

Biology Graduate Student Guide (current April 2019)

Congratulations, you made it to grad school! Take a break to just be proud of the accomplishment and excellence that brought you to this point. Welcome :)

This document was created by the Biology Graduate Student Association (BGSA) to help you through your studies at uOttawa. It might seem overwhelming at first, but you should treat it as an accompaniment to your entire stay in grad school. Some information will not be relevant until months or years after you start, but it never hurts to get an idea of what to prepare for.

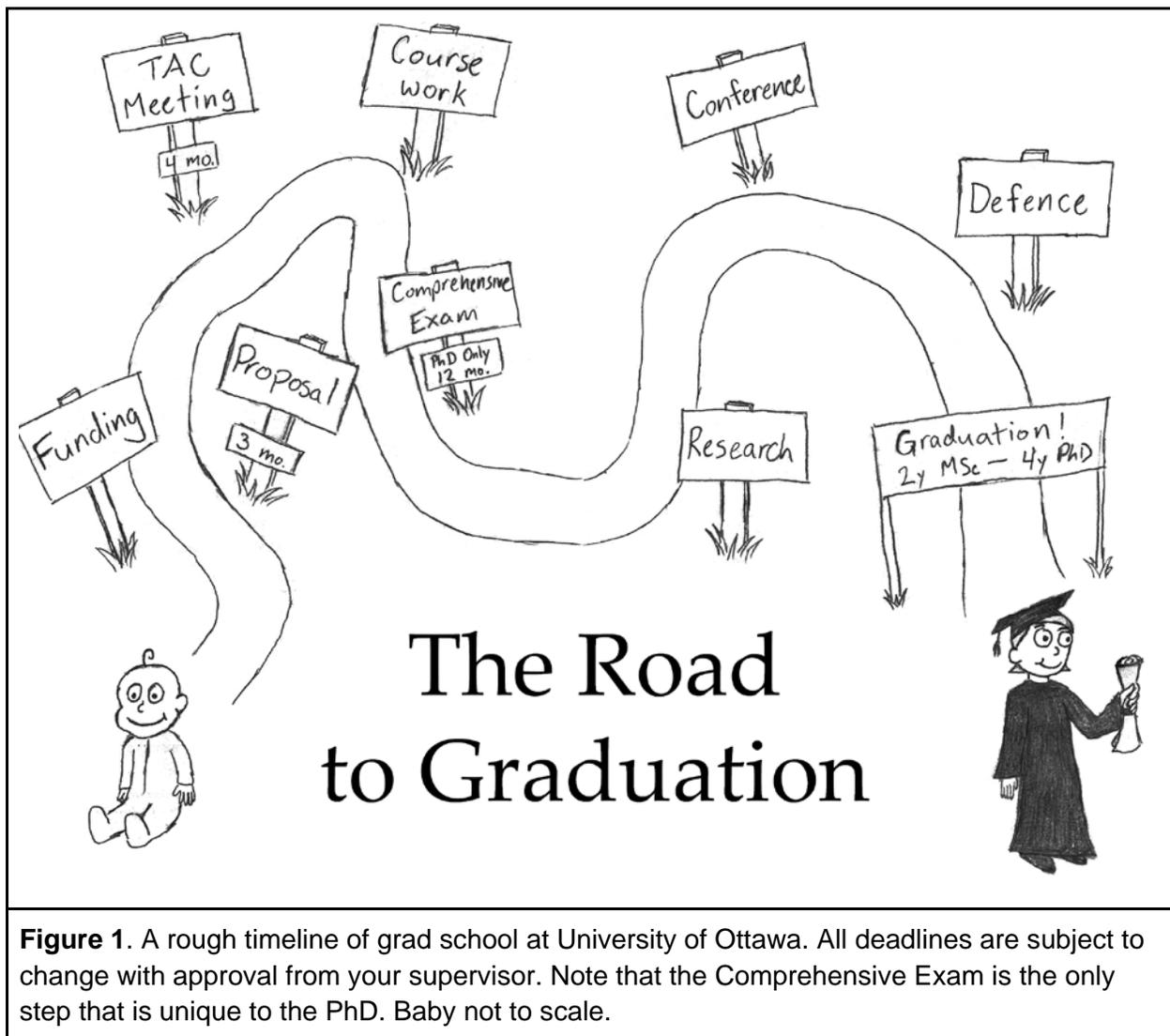


Figure 1. A rough timeline of grad school at University of Ottawa. All deadlines are subject to change with approval from your supervisor. Note that the Comprehensive Exam is the only step that is unique to the PhD. Baby not to scale.

We've tried to include information and advice relevant at each step of your degree, from the time you start to the time you defend and submit your final thesis. We cover academics,

teaching assistantships, funding, research, and more. We will try our best to keep this document up to date, but policies and requirements change from time to time. If you are ever in doubt about academic requirements and scholarship information, ask the biology academic assistant in the Faculty of Science Graduate Office (gradsci@uottawa.ca, Gendron 181) and they will be able to give you the most up-to-date information. For information about teaching assistantships and stipend information, contact the Biology Department Office (bio@uottawa.ca; Gendron 160).

The BGSA is a student-run group with the goal of supporting biology grad students. We run regular social events to strengthen our community and keep you up to date with things going on in the department. The BGSA sends out emails with details on social events. There is also a Facebook group where students share events, information, and ask questions. To be added to this chat send an email to the BGSA. If you have any questions or want to contact us, we can be reached at bgsa@uottawa.com. We're always looking for eager people to join the organizing committee

Good luck!

**Please note that the University of Ottawa may change regulations without notice. Neither authors of this document nor the Faculty and Departments are liable for any potential damages resulting from missing or inaccurate information provided in this document.

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Academic Requirements

The following is accurate at the time of writing (see first page). For the most up-to-date information on program requirements, go to: <https://science.uottawa.ca/biology/programs-of-study> and <https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/theses>

The MSc and PhD programs at the University of Ottawa are research intensive, so most of your time should be spent conducting research. However, all students are required to take a few courses (usually two, see below) and attend a few semesters of the weekly graduate research seminar to earn their degree. If you wish to take additional courses, they must be approved by your supervisor and thesis advisory committee.

You must register for *BIO5900 MSc seminar* or *BIO8900 PhD seminar* each fall and winter semester while they are enrolled, until all your seminar requirements are completed (both attendance and presenting), regardless of whether you plan to attend. You should also register for the appropriate thesis course *THM7999 MSc thesis* or *THD9999 PhD thesis* every fall, winter, and summer semester. PhD students should register for the course *BIO9998 Comprehensive exam* every semester until they have completed their comprehensive exam. Course registration is done online through the “Enrol” application in uoZone (<http://uozone2.uottawa.ca/>).

At your fourth semester (the fall semester, for students who started in September), and each year until they graduate, you must submit an annual progress report to their supervisor. This report describes your research progress and ensures your supervisor stays up-to-date with your work. Download the annual progress report form, which can be found online on the Graduate Studies web page (<https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/theses/progress-report>), fill it out electronically (typed), and submit the completed form as a service request through uoZone. Without timely submission of progress reports, you may not be able to re-register in the following term and would therefore not be eligible for a teaching assistantship.

All graduate students must register their thesis topic online. Master’s students must register their topic by the end of their second term, and PhD students by the end of their third. This can be done by creating a service request in the “Service Request” application in uoZone.

In addition to the standard MSc and PhD programs, you have the option to enrol in one of several program specializations, each with their own slightly altered requirements (e.g. Bioinformatics, Environmental Sustainability, Chemical and Environmental Toxicology, Science, Society and Policy). For more information on specializations, see Appendix A: Program Specializations.

