

# Finding Help

Graduate programs are not easy and can be stressful. Remember that you are not alone and that there are a number of resources and people at UVic who can help you manage. Use this document as a guide for accessing these resources.

## Managing Your Program

### Documents

<https://www.uvic.ca/engineering/ece/current/graduate/resources/index.php>

Here you can find all of the important documents related to managing your program. You should pay particular attention to the Graduate Handbook for your program as well as the documents describing the supervisory relationship. The Faculty of Graduate Studies Graduate Supervisory Policy is an important document which describes the rights and obligations of graduate students, their supervisor(s), their supervisory committee, and their graduate program advisor, among others.

### Your Supervisor

Your supervisor is your mentor and advisor during your graduate program. He or she should help you plan your program and should inform you of and direct you to resources surrounding program requirements, degree regulations, and policies. Your supervisor should counsel you on all aspects of your program and has an obligation to meet with you and to communicate with you in a timely, complete, and respectful manner. You should keep your supervisor up to date on your academic progress and activities so that he or she may counsel you effectively. Your supervisor is the first person you should turn to when an issue or conflict arises.

### Your Supervisory Committee

Members of your supervisory committee are expected to be involved in your program and to be available for timely, complete, and respectful consultation. Your committee is here to provide you with extra support beyond your supervisor. You may ask for a meeting with your committee at any time and for any reason during your program.

### Your Graduate Advisor

The graduate advisor is a faculty member who directs the department's graduate programs. You can meet with the graduate advisor at any time during your program to discuss any concerns you feel are not being addressed by your supervisor or your supervisory committee. Such meetings are confidential and neither your supervisor nor your supervisory committee will be notified. You are also allowed to include an advocate of your choice, such as a friend or trusted colleague, in these meetings. The current graduate advisor is listed on the department's faculty listing: <https://www.uvic.ca/engineering/ece/faculty-and-staff/home/faculty/index.php>.

## Your Graduate Secretary

If you can't find the documents you need or don't know where to find certain resources, you can ask your graduate secretary. Remember that your graduate secretary supports many students and should be consulted once you have tried and failed to find the required resources on your own. You can find contact information for your graduate secretary on the department's staff listing: <https://www.uvic.ca/engineering/ece/faculty-and-staff/home/staff/index.php>.

## Dealing with Issues or Conflicts

When trying to resolve an issue or conflict, you should consult with the following people in this order:

1. Your supervisor
2. Your supervisory committee
3. The Graduate Advisor
4. The department Chair
5. An Associate Dean of Graduate Studies
6. The Dean of Graduate Studies

You may however short-circuit this chain and directly seek confidential advice from an Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

## Conducting Your Research

### Subject Librarian

<https://www.uvic.ca/library/research/librarians/index.php>

Accessing journal articles is straight forward as long as the UVic library has a current subscription to the journal and your device has a UVic IP address. But what if the library doesn't subscribe to the journal you want or you can't find a specific book? The library has a number of subject librarians who can offer in-depth research assistance to students.

### The Centre for Academic Communication

<https://www.uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cac/>

The CAC offers tutorials, workshops, and one-on-one support to help students improve their academic skills. This may be a good resource to explore if you are anxious about presenting a paper at a conference, or having trouble writing a paper.

### Thesis Boot Camp

<https://www.uvic.ca/students/graduate/thesis-dissertation/thesis-boot-camp/index.php>

Are you having trouble writing your thesis? The Thesis Boot Camp is your chance to write and make headway on your thesis, dissertation or graduate project. The goal is to work on your writing, free from distractions. You'll also have the chance to meet other grad students working on their thesis, dissertation or project. Thesis Boot Camp offers several modes of support for thesis writing, including: inspirational speakers, time management workshops, writing workshops, stress reducing activities, copyright and citation management consultations.

