

Master of Engineering in Biomedical Systems

Student Handbook

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Welcome

This handbook will provide you with important information about the city of Victoria, the University of Victoria (UVic), the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science, and the Master of Engineering in Biomedical Systems. Please read this guide carefully especially if you are coming from overseas.

We have done our best to provide you with updated information, but some of the information here is subject to change. Please use the following information to help you plan your studies at UVic but do follow up on any pressing matter.

UVic is located in Victoria on Vancouver Island in the province of British Columbia, overlooking the Pacific Ocean on one side and the snow-capped Olympic Mountain Range on the other. Residents enjoy a mild climate all year round and participate in a wide variety of outdoor activities any time of year. Downtown Victoria boasts of distinctive architecture, a vibrant culture, and excellent cuisine. Our campus features the beautiful First Peoples House, the Finnerty Gardens, and a number of walking and jogging trails through serene woods and is only a short distance away from beaches and quaint villages. All these make UVic an ideal place for study, personal and social growth, and recreation.

UVic is one of Canada's leading research-based institutions that offer innovative programs, real-life and creative learning, and a diverse and inclusive community in our breathtaking West Coast campus. UVic's Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science (ECS) is known for pushing the edges of applied science, creating tangible solutions to real-world problems, and making an impact in areas such as sustainable housing and energy systems, virtual reality simulations that help people understand natural phenomena, medical devices that will improve the health of people around the world, and new applications of machine learning and artificial intelligence.

The Master of Engineering in Biomedical Systems is offered by Biomedical Engineering and the Department of Mechanical Engineering.

Before Your Arrival

International Students: Immigration

The documentation you must obtain from [Immigration and Citizenship Canada](#) depends on your country of origin, the nature and length of your studies and whether or not you plan to look for work. It is your responsibility to obtain the correct documents. As it may take a while to process your application for travel documents, it is strongly encouraged that you apply as soon as you receive your admission letter from us.

If you are planning on visiting other countries before arriving in Canada or during your stay in Canada, it is recommended that you obtain the necessary immigration documents before you leave your home country. Check all travel documents to make sure your personal information is accurate. Make sure your travel documents are handy and not packed away in your luggage.

You may require one or more the following:

Study Permit

Most international students need to obtain a study permit before beginning their studies in Canada. Visit the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) [website](#) to determine if you need a study permit. When you apply for a study permit, use your UVic admission letter (conditional or unconditional) and study permit information document sent by the Graduate Admissions and Records Office as your letter of acceptance.

If you meet the eligibility criteria to submit a study permit application via Student Direct Stream (SDS), visit the IRCC—SDS [website](#) for detailed steps and instructions.

When your application is approved, you will receive a port of entry (POE) letter. A POE letter is not a study permit. It is proof that your study permit application is approved. When you arrive in Canada, you must show your POE letter to the Canadian border officer to get your study permit.

For more information, visit the UVic International Centre for Students [webpage](#) or the IRCC [website](#).

Temporary Resident Visa

If you apply for a study permit outside Canada and you are from a country requiring a Temporary Resident Visa (TRV) or electronic Travel Authorization (eTA), your TRV or eTA will be issued automatically upon a study permit approval. You do not need to submit a separate application to obtain your entry document.

Refer to the IRCC [website](#) for information about who needs a visa to enter Canada.

Work Permit

Please visit the IRCC [website](#) to learn more about international student employment. Read these regulations carefully. If you work without proper authorization, you may be asked to leave Canada.

Health Insurance

All UVic students are required to have comprehensive health care coverage for the duration of their studies at UVic. You will automatically be enrolled for the guard.me@UVic plan and will be assessed a Mandatory Temporary Medical Insurance (MTMI) fee of \$265 in your UVic student account. If you are coming from outside BC or Canada, you will also need to submit an [application](#) for enrolment to the BC Medical Services Plan when you arrive in BC. There is a waiting period before your BC MSP coverage begins, during which guard.me@UVic will cover required medical services. You may be eligible to opt out of the guard.me@UVic plan once your BC MSP coverage takes effect.

The Graduate Students' Society (GSS) health and dental plan provides extended coverage for graduate students. Visit the GSS [website](#) for information about benefits.