MSc requirements

In order to graduate, MSc students must complete the following

- 6 course units (2 courses) at the 5000-level or above
- Attend two semesters of the graduate seminar course (BIO5900; 80% attendance is required to pass)

- Give one seminar presentation
- Submit and defend thesis (see “Submitting and Defending your Thesis” below)

PhD “fast-track” requirements

With the permission of your supervisor, MSc students may transfer directly to the PhD program (“fast-track”) without first completing a Master’s thesis. The following requirements must be met in order for MSc students to fast-track to PhD

- The transfer must occur within 16 months of starting the MSc program
- You must have completed 6 course units (2 grad courses in your MSc program) with a mark of A- or above
- Must have attended 2 semesters of the graduate seminar course (BIO5900) with 80% attendance and given one seminar presentation
- Must have made satisfactory progress in your research program
- Written recommendation by your supervisor and thesis advisory committee
- Approval by the graduate studies committee

Following a transfer to the PhD program, a student must complete the following

- 6 additional course credits (two courses) at the 5000-level or above
- Attend two more semesters of the graduate seminar course (BIO8900)
- Give one more seminar presentation
- Complete a comprehensive exam within 12 months of transfer (as PhD student below)
- Submit and defend thesis (as PhD student below)

PhD requirements

In order to graduate, PhD students must complete the following

- 6 course credits (2 grad courses) at the 5000-level or above
- Attend four semesters of the graduate seminar course (BIO8900; 80% attendance is required to pass)
- Give two grad seminar presentations
- Complete a comprehensive exam within 12 months of starting the PhD program (see “Comprehensive Exams” below)
- Submit thesis (see “Submitting and Defending your Thesis” below)
- Present a pre-thesis seminar
- Defend your thesis

Courses and Registration

Both the MSc and PhD programs require that you take two graduate-level biology courses (5000-level or above) to graduate (see “Academic requirements” below). Some fourth-year undergraduate biology courses are also cross-listed at as graduate courses, and can be taken as part of your degree. Course registration occurs in the “Enrol” application in uoZone (<http://uozone2.uottawa.ca/>). You can click the “Search Courses” button to browse the courses available in the coming semester. It is generally recommended that you complete these courses early in your program so you have more time for research and writing as you progress.

If your offer of admission contained conditions, you will not be able to register for courses until they are fulfilled.

Other course options:

- In addition to the regular course options offered by the Department of Biology, students can register for a directed studies course with a professor other than their supervisor. These courses involve an independent project overseen one-on-one by the professor. The professor running the course must create a syllabus and get it approved by the Director of Graduate Studies in Biology (currently Prof. Vance Trudeau).
- If there are grad courses relevant to you which are offered by other departments (medicine, chemistry, mathematics, etc.), they can count toward your degree. Have your thesis advisory committee fill out the Course Attendance Form available at the biology grad office (Gendron 181) or at <https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/forms>. You will also need the signature of the Professor teaching the course, and the signature of the Director of Graduate Studies with an indication of whether the course will count towards your program requirements.

Most courses (as well as many TA positions) use the web application Brightspace to post assignments, resources, lecture slides, etc. This is available at <http://uottawa.brightspace.com> and through uoZone (<http://uozone2.uottawa.ca/>) as the “Virtual Campus” application.

Passing the recommended degree duration

The department recommends finishing a MSc in two years and a PhD in four years. Students who fast-track are recommended to finish in 5 years, see “Academic requirements (PhD Fast-track)” above.

Even though two years and four years are recommended to complete the requirements, there are two policies in the general regulations of Graduate Studies at University of Ottawa (see: <https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/academic-regulations>):

6.2. Master’s degrees

Master’s degree students must complete all their degree requirements within four years of the date of initial enrolment in the master’s program, unless their specific program requirements provide for a different time limit.

6.3. Doctoral degrees

Doctoral degree students must submit a thesis for defence within six years of the date of initial enrolment in the doctoral program, unless their specific program requirements provide for a different time limit. Students initially enrolled in a master’s program who transfer to a doctoral program must submit the thesis for defence within seven years of their initial enrolment in the master’s program, unless their specific program requirements provide for a different time limit.

If you have not completed all the requirements before the 4 and 6 year university limits, you will need to fill out a “Request for extension of the time limit to complete the requirements of a graduate degree” form (<https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/forms>) and submit

this as a service request on uoZone. Without doing this, you will not be able to register for upcoming terms and you no longer have a guaranteed stipend. Realistically this means that unless you have external funding, most of your funding will need to come directly from your supervisor. You should discuss with your supervisor what the expectations of funding are if you think you will pass the recommended degree duration. Note that students who have passed their recommended degree duration have lower priority in the assignment of TA positions.

Leaves of Absence

See also: <https://www.uottawa.ca/administration-and-governance/academic-regulation-II-3-graduate-enrolment> and <http://www.2626.ca/your-rights/benefits/>

Under certain circumstances, you can apply for a leave of absence from your studies.

If you become ill and cannot continue your studies, you can apply for medical leave. Similarly, if a family member is very ill or has died, you can apply for compassionate leave. For medical or compassionate leave, you need to clearly state the reason for, and length of, the requested interruption of studies, and provide documentation supporting the reason for the leave (such as a doctor's note confirming the illness). Four people have to approve your medical or compassionate leave (in order): your supervisor, the chair of the Biology Graduate Studies Committee (Vance Trudeau), the Vice-Dean of Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Science (André Beauchemin), and the Vice-Provost of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (Claire Turenne Sjolander) (see <https://science.uottawa.ca/en/about-the-faculty/support-staff> for list and contacts of personnel). You will be granted a corresponding extension, up to one year, to complete your studies when you return.

You can also apply for parental leave for each birth or adoption of a child occurring before the end of your studies. You must provide evidence of the birth or adoption. You will be granted a corresponding extension, up to one year for each birth or adoption, to complete your studies when you return. All graduate students are eligible for parental leave, but the total leave or extension cannot exceed one year. This means if both of a child's parents are graduate students at the university, they must split the year of leave between them.

While on medical, compassionate, or parental leave, you will still have access to the university's computer and library resources. When the approved leave period is over, you must enroll as a student again for the next semester.

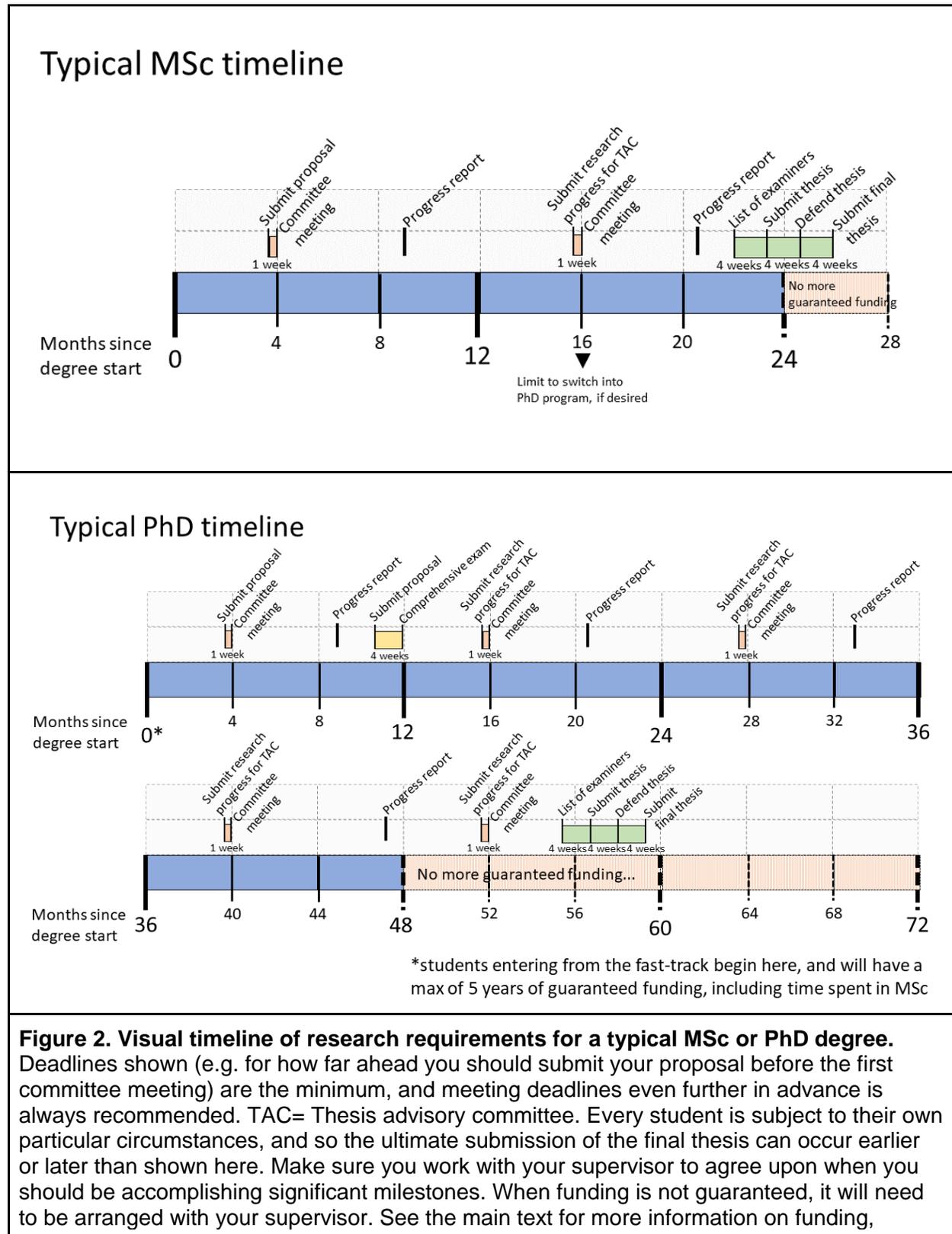
The CUPE 2626 collective agreement also guarantees paid or unpaid leave from your employment under certain circumstances:

- For each 32.5h of work you do, you accumulate 2.5h of paid sick leave, up to a maximum of 38h. Even after you have used your paid hours, you can continue on unpaid sick leave.
- You have the right to up to one (1) month of paid leave in order to undergo the medical procedure(s) related to gender reassignment. You must present a medical certificate to

Health Services, which will then advise the hiring Faculty/Department that this is a legitimate health related leave.

- Following the death of a close relative, you have the right to three (3) consecutive days of paid bereavement leave. You also have the right to ten (10) hours of paid compassionate leave each year to take care of a close relative.
- You have the right to a pregnancy leave of up to seventeen (17) consecutive weeks. You can choose to start this leave at any time between the seventeenth (17th) week preceding the expected date of delivery, and the conclusion of your pregnancy. In the unfortunate and sad circumstances where you had a miscarriage or a stillbirth, this leave and other benefits may apply to you. This leave is paid if it occurs while you are working or when you are guaranteed an employment contract through the collective agreement.
- If you have completed thirteen (13) weeks of employment, you have the right to an unpaid parental leave following the birth of your child or the coming of a child into your custody for the first time. This leave lasts for up to thirty-five (35) weeks if you also took a pregnancy leave, and thirty-seven (37) weeks otherwise.
- You have the right to a paid leave of up to ten (10) hours of work when you attend a conference.

Research requirements



recommended durations, and the full list of requirements you will need to complete each milestone.

Thesis Advisory Committee and Committee Meetings

Each grad student must have a thesis advisory committee (TAC), who will provide guidance on the student's research plans and progress. The TAC is formed in consultation with your supervisor, and should be done within four months of starting your program. Your committee is made up of at least three full-time faculty members: your supervisor (and any co-supervisor) and two other professors, who are chosen by the student and supervisor together. The members of your committee should be familiar enough with your field of study to be able to provide constructive feedback on your research project. It is recommended that one committee member should be from Carleton University, unless the thesis topic or language requirements make it impossible. Students should schedule thesis advisory committee meetings once per year, and can seek committee members for advice and guidance throughout their studies.

For the first committee meeting, you should prepare a research proposal, under the guidance of your supervisor(s), and send it to all committee members at least one week prior to the meeting. Prepare a short oral presentation (15-20 min) of this proposal for the start of the meeting. At the meeting, you and your supervisor(s) consult the thesis advisory committee on course selection and complete a "Course selection form," available from the grad studies office in Gendron 181. Reports of all advisory committee meetings are submitted to the grad studies office and a copy is placed in your file.

You will also discuss your research proposal with the thesis advisory committee. MSc students interested in "fast-tracking" into the PhD program (see "Academic requirements (PhD Fast-track)" below) should discuss this with their committee at the first committee meeting. PhD students will discuss the comprehensive exam with their committee members. Based on these discussions, you then prepare a formal PhD research proposal.

Writing a research proposal

There is no one-size-fits-all method for preparing this very important document. You should prepare it in direct consultation with your thesis supervisor. Make sure to complete your first draft far enough in advance that your supervisor has time to give you suggestions and you have time to revise it. You may need to revise it more than once. Your proposal must be sent to your committee at least one week before your scheduled meeting. Generally speaking, it should be approximately 3,000 words in length, must be typewritten and double-spaced, and should generally include the following sections:

- a) Title page, which also includes the names of the advisory committee members and date of submission
- b) Introduction, which provides the scientific basis for the study, a review of the current literature, and the hypothesis or hypotheses that form the basis of the research
- c) Statement of the scientific value of the research and the rationale for conducting it
- d) Specific hypotheses and associated objectives of the study and the underlying logic

- e) Proposed methodology, including a statement of how the data will be analysed
- f) Timetable, which has been carefully established for successful completion of all proposed research and coursework
- g) Research completed to date (if applicable)
- h) References

Comprehensive Exams

PhD students must take a comprehensive exam within 12 months of starting the PhD program in order to continue their studies. This is an oral examination based primarily on your research proposal.

The comprehensive exam has two main goals:

1. To determine if you have a sufficiently strong background in your research specialty and in fields related to your research topic; and
2. To assess your ability, through your research, to contribute new knowledge in your chosen area of research.

The examination is **not** normally intended to assess the feasibility of the research project, which is determined by the supervisor and student together with support from the advisory committee.

How to Prepare for and Complete the Comprehensive Exam

- Register for the course *BIO9998 Comprehensive exam* every semester until you have completed the exam
- Your Examining Board should be composed of five (only) full-time faculty members. This will be your supervisor, one member from Carleton University Department of Biology, and two other people. These members can be from the thesis advisory committee or not. One member must be an “external” examiner outside your immediate field of research, who is included to assess your general knowledge. The fifth member is the examination chairperson. This can be any principal investigator in the Department of Biology. They do not read or assess the proposal, nor do they ask questions. They chair the meeting, ensuring that questioning is orderly, and take care of the required paperwork.
- Together with your supervisor and thesis advisory committee, agree upon a date, time, and place that is suitable for everyone. A doodle.com poll is an effective way to decide on a time and date when everyone is available.
- Write a formal research proposal outlining your research program (see “Writing a Research Proposal” above)
- At least four weeks ahead of the agreed-upon date, you must:
 - Notify the grad office (gradsci@uottawa.ca, Gendron 181) of the scheduled date, time and place of your exam, as well as the names of your examiners and chairperson. At the same time, email a copy of your research proposal your examiners
 - **Last minute submissions of research proposals are generally not accepted**
- On the day of the exam:

- You will introduce the proposed research with a brief presentation (~15 minute) based on the research proposal and focusing on the significance and logic of the investigation
- The individual examiners will ask you two rounds of questions and discuss your research with you
- Together, these two elements form the basis of your comprehensive examination
- The exam will not normally last longer than three hours
- At the end of the exam, complete the Comprehensive Exam Report form with your committee. Your chairperson will provide the form and take the completed form to the graduate studies office.

Possible outcomes:

- *Pass with no conditions* -- Your performance in the comprehensive exam was satisfactory. You can continue in your program as planned.
- *Pass with conditions* -- Your performance in the comprehensive exam demonstrated some weaknesses, which you are required to address. This may include taking an additional course, doing additional reading on a subject, giving an additional seminar presentation, or other academic requirements.
- *Do not pass* -- Your performance in the comprehensive exam was not satisfactory. The result will be entered into the system as NS (not satisfactory). You must register for *BIO9998 Comprehensive exam* in the following semester, and you will be given an opportunity to redo the exam. If you fail to pass on the second try, you are required to withdraw from the program.

Tips for Passing Your Comprehensive Exam

Take the comprehensive exam as an opportunity to read both broadly and deeply. Brush up on the fundamentals of your field, even topics from your early undergrad, and make sure to know the basic biology of your model organism or study system, if applicable. Even if your research doesn't focus on the organism directly, or uses it only for its convenience as a model system, outsiders (i.e. your external) may expect you to know the basic biology of what organism you study. Give some thought to each of your examiners' research focuses, and read some of their recent papers. This may help you to anticipate the kind of questions they will ask.

The comprehensive exam is meant to test that you have the required knowledge to do the research you propose. It is not a test where you will be expected to answer every question. In fact, your committee will try to find the limits to your knowledge and will likely ask some questions that you do not know the answer to. Don't be scared or embarrassed if and when that happens. It's okay to occasionally admit when you're not sure, and end the question there or give an educated guess (just be very clear on when you are saying what you know, and when you are venturing into "educated guess" territory!).

