7-17-2014

Graduate Program Practices at Western University

Gloria J. Leckie
University of Western Ontario

Western

Graduate Program Practices at Western University

GLORIA LECKIE




2014

Teaching Support Centre
Western University

Table of Contents

Executive Summary: Some Best Practices in Action 4
Background 9
Project Goals 10
Graduate Chair Role and Support 11
Graduate Committees 13
Recruitment 14
Admissions 18
Orientation and TA Training 22
Funding and Scholarships 25
Policies and Procedures 29
Curriculum and Courses 29
Supervision 32
PhD Comprehensive Exams 37
Thesis Proposal/Prospectus 40
Student Progress 42
Fostering a Stimulating Intellectual and Collegial Environment 46
Professional Development 48
Doctoral Student Teaching 52
Student Space 53
Placement and Tracking 54
Doing Well and Some Challenges 56
Appendices 59
- Appendix 1 - Regulations re Transfer from MSc to PhD (Anatomy/Cell Biology 59
- Appendix 2 – Letter of Understanding (Physiology/Pharmacology) 60
- Appendix 3 – TA Responsibilities (Civil/Environmental Eng.) 64
- Appendix 4 – Funding Overview (Microbiology/Immunology) 66
- Appendix 5 – Funding Overview (Anatomy/Cell Biology) 67
- Appendix 6 – PhD Progression Timelines (Health/Rehab Sciences) 69
- Appendix 7 – Guidelines for Supervisors (Biology) 70
- Appendix 8 – Roles of Thesis Chief Supervisors and Advisory Committee Members (Information and Media Studies) 72
- Appendix 9 – Thesis Completion Guidelines (English) 74
- Appendix 10 – Infection Control Policy (Audiology) 76
- Appendix 11 – Comprehensive Examination (Civil/Environmental Eng.) 77
- Appendix 12 – Thesis Proposal Guidelines (Biology) 78
- Appendix 13 – Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Guidelines (Sociology) 80
- Appendix 14 – MA Thesis Guidelines (Political Science) 82
- Appendix 15 – Guidelines for the Independent Research Project (Women's Studies) 83
- Appendix 16 – Research Proposals and Progress Reports (Anatomy/Cell Biology) 84

Appendix 17 – Progress Reports and Review Meetings (Chemical/Biochemical Eng.) 86
Appendix 18 – Annual Progress Report (Philosophy) 88
Appendix 19 – Progress Report (Political Science) 90
Appendix 20 – Professional Dev. Workshops (English) 92
Appendix 21 – Placement Data (Earth Sciences) 94

Executive Summary: Some Best Practices in Action

This document provides an overview of academic and administrative practices related to some of the typical features of graduate programs in six Faculties. Practices vary by program and what works in one program may not necessarily work as well in another program. Nonetheless, based on the interviews with Graduate Chairs and other personnel, there are some general "best practice" ideas which have emerged from the project, including the following:

Recruitment/Admissions

- Recruitment efforts seem to be most effective when personal contact is involved, either through an open house or through direct interaction with prospective students by faculty and/or current graduate students.
- To attract Western undergrads, a recruitment lecture series with the involvement of the Graduate Chair and 1-2 current graduate students who speak about their experiences has worked well for some programs. Providing pizza lunch and drinks and requiring students to sign-up guarantees a good audience.
- Closer integration between graduate and undergraduate programs (such as allowing talented Honors students to take a grad course, or to do their Honor's thesis within the supervisor's research program or lab) can entice more undergrads to apply to the graduate program.
- Recruitment mechanisms beyond traditional text-based media, including videos, blogs, Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media, have given greater visibility to programs that use them and may attract additional applicants.
- Being rigorous and selective in the admissions process may result in an intake of students who are more likely to complete the program (i.e. less attrition).
- Reviewing application files for admissibility (meeting requirements such as TOEFL, academic average, academic background) before circulating them to the faculty eliminates unnecessary consideration of less desirable applicants.
- Personal contact is key when it comes to encouraging students to accept offers.
- Providing some money to have desirable students visit the department/Faculty, and having an organized day for them, is a good investment of time and money.

Funding/Scholarships

- If standard Western funding is not competitive in your discipline, sweeten the pot with some creative solutions such as entrance scholarships, extra conference money, a term free from TA duties, travel funds etc.
- To increase scholarship success, develop a workshop to assist students with applications, provide examples of past successful applications, and have faculty mentors available to give students feedback.
- Develop a clear and consistent set of policies relating to funding adjustments for external scholarship holders so that all students are treated equally.
- The idea of "take home pay" may help students understand how much they will have left to live on once tuition and other fees are paid.
- Develop a chart for posting on the web site showing exactly what the funding is in different categories such as Master's vs PhD, scholarship vs no scholarship, impact of TA pay on overall graduate stipend etc. Transparency re funding can reduce questions and eliminate uncertainty.

Orientation and TA Training

- Major involvement of the program's Graduate Student Association or Student's Council in Orientation has worked well for some programs.
- Having a specific electronic Orientation Handbook or Checklist can alert students as to what they will need to do before they arrive and as soon as they arrive.

- Online programs must be firm about requiring attendance at mandatory on-site orientation and other required campus visits. Helping students find accommodation (possibly billeting, B&Bs or other arrangements) for the duration of the visit eliminates one of their concerns about attending.
- Extra time spent up front with incoming students (such having brief meetings with them individually or in small groups) by the Grad Chair or Program Assistant may pay off in the long run by making them feel the administrative office is welcoming and thus more likely to bring issues forward before they escalate.
- Particularly for non-thesis programs, getting students interacting in an online discussion prior to arrival may help them make contacts and hit the ground running.
- Consider implementing an optional buddy system whereby new students are paired with a more senior student for mentoring. Some students will want to take advantage of the opportunity.
- Having some sort of mixer (either at a faculty member's home or the Grad Pub etc.) where new students can chat with faculty and senior grad students is a good idea.
- Having current graduate students act as peer mentors for incoming students is well received in programs that have this.
- TA training, either in-house or through the TSC, makes a difference.
- Consider developing a tailored workshop for the particular kinds of assignments and duties that your TAs will face.

Policies and Procedures

- A publicly accessible web-based Graduate Student Handbook is handy and clearly lays out all policies in one place for easy reference.
- A separate Orientation Handbook or Checklist may help students be more proactive in their preparations to arrive.

Curriculum and Courses

- Developing an overarching curriculum document that lays out the philosophy, values, pedagogy, learning goals, structure and content of the curriculum is very worthwhile and can be a time saving resource in the long run, useful for many purposes.
- Programs that have a required seminar series see that it increases student interaction and creates cohesion, particularly if students are scattered in different locations.
- In courses that include both Master's and doctoral students, thought needs to be given as to how to meet the differing learning needs of each group.

Thesis and Non-thesis Supervision

- Having incoming students meet with their supervisor or academic advisor to draw up a Plan of Study which includes which courses they must take can be a good way to ensure that students do not miss out on courses and other elements they ought to have considered.
- Having students and their supervisors sign a Letter of Understanding early in the program can help to set the right tone for the work ahead and helps reduce misunderstandings.
- Prepare guidelines outlining the responsibilities of supervisors, advisory committees and their supervisees.
- Some programs have a member of the Graduate Committee on each Advisory Committee as a committee chair, distinct from the thesis supervisor. The Grad Committee rep organizes meetings, chairs them and ensures that all paperwork is completed.
- For programs where having a supervisor is not required prior to arrival, develop a web page to help students choose a thesis supervisor. Include a general discussion of things to consider when choosing a supervisor, as well as a list of faculty members active in particular research areas/streams, along with descriptions of their research projects.
- Hold a social event where graduate faculty members introduce themselves and their research to students and make themselves available to discuss potential supervision.

- Particularly for non-thesis programs, consider assigning each new student a faculty mentor or a peer buddy.
- Develop formal procedures and expectations for students who are going on placements.
- To give students a better idea of the types of internships and placements available, consider having students who have already gone on placements provide a description of their placements for upcoming students to read. Putting the testimonials on the public web site may also attract prospective students.

Comprehensive Exams and Thesis Proposals

- To prevent students from missing program milestones and falling behind, consider limiting the number of second chances given if written or oral components of comprehensive exams are failed. Alternately, set a time limitation on the retake of a comprehensive so that other program milestones can still be achieved.
- If a thesis proposal is required, develop explicit guidelines for what is expected in the proposal, both at the doctoral and Master's levels.
- Presentation of the proposal by the student, either publicly or in front of a committee, can be a good preparatory experience for the eventual defence, but it needs to be done in an atmosphere of constructive support with a view to strengthening the thesis project rather than being a rigorous defence per se.

Student Progress

- If not already doing so, consider requiring students to meet with their Supervisors and Advisory committees at a specific time of the year, to discuss progress and complete a mandatory progress form, handed in to the Graduate Chair and placed in the student's file.
- To instill accountability, some programs require the student to organize the mandatory meetings with the Supervisor/Advisory Committee and to ensure that all the evaluation forms are signed and copies submitted to all required parties.
- Having the student make a short presentation of progress to date at the required meeting can be beneficial both for the student and the committee.
- Develop guidelines for the format and length of the progress meeting so that they do not become overly long and onerous.
- A spreadsheet showing the progress of thesis students through the program milestones is a great tool for monitoring the big picture.
- In non-thesis programs, other forms of progress monitoring (such as general graduate faculty meetings etc.) can prevent students from falling through the cracks, catching academic problems before they escalate into an irretrievable situation.
- Require Year X students to complete, at the very least, an annual progress report sent to the Grad Chair, to prompt discussion of goals if no progress has been made.

Fostering a Stimulating Intellectual and Collegial Environment

- A regular speaker series, with coffee and cookies, and talks that are interesting to both students and faculty, can be a good basic way to promote interaction and discussion. However, it needs to be kept fresh and well supported to be effective. Too many different speaker series can be counter-productive.
- Consider fostering smaller, more intimate venues (such as reading groups, journal clubs or topical discussion circles).
- Providing lots of opportunities for faculty members to talk relatively informally about their own research projects (such as a brown bag lunch series) can promote wider awareness of what various faculty members are actually working on and can engage students.
- Programs that have a weekly coffee hour with home-baked goodies find this to be very successful in bringing faculty and students together informally on a regular basis. It may take a while for this to become ingrained, but it is definitely worth trying.

- Foster a culture of celebration and recognition, both of program accomplishments and individual achievements: examples include a welcome reception for new faculty and staff, a pizza event at the Grad Club to recognize scholarship winners, reception to announce departmental or Faculty-wide teaching award winners etc.
- Organize an annual graduate student research day or conference, with monetary prizes for the best papers in different categories.
- Support the efforts of your graduate student organization to organize social and academic events, to create a feeling of cohesion and belonging among the students. Providing a little bit of seed money for academic events (such as student organized research days or conferences) often yields great rewards.
- Consider sponsoring a student to go to dinner with other faculty when hosting an invited speaker/guest.
- Occasional social events (such as a BBQ, or Christmas party) at faculty members' homes (if student numbers are small enough) are good for building morale and a sense of belonging.

Professional Development for Students

- Develop a regular series of professional development talks/workshops, on topics useful for your particular graduate students (such as successful grant writing, how to prepare a CV etc.). Even two workshops a term would be a good start. Consider drawing upon faculty members and/or senior doctoral students who have expertise in the area to be part of the workshop.
- Solicit some faculty volunteers to help students one-on-one, such as reviewing draft CVs, or holding mock interviews.
- If professional development workshops are not possible, consider building more professional development into the curriculum/courses.
- Set aside some money to bring in guest speakers who can provide specific professional development for your program, either in a workshop/panel discussion or as a speaker in a course.
- Support the efforts of the students to organize professional development events for themselves. Again, providing a bit of seed money may be all that is needed to spark the effort.

Doctoral Student Teaching

- Allowing doctoral students to have at least some experience with solo teaching may give them a competitive advantage when applying for positions.
- Start a mentoring program, where a faculty member mentors and gives feedback on a student's teaching.
- Provide ways to give doctoral students introductory opportunities to teach, such as guest lecturing in courses. This could work well with mentoring as noted above.
- Consider curricular approaches to preparing doctoral students to teach, such as having them develop the pedagogical framework and course outline in a seminar course, perhaps with an opportunity in their final year to teach the course they have developed. Incorporating discussions and projects related to pedagogy into a formal seminar course minimizes the amount of work students need to develop a course on their own time, and thus may prevent completion delays.

Student Space

Space is one area that you may not be able to do much about, especially if space is tight. Nonetheless, given the number of comments about student space being unpleasant, grotty or dispiriting, it seems that some attention needs to be paid to make it as pleasant as possible. Accordingly:

- For shared student facilities such as lounges, kitchens, computer labs etc., do an annual check to see if furniture and equipment needs fixing or replacement. Keeping shared student facilities maintained and in good shape sends a message that students matter. This may mean that you need to develop a facilities maintenance and replacement line within the budget and contribute to it regularly so that when the situation arises, the funds are available for maintenance or replacement.

- If there is a large shared room with carrels that is not particularly appealing, consider requesting that the space be painted – paint can go a long way towards brightening things up.
- If possible, set aside some rooms as breakout spaces where students can work together in groups.

Placement and Tracking

- Consider having a section on the web site that talks about the kinds of careers that are available to students. If you have graduates who do not go into academic careers, follow up informally with as many as you can to see where they are working and collect examples of non-academic careers. Over time, this information will expand and eventually will provide a picture of different career paths.
- To plot out where your thesis students are placed/working, start by soliciting information from thesis supervisors. This may give you a fairly good picture of overall placement patterns.
- Post information on placements on the web site, either generalized or showing specific placements with permission of former students.
- If you are going to gather placement information, do it regularly (e.g. annually or biannually). Collecting it every five years does not do much good and is a waste of your effort.
- If you already have a placement survey in place, consider adding an incentive such as a small gift card or Western University bookmark etc. to keep response rates high.
- For graduating doctoral students, consider creating a section on the web site to feature their expertise and areas of specialization, along with their CVs and any other pertinent information.

Background

This document originally started out as an attempt to gather "best practices" in graduate education at Western. The methodology was straightforward, involving interviews with graduate chairs to discuss their best practices. However, not long into the interviews, I realized that a) "best practices" is a rather elusive term and is highly relative to the type of program being offered, b) graduate chairs are sometimes unsure what they should consider to be a best practice, and c) graduate chairs are not generally aware of practices in other graduate programs and many indicated a desire to know more about practices in other programs which could be useful for ideas.

Accordingly, the scope of the project broadened considerably with a goal of simply recording, with examples where appropriate, a variety of administrative, academic and other practices in graduate programs across the Faculties at Western. I had originally intended to tackle all Faculties and all graduate chairs, but that proved to be too large a group at the outset. Accordingly, I narrowed the initial focus to six Faculties (Arts/Humanities, Engineering, Health Sciences, Information and Media Studies, Social Science and Science). Starting in the fall of 2011, 34 interviews were conducted with the Graduate Chairs (and sometimes the Program Director, Graduate Assistant, Professional Development or Placement officer) from programs in those Faculties. In addition to the interviews, I examined the web site for each program. This work resulted in an interim report which was circulated across the university.

Starting in the fall of 2013 and winter of 2014, I undertook to complete the study by talking to a number of Graduate Chairs or Program Directors in the remaining Faculties, including Education, Ivey Business, Law, Music and Schulich Medicine/Dentistry. Accordingly another 14 interviews were conducted in those Faculties and the initial report was revised into this current version to include the information gathered from the most recent round of interviews.

Accordingly, the final list of departments or grad programs covered in this report is shown below:

Arts/Humanities

- Classical Studies
- English
- Film Studies
- French
- Philosophy
- Visual Arts
- Women's Studies and Feminist Research

Education

- PhD and M.A. in Education Studies
- M.A. in Counselling Psychology
- Doctor of Education
- Master of Professional Education

Engineering

- Chemical and Biochemical
- Civil and Environmental
- Electrical and Computer
- Mechanical and Materials

Health Sciences

- Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
- Kinesiology
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy

Information and Media Studies

- Journalism
- Library and Information Science

Music

- PhD
- M.A. and Master's of Music
- Doctor of Musical Arts

Schulich Medicine/Dentistry

- Anatomy and Cell Biology
- Biochemistry
- Epidemiology and Biostatistics
- Family Medicine
- Medical Biophysics
- Microbiology and Immunology
- Neuroscience
- Physiology and Pharmacology
- Public Health

Science

- Applied Mathematics
- Biology
- Computer Science
- Earth Sciences
- Mathematics
- Physics and Astronomy
- Statistical and Actuarial Sciences

Social Science

- Anthropology
- Economics
- Geography

- Media Studies
- Popular Music and Culture (joint with Music)

Ivey School of Business

- PhD and Master's in Business Administration
- MSc in Management

Law

- PhD
- Master of Laws (LLM)
- Master of Studies in Law

- History
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Administration
- Sociology

Project Goals

The purpose of this project is a) to uncover and describe the different types of graduate program academic and administrative practices in the Faculties above, b) to highlight some of the practices that seem to work well for different programs, and c) to note any associated benefits or issues/concerns as mentioned by Graduate Chairs in the Faculties included. The project was never envisioned as an attempt to provide a statistical analysis of the kinds of practices carried out by various programs, which would likely not be terribly helpful. Rather, the project set out to provide a descriptive overview of graduate program practices, with copious examples from different programs.

While there are a lot of different graduate programs in the Faculties examined, at the macro level, there is not as much variation in how they are structured and operate as one might think. In fact, even though programs may have quite different requirements and varying ways of managing which make them look quite unique on the surface, there is more commonality among them than difference. This is not to downplay the differences among them. Obviously each program has its own reputation, quality, ethos, modes of doing, disciplinary context and faculty culture. But, at the level of broad strokes, a certain amount of difference falls away.

At the doctoral level, there is the least variation. The majority of doctoral programs in the Faculties function very similarly. The doctoral student is admitted, takes courses, takes one or more qualifying and/or comprehensive exams, prepares a thesis proposal (or not, if not required), and eventually proceeds to the thesis research, writing and defence. To ensure a good quality thesis, the student has a supervisor and an advisory committee, which as later sections will demonstrate, could be chosen any time from the point of application to well into second or third year. A few programs have direct entry or fast track doctoral admissions for master's students and a few have a part-time stream, but many do not have either of those options.

At the Master's level, there is more variation in programs, but even here, there are some noticeable similarities. Master's programs at Western tend to be of five types:

i. a purely thesis-based Master's
ii. a Master's program with options to do a thesis, a major research project or purely coursework
iii. a course-only Master's, some with research-project options and some without
iv. a course-only Master's with professional or clinical placements/internships
v. a combination of iii and iv.

Most programs are still face-to-face and campus-based, but a few, such as in Education and in Family Medicine, are distance programs.

As well, there are a number of joint or collaborative programs at both the doctoral and master's levels. While most of them do tend to be more academically and administratively unique simply by virtue of their joint situation, nonetheless they often still fall into the broad types of programs noted above.

In addition to a similar structure, most graduate programs share a certain level of administrative similarity. All programs need to review applications, accept students, orient them, provide appropriate courses, monitor and supervise students as necessary, and ensure that their programs are clearly laid out so that students can progress to completion.

However, having just said that there are some strong similarities among types of programs, and among the types of practices that graduate programs regularly have (such as admission procedures and thesis defences), the devil is in the details, so to speak. For Graduate Chairs and other faculty and staff involved in running graduate programs, it is the myriad and unique program details which drive daily work, create the learning environment for students, and give shape to the particular challenges each program faces. The details also can obfuscate and hinder the development of a shared understanding between and among programs (even in the same Faculty or department), overshadowing the things they have in common and the ways in which they might work together to solve similar problems.

This project, then, is an attempt to reveal the details, with the hope that shedding some light on what programs actually do on a daily basis may facilitate cross-program sharing and idea generation. The document begins with a look at the role of the Graduate Chair and the Graduate Committee and then follows the life cycle of a program, from student recruitment/admissions, to placement and all manner of practices in between. The practices covered are not exhaustive: there are undoubtedly practices that could have been explored that are not included, simply due to the limitations of time and effort. Nonetheless, I hope that what is included is of interest and helpful to a wide variety of programs.

Lastly I want to thank everyone who made time to speak with me during this project. It literally would not have been possible to do this project without the insights of the Grad Chairs and other personnel who shared their program details with me.

Graduate Chair Role and Support

As with almost every element of graduate education at Western, there are commonalities and differences in the role of the Graduate Chair (hereafter GC). First, in terms of a title, although Graduate Chair is the most common name for the role, there are some variations in the title such as Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate Program Director.

Second, while the obvious common denominator is that all GCs are concerned with the overall running of their unit's graduate programs, their degree of recognition, support and autonomy differs by department and by Faculty. The vast majority of GCs are appointed for a set period, varying from 2 to 4 years, usually with an option to renew. One GC had been in his role for over 5 years, while others were relatively new to the position. Some took up their positions enthusiastically, while others felt pressured to become GC or took on the role because no-one else was willing to. Not every faculty member is naturally suited to the administrative responsibilities and interpersonal skills needed to be an effective GC, and so there may be a relatively small number of faculty members who are willing and able to be the GC. In some departments, there is an expectation that every faculty member will take his or her turn at this role (and the Undergraduate Chair role as well), but that expectation is certainly not universal across departments and programs.

Third, a great many GCs receive course release to allow them the necessary time to fulfil their duties, but in some Faculties, a small stipend is more common than course release. For those GCs who receive course release, about half received .5 course per year (i.e. a one semester course weight), and about half received 1.0 course release per year. As a compromise approach, in Psychology, the GC receives .5 course release one year, followed by a 1.0 course release the next year and alternating thereafter, thus providing a bit more time for the role over the GC's term in the position. In Economics, there are two GC positions - the Director manages the day-to-day operation of the program, while the Co-Director looks after recruitment and admissions, with both receiving .5 course release. Other combinations of responsibility sharing are also in evidence. For instance, in English, there is a faculty member appointed as Graduate Chair, receiving 1.0 course release, but there is also a faculty member appointed for Professional Development and Placement, receiving .5 course release. Similarly in Philosophy, the GC receives .5 course release and the faculty member who is the Graduate Placement Officer also receives .5 course release.

There are exceptions to the course release approach. In Law, since the grad program is very small, the Grad Chair does not receive either course release or a stipend, which did not seem to cause any concern at this time. In Earth Science, the Grad Chair receives a $5K stipend to supplement his/her research funds. In the Faculty of Engineering, GCs typically do not get course release for their duties, partly because most of them already have some course release from their research grants and partly because of established precedent within the Faculty. They do, however, receive a small annual stipend. Similarly, in Schulich Medicine/Dentistry, course release for GC duties is virtually unheard of, largely because for many faculty members, their primary role is to conduct research, manage their research labs and grant, and supervise graduate students, so their

teaching is already less than in other Faculties. Accordingly, most GCs in Schulich receive a stipend for their duties, or in some cases, have money added to a research account. While most GCs in Schulich are sole chairs, there was one example of a co-chairing arrangement: iBiochemistry has two co-chairs – one for Internal and one for External. The Internal GC looks after domestic applications, coordinates course offerings, oversees the internal scholarship rankings, organizes the grad seminar series, and deals with student problems. The External GC deals with any graduate level activity/meetings within Schulich (such as the monthly meeting of Schulich GCs), promotional and recruitment events and oversees the rankings for external scholarships.

In some cases, some of the duties of the Grad Chair are shared between a faculty member and a senior staff member. Such is the case at Ivey Business, where the Master's programs are overseen by two Program Directors. The faculty member Program Director looks after recruiting and admissions, while the second Program Director, who is a senior staff member, is responsible for program services (i.e. daily management of the program). The faculty member Program Director sits on the Ivey Graduate Studies committee and reports to the Associate Dean, and handles any of the academic matters (such as plagiarism, appeals etc.) that are typically handled by Grad Chairs. However, the staff member Program Director handles much of the daily management and problem-solving associated with such a large graduate program, so although she is not a member of the Graduate Studies committee, her role is essential to the smooth operation of the program. She builds relationships with the students before they even arrive, so that they know there is always someone to assist them. The staff member Program Director also manages the international component of the program, and accompanies the students on the two week international field trip in December.

Fourth, in terms of what GCs actually do, all GCs mentioned that there are certain responsibilities that usually only they perform, including but not limited to the following:

- keeping a big-picture overview of admissions, program details, student progress, thesis defences, scholarship performance and sometimes placement
- liaising with the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Dean's office, and/or other programs as necessary
- coordinating or preparing official documents about the program, such as for accreditation or quality review
- planning course offerings (sometimes with the Grad Committee, Program Directors or the departmental Chair)
- dealing with student funding issues and TA assistantships
- assigning temporary academic advisors/mentors
- finding examiners for theses and comprehensive exams
- sorting out supervisory problems if the supervisory relationship is not working
- dealing with certain kinds of appeals
- advising on and implementing SGPS procedures with respect to academic offences such as plagiarism
- having discussions with a student and/or supervisor if progress is not being made
- having discussions with students in academic difficulty
- dealing with students in distress (psychological, financial, academic etc.)
- dealing with withdrawals, either voluntary or required, and leaves, etc.
- following up with Year X students re completion.

Of course, there is much more that GCs are involved in on a daily basis, including the details of recruitment, admissions, orientation, program curriculum, course planning, sorting out student issues, writing policies and procedures, ensuring that policies are followed, attending all manner of meetings etc. etc. To do these tasks, the GC sometimes works alone, sometimes with the Graduate Committee, and sometimes with graduate program staff. In some cases the GC works closely with faculty members who are designated as program coordinators or directors. For instance, in Occupational Therapy, two faculty members are designated as Year 1 and Year 2 Coordinators (and receive service credits for these roles) and there is also a Curriculum Committee. Public History and Public Administration both have Program Directors who work with the GC. In Information & Media Studies, there are Program Coordinators for every program (Health Information Science, Journalism, Library and Information Science, Media Studies, and Popular Music and Culture) who take some of the administrative burden off of the Graduate Chair.

Fifth, every GC remarked on the absolute importance of having a good Graduate Assistant to help him/her. In some cases, there is one full time Graduate Assistant, while in other cases, there is more than one FT staff member assigned to graduate program duties (as in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, which is non-departmentalized and has 5 full-time graduate programs staff members working on nine different graduate programs, or the Ivey Business School, which has 15+ staff members working on graduate recruitment, admissions and program operations). What seems to be a key factor is that to be truly supportive and helpful to the GC, the staff member has to be dedicated full time to the graduate programs. In only two programs was there a deviation from this and in both cases, the graduate program duties were distributed among various staff members in the main office, the arrangement being described by the GCs as not working well, to say the least. In these cases, the GCs felt very overwhelmed/stressed and unable to keep on top of program issues, and found that errors had been made in things like admission letters and policy interpretation. In one case, the decision had been made to go back to the model of a full-time dedicated Graduate Assistant because the shared-duties approach did not work.

While this project did not explore the role of the Graduate Assistant directly, it became quite evident that dedicated Graduate Assistants (sometimes called by other terms such as Graduate Program Coordinator etc.) are crucial to the successful and smooth running of graduate programs and the sanity of the GC. While one might think that this goes without saying, it is probably not stated often enough. Graduate Chairs who were new to their role relied heavily on more experienced staff members to help them understand what needed to be done and what priority to assign to various tasks. In a few cases, the interview with the GC also included the Graduate Assistant, who contributed equally to the discussion of internal graduate practices. GCs mentioned numerous areas where the Graduate Assistant's work was crucial, noting in particular

- vetting, processing and preparation of admission application files,
- fielding general questions about not only admissions but all sorts of internal program procedures such as thesis defences,
- acting as the front line for students experiencing a wide range of difficulties and alerting the GC to those difficulties,
- assisting students with procedures regarding their scholarship applications and preparation of scholarship applications for ranking,
- helping the GC to keep tabs on student progress and time in the program through the development of spreadsheets and other tracking mechanisms,
- sending out reminders to students (and the GC) about specific milestones that need to be met,
- keeping track of statistical facts, such as the number of applications, the number of offers, the number of students in different years etc. and
- keeping the web site up to date, and in some cases, dealing with social media.

Some GCs stated that they only agreed to take on the role because they knew that the Graduate Assistant was very experienced and could be relied upon to help the GC decipher the position. Many GCs remarked that they would have been completely at sea without the knowledge and experience of the Graduate Assistant, in particular since the responsibilities of the GC often are not formally recorded anywhere. Thus many GCs had to learn by doing, by relying on the Graduate Assistant and/or by asking for advice from the previous GC if s/he were still around. As one GC remarked “I’ve had to make this up as I go”. Another GC commented that his first year as GC was horrible, because he had to deal with a sexual assault case as well as a drug dealing issue. He felt that there needed to be more support from SGPS to help GCs handle social issues.

Graduate Committees

Every department has a committee structure to provide oversight for the graduate programs. The most common form is to have one departmental Graduate Committee (with various names such as the Graduate Affairs Committee or Graduate Education Committee etc.), but there are exceptions:

- In Nursing, there is a Graduate Program Council, with all faculty who teach in the graduate programs as members. The Council meets once a month, holds a faculty retreat twice a year, and must approve everything regarding grad programs. There is no single graduate committee: instead there are separate Graduate Committees for Admissions, Curriculum, Policy, and Scholarships. Each committee has different faculty members serving on it. The multiple committee model also is used in Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

- In Philosophy, the Graduate Affairs Committee is comprised of all graduate faculty members, so tasks like admissions etc. are delegated to elected subcommittees.
- Another model is Information & Media Studies, where each graduate program, such as Journalism, Library and Information Science, Media Studies etc., has its own graduate committee or committees.
- In Political Science, there is a general graduate committee, but there is also a Local Government Program Committee, which oversees the MPA program.
- In Mechanical/Materials Engineering, there is a Graduate Committee for Research Programs and another one for Professional Programs.
- The most atypical is Economics where there is only one Academic Committee for both graduate and undergraduate programs.

