

## **GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDIES**

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## 1. ADMINISTRATION OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Associate Vice President, Research, Engagement, & Graduate Studies (REGS): The AVP REGS is responsible for the general administration of graduate studies at the University.

Manager, Office of Research, Engagement, & Graduate Studies is responsible for ensuring admission of students, assessment of fees, maintenance of records, graduation and other administrative duties related to graduate students are carried out following established procedures.

A Graduate Program Committee for each program is responsible for recommending admission, reviewing students' progress, and arranging for the supervision and examination of students enrolled in the graduate program.

The student's supervisor or supervisory committee is appointed to work with the student while they are working on their field work, major paper or thesis, and reports on the student's progress to the Graduate Program Committee. The supervisory committee forms part of the student's final examination committee.

## 2. ADMISSION

### 2.1 General

**Before applying for admission, the student should obtain information about program specific admission requirements and procedures. This information can be obtained from the relevant department or school website.**

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements for admission given below but are not assured admission into any graduate program. Most graduate programs have admission requirements in addition to the minimum described herein. Furthermore, programs must restrict admission to students whose interests are compatible with available resources and faculty expertise. Graduate programs may set limits on total enrolments.

### 2.2 Admission Requirements

The minimum requirements for admission to a graduate program are as follows:

- a) a bachelor's degree from a recognized post-secondary institution;
- b) a cumulative grade point average equivalent to at least 3.00 on the last two years of their undergraduate degree from a recognized post-secondary institution;
- c) evidence of the student's ability to undertake advanced work in the area of interest, submitted in the form of three references. Each program will advise what type of letters are appropriate.  
**Note:** Faculty who provide reference letters must recuse themselves from admission review of the candidate.

### 2.3 Application for Admission

Recommendation for admission is through the Graduate Program Committee in the department/school in which the student wishes to enroll. All transcripts of previous university work and proof of obtaining a degree are required at the time of application, and letters of reference as well as optional documentation per the school or department such as a personal statement may also be required at that time. See [How to Apply](#) for further details.

Application procedures and deadlines for each graduate program vary from program to program.

### 2.4 Admission as a Visiting Student

Bona fide graduate students at other universities who wish to take courses at UFV, not leading to a degree at UFV, will be admitted to take specific graduate courses on the recommendation of the chair of the department/school and the dean of graduate studies (or equivalent officers) at the other university, and with the permission of the appropriate Graduate Program Committee and the AVP REGS.

### 2.5 English Language Proficiency

English is the primary language of instruction and communication at UFV. UFV recognizes that applicants must have a proficiency in English sufficient to participate in the learning process. See the [UFV Calendar](#) for further details.

## 2.6 Decisions on Admissions

All decisions on graduate admissions are made by the AVP REGS, upon the recommendation from a Graduate Program Committee. These decisions may be appealed to the Senate Graduate Studies Committee by an applicant or a Graduate Program Committee. The decision of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee is final.

## 2.7 Conditional Admission

Conditional admission may be offered to an applicant who demonstrates that they are substantially ready to undertake a program but who has not completed all admission requirements as stated in 2.2 at the time of application. An offer of conditional admission will specify the remaining requirements to be met and a limited time period within which the requirements must be met. Normally, the requirements must be fulfilled either prior to registering in the program, or within the first semester of registration. In either case below, applicants with a GPA of less than 2.75 will not be considered for conditional admission without a written rationale from the relevant department or school requesting an exception.

- a) In the case of an applicant who has completed the degree required for admission to the graduate program, but whose academic average (GPA) is below the minimum required for admission to that program, an offer of conditional admission will specify the graduate courses that the applicant must complete, and the grades that are expected in order to be granted regular admission. These courses must be completed no later than the end of the second term of enrolment. Graduate courses taken while admitted conditionally may be applied to the student's graduate program requirements. If the applicant does not meet the conditions of regular admission after the second term, the courses completed will not necessarily count towards the graduate program at a future date.
- b) In the case of an applicant who has not completed a bachelor's degree, an offer of conditional admission will specify the undergraduate or graduate courses that the applicant must complete. All bachelor's degree requirements must be completed no later than the end of the second term of enrolment, following acceptance of an offer of conditional admission. The student may take graduate courses during these two terms, but their admission remains conditional until they receive their bachelor's degree.