Make sure you visit the room where your exam will be held beforehand the day of your exam. Check how you will connect your presentation; will you need some cables to connect your

laptop or a USB? The biology office (GNN 161) will be able to lend you any cables you will need.

If there is whiteboard or chalkboard in the room, bring some erasable markers or chalk so you can make some figures or diagrams during your exam. Explanations can be clearer and easier when accompanied by a diagram or figure, and it will show your committee that you have a good grasp of your subject matter and/or experimental predictions. Practice including figures and diagrams during your preparation, especially for any difficult methods or for your predictions.

As you get closer to the date, it is highly recommended that you stage one or more practice exams with your labmates and other students. Present your talk and have your friends ask you questions afterward, as in a real comprehensive exam. Your labmates will be able to probe you deeply with questions about your research area, and students less familiar with your field will help demonstrate gaps in your broader knowledge or perspectives you hadn't considered. You can practice several times until you are comfortable defending your proposal. Think about inviting students from the labs of your committee members, as they may be able to give you a sneak peek into the particular questions and perspectives of their supervisors.

Submitting and Defending your Thesis

Refer also to: <https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/theses>

The thesis is the written culmination of a graduate student's research project. In Biology it usually takes the form of one or more articles, with an additional introductory and conclusion chapter. In addition to these, all theses must have a title page and a bilingual abstract (i.e. you will need to translate your thesis abstract into French before you submit). Once you have completed all the requirements of your degree, and you and your supervisor are satisfied that your thesis is complete, you will submit it for evaluation. All theses are subject to an oral defence before the degree of MSc or PhD is awarded

PhD Students must also present a public pre-thesis seminar before their defence. This may be done either before or after submission, but must take place before your defence date. To schedule the pre-thesis seminar, contact the professor in charge of organising departmental seminars (Risa Sargent, as of Sept 2018).

Defences are fully open at uOttawa, so it is strongly recommended that you attend at least one before submitting your thesis.

How to Submit

One month before submitting your thesis, you must propose a list of examiners. One examiner should be from Carleton University, unless the thesis topic or language requirements make it impossible. Your list of examiners should be submitted to the department by service request through uoZone for approval. In most cases, the examiners will be your thesis advisory committee members.

- PhD students must have an “arms-length” external examiner from outside the University of Ottawa and Carleton, chosen by your supervisor in consultation with you. To ensure there is no conflict of interest, your supervisor must submit a complete bibliography for the proposed external examiner.
- Forms for proposing thesis defence examiners are available at the Faculty of Graduate Studies webpage (<https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/theses/submission-evaluation>). Completed forms should be submitted through the service request application on uoZone.
- **The supervisor is responsible for confirming that all examiners, including the proposed external examiners, are willing to read the thesis.**
- If you submit your thesis without having submitted a list of examiners already, the thesis must be accompanied by an explanatory letter from the Biology Department chair.

You will submit an electronic copy of the thesis online through the “Service Request” application on uoZone (<http://uozone2.uottawa.ca/>)

- Click the “Create New Request” button, then choose “Research Related,” and then “Submission of the thesis for oral evaluation.” If you don’t see this option, click “View All.”
- The Graduate Office will send your submitted thesis to your supervisor, who must examine your final thesis draft. They will be emailed a link to approve your thesis.
- If your examiners require a paper copy, the Graduate Office will contact you and ask that you provide one or more copies of the thesis to the biology grad office (Gendron 181).
- The examiners will read your thesis and send a report back to the university. If they determine the thesis is ready for defence, a defence date will be scheduled by the Graduate Office.

Submission Deadlines

If you successfully submit your thesis (with supervisor’s approval) before the start of a new semester, you do not have to register for the coming semester and you do not have to pay tuition, as long as you have completed all your other requirements (such as courses and seminar presentations).

If you submit your thesis within about a month of the start of a new semester (see official deadlines below), the university will refund 100% of your tuition for that semester. If you submit your thesis after one month but before about two months, the university will refund 50% of that semester’s tuition. Grad students who submit their thesis between the start of the fall semester and September 30th can have their U-Pass fee refunded, but this is not automatic: fill out an exemption form (<http://sfuo.ca/upass/exemptions/>) to get your refund.

The official submission deadlines for each semester are available online at:

<https://www.uottawa.ca/important-academic-dates-and-deadlines/>

Defending your Thesis

On the day of the defence:

- You will give a short (~15 min) presentation of your thesis research. Focus on the main discoveries to remind the examiners and try to address any major concerns raised in the comments you received from them
- The individual examiners will question you on your thesis, in two rounds
- Finally, your supervisor has an opportunity to ask questions or give comments on the thesis
- At the end of the defence, everyone leaves the room except the examiners, who consult to decide on the final verdict

Possible verdicts:

1. *Pass with minor corrections* -- Any examiner corrections and comments must be addressed and the final thesis submitted within 30 days of the defence, overseen by the supervisor. If you take more than 30 days, you must register as a student for the semester and submit your revisions within 120 days of the defence.
2. *Pass with major corrections/revisions* -- You have to register as a student for the semester, and have 120 days after the defence to complete the revisions and submit the thesis. At the defence, the examiners will decide whether the revisions will be overseen by the supervisor alone, or potentially by the examiners as well.
3. *Thesis is not accepted* -- The thesis must be revised and evaluated again by the same jury of examiners, within 3 terms after the defence. You must be registered as a student during this time and make satisfactory progress during each term.

If a student's thesis is not accepted after a second defence, they must withdraw from the university. This almost never happens, as your supervisor will generally not let you advance to the thesis defence if they do not believe you are ready.

Revise your thesis based on your committee's comments and upload it as a service request for their final approval. Once it is approved, submit the final version of your thesis through uO Research: <https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/theses/electronic-submission-final-version>. Once your final thesis is submitted, you can apply for graduation via the "Apply for graduation" application on uoZone.

Stipend and Funding FAQ

See also <https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/programs-admission/finance-studies> and <https://science.uottawa.ca/biology/why-study/scholarships-financial-aid>

Do I get paid to do my degree?

While they are working full-time on their thesis research, every graduate student in the Department of Biology is guaranteed an annual stipend for the expected duration of their degree (two years for an MSc, 4 years for a PhD, or 5 years for a student who has fast-tracked). This stipend is currently set at \$19,500 for MSc, and \$20,500 for PhD. *Every year within the recommended duration of your degree, you are guaranteed to be paid this much.* It is possible to be paid more than this annual stipend, but this is generally uncommon (see “How can I be paid more than my annual stipend?”). Without external funding, you will be expected to work as a teaching assistant (TA) during your degree to help contribute to this stipend (see “What is TAing?” below), and your supervisor is responsible for “topping up” the rest. If you pass your recommended degree duration, your supervisor is not required to support you and you may no longer be eligible for TA support. If you suspect that this may happen, you should meet with your supervisor to secure another funding arrangement.

Example 1: if you are an MSc student with no scholarships or external funding, you will likely need to TA to help pay your stipend. If you TA two courses in the fall and winter and make \$5,750 each semester, then this will count as \$11,500 of your guaranteed \$19,500. Your supervisor will be required to provide the remaining \$8,000 of your stipend (and will typically pay most of it over the summer to balance out your income).

Example 2: If you are an MSc and you have an OGS scholarship awarding you \$15,000 a year, then this OGS will count as \$15,000 of your guaranteed \$19,500. If you TA in the fall and make \$5,750, then this will mean you make \$20,750, and you will make slightly more than your stipend. In this case, your professor is not required to provide additional funding.

Example 3: If you are a PhD and you have an NSERC scholarship awarding you \$21,000 a year, then this will cover the entirety of your stipend. You will not need to TA and your professor is not required to pay you. If you choose to TA, this money will be made on top of the \$21,000.

What do I need to do to make sure I get the correct stipend?

You must fill out a Financial Support form before every single semester (including your very first one) to make sure that your stipend money is deposited into your account. This is emailed to your uOttawa email address, and also needs to be filled and signed by your thesis supervisor. If you're a new student and have not received one, you should talk to the helpful staff in the Biology Department Office (160 Gendron). If your supervisor has agreed to pay you more than the guaranteed stipend, then that should be indicated clearly and explicitly on this form.

When do I get my stipend?