For more information on health insurance for international students, visit the International Centre for Students [website](#).

Personal Insurance

It is recommended that you have insurance for your personal belongings (computers, cellphones, cameras, jewelry, etc.). Be sure your insurance policy covers damage or theft of belongings as well as personal liability (in case you damage another person's property by accident.)

Housing

On-campus Housing

There is a limited number of residence spaces available for graduate students. Accommodation for graduate students will be determined by lottery. Family housing consisting of townhouses and apartments close to the university is available to students with families, with or without children. For more information including how and when to apply, visit [Residence Services](#).

Off-campus Housing

It can be challenging and time-consuming to find off-campus housing in Victoria.

Residence Services provides [resources](#) to help you find off-campus accommodation. You are responsible for the search process and making arrangements with landlords and/or roommates. Standards of accommodation vary so it is strongly encouraged that you view the accommodation in person before making a commitment. You must familiarize yourself with the legal rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords in BC on the Residential Tenancy Branch [website](#).

UVic's [International Centre for Students](#) has a listing of resources for international students looking

for short-term accommodation for when you first arrive, and for long-term housing.

Please exercise caution when viewing or considering housing options via online ad sites. Some further tips to keep in mind while considering your housing options:

- It is cheaper to share a two-bedroom suite than rent a single bedroom.
- Find a place on a direct bus route to the University. Check out the [BC Transit](#) website for complete information about your bussing options.
- Most popular student areas: Gordon Head, Fairfield, downtown, Royal Oak.

International Students: What to Pack

- Canadian electricity is 110 volts, 60 Hz. Bring a voltage converter and plug adapter if your appliances and electronic devices are not compatible.
- Sufficient supply of any medication in original packaging and accompanied by a prescription from your physician.
- Enough Canadian currency to cover your immediate expenses in Canada such as airport fees, food and transportation. Major credit cards are also widely accepted. Please note that if you arrive in Canada with more than \$10,000 in cash, stocks, bonds, banker's drafts, cheques, or money orders, you must declare this to the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) officer.
- Check the section on Climate and Clothing for tips on what to pack from your closet.

Please check the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) [website](#) for regulations on items you are allowed to bring into Canada.

Financial Matters

International Students: It is recommended that you open a bank account at a financial institution in Victoria. You will typically need 2 pieces of identification (e.g. passport and your UVic ONECard) and if applicable, your immigration document, to open an account. Visit the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC) [website](#) at for more information about financial institutions and managing your money. Once you have chosen a financial institution, contact or visit them whenever you have questions about their products or services and whenever you need financial advice. They can also provide information about your options for transferring money into Canada and sending money outside Canada.

There are Automated Teller Machines (ATM) on campus. Please note that if your account is with another institution, there may be a service fee to use these machines.

BC has sales tax of 7% PST (Provincial Sales Tax) and 5% GST (Goods and Services Tax).

Fees

Most students pay ancillary fees in addition to their tuition. These fees pay for services like your U-Pass bus pass, extended health insurance, and athletics and recreation access. Find a full list of these fees in the [graduate academic calendar](#).

All graduate students are automatically charged for the U-Pass bus pass. There are very limited conditions under which a student can [opt out of the U-Pass program](#).

Financial Assistance

Check the Graduate Admissions [webpage](#) for information on funding and employment. Please note that research funding is not available to students in the MEng in Biomedical Systems. You may be eligible for bursaries. There are also opportunities to apply for Teaching Assistant positions; please check the Department of Mechanical Engineering [website](#) for such opportunities.

When You Arrive

International Students: Entering Canada

!!!Always check the Immigration Canada [website](#) for up-to-date entry requirements.!!!

All COVID-19 emergency border measures have ended. Travel restrictions may change with little warning. Please visit the Government of Canada's [COVID-19: Travel, testing and borders](#) website for the most up-to-date information on planning your travel.

When you arrive at the port of entry to Canada, a border agent will assess your eligibility to enter Canada and make a final decision on whether to allow entry. If you were approved for a new study permit from outside Canada, your study permit will also be issued (printed) at this time.

Make sure to check your study permit when it is issued to you, to ensure all the details are correct and the appropriate conditions have been imposed.