In units with a Graduate Committee, it is normally an elected body (although a few committees were constituted by appointing faculty members) with 4 or 5 faculty members plus the Graduate Chair and sometimes the Departmental Chair as well. In departments which have fields of study in their graduate program (such as Psychology), the committee is sometimes stratified with representative from each field. Another variation on that theme is in Neuroscience, which is a cross-disciplinary and cross-departmental program. The Graduate Committee is composed of the program's Graduate Chair and at least one representative from each participating department, for a total committee of about 8-10 people. Similarly, in Medical Biophysics, in addition to the Graduate Chair, the Grad committee has representatives from the different locations where the program is offered, including main campus, Robarts Research Institute, St. Joseph's Hospital and the London Regional Cancer Centre. Many Graduate Committees also have student representatives (who sit out when issues like admissions, student progress and scholarship rankings are being discussed). In Information/Media Studies, Limited Duties instructors are also included on graduate committees. In some cases, the GC chairs the Graduate Committee and in other cases, does not.

The responsibilities and approach to work of the Graduate Committee varied somewhat. With respect to responsibilities, some Graduate Committees are intimately involved in procedures such as admissions, scholarship ranking etc. while other graduate committees tend to focus more on program structure, issues and development. There are standard tasks mentioned by GCs that the Graduate Committee handled, including scholarship ranking in the fall, admissions in the winter and ongoing discussions of program issues/changes as need be. Some graduate committees take on tasks through the committee as a whole, while others routinely set up Ad Hoc subcommittees to handle things like scholarship rankings and admissions.

There are some Graduate Committees which are quite involved in monitoring student performance. For instance, in Schulich Medicine/Dentistry, several departments (such as Anatomy/Cell Biology, Neuroscience, Physiology/Pharmacology) have a practice of requiring each member of the Graduate Committee to be on multiple thesis Advisory Committees so that every student's Advisory Committee has a representative from the Graduate Committee (see more on this practice under the Student Progress section). As well, in some cases, milestones of student progress (such as permission to transfer from master's to PhD programs, thesis proposals, and permission to undertake thesis writing) have to have final approval by the Graduate Committee.

Some Graduate Chairs make decisions relatively independently, and some work more or less in tandem with the department's Graduate Committee(s). In cases where the Graduate Committee meets relatively infrequently (i.e. only a few times a year), the GC has more latitude in making decisions regarding the running of the program. In some cases, the GC is specifically designated by the Grad Committee to undertake certain tasks on its behalf (for instance, eliminating applications that are obviously weak or inappropriate for the program).

Recruitment

Some graduate programs are very active with respect to graduate student recruitment, while others are not. Two of the main reasons for this difference are the size and quality of the application pool, and increased competition. Generally, those programs with a strong application pool do not feel the need to be as aggressive with their recruitment efforts, especially if they are already inundated with applications (as in one program with 800 applications for 55 spots). However, regardless of the size of the applicant pool, some programs still felt the need to be more actively recruiting because of increasing competition from similar programs at other universities (which could be within Ontario, Canada or the United States, depending on the discipline).

For programs that are actively pursuing applicants, there are several different approaches. First, it was mentioned often that the **program web site** is a key factor in attracting applicants. Most of the web sites examined have two general areas for graduate programs: one for current students, and one for prospective students, so information for those who are thinking about applying is separated out and streamlined. For example, under Prospective Students, Sociology has menu items for

- Why Grad School?
- Experience Western
- Admission Requirements
- How to Apply
- Finances
- Living in London (from http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/Grad/)

GCs often commented that keeping the web site up-to-date is a constant headache and challenge in terms of personnel time to create or update the content. Nevertheless, given its importance for recruitment, considerable effort needs to be spent on having the web site provide the best public face of the program. This is done through putting a positive spin on the program by

i. Talking about **features/requirements of the program** and why the program is considered to be of high quality. For example,
Civil/Environ. Engineering http://www.eng.uwo.ca/civil/graduate_program/prospective_grad.htm and Political Science http://politicalscience.uwo.ca/grad_studies/ both indicate their strengths in various areas of the discipline.
Physiology/Pharmacology discusses their research strengths but as well, points out their strong commitment to teaching and learning and student training. The description ends with a link to their current Academic Plan. see www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm/about_us/index.html
For its professionally oriented Master's and PhD programs, the Faculty of Education emphasizes the ease and flexibility of course scheduling and the quality of its online education, developed to meet the needs of busy working professionals, see
www.edu.uwo.ca/graduate-education/documents/[professional

ii. Emphasizing **faculty research**. For instance, Psychology lists the faculty in each specialization and also indicates with ** which faculty are taking students for the next academic year, e.g.
http://psychology.uwo.ca/bcn.htm
Physiology/Pharmacology also provides a list of faculty who are taking graduate students, with a detailed description of their research programs, see
www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm/graduate/faculty_accepting_grad-students.html
Similarly Microbiology/Immunology has an extensive listing of faculty research both by field and by individuals, with a map of the world showing their global research collaborations, see
www.uwo.ca/mni/research/index_research.html
Medical Biophysics takes this a step further and posts a series of videos highlighting faculty research, see for example http://www.uwo.ca/biophysics/

iii. Talking directly about what **careers and career paths** are possible after graduate study such as in Mechanical/Materials Engineering
http://www.eng.uwo.ca/mechanical/graduate_research/prospective/ThinkingOfAGraduateDegree/future_employment.htm and in
Physiology/Pharmacology www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm/graduate/career_development

or indicating **positions taken by graduates**. See examples at
Economics http://economics.uwo.ca/grad/PhD%20Placement%202003_2012.pdf
Philosophy at http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/graduate/index.html#)

iv. Providing **profiles of current graduate students**. For example, Economics and Philosophy provide profiles of their current PhD job candidates, giving their academic areas, CVs and personal web sites. The Faculty of Education also provides profiles of its PhD students in the various fields of study, see www.edu.uwo.ca/phd_profiles/cpels/index.html. The MBA and PhD programs at the Ivey Business School provide student profiles for all PhD students and a select number of MBA students, giving their

pictures and a statement from each student about their motivation for going to Ivey and what they appreciate about the program, see www.ivey.uwo.ca/mba/ivey-student-profiles/.

Some programs have taken recruitment bit further than the basic text-based information on the web site: for instance, Geography has **developed videos** with a lot of student involvement for different areas of the program (Physical, Social and GIS), which are available on the web site (see http://geography.uwo.ca/grad/) and helped them attract some additional high quality applicants. Chemical/Biochemical Engineering also has a video about research in that field (see http://www.eng.uwo.ca/chemical/current-grad.htm and then click on the video button).

Being active on **social media** is another method of attracting applicants. Having a Facebook presence is becoming more common (such as in Applied Mathematics, Computer Science, English, French, Psychology, Statistical and Actuarial Sciences) with Facebook pages usually maintained by the graduate assistant, departmental secretary or occasionally a faculty member. Generally, many GCs indicated that is difficult to keep up with social media both in terms of personnel time and overall effectiveness of efforts. The one notable exception to this is the Ivey Business School, which depends heavily on a wide array of social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, You Tube, Skype) to attract applicants, develop a dialogue and keep them engaged throughout the application process. According to both the PhD and MBA program directors, social media is the most important way that recruitment is done at Ivey. Accordingly, Ivey has devoted dedicated significant human resources to this - a number of staff work specifically on social media both for the Master's programs and for the PhD, and in this sense, the school is an anomaly on campus – no other unit devotes as many resources to their social media efforts. Ivey's extensive use of social media is partly because the number of business schools in North America has grown considerably, so there is fierce competition for students. At the doctoral level, there is only a small number of spots available for students at Ivey, so the program seeks to take the cream of the crop and social media helps them do this. For the MBA program, which is Ivey's largest grad program, it is harder now to attract students than 10 years ago because of the competition of other MBA programs, so the use of social media is crucial. However, social media is also useful for staff to develop an ongoing relationship with each prospective applicant right from the time of initial enquiry about a program. As well, the MBA program uses social media to help potential applicants understand what the program entails. For instance, faculty members do mini case lectures (called Class on the Road) in selected cities, and the upcoming events are advertised on the web site and on social media. Similarly, the dates and times of sessions entitled Admission Tips and Tricks are covered on social media.

Another often mentioned approach to recruiting is through **faculty contact**. In some cases, this means a very one-on-one approach. At Information & Media Studies, each graduate program holds a faculty meeting every term to discuss graduate student progress. At those meetings, Master's students with doctoral potential are identified and sent a letter inviting them to meet with the GC to discuss doctoral study. In Economics, a lot of effort is put into the one-on-one approach: the Grad Director may spend as much as an hour on the phone with each serious candidate.

In other cases, faculty contact means that faculty members who have good collegial relationships with faculty at other universities get in touch with those colleagues to enquire whether they have any strong students who could be encouraged to apply to Western. Media Studies (INFORMATION & MEDIA STUDIES), Economics and Biology graduate programs all do this regularly, contacting strategic faculty at certain universities. For Economics, this direct faculty contact has been quite successful in soliciting students with the type of background required. A more generic variation is to have faculty who are attending meetings and conferences draw attention to the graduate programs at Western through their presentations, and do some networking and recruiting while at the conference by talking with colleagues informally. This type of networking is very important for some disciplines, such as French, where lines of communication need to be kept open with counterparts, especially in Quebec, to encourage students to come to Western and to publicize Western's funding packages.

Recruitment through sending out **brochures and/or posters** was also noted frequently. Most GCs were dubious whether this approach really had much impact, and as well, there was some discomfort at the thought of sending out materials to universities with strong competing programs: one GC described it as "rude" but others noted that it was Quid pro quo: if their program sent out posters/brochures to other universities, they felt obligated to post the posters of competing programs on their own bulletin boards. Also raised was the issue of who would produce the materials (centrally or not?), what the design should be, and the cost of producing them etc. Some GCs noted that they would like to have separate posters/brochures for their programs but

either they could not afford to produce them within their program budgets or this is discouraged in favour of having one brochure that represented all of the programs in the Faculty. With respect to the latter, these GCs thought that individualized program brochures could better help them target certain groups of potential applicants, who might not be willing to sit and peruse a larger brochure of multiple programs.

Another important approach to recruitment is through holding various sorts of **open houses and/or directly encouraging individual applicants to visit** Western. Anthropology holds a fall recruitment open house in the fall each year, with students coming from across southern Ontario. Communication Sciences and Disorders also holds a fall open house this for their programs, routinely attracting over 400 students to their information sessions. Economics invites strong applicants within driving distance to a day-long event usually sometime in January or February. During the event, students may have informal meetings with individual faculty members, come to a presentation of faculty research, go to lunch with current grad students, and attend a meet and greet at the Grad Club. The Grad Director in Economics remarked that this is one of their best recruitment devices and that the change in attitude of applicants by the end of the day is often "staggering". Similarly, Anatomy/Cell Biology holds an open house weekend in March for top applicants. Students come to see the faculty and facilities, to hear talks by current students, to have formal interviews with the graduate admissions committee and to attend a social reception. Transportation and accommodation costs are covered for all out-of-town applicants.

Along these same lines, in many cases, encouraging students from a department's own **undergraduate program** is also an important aspect of recruitment. For example, in History, all third year undergraduates with an A average are sent a letter inviting them to individual meetings with the GC or Dept. Chair to discuss whether they have considered graduate studies and to answer any questions they might have about History's grad program. At Information & Media Studies, top undergraduate students are sent a letter inviting them to meet with the Graduate Chair or a Program Coordinator to discuss the graduate programs. In addition to the open houses organized by SPGS, some programs (such as Political Science) hold in-house workshops or seminars specifically for their own undergraduates to learn about the graduate programs and ask questions. Microbiology/Immunology hosts a few recruitment events aimed at Western undergraduate students, where students sign up to come and hear a couple of 20 minute talks by current graduate students, plus an overview of the grad programs by the Graduate Chair. Pizza and drinks are provided and typically about 40 students attend each session so it is an important recruitment device for the department. Another option for attracting undergrad students is in Biochemistry, where top 4th year Honors students can do their Honors project between third and fourth years, allowing them to take an Advanced Research Course in their final year. Students who take this route may be able to complete their master's degree in one year instead of two.

Some programs are **seeking applicants who are already in professional positions**, so in these cases, specialized avenues of recruitment are needed. For instance, the graduate program in Family Medicine wants to attract medical practitioners who are looking to add a research and teaching dimension to their practice. Accordingly, the program advertises at family medicine forums and conferences and by word of mouth. Similarly, the Master's program in Public Health is aimed at students who want a public health career, not a stepping stone to a PhD. Since work experience is desirable, the program uses social media such as LinkedIn and alumni e-blasts to advertise to potential applicants.

Finally, there are many other approaches to recruitment, including:

- using an undergraduate or diploma program as a recruiting ground or **"teaser course"** (e.g. Public Administration)
- developing specific **undergrad program options for international students** that feed easily into the graduate program (Applied Mathematics, Statistical and Actuarial Sciences)
- developing partnerships with, and recruiting at, **international universities** (Applied Mathematics, Statistical and Actuarial Sciences)
- **word of mouth** through current students, former graduates working in the field and organizations related to the field (e.g. Journalism, Library Science, Public Administration; in Public Administration, municipalities are likely to send employees to the program to attain their MPA credentials and in Library Science, libraries often encourage their staff to upgrade to the MLIS degree)
- keeping in close contact with an **alumni group** (e.g. graduates of the MPA program have a strong Local Govt. Alumni Association which does a yearly conference, with sessions demonstrating the wide range of expertise and responsibilities that graduates have. Those attending the conference may become interested in the MPS program as a result.)

- using a **Master Class** given by a faculty member to attract applicants (Music)
- giving 4th year Honors students a chance to do their **Honors thesis in a faculty member's research lab**, thus getting them interested in graduate study and advanced research and allowing faculty to get a close look at the top students
- advertising in **campus newspapers** (Information & Media Studies)
- advertising on key **disciplinary electronic lists** (Media Studies)
- using a **blog** to advertise prestigious scholarship opportunities (Philosophy)
- developing a **podcast** about the program (Journalism)
- using **summer undergraduate research internships/scholarships** (such as through NSERC) to interest students in coming into the graduate program (e.g. in Engineering)

Admissions

It would be fair to say that all GCs and Program Directors interviewed had concerns over admission numbers. In most cases, the concern was that admissions needed to be kept at a certain level to keep the program viable and vibrant, so efforts had to be made in recruitment and advertising to ensure a good applicant pool. However, some programs had the opposite concern, which was a much larger number of applicants than actual spots in the program. Finding the right balance for admissions is tricky, no matter what the program. In thesis-based programs, the admission numbers are limited by the number of supervisors and grant funding available to support students. In non-thesis programs, numbers are limited by the faculty available to teach, class size and internship or placement limitations. As well, there can be quality issues, particularly if the program is larger than ideal. In one case (Law), the Faculty chose to significantly downsize the program and concentrate on taking only the very best students, a strategy that has greatly improved the Faculty's satisfaction with the students in its graduate programs.

In terms of the mechanics of admissions, most programs have a definite application closure date, often in January or February, with the goal of reviewing files and getting offers out as quickly as possible in the early spring, knowing that competitor programs are doing the same. However, a few programs, such as Kinesiology, Physics/Astronomy and Medical Biophysics, deliberately leave the application due date open longer to be able to consider late applicants. Some programs admit graduate students only once a year, usually to start in September while others have rolling admission (usually intakes in January, May and September, with the latter being the largest).

Those with rolling admission do so because they believe it gives them a competitive advantage and allows them to take good students whenever they apply, rather than waiting for admission to the September semester (e.g. Earth Sciences, Health/Rehabilitation Sciences, Physics/Astronomy, most Engineering programs, some Schulich Medicine/Dentistry programs). Another view is that rolling admission gives the students greater flexibility and allows the program to space out the cohorts, which would otherwise be too large to handle at the graduate level (such as the Library and Information Science MLIS). Rolling admission does create some unique considerations, including whether courses will be offered to accommodate each admission (such as in the MLIS program), or whether students simply take whatever courses are available at the time of entry (such as in Earth Sciences, Physics/Astronomy and Physiology/Pharmacology).

The procedures for handling and making decisions about applications vary considerably by program. Often the Graduate Assistant (and sometimes the GC) performs the first line of triage, ensuring that applications are complete and dealing with those who do not meet stated criteria. Sometimes the files are organized in hard copy (e.g. Anthropology, Kinesiology), and in other cases, the files are uploaded to a central database for faculty members to view (e.g. Physics/Astronomy). However, beyond this preliminary preparation of the files, the processes for reviewing and ranking the applicants differ greatly, depending largely upon whether the program requires the student to have a supervisor for admission, or not.

Admission to Thesis Programs

For thesis-based program, all eligible application files are carefully reviewed but the issue of supervision frequently determines how files are considered and how admission decisions are made.

In thesis-based Master's and PhD programs that do *not* require the student to have the agreement of a supervisor prior to admission (examples include Anatomy/Cell Biology, Business PhD, Education, English,

French, Library and Information Science PhD, Media Studies, Music, Philosophy, Women's Studies), there are a few different approaches to handling the final complete application files:

- application files go to the Graduate Committee or Admission committee/subcommittee first (Information & Media Studies, Philosophy, Women's Studies). The committee members then review the files, seek faculty input on applicants in their respective areas of expertise, and come up with a ranked list of applicants and a waitlist.
- application files go to the Graduate Admissions Committee. Each committee member reads and ranks the files. The rankings are put into a spreadsheet, which is then discussed in terms of anomalous rankings, along with potential supervisors, to come up with a ranked list of applicants to be given offers (English).
- application files are reviewed by 3-5 faculty in each of the different program areas who then make recommendations to the Associate Dean/Graduate Chair as to the desired applicants. The Associate Dean/Graduate Chair then makes offers (Music).
- applications are divided by fields or streams of the program and are sent first to faculty in those fields to review and rank. For example, in Sociology, once the faculty rankings come back to the Graduate Committee, decisions are then made regarding offers. Students are accepted based on rankings/quality and do not necessarily need a designated supervisor, but potential supervisors are kept in mind when decisions are made.
- similarly, in the Ivey PhD, applications go first to disciplinary groups, who pick their top students. The files then return to the PhD Program Director, who goes through all the recommendations and ranks them, considering the capacity for intake in each discipline. The Program Director then interviews everyone by Skype. Based on the interviews, the Director advises each disciplinary group of the best applicants for offers. Faculty members then call the shortlist to convince them to come to Ivey.

It should be pointed out here that some programs where having a supervisor prior to admission is not absolutely mandatory seem to be moving towards tightening this up. So, for instance, in Media Studies, an excellent student may be admitted as long as one or more faculty members have expressed an interest in supervising. The student may be admitted even though it is not certain which of the interested faculty members will end up supervising him/her. However, even a superb student cannot be admitted if there is no faculty interest at all in supervising him/her.

In PhD programs (and some thesis Master's programs) where a student normally can only be admitted if a faculty member has already agreed to be the supervisor (for example, Anthropology, History, Kinesiology, Law, Nursing, Psychology, all Engineering programs, most Science programs, most Schulich Medicine/Dentistry programs), one common approach is that each applicant would have already been in contact with his/her potential supervisor prior to applying. That faculty member would already have looked at the student's credentials in making the decision whether or not to take him/her. In such cases, the faculty member often then encourages the student to apply formally if s/he has not already done so. In these situations, the GC or Graduate Committee may be relatively uninvolved in the decision as to whether to accept a student. For instance, in Engineering, the final say as to which thesis students to accept is commonly left to the supervisor.

However, in some programs in Schulich Medicine/Dentistry, a slightly different approach is taken. For example, in Epidemiology/Biostatistics, Microbiology/Immunology, Neuroscience, and Physiology/Pharmacology, the Graduate committee first reviews all applicant files for admissibility. This means the student must meet all the requirements of the program, such as TOEFL, academic average and any required courses or academic background (such as a statistics course for admissibility into Epidemiology/Biostatistics). The applicant is informed that s/he is admissible contingent upon having the agreement of a supervisor. Once the supervisor has been determined, a formal offer of admission is sent.

In some cases, students may not have confirmed a supervisor, but this does not automatically eliminate them from consideration. For instance:

- In Biology and in Mechanical/Materials Engineering, application files are circulated to potential supervisors, who indicate whether they are willing to take the student and contribute to his/her summer funding.
- The same approach is taken in Geography, where the Graduate Committee considers all the faculty input on the files and makes final decisions about offers, but before an offer letter is actually sent, it is confirmed that a faculty member who has indicated interest is still willing to take the student.

- In Physiology/Pharmacology, the files of admissible applicants are put in a secure area for faculty to review. The Graduate Assistant regularly sends out reminders to faculty about which students are still looking for a supervisor.
- Similarly, in Epidemiology/Biostatistics, files of applicants who are admissible are circulated to the faculty. Faculty have one week to respond re students they want – if they don't respond, the application is put back into a general pool. After a week, all faculty meet together for a discussion of the applicants and make final decisions about what students they will take. Faculty then contact the applicants they are interested in to convince them to come.
- In Kinesiology, the applicant provides a ranked list of potential supervisors, so the file is circulated to those professors until one of them agrees to supervise. If none agree to supervise, the student is not accepted.

A slightly different variation occurs in Anthropology: once the files have been reviewed by faculty members in the various streams, two stream-based meetings of the graduate faculty are held. At those meetings, faculty members state which students they are prepared to take and admission decisions are based on those discussions. Similarly in Psychology, the files are reviewed by faculty in the different areas of the program, with faculty making decisions as to which students they are prepared to take. These expressions of supervisory commitment are then forwarded to the Graduate Selection Ad Hoc Committee, which has faculty reps from the various areas of the program and which makes the final decision about which students will be given offers.

Another variation on admissions is that for PhD programs, some departments (such as most of the Schulich Medicine/Dentistry programs, some of the Science programs and Economics) the main entry mechanism is through a transfer from the Master's program into the PhD program. In these cases, there are regulations about when the Master's student must apply for a transfer, how the transfer is approved or not, and how milestones such as courses and comprehensive exams are affected (see the example from Anatomy and Cell Biology in Appendix 1).

In Faculties with multiple programs, some of which are research-intensive and some of which are professionally-oriented, admission procedures may differ depending on the program. For instance, in Education, which has both a PhD and an EdD (Doctor of Education), application files are handled quite differently for each. For the EdD, which requires appropriate work experience and related reference letters, the Associate Dean and three faculty members review all the files and make decisions about which applicants to take. For the PhD, an Admissions committee of six faculty members in the graduate area reviews the files, makes decisions and assigns supervisors.

Interviews with applicants are not generally a feature of admissions procedures unless there is uncertainty about the applicant. In that case, either the Graduate/Admissions committee may interview the applicant, or if the student is international, a faculty member from the country of origin may be asked to do the interview. However, there are some notable exceptions. In Psychology, students who have applied to the Clinical stream are brought in for interviews during a day set aside just for this purpose. Based on the interviews, faculty members in the area decide which students should get offers. In Statistical and Actuarial Sciences, which has program partnerships with Chinese universities, students are interviewed in China before being accepted. This allows the program to have a very good idea of their English language skills before admission. In Epidemiology/Biostatistics, the Admissions committee interviews each applicant by phone or Internet as part of the process of determining admissibility. In Microbiology/Immunology, current policy requires each applicant to have a visit and interview. Results of the interviews are then fed back to the Graduate Committee who then decide which applicants are desired.

In programs with a high percentage of international graduate students, faculty members who are from various countries are often asked to review the files and provide input both on the student's background and the quality of the university attended in the other country. One GC commented that this is a bit like reinventing the wheel and that he would very much like to see Western compile a database of international universities, which would consolidate and build upon the knowledge that various programs have about which universities are good.

Admission to Non-thesis Master's

In Master's programs with no thesis requirements (such as Audiology, Business Administration, Library and Information Science, Journalism, Microbiology/Immunology's course-based program, Occupational Therapy,

Public Administration, Public Health, Public History, Speech Language Pathology and the Master's of Engineering), no thesis supervisor is required (although there may be a supervisor required later on if there is an independent research project in the program). In these programs, admission decisions may be handled in a number of different ways, including:

- a faculty committee which ranks the applications using multiple criteria such as academic background, prior experience and a written statement (Journalism, Communication Sciences and Disorders)
- a faculty committee where the members review files independently, and then discuss differences in opinion to arrive at a consensus as to the students to be admitted, with a ranked waitlist (Public Administration)
- a recommendation on the desirable applicants given by the Program Director to the Graduate Committee (Public History)
- review of files and offer decisions made by the GC and MEng Program Coordinator (Civil/Environmental Engineering)
- initial ranking by the GC with top 50 applicants going to the Graduate Committee for final decisions (Electrical/Computer Engineering)
- a largely administrative decision with admission normally based on meeting a specified grade average and academic background, along with other requirements such as TOEFL (Library and Information Science MLIS, Master's of Engineering, MSc in Occupational Therapy).

While there is no overall pattern as to how applications are assessed for non-thesis programs, it is nonetheless true that the number of spaces in the program compared to the number of applications may have an impact on how admissions are done. For instance, the Master's in Speech Language Pathology has only 36 seats with over 400 applications, so a faculty committee does a very thorough review and ranking of the files to ensure that the absolute best students are being offered admission. In contrast, the much larger Master's in Library and Information Science has space for about 180-190 students a year, so admission is based upon whether applicants meet a standard set of quality-based criteria rather than on ranking of all applicants.

One of the most intensive admission processes for non-thesis master's programs is at the Ivey Business School. Taking the MBA program as an example, the program is very selective about who applies so they spend more time with applicants up front and consider it important to build a relationship right from the point of interest in applying. The program can accommodate up to 150 students, with about 70% domestic and 30% international. The current class has 27 languages with many students from India and China. All applicants have an interview – this is done by staff in either Admissions or Career Management before the file goes to the Admissions Committee. The interview is conducted via a standard template, where various criteria (such as required work experience) are listed and ranked by the interviewer. The interview results in a score, which then becomes part of the application file. The formal Admissions Committee consists of the faculty member who is the Program Director for Recruitment and Admissions, as well as staff from the Admissions and the Career Management areas. Career Management staff are involved from the beginning so that they can be thinking about how to place the students upon graduation. The Admissions committee makes final decisions about which students to make offers to for the best class possible.

Domestic vs. International Applicants

A common concern of many programs is the general lack of domestic applicants. For instance, in most of the graduate programs in Engineering, in some of the Science programs such as Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Mathematics, Physics/Astronomy and Statistical and Actuarial Sciences, it is difficult to attract domestic applicants. There are several reasons for this, one being that in some fields, the job market is sufficiently strong that undergraduate students would prefer to work rather than coming to graduate school, while in other fields, there is a lack of knowledge about what kinds of careers could lead from a graduate degree and/or there is a lot of competition for domestic students from other Canadian programs. In other cases (such as Economics), there are domestic applicants but many do not have the desired academic background and requirements to be successful in the very mathematically oriented Economics program.

Some recruitment efforts are devoted to attracting domestic students specifically (examples being recruiting from within Western's undergraduate programs, or using the NSERC summer internships for fourth year undergraduates to pique their interest in graduate study etc.). Domestic applicants are sought after primarily because it costs less to fund them than international applicants and many GCs expressed concern that, while

they would like a more diverse student population, they simply could not support large numbers of international graduate students due to the limitations of their departmental budgets. So, in many cases, domestic applicants are given priority during admissions processes. Nonetheless, with a small pool of domestic applicants, some programs are forced to consider much larger numbers of international applicants and ultimately accept far more international students than domestic. Such is the case across Engineering, as well as some programs within Science (such as Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Statistical and Actuarial Sciences) which have higher numbers of international students than is common in Arts and Humanities, Information & Media Studies, Health Sciences and Social Science.

Sweetening the Offer

In the end, the bottom line is that it is not enough to have a strong applicant pool, great applicants, efficient application handling and quick decision making: programs need to close the deal by making competitive offers to excellent students and having them accept those offers. This is difficult in some disciplines where competition for graduate students is fierce, particularly in southern Ontario where there are a lot of similar graduate programs in established disciplines. As the GC in History remarked, applicants with offers "need a personal relationship to get them into the program". Thus programs employ various strategies to get students to accept offers, including:

- early emails to students getting offers, indicating that an offer letter is on the way
- personal phone calls by the Chair, Grad Chair or Program Director to each student receiving an offer
- personal phone calls or email by faculty members, particularly the supervisor or potential supervisor, to every student with an offer
- paid campus visits for top ranking students
- holding an open house for students with offers, where they have a chance to meet faculty and current graduate students (one GC described current students as "our best ambassadors")
- various sorts of entrance scholarships (e.g. Faculty of Science has $2K entrance scholarships which can be used to entice top students)
- research grants (such as in History, where students can receive $2K funding in their third year to support their research expenses such as travel to archives)
- providing conference travel money
- supplementary scholarships, as in Arts and Humanities programs, whereby students may be given scholarship money in their fourth year to free them from TA duties, allowing them more time to work on the thesis.

The GC in Classical Studies noted that all applicants with offers receive a personal phone call and then a follow up email, an approach she summed up as "persistent personal attention". This level of follow up has been successful for their program in the face of growing competition not only in Canada, but also in the United States.

For international students, the biggest obstacle to acceptance may be international student fees, so programs with a large number of international students need to figure out ways to lower the fees to domestic levels. In some cases, the supervisor may have to pay more from his/her grant money, and/or the department or Dean's office may provide some additional funding for international students. International students who come fully funded from their own countries are relatively rare so usually there needs to be a creative approach to funding international students.

Orientation and TA Training

Orientation

All graduate programs provide orientation with some orientation programs being more extensive than others. In most programs, the Graduate Assistant is in email contact with incoming students in the summer or in the term prior to arrival, making them aware of course selection and other deadlines, such as for fees. However, for a few programs, specific aspects of orientation start early, well ahead of the students' arrival on campus.

- Anthropology holds an open house in June for accepted students, where they can get started on their course selection, and making decisions about their stream/field of research.
- History has fall course outlines ready for viewing in May/June so that students can begin to think about which courses to choose.
- Economics gives the students readings to do over the summer, both as background reading and for tutorials. Then, in mid-August, the program holds a two-week refresher course covering micro and macro economics, mathematics and econometrics. This is interspersed with social events to welcome the students.
- Philosophy sends an orientation package at the beginning of August, which includes information about applying for scholarships such as SSHRC, moving to London and the schedule for the fall orientation.
- The MBA program begins contact at least 4 months ahead of the students' arrival, and encourages them to take the Pre Ivey Preparatory Knowledge Program, which the majority do take.
- In Public Health, students join a LinkedIn discussion organized by the program manager prior to their arrival. The LinkedIn discussion gives info about housing, parking, lines of credit etc. and enables the new students to ask questions. Students start to make friends and the discussion gives them a sense of connection before arriving.