When you TA and/or if you're funded from your supervisor, you will receive this money in direct deposits to your bank account on the 15th and the last day of every month. You will need to send a direct deposit form to the Biology Office (160 Gendron) to ensure you are paid. If all the required documentation is completed on time, pay cycles generally start on September 15th,

January 15th, and May 15th. However if students wait to complete the payment forms after their first term begins, then they are not likely to receive a paycheck from the university until the end of the month.

The amount that you receive per pay period is usually consistent, although there can be exceptions if for example you TA an intensive (4-week) course or a (2-week) field course, receive a scholarship, or stop/start TAing. When you have an external scholarship (e.g. OGS, NSERC, or FQRNT), this will be split into lump-sum amounts for each semester and deposited into your university account at the start of each semester. This will balance against any fees and tuition that you may owe, and if there is a credit (i.e. the total amount of scholarships exceeds the amount of fees/tuition) then you will receive a reimbursement in the form of a cheque sent to your mailing address. This cheque usually arrives in the second or third week of the semester. You can check your account balance at any time through the “Statement of Account” application on uoZone (<http://uozone2.uottawa.ca/>).

Example 1: If you are an MSc student beginning their degree in September who has their entire \$19,500 stipend funded through a TA and their supervisor, you will begin TAing when you arrive in September. Your first paycheck will arrive on September 15th, and you will continue receiving paychecks every other week. Regardless of how much you TA, you will receive all your \$19,500 stipend direct deposited throughout the year (but note you will generally be expected to TA to subsidize the amount your supervisor needs to pay). If you TA two units each semester, you will earn ~\$11,500 per year, and the remaining ~\$8,000 will be covered by your supervisor as a direct bursary. Note you are not guaranteed two TA units each semester (see *“How are teaching assistant positions assigned, and am I guaranteed a position?”* below)

Example 2: If you are an MSc student beginning their degree in September with a \$15,000 per year OGS scholarship and an Excellence scholarship (equivalent to a tuition waiver), you will see your OGS split into three payments of \$5,000 at the start of every fall, winter, and spring/summer semester. At the beginning of the semester your student account should show tuition owed, a credit from the Excellence Scholarship in the amount of tuition, and a credit from the OGS in the amount of \$5,000. You should receive a reimbursement of \$5,000, minus incidentals (e.g. bus pass or health and dental), and other fees, in September. Your OGS award will count for \$15,000 of your \$19,500 stipend. If you TA in the fall and winter semesters you will likely make \$5,000-10,000 and meet your minimum annual stipend, so you will not receive any money from the University in the spring/summer semester, aside from your OGS reimbursement for that term. If you do not TA, and your supervisor pays the remaining \$4,500 of your stipend, this will likely be split into 16 payments and direct deposited every other week throughout the spring/summer semester.

How do I pay tuition?

See: <https://www.uottawa.ca/financial-resources/student-accounts/method-payment>

You will receive an email to your student email address each semester when tuition and fees are charged to your account. You can also view outstanding charges to your student account at any time by clicking on “statement of account” on the “Finances and jobs” tab of uoZone

[\(http://uozone2.uottawa.ca/\)](http://uozone2.uottawa.ca/). Any tuition scholarships you are awarded should be applied to your account automatically. If are not receiving your scholarship money, you can email gradsci@uottawa.ca or visit the grad office (GNN 181). Students with partial scholarships or without scholarships can then transfer money to their student account to pay tuition. You can also pay by cheque at InfoService (in Tabaret Hall) or in-person at your personal bank or the National Bank branch at 232 Rideau St, by following the instructions on the web page linked above.

As an alternative to paying tuition and fees up front as a lump sum, grad students can also use the “Payment Plan for Graduate Students” (<https://www.uottawa.ca/financial-resources/student-accounts/payment-plan>) to pay their tuition in three installments throughout the semester without interest. To qualify for the plan, you must have a TA contract (or a Research Assistant contract) at the university (see “What is TAing?” below) and not owe any debt to the university. Email a copy of your contract to finance@uottawa.ca or bring it to the financial office at Tabaret 021, and they will enroll you in this payment plan.

Make sure you know when tuition payments are due. This information is available at <https://www.uottawa.ca/important-academic-dates-and-deadlines/>, under “Tuition fee payment.” If you miss the deadline, you will be charged \$60, plus interest on the remaining balance. See <https://www.uottawa.ca/financial-resources/student-accounts/paymentdates> for more information on late payments.

Does my stipend cover tuition?

For PhD and MSc students from Canada, tuition is about \$9,000-10,000 for the year (* see below for overseas students). You will need to use your stipend to pay your tuition. If you have an Admission scholarship, the University will award you \$2,500 per term for M.Sc. and \$3,000 per term for PhD, for the recommended degree duration (2 years for a MSc and 4 years for a PhD). If you are awarded an OGS/NSERC award, your Admission scholarship will be replaced by an “Excellence Scholarship”, which covers all of your tuition (not including incidental fees such as GSEAD fees, UPASS fees, UHIP, etc). When your OGS/NSERC award is completed, you may be eligible to continue receiving the regular Admission scholarship if you are still within the recommended duration of your degree (two years for a MSc, four years for a PhD, and five years for a student who has fast-tracked).

Example: You are a MSc student who has received an admissions scholarship and an OGS award for your first year of studies. In the first year of your studies, you will receive your OGS award (\$15,000) and your admissions scholarship will be replaced by an Excellence Scholarship (which should cover the entirety of your tuition, but not additional fees such as U-Pass, UHIP, etc.). If you are not awarded an OGS for your second year of studies, then for your second year of studies you will receive a regular admissions scholarship. If you stay for a third year of MSc studies, you will not be eligible to receive any admissions scholarship.

Keep in mind that while you do not need to pay tuition once you submit your thesis, a verdict of “major revisions” in your defence means that you will need to pay the full cost of tuition while you revise your thesis (see “Submitting and Defending Your Thesis” above).

*For international MSc students, tuition is about \$23,000-24,000 a year. As of 2018, international PhD students pay the same tuition as Canadians (~\$9,000 a year). For up-to-date information on tuition see <https://www.uottawa.ca/university-fees/>. International students are eligible for the International Admission Scholarship (\$7,500/year for MSc for two years, and \$9,000/year for PhD for four years), but note that unlike the domestic Admission Scholarship, this is a competitive award.

How can I be paid more than my annual stipend?

It's possible to be paid more than your annual stipend, although it is not common because scholarships replace your stipend instead of adding to it, and because the department does not generally assign full 130-hour TA positions to scholarship holders. The main ways you can make significantly more than your stipend are if you have an NSERC/OGS award and can apply for French TA positions, and if your supervisor decides to pay you above your stipend.

Example 1: If you are an MSc student with an OGS awarding you \$15,000 a year, then this will count as \$15,000 of your \$19,500 annual stipend. If you are able to TA in French, you could likely apply for and receive two TA units in both the fall and winter semesters. You would be paid \$11,600 and therefore you would make ~\$8,000 over your annual stipend.

Example 2: If you are a PhD student with no external scholarships, and you TA two units in the fall and winter semesters, you would make ~\$11,600 of your \$20,500 annual stipend. If your supervisor has agreed to pay you \$5,000 above the annual stipend, then this will need to be indicated on the financial support forms that are filled out every semester. They would pay you ~\$8,900.

Can I still apply for OSAP?

See <https://www.ontario.ca/page/osap-ontario-student-assistance-program>

Even though you have a guaranteed stipend and even if you have OGS, NSERC, or other scholarship awards, you can still be eligible for the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). Canadian citizens and permanent residents can apply to OSAP and be awarded money in the form of loans (which you will need to repay when you finish) and in grants/bursaries (which do not need to be repaid). After applying for OSAP and seeing whether you qualify and how much you qualify for, you can choose to accept all the offered loans and bursaries, or just the bursaries. If you have questions related to OSAP funding, you can email loansandawards@uOttawa.ca.

Do I need to pay taxes on my stipend?

Full time graduate students often receive refunds on their tax returns, so you should file your taxes. This is a legal requirement for working in Canada. Most scholarships like OGS and

NSERC are not taxed, and you will likely not make enough money from TAing to have to owe taxes on this amount. However, there are various tuition tax credits, public transit tax credits, and provincial credits that you can apply for upon filing your income tax return in order to obtain a refund. Relevant income tax forms related to scholarships, tuition, and TAing can be downloaded from the Income Tax Form application on uoZone (<https://uozone2.uottawa.ca/content/income-tax-form>).