- Check that all details in the client information section are correct.
- If you are a full-time student at UVic, make sure your study permit includes a statement that you "may work" or "may accept employment". If it does not, this can significantly delay your ability to begin working in Canada.
 - We recommend carrying a Verification of Enrollment (VOE) from UVic as proof of your full-time student status. You can request a VOE through UVic Online Tools > Online Request Forms.

If you notice any errors on your documents, request changes before you leave Immigration. Be prepared to demonstrate your eligibility to work (for example, by showing the officer a Verification of Enrollment from UVic confirming your full-time student status), if needed.

If you have any questions about your travel documents, you should connect with an International Student Adviser (ISA) prior to travelling. Please email your questions to icsinfo@uvic.ca.

It is also a good idea to bring any of the following documents that apply to your situation.

- birth certificate or baptismal certificate
- driver's license
- immunization, vaccination, dental and health records
- health insurance documents
- marriage certificate or proof of common-law status
- separation or divorce papers
- adoption papers
- language proficiency scores
- official school records or academic transcripts
- medical or psychological documents if you plan to access services for students who could benefit from accommodation
- letters of reference from former employers
- documents required for entry into other countries you plan to visit

If necessary, you should have them translated to English by a qualified translator.

Arrival Times

It is recommended that you arrive in Victoria at least one week before the start of term so you have time to settle in and participate in University [orientation](#) activities. Note that you may be required to register for some orientation events.

For students coming from outside Canada, please allow plenty of time between your arrival at your first port of entry and any travel connections thereafter.

Travelling to Victoria

Victoria is located on Vancouver Island, across the Juan de Fuca Sound from Canada's mainland. It is **NOT** in Vancouver. If your international flight is arriving at the Vancouver International Airport (YVR), you will need to take a plane or a ferry to Victoria. The flight is only 20 minutes; if traveling by ferry and transit, it could take more than four hours. If flying all the way to Victoria (YYJ), you should book your YVR-YYJ flight before coming to Canada.

International students should consult the International Centre for Students '[Getting Started](#)' webpage prior to making travel plans.

From Victoria International Airport (YYJ)

Visit the Victoria International Airport [website](#) for transportation options to downtown Victoria or UVic.

From Vancouver International Airport (YVR)

There are flights from Vancouver to Victoria as well as regular ferry service from [Vancouver and the Gulf Islands](#) and from [Washington State](#) in the US.

You have a few options if taking the ferry from YVR:

- you can purchase a [BC Ferries Connector](#) ticket and board the bus from the airport, for drop-off at Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal or at any of its stops between the Swartz Bay Ferry Terminal and downtown Victoria;
- you can take a taxi or [public transit](#) to the Tsawwassen Ferry Terminal and purchase your ferry ticket to Victoria (Swartz Bay) from the departures building;

After disembarking from the ferry at Swartz Bay Terminal, you can take a taxi, ride-share (Uber, Lucky to Go, Kabu or URide), or [public transit](#) to downtown Victoria or UVic. It is about 40 minutes by car to both destinations and approximately 1.5 hours by bus to campus. If staying off-campus, check the BC Transit [website](#) for connections and schedules.

Climate and Clothing

Victoria has the mildest climate in Canada. We enjoy generally comfortable dry summers with low humidity and the ocean breeze keeping it cool. Winter temperatures rarely fall below freezing, so you don't need to bring your heaviest winter outfit with you.

We do, however, suggest bringing a rain jacket, waterproof shoes or boots, and an umbrella, as the west coast gets plenty of rain. In the winter (December to February), temperatures will range from -5C to 10C, so you will need a warm jacket, gloves, scarf and a hat from time to time. If you are from a warm climate and coming to Canada in the winter months, it may be easier and less expensive to purchase outerwear once you arrive in Canada. Spring (March to May) is very pleasant and in the summer (June to August), temperatures can go up to 30C. In the fall (September to November), it generally stays warm until mid-October and you can expect some rain showers.

Locals dress in layers as the weather can change quickly, and we encourage you to do the same. At UVic, students dress casually: jeans and sweatshirt or shorts and t-shirt are typical outfits during school. You are encouraged to bring at least one formal or traditional outfit for special occasions, and/or business attire in case you need to make a presentation for a course.

