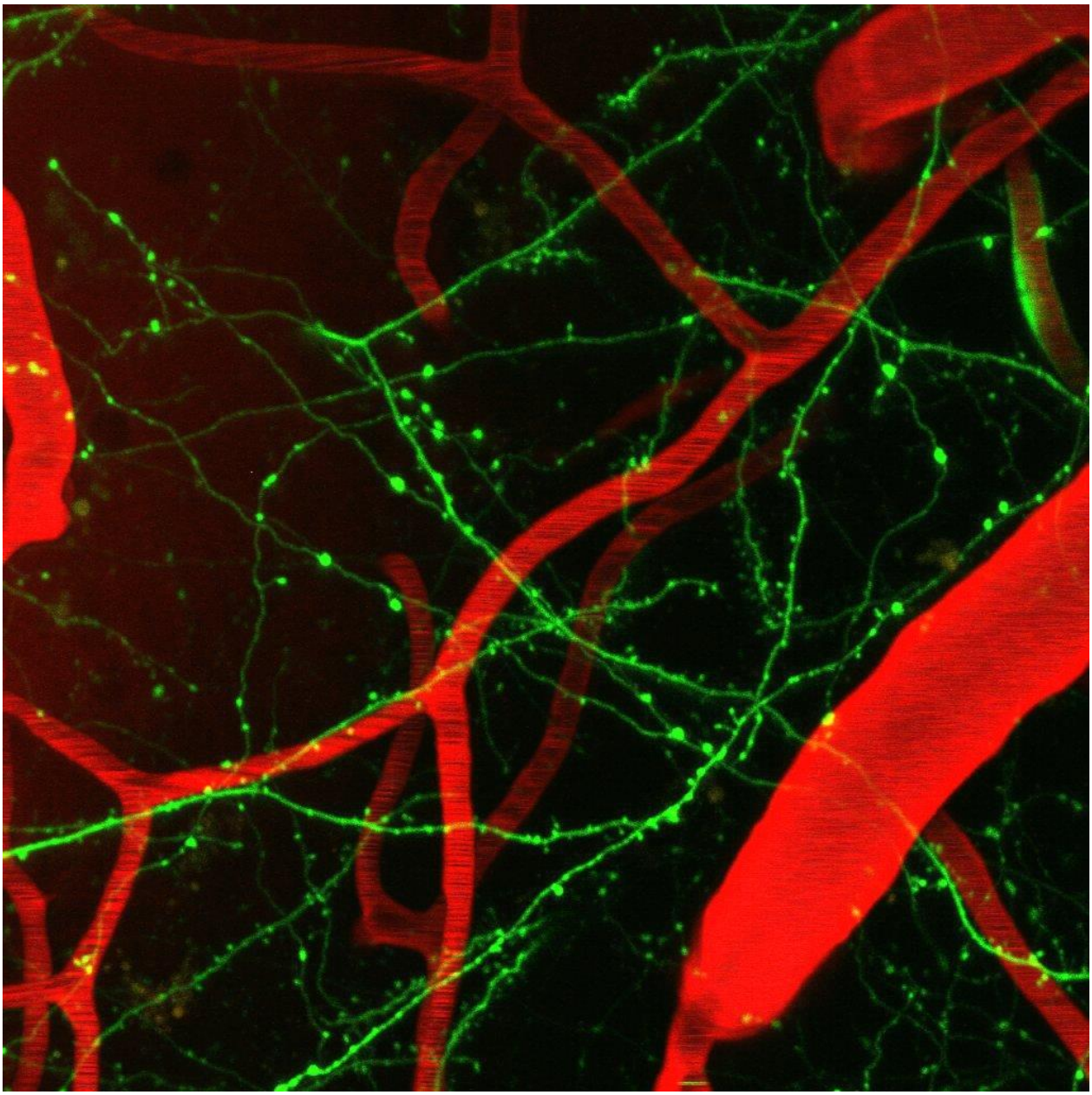
University of Victoria

Neuroscience Graduate Program

Student Handbook



Mouse somatosensory cortex, in vivo 2 photon image of cerebral blood flow
in red and pyramidal neuron's dendrites in green

Photo by Dr. Patrick Reeson, Post-doctoral Fellow, Brown Laboratory

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Territorial Acknowledgement

The Neuroscience Graduate Program acknowledges with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Neuroscience Graduate Program embraces an inclusive learning community and is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe learning and working environment for all its members. Acts that incite hatred, espouse, or encourage bigotry, either implied or explicit, will not be tolerated. Please refer to information available on the Equity & Human Rights, the General University Policies, and the additional resources listed in the Student Resources section of this handbook.