Can I be employed outside of the university?

No, not when you are supported through the stipend. Graduate program requirements allow full-time students to work no more than 10 hours a week outside of their thesis. This includes TAing and any other part-time employment. If you're not TAing two units in a semester, you should be able to work at another part-time job, as long as you don't exceed a total of 10 hours a week of non-thesis related work. This is so that you can conduct quality research and submit your thesis in a timely manner. If you need to work more than 10 hours a week at a part-time job outside of your thesis, you should talk to your supervisor. Note that international students with student visas should double check whether their study permits allow them to work legally in Canada outside of the University.

Teaching Assistantship (TA) FAQ

What is TAing?

See <https://science.uottawa.ca/en/programs-of-study/graduate-studies/teaching-assistantships>

Most grad students in the department work as Teaching Assistants (TAs) during their degree. This is an important contribution to the departmental activities but must be balanced against your primary goal: research excellence. Grad students work as TAs to help make their stipend and to obtain experience teaching in a university. There are generally two types of TA positions: lab demonstrators and correctors (who will lead undergraduate students through labs and/or correct lab assignments) and course correctors (who will correct undergrad midterms, exams, and course assignments). Teaching assistantship contracts are measured as units, and each unit represents either 65 hours of lab demonstration, or 90.5 hours of course correction work (the difference in hours between these positions reflects the fact that undergrad labs generally finish a few weeks before final exams). All TA positions (lab demos and course correctors), make ~\$2,900 per unit. You can apply for TA positions within the Biology Department and in other departments as well (for example in the chemistry, environmental science, earth sciences, or physics department).

How do I apply to TA positions?

Applications for TAs generally open several weeks before the fall and winter semesters begin, usually late July for Fall positions and late November for Winter positions. You will receive an email when they open, so check your uOttawa email inbox around these times. There is only one round of applications to TA positions per semester. All students must apply during the posting period and you should apply to everything you are interested in TAing. Applications must be submitted on the University of Ottawa Human Resources website (<https://erp-forms.uottawa.ca/uohmsweb/cupe.aspx?lang=en>). You will complete a single application which indicates all of the positions you wish to apply for. After completing your applications on the HR website, you must then visit the following department of biology site (<http://biolab1.uottawa.ca/choices/>) in order to preferentially rank up to five of your applications. At this point, you will also be able to indicate if you have been formally recommended for your first choice by the direct supervisor of this position.

If there is a course in particular you would like to TA, you can contact the professor or lab coordinator for the position before applying and ask them to recommend you for the position. If they have worked with you before, or agree that you would be a good TA for the course, then they may tell you to indicate during the TA application that they recommended you for hire. This “recommended for hire” generally appears as a box you can tick during the application process, and can increase the odds that you are chosen for the position.

How are teaching assistant positions assigned, and am I guaranteed a position?

First, you must apply to at least one position. After the application period has finished, the departmental TA Assignment Committee, chaired by Charles Darveau, assigns units according to the entitlement and hiring priority stated in the CUPE 2626 collective agreement, including whether you are within two years of your MSc, or 5 years of your PhD. Following these criteria, the department also matches student with positions based on the amount of external funding

you have (students with less funding being preferred), due to the stipend commitment the Department adheres to. Students without major scholarships (e.g. OGS, NSERC, or FRQNT) will usually be given two TA units per semester, and then the remaining TA assignments are distributed among students with scholarships and students outside their recommended degree duration. Because of the limited number of TA positions, students with major scholarships may not be given any TA units in one term. In this case they will receive two units the following term. Biology grad students can also apply for TA positions in other departments, such as chemistry, environmental science, earth science, and physics. If you are qualified, this can be another way to increase your chances of getting a full TA load. Units obtained in another department counts towards your entitlement.

From the time you accept a TA contract until 12 months after the contract ends, as long as you are a student, you are a member of CUPE 2626 (Canadian Union of Public Employees, see “What is CUPE?” below). As a CUPE member, the university is required to give you at least 130 hours of employment annually (generally equivalent to two TA units). This could mean two units in the fall, one unit in fall and one in winter, or two units in the winter. If you applied to TA in both semesters, but did not receive at least two units throughout the year, you should contact the biology department TA Assignment Committee (Charles Darveau), and then CUPE 2626 (info@2626.ca) to be paid the difference.

Can I TA in French?

Yes. Students applying to TA in French should be competent speaking, reading, and writing scientific content in French. You will be TAing or marking students from a variety of backgrounds who will expect you to be able to understand them and answer their questions in French. Historically, the Department generally does not have enough francophone TAs, so NSERC and OGS-holders are more likely to receive two TA units if they apply to TA positions requiring French. The Biology Department TA Assignment Committee strongly encourages bilingual graduate students to apply to French positions.

How much work is TAing going to be?

TA's are meant to work on average across the term no more than 10 hours a week. In reality, the TA workload is not consistent. Some weeks you will need to dedicate 30 hours to TA responsibilities and other weeks you will not do any TA related work. The TA job description varies between courses due to the diverse type of jobs available. Some students may find TAing to be a burden, especially when given two units in a semester, while other students who like teaching may find TAing very enjoyable. You should record your hours worked during TAships to ensure they do not exceed your contract hours. If hours worked exceed hours contracted, the student must contact their TA supervisor to discuss options (i.e., continue paying the extra hours or finish the contract). If you think you are being pressured to consistently work more than 10 hours a week, or if you feel you are being asked to work within unreasonable deadlines, you should discuss it with the department Chair. If you cannot resolve the issue with your supervisor and/or the department Chair, you should then contact the departmental CUPE union stewards (you can ask for contact information for your appointed CUPE stewards by emailing bgsa@uottawa.ca).

How much do I have to TA?

Generally you are expected to TA if you do not have a scholarship that covers your stipend. Each fall and winter semester you can apply for one or two units of TA work. The TA positions are not guaranteed, but the department works hard to accommodate everyone's needs.

I will be abroad at another institution/city for the semester. Can I still TA?

It may be possible to TA while you are abroad or not physically at the university. Some corrector contracts can be completed entirely online, although this is rare and it is not guaranteed. To do this, you will need to contact the bio office (GNN 160) and the professor or lab coordinator in charge of the position you are interested in BEFORE YOU APPLY FOR THAT POSITION. You will need to work out an agreement with the prof/lab coordinator and inform the Biology department TA Assignment Committee before actually applying for positions. Ultimately, your thesis supervisor is responsible for your stipend if you are not on site to perform your TA duties.

A list of lab coordinators and contact information can be found here at

<https://science.uottawa.ca/biology/about-department/personnel>.

What is proctoring?

Every TA unit also includes proctoring (invigilating) a final exam. The final exam period in the fall is usually from the ~5th to the 20th of December, while the final exam period in the winter is usually from the ~5th to the 26th of April (see <https://www.uottawa.ca/important-academic-dates-and-deadlines/>). You will be randomly assigned a final exam (usually 3 hours long) sometime during this period and it is part of your TA contract to show up and monitor this exam under the guidance of a senior proctor (professor). If you know that you are not going to be present for your assigned proctoring assignment, you have to inform the biology office by email as soon as possible (bio@uottawa.ca), and then find a replacement and find a proctoring assignment that works for you (try switching with another TA). If you know that you will not be present for the entire December or April exam period, you should contact the biology office by email as soon as possible. You can be assigned to proctor any exam within the Faculty of Science in French or English, although you will not need to answer any questions regarding the exam content.

What's CUPE?

See <http://www.2626.ca/>

Every student who TAs becomes a part of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 2626 (CUPE 2626) for up to 12 months after the end of their TA contract. CUPE 2626 represents all teaching assistants, research assistants, markers, and other student employees at the university and offers several sources of financial aid (for non-thesis related conference travel, emergencies, and non-insured medical costs, among other things). They also provide services for students who want to file a grievance against their employer.

International Students - Special considerations

- **Student Visas** -- In order to go to school in Canada, you must have a student visa and/or study permit, depending on where you are from. See the Canada Immigration and Citizenship website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/immigration-citizenship.html>. When your student visa expires or your studies end, you will no longer be able to stay in Canada under the visa.