You may also want to bring clothing for outdoor sports or activities, such as hiking, skiing, kayaking, etc. or plan to purchase them here.

Starting on Campus

ONECard

The UVic [ONECard](#) is the single official identification card for students. It is also your library card and campus debit card, among other things. Please make sure to obtain your ONECard as soon as you can. The ONECard office is located in the lobby of the University Centre.

Once you are enrolled in BC MSP, you can get a [Photo BC Services Card](#).

International students may also want to get an [International Student Identity Card](#) (ISIC) and enjoy discounts and offers on travel, shopping, and recreation worldwide.

Communication

The country code for Canada is 1 and the area codes for Victoria are 250, 778, 236, or 672.

To dial an international number from Canada: 011 + country code + city routing code + local number.

Emergency (fire, ambulance, police): 911

Directory assistance: 411 (there is a fee for this service)

Cell Phones and Internet

Major cell phone providers in Victoria include Rogers, Bell, Fido, Koodo Mobile, Telus and Virgin Mobile.

For international students:

- Refer to this [handout](#) from the International Centre for Students for more information on choosing a cell service provider.
- Online messaging applications are very popular among international students as a way of keeping in touch with family and friends back home. Several are free and only require an internet connection. Please note that they may not provide the ability to call emergency numbers.
- Phone cards can be purchased at most convenience and grocery stores. It is usually cheaper to use these cards for international calls.

There are no pay phones on campus. However, there are courtesy phones around the campus that

allow you to make short local calls by dialing 9 and then the area code and telephone number.

[UVic's wireless internet service](#) allows students, faculty and staff to connect laptops and other wireless devices to the internet at high speeds from most places on campus. You will need a UVic NetLinkID to access the network. There are computer labs in the [Mearns Centre](#)—McPherson Library or any of the [computing facilities](#) on campus.

If you live off campus, then you should consider getting your own internet service so you have the ability to study, stream, download, and connect with your friends and family at home. Note that some landlords include internet with your monthly rent or you may be able to split the cost of internet with your roommates. Some internet service providers in Victoria include [Bell](#), [Shaw](#) and [Telus](#).

Mail/Post

There is a post office inside Heart Pharmacy in the Student Union Building. Canada Post provides delivery service for letters and parcels within Canada and internationally.

Transportation

BC Transit

Buses to most areas of the city leave frequently from UVic. It costs CAD\$2.50 to take the bus anywhere one way or CAD\$5.00 for a day pass. The fare box onboard accepts coins and bills (but not bank or credit cards). Please note that drivers don't carry change. You can also [purchase](#) a sheet of tickets or a monthly pass.

If you are enrolled in one or more "on-campus" courses, you will be automatically charged for the Universal Bus Pass (UPass) with your tuition. Starting September 2023, you'll need to use the new Umo mobile app or a reloadable Umo card to show proof of payment on all busses in the Victoria Regional Transit System. If you have paid for the UPass (whether it was included in your tuition or you have opted in), you must add your UPass benefit code (found in your UVic Online Tools under "MyBusPass") to your UMO account at the beginning of every term before you can use the bus pass. For more information about UPass for graduate students, please click [here](#). If you wish to opt-out of the UPass, please visit the Graduate Students' Society [website](#).

Bicycle

The size of and weather in Victoria are conducive to cycling, and many residents bike even through winter. UVic is a bike-friendly campus, with more than 2,000 bike parking spaces, bike shelters, storage, shower and change room facilities, and e-bike charging stations. You can purchase new or used bicycles and register it with Campus Security Services for free engraving. Click [here](#) for more resources on cycling and information on the SPOKES bike recycling/loan program.

Car

You must have a valid driver's license and insurance to drive a vehicle in BC. Please visit the [Insurance Corporation of British Columbia \(ICBC\)](#) for information on licensing, driving rules, road safety and insurance. Information on parking on campus can be found [here](#).

Driving alternatives

Click [here](#) for more information on sustainable alternatives to driving:

- Carsharing
- EV charging
- Flex 25
- Rent a vehicle
- Motorcycle

Orientation

[UVic Orientation](#) organizes events to welcome you to the university, including new student welcome and the International Student Welcome. Please check out their website and register for some or all of their activities and access resources to support your transition to UVic and your studies. For international students, the [Global Community](#) is a great community to meet students from all over the world and engage in activities that foster intercultural connections.