## 2.8 Competency Based Admission

Exceptions to the minimum requirements as stated in 2.2 are rare. Some programs may occasionally allow for competency based admissions when an applicant does not meet the requirements under 2.2, and does not qualify for conditional admission under 2.3. The requirements for a competency based admission include evidentiary demonstration of academic competency equivalent to a bachelor's degree.

Evidence of competency will be evaluated against a rubric established by the program and approved by the Senate Graduate Studies Committee and the AVP REGS. An applicant's portfolio of evidence will be independently evaluated against the established rubric by three reviewers who have training in competency based assessment.

Students must satisfy any further requirements set by school or departmental Graduate Program Committees, over and above 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4.

Students must satisfy the requirements of UFV [English Language Proficiency Requirement](#) policy (99).

## 3. REGISTRATION AND ACADEMIC RECORDS

### 3.1 Date of Entry

Graduate students may enter programs at the beginning of any semester unless a program requires students to start in a specific semester. See Calendar.

### 3.2 Registration

Students are registered in 'per credit fee' programs, whereby students are charged a fee based on the number of credits taken. Please refer to UFV graduate tuition fees online.

Registration normally begins two months before the start of each semester and must be completed by the Friday preceding the start of classes. The course or research-related work for which the student registers must have the approval of the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee and of their supervisor once this supervisor is appointed. In addition, registration for courses taken outside the student's program must have the approval of the supervisor and the Graduate Program Committee.

### **3.3 Continuity of Registration**

Students going on leave are required to obtain the written approval of the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee and/or of their supervisor. Notification of the leave must be sent to the AVP REGS for their records.

Students in per credit fee programs register only in those semesters in which they are taking courses or working on other requirements, such as a project or field exam. A student in a per-credit fee program who does not register in at least one of three consecutive semesters is considered to have withdrawn from UFV.

Candidates with an IP grade in their final course (major paper, thesis) must register in a continuance course, and pay continuance fees, each term until they receive a final grade. This keeps the student's account active and allows them to access the Library, student email, and other campus services. Fees are set at 75% of one graduate credit.

Students in per semester fee programs are required to register in every semester until all requirements for the degree have been fulfilled. A student in a per semester fee program who does not register is considered to have withdrawn from UFV.

### **3.4 Course Audit**

Graduate students may audit graduate courses, with permission of the instructor, supervisor, and graduate program chair of the student's department/school.

Prior to registration, the student and instructor must agree on the requirements for auditing the class. These requirements include regular attendance at class meetings, completion of readings and participation in class activities. Course fees for an audit may apply. Audited courses will not count toward degree requirements. Such audits are recorded as AU on the student's transcript.

### **3.5 Graduate Level Grading System**

Please refer to the [UFV calendar](#) for the current grading system.

When a student is working on a thesis or major project as part of the requirements for the degree, the notation IP (in progress) shall be entered on the transcript. IP is not a grade and is not used in calculating the student's program GPA.

### **3.6 Credit/No Credit Grading (CR/NCR)**

With the approval of Senate Graduate Studies Committee, a department may require that a designated course be graded credit/no credit (CR/NCR) for all students in the course. The grades CR and NCR have no grade points and are not counted in the GPA.

### **3.7 Program GPA Required For Continuation and Graduation**

To continue in a program, students must maintain a minimum program grade point average of 3.00, or higher if required by the program. Failure to meet the minimum program GPA is evidence of unsatisfactory progress and this will be addressed by the Graduate Program Committee as required.

Successful completion of a graduate program at UFV requires the student to obtain a minimum of B- in every course, and a minimum program GPA of 3.00, or higher if required by the program, and successful completion of any other program requirements. Under no circumstances will a student whose program GPA is below 3.00 be awarded a graduate degree.

### **3.8 Graduate Students Retaking a Course**

A graduate student may retake a course under the following conditions:

- a) when the same numbered course covers different material in different semesters, as in the case of special topics or directed readings courses that are lettered or designated as such.
- b) when the student wishes to improve the grade earned in the course. Permission of the Graduate Program Committee is required.

Under a), both grades are recorded on the student's transcript, and the grade and the credit hours for both iterations of the course are used for the calculation of the program GPA and towards the credit hours required for the degree.

Under b), both grades are recorded on the student's transcript. However, only the better grade is used in calculating the program GPA and the credit hours for the course are used only once towards the requirements for the degree.

Students may not take a course more than twice unless they also receive approval under UFV Policy 86 – Course Repeat.