NOTE: If you are an international student enrolled in the MSc program who fast-tracks to PhD, you will have to renew your study permit or visa to reflect the new “expected duration” of your degree. If your visa expires during a semester, you will not be able to accept TA contracts that semester, so make sure to renew it before then.

- **Social Insurance Numbers** -- International students must obtain a temporary Social Insurance Number (SIN) in order to work in Canada, including as a teaching assistant. You can get one at the Service Canada office in City Hall (110 Laurier Avenue West - <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/tbsc-fsco/sc-dsp.jsp?rc=3747&lang=eng>).
- **University Health Insurance Plan** (<https://international.uottawa.ca/en/study-at-uottawa/uhip>) -- International students are required to pay for UHIP health insurance through the university. This insurance plan covers basic medical services but not dental care or prescriptions, which fall under the grad student Green Shield insurance (see “Perks” at the end of the document).

Many, though not all, scholarships available to Canadian students can be awarded to international students. However, there are a few scholarships and grants specifically available to international students! See Appendix B: Scholarships and Grants for more information.

Appendix A: Program Specializations

See also: <https://science.uottawa.ca/biology/programs-of-study>

In addition to the standard graduate programs in biology, the Department of Biology offers four degree specializations for Master's students and one for PhD students. Each requires that your research project is related to the theme of the specialization, and has a slightly altered set of course requirements from the standard program.

MSc Specialization in Bioinformatics

Thesis topic must be original bioinformatics research carried out under the supervision of a faculty member participating in the bioinformatics collaborative program. In addition:

- One of your two graduate courses must be *BNF5106 Bioinformatics*, and the other is an biology grad course of your choosing
- You must complete one semester of *BNF6100 MSc Seminar in Bioinformatics* and one semester of *BIO5900 MSc Seminar in Biology*. The bioinformatics seminar involves a written report, the presentation of a seminar, and regular attendance at departmental seminars.

MSc Specialization in Environmental Sustainability

Thesis topic must be original research in environmental sustainability carried out under the supervision of a faculty member in biology or participating in the environmental sustainability collaborative program. In addition:

- You must complete one semester of *EVD5100 Seminar in Environmental Sustainability* and one semester of *BIO5900 MSc Seminar in Biology*. The environmental sustainability seminar involves a written report, the presentation of a seminar, and regular attendance at departmental seminars.

MSc Specialization in Science, Society and Policy

Thesis topic must be original research relating to science, society and policy, carried out under the supervision of a faculty member in biology or participating in the science, society and policy collaborative program. In addition:

- You must take *ISP5101 Decision at the Interface of Science and Policy*, in addition to two biology grad courses of your choosing
- You only have to complete one semester of *BIO5900 MSc Seminar in Biology*.

MSc or PhD Specialization in Chemical and Environmental Toxicology

Thesis topic must be original toxicology research carried out under the supervision of a faculty member participating in the chemical and environmental toxicology collaborative program. In addition:

- In addition to one biology grad course of your choosing, you must take either
 - *TOX8156 Principles of Toxicology*, or
 - *TOX9104 Ecotoxicology*
- You must complete one semester of *TOX9105 Seminar in Toxicology* and one semester of *BIO5900 MSc Seminar in Biology*. The toxicology seminar involves a written report, the presentation of a seminar, and regular attendance at departmental seminars.

Appendix B: Scholarships & Grants

See also <https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/awards>

There are many internal and external scholarships you can apply for at the University through the “Online Scholarships and Bursaries” application of uoZone. Apply for them!! Most awards through this portal are small, but an extra hundred dollars can help your wallet and any award listed on your CV is a good thing! In particular, look for the Department of Biology Scholarship Fund, Don E. McAllister Memorial Scholarship (OTSS), Dr. Pearl Weinberger Memorial Scholarship, Heather Glendinning McMurter Award, and Denis Vézina Faculty of Science Research Scholarship. Many scientific societies and non-profit agencies have their own scholarships, which you could seek out. They also have grants that could go directly to support your research (e.g. travel to field sites, conferences, etc.).

Scholarships for Canadian Students (Citizens & Permanent Residents)

For the main scholarships (OGS, NSERC, FRQNT), you will need to apply in autumn of the academic year preceding your start. For students starting in September, this means applying the previous fall. For students starting in January, this means applying the fall of two calendar years before (e.g. apply in Fall 2019 if you are beginning in Jan 2021).

Popular scholarships include: (More info available at the link)

NSERC/CIHR (<https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/awards/canada-graduate-scholarships-program>)

- \$17,500/year (MSc), \$21,000/year or \$35,000/year (PhD)

OGS (Ontario Graduate Scholarship) - \$15,000/year

(<https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/ogs-application-portal-step-step-instructions>)

- Available to both MSc and PhD students

FQRNT (Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la nature et les technologies)

(<https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/awards/fonds-quebecois-recherche>)

- \$17,500/year (MSc), \$21,000/year (PhD)
- Applicants must live in Quebec

Queen Elizabeth II graduate scholarships in science and technology

- \$15,000/year (MSc and PhD) (with one-third from a sponsor)
- International students not eligible

Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship - \$50,000/year

(<https://research.uottawa.ca/rms/researchers-resources/external-sources/vanier>)

- Available to Canadian or international PhD Students
- Applicants need to be nominated by the university

Mitacs Globalink (<https://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/globalink>)

- \$6,000 to come from abroad and study in Canada (or vice-versa)

And many more!!

Scholarships for International Students

OGS (Ontario Graduate Scholarship) - \$15,000/year

(<https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/ogs-application-portal-step-step-instructions>)

- Available to both MSc and PhD students

Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship - \$50,000/year

(<https://research.uottawa.ca/rms/researchers-resources/external-sources/vanier>)

- Available to Canadian or international PhD Students
- Applicants need to be nominated by the university

Ontario Trillium Scholarship - \$40,000/year (<https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/awards/ontario-trillium-scholarships>)

- Available to international PhD students only

Mitacs Globalink (<https://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/globalink>)

- \$6,000 to come from abroad and study in Canada (or vice-versa)

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>)

- US citizens can apply to FAFSA for financial aid for graduate studies abroad.

Fulbright Student Awards (<http://www.fulbright.ca/>)

- Fulbright and Fulbright Canada offer research and study awards for Canadian citizens to study in the US, and US citizens to study in Canada.

And many more! See <https://scholarships.uottawa.ca/> for a full listing of those available through U. of Ottawa.

There are also commercial web sites that may also be worth exploring for scholarships such as <https://www.scholarshipscanada.com/>

Conference travel funding

MSc and PhD students are highly encouraged to present their work at conferences throughout their degrees. You should talk to your supervisor to discuss how many conferences they will be willing to fund for you, and what they will cover. (e.g. Airline tickets, conference registration, and accommodations are usually covered, but what about food, bus/taxi/Uber between airports/hotels/conference centers?). Students can apply for one or more conference travel grants to help offset the cost to the professor.

Generally all conference reimbursements and grants will require:

- A pre-travel authorization form (to be signed by your supervisor and submitted to the bio office before you leave)
- A post-travel authorization form (also to be signed by your supervisor)
- Itemized receipts for any purchases being reimbursed, or a Missing Receipt Affidavit (this also includes original boarding passes, ticket invoices, credit card statements of payment etc.)
- Credit card or bank statement records (something to show you personally paid for the purchase)
- Proof that you attended the conference (e.g. a program with your name, a nametag from the conference)

Travel reimbursement forms can be found at <https://www.uottawa.ca/financial-resources/accounting/>

List of conference and travel grants:

Travel grant via Faculty of Science Graduate Office

See <https://science.uottawa.ca/en/programs-of-study/graduate-studies/conference-travel-grants>

This is the primary travel grant for conference travel. MSc students are allowed up to one award through their degree, and PhD students are allowed up to three. Students who have fast-tracked into a PhD are allowed up to four of these conference grants. There are forms to fill for this before and after leaving for your conference, and must apply before you leave. An travel grant awards up to \$550 to MSc students, or \$800 to PhD students, although this amount varies depending on how far away the conference is. The grant pays for travel only.

Departmental conference support

See <https://goo.gl/forms/iNGqv1rkxqOndYIG2>

The Department of Biology offers conference travel grants to students who have used up all their Faculty of Science travel grants, or if other grants do not cover the entire cost of the conference. At present, the fund can provide up to \$1000 for PhD, and \$500 for MSc students. This should be applied for before you leave for the conference.