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Academic Head's Welcome

Dear new and returning students,

As the Director of the School of Medical Sciences, the academic home of University of Victoria's Neuroscience Graduate Program, I would like to extend a warm welcome, or a welcome back!

In this carefully curated handbook, you'll find a wide range of resources that will be incredibly helpful to support your journey through the graduate program.

Many years ago, I completed a PhD in Neuroscience, and I do remember how challenging it was. I encourage you to make the most of this opportunity to learn new things about the nervous system, as well as to learn new things about yourself in the process. I urge you to connect with your peers early on, because you will undoubtedly be stronger together; the friendships you form in graduate school have the potential to be friendships for life. To that end, participating in the Neuroscience Graduate Student Association is an excellent way to connect with your peers.

All in all, I hope you create many fond memories of working together with your peers to advance understanding in Neuroscience, and that this experience proves to be an expansive one for you!

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at any point along your journey to let me know how you are doing, and to ask for my help, if it's ever needed.

Sincerely,

Leigh Anne Swayne

Dr. Leigh Anne Swayne
Director, School of Medical Sciences, Faculty of Health, University of Victoria

Graduate Advisor's Welcome

Welcome to the **Graduate Program in Neuroscience** at the University of Victoria! It is both a privilege and a joy to greet you as you begin this exciting new chapter of your academic journey. You are joining a program that is **dynamic, supportive, and deeply committed** to advancing our understanding of the brain and nervous system—from molecules and cells to cognition and behavior. More importantly, you are joining a community of peers, mentors, and alumni who share your passion and are eager to support you. I look forward to walking alongside you in the years ahead and celebrating the milestones you will achieve.

During your time here, you will:

- **Engage in challenging and rewarding coursework** that balances breadth and depth, including cellular, systems, computational, and translational neuroscience.
- **Build your research skills** by collaborating with your supervisor and committee to design, conduct, and publish meaningful studies.
- **Contribute to our scientific community** through seminars, conferences, journal clubs, and collaborative projects that expand your perspective.
- **Grow as a professional** by developing skills in communication, mentorship, and leadership, while holding yourself to the highest standards of integrity.

Guidance and Support

Graduate training is a journey of discovery, one that comes with both challenges and moments of exhilaration. While your supervisor and committee will be your primary guides, please remember that my role as Graduate Advisor is to help you navigate both the program and any challenges you may encounter—academic, personal, or professional. We encourage open communication and a culture of mutual support, so please never hesitate to reach out. To help orient yourself, I recommend becoming familiar with the **Neuroscience Graduate Program Handbook**, which outlines program requirements and policies.

Our Shared Values

Successful students in our program are those who:

- Approach their work with curiosity, independence, and initiative.
- Uphold the highest ethical standards in research and scholarship.
- Contribute actively to our community through seminars and events.
- Foster inclusivity, respect, and collaboration in all interactions.

Looking Ahead

Graduate school is not only about mastering neuroscience techniques—it is also about **growing as a scientist and as a colleague**. The path may at times be demanding, but it is also filled with opportunities for discovery, growth, and impact. We are thrilled to have you here, and I cannot wait to see how your unique contributions will enrich both our program and the field of neuroscience as a whole.

Once again, welcome to our program. We look forward to supporting your journey and celebrating your successes every step of the way.

Warm regards,

Dr. Brian Christie
Graduate Advisor, Neuroscience Program
School of Medical Sciences, Faculty of Health, University of Victoria

The Neuroscience Graduate Program

Established in 2011, the goal of the University of Victoria's research-based Neuroscience Graduate Program (NGP), which offers both MSc and PhD degree programs, is to produce well- trained and fundamentally sound neuroscientists within a multi-disciplinary environment that fosters crosstalk and collaboration.

The multi-disciplinary approach of the program reflects the future of neuroscience research and allows students to develop diverse skills and engage in collaborative work both across our campus and in our community. As such, the program hosts faculty across the School of Medical Sciences (SMSC), as well as the Departments of Biology (BIOL), Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education (EPHE), and Mechanical Engineering (MEng).

The program draws top-tier graduate students from Canada, and abroad, who thrive both academically and scholastically in the form of awards, scholarships, and scientific publications. Most graduates have achieved excellent career outcomes in the Health and Higher Education sectors.

- Please see the Neuroscience Website for a list of current faculty members and their research interests.
- Upon entry into the program, the student and their supervisor must review the Code of Conduct, the Student Supervisor Guideline, and the Graduate Supervision Policy. All of which are on the Neuroscience Website.