Typically within the first week of the student's arrival on campus, a formal orientation occurs. In most Faculties, the orientation is carried out by each department/program, but in Engineering and in Schulich Medicine/Dentistry, there is a Faculty-wide orientation (though some programs also have their own specific orientations in addition to the Faculty-wide one). Program orientations usually are fairly similar and could include any of the following items mentioned by GCs:

- greetings from the Dean, Chair, Grad Chair and/or Program Director
- introduction of faculty members
- representatives from the program's Student's Council or similar organization
- representative from SOGS and the TA Union
- an overview of key policies and procedures
- an overview of program milestones and requirements
- a refresher on academic integrity and plagiarism
- an introduction to resources by a university librarian
- an introduction to program resources such as the Student Handbook, computing labs, electronic resources etc.
- introduction to TA responsibilities and grading
- an introduction to scientific writing
- information on scholarships
- a campus tour and getting student IDs and bus passes
- lunch or refreshments at the Grad Club
- social activities arranged by the graduate student association of the program
- a welcome event/BBQ at a faculty member's home.

There are a few twists on the traditional orientation approach. For instance, Earth Sciences and Anatomy/Cell Biology both have specific electronic graduate Orientation Handbooks, which is different than an academic policies handbook. The Earth Sciences handbook covers

- contact information for key personnel
- things to do when you first arrive
- what to do if you are an international student
- safety training
- registration and fees
- health insurance
- supervisors and courses
- access to research and technical facilities
- scholarships available etc. etc.

see http://www.uwo.ca/earth/pdf/orient-broch.pdf

Similarly, Medical Biophysics, although it does not have a handbook per se, provides an orientation checklist on their web site, covering important dates and a myriad of other details such as bus passes, transcripts, course enrolment, WHMIS testing etc. see www.uwo.ca/biophysics/grad/orientation/MBP_graduate_orientation.html

In French, all incoming students are presented to the faculty at the Departmental Assembly. By doing so, all faculty members get to see/meet the incoming graduate students, whether or not they are supervising any of them. Political Science includes current students in their orientation sessions, to pass on new information regarding the program, courses etc. and to get input on how well the program is working.

In some programs, in addition to introducing students to the campus and program resources, there may be curricular reasons for aspects of the orientation. In Public Health, students are expected to work in teams for the duration of the program, so the orientation takes place over 3-4 days and covers expectations of the program, plagiarism, and team building. The orientation also stresses how grades are not as important as process in this particular program, since it is geared towards preparing them for a career in public health and not as a stepping stone to medical school or a PhD. The orientation also discusses the case method, which is unique since no other public health program is case-based.

In programs that are delivered by distance, orientation takes on a special importance. For instance, students in the Family Medicine program attend a mandatory two week orientation in September, where they meet all of the faculty to hear about their research, and meet with the Program Chair to discuss research ideas and the sequencing of their courses. Once they disperse after the two weeks, everything is done online. Master's students are required to come for the on-site two week residency session until all course work has been completed. PhD students are also expected to attend the 2 week orientation and must continue to do so in every year that they are taking courses. The program is quite strict about this requirement and even though students sometimes request that they be allowed to skip it, failure to attend can result in removal from the program so no-one misses it.

Beyond the general orientation, some programs try to provide a more personal touch. In Kinesiology, the Graduate Assistant meets with every incoming grad student in 15 minute sessions to answer their specific questions about policies, procedures, fees, courses etc. While this entails a lot of extra work, both the GC and Graduate Assistant felt it was very worthwhile, since some students may be reluctant to voice their specific and perhaps personal questions in a large group. It also lays the groundwork for a proactive approach so that students with problems know they can readily come to the Grad Assistant or GC before the problem escalates.

The incoming French students have an opportunity to meet with the Graduate Chair as a group, and then individually to discuss their expectations, academic interests, level of preparation and to answer any questions. Similarly in Sociology, the GC meets individually with all incoming students. In Music, Master's students meet with the program advisor (who is chair of each department). New doctoral students in Music each meet with Associate Dean to discuss the makeup of their Advisory Committee, go over program details and choose their courses.

In Geography, the personal touch takes the form of a field camp or retreat with the incoming students. Typically three faculty members take all the new students on a two day outing, booking shared rooms in a small inn or hotel. The weekend focuses on helping students figure out what graduate school is all about, doing some team building and role playing exercises (such as a TA meeting with a difficult student), and going on a hike or other outing on the Bruce Peninsula. The retreat, which has been a feature of the program for many years, is instrumental in cohort building, giving a strong sense of shared experiences among the new students and facilitating good faculty-student interaction and collegiality.

Some programs use a Letter of Understanding, or something similar to that, as a component of orientation. For example, in Physiology/Pharmacology, upon arrival students are expected to find their supervisors and get started in the lab. As well as attending the larger Schulich orientation, students attend a smaller orientation given by the department. At the end of the first week, a standard Letter of Understanding is generated, which the department has used for 10 years (see Appendix 2). The Letter of Understanding covers the student's responsibilities, the supervisor's responsibilities, outlines the expectations for meetings, personal conduct, laboratory and computer use, publications, safety, and intellectual property. Timelines for completion are also reviewed. Both the supervisor and the student sign the Letter of Understanding. According to the GC, the Letter of Understanding has really prevented problems and misunderstandings, particularly since students in different labs may have varying understandings of expectations and procedures. Since using the Letter of Understanding, there have been very few problems.

Usually the organizing of orientation falls to the GC and/or graduate program staff but in some cases, current graduate students have a significant role in the orientation. For instance, it is very common that a program/departmental Graduate Student Association organizes social events for orientation such as mixers, receptions, events with food, events at the Grad Club, pub crawls, movie nights etc. One of the most interesting orientation examples is in Communication Sciences and Disorders, where the orientation is entirely student organized. The CSD Students' Council takes this role very seriously and has an elected position solely for Orientation. In addition, the Council runs a mentoring program which has been a huge hit with the students: each incoming student is paired with a 2nd year student mentor. The Council also has developed a Facebook page so that incoming or potential students can chat with a current student prior to arrival or applying. Similarly, the student's council in Kinesiology is also very involved in their graduate programs orientation.

TA and Other Training

With respect to their TA duties, students may be either required or encouraged to take the TA training offered by the Teaching Support Centre, or there may be specific departmental orientation for TAs (such as in History, where their in-program mandatory TA training is taken out of the student's TA contract hours). To help orient students to what is required of a TA, Civil and Environmental Engineering has a section on their web site describing TA Responsibilities (see Appendix 3).

Visual Arts has a very structured approach to TA training. Since TA duties can vary greatly, from leading a studio class to teaching tutorials, each student with TA duties has a teaching supervisor, who reviews the student's TA progress and submits a formal report to the GC and the student. It is also fairly common for TAs who are TAing for large, first year courses (such as in Film Studies) to have a specific orientation session with the instructor, who goes over the logistics of the course, expectations for TAs, leading tutorials, and grading.

To meet their specific needs, the department of English has developed a more intense and targeted TA training. In English, much of the TAs' work is to mark student essays, which can be a difficult task even for faculty members. Their workshop was designed with the help of experienced TAs, who also take part in delivering it. The workshop covers how to assess an essay and how to grade it – when to write comments, what comments are appropriate or not, etc. Participants are given an actual anonymized essay to grade, the grades assigned by the workshop participants are then revealed and a discussion takes place about what the appropriate grade should be. The workshop also covers grading rubrics and their use.

In Statistics and Actuarial Sciences, in addition to encouraging their TAs to do the TSC TA training, a specific TA training workshop is held during the second week of classes. With a lot of international graduate students, this additional in-house TA training is a necessity and orients students to expectations re marking and running labs. The program also holds a proctoring workshop at the beginning of October, to ensure that proctors understand their responsibilities and are watchful for cheating. As the GC noted, we "don't want proctors doing homework" when they should be paying attention to proctoring.

Most programs have their TAs start their responsibilities in the fall term. However, in some programs (such as Mechanical/Materials Engineering), students do not TA for the first term, to allow them time to adjust and settle in to their courses.

Finally, another important aspect of orientation is safety training. Students who work in labs must achieve their safety requirements (by taking the Western University-developed workshops and tests) before they are allowed into the labs, such as is the case in Engineering and Science. In Engineering, incoming students are told about the safety training requirements by letter before they arrive and are also told that they will not be allowed into the labs until safety certification is completed.

Funding and Scholarships

Funding

This project did not attempt to record all of the permutations in funding graduate students across the programs included. Nonetheless, the topic of funding was discussed with most of the GCs. As is common knowledge, at Western, Category 1 (i.e. thesis-based) students usually receive funding in the form of Teaching Assistantships, Research Assistantships and various sorts of internal (such as Western Graduate Research

Scholarships, or WGRS) and external scholarships. Category 2 (i.e. professionally-oriented) students, however, do not receive TA, RA or WGRS funding, although there are scholarships and bursaries available to them.

With respect to Category 1 students, the funding formula mentioned often was the SPGS recommendation of tuition plus $12K for doctoral students and tuition plus $10K for master's students. Discussions with GCs revealed that there are disciplinary differences in base funding depending on what is needed to be competitive with other universities. For students with no external awards, some programs provide annual funding in the range of $22-$26K for a doctoral student, while others come in at about $20K in funding or slightly less.

In addition, beyond the actual amount of funding, there are notable differences in how funding is arrived at, who provides it and satisfaction with it. The most obvious difference in funding is that in lab-based Category 1 programs (Engineering, Science, Schulich Medicine/Dentistry, parts of Health Science and parts of Psychology), when a faculty member agrees to supervise a student, that faculty member is essentially "hiring" the student to work in his/her lab. As a result, the supervisor is required to provide a certain amount of support for the student, which could vary depending on the program. For instance, in Engineering, the typical contribution of a supervisor is about $4500 per year per domestic student, in Computer Science it is $5,000 and in Biology, it is $6000, with the remainder coming from the Western Graduate Research Scholarship (WGRS), from the Faculty (i.e. Dean's office, which helps departments cover TA costs) and/or other scholarships, such as OGS or NSERC. In most Schulich Medicine/Dentistry programs, the faculty stipend per student is often considerable because it also must include the costs of doing research, whether that be specific supplies required, or the cost of buying time to use specific equipment such as a Magnetic Resonance Imaging machine. For international students, the amount the faculty member must commit is even higher. For example, in Engineering, the Faculty Dean's office contributes $8500 for each international doctoral student and faculty members are expected to contribute about $6500. Typically students who receive external scholarships have their internal funding reduced, so in some cases, the faculty member does not have to pay as much.

In programs where a TA is routinely assigned to students, they are expected to TA in the fall and/or winter terms, do their courses, and work the rest of the time on their research in the supervisor's lab. In some cases, students do not work full time in their supervisor's lab (or sometimes field camp) until the summer. However, in many programs in Schulich Medicine and Dentistry, TAs are not the norm for most students, since there are not enough TA positions to go around and those that are available are generally given to senior PhD students. In these programs, the stipend from the faculty member is even more critical to support each student. To provide transparency about funding and prevent repetitive questions from students regarding their funding, the department of Microbiology/Immunology developed the concept of "take-home pay", which is outlined on their web site (reproduced as Appendix 4). Since the department developed this funding information on their web site, the number of questions regarding funding has decreased considerably. The page also notes that living in London is lower than in many other Canadian cities.

Medical Biophysics also uses the take home pay approach to clarify their funding. For instance, for the PhD, their web site indicates the following funding:

- As a Medical Biophysics PhD student, you will receive $15,200 per year take-home pay to cover your living expenses.
- The program will cover your entire tuition and ancillary fee bill. In the 2012-2013 academic year, the total annual stipend (living expenses + tuition fees) for a PhD student amounted to approximately $24,000 for domestic students and $34,000 per year for international students. The higher rate for international students reflects the higher tuition fees assigned to them by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. However, the annual take-home pay ($15,200) is the same in both cases.
- For students receiving external awards (e.g. NSERC, CIHR, or OGS scholarships), the program pays your entire tuition and ancillary fee bill and provides a top-up (for the length of the scholarship) so that your total take-home pay consisting of the scholarship amount and the top-up amount exceeds $15,200 per year. (taken from http://www.uwo.ca/biophysics/grad/student_funding/MBP_graduate_stipends.html)

The funding situation is further complicated when departments have programs which are not research-intensive, and those students receive different levels of support. For instance, Anatomy/Cell Biology has a Clinical Anatomy MSc as well as the research-based MSc and PhD. To clarify funding for students, the department has developed a chart, posted on the web site, which outlines the base funding that students can expect in each program (reproduced in Appendix 5).

In programs that are not lab-based, the funding strategy is completely different, with most of it coming from WGRS and the Department or Dean's office of each Faculty. Faculty members who have research grants can agree to pay a portion of a student's funding from their grants, but many GCs in non-lab-based programs said there was no hard and fast rule about this, and that essentially faculty members are free to hire whomever they want on their research grants. Having said that, some GCs also mentioned that the culture within their departments was such that faculty members with grants felt obliged to support students in their own graduate programs by hiring them as RAs whenever possible. While hiring students as RAs for grants might help stretch the departmental or Faculty funding budget, it also can create the additional headache of a shortage of TAs. One GC noted that his program is chronically short of TAs, so having too many students working as RAs is problematic despite the budgetary savings.

There are also variations in funding depending on the level of the student (i.e. Category 1 Master's students vs. doctoral students) and whether the student has an external scholarship. In most cases, Master's students' funding is less than doctoral funding, but not in all Faculties. For instance, in Electrical/Computer Engineering, the funding is the same for MESc and PhD students ($12K plus tuition), since they all work in their supervisor's lab. However, in other departments and Faculties, funding for Master's students can be $5-$7,000 less than for doctoral students.

Students with external scholarships usually have their Western funding reduced. In Arts and Humanities, there is a Faculty-wide approach to providing consistent student funding packages, with a table developed in the Dean's office showing all of the various funding options, including those for students who have large external scholarships. So, for instance, base funding from the Faculty for a Canadian PhD student is just over $19,000, but if the student has been awarded a Canadian Graduate Scholarship worth $35,000, the internal funding drops to under $5,000, no matter what program.

Regardless of the funding amount, all programs have requirements that students must meet to maintain their funding. In some cases, funding is tied to annual progress reports – the student must make satisfactory progress to continue being funded (Classical Studies being one example). In other cases, the student is expected to maintain a certain average to maintain funding, often 78% (such as in Kinesiology) but sometimes higher.

Are GCs happy with the level of funding they are providing for their students? In some cases, yes, and in other cases, no. Some GCs are satisfied with the funding they are able to provide their students and thought that, in their disciplines, it is comparable or even better than funding provided by other institutions, particularly at the Master's level. However, other programs are not at all happy with the funding, remarking that they are falling behind competitors such as the University of Alberta, the University of Toronto and Queen's University. In some cases, doctoral students are able to receive funding packages at other universities that are as much as $9,000 higher per year for the basic funding package. This makes it difficult to be competitive and attract the very best students. Overall, it would seem there is no easy solution to funding disparities because it is very much university-, discipline- and program-specific, and can vary considerably by province as well.

Scholarships

Every program wants to have graduate students with external scholarships such as SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR, OGS, CGS and Vanier awards, not only to decrease the amount of student funding that must be expended, but perhaps more importantly, to recognize the quality of the students in the program. Even though it might be good experience for all eligible graduate students to complete scholarship applications, very few programs actually make it mandatory for all students to prepare them. This is because, as several GCs mentioned, most of the applications are not going to be competitive so it makes a lot of extra work for everyone in terms of advising, reviewing, letter writing and ranking. Therefore, in most programs, students are actively encouraged, rather than required, to apply for awards. However, to be successful, students need not only strong encouragement but active support and mentoring.

Various programs work hard at improving and supporting student award applications. For instance, in Sociology, students are sent information on writing good applications and successful applications are made available for them to see. Information is also sent to faculty on writing good reference letters. Students are encouraged to attend information sessions held by SGPS, but in addition, the GC offers to read over the students' applications and encourages them to have their supervisors read them as well. The Graduate Committee meets early in the fall to go over the applications and offers suggestions to letter writers and students if the letters or the student's statement could be improved to better represent the strengths of both the student and the application. Similarly, in Anthropology, a fall workshop is held on preparing scholarship applications, with faculty on hand to review students' applications and suggest ways to improve them.

Once applications have been received by the program's due date, ranking activities inevitably take place. Sometimes ranking is done by the Graduate Committee and sometimes by a specific ranking committee or subcommittee. GCs often noted that ranking is a fairly onerous task, particularly if there are a lot of applicants, most of which are not going to be competitive. Nevertheless, ranking is a fact of life and needs to be carried out.

It is still the case, however, that some programs expect students to apply for scholarships. In Anatomy/Cell Biology and in Microbiology/Immunology, all eligible students must apply for OGS and either NSERC or CIHR, even though a quota system is in place for some of those scholarships. In Anatomy/Cell Biology, a workshop is given on how to complete a good application. In Microbiology, workshops on applying for scholarships are no longer offered since SGPS now does them so it was decided that departmental workshops are not as necessary as they once were. In both departments, internal deadlines are given so that the members of the Grad Committee can look over applications and suggest changes if need be. Microbiology has an interesting approach to ranking. Three members of the Grad Committee rank the applications based on a point system, which is sent out to the students in advance. The point system is quantitative, reflecting students' overall accomplishments rather than just the research proposal itself. In the department's view, better quality students will have more conference presentations and published papers so quantity and quality are related. The GC remarked that generally students like the idea of rating by points and the transparency of the rating system. Although there may be some grumbling at times about the number of points allocated to various accomplishments, generally the system works well for the department. Final rankings are sent to the Vice Dean of the Faculty, to be put into the pool for the Faculty as a whole.

During this study, the scholarship landscape changed. First, the province handed over responsibility for OGS to each university. Later, the same change occurred with some of the TriCouncil scholarships. These changes made their way from the central university administration at SGPS, through Faculties and departments and eventually down to the program level. With respect to OGS, only Social Science made the decision to go with a Faculty-wide merit-based approach, so that applications are considered centrally and there are no specific allocations by department. This meant ranking the Social Science OGS applications from all programs together, with the GCs from each department serving on the central ranking committee. While this worked well in the first year, the Associate Dean noted that it is a very labour-intensive process and there is no guarantee that the GCs will agree to the same process the next time around.

All of the other Faculties included made the decision to divvy up the awards to departments, which would then make allocations to programs, based on past patterns of success. In some cases, GCs are fine with this approach and in other cases, they are not. Those GCs who are fine with it reckoned that their OGS awards under the new system would be about the same as under the old system. However, GCs who are unhappy about the new arrangement noted two main areas of concern. First, they are now allocated more Master's awards than in the past, meaning that some outstanding PhDs will not be given OGS awards. One GC remarked that in his mind, this was not a good use of scholarship money since most of the Master's students will never go further and it should be the doctoral students who are given priority. The second concern is that the overall number of OGS awards they have been allocated is less than previously, sometimes significantly so. This dissatisfaction led some GCs to remark that they will be actively discouraging OGS applications in the future to keep applications more in line with allocations and to prevent having to rank applications where there is no hope of an award (such as one program that had 60 OGS applications for 3 allocated awards). With NSERC awards, the most common approach seems to be similar to OGS, where awards are allocated to each department on a quota system.

Policies and Procedures

Most units have their graduate program policies and procedures readily available on the web site. Usually there is a menu item for Graduate programs, and then further menu items labeled Master's program and PhD program. After the program has been selected, then there are normally secondary items for Admission Requirements, Program Details, and/or Program Milestones etc. where progress through the program is laid out. This can be either a text-based document, or a graphical representation such as the one from Health and Rehabilitation Sciences shown in Appendix 6.

In some cases, (such as in Anatomy/Cell Biology, Anthropology, Sociology and Occupational Therapy), the program requirements are gathered together into an electronic Graduate Student Handbook. Having a Handbook rather than just a menu item for progression requirements enables the program to pull together a wider variety of academic policies, such as appeals, course registration, add/drop, exams, plagiarism, leaves of absence, etc. In Biology, the Graduate Handbook is on the web and is conveniently divided into two sections: Part 1: Biology Graduate Program Regulations, and Part 2: Graduate Students and the Department (see http://www.uwo.ca/biology/graduate/GradHandbookPart1.pdf). This division keeps the program academic requirements organized separately from the nuts and bolts of daily life in the department, such as mail, expense reimbursement, travel funds etc. thus making it easy to find whatever policies are required.

While most programs have made all or most of the program policies publicly available on the web site, in some cases, only the bare bones admission and progression requirements are on the public site, while the more detailed Handbook or equivalent is accessible only to current students, faculty and staff. For instance, in French, the Graduate Handbook is kept on a Wiki, which makes it very quick and easy to update. At Information & Media Studies, the graduate student handbooks are only available to current students on the Intranet.

It is difficult to say whether one approach is better than another. Having everything available on the web site does give great transparency and allows potential students to view the entire range of academic policies. On the other hand, there is an argument to be made that potential students only need to see the basic elements of the program and that further details may just be overwhelming. Removing detailed program and administrative information to the Intranet or a wiki also may help to reduce the overall clutter of the public web site.

Curriculum and Courses

Programs and their curricula go hand in hand. The program is developed to meet a perceived need in the educational landscape, and the curriculum then is created to facilitate student learning, knowledge and skill development in that area of study. It sounds logical and simple, but it is not so logical and simple in reality. Re program development, many factors come into play, including the desire to further the discipline through provision of graduate studies opportunities, the assessment of a knowledge gap in the workplace or in professional practice, and/or a practical budgetary need to increase graduate student numbers etc. With respect to curricula, the central questions are always What do students need to know? and What is the best way to deliver that knowledge or facilitate student learning? However, despite best efforts to devise great programs and cutting edge, relevant curricula, students do come to programs with their own expectations and motivations.

When student expectations/motivations do not match programmatic and curricular goals, this can create problems. For instance, many students want to get into professional schools (such as Law and Medicine), but it is very competitive and only a minority of applicants are successful. Accordingly, in the hope of increasing their chances of success in future applications, many students opt to take a Master's degree in a related area. This trend means that the research intensive thesis-based master's programs have students in them who are taking up supervisory and monetary resources when they really have no desire to continue in the discipline. The situation is particularly evident in the Schulich Medicine/Desntistry programs (such as Anatomy/Cell Biology, Pharmacology/Pysiology, Microbiology etc.) as well as in some of the Science programs, causing one Schulich GC to remark that it is hard to find students who are truly interested in advanced research in the discipline rather than using the program as a means to increase their chances of acceptance into medical school. To meet the needs of these particular students, Microbiology has developed a one-year project and course-based program, described as follows:

> The 1-year project and course-based M.Sc. program is aimed at highly motivated undergraduate students who intend to pursue a professional degree, and want to prepare by learning critical thinking

> skills using hands-on training in state-of-the-art biomedical research methods. Students enrolled in this program will work with faculty mentors in a hands-on laboratory setting. Taken from www.uwo.ca/mni/gaduate/graduate_about.html

For the same reasons, Neuroscience has approval for a one year program starting in 2015 and some other Schulich and Science GCs indicated that their departments are planning to offer similar programs in the near future.

As for the specifics of curriculum development, some programs (but certainly not the majority) have an extensive curriculum model that outlines the philosophy/framework of the curriculum and the values contained within it. A good example is the relatively recent (2011) curriculum document of the professional MSc in Occupational Therapy program. The curriculum model is introduced as follows:

> The goal of the School of Occupational Therapy is to develop practitioners who have the competencies and abilities to practice as entry level occupational therapists in a variety of practice areas. Moreover, the program is meant to develop the knowledge and attitudes that will allow graduates to continue to develop as practitioners, while working within a continually evolving health care context.
>
> To achieve this goal, the curriculum model integrates a professional conceptual framework/philosophy and an educational conceptual framework/philosophy. These provide the foundation for the content and process of our curriculum. **The professional conceptual framework** is grounded by two core concepts regarding the role and function of occupational therapy… (1) occupational therapy enables meaningful human occupation and (2) health and well-being can be promoted when occupational performance is enabled… The **educational conceptual framework** rests upon a philosophy that values social responsibility to the *self* and the *other*. Given this philosophical basis, the approach to teaching is learner-centred, wherein students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning
>
> (for the full document, see http://www.uwo.ca/fhs/ot/files/downloads/pdf/curriculum_document.pdf)

The document goes on to provide a curriculum matrix for years 1 and 2 of the program, and describes in more detail the conceptual frameworks of the curriculum. For instance, the professional conceptual framework consists of eight different perspectives, including the knowledge of occupational science, critical social and cultural perspectives, client-centred practice, evidence-based practice, and ethical and reflective practice. The document describes client populations, and lays out specific expectations for professional competence in a variety of areas of practice. The document also looks at experiential learning, including the role of on-site learning and fieldwork. Having this kind of guiding document is invaluable for planning both coursework and field placements and is a ready source of evidence when preparing program review reports.

Whether or not there is an explicit curriculum model, every program has a definitive list of what courses are being offered, what courses students are required to take and in what sequence. In some cases, courses can include both program-based courses and acceptable courses from other departments/programs. Mandatory courses are fairly straightforward, with the exception that some programs do allow students to petition to be exempted from a mandatory course if they have the required background (for instance, in the MLIS program, a student may petition to be exempted from one mandatory course).

Differences occur in course selection for elective courses, but also in the case of choices among mandatory course options. In some programs, students decide on which courses to take largely on their own, based on their interests and course availability. They might seek faculty advice on course selection, or they might not. In other programs, course selection is/must be discussed with an academic advisor or supervisor. In some thesis programs (such as in Engineering and Health/Rehabilitation Sciences), the supervisor has a large say in the courses the student must take, to best prepare him/her for the eventual thesis research.

It would be fair to say that in many programs, courses for doctoral students and Category 1 master's students are not separated (i.e. courses will have both doctoral and master's students in them). This may have some disadvantages, since doctoral students are likely to be more advanced than master's students, thus making it a challenge for the instructor as to how to accommodate the learning needs of each group. Nonetheless, most programs do not have the resources to provide doctoral-only or master's-only courses, particularly if enrolments are small. There are exceptions, of course: in the LIS program at Information & Media Studies, doctoral level courses might be populated only with doctoral students, since the Master's program in LIS is not a thesis-based degree. MLIS students can request to take a doctoral course, but such requests are not

automatically granted. In the INFORMATION & MEDIA STUDIES Media Studies program, there are separate mandatory doctoral and master's courses for theory and research methods but in electives, doctoral and master's students take courses together.

In Faculties with both professionally oriented and thesis-based programs, it is a challenge to have students from both streams in the same courses. For example, every department in Engineering has students in the professional Master of Engineering (MEng) program, as well as the research-oriented Master's of Engineering Science programs (MESc). Often the two groups of students are in the same course, which not only makes the classes quite large (up to 40 or so) but also poses challenges for instructors in making the courses sufficiently advanced for the research-oriented MESc students while meeting the practice-based needs of the MEng students. Since the two groups of students do not have the same interests or motivations, keeping both groups equally engaged in the course is difficult.

Graduate courses are typically held during the week, on the same model as undergraduate courses. However, in some programs, courses may be on a completely different schedule, depending on the needs of the program. For example, in the Master's of Public Administration program, to accommodate part-time students, some courses are offered on Friday afternoons/evenings, on Saturdays and as week-long intensives. In Audiology, Speech Language Pathology and Occupational Therapy, courses are interspersed with the various clinical placements that students must undertake, so the course timing does not conform to typical university timetabling.

As noted previously, the majority of graduate programs/courses at Western are campus-based and face-to-face, but there are some exceptions. The Master's in Library and Information Science has a selection of elective courses which can be taken online but seats are limited so a student is only allowed to enroll in one distance course per semester. Programs which are totally online include the graduate programs in Family Medicine and most of the professionally-oriented graduate programs in Education. Totally online programs do have a different set of curricular issues which need to be resolved. In Family Medicine, the graduate courses have been online for 15 years, so the faculty now have a lot of experience with that mode of delivery. In most courses, students take turns organizing and facilitating the online discussions, but faculty are always present to make sure that everyone is contributing and that the discussion is on track. Despite the long track record with online courses, it remains challenging to teach some topics (such as Statistics) in an online format. To help counter these challenges, the Research Methods course is deliberately grounded in Family Medicine research to make it relevant for the practitioners who are taking the program. In general, to make the curriculum work in the online environment, the faculty in Family Medicine put much effort into the cross-over and synergy among courses and spend a lot of time talking about course content so that everyone is clear about who is covering what topics in which courses. In Education, the Master's of Professional Education is also primarily an online program. When the decision was made to develop the MPEd as an online program, two curriculum designers were hired to assist the faculty with course development, which proved to be a good decision.

In programs with rolling admission, courses may need to be offered more frequently to accommodate students coming in at different times of the year. This is the case in the MLIS program, where all required courses must be offered three times a year, in the September, January and May terms. On the other hand, some programs with rolling admission (such as in Engineering, or Physics/Astronomy) do not make significant adjustments to their courses, and simply recognize that the student arriving in January or May might end up taking certain courses out of order, so to speak.

Beyond giving the student essential disciplinary knowledge and critical thinking skills, graduate courses can be used for different programmatic purposes, such as:

- In Anthropology, certain core courses are used to promote cohort building and facilitate cross-stream disciplinary understanding. The Anthropology program has two required theory courses, one for students in the Sociocultural stream and one for students in Archaeology/Bioarchaeology stream. The courses meet simultaneously, but every three weeks, the students come together to discuss shared interests and issues and to make group presentations (with groups composed of students from both courses) to the combined meeting, thus building what the GC described as a "common conversation" within the discipline.
- In Communication Sciences and Disorders, a series of four Professional Practice courses introduce students to the profession, and to current products and technologies so that they are well prepared to enter the workforce. For example, Professional Practice IV in the Audiology program is described as:

"This course will make use of experiential learning strategies (e.g., case studies, observation, reflective practice, resource portfolios) to build competence in protocol knowledge, integration of information, clinical decision analysis, developing recommendations, presentation of information, and professionalism in the context of service delivery. Students will present adult and pediatric clinical cases for discussion, analysis and reflection. Hearing instrument, assistive technology and instrumentation manufacturers will present to inform students of current products and technologies relevant to the practice of audiology."