## Working as a TA or Sessional Instructor

Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation

<https://www.uvic.ca/learningandteaching/index.php>

The LTSI offers many excellent resources, including workshops and certificate programs, to help you become a confident and effective instructor. The LTSI also organizes a mentorship program called Teaching Assistant Consultants (TAC) in which graduate students with considerable teaching experience provide seminars and one-on-one support to TAs in their home departments. You can contact the ECE TAC through [ecetac@uvic.ca](mailto:ecetac@uvic.ca).

Teaching Assistants and Sessional Lecturers Union

<https://4163.cupe.ca/>

If you work as a TA or sessional lecturer you will be automatically enrolled into the CUPE 4163 union. The union bargains with the university in order to set the terms of TA and sessional instructor employment contracts, including pay rates, and will defend your rights as a worker. The union can help you if you feel that you are being unfairly treated as a TA or instructor.

## Other UVic Resources

The Graduate Students' Society (GSS)

<https://gss.uvic.ca/>

The GSS is a democratic, volunteer-lead student organization which operates independently from the university. Every current graduate student is automatically enrolled into the GSS. The society organizes social events to help students connect with each other (<https://gss.uvic.ca/about-gss/gss-events/>). The society also provides an extended health and dental plan, a discount bus pass (U-pass), access to a car co-op, and several other useful services (<https://gss.uvic.ca/about-gss/services/>). Additionally, the GSS works with the university administration to ensure that a graduate student perspective is included in governance decisions. The GSS is governed by the graduate representative council (GRC) which is comprised of volunteer graduate students from every academic unit on campus. Contact your graduate secretary to be put in touch with your graduate representative.

Office of the Ombudsperson

<https://uvicombudsperson.ca/>

The Office of the Ombudsperson is an independent, impartial and confidential resource for students and other members of the university community. It addresses student inquiries and complaints by providing information and guidance regarding student rights and responsibilities, as well as university resources, policies and procedures.

Sexualized violence

<https://www.uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/index.php>

UVic considers sexualized violence to be a serious issue and offers support for those who are affected by it, and educational resources to combat it. The definition used by UVic is: Sexualized

violence is any non-consensual, unwanted, actual, attempted, or threatened act or behavior that is carried out through sexual means or by targeting a person's sex, sexual identity, or gender identity or expression. You may find this page addressed to international students helpful: <https://www.uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/get-support/international/index.php>.

#### International Student Services

<https://www.uvic.ca/international/home/contact/iss/index.php>

International Student Services (ISS) is a centralized resource providing international services, information and programs for undergraduate and graduate students from pre-arrival to degree completion.

## Maintaining Your Wellness

#### Student Wellness Centre

<https://www.uvic.ca/students/health-wellness/student-wellness-centre/index.php>

The Student Wellness Centre (SWC) is made up of Counselling, Health and Multifaith. The SWC aims to provide holistic care to support UVic students' wellbeing emotionally, physically and spiritually. The SWC team includes counsellors, doctors, nurses, administrative staff, chaplains and other practitioners.

#### Physical Fitness at UVic

<https://vikesrec.ca/>

UVic has a number of sports facilities available. Some, such as the pool, are free to use, while others, such as the CARSA weight centre, have additional costs. There is also a great network of walking/jogging trails which wind through the woods around.

#### SPOKES: Bike Loan Program

<https://www.uvic.ca/sustainability/involved/spokes/index.php>

Are you looking for an affordable bicycle? If so, then you might want to visit SPOKES, located in the campus bike centre under the university centre.

#### Student Clubs

<https://uvss.ca/clubs-course-unions/>

The UVSS, the undergraduate student society, sponsors a large number of student clubs which cater to a wide range of interests. These clubs all welcome graduate and undergraduate students and are a great way to meet others. You can also start a club if you can't find the right one for you.

#### UVic Global Community

<https://www.uvic.ca/international/home/global-community/index.php>

The UVic Global Community initiative provides opportunities and creates space for international and domestic students, staff, and faculty to share perspectives, celebrate

diversity, foster intercultural connections, and cultivate an inclusive and globally minded campus.