The Neuroscience Graduate Program Handbook

This handbook, mandated by the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Victoria, contains important information for all students, faculty, and staff of the NGP regarding policies and procedures for program administration. Development of the handbook was led by the Academic Head of the School of Medical Sciences, in consultation with faculty, staff and students. All students are provided with a copy of this handbook upon entry to the program to be used as a reference guide throughout their time in the NGP. This handbook is an accompanying document to the existing policies and procedures at the University of Victoria and the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

This handbook is reviewed annually, and the most updated version can be found online. All changes are ratified by the Neuroscience Graduate Program (NGP) Committee.

Academic Integrity

All members of the Neuroscience Graduate Program are held to the standards of academic integrity and academic conduct set by the University of Victoria. Academic integrity requires commitment by all members to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service.

The University of Victoria's Policy on Academic Integrity contains information on the following types of violations of academic integrity:

1. Plagiarism
2. Unauthorized use of an editor
3. Multiple submission
4. Falsifying materials subject to academic evaluation
5. Cheating on tests and examinations

Alleged violations of this policy must be documented by the course instructor (or supervisor if violation is not related to a particular course) and the Head of the academic unit must be informed. The penalties assigned will vary based on the severity of the violation and will typically result in a failing grade on the work, or in the course in the case of more serious infractions. Two or more violations shall result in the student being placed on disciplinary probation.

Roles & Responsibilities

The Neuroscience Graduate Program faculty, staff and students share in the values of high integrity, ethical and equal treatment, and opportunity for all individuals regardless of sex, gender, ethnicity, religion, and nationality. The NGP is committed to the respectful and fair treatment of all members of the program and university community.

Below are brief descriptions of the major roles and responsibilities that are important to be aware of during your graduate education. Detailed descriptions can be found in the Graduate Supervision Policy.

Role	**Description**
Supervisor	The person who acts as the student's principal Advisor on all matters pertaining to the graduate program as outlined in this document and the official UVic calendar.
Co-Supervisor	A faculty member sharing supervisory duties on matters related to the student's graduate program. One Co-Supervisor must be a regular full-time faculty member; the other can be an adjunct faculty member.
Supervisory Committee	This committee is responsible for guiding the student's research and academic progress.
Graduate Secretary	This staff member maintains all student records and can provide necessary forms and information regarding processes within the program.
Graduate Advisor	A regular faculty member responsible for the administration of graduate studies within the Department. This position is the liaison between students, the School and the faculty of graduate studies.
Neuroscience Graduate Program Committee (NGC)	This committee is composed of regular faculty members supervising Neuroscience students. It reviews all applications for graduate admission, makes recommendations for awards / scholarships, and reviews / makes recommendations regarding the Neuroscience Program.

NGC Student Representative	A graduate student, usually an executive of the Neuroscience Graduate Students' Association (NGSA), who represents graduate students on the NGC. The student is a spokesperson and liaison between graduate students, the Department, and Graduate Studies.
Head of Academic Unit	School of Medical Sciences Director. Operates in conjunction with the Graduate Advisor to oversee the NGP.
Dean of Graduate Studies	The final arbiter on all matters pertaining to graduate studies. The Dean accepts students, approves the student's Supervisory Committee, approves programs, sets examining committees, and recommends to Senate that a degree be conferred.
Associate Dean of Graduate Studies	Function as liaison between the Office of the Dean of Graduate and the Graduate Advisor. The Associate Dean reviews and approves special arrangement programs, act on behalf of the Dean in his or her absence, as well as assist the Dean with student appeals and the administration of fellowships & scholarships.

Supervisory Committee

The roles and responsibilities of the supervisory committee are outlined in detail in the Graduate Supervision Policy and are briefly summarized below. All members of the supervisory committee, the supervisor, and the student are required to be aware of their roles and responsibilities and must adhere to and act within them.

- To be available to meet (in person, by videoconference or by phone) with the student in a timely manner to discuss program or university related matters.
- In consultation with the student's supervisor, to call and/or attend meetings (in person, by videoconference or by phone) of the supervisory committee on a regular basis including participation in formal assessments of progress and whenever issues relating to student progress need to be addressed.
- To advise on an appropriate program of study that will allow the student to complete in a timely fashion.
- To participate in the evaluation of the student's proposed work plan
- To evaluate the implementation of the student's proposed work plan
- To ensure that the student is aware of expectations concerning length, quality, style and standard presentation of the dissertation.
- To evaluate and return, within a reasonable time frame, drafts of the dissertation. The review period is not to exceed 20 business days unless a delay is required by field work, remote study, supervisor or student vacation, sick leave etc.
- To aid in arbitration of problems that may arise between the student and the supervisor or to seek consultation from the Graduate Advisor.
- To serve on the final oral examination committee.