- In Occupational Therapy, international courses enable students to broaden their experience and knowledge of the field. Each year, up to 10 OT students are sent to an international, interdisciplinary summer intensive course addressing public health, held at Oslo University College in Norway. In turn, Public Health students from Norway come to Western for a 4 week intensive course in occupational science, during which time there are several opportunities for social and intellectual engagement with the occupational therapy class. Some OT students also have opportunities to do international fieldwork placements.

Examples of other programmatic goals that are embedded into graduate courses include:

- developing a scholarly culture of inter- or multidisciplinarity
- professional development (e.g. giving the students experience in presenting and giving their peers feedback, writing different kinds of articles, reports, or documents like agendas and executive summaries, preparing posters)
- modeling professional work practices (such as effective time management, ethical practices)
- fostering collegiality and cooperation (such as through group/team approaches to projects).

Supervision

For thesis programs, supervision is a major preoccupation of both the GC and individual faculty members. A lot of time and effort is spent on supervision: thinking about it, planning for it, carrying it out and fixing it if things go awry. However, supervision also occurs in non-thesis programs but it is of a very different character than in thesis programs.

Finding a Thesis Supervisor

GCs have varying levels of oversight in the organizing of thesis supervision, from quite hands-off, to very active involvement. In programs where the student is *not* required to have a supervisor prior to admission, it often falls to the GC to assign each incoming student a temporary academic advisor, or mentor. In Visual Arts, for instance, all incoming graduate students are assigned a mentor, whose job it is to develop a rapport with the student, meet with him/her regularly (usually once a month or so), keep tabs on how the student is doing in coursework and otherwise, and alert the GC if the student is having difficulties. Similarly, in Classical Studies, assigned mentors help their students select their courses in July. For their master's students, Film Studies assigns academic advisors, who then may or may not end up being the thesis supervisor. In Mathematics, an academic advisor is assigned to each Master's student, even though students may opt to do only coursework.

In thesis programs where a supervisor is not necessarily required upon admission, at some point in the program, the student needs to find a supervisor. The supervisor could be selected within the first or second term in the program, or if a doctoral student, perhaps not until the student has to begin preparing for the comprehensive exams. Generally, GCs tend to leave it up to the student to find an agreeable supervisor and only facilitate the process of matching supervisor and student if the student is having difficulty finding a supervisor.

In thesis programs where a supervisor is required prior to admission, the GC is often not very involved in matching students with supervisors because it is usually the faculty members who review the applications and decide which students to take, thus indicating agreement to be the supervisor. However, the GC may help a student to identify a faculty member to approach at the application stage. This is particularly true if the student is from another country and is not quite sure which faculty member would be best for his/her area of interest.

If GCs are usually fairly hands-off with respect to matching students with supervisors, how do students find a thesis supervisor? In programs where a supervisor is required prior to admission, it is expected that prospective students will contact faculty directly regarding whether the faculty member is willing to supervise the applicant. For programs not requiring a supervisor upon admission, typically students gain exposure to

faculty members and their research through coursework, through talks given by faculty and through interacting/socializing with faculty, but it is also true that some faculty members may not be teaching or are not around as much at the time when students need to find supervisors. To rectify this, some programs (such as Media Studies) hold an annual "find a supervisor" session where all faculty members who supervise in the program come to talk about their research so that students can meet/speak with faculty they have not yet met and discuss supervisory possibilities. Examples from other programs to help students find supervisors include

- Philosophy provides general information on what to consider when choosing a supervisor - see http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/graduate/4-prospective_students/supervisor.html
- History has developed a page on their web site with information on faculty members and topics (see http://www.history.uwo.ca/graduate/supervisors.html).
- Political Science has a page on faculty expertise for students to browse (see http://politicalscience.uwo.ca/faculty/).
- Anatomy/Cell Biology has descriptions of the department's Research Areas and a list of faculty who work in each area (see www.uwo.ca/anatomy/research/index.html)
- Law provides a section on faculty books (see www.law.uwo.ca/research/faculty_books/index.html)

Supervisors and Advisory Committees

Thesis supervisory relationships are a bit like marriages: at the outset, the parties are keen and optimistic, but despite this, the relationship doesn't always work out. GCs sometimes are approached by students who are not happy with their supervisors or committee members, but GCs are also approached by faculty members who are not happy with the progress being made by a student, so things can go awry from either side. Accordingly, every GC indicated that it is part of his/her responsibilities to facilitate good supervisory practices and to change supervisory arrangements if need be. Interestingly, most GCs indicated that it was fairly rare for them to have to intervene in a failing supervisory situation, but that it does occasionally happen.

To lay out the groundwork for successful supervision, some programs have developed detailed explanations of the role and responsibilities of supervisors, supervisory committees and students. As mentioned previously, Physiology/Pharmacology requires each student and his/her supervisor to sign a Letter of Understanding (Appendix 2) within the first two weeks of the program. The Letter outlines the responsibilities and expectations for both the student and the supervisor, as well as the expectations regarding shared publishing of research findings, and the document is signed by both parties. Other examples of the role of the supervisor and advisory committees included are from Biology (Appendix 7) and Information & Media Studies (Appendix 8).

At the doctoral level, supervision is more onerous than at the Master's level, but perhaps a little more straightforward. All doctoral students prepare a thesis, so the supervisor and the student are clear from the outset about what needs to happen: a thesis eventually needs to be produced. If the student already has a supervisor prior to admission, the supervisory relationship begins immediately upon the student's arrival. In such cases, the supervisor may even be involved in issues like course selection. In some programs, this is quite formalized. For instance, Civil/Environmental Engineering requires that each doctoral student and his/her supervisory committee develop a Plan of Study, described as

> During first term of registration, the student must submit a Proposed Program of Study, available from the CEE Graduate Office, to the CEE Graduate Affairs Assistant for review and approval by the CEE Graduate Committee. The Proposed Program of Study must indicate the proposed course selection, thesis topic, and research advisory committee. Failure to submit a proposed program at the end of the first term of registration will entail the denial of permission to register in further courses.
>
> from http://www.engga.uwo.ca/civil/graduate_program/PhD_requirements.htm

Once the supervisor has been chosen, the next step is to find the other members of the advisory committee. Typically the supervisor approaches the potential committee members, which in most cases is two for doctoral students and one for Master's students. In some programs, the advisory committee is determined very early in the student's first term, (e.g. in Biology, the advisory committee needs to be identified within the first six weeks of term one) while in other programs, the advisory committee is not appointed until later, perhaps not until preparations for the comprehensive exam. Once the advisory committee has been decided, the GC is informed so that the information can be recorded in the student's file.

There are some deviations from this pattern. In Music, the Associate Dean/Graduate Chair and each new PhD student meet early in the fall to discuss who should be on the Advisory Committee. The student approaches the faculty members suggested and the Advisory Committee is formed. The committee selects a Chair, who calls the first meeting of the committee plus the student. At this meeting, the committee discusses the plans for the research and for the directed research requirement. The actual thesis supervisor is not named until after the comprehensive exams. Another example is in Economics, where each doctoral student in the fall of their 4th year does a 20 minute presentation of their thesis prospectus before a meeting of all faculty members. The student then leaves the room and the prospectus is judged as either pass or fail (failing is rare but does happen). Once the prospectus has been judged as a pass, two faculty members at the meeting must agree to supervise the student, and then shortly thereafter, the formal committee is named.

In some programs, it is not the Grad Chair, but rather the Graduate Committee which is actively involved in the composition of the Advisory Committee. For example, in Neuroscience, which is cross-disciplinary and cross-departmental with no usual departmental structure, it was decided that the Graduate Program Committee had to be very active in all decisions re Advisory Committees. Each Advisory Committee has a Chair (who is distinct from the Thesis Supervisor). The Chair is a member of the Graduate Program Committee, and his/her role is to call and chair the meetings of the Advisory Committee, ensure proper procedures are followed and that there are formal notes and an official paper trail of student progress. Within two weeks of the start of the fall term, the Chair and the Supervisor meet and brainstorm who should be on the Advisory Committee. Those individuals are approached and if they are agreeable, the Advisory Committee composition is put forward to the Graduate Program Committee for approval.

As well, as noted previously, some programs in Schulich Medicine/Dentistry (such as Anatomy/Cell Biology, Physiology/Pharmacology and Neuroscience) require that each Advisory Committee have a representative from the departmental Graduate Committee. While this entails a lot of additional work for the Grad Committee members (i.e. each of them may have to sit on 7 or 8 thesis supervisory committees), it is viewed as being a necessary preventative measure to ensure that all procedures are being followed and that there are no outstanding issues. As well, having a Grad Committee member sit on each committee ensures regular scheduling of advisory meetings (for instance, Anatomy/Cell biology requires one every 6 months) which in turn significantly improves times to completion. The Grad Committee rep also gives the student access to a faculty member who is at arm's length from the Thesis Advisory Committee should the student need some advice about policies and procedures.

In Category 1 Master's programs, supervision may be a bit more varied, depending on the options available in the program. In Master's programs that are purely thesis-based, some require a supervisor prior to admission and some do not, so comparable procedures would be in place as for doctoral study. For instance, in Health & Rehabilitation Sciences, where thesis Master's students must have a supervisor prior to admission, the students are required to have a Plan of Study for their degree within their first term, developed with and approved by their supervisory committee, just as is required for doctoral students. In Master's programs where a thesis supervisor is not chosen prior to admission, it is still the case that finding a supervisor is largely up to the student – GCs rarely become involved unless there are problems. In terms of the advisory committee, for a thesis Master's student, requirements for the supervisory committee are typically less stringent than in the doctoral program. Often the Master's thesis committee is a two-person team, consisting of a primary supervisor and another faculty member as a second advisor/reader.

However, unlike doctoral programs, some Category 1 Master's programs have options either to do a thesis, a major paper/independent research project, or entirely coursework. There are differences in when the student must declare his/her intent as to which option to pursue, and this will affect the supervision required and the timing of supervisor selection. In some cases, the student's decision is made by default: if the student is not able to meet the milestones for the thesis option, s/he may have to go into another option such as a major research project or purely coursework. In other cases, the decision is made deliberately by the student. For example, in Sociology, the Master's student must make a decision about which option to choose by the beginning of his/her second term, and once the decision has been made, it cannot be changed. As well, Master's students in Sociology do not decide on their area of specialization (Health & Aging, Population Studies, Migration etc.) right away, so no supervisor can be selected until decisions are made regarding the specialization.

Thesis Completion

Once in place, supervisors and advisory committees need to work with the student to ensure that a good thesis is produced and defended. Some programs, such as English, have developed in-house guidelines, so the supervisor and student are both aware of what needs to take place at each stage as thesis submission approaches. The guidelines cover items such as SGPS deadlines, final revisions, notification of the GC, selection of the examining board, final submission and the thesis defence (see Appendix 9).

Non-thesis Master's Supervision

As mentioned previously, professionally oriented Master's students (most commonly in Category 2 programs although some Category 1 programs also have professional affinities) do not need a thesis supervisor. However, this does not mean they are completely unsupervised: in some cases, they undergo quite rigorous supervision, but of a very different kind to thesis supervision. Supervision is likely to occur either when students are doing independent studies or research options, or when they are on program-required or program-sanctioned placements.

With respect to research, most Category 2 programs do have some sort of supervised research option available to students. A major research project/paper is mandatory in some programs, while in others, it is an elective chosen by the student. For instance, in the Master's of Library and Information Science, students who wish to have some experience with research have three research-oriented opportunities: doing a one (i.e. .5) course weight Individual Study, doing a two course weight Guided Research project, or doing a four course weight Major Research Project. All of these options require the student to have a formal supervisor, although no second reader in this case.

Even though a major research projects is not like a full-blown thesis, it is still likely that the GC is relatively uninvolved in the selection of the supervisor, leaving it up to the students to negotiate. This is not true in all cases, however. For example, in Public Administration, the Program Director assigns supervisors for each Major Research Paper, to ensure fairness in distributing the supervisory responsibilities among all instructors. The process is described as follows:

> Soon after completing the course on research methods, each student submits a research proposal and is assigned a research supervisor. Together, the supervisor and student work out an outline and research strategy. Students will normally present their research proposals and their preliminary findings to the seminar class "Issues in Local Government" in the final summer term of their program. Reports can be revised for final submission following presentation to the seminar. from http://localgovernment.uwo.ca/masterspa/coursedescriptions.asp

Supervision also occurs in student placements. Most of Western's professionally oriented programs do have placements, such as the Co-op Work Study Placements in Library and Information Science, internships in Journalism and in Public History, and clinical placements in Health Science programs such as Communicative and Speech Disorders, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy. Some placements are voluntary (such as in the MLIS), while others are required, such as in Health Science programs. Either way, there is always supervision involved.

For the MLIS program, although going on a work/study placement is voluntary, nonetheless students must complete a report half way through the placement, and the workplace supervisor also completes a report. The Manager of Graduate Student Services either makes a call to the student and supervisor or visits the student and supervisor on site to ensure that all is going well. At the end of the placement, the student completes a more thorough report, and the workplace supervisor provides an assessment as well. The Manager of Graduate Student Services reads all reports and in consultation with the GC, a decision is made as to whether the placement is a Pass or Fail, which is not for course credit, but does go on the student's transcript.

In Public History, internships are mandatory and take place in the summer. An Internships Coordinator helps students to find appropriate placements that are tailored to their interests. Each internship is supervised by a professional public historian. To give students a better idea of placements, the program web site also includes a Past Experiences section where students describe their internships in detail (see http://www.history.uwo.ca/public_history/internships/past_experiences.html)

Clinical placements require a very stringent approach to supervision, particularly since students will be interacting with, and practicing on, human subjects. For example, both the Audiology program and the

Speech-Language Pathology program in Communication Sciences and Disorders have a number of mandatory clinical placements for all students. The first placement is in-house, within the H.A. Leeper Speech and Hearing Clinic, so that students can be closely supervised and given extra help if necessary. The supervising faculty members want to be sure that students are well prepared before going out to external placements.

Later on in the program, students are put into longer placements within external agencies, working with practicing professionals who supervise and evaluate the students. To prepare for their placements, students have access to a very thorough 54 page clinical Policies and Procedures Manual. The Audiology program manual covers the following topics, and more:

- Procedures and preparation
- Professional conduct
- Confidentiality
- Observations
- Infection control
- Attendance policy
- Criminal reference check
- Mask fit procedures
- Recruiting research participants
- Supervision of children
- Allergies

See http://www.uwo.ca/fhs/csd/files/downloads/pdf/current/aud_procedures_manual.pdf

The detail in the manual is quite extensive. For instance, under the Infection Control section, very specific cleaning regimens are outlined, a few of which are illustrated in Appendix 10. Students have to adhere to all of these policies and procedures or risk not doing well during the placement.

Also covered in the manual are extensive evaluation guidelines, covering every aspect of the student's work on placement, from communication skills, to following correct procedures, to conflict resolution etc. Below is one example from the evaluation of Skills and Test Techniques:

The Clinician:

1. presents appropriate rationale for selection of standardized assessment procedures.
2. selects appropriate materials and testing methods considering client's age, language abilities, cognitive level and hearing status,
3. utilizes standardized techniques with appropriate accuracy and speed,
4. modifies standardized techniques when appropriate (e.g. eliminating carrier phrase)
5. makes modifications in the testing strategy such as shifting material/procedures/activities when necessary,
6. demonstrates mastery of equipment (e.g. uses equipment with accuracy and speed.)
7. maintains appropriate visual and verbal contact with the client during testing.
8. can reliably and accurately observe responses.
9. shapes child's behaviour through appropriate test techniques and reinforcement techniques,
10. uses verbal praise/continent remarks that are appropriate to client age, language abilities and cognitive level

from http://www.uwo.ca/fhs/csd/files/downloads/pdf/current/aud_procedures_manual.pdf

Based on these and other metrics, external supervisors evaluate the students in five areas, including:

- Interpersonal Skills/Personal Qualities
- General Assessment Skills and Test Technique
- Written Work/Recommendations
- History Talking and Counseling
- Self-Evaluation/Problem Solving

The evaluation forms are sent to the program's Placement Coordinator, and if there is a problem, it is discussed with the student to improve performance. On the rare occasion of a failure, the student can be given a second chance at a placement, but only once.

From this description of supervision in a typical clinical placement, it is clear that the supervision is very rigorous, and is at least as rigorous as in most thesis programs, if not more so.

PhD Comprehensive Exams

As could be expected, the comprehensive exam (type of and procedures for) is one of the most diverse topics examined in this project. Although the vast majority of programs do have comprehensive exams, in some disciplines, there are diagnostic or qualifying exams either in addition to, or instead of, the comprehensive exam:

- Statistical and Actuarial Sciences doctoral students may have to write a qualifying exam at the end of their first year and if successful, then proceed to the thesis proposal. If they achieve 81% or higher in the advanced courses, the qualifying exam is waived.
- French requires a textual analysis exam at the end of first year which must be passed before proceeding to the comprehensive exams.
- Classical Studies requires a diagnostic exam in Greek and Latin, which is used to gauge which courses the student should take. Students then take their comprehensive exams in Year 2.

In most programs, however, there is no qualifying or diagnostic exam but rather one or more comprehensive exams (although some programs use the term "qualifying" exam instead of the term "comprehensive"). The mention of comprehensive exams prompted many GCs to remark that their exams had been recently changed or that changes were being contemplated, so it seems that a number of programs are striving for more consistency and tighter procedures for their exams. For instance, Rehabilitative and Health Sciences, with many different doctoral programs, had a wide variety of exam approaches and formats. To streamline practices and make the comps more comparable and transparent, the department overhauled the comprehensive structure so that exams in the different programs use the same or a very similar format. Geography has also streamlined their comprehensives, and a survey of the students who had taken the new format indicated that most felt very good about their comps, and thought overall it was a positive event for them.

To help students prepare for the comprehensive exams, reading lists are used by many programs (e.g. Biology, Business Administration, Geography, Library and Information Science, Media Studies Physics/Astronomy etc.). There is usually one or more reading lists compiled for which the student is responsible. The reading list can either be compiled individually for/by each student (e.g. Biology, Library and Information Science), or it is a standard set of core texts which all students must use to prepare for the exam (e.g. Media Studies, Physics and Astronomy). In the case of Business Administration, doctoral students are given required reading lists by the area of the program (such as Information Systems, Management Science, Marketing etc.) in which they are enrolled.

If the reading list is common to all students, it may be compiled collaboratively by graduate faculty members, or it may be delegated to a committee. In Media Studies, a subcommittee of the Graduate Committee looks after the core reading list and examination:

> The first comprehensive is a 'core' examination, on a common reading list of fifty texts. The list is reviewed biennially by the Media Studies Examination Committee, a subcommittee of the Media Studies Program Committee consisting of three faculty members (representing Media Cultures, Media Industries, and Media Technologies). In setting the core exam, this subcommittee will seek input from doctoral students and the media studies faculty at large. (taken from
>
> http://www.Information & Media Studies.uwo.ca/acad_programs/grad/media/media-phd/progression/comp.htm)

If the list is generated for/by each student, then there usually are requirements that the list must be prepared anywhere from 4 to 6 months prior to the date of the exam, and to protect the student, it cannot be changed prior to the exam. Individualized list(s) are developed differently in different programs: in some, the supervisor, student and sometimes advisory committee members together develop the list, while in others, members of the examining committee have input to the list. In either case, the early development of reading lists requires

that at the very least, the student's supervisor has been chosen. The comps thus are sometimes the catalyst for ensuring that the supervisor and advisory committee is in place.

Again using Media Studies as an example, the reading list for the second comprehensive is compiled by each student:

> The second comprehensive is a "specialized" examination, on a list of twenty-five texts to be compiled by the student under the supervision of his/her advisor and two additional faculty members, who will comprise the "specialized examining committee" (SEC). The two additional faculty members on the SEC may or may not later become members of the student's thesis committee. The specialized reading list may not contain the same texts as the core list, but it may contain additional works by authors represented on the core list. Students will be tested by their SEC in a two-hour pass/fail oral examination to take place between the beginning of March and the end of May of their second year. The student will circulate a ten- to fifteen-page written rationale for his/her list to the SEC one week in advance of the oral exam; students will begin the exam by speaking about the list and rationale for five to ten minutes.

In Biology, an individualized reading list also is used but it is quite open-ended:

> Examiners may suggest appropriate reading material (papers, textbooks
>
> etc.) but need not assign specific readings. Any suggested or assigned readings are meant to represent a starting point and do not necessarily define the limits of the assigned topic. Since the purpose of the Comprehensive Examination is to assess the Candidate's general knowledge, autonomy, and scientific maturity, part of the evaluation may focus on the Candidate's ability to identify the important literature for a given topic. (taken from http://www.uwo.ca/biology/graduate/GradHandbookPart1.pdf)

Exams may be offered at specific times of the year (such as in Anatomy/Cell Biology, Sociology and Physics/Astronomy) or they may be offered whenever a student will be ready to write (e.g. Civil/Environmental Engineering, Library and Information Science). Offering the exams at specific times of the year has the big advantage of transparency: students know when the exams are coming up and can organize their preparations accordingly. On the other hand, if a student is not ready when the first opportunity arises, it may be months before the next opportunity comes around. In that sense, offering the exam when a student will be ready to write may avoid delays in progress. Whichever approach is taken may depend somewhat on the size of the program and the exam format. It would be difficult to offer individualized exam times if there are 10-12 students in the same cohort needing to write the exams. However, if the comprehensive is based on the student's research proposal (such as in Civil/Environmental, Mechanical/Materials Engineering and Earth Sciences), individualized exams are a necessity.

As for examining committees, in some programs the examining committees are established annually (such as Sociology, where exams are offered twice a year at set times, examining committees are set up in the summer by the GC and then tweaked as necessary). In other programs, examining committees are established closer to the date of the exam. In most programs, examining committees are usually different from the thesis advisory committee, although there may be some overlap in members. Examining committees may also be stratified by fields, such as in Psychology, where a three member comps exam committee represents different aspects of each area.

Exam Formats

Exam formats vary but generally there are three types: i) exams held as a closed-book sit-down written exam of several hours duration, with exams being written on one day, or spaced out over several weeks, ii) take-home written exams spread out over two to seven days, and/or iii) written papers/proposals due on a particular date. Assuming that the written portion is acceptable, the student then proceeds to an oral exam if one is required.

With respect to the exams themselves, despite disciplinary differences, there are some common features (with various sorts of tweaking) that are apparent. First, a large number of programs require students to take more than one comprehensive exam. The requirements can include a variety of written (closed-book or take-home) and/or oral exams, as the examples below illustrate:

- three separate written exams for different fields within the discipline (Economics)

- three separate written exams: two for the major and one for the minor (Political Science)
- three separate written exams: one paper for the major field and two take-home exams for minor fields (History)
- three field exams: a written for the Secondary Field, a written and oral for the Primary Field and a written Field Study document, with an oral defence (English)
- three exams: one oral and two written in major and minor areas (French)
- four separate written exams: one in Greek, one in Latin, one in Archaeology and one in the student's area of research (Classical Studies)
- two exams (Low Level and Mid Level). Low Level exam is an oral which assesses the student's understanding of the field; the Mid Level exam is based on research papers that the student must know related to his/her area of research
- two separate written exams for major and minor fields (Visual Arts)
- two separate exams: a written exam for the core and an oral for the specialization (Media Studies)
- two separate parts: a written sit-down exam on Algebra and Analysis, and then within a month, an assigned research project seminar presentation, judged on a pass/fail basis (Mathematics)
- separate written exams covering four subjects, written over two days (Physics/Astronomy)
- preparation of a 10-11 page CIHR proposal, which is then reviewed or rated by faculty members and assessed as a pass/fail. Upon passing, students then proceed to an oral exam, which might follow quite closely, or within 4 months (Anatomy/Cell Biology, Biochemistry, Microbiology/Immunology, Neuroscience, Physiology/Pharmacology)
- a five day take-home exam with one long essay and one shorter essay followed by an oral exam (Library and Information Science)
- a written paper where they student reviews the dissertation topic including the magnitude of topic, gaps etc. (intended to form the first chapter of the dissertation) followed by an oral exam (Family Medicine)

Some programs structure the exams around the student's research proposal. For instance, in Civil/Environment Engineering, the student must develop and present a thesis research proposal (see Appendix 11). Three months prior to the exam, the supervisor and examining committee specify three subject areas related to the fundamentals of the research. Following the public presentation, the oral exam takes place with questions on the proposal and the three subject areas. The student's presentation and oral exam are open to Engineering faculty, staff and graduate students. A similar process also is used in Chemical/Biochemical Engineering, Electrical/Computer Engineering and Mechanical/Materials Engineering.

Although quite a few programs require multiple examinations, there are cases where a single exam is required, such as:

- a 4 hour written exam at the end of first year (Applied Mathematics)
- a 3 hour oral exam, with three examiners representing different areas of concentration or topics (Biology)
- a day-long written exam, in which the student reviews a peer-reviewed article or research protocol. There is no oral unless the written exam is weak – the student is then asked to defend his/her answers (Epidemiology/Biostatistics)
- a month-long take home exam, with one required question in each of Methods, Research Literature and Issues (Music)
- an oral exam of an in-depth study (called the TSP or Topics Survey/Proposal) which is a 20-40 page paper on a research topic. The oral exam evaluates the student's ability to understand important research. Students must pass the TSP or may be required to withdraw (Computer Science).
- an oral exam with three examiners, based on the student's statement of proposed research (e.g. Earth Sciences). In Earth Sciences, examiners may suggest specific readings to the student ahead of the exam.

In programs with different fields, such as Kinesiology, Psychology and Philosophy, the comps differ according to the requirements of each field and could take the form of written exam/paper, an extensive literature review, a research project or whatever is required by the field..

Perhaps one of the most unique approaches to the comprehensive exams is in Women's Studies where the comps take the form of two course outlines, described on their web site as follows:

> The course outlines will be a general level lecture course and an upper year seminar in the candidate's area of interest. Readings and themes for each class as well as teaching philosophy must be detailed. Requirements will include analytical reflection on the course content, the learning objectives of the evaluation methods and the course's contribution to teaching and training for the field of Women's Studies and Feminist Research in the academy or in the workplace.
>
> (taken from http://www.uwo.ca/womens/graduate/degree_requirements_phd.html

Second, the majority of programs require an oral defence of a written exam or paper/proposal. In some cases, as in History and Political Science, the oral is held upon successful completion of more than one written comprehensive exam. Some programs (such as all of the Engineering programs) deliberately model the oral exam after the thesis defence with the thinking that it gives the student an idea what the thesis defence will be like. According to one GC in Engineering, a disadvantage of this approach is that the whole process becomes very serious and onerous, and students delay taking the comprehensive longer than they should because they want everything to be perfect, or they want to delay until they have something publishable.

The third common feature is that there are always second chances available to the student. If the student fails the written portion, that usually can be retaken and then there also might be a second chance at the oral if it is failed on the first attempt. In some programs, the second chance option is always available, while in others, it is up to the examining committee to decide if a second chance will be allowed. In other cases, the student can retake either the written or the oral exam, but not both. In Applied Mathematics, a second chance at the written comprehensive is only available if the student has done well in required courses. The drawback to multiple second chances is that the student can be completely derailed with respect to meeting normal milestones for the program, which prompted some programs to rethink policies about second chances. So for instance, in Physics and Astronomy, regardless of whether the student is retaking the June comprehensive in September, the Research Proposal is due in November and cannot be deferred.

Thesis Proposal/Prospectus

By now, it will not be surprising to know that approaches to thesis proposals differ greatly in terms of whether proposals are mandatory, when they must be completed, who must approve them, whether they must be presented, and whether there is an oral defence.

Formal thesis proposals are a feature of many (but not all) programs for both doctoral and master's students. In doctoral programs, the format and timing of the proposal is aligned with the overall structure of the program. Some programs require thesis proposals to be developed relatively early (for instance, students in Anatomy/Cell Biology must have a proposal within 6 months of starting their program), while in other cases, the formal proposal comes later (e.g. PhD students in Psychology and Women's Studies must have a proposal in Year 2; in Economics, because the thesis is based on the integrated article format, the proposal is done at the beginning of Year 4). Often the proposal is the next milestone following the comprehensive exams but sometimes the proposal precedes the comprehensive (as in Biology).

Many programs have a document outlining the requirements for the proposal - examples are included from Biology (Appendix 12) and Sociology (Appendix 13). The proposal is usually a written document of a specified length and is normally developed by the student outside of coursework. However, in Philosophy, the doctoral proposal is developed as part of a mandatory Prospectus course, as follows:

> One half-course must be a reading course that will lead to the preparation of a thesis prospectus. Typically this prospectus course will be taken with the intended supervisor of the dissertation in the winter semester of the second year of PhD coursework. A grade will be assigned on the basis of work done specifically for this course; the resulting prospectus must be independently assessed by the student's supervisory committee. (taken from http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/graduate/6-current_students/documents_forms.html#forms)

In Film Studies, master's students begin developing their thesis proposals in the required Research Methods course, described as:

> This graduate seminar will provide a practical introduction to the distinctive, sometimes intertwined methods involved in the study of film… Students will also begin to develop their own thesis topics in this course, as well as draft a short segment of the thesis itself as a seminar paper. Thus, by the end of this seminar, students will present and discuss some of their preliminary thesis research to the class as a whole, and generate a draft of their thesis prospecti in a forum that will allow students to receive feedback on the document before submitting it for approval to their respective advisors. (taken from http://www.uwo.ca/film/graduate/course.html)

In Music, to prepare for the proposal, PhD students must first complete two Directed Research Projects (DRPs), supervised by a faculty member. The first DRP is in the summer after Year 1 and before the comp exam and could take the form of a literature review or something general related to the research area. The second DRP is after the comp exam (in the summer of Year 2) and must articulate a research question. The two DRPs form the basis of the research proposal. The formal proposal is constructed under the supervision of the Advisory Committee (thesis supervisor and one other committee member) and should be completed by the 2nd term after comp exam. If the supervisor approves, the student may go to a defence of the proposal, The proposal is defended before the Advisory Committee.