GSAÉD Academic Project Fund

See <https://gsaed.ca/en/services/individual-academic-project-fund/>

The Graduate Students Association (GSAÉD) provides a travel grant to cover up to \$100 a day (for up to four days) of travel-related expenses (primarily this means conferences although it can be used for other academic projects as well). MSc can receive one GSAÉD travel award, while PhDs can receive two. Applicants will need to apply for this after the conferences, and must be receiving funds from elsewhere as well (e.g. through an Faculty of Science or Trésor cachée grant).

CUPE Conference grant for non-thesis

See http://www.2626.ca/your-rights/funding/#conference_fund

The Canadian Union of Public Employees offers a conference grant for non-thesis related research. The CUPE grant will cover all travel expenses up \$800 per award. There is no limit on how many CUPE conference grants one can receive, although priority is given to students who have never received one. Students are not eligible for the CUPE Conference grant if they have received funding from the Faculty (i.e. Faculty of Science), and the application must be sent at least two weeks before leaving for the conference.

Society grants

The hosting societies or organization of a conference will often offer Student Travel Grants. The deadlines for these are generally around the early-bird conference registration deadline, and applicants usually need to show they have applied (or are planning to apply) to external sources of funding.

Research travel funding

There are a few sources of funding to help you travel and research overseas, for example to collaborate with another researcher or an industry partner. Below are a few.

Faculty of Science Research Travel Grant

See <https://science.uottawa.ca/en/programs-of-study/graduate-studies/research-travel-grants>

The Faculty of Science offers a grant of up to \$550 to support thesis-related research. MSc, PhD, and fast-track students can be awarded up to one award. To be eligible, you must be studying full-time, complete the application and estimated budget, clearly indicate how the research stay is related to your (current) thesis, and ensure that your supervisor indicates their support. You must also have completed two terms (for the MSc) or three terms (for the PhD), but not yet exceeded six terms (for MSc) or 12 terms (for PhD). Applications for the award should be sent before leaving.

uOttawa PhD Student Mobility Bursary

See <https://www.uottawa.ca/graduate-studies/students/awards/student-mobility-bursary>

Domestic PhD students in their 3rd or 4th years can apply for a Student Mobility bursary to support a research stay of at least three months at a foreign institution. Depending on the proposed budget, students can receive up to \$4,000 to cover the exchange. Students should submit their application at least one month in advance, and will need to include a description of the research to be conducted (1-2 pages), a letter of support from their supervisor (½ - 1 page), an letter of invitation from the host researcher (½ - 1 page), an CV, and a brief budget.

MITACS Globalink Research Award

See <https://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/globalink/globalink-research-award>

The Mitacs Globalink Research Award provides \$6,000 for graduate students in Canada to conduct 12–24-week research projects at universities overseas. Applications for the award are open year-round but should be completed ~4 months in advance of travel. Your supervisor and the host supervisor should work with you on the application.

MITACS Accelerate

See <https://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/accelerate> and <https://www.mitacs.ca/en/programs/accelerate/fellowship>

The MITACS Accelerate awards proposals for collaborations between a university professor and a company or organisation. It sponsors stipends for students to go on (international) internships at the partner organisation.

Appendix C: Resources and Perks for Grad Students

Resources

Bio Departmental Office (<https://science.uottawa.ca/biology/>)

The departmental office is found at 160 Gendron. Here you can find information or anything related to teaching assistantships (TAs), reimbursements, stipend information, and booking rooms. This is also where you will need to go to get your lab/office keys and building keycard.

Graduate Studies Office (<https://science.uottawa.ca/en/programs-of-study/graduate-studies>)

The graduate office is found at 181 Gendron. Here is where you should go for any questions about academic requirements, courses and course registration, scholarship information, comprehensive exams and defences, and seminars.

Mental Health Resources (<https://gsaed.ca/en/services/>)

A number of mental health resources are available to grad students, many of them free, which can be seen at the webpage linked above.

If you, a friend, or a family member are experiencing a mental health crisis, the Ottawa Mental Health Crisis Line can be reached 24h a day at 613-722-6914 or 1-866-996-0991.

University of Ottawa Health Services (<https://www.uottawa.ca/health/>)

There is a clinic on campus at 100 Marie Curie, very close to the biology buildings. They accept walk-ins, although the wait can be long if you don't make an appointment. You can also register with a primary care physician on the website above. A variety of health services are offered by the university beyond primary care, which can be read about on their website.

Academic Writing Help Center (<https://sass.uottawa.ca/en/writing>)

The University's Academic Writing Help Center allows students to book appointments with professional writing advisors, who can help you learn to identify and correct writing mistakes (in French or English).

Fitness Centres (<https://www.geegees.ca/en/facilities>)

There are two gyms on campus, one in Montpetit Hall and the other in the Minto Sports Complex. Grad students have access to both of them, including the olympic sized swimming pool in Montpetit. Membership to use the fitness centers and sports facilities is free for all full-time students (included in tuition).

CUPE Grievances (<http://www.2626.ca/get-help/grievances/>)

If you believe your employer has violated your rights as a worker, you may file a grievance through CUPE 2626. They can help you to decide whether to file a grievance and support you through the process. Grievances can pertain to candidate selection, exceeding the allotted number of work hours in your contract, harassment, discrimination, evaluation procedures, health and safety, employment entitlements, and many other rights and privileges established by Canadian laws and our collective agreement with the University of Ottawa.

Foot Patrol (<http://sfuo.ca/footpatrol/>)

Foot patrol is a student-run volunteer-based safe walk service offered to all students and members of the university community. They will accompany you anywhere within a 45 minute walking radius of campus and along several bus routes.

Finding Housing (On campus and off)

The University provides some student housing for upper-year students, including graduate students. While this can be very convenient, it is also much more expensive than most off-campus housing. Talk to your labmates for suggestions about good areas and potential opportunities. Common sites for searching for off-campus housing include kijiji.ca (<https://www.kijiji.ca/h-ottawa/1700185> - arguably the most popular site for finding housing in Ottawa), craigslist (<https://ottawa.craigslist.org/>), and uOttawa's Student Housing billboard (<https://web5.uottawa.ca/rezweb/search.php>).

U-Pass

See (<https://www.uottawa.ca/uottawacard/upass>)

All grad students are eligible for a student transit pass called U-Pass through the University. It allows unlimited use of the OTranspo buses (Ottawa), STO buses (Gatineau), ParaTranspo shuttles, and O-train (presumably including the new "Confederation Line" light rail with a station set to open on campus in 2019). A fee covering this pass is automatically charged to your account twice a year: once in September, covering the fall and winter semesters, and once in May, covering the summer semester. When you arrive, you have to get the pass at the UCU Student Lounge in the basement of the University Centre. Each fall and summer, you have to go to the recharging station kiosks across from the book store in the basement of University Centre to reactivate the pass.

It is possible to be exempted from the U-Pass program for a period if you have a legitimate reason that you cannot use the transit system. Acceptable reasons include students who live outside the OTranspo & STO service area, cannot ride the bus for medical reasons, or are conducting research outside the Ottawa-Gatineau region for at least 60 days. For more information, see <https://www.uottawa.ca/uottawacard/upass/opt-out>.

Grad students who submit their thesis between the start of the semester and September 30th can have their U-Pass fee refunded, but this is not automatic: fill out an exemption form (above) to get your refund.

Green Shield Health Insurance

See (<https://student.greenshield.ca/uottawa-grads-gsa>)

In addition to any provincial or private insurance of their own, grad students are provided health insurance by GSAÉD and CUPE 2626. This insurance plan, through Green Shield Canada, covers a range of medical needs, including contraceptives, dental services, and eyeglasses. The full range of benefits can be read at the website above. The fees for Green Shield

insurance are charged to your student account each September. Students may opt out of this insurance plan if they demonstrate that they have comparable coverage from another source (not including OHIP, QHIP, or UHIP). You can opt out on uoZone, under the Finances and Jobs tab.

Perks

10% off at Café Nostalgica

Grad students can get 10% off food at Café Nostalgica. Visit the GSAÉD 2nd floor of 601 Cumberland for a sticker that will unlock this reward.

Free parking

Graduate students are eligible for a free weekend parking pass (free parking at campus lots on weekends or holidays). Visit Parking Services at 139 Louis-Pasteur, Room 133, and show your GSAÉD sticker to unlock this reward.