Committee Composition

Appointment of members to the supervisory committee is done by the student and their supervisor at the beginning of the student's program. Committee members can be chosen for their areas of

expertise and the degree to which they fit the student's project, availability, or other measures as identified by the supervisor and student.

MSc Committee (minimum 2 faculty)	
Member #1: primary supervisor (must be from the home academic unit)	Member #3: only required if there are co-supervisors
Member #2: committee member, may be a co-supervisor	

PhD Committee (minimum 3 faculty)	
Member #1: primary supervisor (must be from the home academic unit)	**Member #3:** committee member from inside or outside the home academic unit
Member #2: committee member, may be a co-supervisor, from inside or outside the home academic unit	Member #4: only required if there are co-supervisors

For PhD students at least two of the members must be from the home academic unit, one of the members must be from outside the home academic unit. If a PhD student is being co-supervised, two additional committee members, for a total of 4 committee members, are required.

In consultation with their supervisor, a student can choose to have additional members beyond the minimum requirements stipulated. If a mutual agreement cannot be reached between the student and the supervisor regarding the composition of the supervisory committee, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Graduate Advisor and/or Academic Head for consultation. As appropriate, the student, in consultation with the supervisor, may also revise the membership of the supervisory committee at any time.

A non-departmental member is defined as a faculty member whose primary academic appointment is either outside of the supervisor(s) home department or the University of Victoria. Depending on the student's research project and faculty availability, a student may, in consultation with their supervisor, elect non-departmental members or members from outside of the University. It is a common practice to involve faculty outside of the University given its proximity to other campuses and the access to videoconferencing technology. For the appointment of non-university members to the supervisory committee the student, in consultation with their supervisor, must complete an FGS Membership Recommendation form. Once the Membership Recommendation is approved you will need to inform the Graduate Secretary.

Notes:

- Additional Committee Composition details are outlined in the Graduate Calendar.
- The composition of the supervisory committee is not the same as the composition for the oral exam committee for PhD candidacy exams nor the MSc or PhD final oral exam. For more information, see the respective sections of this handbook.

Committee Meetings

Supervisory Committee meetings are an important part of a student's graduate degree as they help direct the student's research project, negotiate timelines for completion, and address such issues as selecting course electives, transferring from the MSc to PhD program, candidacy examination and graduation.

Scheduling

1. It is the responsibility of the student to call a committee meeting.
2. For both MSc and PhD students, the first supervisory committee meeting must occur within the first term of entry into the NGP**.**
    a. If, by the time the first committee meeting is due, the student has not fully formed their supervisory committee then the first meeting will commence with only themselves and the supervisor.
3. Additional committee meetings may be called at any time by the student, supervisor, or committee members to discuss a student's research progress.
    a. Not all committee meetings must be formal research-focused meetings. These meetings are important for administrative milestones and can be used to mediate student issues outlined in the roles and responsibilities including arbitration of student-supervisor problems.
    b. If a committee member is unavailable for the annually reoccurring or ad hoc meetings due to extenuating circumstances the committee meeting may still proceed without them in attendance. Following the meeting the student will email the missing committee member (copying their supervisor) a summary of what occurred during the meeting as well as a signed copy of the progress report form.
4. A minimum of one formal committee meeting must be held annually; however, more frequent meetings (e.g. once in each of the fall and winter terms) are recommended in order to maintain good progress in the program. For MSc students to maintain good progress in the program, 2 meetings must be held within their first academic year.
5. Students are to complete the first section of the Supervisory Committee Progress Report Form and circulate an electronic copy of this document ahead of their scheduled meeting.

Content

For all formal meetings, students and committee members are required to complete the Supervisory Committee Progress form. Portions of this form may be used as the basis for subsequent meetings that are not considered formal progress reviews.

Meetings may also include the information described below:

1. During the first meeting, students customarily include:
    a. An introduction of self to the committee including:
        i. Previous degrees

        ii. Techniques and previous training
    b. A brief background on academic progress
    c. A project proposal and rough plan for completion including: key hypothesis, objectives, techniques and clearly identified timelines
    d. A review of the student-supervisor guidelines (this document should be signed and returned to the Graduate Secretary)
2. Structure of subsequent meetings of the supervisory committee should include:
    a. A brief update on academic progress including:
        i. Grades for graduate courses taken
        ii. Publications
        iii. Scholarships and awards and any other information that the student and supervisor see fit
    b. Revisiting the plan set at the previous meeting and updating the committee on experimental progress since the previous meeting
    c. Creating a new plan including: key hypotheses, objectives, techniques, and timelines clearly indicated

Notes:

- Students should consult with their supervisor(s) prior to the committee meeting for approval of their experimental plan and the work proposed.
- The student-supervisor guidelines document should be revisited and resigned annually throughout a student's program.