Family Medicine requires all Master's students, whether doing a thesis, project or paper, to submit a proposal to the Grad Committee. The proposal is usually submitted after coursework has been completed but there have been some difficulties with timing since students do not yet have a supervisor and no-one to push them to complete the proposal. To improve the situation, every student now is assigned an advisor who keeps them on track and helps ensure that the proposal gets submitted in a timely manner. As for PhD students, usually the proposal comes out of the comprehensive exam and the exam committee may morph into the thesis committee.

In a few disciplines, the proposal may involve creative work, as in Visual Arts, which describes their proposal requirements on their web site as follows:

> … the candidate will submit a copy of their research prospectus to members of their advisory committee as well as to the Graduate Chair and Graduate Assistant. The twenty-five page prospectus will outline the candidate's research program according to the guidelines established for the stream of the program they have selected… A bibliography organized to indicate which materials are pertinent to a candidate's larger research trajectory, and those that are specific to individual articles or exhibitions, must be provided… At the public event, the candidate will make a half hour oral presentation about their research/creative practice. Following the presentation, the candidate will take questions from members of the audience. (taken from http://www.uwo.ca/visarts/grad/gradphdregulations.html#ce)

Formal doctoral thesis proposals are not mandatory in all programs (e.g. Computer Science, Earth Sciences, Kinesiology, Sociology). This may be because the student is working on a piece of research related to his/her supervisor's grant, so the topic and the parameters of the research are already well understood by both the student and the supervisor. Alternately, the student may have prepared a shorter, less formal document on the intended research for the approval of his/her supervisor and advisory committee. In lieu of a formal proposal, students in Applied Mathematics must present on their thesis research annually at the departmental mini conference. Based partly on the talk the student has given, the advisory committee evaluates the student as part of the annual progress report to the GC.

There may be a presentation of the proposal, but sometimes this is done publicly (Civil/Environmental Engineering, Visual Arts) and sometimes before a committee, which could be the thesis advisory committee, a specific examining committee or a disciplinary area group (e.g. Biology, Business Administration, Epidemiology/Biostatistics, History, Law, Music, Political Science, Statistical and Actuarial Sciences, Women's Studies). In Philosophy, the proposal is defended before the advisory committee but then must also be circulated to, and approved by, the entire Graduate Affairs Committee. In some cases, there is no formal presentation, but only an oral defence before a committee, as in Classical Studies. The GC in Classical Studies explained that the defence is not intended to be confrontational, but rather a review of the proposal to highlight what the student needs to do to make the proposal stronger. Similarly, in Statistical and Actuarial Sciences, the proposal is defended before the supervisor, co-supervisor (if any) and Graduate Chair. It is organized like a mini thesis defence, with two rounds of questions. The goals are to see if the student has a suitable problem, to help the student focus the problem and to take corrective action as necessary.

For Master's programs, generally the requirements for both the thesis proposal and the thesis itself are understandably reduced from what is expected at the doctoral level. Students are working to a much tighter time frame, so proposals may be quite brief, as the examples from Biology in Appendix 12 and Political Science in Appendix 14 indicate. Students in Master's programs where a major project/paper is done in lieu of a thesis typically do not do a proposal for the paper/project. The guidelines for the Independent Research Project in the Master's program in Women's Studies (Appendix 15) are a good example of this.

However, for Master's students who are transferring into a PhD program, the research proposal may be quite a bit more rigorous. For example, in Medical Biophysics, PhD students who are direct entry or have a master's from another university must do a proposal defence at the end of Year 1. MSc students who want to transfer into the PhD have a reclassification meeting during which they present their work to date and their proposal. At the reclassification meeting, the student gives a presentation which includes the following:

- a recap of academic background, courses taken to date, grades earned and awards received
- a summary of research to date during the MSc and a tabulation of publications
- a research proposal of 2-3 studies to expand the research during the PhD.

The students then are questioned on the proposal and background material as at any proposal defence. There is extensive questioning by the entire committee on the proposal and background material. For example, if the student wants to use MRI to study lung mechanics, s/he will be questioned on the basic physics of MRI and will also be asked questions that go well beyond the basics, e.g., questions about pulse sequence programming. The committee then makes a decision whether the student can continue or needs to present and defend a revised proposal. The committee also decides if the student needs to take specific courses or if additional expertise is required on the advisory committee. The approval of the student's transfer/reclassification serves as the approval of the proposed research, so there is no need for a separate proposal defence.

Student Progress

The vast majority of graduate programs have relatively formal procedures in place to keep watch over the progress of their students. In most thesis programs, progression is monitored by regular mandatory meetings between the student and supervisor (and sometimes the members of the advisory committee as well).

Doctoral Progression Meetings

The primary goal of monitoring student progress is to ensure that difficulties with progress are caught early and that students complete their programs within the funding window or at least very close to it (e.g. within a few terms of the end of funding). In doctoral programs, this typically is accomplished through a mandatory meeting of the student with the supervisor and sometimes the supervisory committee as well, usually at a set time every year (e.g. Epidemiology/Biostatistics holds their meetings in June, Geography holds theirs in the fall, Psychology and Sociology hold theirs in the spring), twice a year (e.g. anatomy/Cell Biology, Business Administration, French, Physics/Astronomy, Physiology/Pharmacology) or even once every term (e.g. Information & Media Studies, Law).

In some programs, the progress meeting is used to track all elements of the student's progress, including courses, comprehensives, and thesis research and to note external milestones such as scholarships, conference attendance and publications. For instance, Health/Rehabilitation Sciences keeps a database with all elements of student performance, including conference presentations and publications. During the summer, a work bursary student enters all the data into the database so that it is kept current.

In most programs in the Faculties of Science and Schulich Medicine/Dentistry, the progress meetings focus primarily on the student's research. For example, in Physiology/Pharmacology, the Graduate Student Handbook is very clear about the purpose and format of the meetings:

> Students are required to prepare an oral presentation for the meeting that outlines research progress made since the previous meeting. After the opening comments by the GSR (Graduate Studies Representative), the student is invited to begin his/her presentation. This is not considered to be a

formal presentation, and therefore members of the Advisory Committee may interject frequently to discuss the experimental data or approaches as they are presented. This ongoing discussion and clarification makes the presentation seem more like a conversation that generates constructive input for the student and challenges the student to think more broadly about the research project and data interpretation. For example, discussions may focus on how to trouble-shoot a technical problem, or input may be requested regarding additional avenues of research related to the overall objective. In cases where progress is limited or where insurmountable concerns arise, the Committee may be of assistance in defining ways to improve progress or to refocus research objectives appropriately. Students and their Committees should act together to ensure that program goals for completion of the degree are met with a high level of performance. A typical Advisory Committee meeting should last about 1 hour but may extend up to 2 hours. At the completion of the meeting, notes taken by the GSR regarding progress and any challenges that have been encountered are reviewed and signed by all present. The goal of the meeting is that students should feel they have received clear direction regarding their progress and the next stage of their research project.

(taken from http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/physpharm/graduate/forms2/Grad_Handbook_2013.pdf)

Similarly, in Physics/Astronomy, the GC has developed explicit instructions as to the purpose and format of the meeting. The meeting should typically last no more than 30 minutes. The student is expected to do an oral presentation but not to use a large number of slides, as noted below:

Purpose of the Advisory Committee Meeting

For the student:

- IS: to inform the committee of progress since the last meeting
- IS: to solicit advice from the committee to improve the project.
- IS NOT: to avoid interaction by showing dozens of slides to “run out the clock”.

For the Advisory Committee

- IS: to provide guidance and advice when asked
- IS: to expect to be told the “big picture” and if not, to ask
- IS: to use questions to check the student’s grasp of important concepts
- IS: to help get a project that is not coming together back on track.
- IS NOT: to become an Examining Committee

(taken from http://www.physics.uwo.ca/graduate/pdf_files/PABgradGuide_30Jan2013.pdf)

In Anatomy/Cell Biology, each progress meeting differs slightly in terms of what is required, depending upon where the student is in the program. Accordingly, the goals and format for every meeting are laid out in the Student Handbook (see Appendix 16). Students are held accountable for their own progress: it is the student’s responsibility to schedule the supervisory committee meetings, to ensure the meetings are completed on time, to see that all members have copy of the Supervisory Committee Evaluation form with page one completed, and finally, for providing final copies of the completed and signed evaluation to all members of the committee.

In Mechanical/Materials Engineering, the student does an oral seminar presentation on his/her research, with the supervisor and advisory committee in attendance. Immediately after the presentation, a progress meeting is held where the annual performance report is completed. The student has already described his/her progress and timelines on the form, the supervisor adds comments, and then the advisory members add comments. Once the meeting is finished, the form is submitted to the GC who reviews it and also includes comments. The student is given a copy with all comments. The GC in Mechanical/Materials Engineering commented that this is a very effective process because it keeps students on track and pushes them to keep to their deadlines. Chemical/Biochemical Engineering also has a similar approach and has developed detailed guidelines for the progress meeting, shown in Appendix 17.

Nearly all programs use a standardized progress form to track progress (examples include Philosophy in Appendix 18 and Political Science in Appendix 19), to be completed by the student and supervisor, forwarded to the GC and sometimes signed by the GC as well. In situations where progress is fine, the form is filed in the student’s file. One GC commented that having the forms at hand, along with a spreadsheet prepared by the Graduate Assistant showing the milestones achieved by each student, is extremely helpful for developing a

broad overview of student progress, for scholarships and for specific issues that arise with particular students. There are only a few doctoral programs that do not have mandatory progression forms and in those cases, the student must do something else to indicate progress. For instance, in Biochemistry, for doctoral students there is no required report per se, but yearly meetings with the Advisory Committee are required and the student must do an annual seminar on his/her research.

In a few programs, there are slight differences as to how the progress meeting is handled. Some programs involve the Graduate Chair in the meeting, and the Graduate Committee may also be involved. For instance, in Classical Studies, the progression meeting takes place with the student, the GC and the supervisor/mentor all in attendance. The annual review is included as part of the program milestones, described as follows:

> At the beginning of Term 2 (and each subsequent January for continuing students), the Graduate Chair of the Department, (after consultation with the mentors and instructors) will meet with each student, along with that student's mentor, to discuss the student's progression. At this meeting, a progress report is signed by the student. If a student should fail to meet the Progression Requirements set out in this document, and/or if there is a concern, the Graduate Chair of the Department, in consultation with the Graduate Affairs Committee, will draw up a plan of work that the student will be expected to follow in order to make up the deficit within a prescribed period of time. Funding for Term 3 and all subsequent terms is dependent upon… progression (from http://www.uwo.ca/classics/graduate/PhD-program.html#progression_review)

One of the most notable differences is that in many of the Schulich Medicine/Dentistry programs, as mentioned previously, it is fairly common practice that a representative from the departmental Graduate Committee sits on each student's advisory committee. Generally the Graduate Committee reps are present for oversight purposes. So, for instance, in Neuroscience, it is the role of the Graduate Committee rep to call each progress meeting and to ensure that all procedures and paperwork have been completed.

Some programs have, or are considering, implementing stricter policies regarding progress meetings. In Medical Biophysics, there has been an issue with timely completion of progress meeting forms, so the GC instituted a mandatory seminar course that requires students to meet with the Advisory committee formally before presenting their work at the weekly seminar. The Advisory committee has to fill out a report at this meeting. Failure to submit a report results in a failing grade for the student and thus the compliance rate since this was implemented has been 100%. In Family Medicine, the challenge is that students are not located physically on campus, so they must meet with their supervisor and advisory committee via Skype or some other method. To ensure that students are keeping in touch regularly, the program is now requiring doctoral students to meet with their supervisors monthly.

In situations where there is a problem regarding progress, completion of the form generally prompts discussion at a meeting between the GC and the supervisor, and often with the student as well, and decisions are made about what remedial action the student must take to get on track. In some cases, such as in Physics/Astronomy, follow up meetings are required if progress is not satisfactory:

> "If the Advisory Committee decides a student's progress is unsatisfactory, they will specify what actions are required to remedy the situation and meet again within no more than 8 weeks after the initial meeting. A student whose progress is considered unsatisfactory by the Advisory Committee in 2 consecutive meetings will cause a review of the student's standing in the program by the Department. In this case, the Department's action could be as severe as dismissal from the program." (taken from http://www.physics.uwo.ca/graduate/pdf_files/PABgradGuide_30Jan2013.pdf).

In some programs (such as Business Administration, Information & Media Studies, Music), upon completion of the mandatory progression meeting, each student receives a letter indicating whether or not his/her progress is satisfactory or not. In Business Administration and in Music, the letters inform those students with unsatisfactory progress what the specific concerns are so that remedial action can be taken.

In addition to the regularly mandated meetings between supervisors and students, there is sometimes another level of monitoring such as:

- An annual meeting is held with the heads of each area in the Psychology program, where students who are having difficulty are discussed and recommendations are made re actions.
- For each thesis program at Information & Media Studies, there is a meeting once a term of the graduate faculty in each program, where students experiencing academic difficulties are identified and

appropriate remedial action is discussed. All thesis students are sent a progress letter signed by the GC, indicating either Satisfactory Progress or Unsatisfactory Progress, the latter also indicating what action the student must take to rectify the situation. Sometimes the GC also discusses the concerns and solutions with the student.

- In Sociology, during the summer, the GC meets with all incoming and current students (typically about 60-65 students). For incoming students, this meeting is used to talk about the area of the program in which they may be interested and to choose their courses, but for ongoing students, the meeting enables them to give the GC an overview of how they are doing. Although this is quite a labour-intensive process, the GC felt that it was extremely worthwhile for all concerned and sometimes catches issues that are likely to arise later.
- A similar process occurs in French, where all current students meet once a year with either the GC or another faculty member designated to help with this task. During the meeting, the student's file is reviewed to ensure everything is up to date, and any problems are discussed. The GC felt these meetings were very good and allowed students a safe space in which to vent if need be.

Progression Monitoring of Year X Students

In addition to doctoral students within the funding period, many GCs expressed concerns over the progression of Year X (i.e. beyond funding) students. One GC in Science remarked that in his discipline, incoming students did not have the depth of knowledge in the discipline that they once had, so at the Master's level and even the doctoral level, more time is required to get them up to speed before they can do original research. Given that, to produce the quality of work that is expected for a thesis, it would not be unusual for a doctoral student to take six years to complete and so the GC felt that the emphasis on getting students completed within four years was misplaced in his discipline. Another GC wondered how assertive he could actually be with Year X students to get them to complete – what sort of measures could be taken that did not infringe upon the student's rights? Some GCs related having very difficult conversations with Year X students who were not making sufficient progress, in some cases having to convince the student to withdraw. Other GCs mentioned that they try to help Year X students by giving them a certain amount of teaching to tide them over, the thinking being that if Year X students have to worry too much about finances, they may never complete. Overall, there is an evident level of concern across programs over the progress of Year X students.

One of the most formal approaches to getting Year X students to complete is in Engineering. In Mechanical/Materials Engineering, for instance, once the funding period has finished, a student is given one term's grace to complete the thesis. If completion is not achieved within the grace period, then a letter is sent, signed by the GC and copied to the supervisor, notifying the student that s/he must apply for an extension of registration. The extension is not automatically granted – the student must provide an acceptable justification why the extension is needed. As a result, most students complete the thesis within 1-2 terms of the end of funding.

In Philosophy, Year X students are expected to complete an annual report that includes specific deadlines for progress. If the deadlines are not reasonable, the student must meet with the GC to discuss the lack of progress and to devise a strategy for moving things along. If deadlines are not met, the student must meet again with the GC. Similarly in Kinesiology, Year X students meet regularly with the GC to define goals for progress, discuss timelines and resolve any issues preventing progress.

Master's Student Progression

Many GCs indicated that it is easier to keep Master's students on track than doctoral students. This is because a) Master's students have a shorter program with fewer hoops to jump through so potentially fewer delays, or b) the Master's program is laid out in such a stepwise fashion (such as in course-only programs) that it is glaringly obvious if a student is not meeting the milestones. In thesis programs, Master's students are mandated to have regular meetings with their supervisors, just as doctoral students. For instance, in Mechanical/Materials Engineering, a MESc student meets with his/her advisory committee in the third term, and then again before submission of the thesis, just to ensure everything is in order.

In thesis programs in Schulich Medicine/Dentistry and in Science, it is very important for Master's students to have mandatory progression meetings, because many of them will want to transfer into the PhD program so their progress has to be monitored right from the outset. In all cases, the student's proposed research at the master's level must be evaluated and judged to be sufficiently strong and worthy of doctoral study before a

transfer is approved. In programs where there are PhD students who have entered directly or already have a completed master's degree, and PhD students who have transferred part way through the master's degree, there are usually two set of regulations regarding course completion and milestones to be achieved (see Anatomy/Cell Biology in Appendix 1).

In coursework and professional master's programs where there are no mandatory meetings of the student with an advisor, it may be up to the course instructors to alert the GC if a student is having persistent academic difficulties. One GC noted that it is important to be vigilant about student progress in these types of programs, especially in the first semester. Another GC mentioned that she regularly interacts with course instructors just to be sure there are no students falling through the cracks. Often student progress is discussed at general faculty meetings. Some examples:

- In Communication Sciences and Disorders, Kinesiology, and Occupational Therapy, student progress is reviewed at regular meetings of the entire graduate faculty, where the discussion primarily focuses on those students having progression difficulties.
- In the professional programs at Information & Media Studies (Master's in Journalism and LIS), faculty in Journalism and Library/Information Science meet once a term to discuss students experiencing academic difficulty. In some cases, the GC is directed to speak with the student, or send a letter indicating the concerns and suggesting remedial action.
- The Ivey MBA program has implemented a variety of methods for monitoring student progress. The MBA class is divided into two sections, each with a faculty member as the Section Head. At the beginning of the program, the Section Head talks to students about how to participate in class and resolves any academic issues that students might have. Students cannot miss more than 25% of class time; this is very strictly enforced. Professors take attendance and a student is not there, s/he gets zero for participation. Faculty members in each Section hold progress meetings at three weeks into the course module, where they discuss everyone in program, looking out for students who are disengaged. If a student is having problems, his/her faculty advisor is notified, who then has meeting with the student. All faculty give feedback to students in each course halfway through. As well, Faculty members in each Section hold a meeting at the end of module 1. This results in a grades report whereby the student gets a letter saying how s/he is doing. The grade report breaks down the grades by Contribution grade, Written grade and Composite grade so the student has a very clear idea of where s/he stands. During Module 2, another Section meeting is held to re-evaluate how students are doing, especially those flagged earlier. If a student fails after a module is complete, s/he can appeal and is allowed to stay in class until the decision is made.

Fostering a Stimulating Intellectual and Collegial Environment

Offering great programs is certainly a cornerstone of having a stimulating intellectual environment, but most programs recognize that this alone is not enough to keep students engaged, interacting and enthusiastic. Accordingly, programs have a wide range of strategies to create a feeling of academic excitement for both graduate students and faculty and to encourage interaction and discussion. Common strategies include:

- a regular departmental speaker/colloquium series with internal and/or external speakers (such as regular Friday afternoon speaker series in Geography, Earth Sciences and Music)
- Brown Bag lunch series, at which faculty or students give talks (Information & Media Studies)
- a weekly seminar series where faculty, students and external speakers can present. Student presentations are judged and the winner receives a $300 prize. As well, any student attending at least 80% of the seminars gets $300 towards conference attendance. Students appreciate these prizes and enthusiasm for the series is high (Civil and Environmental Engineering)
- an academic book/reading group (Information & Media Studies)
- a variety of journal clubs on various topics, where students read and discuss research papers. Participation in one club can be for credit, other participation is voluntary (Microbiology/Immunology)
- a named seminar or lecture series (such as the McCaffrey Graduate seminar series in History, the Clissold Lecture in Journalism, the Maude Menon Lecture in Biochemistry or the Alan C. Burton lecture in Medical Biophysics)
- colloquia and other events associated with funded Chairs (such as the Rogers Chair at Information & Media Studies)

- an annual graduate student conference (Anthropology, Health/Rehabilitation Sciences, Microbiology/Immunology, Women's Studies).
- an annual graduate student research day/forum (Biology, Information & Media Studies LIS PhD, Nursing, Physiology/Pharmacology)
- annual graduate conference with professional or industry involvement. In Electrical/Computer Engineering, the Graduate Symposium is a major event, held over 2-3 days in May or June. Both MESc and PhD students present as well as some invited speakers. External industry professionals are brought in to listen and to judge papers. Prizes of $150 are given to the best papers in a variety of different categories. Students are given lunch. Similarly, in Chemical/Biochem Engineering, an annual research day is held in Sarnia, with participants from local industries. Again, prizes of $300 to $500 are given for the best papers in different categories, judged by industry professionals.
- every term, a graduate symposium is held in a different location, with students presenting who are not physically located at that site. This ensures that students who are spread out across different research venues in London get to hear about each other's work (Biochemistry)
- research-related events associated with a departmental Research Centre (Political Science, Sociology) or a Research Institute (as in Philosophy)
- events with visiting scholars and professors (such as the Jean Tague Sutcliffe Visiting Scholar at Information & Media Studies)
- non-credit research seminars (some programs requiring students to attend)
- for-credit seminar series, where graduate students must present on their research. In Medical Biophysics, there is a weekly seminar series and students have to present every year. There are three students presenting each week for 10 minutes each plus 5 minutes for Q&A. First year students are scheduled near the end of the year so they have more to talk about. There is good interaction at the seminar series and great discussion among the students and faculty present. The series really fosters a sense of community.
- Faculty-wide thesis competition (Schulich Medicine/Dentistry)
- a "Welcome to the Profession" ceremony in the fall, attended by incoming students and the clinical community. This helps the students develop a sense of professional identity and shared values (Occupational Therapy)
- occasional field trips with students (Film Studies, Journalism)
- providing international opportunities for student placements (Journalism, Speech Language Pathology)
- providing international opportunities as part of coursework (Occupational Therapy, Ivey MBA)

It is quite common that at some point in their programs, thesis students are required to present their research, either in a preliminary way or research already underway. These presentations could be part of a for-credit seminar course, or a mandatory but non-credit seminar series. In some cases, only doctoral students are required to present, but in other cases, master's students must also present. The presentations are a means to give students more experience presenting, but also to foster greater academic discussion among graduate students and faculty. English has a unique variation as part of their departmental seminar series. If a faculty member and a student are working on a similar topic, each gives a 20 minute presentation during the same seminar, followed by discussion of the two different perspectives on the topic. Usually two of these special seminars are held per year, and they generate lively discussion and debate.

Facilitating a strong and positive social environment is perhaps a little more difficult, because it depends partly on what physical facilities (i.e. common social spaces) are available to promote socializing and cohesion. More than one GC mentioned that their units had tried to facilitate more socializing but with limited success and that "forced socializing" never works. The socializing aspect can be even more difficult in programs where students are spread out in research locations across the city, such as in Anatomy/Cell Biology, Neuroscience and other Schulich Medicine/Dentistry programs. Nonetheless, many programs do what they can to foster a collegial social environment including:

- departmental coffee hour or café every week
- student-organized departmental tea every week for faculty, staff and students, where home baked goodies are brought in
- "muffin" day where faculty, staff and/or students bring in home-baked goods
- coffee and cookies/snacks provided at a weekly speaker or seminar series
- take visiting speakers to dinner and department pays for two students to attend

- mid-term morale booster party at the Chair or Grad Chair's home
- regular Friday afternoon gatherings of faculty and students at the Grad Club
- regular gathering of students and faculty at a downtown pub. The program buys chicken wings. Momentum is building and the socializing increases cohesiveness.
- celebrations of various kinds (thesis defences, faculty teaching awards, new faculty appointments, scholarship and grant awards etc.). One GC stated that her department deliberately encouraged a culture of "celebrating successes".
- parties at a faculty member's home a couple of times per term
- Christmas party for graduate students and faculty
- special Convocation events.

The last item above, Convocation, was not a topic of discussion in most interviews. However, in a few cases, notable Convocation events were mentioned. For example, in Kinesiology, a semi-formal event is held for graduating thesis students at both the Spring and Fall Convocations. Students must register for the event, which occurs on the same day as the official Convocation. At the event, students and their families attend, in semi-formal attire and lunch is provided along with wine and beer. The main feature of the event is that each graduate is formally presented on stage by his or her supervisor, who gives an overview of the graduate and his/her work. The students also are given a chance to talk about their experiences. The event is very popular with both students and their families and gives everyone a chance to hear about the diverse research of the graduating class.

A similar event is held in the Journalism program of Information & Media Studies. Graduating students from all programs and their guests are invited to a lunch in the North Campus Building. However, the Journalism students are also invited to a special awards presentation, where all of the in-program awards for outstanding achievements in various categories are presented. Secrecy prevails and students have no idea who is going to receive awards so there is an air of anticipation before the event. As the awards are given out, each presenter gives a little background as to the nature of the award and recognizes the award donors. The awards ceremony is always a Convocation highlight for the Journalism students and their families.

The Ivey MBA program also has developed an ongoing ring tradition for its graduating students. At a closed ceremony of students with the Dean, the Dean reads a pledge and each student receives an Ivey ring. Donations for the rings are gathered from alumni, many of whom would also have participated in the ring ceremony so it is a great way to instill the importance of alumni contributions to the graduating class.

In terms of students, one of the most important factors in promoting a strong social environment seems to be the vibrancy of the program's graduate student association. Some graduate student associations are remarkably active and provide a creative range of opportunities for social interaction and peer support. One of the best examples of a vibrant student association is the Kinesiology Graduate Board, affectionately known as the KGB. The KGB is very active in all aspects of the school, organizing a myriad of sport and social events, such as volleyball, dodgeball, SuperBowl chili parties, the Kin Winter Special Games, and the Kin Formal. They also design and sell Kin clothing and a cookbook. The KGB has a central bulletin board where a calendar displays an impressive roster of events occurring each month. As well, every month, several graduate students are featured, showing their pictures and giving biographical sketches. A rep from the KGB sits on the Kinesiology Graduate Activities Committee, and as well, the KGB basically organizes and runs the Orientation for incoming students. There are many other examples of strong graduate student associations, such as in Anatomy/Cell Biology, Biology, Earth Sciences, Library and Information Science, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Microbiology/Immunology, Physiology/Pharmacology and Sociology to mention a few.

Professional Development

There is a large amount of professional development (PD) occurring in programs, some of it being quite formally organized (as, for example, in English, History) and some being more informal and spontaneous.

PD in Thesis Programs

In thesis programs, quite a lot of the professional development that occurs is geared towards doctoral students, but professional development for master's students is also evident. Topics included in professional development sessions include how to:

- be a better TA
- grade student work
- prepare a CV or resume
- understand the job market
- write scholarship/grant applications
- prepare ethics protocols
- prepare for position interviews (sometimes with mock interviews)
- use archival resources
- work with specific research tools
- conduct interviews with research participants
- prepare conference papers/talks
- put together a conference panel
- be a conference panelist
- write an article for publication
- write an abstract for an article
- understand scholarly journal expectations and editorial practices
- select a journal and get published
- balance research, teaching and service in your first faculty position.

The three most common ways that professional development is handled are

i) by having a series of workshops on topics like those noted above,

ii) by embedding professional development into the course structure,

iii) by embedding professional development into a lab-based research culture.

With respect to the workshop approach, English has perhaps the most well developed program (see Appendix 20) with regular, well-advertised workshops on a wide range of topics such as:

- graduate funding
- vetting funding proposals
- preparing for qualifying examinations
- academic job dossiers
- conference papers and presentations
- dissertation writing
- publishing
- finding part-time teaching
- applying for postdoctoral fellowships

Other disciplines also use the workshop approach (such as Anthropology, Health/Rehabilitation Sciences, Political Science, Women's Studies etc.). Some programs have only a few workshops per year, while others have regular workshops throughout the fall and winter terms. Faculty may be directly involved in some of the workshop presentations. For instance, in Anthropology, a scholarship writing workshop is combined with faculty feedback so that students are given immediate feedback on their applications. As another example, workshops on how to prepare for a job interview sometimes take the form of a mock interview, with faculty members conducting the interview. As well, faculty members sometimes prepare and deliver a workshop themselves. Finally, it was also mentioned by several GCs that they encourage their students to take professional development workshops offered through the Teaching Support Centre, such as preparing course outlines as one example.

The second way that professional development is often handled is to embed it into courses. History makes professional development part of the recommended Research Methods course, where students work on developing a conference paper throughout the course and then present it at the end. Medical Biophysics has a required year-long Scientific Communication course which covers CV preparation, scholarship applications, how to do a good oral presentation, grammar and brevity, statistics and visualization, writing abstracts, poster essentials etc. etc. Similarly, Physiology/Pharmacology has a required Communications and Critical Thinking course for all graduate students, as well as a mandatory Grant Proposal course for doctoral students.

Mandatory seminar courses are a common way to build professional development into the curriculum. The Classical Studies Proseminar series is described as

> **Proseminars:** Every two weeks there will normally be a one-hour proseminar for all students. The proseminars are designed to help students develop skills for a career inside or outside academia. Topics will vary from year to year, but include: writing an abstract; writing a grant proposal; applications to PhD programs; working with research tools (TLL/TLG); textual criticism; introduction to resources in ancillary disciplines; developing research skills. There will be no examination, but students are required to attend all the proseminars that are applicable to their career path. (from http://www.uwo.ca/classics/graduate/PhD-program.html)

History also holds regular Professional Development Seminars, described on their web site as follows:

> Post-graduate study focuses on mastering a subject of study, often quite narrowly defined. But an academic's job is multifaceted, including lecturing to large classes, leading small group discussions, marking assignments, giving conference papers, publishing articles and books, and applying for grants and jobs. It is often the case that graduate students learn about these things implicitly or through trial and error. There are other ways to learn. The Professional Development Seminar examines different parts of the scholarly profession. Several members of the department lead individual seminars, thus bringing a variety of experiences and perspectives to bear and creating a more extensive and diverse network between students and faculty.
>
> (from http://history.uwo.ca/graduate_handbook/professional_development.html)

An interesting approach to seminar series as a form of professional development is taken by Neuroscience. All grad students must attend the seminars held on Tuesday mornings where students present their research (2 presentations per hour). One of the goals of the seminar is to push the students hard to learn how to communicate to an audience. To support this, the seminar has a TA whose job it is to ensure the presentations are well written and structured. Presenting students must send the TA their presentations ahead of time and the TA makes suggestions for improvement. Students and faculty in attendance mark the presentations. The seminar is compulsory right to the end of the PhD so students improve greatly over their time in the program.