#### **4. SUPERVISION**

##### **4.1 General**

When a graduate student has been admitted to a graduate program, the Graduate Program Committee will provide general academic guidance of the program requirements for the student through the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee or a faculty member designated by the Chair, until a supervisor or supervisory committee, as stipulated by the program, is appointed.

##### **4.2 Supervisor**

In consultation with the student, the Graduate Program Committee will ensure that a supervisor is appointed prior to beginning their thesis, major paper, or research paper. A supervisor must have received supervisory status from the AVP REGS.

A supervisor who is planning to be off campus for more than three months shall arrange for proper supervision of the student during this absence. The Graduate Program Committee and the AVP REGS shall be informed in writing of the arrangement.

##### **4.3 Supervisory Committee**

Supervision responsibilities and structure are determined at the discretion of the school/department.

The supervisory committee consists of the supervisor and at least one other person. In consultation with the student, the Graduate Program Committee will ensure that the supervisor is appointed prior to beginning their thesis, major paper, or research paper. The supervisor, in consultation with the student, may recommend the composition of the supervisory committee. Normally, this recommendation shall be made during the same semester in which the supervisor is appointed.

The composition of a supervisory committee shall be approved by the Graduate Program Committee and forwarded to the AVP REGS for final approval. All members of the supervisory committee must have received supervisory status from the AVP REGS.

The supervisor chairs the supervisory committee. The GPC chair and /or supervisory committee may be responsible for helping the student develop a program of study leading to a degree and for reporting to the Graduate Program Committee at least once a year on the student's progress towards completing the degree requirements. The GPC Chair and/or the supervisor may be available to the student for consultation as needed.

##### **4.4 Change in the Supervisory Committee**

Continuity of supervision is important in all graduate work. Consequently, after a supervisory committee is established, a change in supervisory committee membership, especially a change in supervisor, may be made only on the basis of strong reasons.

A request for a change in the supervisory committee may come from the student or any member of the supervisory committee. It shall be sent to the Graduate Program Committee accompanied by the reasons, in writing, for the proposed change. If the Graduate Program Committee concurs in the request, it shall be sent to the AVP REGS for final approval.

##### **4.5 Ethics Review**

All research plans must comply with UFV policies [54 - Human Research Ethics](#), [51 - Animal Care](#), and [53 – Responsible Conduct of Research and Scholarship](#).

#### **5. RESIDENCE REQUIREMENT FOR A GRADUATE PROGRAM**

Graduate Programs may allow the transfer of equivalent graduate level credits from other recognized institutions as well as, wherever appropriate, the recognition of prior learning. However, a minimum of 75 percent of the academic requirements for the completion of a master's degree must be completed by the student at UFV.

## 5.1 Courses in other Universities

A graduate student may apply to take one or more courses at another university for credit towards a graduate program at UFV under the following conditions:

- a) Such applications shall be made at least one month before the course/courses start and shall be approved by the student's supervisor and the Graduate Program Committee
- b) A graduate student may apply to have credit for graduate courses taken prior to admission applied to the requirements for the program, under the condition that courses must have been completed within five years of starting the UFV program.
- c) Application for advance credit must be made at the time of application for admission and must be approved by the Graduate Program Committee and the AVP REGS.
- d) [Western Deans of Graduate Studies Agreement](#) - UFV is a member of the Western Canadian Deans of Graduate Studies.

## 6. PROGRESS, WITHDRAWAL AND LEAVE

### 6.1 Progress Evaluation

The supervisory committee shall report on the student's progress at least once each year to the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee. The evaluation of student progress in coursework will rely in part on their maintenance of a program GPA of 3.00. A graduate program may define any further expectation for progress.

### 6.2 Review of Unsatisfactory Progress

If a student's progress appears to be unsatisfactory, the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee shall make a written report to the AVP REGS and provide a copy to the student. The Graduate Program Committee, on consultation with the supervisory committee if one has been appointed, may:

- a) require the student to withdraw, or
- b) inform the student of the unsatisfactory progress and require the student to improve in specific ways in a specific period of time.

The student concerned has the right to appear before the Graduate Program Committee when the case is considered and may submit any materials relevant to the case. A student who is required to withdraw shall be informed, in writing, with a copy to the AVP REGS. If required to improve within a specific period of time, the student shall be informed in writing as to what precisely is required, with a copy to the AVP REGS.

Any decision of the Graduate Program Committee under the provisions of this section may be appealed to the AVP REGS, whose decision shall be final.