Administrative Requirements and Documentation

1. Every committee meeting must be officially documented in the student's file which is maintained by the Graduate Secretary. For all meetings the committee will complete and sign the Progress Report Form indicating the student's progress and their satisfaction with the progress.
    a. It is the responsibility of the student to provide the Graduate Secretary with any updates on planned or completed meetings as well as their signed Progress Report forms.
2. The plan for the next experiments/study must be stated in these documents in order for the committee to fairly judge a student's progress.
3. In the case where the committee identifies that unsatisfactory progress is being made, refer to the corresponding section below.

Student Progress Reporting

To fairly adjudicate student progress, record-keeping measures must be taken. Committee members with concerns regarding progress must voice and document these concerns at committee meetings and allow the student an opportunity to address them directly.

The criteria and definitions used to evaluate a student's progress (Excellent, Good, Needs

Improvement, or Unsatisfactory) are defined below.

Graduate Student Progress Report Evaluation Criteria

Progress reports are critical components of a student's trajectory through the NGP. Their purpose is to ensure that a student is successfully completing experiments and reviewing the relevant literature necessary for completion of their thesis/dissertation.

The following criteria are evaluated during the meeting to determine a student's progress in the NGP and should be identified by the student (Table 1) and Supervisory Committee (Tables 2 & 3) in the formal Supervisory Committee Progress Report form submitted to the Graduate Secretary following the meeting.

Table 1 – Basic Information

Program Requirements	Scholarly Contributions	Other Measures of Progress
Courses taken/completed/ in progress	Publications - total # and # first author	Scholarships and awards
Grades	Presentations - total # and # first author	Conferences attended
		Academic committee work
		Laboratory mentorship
		TA-ing
		Guest lecturing
		Community outreach

Table 2 - First Committee Meeting

Progress	Outcomes
Literature review	Experiments proposed
Identify research question(s) and hypothesis(es)	Timeline(s) for completion of experiments
Outlined logical experiments for next meeting	
Identified realistic timeline for completion of experiments	

Table 3 - Second (and all subsequent) Committee Meetings

Progress	Outcomes
Completed proposed experiments from previous meeting?	Was the research question answered?
Completed experiments from previous meeting in the indicated or within a reasonable timeline?	Were appropriate pitfalls and limiting factors identified?

Proposed next experiments to be completed for next meeting?	Are steps being taken to overcome pitfalls?
Identified realistic timeline for completion of above for next meeting?	

Definitions for Evaluation of Progress

Excellent	The student has met/exceeded all expectations and made exceptional progress on identified experimental timeline.
Good	The student has met most expectations and has made significant progress on the identified experimental timeline.
Needs improvement	The student has met some, but struggles to meet most expectations, and experimental progress is below what is reasonably expected.
Unsatisfactory	The student has not met expectations and/or the student has committed a serious Code of Conduct violation. Should such a violation arise, a student may be expelled from the program.

In the case of any evaluation, the supervisory committee members must clearly identify their rationale for the assessment. Committee members must also identify area(s) for improvement for the next progress report. If any committee member is absent from the meeting, the progress report form must be circulated and any concerns regarding the experimental plan must be made within10 business days of receipt. All unsatisfactory reports must be reviewed and signed by the Graduate Advisor prior to filing with the Graduate Secretary.

Unsatisfactory Progress Report Ratings

Unsatisfactory progress reports can result in the withdrawal of a student from the NGP. The following procedure must be followed once an unsatisfactory rating has been indicated following the Supervisory Committee's formal review of a student's progress.

The Supervisory Committee may rate a student's progress as unsatisfactory for any of the following criteria as outlined in the Graduate Supervision Policy:

- Receiving a grade below B (or failing a course).
- Repeated disregard for ethical or safety protocols
- Repeated failure to appear at scheduled meetings.
- Repeated failure to complete assigned tasks.
- Lack of knowledge, preparation, or ability consistent with the Neuroscience Graduate Program's expectations

The Graduate Advisor's decision to recommend withdrawal is made only after a thorough examination of all aspects of the students' program and in consultation with the supervisor(s), members of the supervisory committee, the Neuroscience Graduate Committee, and the Head of the academic unit.