There will be a program orientation in early September. Please watch your e-mail for the invitation.

During your program

BISY Studio

ELW A229 is space designated for BISY students. When completed, the room will be equipped with desks, computers, and printers.

An access card is required for after-hours access to the Engineering Lab Wing (ELW). You can purchase the card at the bookstore for a non-refundable fee of \$10.00.

Students can also [book study spaces](#) on campus.

E-mail

The student listserv is used to provide you with information relating to your program. Your preferred e-mail address will be added to the listserv. You can update your preferred email by selecting *Contact information* from the *Your profile* drop-down menu and assigning an e-mail address as your preferred contact e-mail. It is strongly recommended that you use your UVic e-mail as your preferred e-mail address.

Academic Information

Students in the Master of Engineering in Biomedical Systems are bound by policies set out by the [University of Victoria](#) (UVic), the [Faculty of Graduate Studies](#) (FGS), the [Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science](#) (ECS), and the [Department of Mechanical Engineering](#) (MECH).

Please familiarize yourself with policies, especially the UVic [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) and the [Discrimination and Harassment](#) Policy as well as the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science [Standards of Professional Behaviour](#).

Contact Information

The program coordinator should be the first point of contact for all program inquiries.

Department Chair	Dr Brad Buckham	mech.chair@uvic.ca
Program Director	Dr Christopher Dennison	bmedirector@uvic.ca
Program Coordinator	Katharine Waring	bme.coord@uvic.ca
Graduate Admissions & Records Office (GARO)	Sandra Baskett, GARO Advisor	grad6@uvic.ca

Program Information

The MEng in Biomedical Systems is a professional program that prepares graduates for careers in biomedical device and systems design and development. Graduates will gain technical skills useful in a professional environment. An MEng degree is not normally a pathway to a PhD in Canada.

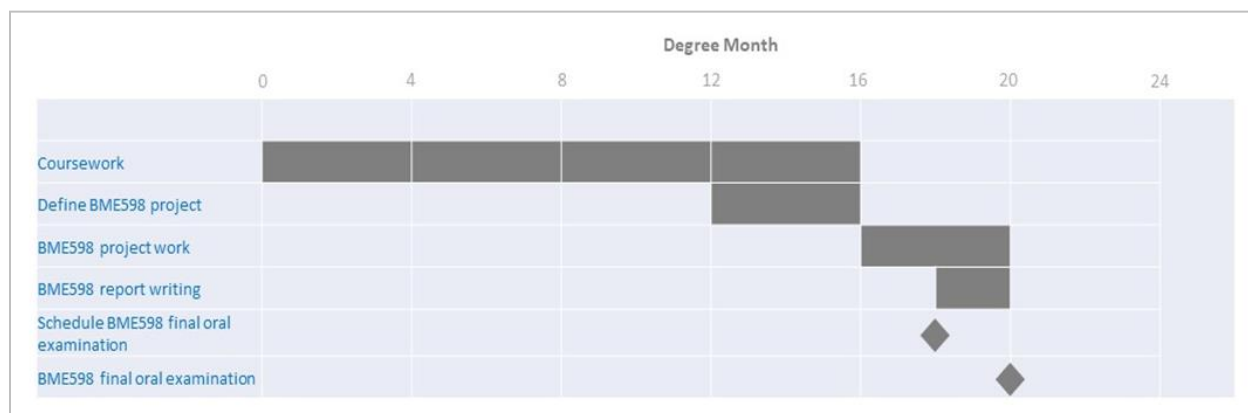
You are expected to familiarize yourself with the [program requirements](#) and to register in core and elective courses as applicable. Please refer to the [program website](#) for current timetables. The latest official UVic [Academic Calendar](#) shall have precedence over all information contained in this handbook.

The minimum program length is 12 months. Most students complete the program in 16-24 months.

Course Credits

Courses are valued in terms of unit and are between 1.0 and 2.0 units. A 1.0-unit course meets 2 hours per week, a 1.5-unit course meets 3 hours per week, and a 2.0-unit course meets 4 hours per week.

