary (COM), extension 33100. Visit the University of Waterloo Parking website for more information.

Banking

Major banking organizations have branch offices located close to the University and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) has a branch located on the lower level of the Student Life Centre. Assistantship and scholarship payments are deposited directly into your local account. Please check with the Payroll Department in the General Services Complex (GSC) to be sure that you have filled out the appropriate forms for Direct Deposit.

Housing
As with most university cities, housing is at a premium. Therefore, the earlier you can arrange accommodation, the closer you will be to the University and the cheaper the rate. There is a Housing Office located in Village 1 (V1) which provides lists of apartments and rooms to rent. You should consult this source as soon as possible. Another good source of information is the current graduate students who, based on experience, may be familiar with upcoming vacancies. New to campus housing is Columbia Lake Village, designed specifically for graduate students. Visit the Waterloo Residences website for more information.

Centre for Career Action

The Centre for Career Action provides assistance to students graduating with advanced degrees who are seeking employment. Types of employment and the organizations and agencies compatible with individual students' needs and abilities are discussed during personal interviews with career advisors. Group sessions for students are held on job-hunting techniques, resume writing and successful interviewing. Each year, several hundred employers are invited to conduct on-campus interviews for all graduating students. Post-graduate students may participate in interviews during the Fall and Winter terms. Visit the Centre for Career Action website for more information.

Bookstore

The Book Store, with three sales areas, is located in South Campus Hall. It provides for all of the student's textbook needs, more than 30,000 titles of non-required books, engineering, art and optometry supplies, stationery and crested merchandise.

Normal Bookstore hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Extended hours as posted as required. For general information, call extension 32902. For more information, visit the University of Waterloo’s Bookstore website.

International Student Experience Office

The International Student Experience Office (ISE) aids international students through its special programs and by providing information on many aspects of living in Canada: immigration regulations, community services, personal problems, legal problems, cultural adjustment, orientation to university life, and so on.

Programs include Host Families, English conversation class, English tutoring, temporary housing, TOEFL preparation courses and United States visa service.

All students from outside Canada are invited to visit the International Student Office in the Student Success Office in South Campus Hall on the second floor. International advising drop-ins and workshops are also offered for students.

Health Care

Health Services are provided for all students at UW. For details on services available at specific times, see Hours of Operation. Registered students can receive medical care, nursing care and counselling services at Health and Safety. A roster of family doctors attends Health and Safety each day to see students. A Health and Safety physician is on 24-hour call seven days a week for students.

Health Insurance: Physicians' fees at Health and Safety as well as laboratory work and X-rays are paid for by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). For detailed information on OHIP, students can obtain a
free booklet, “The Ontario Health Insurance Plan General Guide”, at the Clinic. OHIP application forms are also available at the Clinic. Students from other Canadian provinces and foreign students should check with Health and Safety staff regarding their coverage.

With the exception of visa students, all full-time students are covered by a Student Supplementary Health Insurance Plan. Premiums are shown in the Schedule of Fees. Dependent (family) coverage can be obtained by payment of an additional premium. A pamphlet detailing this plan is available at Health and Safety, the Registrar's Office, Financial Services, or the Federation of Students' Office.

Visa students, no longer covered under the Supplementary Health Insurance Plan since June 30, 1994, should enrol for the UHIP or University Health Insurance Plan. This plan can cover either the student alone, one dependent or more than one dependent at different costs. To apply for dependent coverage, the student must apply for coverage within 30 days of arriving in Canada. After this time the student must seek coverage from another private insurer or be responsible for their own medical costs. The Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office cautions that medical costs are very high, for example, one day in the hospital can cost as much as $2,000.00 in Canada. Information regarding this plan can be obtained from the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs Office.

Mental Health Resources

UW students are provided with mental health services to help assist with various problems such as anxiety and depression. Counselling Services are also available for urgent situations where drop in sessions are offered. In addition, stress-reduction workshops are offered to better prepare students to cope with stress of studies, personal lives, social lives, etc.

Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE)

The Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) fosters teaching and learning of the highest quality at Waterloo. They support the development of instruction by working collaboratively with departments and individuals at all career stages, and promote the importance of effective teaching and meaningful learning across the university.

Child Care

There are a variety of child care services available through four centres on campus. The Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) and Bright Starts Co-operative Early Learning Centre Inc. provide a variety of child care services on campus. Visit the Human Resources website for more information.

Policy on Bicycles in University Buildings

This statement makes clear that bicycles are not to be taken into or parked in campus buildings. The only exceptions are the storing of bicycles in areas specifically designated for this purpose located in the residence facilities and the UW Bike Centre in the Student Life Centre.

Departments administering buildings and UW Police are authorized to remove any bicycles found within campus buildings and not parked in outside bicycle racks.

This policy is not intended to discourage bicycle use but to ensure UW's compliance with fire and life safety requirements.
K. Post-Graduation Procedures

It is your responsibility to be aware of all academic deadlines for Convocation.

Below are the next steps you need to complete to graduate:

1. Review the deadlines on GSPA Academic Calendar for program completion deadline for convocation.
2. Check your unofficial transcripts to ensure all of your marks and milestones are reporting correctly.
3. Apply to Graduate on QUEST.
   a. Self Service-> Degree Progress/Graduation-> Apply for Graduation
   b. You will be able to view your Graduation status in this tab.
4. Follow the UWSpace Guide and upload your thesis to UWSpace, this can take 3-5 business days. Please ensure you are within the Program Completion Deadline for Convocation for the term.
5. Ensure you return all keys and fobs to the Graduate Coordinator, LHN 2707.