The recommendation for withdrawal is made when the above-mentioned find reasonable grounds to believe that academic progress is not being made and that continued supervision will not lead to the satisfactory completion of degree requirements. The final decision to withdraw the student from the program is made by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean may invite the student to discuss the circumstances surrounding the request for withdrawal prior to consenting to withdrawing the student.

Note: Initial attempts to resolve these situations should be conducted internally and followed, if necessary, by consultation with an Associate Dean or Dean of Graduate Studies.

Procedures Following Unsatisfactory Progress Report:

1. Committee meeting documents are to be sent to the Graduate Secretary for review. The Graduate Secretary informs the Graduate Advisor and Academic Head that the student has not made satisfactory progress.
2. The Graduate Advisor schedules a meeting with the student to gather more progress-related information.
3. The Graduate Advisor, Supervisor, and student meet to discuss the progress report and develop an experimental action plan based on the recommendations of the Supervisory Committee. The plan identifies expectations and deadlines required to make satisfactory progress.
4. The Graduate Advisor sets a date for the next committee meeting which must be at least 8 weeks following the meeting outlined in step 3; however, the recommendation is that this next meeting take place within 6 months of the previous meeting. At this subsequent meeting, the student will present the new plan and the progress made since the previous meeting. This meeting will include the Graduate Advisor.
5. The Supervisory Committee completes a second progress report.
    a. In the case of a satisfactory rating: Regular meeting and experimental planning procedures will resume. At their discretion, the Supervisory Committee, Supervisor or student may choose to involve the Graduate Advisor in future meetings. The Graduate Advisor informs the Academic Head of the resolution of the student progress issue.
    b. In the case of an unsatisfactory rating: The Supervisory Committee submits a request, in writing, to the Graduate Advisor for the withdrawal of the student.
        i. The Graduate Advisor meets with the Academic Head and the student to discuss progress.
        ii. The Graduate Advisor, in consultation with the Academic Head, Supervisor and Supervisory Committee submit a request, in writing, for the withdrawal of the Student to the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Notes:

- The student may choose to meet with the Supervisor, Graduate Advisor, Academic Head, any, or all members of the Supervisory Committee, and/or the Associate Dean(s) of Graduate

Studies at any time either privately or with an advocate of their choice.
- The Graduate Advisor and Academic Head may choose to meet privately with the student at any time.

MSc Program

The MSc program is a research degree typically requiring 2 years of full-time study, though it may take additional time. The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) stipulates that the maximum allotted time for the MSc degree is 5 years and a minimum enrollment of at least 12 consecutive months is required. To extend the graduate program beyond 5 years a formal extension request is required and there must be sufficient rationale for doing so. See the Graduate Calendar or the Graduate Secretary for more information about requesting an extension.

The minimum stipend is guaranteed for 2 years; however, financial support beyond this period depends on the ability of the supervisor to support the student and/or on existing scholarships and awards (see Unit Funding Information). Students will discuss this topic with their supervisor upon entry into the program and following completion of their first year of studies. Agreement of financial support beyond 2 years must be confirmed in writing and signed by both the supervisor and the student at least 3 months prior to the beginning of the 3rd (and subsequent) years. The document must indicate the annual stipend and the term for which the stipend will be provided.

Students should refer to the most recent version of the Graduate Calendar for important policies related to all aspects of graduate studies as well as the list of currently available courses.

Example Timeline of Major Program Requirements for MSc Program

	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
Y1	NRSC 500A NRSC 501A NRSC 599 Committee Meeting # 1				NRSC 501A NRSC 599 Elective*				NRSC 599 Elective* Committee Meeting # 2			
Y2	NRSC 502A NRSC 599 Elective*				NRSC 502A NRSC 599 Elective* Committee Meeting # 3				NRSC 599 until completion of thesis & oral defense			

Notes:
- All MSc students must be perpetually enrolled in NRSC 599.
- A student only needs to be registered in 500A once.
- Electives may be taken at any time during the first or second year.
- Course requirements for the MSc program are the same regardless of the student's home department.

PhD Program

The PhD program is a research degree typically requiring 4 years of full-time study. Students may enter the PhD program directly, subject to the decision of the Neuroscience Graduate Program (NGP) Committee if (1) they have already obtained an MSc degree from a recognized university or (2) have significant prior research experience such as a Bachelor's program with Honour's. Students may also enter the PhD program following completion of between 10 and 18 months of study in the MSc program. For more information see the Transfer Procedures section of the handbook.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) stipulates that the maximum allotted time for the PhD degree is 7 years and minimum enrollment for at least 24 consecutive months is required. To extend the graduate program beyond 7 years, a formal extension request is required and there must be sufficient rationale for doing so. See the Graduate Calendar or the Graduate Secretary for more information about the extension procedure.