Suggested Timeline



Students are expected to follow the schedule below:

	Fall	Spring	Summer
Core Courses (Note: The terms in which these courses are offered are subject to change.)	BME500 BME501	BME520	BME505
BME598: Students will normally register in BME598 as their final degree requirement before graduation.			

Elective Courses	Students must take 6.0 units of electives from the electives list and can spread these courses over several terms. Students may request permission to take courses outside of the prescribed elective list.
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Advice and Supervision

The program director is responsible for advising students on the academic aspects of their program. All students will be supervised by the program director from the start of the program until the student secures a supervisor for BME598.

The BME598 supervisor will serve as the student’s academic mentor. For projects with industry collaboration, the supervisor will serve as the main contact for the external partner. The supervisor will normally coordinate the formation of the student’s supervisory committee, including contacting potential committee members, in consultation with the student. The supervisory committee must have at least two members: the BME598 supervisor, and a co-supervisor or committee member from inside or outside the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Your primary supervisor will normally be nominated within the first two terms of attendance; the remainder of the supervisory committee shall be nominated within three terms of first registration in BME598.

The student-supervisor working relationship is governed by the FGS [Graduate Supervision Policy](#).

BME598 Technical Project

BME598 is a 3.0-unit course. It is a significant technical design project completed under the supervision of a faculty member. Normally the design experience is based on knowledge and skills acquired in earlier coursework. Projects may originate from faculty members, students, or external sources. Please refer to the [BME598 Guidelines](#) for detailed information.

Time during program	Steps
Between term 1 - 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Read BME598 Guidelines document. <input type="checkbox"/> Find supervisor: approach faculty directly, consult with director, or check list of available projects by contacting the program coordinator . <input type="checkbox"/> Submit project summary for director’s approval. <input type="checkbox"/> Work with supervisor to find a committee member.
Term in which student defends	<input type="checkbox"/> Register in BME598 (Students must be registered in BME598 for the term in which they defend. <i>Note:</i> Graduate students can defend in the same term they are on co-op.). <input type="checkbox"/> Go over program completion information with program

	<p>coordinator.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Apply to graduate. <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule oral examination (with supervisor). <p><i>*Allow at least 5 business days after the exam to complete revisions on your technical project; see below for deadlines to submit final report.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Send the following to program coordinator: date and time of oral examination, title of project and copy of technical report. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit first page of Checklist for Non-Thesis Oral Examinations to program coordinator.
After oral examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Revise. <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm details on confidentiality and data ownership with your supervisor. <input type="checkbox"/> Submit PDF of revised report to program coordinator. If this is your final term, the last day to submit your final report and other documents is April 30 (spring term), August 31 (summer term), and the last working day in December (fall term).

Registration

Students must register in every term of their program to maintain [continuity of registration](#). Any student who is registered for a single term in is defined as full-time if enrolled in courses totaling a minimum of 3.0 units or enrolled in BME598.

Funding

The MEng Biomedical Systems program is self-funded, and students must secure their own funding before beginning their studies. BISI students will not be nominated for UVic fellowships or awards.

BISI students may apply for teaching assistant positions in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Please visit their [website](#) for TA eligibility and postings.

Student Support

Academic and Professional Development

There are a variety of tools and resources to help graduate students succeed in their academic program and prepare for a career:

[Centre for Academic Communication](#) (CAC)

[Co-op and Career Services](#)

[Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation](#) (LTSI)

Accessible Learning

If you have a learning disability, physical or sensory disability, or a mental or chronic health condition that presents a barrier to your education, you can apply to the [Centre for Accessible Learning](#) (CAL) for academic accommodations. The Centre will work with you and your instructors to create learning environments that are equitable, inclusive and usable. You need to register for this program. It is recommended that you register early as the Centre gets very busy in August and September.

Child and Family Care

Graduate students with families are welcome at UVic. Check [Residence Services](#) if you are eligible for family housing and [Child Care Services](#) for the programs that they offer. Please note that there is normally a high demand for space at UVic's child care facilities and new families must apply to the waitlist, so plan accordingly.

Graduate Students' Society

The [Graduate Students' Society](#) (GSS) is an independent not-for-profit society that advocates for graduate students and provides information on academic concerns. It is based in the Halpern Centre for Graduate Students, also known as the Grad House. All graduate students are members of GSS.