The third way that professional development occurs is to make it part of a lab-based research culture. This approach is most evident in Schulich Medicine/Dentistry and in Science programs. Students are mentored by their supervisor and more senior students in the lab and there are generally expectations that students will be working on publications jointly with their supervisor and will be giving conference presentations or posters throughout the program. These expectations are reinforced by requirements that students must present their ongoing research in weekly or biweekly seminar courses as noted above. In some programs, students must present their research every year while in the program. As well, some programs have requirements such as students must attend at least one conference a year. To reinforce exactly what transferrable skills students are learning in their program, Biochemistry includes a statement on its web site:

Graduate work in Biochemistry provides students with important research and teaching skills for future careers. Such skills include the following:

- technical expertise
- critical analysis and problem solving
- teamwork
- effective communication (speaking and writing)
- time and project management
- organization
- leadership
- independence
- creativity

(taken from http://www.biochem.uwo.ca/grad/grad.html)

Beyond the three approaches noted above, professional development in thesis programs occurs in many other ways. A few examples include:

- in Women's Studies, there is an optional PhD scholarly practicum, where students undertake a research-related project that is community-oriented and write a professional outcomes report for the agency involved
- mock position interviews for individual students and/or presenting upcoming job talks in front of faculty members (e.g. Anthropology, PhD in Business Administration, Economics, Philosophy, Visual Arts)
- mentoring outside of the thesis supervisory role (such as a faculty member and student who work together to write and present a conference paper)
- in Film Studies, students assist Museum London with the summer film series, thus giving them a better understanding of arts programming.
- in French, to get conference funding, a student must present his/her paper and have it approved at an open departmental meeting. This is helpful for the student to receive feedback but also guarantees that s/he will represent the department well.
- in Economics and in Philosophy, students present their job talks with faculty members in attendance.

PD in Non-Thesis Programs

In the professionally oriented Master's programs, PD also takes place in courses and workshops, but in addition, PD occurs through professional or clinical placements and through direct interaction with external working professionals.

With respect to courses, every professionally oriented program has one or more courses oriented to fostering a better understanding of the professional milieu that students will enter upon graduation and/or giving them specific skills that they will need to practice. However, this is often done quite differently than in thesis-based courses. An example cited previously is the *Professional Practice* courses in Communication Sciences and Disorders, but these are not the only examples by any means. In the Master of Nursing program, students must take a course entitled *Roles and Responsibilities*, described as follows:

> Compare and contrast advanced practice nursing and related frameworks to develop, integrate, sustain, and evaluate the role of the nurse practitioner within primary health care. Critically analyze and develop strategies to implement advanced practice nursing competencies (research, leadership, collaboration, and health and social policy. (taken from http://www.uwo.ca/fhs/nursing/Grad/mn/course_descriptions.html).

Similarly, in the MLIS program, PD is frequently incorporated into academic courses. For example, the course *Public Librarianship in the Community* examines the place and role of the public library within society, but it also exposes students to professional development. For instance, students are required to attend a public library board meeting and report on what was accomplished at the meeting and how it was accomplished. During the course, guest professionals come in as speakers to describe the specific elements of their work and the challenges they face. Courses like these blur the distinction between purely PD and a theoretically-oriented academic framework. Whether or not such courses are explicitly labeled as professional development, they nevertheless do provide the student with valuable insights into the ways in which professionals practice in the workplace and help them understand the broader scope of their specific professional milieu in Canada.

In addition to courses that embed PD within them, professionally oriented programs also have specific workshops for professional development. For instance, in the MLIS program, a resume workshop is held for students, and they may also approach the Manager of Graduate Student Services for a one-on-one session to go over their resumes and improve them. The Public Health program has a Career Development Coordinator who helps students with resumes, career options, job postings etc. She also goes into classes to speak about resumes, Linked In and how to network. Other programs also noted that they do workshops on job searches, resume preparation, cover letters, tips on job interviews, mock interviews etc.

Public History has a mandatory regular professional development series, intermixing workshops with external speakers. Topics during the past year included

- networking and social media
- historical consulting
- grant writing
- dramatizing history
- First Nations and museums

For the complete list, see
http://www.history.uwo.ca/public_history/about_our_program/development_series.html

In the Ivey MBA program, professional or career development is an ongoing theme. During the early part of the program, there are numerous career management lunch hour sessions such as resume writing, networking, how to accept or decline an offer, library research etc. Also during Module 1 courses, there are four career management classes to prepare students for interviews. In addition, Ivey's Career Management advisors meet with each student 3 or 4 times to get them ready for interviews and the job search process. As well, the Career Management staff work with companies to encourage them to come and interview. They also solicit feedback on how well students are doing in their interviews so that a student who has not done well can be coached to improve.

Finally, interaction with working professionals is an integral part of ongoing professional development**.** One common way this is done is through various sorts of internships and placements. In these placements, students not only practice the fundamentals of their professions but also are supervised and mentored by working professionals. Some examples include:

- Journalism students are placed in a four to six week internship with a media organization in their final term
- the MLIS program has both a co-op work study placement option and job shadowing opportunities
- Public History students undertake a mandatory summer placement in an organization with a public history focus
- Audiology, Occupational Therapy and Speech Language Pathology programs have a series of clinical placements/fieldwork, both in-house and external
- Public Health students go on a 10 week unpaid placement (2/3 in Canada and 1/3 abroad) with multiple agencies and a variety of public health-related projects.

Visiting practitioners also frequently contribute to professional development. A case in point is a mentoring program sponsored by the Ontario Library Association whereby 2-3 working professional librarians come to Information & Media Studies for a day to do mock job interviews with graduating MLIS students. This particular form of PD has been a huge success and the volunteer interviewers are always swamped with student requests to participate in the mock interviews.

Similarly, in Occupational Therapy, students meet regularly in groups of approximately eight with a community clinician mentor. The interaction with the mentor helps the students to develop a sense of professional identity. Students discuss all manner of professional issues with the mentor, and also prepare a professional portfolio, which is handed in and assessed for credit at the end of the program.

Doctoral Student Teaching

It would be fair to say that most GCs expressed reluctance to have their doctoral students do much teaching as limited duties instructors lest this affect their progress through the program. At the same time, some of these GCs wondered if they were doing enough to prepare their doctoral students for a career that involved developing courses and independent classroom teaching. The general practice seems to be that students past their funding are free to apply for limited duties teaching positions, but students within their funding are discouraged from doing so. In some departments, such as French, even Year X students are not typically hired for Limited Duties teaching.

This is certainly not true in all cases, however. Some programs allow their doctoral students to teach, to give them independent teaching experience and thus make them more well-rounded and competitive. As noted under the Comprehensive Exams section, the comps in Women's Studies require the student to develop two course outlines, with accompanying pedagogical analysis and statements. Having already developed their course outlines, students in third or fourth year may apply to teach one of these courses and usually one or two will be hired to do so. This makes the comprehensive exam perhaps less of an obstacle and more of an opportunity. Along these same lines, in Visual Arts, there is a mentoring approach to teaching. In first year, a doctoral student usually works as a TA. In second year, s/he may be given an independent teaching assignment with a supervisor. Also in second year, there is a mandatory seminar course, with a 4 week session on pedagogy, lesson planning, course design etc. By third year, students may design and teach their own course if they wish to and if it fits within the needs of the department.

In Business Administration, doctoral students may teach in the undergraduate BMOS program. The only stipulation is that they cannot teach while doing coursework. Doctoral students in Law are able to instruct MSL (Master's of Studies in Law) students, most of whom have no law background. Accordingly, the doctoral students are able to instruct on legal basics, such as how to prepare a case brief.

In Information & Media Studies, students in the various doctoral programs (LIS, Media Studies, Popular Music and Culture) are also given opportunities to teach as limited duties instructors. Normally the student must have completed his/her proposal and have permission of his/her supervisor to apply for limited duties positions. While there is no guarantee that a student will be hired for a LD teaching position, many are. Some doctoral students at Information & Media Studies have opportunities to teach more than one course, thus building up their teaching portfolios and giving them ready-to-go courses to teach elsewhere. Informal feedback from doctoral students at Information & Media Studies confirms that having independent teaching experience can make a big difference in terms of applying for faculty positions, being shortlisted and ultimately being hired.

Student Space

There was agreement among all the GCs interviewed that student space was a concern, but there were differing practices regarding how best to accommodate the students' needs. In professional programs, it is not usual practice to assign office space to students, but in most of these programs, students do have access to facilities such as a student lounge/kitchen, computer labs, and sometimes lockers in which to store their belongings etc. Examples here include Library and Information Science and Journalism students at Information & Media Studies, Communication Sciences/Disorders and Occupational Therapy students in Health Science and MBA students at Ivey.

With respect to thesis-based programs, however, it was commonly recognized that both MA and PhD students who are within the funding window need some shared office space or at least a desk/carrel (even though some GCs observed that with the ubiquity of laptops, the absolute need for designated desk space may decline over time). All of the thesis-based programs included in this project do provide office space for their students, but how this is accomplished differs greatly.

In thesis-based programs where the supervisor does not have a lab, GCs expressed the ideal of having graduate students in shared offices, intermixed among the faculty offices (as is the case in Economics, Women's Studies, Political Science, and Visual Arts, to name a few). As many GCs stated, having graduate students in shared offices that are intermixed with faculty offices promotes collegiality and casual conversation in hallways etc. and tends to create a feeling of cohesion within the program. However, more often than not, there is a shortage of offices with the result that the smaller shared offices are given only to doctoral students, and MA students have a carrel/desk in a large common room, or if office space is in very short supply, both PhD and MA students may be accommodated in large rooms with carrels. In one program, office space was in such short supply that only students who were working as TAs could be given office space.

Office space for students is often not especially pleasant, particularly the large shared rooms with rows of carrels (described by one GC as "not a joyous space"). One program has office space for students in a large room in the basement with little natural light, so students often prefer to use locked carrels in the library. In some units, office spaces for graduate students are separated from the faculty offices (such as in the case of Information & Media Studies where graduate students share offices and large rooms in another building) or are spread over a number of different buildings, such as is the case in Anatomy/Cell Biology, Kinesiology, Neuroscience, Psychology, and Physiology/Pharmacology. In such situations, the ideal of having student office space intermixed with faculty space is unattainable and the concern then becomes one of simply having enough space at all, especially as graduate programs grow. Even programs in relatively recently renovated buildings such as Lawson Hall indicated that they are already short on space for their students.

Students with supervisors who have a lab may be more assured of having a space in the lab where they can work in the company of faculty and other students who are involved in the same areas of research. In some cases (such as in certain departments in Engineering), even though students are assigned carrels in a larger shared room, they much prefer to work in their supervisor's lab. In other cases, students who have access to space in a lab are not assigned any other office space. Some GCs who themselves have labs remarked that having their students working in their labs created a sense of solidarity among the students, and since both MA and PhD students work in the same lab, it encourages mentoring as the junior students can see what the more advanced students are doing. The only drawback, according to the observations of one GC, is that students can become isolated in a particular lab and may not intermingle with other graduate students in the

department working in different labs or in different research areas. So, in his opinion, having students gravitate towards space in their supervisor's lab is not always necessarily optimal either.

Placement and Tracking

Placement

Placement activities start by making students aware of what career possibilities exist for them upon graduation. Some programs make it a point to include possible career paths on their web sites, e.g. Biochemistry. In many thesis programs, the assumption has been that students in Master's degrees will go on into the PhD and hence into academia so there is not a lot of emphasis on other career paths. However, using the Master's primarily as a route into the PhD is no longer true in many disciplines and even if it were, it is increasingly difficult to achieve a tenure-track position. Anatomy/Cell Biology is very aware of this: only about 50% of their doctoral graduates go into academic settings. Accordingly, the department undertook an initiative to provide more information on non-academic careers. They developed a workshop offered in January with speakers from various industries, and panel discussions on career options. The department also completed a survey of their students to see how aware they were of other career paths, as well as a survey of industry to see how well prepared graduates were, and what hard and soft skills employers wanted to see. The department is also working with Schulich to develop a Faculty-wide course on non-academic job options and skill transferability.

In terms of support for placement, most programs do not have dedicated placement officers for their students, but there are notable exceptions, namely Philosophy, English, the Ivey Business School and Law.

In Philosophy and English, a faculty member is given course release to work with students (primarily doctoral) re placement. Since the Placement officers in both disciplines work similarly, Philosophy will be used here as the example of what is done routinely to assist students.

In North American Philosophy departments, it is standard to have a placement officer. This is because certain key online reports which publicize and rate Philosophy programs include placement activities as one of the criteria for inclusion. Accordingly, Philosophy has placement information on its website, including a list of graduates and where they have taken positions, going back over a decade. Also on the website are the CVs and personal statements of current graduates who are seeking faculty positions. Interestingly, Philosophy is the only department among those examined which also provides PhD attrition rates as part of the publicly available information on the website (see http://www.uwo.ca/philosophy/graduate/attrition.html).

The Graduate Placement Officer in Philosophy (who receives .5 course release) works both with students early on in the doctoral program, and those who are graduating. For the newer students, the Placement officer gives presentations on CV development, getting published etc. For some students, the heavy emphasis on publications from the get-go is a shock so they need encouragement to be thinking about this early.

For students who are graduating, the Placement officer primarily works with them one on one. Job announcements in Philosophy come out in mid October, so once the advertisements are out, the Placement officer sends an email to all doctoral students to prepare their dossiers. Dossiers include a CV, cover letter, writing sample and teaching dossier, which includes sample syllabi, teaching evaluations and often a letter from the undergraduate chair. The Placement officer is available to help students with any and all aspects of dossier preparation. Dossiers are submitted to Interfolio, a private company that uploads and stores a student's dossier centrally so that it can be sent electronically to many different advertised positions. Philosophy gives each student $100 to set up their Interfolio accounts.

After the dossiers are ready, the Placement officer begins preparing students for the major hiring conference, which is held in late December. To help students get ready, there are two rounds of mock interviews held. In the first round, students interview each other. In the second round, faculty members do the mock interviews. The Placement officer goes to the conference to mentor the students who are interviewing there, since it can be a very intimidating and intense experience. After the hiring conference, students who receive invitations to interview at specific universities are coached further by having them do their job talks or teaching demonstrations in front of faculty for critique and suggestions. The field is very competitive so graduating students need to be well prepared to be successful.

At the Ivey Business School, there are 14 Career Development officers, whose job it is to assist students with placements. As noted previously, in the MBA program, the Career Development staff are involved with the student right from the time of application, getting to know his or her goals and strategizing about what might be a good placement upon graduation. There is a lot of one-to-one support and coaching for students regarding placement, including preparation for job interviews and assisting with all elements of the job search. In the PhD program, placement is also a major concern, because placing a student as a faculty member in a Top 50 business school makes a huge difference to both the Ivey doctoral and MBA programs in terms of future admissions, reputation etc.

The Faculty of Law has a Career and Professional Development office. Although the office primarily assists students graduating from the undergraduate JD program, it also helps graduate students who want to return to practice after completing their graduate degrees. The CPD office provides a range of professional development workshops as well as facilitates on-campus job interviews and maintains a large database of legal employment opportunities. Because of the CPD office, the Faculty of Law can claim that "Western Law's graduate placement rate is consistently among the best, if not the best, in Canada". (from http://www.law.uwo.ca/support_services/career_and_professional_development/index.html)

Some programs which do not have a designated placement officer still do undertake placement activities. For instance, in Economics, the job market consists of both tenure-track faculty positions as well as positions within the public and private sector, such as banks, government finance departments etc. By November each year, the doctoral students who are nearing graduation have sent out their files to prospective employers. To help them prepare, they must do their job-talk presentations in front of the entire faculty in December. This enables the faculty to see students working in different areas, who are then ranked. The rankings help the faculty members decide who to "push" in their references etc. As the Grad Director explained, this process results in a very "unified approach to placement", which for this particular program, has been very successful. As in Philosophy, the Economics program publicizes its placements on the web site and also provides profiles of graduating students for employers to consider (see http://economics.uwo.ca/grad/phdjobcandidates.asp).

Placement Tracking

Whether programs undertake placement activities or not, they all face the same question, which is: Where do their graduate students end up after their degrees are completed? In response to that question, some programs have a very good idea and others, not as much.

The GCs in some programs admitted that they do not do a very good job at placement follow-up and only have a very general sense of where their graduate students are taking up positions. This is the result of a number of factors, including a lack of human and other resources to do ongoing tracking, the size of the graduating class which in some professional programs can be quite large, and the difficulty in collecting and maintaining current email and postal addresses, particularly with international students. Placement tracking is notoriously difficult at the best of times, requiring a lot of diligence and staff time, particularly if graduates are asked about their careers at different points in time (one year out, three years out, ten years out etc.). Most programs do not have the capacity to do such extended follow up, so there may be only one placement survey, if any.

Nonetheless, some programs do have a very good idea of where their graduates are being placed and how they are doing in their positions. In thesis-based programs, often the supervisor is very aware of where his/her students have taken positions. During the course of my discussions with GCs, it became quite obvious that faculty whose research grants were funded by NSERC and CIHR generally had a very good handle on where both former Master's and doctoral students are working, largely because the grant forms require a list of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQPs) from the past 6-7 years. This means that supervisors need to keep in regular contact with their former students to be able to include them as HQPs. Thus one method of tracking placement is by using information already generated for grant applications and/or by asking supervisors, providing a rather straightforward way to compile basic information showing in which areas students are working, and what percentage work in those areas. In fact, the GC in Earth Sciences had just recently compiled such a table showing their placements, which he had presented at a departmental retreat for discussion and agreed to allow me to include in this report (see Appendix 21).

Professional programs are more likely to have a formal placement survey. Audiology, Occupational Therapy, Library and Information Science and Speech Language Pathology all have placement surveys. In particular, Occupational Therapy has had great success with its placement survey, having a relatively good response rate (perhaps due to the provision of Tim Horton's gift cards) and finding that over 90% of respondents are

working in the profession. On the other hand, some programs which have an ongoing placement survey (such as the MLIS program) sometimes find that the response rate is lower than they had hoped for, thus the picture of both the graduates who are working in the field and those who are not is not as accurate as it could be.

Doing Well and Some Challenges

Doing Well

Many exemplary practices already have been noted throughout this document but in most of the discussions I had, the GC or Program Director indicated what it was that they felt they did especially well or were proud of in their graduate program(s). In particular, numerous GCs noted the quality of supervision/mentoring of students, the strong collegial culture of their unit, and a proactive approach to monitoring student progress. Having a faculty complement with a strong research focus and reputation was also mentioned repeatedly. The range of responses included:

Academics

- have maintained high academic standards for admission
- strong focus on, and incorporation of, interdisciplinarity
- very multidisciplinary department with diverse fields so students have more exposure to other areas of the discipline than typical – gives a broader perspective to their education
- students learn to value colleagues in other areas of the discipline
- a very strong department with a high number of graduate students per faculty member
- a strong faculty complement with an international research presence and reputation
- the high quality of faculty mentoring of students: a culture of mentoring (noted for both thesis and professional programs)
- the high quality of thesis supervision
- a strength is the great diversity of faculty – health economists, community based, clinical, population health
- students are very polished and leave with a lot of publications
- students do well – the program tries hard to make them good scientists
- a good record of external student scholarships: students are given a lot of feedback on their applications
- great scholarship success is inspiring to all the students
- an outstanding professional program, well respected in the field
- high standards of academic integrity – no (or very few) cases of plagiarism at the graduate level
- excellent courses
- international opportunities attract students

Students

- do a good job at professional development of students
- prepare students well for job market
- most students graduate – very little attrition
- students well supported for conference presentations
- student culture is very supportive of one another – close knit
- the quality of marking and feedback given to the students, not just in courses but in all aspects
- being proactive and catching problems early so students do not get lost
- keeping track of student progress
- a very vibrant and well organized graduate student association
- graduate students who are keen to help in the recruitment of new students
- generally high levels of student satisfaction with the quality of their education
- students like the flexibility and openness of the program

Program Atmosphere

- creating a collegial and friendly environment where faculty and students interact frequently and informally
- faculty make a lot of time for their students – not a “factory” approach

- a very strong faculty culture of equality and collegiality with no big egos or superstars who drain resources
- a strong sense of pride permeates the whole department
- a strong, self-enforcing culture where a lot of decisions are made by consensus
- great group of cross-appointed faculty who are actively involved in the grad program
- the GC and graduate staff work hard to maintain strong interpersonal connections with students
- approachability of the GC and graduate staff through an open-door policy
- a small, very hands-on program
- the resources of a large university but the feel of a small department

Program Administration and Management

- do a good job at recruitment despite stiff competition from other universities
- do well at selection of students so little attrition from the program
- have worked hard to have transparent and consistent policies and procedures across the entire Faculty

Challenges

Despite the many exemplary practices that programs have, there is an equally long list of challenges, including those noted below. The issues that arose most often among the challenges mentioned were the need to do more regarding student placement and career paths, and concern over funding packages, particularly for international students.

Academics

- the demand is there to expand the professional master's programs for knowledge upgrading by working engineers, especially through distance modules, but more funding is needed to be able to do this
- problem with large number of professional students in same courses as thesis students – really should be separated out but don't have the resources
- applications are dropping so need to try new approaches to delivery, like distance
- students are not involved in faculty research – there is a divide so need better ways to get faculty and students talking
- ongoing problem of getting faculty to respond to student work in a reasonably timely manner
- workshops for faculty on how to run a good graduate seminar and strategies for getting discussion going would be very helpful
- program growth is limited by the number of faculty who can supervise
- currently at the limit of students per supervisor
- program is maxed out re student numbers but now striving to improve quality

Program Atmosphere

- a lack of faculty engagement with students
- need to do more to foster a stronger intellectual environment – speaker series has withered and nothing new to replace it
- no active graduate student organization so very few social and other activities for students
- no common social events for faculty and students

Program Administration and Management

- need a larger applicant pool but so far, not much return on recruitment efforts
- centralized information on international universities would make admission decisions easier
- small faculty so someone always on leave – makes workload heavier
- a lack of awards specifically for students in this specific program
- not doing as well in getting scholarships as ought to be
- ongoing difficulty in keeping the web site updated and fresh
- no ability/capacity to even think of different approaches like social media
- need to become more actively using social media (Facebook, tweets) – it is expected in this discipline
- as program grows, staff are overwhelmed

- only one graduate assistant so time management is always a challenge
- ongoing need for staff training, particularly more cross-training
- general lack of space for classes, thesis defences, comp exams – all competing to use rooms and not enough smaller meeting rooms
- program needs to step up the game re information on non-academic career paths for students
- don't do a very good job at placement
- need to consider internships for students to make better connections to the workplace
- lack of positions in workplace means more doctoral students are seeking Limited Duties positions – if the program relies on them for teaching, they risk becoming exploited
- a need to coordinate orientation and TA training since the window of days for orientation is so small
- need a better system of writing reference letters for scholarships: a huge amount of time is spent on this by faculty, even for students who will not be ranked well, and the online systems just make things worse

Students

- even though faculty are very successful, they may not be the best role models. Students find it disconcerting that faculty are doing research 24/7. The GC hears from students that they want a family life and better work/life balance.
- student funding packages which are falling behind those at other universities
- a problematic lack of domestic applicants (discussed in Section 4c)
- hard to get students in professional programs to apply for scholarships
- have a large international student population, so there are a lot of cultural adjustment issues
- a desire to take more international students but an inability to do so due to the additional expense required to support them
- many international students do not really have the qualifications that they seem to have on paper, such as English language skills, so taking more international students is a shot in the dark
- more and more students with psychological or mental health problems
- space for students is not good – they are separated from the faculty and the office conditions are grotty
- a general lack of space for students
- a large number of part-time students, who are not given as much weight by the government, even though they bring many positive qualities to the program such as real-world experience
- feel pressure to expand but in reality, cannot accommodate more students
- because of high numbers of part-time students, there is pressure to take more full-time students, which really doesn't match the applicant pool

Appendices

Appendix 1

Dept. of Anatomy and Cell Biology

MSc to PhD Transition

Transfer from the MSc to the PhD degree will take place before the end of the 5th term of MSc enrolment. For most students this will mean prior to the end of April during the second year of the MSc. Students will typically seek permission to transfer from the MSc to the PhD program during the regularly scheduled advisory meeting (*meeting 4*) although a special meeting can be arranged if necessary. The composition of the advisory committee for this meeting will be the same as the previous advisory meetings, except one additional member of the GAC will be present.
In preparation for the meeting, the student should prepare the typical progress report (see *Research Proposals and Progress Reports*) summarizing the result obtained thus far, but also include the overall hypothesis, rationale and individual aims for the PhD project.

To successfully transfer from the MSc to the PhD program, a student must demonstrate to the committee that all of the MSc requirements outlined in the student handbook have been fulfilled with the exception of writing and defending the thesis. The student must also explain how the project will be expanded beyond the limitations of an MSc and demonstrate a suitable understanding of the proposed project. Finally, there must be enthusiasm and commitment for the transfer on the part of the student, supervisor and committee.

Degree Requirements

Timeline: Students may commence their PhD degree in January, May or September although most students begin in Sept. PhD students are expected to complete their degree within 48 months (4 years) if they already have an MSc degree or 60 months (5 years) if they switch from an MSc into the PhD program. Note that the 60 months includes **both** the time in the MSc and PhD program. Schulich, SGPS and most scholarship programs will not financially support students enrolled in a PhD program past the specified time limits. Mentors may cease providing stipend support for students after 48 or 60 months of enrolment respectively with 90 days written notice. If circumstances arise that require a student to remain in the PhD program longer than 48/60 months, the student must seek permission from the GAC to remain enrolled.

Courses: Students that transfer from the MSc to the PhD program or complete an MSc degree in ACB and then enter the ACB PhD program are required to enrol in the 9605 comprehensive course. Students that transfer from the MSc to the PhD program will have completed ANATCELL9520 and not enrol in ANATCELL 9620 or be required to attend additional ANATCELL 9620 seminars. Students that have completed an MSc or equivalent degree elsewhere and enrol in the ACB PhD program must complete ANATCELL9620 plus one additional full credit.

Excerpted from the Anatomy and Cell Biology Student Handbook at

http://www.uwo.ca/anatomy/graduate/files/studenthandbook_2012Jan18.pdf

Appendix 2

Dept. of Physiology and Pharmacology

Letter of Understanding

Student's Name

Supervisor: Dr. XXXXX

GSR: Dr. YYYY

Dear Student:

Welcome to the graduate program of the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario. Two important goals for your time in our program are to: (1) further your academic and professional career in a stimulating and rewarding work environment, and (2) produce a body of scientific research that enhances our knowledge and is published in peer-reviewed literature.

To assist you in achieving these goals, we are providing you and your supervisor with the attached Letter of Understanding and our Graduate Student Handbook which provides information about graduate studies and outlines your individual roles and responsibilities. It is important that the two of you meet to discuss the expectations of our graduate program, and to review the obligations that you have to each other and to the other members of your laboratory. We feel that this is an important part of properly preparing you for graduate school, and the Letter of Understanding and Graduate Student Handbook can be used as a guideline to plan your time appropriately. If you have any questions regarding the content of these documents, or if other issues arise as you proceed through your graduate studies, please do not hesitate to discuss these with you supervisor, members of your Advisory Committee or myself as the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Again, welcome to our Department. We are confident that you will find your graduate training

a positive experience and that you will share the enthusiasm that we have for research and

our disciplines.

Sincerely,

Lina Dagnino

Chair, Graduate Studies Committee

Department of Physiology and Pharmacology

LETTER of UNDERSTANDING

OVERALL ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisor(s) - It is my responsibility to:

- provide guidance in choosing course work, planning experiments, and preparing presentations, reports, papers and scholarship applications
- provide appropriate resources and work space to complete the research project
- work with you to develop hypotheses / research questions and achievable goals
- establish a professional working relationship that includes respect and understanding
- ensure that your contributions to scholarly activity are noted in both abstracts and publications
- meet with you regularly and at frequent intervals (as needed) to provide guidance, assess progress and assist in completing the program on time

Student - It is my responsibility to:

- exhibit independent judgment, academic rigor, and intellectual honesty
- devote full time to scholarly studies and make timely progress towards completion of degree. This includes participation in regular lab meetings, seminars, journal clubs, and Department research days
- establish a professional working relationship that includes respect and understanding
- interact with graduate and undergraduate students, staff and faculty in a professional and mature manner
- negotiate amount of time and timing of holidays
- acquire and exercise skills for working independently and as a member of a team

MEETINGS

Meetings can be called by either of us, and usually by common agreement, with the frequency varying according to the stage of the program, progress in research, and the tasks at hand.