The candidacy examination must be held within 21 months of a student entering the PhD program. Students transferring from the MSc to the PhD program must complete the exam within 18 months from their entry into the PhD. An extension beyond these limits may be considered, provided sufficient rationale, yet is not guaranteed.

The minimum stipend is guaranteed for 4 years; however, financial support beyond this period depends on the ability of the supervisor to support the student and/or on pre- existing scholarships and awards (see Unit Funding Information). Students must discuss this topic with their supervisor upon entry into the program and following completion of their first year of studies. Agreement of financial support beyond 4 years must be confirmed in writing and signed by both the supervisor and the student. The document must indicate the annual stipend and the term(s) for which the stipend will be provided.

Note: Students should refer to the Graduate Calendar for important policies related to all aspects of graduate studies as well as the list of currently available courses.

Example Timeline of Major Program Requirements for PhD Program

	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
Y1	NRSC 500A NRSC 501A NRSC 693 Committee meeting # 1				NRSC 501A NRSC 693 Elective*				NRSC 693 Elective*			
Y2	NRSC 502A NRSC 693 Elective* Committee meeting # 2				NRSC 502A NRSC 693 Elective*				NRSC 693 Completion of Candidacy Exam			

Y3	NRSC 502A NRSC 699 Elective*		NRSC 699 Elective* Committee meeting # 3
Y4	NRSC 502A NRSC 699 Elective*	NRSC 502A NRSC 699 Elective* Committee meeting # 4	NRSC 699 until completion of oral exam

Notes:

- All PhD students must be perpetually enrolled in NRSC 693 until successful completion of the Candidacy exam, following which the student must be enrolled in NRSC 699 until the end of the degree program.
- A student only needs to be registered in 500A once.
- Permission to advance to candidacy should be sought at Committee meeting # 2.
- Electives may be taken at any time during the first or second year.
- Course requirements for the PhD program are the same regardless of the student's home department.

Transfer from MSc to PhD

Upon permission from their supervisory committee and approval of the Neurosciences Graduate Program Committee, students can transfer from the MSc program to the PhD program. Students transferring from the MSc to the PhD may be permitted to apply their UVic 500 level courses to the PhD program, subject to approval of the Neurosciences Graduate Program Committee. Students may initiate the request to transfer at the end of their first year.

The transfer process includes the following steps:

1. Within 10-12 months of starting the MSc program in NRSC, a student must meet with their academic supervisor to discuss a potential program transfer.
2. If the student obtains support of their supervisor to request a transfer to the PhD program the student must initiate a supervisory committee meeting where a formal review of their progress is completed.
3. The supervisory committee will make a recommendation to either support or reject the program transfer. The outcome of this review will be documented on the Student Progress Report form.
    a. The supervisory committee must determine sufficient progress has been made to warrant transfer to the PhD program.
    b. The committee must then vote whether to support the student's transfer (majority vote).
4. The supervisor of the student will inform the Graduate Secretary that the student has been approved to transfer to the PhD program (as indicated on their Student Progress Report). The Graduate Secretary will initiate the paperwork required for GARO.

5. Following transfer approval, the student must officially reapply to the program by submitting an online application under "Current/Returning UVic Students".

Example Timeline of Major Program Requirements MSc to PhD Transfer

	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
Y1	NRSC 500A NRSC 501A NRSC 599 Committee Meeting # 1				NRSC 501A NRSC 599 Elective*				NRSC 599 Elective* Committee Meeting # 2			
Y2	NRSC 502A NRSC 693 Elective*								NRSC 693 Committee meeting # 3			
Y3	NRSC 502A NRSC 693 Elective* Completion of Candidacy Exam (due by March)								NRSC 699 Elective*			
Y4	NRSC 502A NRSC 699 Elective* Committee meeting # 4								NRSC 699 until completion of oral exam			

Notes:

- All PhD students must be perpetually enrolled in NRSC 693 until successful completion of the Candidacy exam, following which the student must be enrolled in NRSC 699 until the end of the degree program.
- Permission to advance to candidacy should be sought at Committee meeting # 3.

Course Requirements

All course descriptions below are derived from the Graduate Calendar and are subject to change. Please refer to the Graduate Calendar for the current list and description of NGP Courses.