### 6.3 Withdrawal from Courses and from UFV

A student must obtain permission of the supervisor and the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee in order to withdraw from a course. If the supervisor is not yet appointed, or if the student is in a graduate diploma program, permission of the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee is required. If such permission is granted, a student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty up to the end of fifty percent (50%) of classes in any semester.

Under extenuating circumstances, a student may withdraw from a course without academic penalty after fifty percent (50%) of the course duration. Such circumstances must be beyond the control of the student (e.g., medical or financial crisis). Permission of the supervisor, if one has been appointed, and the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee is required.

A student may withdraw from UFV at any time by notifying the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee.

A student who has withdrawn from UFV and who wishes to re-enter shall apply for permission under the same conditions as any other applicant.

A student who does not register in accordance with 3.3 is considered to have withdrawn from UFV.

## 7. EXAMINATION OF A MAJOR PAPER

The term major paper refers to all capstone projects (e.g., major papers, extended essays, or other projects) that form a requirement, other than the graduate thesis, for fulfillment of a graduate degree.

### 7.1 Examining Committee

Each candidate in a program with a major paper shall be examined by an examining committee comprised of:

- a) The student's supervisor
- b) A second reviewer (may be 2<sup>nd</sup> reader, 2<sup>nd</sup> supervisory, internal or external reviewer)
- c) The GPC Chair

### 7.2 Oral Presentation as a part of Examination

If the student's program has an oral presentation as part of their examination, preparation for the oral presentation takes place after the student has successfully passed the evaluation of their major paper.

The candidate's supervisor shall make a recommendation to the AVP REGS concerning the date, place, and time of the oral presentation and the name of the external or internal evaluator, as stipulated by the program. This information will be submitted for approval to the AVP REGS.

The Chair of the Graduate Program Committee will ensure that a copy of the major paper, project, or extended essay is received by the evaluator well in advance of the oral presentation at least one week before the date of the oral presentation.

### 7.3 Outcomes of Examination

The possible outcomes are:

1. the major paper may be passed as submitted
2. the major paper may be passed on the condition that minor revisions be completed to the satisfaction of the supervisor. Minor revisions to a major paper must be completed within two weeks after the examination and checked by the supervisor.
3. judgement on the major paper may be deferred once, up to one semester, pending major revisions to be completed to the satisfaction of the examining committee
4. the major paper may be failed. In this case the candidate is required to withdraw from UFV.

## 8. EXAMINATION OF THESIS

### 8.1 Examining Committee

Each candidate for a master's degree with a thesis shall be examined by an examining committee comprised of:

- a) the Chair of the student's Graduate Program Committee, or their designate, who shall be a non-voting chair of the examining committee. If the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee is also on the student's supervisory committee, he/she shall designate a member of faculty at UFV, who is not a member of the student's supervisory committee, as chair.
- b) all members of the student's supervisory committee.
- c) an external or internal examiner who is approved by the Graduate Program Committee and the AVP REGS. External examiners are qualified experts who hold no academic positions at UFV, while internal examiners are faculty members of UFV, but who are not from the same department or school as the student or supervisor.

### 8.2 Preparation for Examination of Master's Thesis

Once a student has completed the requirements described in section 3.7 and the thesis is substantially complete and in the format laid down in the [Guidelines on the Preparation and Supervision of Theses, & Major Papers](#), their supervisory committee will make a recommendation to the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee concerning the date, place and time of the examination and the composition of the examining committee. This recommendation will be submitted for approval to the AVP REGS.



At least two weeks before the date of the thesis examination, an electronic copy of the thesis shall be distributed to the examining committee and the AVP REGS by the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee. Department/school rules may require earlier submission of the completed thesis.

## **8.2 Possible Outcomes of the Examination**

The possible outcomes are:

1. the thesis may be passed as submitted
2. the thesis may be passed on the condition that minor revisions be completed to the satisfaction of the senior supervisor. Minor revisions to a thesis must be completed within two weeks after the examination and checked by the supervisor.
3. judgement on the thesis may be deferred once, up to one semester, pending major revisions to be completed to the satisfaction of the examining committee
4. the thesis may be failed. In this case the candidate is required to withdraw from UFV.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE**

Once a student has successfully defended their examination of major paper or thesis and completed any revisions that may be required, the supervisor shall recommend that the degree be awarded. The Chair of the Graduate Program Committee will ensure that all program requirements have been met and forward the recommendation to the AVP REGS, who will review the recommendation and send it to the Registrar for presentation to Senate.