Supervisor(s) - It is my responsibility to:

- monitor the accuracy, validity, and integrity of your progress
- respond in a timely manner with comments/revisions to drafts of applications, reports or presentations
- ensure that you are aware of relevant policies and procedures for the conduct of research and proposal writing to avoid improper documentation of results or plagiarism

Student - It is my responsibility to:

- initiate regular meetings with supervisor(s) to discuss progress in research
- establish, in consultation with my supervisor, deadlines to which I will adhere
- hold face-to-face meetings with Advisory Committee within the first term of starting the program and subsequently at 6-month intervals or sooner, as recommended by Advisory Committee
- distribute printed copies of progress report and future plans to Advisory Committee **at least one week** in advance of meetings
- plan appropriately to allow time for your supervisor(s) to review and comment on reports before distribution to the Advisory Committee

- be aware of relevant policies and procedures for the conduct of research and proposal writing to avoid improper documentation of results or plagiarism

PERSONAL CONDUCT (Research and/or Lab space)

Supervisor(s) - It is my responsibility to:

- maintain good professional and personal relationships with you and all other trainees in the laboratory
- treat all members of the laboratory (and their work) with verbal and intellectual respect

Student - It is my responsibility to:

- maintain good professional and personal relationships with supervisor and other trainees in the laboratory
- keep space tidy, respect the space, reagents and work of others, and participate in periodic laboratory cleanup
- share space and equipment, exercise care and safety, and report problems as they arise
- not borrow or use other people's supplies or equipment without their explicit permission, or remove anything from the laboratory without explicit permission from the Supervisor

LABORATORY & COMPUTER USE

Student - It is my responsibility to:

- maintain complete daily records and laboratory notes, including records of primary data
- use these data as the basis for the regularly scheduled meetings with supervisor
- leave laboratory books and primary data in the laboratory at all times, and recognize that all laboratory property and research data belongs to the laboratory and must be left with my supervisor when my program is complete
- only install and use legal software on laboratory and office computers that is deemed to be required for the conduct of your graduate research work and other academic responsibilities, upon explicit permission from the Supervisor
-

Student & Supervisor(s) - we jointly acknowledge that:

PUBLICATIONS

- given suitable progress and adequate financial resources, there may be an opportunity for you to attend at least 1 national or international meeting to present your research results. Attendance at meetings is contingent upon making a presentation in either verbal or poster format
- we will publish research results in a peer-reviewed journal, thus achieving the goals of creating new knowledge and reporting it to the scientific community. Preparation of manuscripts will be a joint effort
- we must determine the order of authorship for publications in advance and understand the importance of first authorship for the student
- timely publication of manuscripts before program completion will facilitate thesis preparation
- an M.Sc. student should publish at least 1 first-authored manuscript and a Ph.D. student should publish at least 3 first-authored manuscripts in peer-reviewed journals. In some cases, joint first authorship may result from the work and will be noted in the submission and publication process

SAFETY

- safety courses requirements (WHMIS and New Employee Health and Safety Orientation) are mandatory training. Other training (Biohazard, Radiation or Animal Handling) is taken if appropriate
- all students are expected to be aware of and respect safety regulations regarding their work environment and to take all appropriate safety precautions at all times

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- maintenance of appropriate confidentiality concerning the research activities may be required to protect intellectual property, in accordance with existing practices and policies of the discipline
- circumstances of the research and student's contributions will influence the extent of ownership of intellectual property (see http://www.cags.ca/ for discussion)

TIME-LINES

- the student commits to every effort to complete research, course work and thesis defence within 2-years for an M.Sc. degree or 4-5 years for a Ph.D. degree
- the student should be aware that duration of financial support is guaranteed only for a finite period, as follows: 2 years (MSc), 4 yrs (PhD if student is admitted with a MSc degree), or 5 years (if student is admitted to MSc and switches to PhD). There is no guarantee of financial support beyond these periods. Continued support beyond that time is contingent on availability of funds from the supervisor, occurs at the supervisor's discretion, and will only be considered if research progress has been appropriate, and if the likelihood of completion of the work within a further 4-month period is very high.
- the student is required to complete the SGPS required module on Academic Integrity within the first term of enrollment, as per information detailed in www.grad.uwo.ca.
- the student is required to complete the requirement on Basic Knowledge in Physiology and Pharmacology in a timely manner. Specifically, by the end of the first term of study, the student should complete at least half of all the Physiology and Pharmacology modules. The second half of these modules should be completed by the end of the second term. Students who fail to complete the modules by the end of the second term will not be allowed to register in the program for the following term.

Our signatures below indicate that we have met and discussed the individual points outlined in this document

_____	_____	_____
Supervisor	Graduate Student	Date

_____	_____
GSR	

Appendix 3

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Responsibilities of Teaching Assistants

About TA Responsibilities

Teaching Assistants are assigned a total number of hours over any given term. The rules governing the assignment of hours worked in any given week are defined in the Collective Agreement between the Graduate Teaching Assistant (Public Service of Canada) Union and the University of Western Ontario. The Collective Agreement requires the responsibilities to be defined with the Letter of Offer. Normally the Teaching Assistants and Course Instructor(s) meet at the beginning of the term to clarify the responsibilities of each individual.

Teaching Assistants are expected to be knowledgeable in the subject matter of undergraduate courses. They are expected to be punctual in attendance at their duties, and will be present for the full scheduled time with the possible exception of a short break as agreed to with the course instructor.

There is no obligation on the part of the Teaching Assistants to make themselves available to undergraduate students outside of scheduled laboratory or tutorial hours. However, Teaching Assistants may have assigned hours, counted as TA hours, to make themselves available for consultation. It is not recommended that Teaching Assistants offer consultation in their offices to undergraduate students but rather use the engineering cafeteria or arrange with the departmental office to book Room SEB 3035 for this purpose.

Teaching Assistants should endeavour to distribute their time in tutorials and in laboratories as equitably as possible, and to avoid spending an inordinate amount of time with a small number of individuals.

All Teaching Assistants are required to maintain Health and Safety training as provided by the University's Department of Occupational Health and Safety. This includes introductory Health and Safety training for all new TA's (and those who have not taken this previously) as well as more specialised training for TA's demonstrating in laboratories.

Demonstrating in Laboratories

The Teaching Assistant must ensure that he/she thoroughly understand the apparatus and the principles on which the laboratory exercises to be performed are based. It is understood that this will in many cases require that the TA spend some of their allotted time outside of regularly scheduled laboratory hours preparing him/herself.

Time spent physically preparing laboratory equipment is counted as paid time.

During the course of the laboratory the Teaching Assistant must be visible and forthcoming so that the undergraduate students feel no inhibitions in requesting assistance.

Participation in Tutorials

The Teaching Assistant is expected to be completely familiar with the problem sets and to have studied each problem beforehand. All students' questions, no matter how trivial, are asked in good faith and should therefore be respected.

Marking of Assignments, Quizzes and Reports

All marking should be performed in a thorough, professional manner. The reasons for all mark deductions should be indicated in clear, unambiguous terms in ink. Grading should be done in the context of a scheme, which has been approved by the course instructor. The grading scheme should be made available to undergraduate students in all cases.

Normally, marking should be done within one week or as arranged with the course instructor. The Teaching Assistant is responsible for delivering copies of marks sheets to the course instructor on a regular basis.

Proctoring Duties

Teaching Assistants can be asked to proctor quizzes, mid-terms, or final exams. They shall be in communication with the Course Instructor before the quiz or exam to finalize the proctoring arrangements and should arrive at the exam room 30 minutes in advance of the scheduled quiz or exam to help with the room

preparation, and remain up to 10 minutes after the quiz or exam is completed. Compensation for the time spent undertaking this activity (including the 40 minutes spent before and after the quiz or exam) will be part of the total number of hours assigned for the course.

Other Duties

Teaching Assistants may occasionally be asked to perform duties that do not fall within the previous categories. Only under exceptional circumstance may a Teaching Assistant be required to replace a faculty member as a lecturer in the classroom. Assignment to such duties requires prior approval by the Chair of the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering.

(from http://www.engga.uwo.ca/civil/graduate_program/TA_responsibilities.htm)

Appendix 4

Dept. of Microbiology/Immunology

Overview of Financial Support

It is the policy of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology that all Graduate Students in thesis based programs receive a stipend that guarantees a minimum living allowance after tuition and ancillary fees are paid. Unless waived by the student, the current living allowance is $13,250 for M.Sc. and $15,250 for Ph.D. students. This value reflects "take home" pay. Student tuition is paid by a composite of funds from the supervisor's research grant, and School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Scholarship funding (e.g. Schulich Graduate Scholarship or Western Graduate Research Scholarship). When the stipend is combined with tuition reimbursement, this brings the total value of compensation received by each student to a minimum of ~$21,000-$23,000.

Stipends increase when a student is awarded a scholarship (see examples below). In this way, academic success and achievement are rewarded with financial incentives. We strive to ensure that our Graduate Students are as competitive as possible for scholarship funding and our success rate is high. In addition, stipend dollars go farther in London, as the cost of living here is lower than many other Canadian cities. (Living in London)

M.Sc. students in good standing are guaranteed financial support for up to 6 terms. Ph.D. students in good standing are guaranteed financial support for up to 12 terms. Students in good standing who transfer from the M.Sc. program to the Ph.D. program are guaranteed financial support for up to 15 terms. Beyond the guaranteed funding periods, continued funding is at the discretion of the supervisor.

A limited number of Teaching Assistantship positions (covered by the Collective Agreement between UWO and PSAC Local 00610) become available each year and information regarding these positions is communicated during the Summer term each year. These are valued at approximately $2300 - $3300/ term and are normally above and beyond the base stipend values shown.

Graduate Students in the Microbiology & Immunology program are also eligible for a number of competitive internal awards, including our Departmental Entrance Scholarships. More details on these awards can be found here.

Students may be eligible for External Scholarships through the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at Western. To assist students with these applications, effective scholarship writing seminars are held on an annual basis.

Appendix 5

Dept. of Anatomy/ Cell Biology

Funding Overview

Anatomy & Cell Biology offers a competitive stipend for all students enrolled in the graduate program.

Students enrolled in the **Research stream (Cell and Neurobiology MSc and PhD students) or Clinical Anatomy (PhD only)** will receive no less than the base stipend and the funds are guaranteed for the following periods of time:

- **MSc (24 months / 6 terms)**
- **PhD (*after completion of MSc*) (48 months / 12 terms)**

Students enrolled in the **Clinical Anatomy MSc** will receive at least the base stipend for the full length of the program.

- **MSc (20 months / 5 terms)**

Stipend levels:
While Anatomy & Cell Biology guarantees every student the minimum stipend (base), we try hard to move students into the higher stipend categories(see below). **Cell and Neurobiology research students** that accept teaching positions (TA's) or receive scholarships have higher stipend levels. **Clinical Anatomy students** teach as part of the curriculum but can also receive a higher stipend should they successfully obtain scholarships.

**Please Note - The following stipend levels include tuition scholarships (if eligible) and are subject to change.*

ANNUAL ACB FUNDING FORMULA (revised March 20, 2012)

The following are proposed formulas for funding domestic graduate students in the Research and Clinical Anatomy tracks in the Anatomy & Cell Biology Program at Western for students entering the ACB Graduate Program on or after January 01, 2012.

	Base Without TA With TA	Vascular Biology Training Fellowship Without TA With TA	OGS/OGSST or Cancer Biology Training Fellowship Without TA With TA	NSERC (PGS-M) or Heart & Stroke or CIHR (PGS M) Without TA With TA	CIHR (CGS-D)	NSERC (CGS-D)
MSc (Res)	$19,920 $22,195	$23,420 $25,695	$25,420 $27,695	$27,920 $30,195	n/a for MSc	n/a for MSc
PhD (Res & Clin)	$20,920 $23,195	$24,420 $26,695	$26,420 $28,695	$28,920 $31,195	$34,500 $39,050	$39,500 $44,050

	Minimum Base (including TA)	OGS/OGSST with TA	NSERC or SSHRC or CIHR with TA
MSc (Clin)	$9,050	$24,050	$26,550

Scholarships:
Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for scholarships such as OGS, CIHR and/or NSERC in their 4th year. There are several scholarships and training grant awards available to Anatomy & Cell Biology graduate students that help to increase stipend levels. To ensure that our students are as competitive as possible for scholarships, Faculty within the program who have extensive experience serving on scholarship selection panels provide scholarship information seminars and pre-review all applications prior to submission. The results of our efforts are that many students have higher stipends than base since our success rate for scholarships is very high! Approximately, 60% of our students

received a major scholarship last cycle and many of our research students TA. Also keep in mind that your stipend dollars stretch further in London!

International Scholarships:
The vast majority of Anatomy and Cell Biology international students are self-funded through scholarships they bring with them or through their governments. However, students with an average over 80% are eligible for a WGRS allocation of $10,800.
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/student_finances/wgrs.html

International students are not eligible for tri-council scholarship funding but can apply for OGS.
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/student_finances/ogs.html

PhD students are also be eligible to apply for Trillium Scholarships.
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/student_finances/ots.html

Schulich Medicine & Dentistry sometimes has Dean's Scholarships which international students are eligible for.
http://www.uwo.ca/schulich/gradstudies/prospective/funding_scholarships.html

To learn more about London and the cost of *Living in London:* ***www.goodmovelondon.com***

Appendix 6

School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

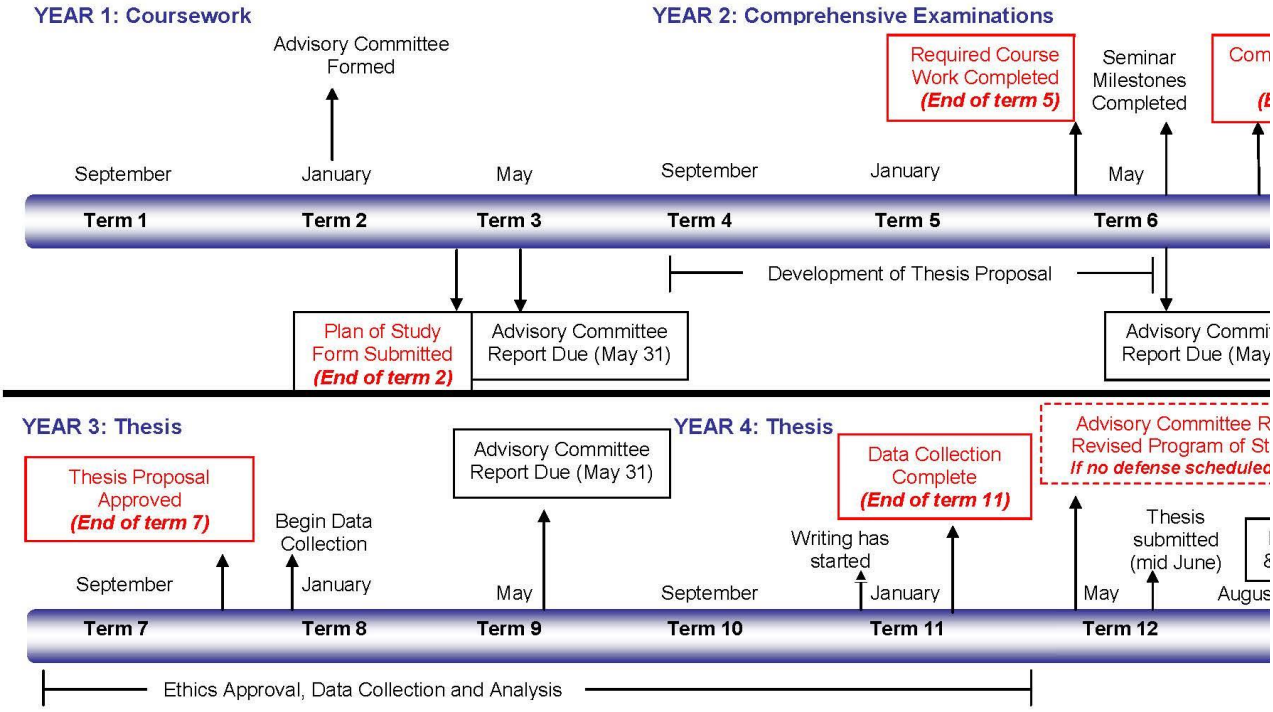
PhD Progression Milestones

Western HealthSciences

Ph.D. Full-Time Students

MILESTONES

Health and Rehabilitation Sciences



Appendix 7

Department of Biology
Guidelines for Supervisors

B. Supervisors

1) The supervisor should make and maintain a strong commitment to devote the required time and energy needed to successfully engage in graduate student supervision. As part of this commitment, the supervisor should display the highest ethical standards of behavior at all times.

2) Potential supervisors should have sufficient familiarity with the field of research to provide appropriate guidance and supervision, or indicate a willingness to gain that familiarity before agreeing to act as supervisor.

3) The supervisor should discuss with the student, very early on, any expectations and the relevant policies concerning authorship on publications, and issues surrounding ownership of intellectual property (this may include patents/licenses). This may result in written agreements or contracts between the supervisor and student covering these issues.

4) The supervisor should make the student aware, very early on, of program requirements and deadlines, various sources of funding, policies covering the conduct of research, and any relevant safety and/or work place regulations. The nature of any financial support provided by the supervisor should be communicated clearly to the student, in writing, including such details as the amount of financial support, the length of time of such support, and any specific conditions pertaining to this financial support.

5) The supervisor should, very early on, discuss and formulate with the student a plan of study for completion of degree requirements and thesis work, with clear milestones denoting progress. This would include, for example, assisting the student in selecting and planning a suitable and manageable research project, as well as setting a viable time schedule and adhering to it for thesis progress and completion.

6) The supervisor should be available for regular consultation with the student. The supervisor and student should discuss and agree on an appropriate schedule for supervision meetings, and the supervisor should provide constructive and timely feedback to the student. More generally, the supervisor should maintain open communication and feedback with the student on all issues, including supervisory practices.

7) The supervisor should provide regular evaluations and assessments of the student's progress and academic performance. This would include a review with the student and advisory committee, at least on an annual basis, of progress on thesis research and any other relevant degree requirements. The supervisor should then provide input to the program regarding the student's progress.

8) The supervisor should make reasonable arrangements to ensure that adequate and appropriate research resources are available for the student's thesis project.

9) The supervisor should help ensure that the research environment is safe, healthy, free from harassment, discrimination, and conflict. To this end, the supervisor should be aware of all pertinent regulations and policies covering these issues.

10) The supervisor should provide guidance, instruction, and encouragement regarding the research activities of student. The supervisor should help ensure that the student has access to intellectual resources and research opportunities, and should also encourage the dissemination of research results by publications and conferences.

11) The supervisor should monitor any major discrepancies in advice given to the student by members of the advisory committee and/or supervisor, and attempt to achieve resolution and consensus on the issue(s) involved.

12) The supervisor should be familiar with all program, School of Graduate & Post-Doctoral Studies, and University policies and procedures pertaining to graduate students and supervision, along with information on graduate student financial support.

13) The supervisor should make satisfactory alternative supervisory arrangements if away for a prolonged period of time.

14) The supervisor should inform the program (i.e., graduate chair or chair), in a timely fashion, of any serious difficulties which may arise in supervision. These might include major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

(from http://www.uwo.ca/biology/graduate/GradHandbookPart1.pdf)

Appendix 8

Faculty of Information and Media Studies
Roles of Thesis Chief Supervisors and Advisory Committee Members

Note: Parts of this have been excerpted from a larger and more detailed document from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, available at http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/supervising_guidelines.htm.

Thesis Chief Supervisor:

The Chief Supervisor usually has a key role in the student's thesis work and may be influential in shaping both the formulation of the thesis topic and the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the research project. At the same time, the chief supervisor must respect that the thesis is the original work of the student and that the student necessarily brings his/her own insights, perspectives and approaches to the thesis project.

Chief supervisors have a number of important obligations to the student, including:

- A commitment to seeing the project through to completion;
- Sufficient familiarity with the field to provide appropriate guidance;
- Being knowledgeable about the institutional requirements for the thesis;
- Clarification of any expectations regarding authorship on publication of material from the thesis (see endnote);
- Helping the student to set out a reasonable plan of action for completion of the thesis;
- Assistance to the student in securing adequate resources to conduct the research;
- Availability for regular consultation and timely, constructive feedback;
- Resolving any difficulties or disagreements with advisory committee members;
- Keeping the Graduate Chair informed of the progress of the thesis or any difficulties arising from it;
- Making arrangements for appropriate examiners for the thesis defense.

Although advisory committee members may give input, the Chief Supervisor makes the final decisions regarding the overall direction and writing of the thesis, the adequacy of the research and the readiness (or not) of the candidate for the final defence.

Advisory Committee Members:

Advisory committee members serve to broaden and deepen the range of expertise and experience available for providing advice and for assessment of the student. Committee members may provide additional guidance and advice on the student's thesis research project, thus complementing the expertise of the supervisor. Normally, the Chief Supervisor suggests which faculty members would be the most appropriate as Advisory Committee members and so is relatively committed to working closely with those members on the thesis project.

Advisory committee members should:

- Be reasonably available to meet with the Chief Supervisor and/or student upon request to discuss the thesis project or to provide general guidance;
- Be prepared to provide constructive feedback and criticism to the Chief Supervisor and/or student in a timely manner;
- Be willing to sit on the student's thesis exam if required (Note: The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies indicates that a member of the Advisory Committee may act as an examiner only if their involvement in the thesis has not been "significant". In practice, this is taken to mean limiting involvement to general discussion and perhaps reading a draft of one or two chapters. Anything more than this would be taken as significant.)

The Chief Supervisor should set the tone with respect to how the Advisory Committee will function. Some Chief Supervisors prefer that all comments from committee members go through the Chief Supervisor, while other Chief Supervisors prefer that Advisory Committee members interact directly with the student. The Chief Supervisor and the Advisory Committee members need to establish their working relationship from the outset.

The work of Advisory Committee members is often relatively unacknowledged and invisible. Accordingly, the Chief Supervisor has a responsibility to consider the input of Advisory Committee members seriously and to involve them throughout the thesis project as appropriate. However, it is not the role of Advisory Committee members to overrule or undermine the decisions of the Chief Supervisor with respect to the thesis. Disagreements with respect to the direction or completion of the thesis should be resolved privately by the committee without unduly upsetting the student.

> *Endnote: Although relatively rare in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, there is the possibility that the student and the supervisor may share publication of some of the papers resulting from the thesis. This could arise in cases when, for instance, the student is largely funded by a faculty member's research grant and is working on an offshoot of the faculty member's research, or when the student has agreed to collect additional data for the thesis that is going to be used for some other purpose by the supervisor. In such cases, the student and the supervisor need to be clear about expectations regarding the authorship of published works.*

(Text available only on the Information & Media Studies Intranet)

Appendix 9

Department of English
Thesis Completion Guidelines

The following notes provide English program in-house guidance for supervisors and candidates concerning the final stages of thesis completion and the setting up of the exam board and the defence. Definitive regulations are posted by SGPS and they should also be consulted:
http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis_regulations/index.htm

1. Planning prior to submission of thesis draft to supervisor

In considering possibilities for a defence date, the candidate must plan well ahead to ensure that he or she has any necessary SGPS extensions in place, is in good standing with the University regarding fees and any other dues, has fulfilled the program's language requirements, can meet the SGPS deadlines for submission of thesis to SGPS, has allowed for the six weeks of reading time required for examiners, and (particularly in Summer Term) is taking account of faculty and staff vacation periods and other authorized leaves. It is wise to have made financial provision for payment of an extra term's tuition fees in case the defence has to be delayed for any reason. Please see the Section 4.04 d) of the Graduate Regulations on Thesis Defense Only status.

2. Submission of penultimate thesis draft to supervisor

The candidate submits a penultimate draft of the complete thesis to the supervisor. The draft must constitute one through-composed text (not, for instance, a set of discrete articles). All chapters, including introduction, conclusion, bibliography, notes, and any appendices, must be submitted at the same time (since the supervisor will want to check one section against another). A high standard of spell-checking and proof-reading should have been reached, so that the supervisor is not distracted by microscale errors. Similarly, bibliography format should conform with MLA requirements. If the draft does not meet the standards listed above it is not ready for this formal supervisor submission stage.

3. Supervisor reads thesis draft

The time needed by the supervisor for reading and reporting back should be negotiated in advance. The supervisor will need to be allowed several weeks at least, since this is a crucial stage in the proceedings. Special circumstances may call for longer. Supervisors should not be put under pressure to reduce or waive this reading time. Similar observations apply to other members of the supervisory board who have reading commitments.

4. Final revisions

The supervisor informs the candidate of any revisions that need to be made. All residual proof-reading and checking (e.g., of references) must be done as part of the revision, whether or not indicated by the supervisor.

5. Notification of graduate chair

If the supervisor is satisfied as to the overall quality of the thesis draft, he or she informs the graduate chair that the thesis is within two or three weeks of readiness for submission to SGPS and that carry-through to SGPS submission of thesis is guaranteed.

6. Preparation for final submission

The candidate should consult the SGPS webpage on Thesis Regulations for up-to-date format requirements. Copies of previous English program theses should not be used as templates, since format requirements may have changed. Where the SGPS instructions do not cover specific contingencies, MLA formatting and referencing guidelines may be followed instead. Where SGPS and MLA conflict, SGPS guidelines should be followed.

7. Candidate and supervisor role in setting up the examination board and defence date

Four examiners are needed: 1 external to the University, 1 within the University but external to the program, 2 internal to the program. Candidate and supervisor should discuss possible examiner nominees fully, reviewing

the various options. Considerations are, for instance, a) their likely availability, b) the applicability of their teaching and research interests to the specific thesis project, c) their experience in the examiner role, d) their potential helpfulness for the candidate's career.

All nominee examiners must be "at arm's length" from the candidate. That means not being a relative or a friend, not having helped substantively with the thesis at any stage, not having collaborated with the candidate (e.g., on conference panels, editorship of journals or essay collections), and so forth. In case of the program examiners, these requirements apply less rigorously.

When these discussions have resulted in a consensus shortlist of prospective examiners, the supervisor passes the list on to the graduate chair. This list should include complete contact information, including e-addresses, telephone numbers, and links to the nominee's webpage, so as to expedite the correspondence between graduate chair and the nominees.

In the English program it is the convention that the candidate and supervisor do not themselves issue the formal invitation to prospective examiners. That (as described below) is the role of the graduate chair, who in turns consults the Department chair on budgetary matters connected with the external examiner visit.

8. Graduate chair role in setting up the examination board and defence date

On receipt of the invitation list, the graduate chair asks the supervisor whether all prospective examiners are "at arm's length" from the candidate. If satisfied on this score, the graduate chair contacts the prospective examiners. Although this process is prioritized over other graduate chair commitments and can sometimes be completed quite rapidly, equally (and unpredictably) it may well consume two or even three weeks. Nominees may have many commitments and be unable to respond immediately. Also, it can be difficult to find a date when all parties can attend defence. (It is the expectation, under SGPS regulations, that all examiners be present.) Candidates need to build this allowance into their time-line leading up to defence. Once all arrangements are made the graduate chair nominates the examination board to SGPS.

9. SGPS submission

Within the following week, and by the deadlines specified by SGPS (see Section 4 of the SGPS Thesis Regulations, the candidate should submit thesis to SGPS (see Electronic Thesis and Dissertation - Overview,) The supervisor approval form must be completed and submitted by the student in hard copy to the Thesis and Membership Coordinator at SGPS. In those rare and undesirable cases where the supervisor has declined to sign off but where the candidate wishes to go to examination regardless, the candidate should enquire with the graduate chair or graduate assistant as to the procedures for submitting on their own recognizance.

10. Commencement of examination

The thesis is dispatched to the examiners by the SGPS Thesis Coordinator. The Coordinator will also, in due course, inform the candidate officially as to date, time, and venue of the defence (though the first two items will have been unofficially communicated already by the graduate chair).

11. Guidance to candidate on defence

During the examiner reading time, the supervisor and the graduate chair will provide advice and guidance to the candidate on the standard protocols for the defence and how to prepare for it.

(from http://www.uwo.ca/english/graduate/phd.html)

Appendix 10

Communication Sciences and Disorders

Excerpt from

H. A. LEEPER: SPEECH AND HEARING CLINIC

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL: AUDIOLOGY

Policy 6: Infection Control

AUDIOLOGY CLINIC CLEANING ASSIGNMENT AND DUTIES

Each student will be required to perform clinic cleaning duties during the term that they are placed in the audiology clinic. A schedule will be provided to the students detailing the times when they are responsible for cleaning duties. Cleaning duties include:

Clinical Environment

- Wear gloves for cleaning procedures. Gloves are available in a variety of sizes in the room with the sink.
- Cleaning of general environmental surfaces such as countertops, telephones, chair armrests, door knobs, work surfaces on the buffer/grinder, computer and other test systems (audiometer, Tympstar, Verifit etc.) keyboards and dials should be completed using T 3 6 (in the cabinet below the sink) sprayed onto a cloth.
- Never spray directly onto the computers and test systems.
- Glass sliding doors and windows should be cleaned using Windex.
- Toys in the assessment areas and waiting rooms should be cleaned using low level disinfection procedures such as soaking in diluted bleach (5mls/500 mls water).
- The powder Sklar Kleen can also be used for soaking (1Tbsp per gallon of water).
- Rinse toys thoroughly after soaking.

Clinical Equipment

- Hard plastics such as specula and immittance tips are cleaned in the ultrasonic cleaner
- Dispose of items if significant debris is present or if the item has come into contact with apparent bacterial or viral infection.
- Wipe away any easily removed debris with paper towel.
- Fill the ultrasonic cleaner with water, add one quarter scoop of Sklar Kleen cleaner for instruments and allow granules to dissolve.
- Insert the basket.
- Run the ultrasonic cleaner for one cycle (~10 minutes)
- Rinse the items thoroughly with water.
- Set on paper towel

(from http://www.uwo.ca/fhs/csd/files/downloads/pdf/current/aud_procedures_manual.pdf)

Appendix 11

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Comprehensive Examination

Students are required to take a comprehensive examination, which must be set within the first 3 terms of PhD study, and must be passed before the end of the 4th term of PhD study. The students are required to submit a written proposal of their PhD research (2500-3500 words, double spaced, up to 10 figures/tables) one week before the date of their comprehensive exam. Students are free to structure their proposal in a way that best suits the nature of the work they are doing. However it must include at least the following content/sections:

- A *critical review* of the key literature relevant to the proposed research, with the emphasis on the strengths and weaknesses of previous research, such that the student may clearly demonstrate the gaps in knowledge that the proposed research will address.
- A *detailed discussion* of the research tools that the student will be using in his/her research (e.g. experimental, analytical, computational). As appropriate to the student's field of research, the discussion should show an understanding of the advantages, disadvantages and accuracy of the applicable techniques for the problems being addressed, in relation to any other tools that the student might have used instead.
- A *summary* of the program of research that will be carried out, including any progress or findings made to date.
- A *statement* on expected outcomes and the contribution that the student expects to make in advancing their field of research.

Note:
The format of the written proposal would follow that of a MESc/PhD thesis.
The oral presentation at the beginning of the exam is not strictly limited to 15 minutes, it can be longer if needed.

The comprehensive exam is a test on the background that the student will need to carry out the proposed research. Hence, the exam will also focus on fundamental engineering science of relevance to their area of research. Three months before the date of the oral examination, an examining committee will be proposed by the candidate's advisor and will include a minimum of three members, one of whom could be an extra-departmental member. At the same time, the advisor in consultation with the examining committee will specify three subject areas related to the fundamental aspects of the proposed research for examination. The materials presented in the proposal together with those three subject areas will define the scope of the oral presentation. The candidate must make a short oral presentation (15 minutes) on the research project at the beginning of the examination. This will be followed by questions to the candidate from each member of the committee. The exam is open.

(from http://www.eng.uwo.ca/civil/graduate_program/PhD_requirements.htm

Appendix 12

Department of Biology
Thesis Proposal Guidelines

A. M.Sc. Thesis Proposal Format and Guidelines

The M.Sc. proposal has a maximum length of 8 pages, double-spaced, excluding figures and references. Up to two pages of Figures/Tables and one page of references may be appended. The proposal should be prepared using 12 point font and a minimum of one-inch (2.54 cm) margins.

The written proposal should contain:

- the scientific background of the study.
- clear and well-expounded question(s) to be addressed (i.e., the hypothesis to be tested).
- the methods to be used for collecting and/or analyzing data and an explanation of how these methods meet the objectives, test the hypothesis(es), or answer the research question posed, as appropriate.
- the methodology to be used for collecting and/or analyzing data.
- preliminary results if they exist.
- a time-line for the completion of the data collection/data analysis or the experiments.
- a summary of the research proposal.

The order of presentation of these elements and the emphasis placed on these elements is dictated by the topic to be studied.

B. Ph.D. Thesis Proposal Format and Guidelines

The Ph.D. proposal will be written in a modified NSERC grant application (Form 101) for a Discovery Grant, complete with a budget and budget justification. The instructions for a NSERC Discovery Grant application can be found at www.nserc.ca. Follow the links On-line Services>PDF Forms & Instructions, and choose the appropriate link from the drop-down menu under “Instructions” in the “For Professors” section. A fillable pdf version of the required NSERC forms, and a Guidelines & Checklist document, are available from the Graduate Program Coordinator.

Students are responsible for adhering to the NSERC guidelines, subject to modifications below, but are not expected to complete every form that is required of professors. Specifically, the Ph.D. thesis proposal must include the following components:

Form 101 Part I

1) Page 1 – contact information

2) Page 3 – summary of the proposed research in lay terms

3) Page 4 – activity schedule

4) Page 5 – budget summary

5) Supplementary pages to accompany the budget (rationale/justification for expenditures).

6) Form 101 Part I Appendix A ONLY IF it applies to the project. Students may list all of their field sites on a single Appendix A.

7) Form 101 Part I Appendix B ONLY IF it applies to the project.

Form 101 Part II - free form-

1) Up to 10 double-spaced pages for a detailed research proposal

2) Up to an additional 2 pages for figures and tables; these should be cited in the text of the research proposal and can be for background or to illustrate progress to date

3) Additional pages for references cited; these should be single-spaced and include a full list of authors and the full title of the article. Note that more than 1 page is allowed for the reference list.

When writing the 10-page research proposal, students should (1) summarize their recent

progress in research activities related to the proposal; (2) articulate goals or objectives, both short and long term; (3) literature pertinent to the proposal ensuring that they place the proposed research within the context of what is currently happening in the field; (4) describe a research plan and methods that are well laid-out; (5) explain the significance of the potential findings, as well as plans for future options; and (6) ONLY IF the student will be supervising fourth-year thesis students or field/lab assistants, indicate how the project contributes to the training of HQP.

(from http://www.uwo.ca/biology/graduate/GradHandbookPart1.pdf)

Appendix 13

Department of Sociology
Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Guidelines

Writing a thesis proposal is an important and valuable precursor to preparing, researching and writing your doctoral dissertation. Although the nature, style and content of your dissertation proposal will vary depending on the kind of dissertation you plan on writing, the following are intended to serve as general guidelines.

Overall, your proposal should be 15-20 pages in length (excluding your bibliography), with lines double-spaced. The content of the proposal should be similar to that required in a SSHRC standard research grant application, in that your proposal should provide a clear statement of the topic of your work and your central research questions, summarize the key theoretical and empirical literature on your topic, and provide a clear statement of what you will do to address your research questions. The following sections are typical.

1. Introduction (1-2 pages): A statement of what is being studied and why it is important both within your field and to people working outside of your particular field.

2. Literature Review (7-10 pages): Your full dissertation will contain a lengthy discussion of the literature relevant to your project. Here, you want to provide a summary of the theoretical and empirical literature most relevant to your study, and the literature that shapes your key theoretical and research questions. This review will generally be thematic, identifying particular aspects of your project that have been studied and/or particular ways in which your topic has been approached by others.

3. Study Objectives (1 page or so): Provide a statement of your study objectives. Clearly state your research questions and/or hypotheses. Identify what these questions and/or hypotheses contribute to the existing literature on your topic.

4. Methodology (2-5 pages): Clarify how you intend to tackle your central questions.

- Will your research be quantitative, qualitative, theoretical, historical…?
- Where will you find your empirical evidence, and how will you access / collect it?
- Will you be collecting your own data?
- Are you using previously established questions and scales?
- Have you designed your own questionnaire or interview schedule?
- Will you require ethics approval?

Overall, this section should clearly describe the phenomenon or population you will study, the data sources you will use, your study design, data collection and sampling techniques, and your data analysis strategies. This section should also outline your time frame for completion. If you anticipate difficulties or challenges with your proposed methodology, explain those issues as well as ways in which you anticipate addressing them. If your dissertation is theoretical in nature, discuss the bodies of work with which you will engage, particular perspectives you will bring to bear on those bodies of work, and the types of case studies you may analyze.

5. Anticipated Outcomes (1-2 pages): Discuss the outcomes or anticipated impacts of your research on the broader fields within which you are working.

- Do you anticipate supporting or revising existing theories on your topic?
- Providing a new methodological approach that represents an improvement over, or a complement to, existing ones?
- Testing existing explanations in new contexts?
- Developing theoretical approaches to social phenomena?

In each case, you should show that you have an idea of what your project will contribute to sociological understanding as well as to your subfield.

Overall, a well-written proposal links all sections and provides a complete story of your dissertation project. That is, your central questions should be clearly linked with, and informed by, the literature you review, and your study methodology should link back clearly to your central questions and objectives. It should be clear – not only to specialists in your field but also to sociologists working in other areas of the discipline and to non-sociologists – what it is that you plan to do, why it is important, what its potential impact on our understanding of society might be, and how these aspects are integrated.

In preparing your dissertation proposal, you might find the following questions important to consider.

- What is your key problem, question, or object of investigation?
- Why does this problem or question matter? Why should others care about it?
- What are the potential implications of your research for the discipline, your field, subfield, and the literature in your sub-field?
- What theories shed light on your issue? Do different theories make different predictions about your phenomenon?
- Is there an approach (or several) you find provides a more convincing explanation? Why?
- What is your own argument or prediction about the social phenomenon you are studying?
- What empirical evidence is available on your phenomenon?
- What methodology will you use? What are the strengths and limits of this methodology for the problem under investigation?
- Is there an existing secondary data set, or questionnaire related to your issu
- Should you collect your own data? Where will you find it, and how will you collect it? Is your population hard to get access to?
- How can you operationalize central, complex concepts? What has been done in the past?
- What are the theoretical impacts of your proposed dissertation project?

(from http://www.sociology.uwo.ca/Grad/Handbook/Documents/Doctoral%20Dissertation%20Proposal.pdf)

Appendix 14

Department of Political Science
MA Thesis Writing for Political Science Students

MA theses vary greatly in scope, length, approach and method and it is difficult to provide a useful general definition. A thesis of less than 50 pages is unlikely to provide sufficient evidence of research to be successful, while one greatly in excess of 100 pages is likely to reflect either poor organization or an inappropriate choice of topic.

Expectations as to scope, method and empirical content differ among the sub-disciplines and you will get the best guidance on this from your advisor. The thesis could be an analysis of an event, an institution or a concept; a case study in the operation of government; a critical discussion of a body of literature in Political Science; a statistical analysis; an examination of a particular theorist; a comparison of theories, cases or institutions; or a discussion of a proposed institutional reform. The important thing is to define a topic clearly, to ensure that it is manageable and to avoid the temptation to stray from the subject. MA theses do not need to make an original contribution to theory but students must provide some element of their own above a mere review of the literature.

You are strongly urged to select a thesis topic related to one or more of your course work areas. While a thesis that is merely a compilation of term papers would be unacceptable, you are encouraged to build the thesis on one of your term papers.

In the first term, you must prepare a preliminary **thesis proposal** in consultation with your advisor. You are free to approach any member of faculty to ask if he/she would be willing to supervise your work, though, it may not always be possible to oblige. The graduate chair can advise on topics and potential advisors. Thesis proposals do not need to be very long. A few pages, together with a representative bibliography, are normally sufficient. The important elements to include in the proposals are:

- A clear statement of the topic
- Evidence that the topic is manageable, given the student's background, the support available in course work, the availability of sources and time
- A statement of the sources and methods to be used in the thesis.

In the second term, you should work with your advisor on a more detailed proposal, including a proposed chapter division and a more complete bibliography. Review the Department Regulation and Policies - Research Involving Human Subjects if applicable.

(from http://politicalscience.uwo.ca/grad_studies/GuidanceNotes.pdf)

Appendix 15

Women's Studies and Feminist Research
Guidelines for the Independent Research Project (excerpt only)

Introduction

Currently, students enrolled in the Master's program in Women's Studies can opt to do an Independent Research Project (IRP) as part of their degree. The following guidelines are offered to facilitate the successful completion of IRPs within the one-year time frame, and to articulate clear expectations for both students and supervisors. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the field of scholarship in women's studies and feminist research, these guidelines have been developed with the intention of maintaining sensitivity to interdisciplinary differences.

Description, form and scope of the IRP

The IRP replaces a full-year course and is intended to provide Master's students with an opportunity to develop their ideas and analytic thinking on a topic of their choosing. IRPs may, but are not required to, make an original contribution to knowledge.

In the IRP, students are expected to conduct an independent piece of research and develop a critical analysis of a topic in a paper that is clearly informed by feminist thinking and/or theory. Typically, students will write an essay in which they articulate and develop a particular thesis or argument. The form of the IRP is somewhat flexible, however, and should be negotiated between the student and supervisor. The scope of the IRP should be guided by the supervisor, and should be revised as necessary as the IRP develops, in order to distinguish the project from a thesis and to facilitate the timely completion of the IRP. It is possible to combine the written paper with other creative projects, such as a film.

Students who intend to do research that involves human subjects will need to go through an Ethics Review and should consult the appropriate Ethics Committee for deadlines and requirements. See http://www.uwo.ca/research/ethics/info/which-reb.htm for more information.

Length of the IRP

The length of the IRP should be appropriate to the field of study in which it is being written. The IRP is meant to replace a full year course, and thus its length should be comparable to that which would be expected as a final paper for a full year Master's level course. As a general guide, the completed IRP should be between 30 and 50 pages (excluding the bibliography).

Process

Students and supervisors are expected to meet on a regular basis. It is anticipated that meetings will be more frequent during the first academic term, as compared to the second and third terms, as students are still in the process of refining their ideas, defining the focus of the IRP, sketching out their research methodology, and developing their paper proposals. It is expected that supervisors will give students feedback on their writing and ideas in an ongoing fashion, and that students will provide supervisors with a complete draft of the final paper by approximately June 30 so that supervisors have sufficient time to review it and provide feedback.

(for full guidelines, see http://www.uwo.ca/womens/pdfs/graduate/IRPguidelines.pdf)

Appendix 16

Department of Anatomy/Cell Biology
Research Proposals and Progress Reports

Overview: Supervisory committee reports are required for all supervisory committee meetings. They provide members of the committee with an update of the student and a starting point for discussion during the meeting. Committee reports also help the student focus their thoughts/research and present the project in a clear and concise manner. Supervisory reports should be prepared by the student with feedback from the supervisor. The completed report should be provided to the supervisor 10 business days prior to the meeting for comment. The report must be provided to members of the supervisory committee 5 business days prior to the meeting. Committee members must be provided either a paper copy or a single PDF file containing the completed report. A copy must also be provided to the Graduate Program Assistant in the departmental office (MSB443).

The reports consist of two parts; A **summary of student's academic activities** and the **research proposal or progress report**. The goal is to prepare the initial document for the first supervisory committee meeting and then revise and update the document with changes and new information for subsequent supervisory committee meetings. It is not necessary and counterproductive to prepare a fresh document from scratch each time unless there is a fundamental change in the research project. There is no restriction on the length of the report but all written materials should be concise and polished. Figures should be of near publication quality (i.e. properly labelled, accompanied by a figure legend etc.).

Summary of Student's Academic Activities – The goal of the activity summary is to keep the supervisory committee informed concerning the students activities. The information also serves as the basis for the preparation of the student's CV.

Research Proposal/Progress Report – A research proposal must be prepared by the student for the first meeting. Thereafter, the student will prepare a progress report. The progress report will develop and grow as the student progresses through the program. By the final supervisory committee meeting the student should have a well thought out, polished document to serve as the basis for the thesis.

Research Proposal (Meeting #1) – Proposal + Summary of Activities.

1. Summary of Student's academic activities

• Courses currently enrolled /to be taken/remaining

• Scholarships (held and to be applied)

• Teaching Assistantship(s) - please indicate time commitment

• Publications (if prior research has produced any abstracts or contributions to published or submitted papers).

• Other Contributions (committee membership etc).

2. Research Proposal

• **Background of Project** - Provide a description of key findings leading to the creation of the hypothesis to be tested. Include relevant references if applicable.

• **Hypothesis** - Provide a focused hypothesis for the project to be undertaken. The hypothesis must be succinct and testable.

• **Objectives** - Define the objectives to be pursued, the rationale for the objectives selected and the methods that will be employed for each objective. Using point form, indicate the tasks to be completed for each objective including relevant methodology.

Progress Report (Meeting #2) – Research Proposal + Progress + Summary of Activities.

1. Update the Summary of Student's academic activities

2. Progress Report

I. Update the Research Proposal.

II. Add Progress obtained to date.

• **Results -** Indicate progress on each of the objectives outlined in the research proposal. Write a brief description of the results obtained and provided figures with figure legends for data generated.

• **Discussion -** State the conclusions that can be made from the work accomplished to date. Briefly explain how the results contribute to the overall problem to be studied ('Big Picture').

** manuscripts in preparation or submitted and abstracts may be appended as separate documents for consideration by the committee

Progress Report (Subsequent Meetings) – Research Proposal + Progress + Summary of Activities.

1. Update the Summary of Student's academic activities

2. Progress Report

I. Update the Research Proposal

II. Update Progress

Progress Report (Final Meeting) – Research Proposal + Progress + Summary of Activities + Thesis Outline.

1. Update the Summary of Student's academic activities

2. Update Progress Report

I. Update the Research Proposal

II. Update Progress

3. Add Thesis Outline

Appendix 17

Department of Chemical/Biochemical Engineering
Procedures regarding Progress Reports and Review Meetings
(PhD and MESc Programs)

(1) PhD Committee should have minimum of 3 members and MESc Committee 2 members including the supervisor(s). Each member must have at least non-core SGPS membership status.

(2) For both PhD and MESc students, the Progress Report with committee review needs to be submitted by the end of each academic year of registration (i.e. the 3rd, 6th, 9th, 12th and 15th terms as applicable). However, PhD student may skip the 1st year (3rd term) report should their Comprehensive Exams take place in 3rd term.

(3) Progress Report should normally be submitted following a Face-to-Face Advisory Committee meeting. However, the meeting may be substituted by a Review-via-Report format, if the supervisor(s) proposes, and the student and Advisory Committee agree to, in the following cases:

- (a) The 1st year MESc student report.
- (b) If the thesis defense is scheduled during the same term when a Progress Report is due.
- (c) One of the 2nd or 3rd year PhD student reports.

However, Face-to-Face meetings must be held under the following conditions:

- (d) If any of the student, the supervisor and/or a member of the Advisory Committee, or the Graduate Chair requests a Face-to-Face meeting.
- (e) When a MESc/PhD student cannot complete their thesis requirements within the normal 6th or 12th term period, each and every Progress Report, starting from the 6th/12th term, must be done through a Face-to-Face meeting, so that the Committee can closely monitor the progress.
- (f) If there is a condition on the PhD Comprehensive Exam, the Progress Report immediately following the Comprehensive Exam must be done via a Face-to-Face meeting.
- (g) If any significant issue has been raised in the last Progress Report which imposed a condition, the following Progress Report must be done by a Face-to-Face meeting.

(4) At any time and under any condition, if any of the student, supervisor or a member of the Advisory Committee, request(s) a review meeting of the Advisory Committee, the supervisor must arrange such a meeting within 3 weeks of such request. Such a meeting must be a Face-to-Face meeting and a Progress Report must be filed after such a meeting.

(5) For Face-to-Face Advisory Committee meetings, the candidate is required to first fill in and distribute a copy of the progress report (with the supervisor's comments already filled in) to each committee member and then make a 10 minute presentation, followed by questioning and answering period. The candidate should also bring at least one copy of all his/her publications generated at UWO.

For Review-via-Report, the supervisor (not the student) must first inform the Advisory Committee Members that he/she intends to follow the Review-via-Report route for the current Progress Report. If there is no objection by the Members, the student must complete and send the Members a copy of this form (with the supervisor's comments already filled in), plus any other materials deemed necessary such as publications, at least 5 working days before the report due date. Any Member may contact the student for a short questioning/answering period and request additional information. If there is no concern, the Members will sign the form. However, if any Member has any concern during the process, a Face-to-Face meeting of the Advisory Committee must be held.

At the end of each review, via Face-to-Face meeting or Review-via-Report, a scanned version of the fully signed Progress Report Form must be submitted to CBE Graduate Office via email, within one week of the Date of Review, either directly by the supervisor or by the student but copied to the supervisor on the same email. (For your record, please ensure to ask an email confirmation from CBE Graduate Office.) The supervisor is responsible for sending the e-file and for keeping the originally signed form on file until 1 year after the student's graduation or withdrawal.

(6) A mark or pass/fail is not given as an outcome of such review, the Advisory Committee, however, may make a number of requests/recommendations. For example, they may request/recommend the student to take some extra courses, to gain more background knowledge through reading or literature survey, to submit a report, etc. Committee may, however, also request the student to withdraw from the program.

(7) Failure to complete the Progress Report or submit the Progress Report Form on time will be considered have not completed the program requirements, which may lead to the withdrawal or dismissal from the program.

Appendix 18

Department of Philosophy
Annual Progress Report for the PhD

Student Name:	
ID:	
Program Start Date:	
Advisor or Supervisor:	
Other Advisory Committee members (if relevant):	

1) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

Are you completing the old program (with the requirement of doing 10 half-credit courses) or the new program (with the requirement of 6 half-credit courses)?

Course Requirements:

QUANTITY: Please list the numbers of the courses you have completed for credit (do not include audits).

DISTRIBUTION: Please indicate which area you specialize in and then identify the courses you have taken outside of this area with the aim of meeting your distribution requirement.

Area of Specialization:

Courses taken outside of this area:

History of Philosophy:	Philosophy of Science (incl. logic and foundations of math):
1.	1.
2.	2.
Metaphysics & Epistemology (incl. Language and Mind):	Value Theory (moral, political, legal, and social philosophy):
1.	1.
2.	2.

Additional Program Requirements:

- ❑ LOGIC COMPETENCE REQUIREMENT
- ❑ PROSPECTUS COURSE
- ❑ AREA COMPREHENSIVE EXAM Specify area:
- ❑ PROSPECTUS DEFENCE
- ❑ THESIS SUBMISSION and DEFENCE

Progress:

Briefly describe what progress you have made in fulfilling your program requirements since your last annual report (if applicable).

2) CURRENT CURRICULUM VITAE:

Please submit a current CV using the form found at:

Home > Graduate Studies > Current Students > Documents

3) PLAN FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR:

Briefly describe the progress you anticipate making in the next 12 months. If you'll be working on your thesis, then explain how much of it you hope to get done and lay out a plan for completing this much.

4) THESIS PROPOSAL:

Please include a summary of your thesis project (maximum 2 pages).

5) EVALUATION (to be completed by the supervisor or advisor in consultation with the student)

- ❑ Progress evident; student is on track
- ❑ Progress not evident, but anticipated (acceptable remedial plan in place)
- ❑ Progress not evident, not anticipated (revised program of study and remedial plan requested)

Other comments, or action required:

Signature of Student:	
Signature of Advisor or Supervisor:	
Date:	

Completion of this form is required by May 15th of each year of enrolment in the PhD program. This form must be submitted to the Graduate Program Assistant in Philosophy. Failure to submit it will result in the student being barred from enrolling in the program in September.

Appendix 19

Department of Political Science
Progress Report for PhD Students in Political Science

This form must be completed in the Fall and Spring of each academic year for all students in the PhD program except for those in first year. Parts A and B are to be completed by the student. Please re-name the Word file using your last name. Then the form is sent to the supervisor who completes Part C and sends it to Teresa McLauchlan at: tmclauch@uwo.ca This Fall, the form is due by the end of November.

PART A (to be completed by student)

Name	
Month/Year PhD started	
Name of Supervisor	
Names of other committee members	
Courses completed (no/yes – and dates final courses were completed)	
Courses remaining (list)	
Comprehensive exams passed (no/yes – and date)	
Comprehensive exams remaining (list)	
Cognate skill completed (no/yes – date, specific skill and how fulfilled)	
Dissertation proposal submitted	
Dissertation proposal approved (no/yes – date approved)	
Dissertation topic or working title	
Ethics review (yes/no/not applicable)	
Number of chapters completed	
Percent of writing completed	
Frequency of meetings w/ supervisor	

List progress achieved in past year	
Target date for submitting dissertation (only for those finished Comp exams)	

PART B Student Comments on Progress Over Past Year

Please comment on your progress over the past year including any reasons for slower progress.

PART C Supervisor Comments on Student Progress

Please provide comments on the student's progress over the past year and whether you are satisfied.

Appendix 20

Department of English - Professional Development Workshops

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GRADUATE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS
Fall 2012

When	Workshop	Where
Tues. 4 September 1:30-4 pm	**Orientation**	UC 289
Mon. 10 September 4:30-6:30	**Graduate Funding** Open to ALL graduate students. We'll discuss available sources of funding, tips for preparing successful applications, and how to frame the research proposal.	Weldon Rm 258 Eng9002A
October10th -16th	**Vetting Your Funding Proposals** Students have an opportunity for one-on-one feedback and guidance on their funding applications.	Professors' Offices
Fri. 28 September 2:30-4:30 pm	**TA Training: Marking Essays** This new session is required for all new TAs and strongly recommended for continuing TAs. We will review departmental grading criteria and provide tips and strategies for better, faster marking.	UC 286
Fri. 12 October 2:30-3:30 pm & Fri. 26 October 4:00-5:00 pm	**Academic Job Dossiers** This first session offers tips on preparing your job dossiers including the c.v., the cover letter. We will look at examples and answer your questions. The second session will help you with a teaching philosophy statement and teaching dossiers which are often requested as part of the job application. Contact GDPC for individual feedback on your own materials.	UC 377
Fri. 12 October 4-5:30 pm	**Conference Proposals, Papers, Presentations** Just in time for the Nov. 1st ACCUTE deadline, this workshop will give you advice on how to build that abstract into a workable 20-minute paper, how to deliver it effectively, and how to get the most professional gain from your upcoming conference experience.	UC 377
Fri. 9 November 4-5:30 pm	**Writing The Dissertation** This workshop is specifically geared to PhD 3 students, but all are welcome. Discussion will include research and writing methods, goal-setting, time management, task management, etc.	UC 377
As requested.	**Job Interviews** A mock interview can be a great way to gain practice in talking to a hiring committee about your research and teaching strengths. If you'd like to participate in a mock interview in advance of MLA, or before a formal campus interview, please email	

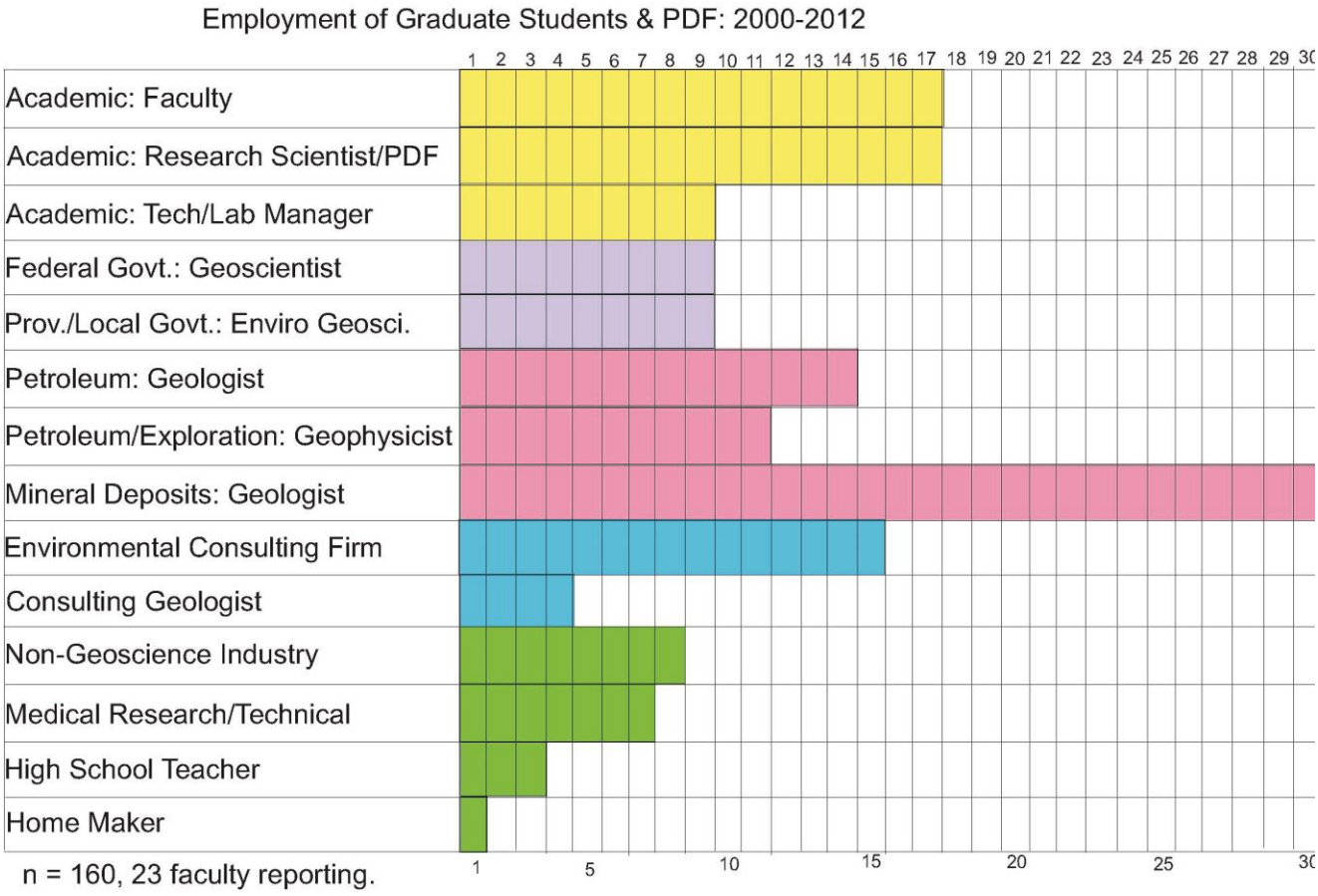
GRADUATE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS
WINTER 2013

Thursday **January 17** **3:30 pm**	**PREPARING FOR ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS & JOB TALKS** A mock interview is the best way to prepare for your on-campus visit. Profs. Phu, Schuster and McMurran will act as the mock interview committee.	**UC 377**
Wednesday January 30 **4:30 pm**	**PREPARING FOR THE PRIMARY FIELD ORAL EXAMINATION** This session is scheduled during the week between the written and oral portions of the primary field exam. It is designed to help those students prepare well for a successful oral. All those students taking the primary field exam are strongly urged to attend.	**UC 274**
Friday **February 8** **3 - 4 pm**	**PUBLISHING** A session aimed to provide basic information and tips on how to get published in academic journals. Prof. Osinibi and McMurran.	**UC 282**
Friday **February 8** **4:30 – 5:30 p.m.**	**FINDING SESSIONAL & PART-TIME TEACHING** With so many colleges and universities in southwestern Ontario, PhD students and graduates often find teaching opportunities in their field. In this new workshop, we will discuss how to best search for such positions.	**UC 282**
Wednesday **May 1** **4-5 pm**	**PREPARING FOR THE QUALIFYING EXAM** This workshop is aimed at PhD1 students who have just finished their course work and are moving on to the preparing of the qualifying exams. The workshop will not be about any specific exam—that comes in your meeting with each particular exam committee—but about overall strategies for preparing: how best to study; what to expect in the written portion of the exam; what kind of timeline to set.	**UC 377**
Wednesday **May 1** **2 -3:30 pm**	**APPLYING FOR POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS** How to do it, where to apply, when applications are due. This session is essential for any thesis student who might even be thinking of completing a year from June. Profs. Bassnett and McMurran.	**UC 377**

If you have any questions or comments about the Graduate Workshop and Seminar Series, please contact Mary Helen McMurran
mmcmurr2@uwo.ca

Appendix 21

Department of Earth Sciences
Graduate Placement Data



About the Author

Gloria J. Leckie

Professor Emeritus
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
MLIS, MA, PhD (Western)
E-Mail: leckie@uwo.ca

After attaining her BA in Geography from the University of Windsor, Gloria Leckie graduated from the MLIS program at Western in 1974 and worked for over a decade as a professional librarian. She then returned to Western to complete an MA and PhD, both in Geography. While completing her doctorate, Gloria taught cataloguing and classification in the MLIS program, which led to a tenure track position with the Graduate School of Library and Information Science in 1991. After the school became part of the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Gloria served as Undergraduate Chair from 1998-99, and then became Associate Dean, a position that she held from 2000-2007. Gloria retired from Information & Media Studies in 2011, but she is continuing at Western as a Faculty Associate with the Teaching Support Centre. In her new role, Gloria is using her expertise gained from many years of teaching in a graduate professional program to work on issues and new initiatives in graduate education at Western.