The title of the thesis or major paper will be recorded on the student's transcript.

## **10. PUBLICATION OF A MAJOR PAPER OR THESIS**

### **10.1 Submission of Major Paper or Thesis to the Library**

Once all revisions to a major paper or thesis have been accepted by the supervisor and Chair of the Graduate Program Committee, it will be ready for submission to the Library.

Following the Library's requirements as stated in [Formatting and Submission Requirements for Graduate Major Papers](#) or the [Formatting and Submission Requirements for Graduate Theses](#), the required electronic copies of the final draft of the completed document in a format stipulated by the Library, shall be sent to the library together with an approval form from the supervisor certifying that all required revisions have been made.

When a library representative has checked the major paper or thesis and accepted the format, the representative will sign the candidate's request to Graduate form and send it to the AVP REGS for final approval and submission to the Registrar's office. No degree will be approved by Senate until the Registrar has been so notified.

Recommendations of exceptions to library submission can be made by the School or Department.

### **10.2 Partial Copyright License**

Except as noted in 10.4, the student shall sign a partial copyright license which grants to UFV the right to lend the major paper or thesis to users of the library, and to make partial or single copies for such users. Multiple copying is not permitted without written permission from the author except that, if the author is unobtainable, the AVP REGS may give this permission.

### **10.3 Reproduction**

In the case of theses, except as noted in 10.4, the student shall sign an agreement form authorizing the Library and Archives of Canada to reproduce the thesis and make it available in a variety of formats.

### **10.4 Postponement of Publication**

The results of research conducted at the UFV should be available freely to the public, and it is expected that major papers and theses will be placed in the library immediately following final revisions. It is the responsibility of graduate students to ensure that this policy is communicated clearly to relevant individuals and organizations outside UFV prior to the initiation of any research project.

A major paper or thesis may be withheld from circulation and from copying for a period of 12 months from the date of defense in order to protect confidential commercial information, patentable material, pending



application, or where immediate commercial publication is anticipated. No extensions to this time limit will be permitted. At the time of defense, a project, extended essay, or thesis withholding document requesting and authorizing such delay shall be signed by the student, the supervisor, and the AVP REGS. The official copies of the major paper or thesis and all pertinent forms shall be deposited in the library along with the withholding document. A copy of the thesis shall not be sent to The Library and Archives of Canada during the restricted period, but the abstract of the thesis shall be sent with the period of restriction duly noted.

Under exceptional circumstances, portions of a major paper or thesis may be withheld from the reference copy of the document that is made available to faculty members and students. This procedure must be authorized by the AVP REGS well before the distribution of the document. The AVP REGS must ensure that only the most confidential material is withheld from the document, and that the overall integrity of the document is preserved.

#### **10.5 Publication of the Thesis by the Student**

None of the clauses above preclude the student from publishing the project, extended essay, or thesis in any form at any time.

### **11. MAXIMUM TIME FOR COMPLETION OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE**

The maximum times for completion given below are not intended to be the normal times for completion. They are intended to take into account a wide variety of extraordinary circumstances and events that may delay completion. Individual departments/schools may specify their expectations of normal degree completion times as a guide to determining whether a student's progress is satisfactory.

All requirements of the master's degree must be completed within seven years of initial enrolment as a master's student.

### **12. AWARD OF THE DEGREE**

#### **12.1 Application for Graduation**

Every candidate for a graduate degree is responsible for applying for graduation on forms available from the Office of the Registrar.

#### **12.2 Award of the Degree**

Award of the degree is by approval of the UFV Senate.

#### **12.3 Transcripts**

Certified official transcripts of the student's graduate academic record may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar.

### **13. CONVOCATION CEREMONY**

Convocation is held annually. Graduates meeting all requirements prior to April 30 of a given year will convocate in June of that year. See the [Graduation webpage](#) for more information.

### **14. GRADUATE STUDENT APPEALS**

Graduate students are advised to seek informal resolution of problems through discussions with their supervisor and the Chair of the Graduate Program Committee. UFV [Final Grade Appeals policy \(217\)](#) applies as relevant. For final grade appeals for graduate level courses, the Associate Vice-President, Research, Engagement, and Graduate Studies is the administrator responsible for the appeal, however, the dean or designate of the faculty will be notified.