MSc

Course	Credits	Title
NRSC 500A	1.5	Fundamentals of Neuroscience
NRSC 501A	1.5	Advanced Topics in Cellular Neuroscience I
NRSC 502A	1.5	Advanced Topics in Cellular Neuroscience II
NRSC 599	9.0-15.0	MSc Thesis
Electives	1.5	
Total minimum requirement	**15.0**	

PhD

Course	Credits	Title
NRSC 500A	1.5	Fundamentals of Neuroscience
NRSC 501A	1.5	Advanced Topics in Cellular Neuroscience I
NRSC 502A	1.5	Advanced Topics in Cellular Neuroscience II
NRSC 693	3.0	Candidacy Examination
NRSC 699	21.0-39.0	PhD Dissertation
Electives	3.0	
Total minimum requirement	**31.5**	For students with a MSc
Total minimum requirement	**45.0**	For students **without a MSc**

Recommended Electives

Course	Title	Course Offering Frequency
BIOL 509B	Neurobiology: Molecules to Behaviour	Combined with BIOL 367 or BIOL 409A, Spring term
BIOL 509D	Ion Channels and Disease	Spring term
BIOL 550D	Cell Biology	Directed Studies - Proforma
BIOL 550E	Molecular Biology	Directed Studies - Proforma
BIOL 522	Sensory Biology	Combined with BIOL 404, Fall term
BIOL 567	Neural Development	Combined with BIOL 467, Spring term
EPHE 582	Neuroscience in Exercise, Physical Activity and Health	
EPHE 590/690	Directed Studies	Directed Studies - Proforma
EPHE 591	Selected Topics	
NRSC 525	Translational Neuroscience	Spring term (alternating with NRSC 535)
NRSC 535	Cognitive and Behavioural Neuroscience	Spring term (alternating with NRSC 525)
NRSC 587	Advanced Topics in Neuroscience	Directed Studies - Proforma
NRSC 590	Directed Studies in Neuroscience	Directed Studies - Proforma
PSYC 504	Individual Study	Directed Studies - Proforma
PSYC 532	General Linear Model - Univariate	Every year
PSYC 533	General Linear Model - Multivariate	Every year
PSYC 537	Multilevel Modeling	Winter term
PSYC 540	History and Theory in Neuropsychology	Winter term
PSYC 541	Research Design and Methods in Neuropsychology	Winter term
PSYC 543	Behavioural Neuroanatomy	Winter term
PSYC 564	Advanced Analysis of Change and Variation	

PSYC 574A	Cognitive Methods: Electroencephalography and Event-related Brain Potentials	
PSYC 574B	Cognitive Methods: Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging	
PSYC 574C	Cognitive Methods: Computational Modelling	Winter term
PSYC 576A	Cognitive Processes: Human Memory	Winter term
PSYC 576D	Cognitive Processes: Cognitive Control	Winter term
PSYC 576E	Cognitive Processes: Visual Perception	Winter term

Notes:

- All course descriptions, requirements, and schedules are listed in the Graduate Calendar.
- Electives must be pre-approved by the student's supervisory committee (to be included in their Progress Update Form following a committee meeting).

Directed Studies & Advanced Topics

Directed studies and selected topics courses can be used as electives towards a MSc or PhD. These are flexible courses that exist to enrich the student's graduate learning experience by giving students the ability to expand their skill set and knowledge base outside of their specific thesis/dissertation project. The product of these courses is submitted to the courses' instructor for evaluation and may not be submitted for credit in other courses nor included the student's thesis. Although both directed studies and selected topics courses may be taken under the supervision of any faculty member including the student's thesis supervisor, approval must be provided by the student's supervisory committee prior to enrolling in the course.

Directed studies (NRSC 590) are courses where a student develops new skills or knowledge through the completion of a small research project that must not appear in the student's thesis /dissertation unless otherwise approved by the supervisory committee. Examples include completing a small side-project related or unrelated to thesis/dissertation for publication, learning a new skill or technique, developing a standard operating procedure, etc.

Advanced topics (NRSC 587) are courses designed to expand a student's knowledge in a particular area and can take the form of discussion and presentation groups or independent study. Examples include weekly meetings to discuss or present recent publications in a particular research area, writing a review paper on a given research topic, etc.

Students, supervisors and supervisory committee members are directed to the University of Victoria Policy on Academic Integrity regarding multiple submissions (duplication of effort). If the supervisory committee does not approve the directed study or selected topic, they must indicate what additional work or measures must be present for approval.

Procedures for Directed Studies & Advanced Topics

Fill out a Graduate Pro Forma form then obtain approval from your supervisory committee (formally noting the approval in your progress report form) and send both to the Graduate Secretary.

Note: Graduate students may not act as instructors of graduate student Directed Study or Special Topic courses and may not participate in evaluation of other graduate students in these courses.

Academic Appeals

A student may seek clarification or express dissatisfaction regarding an assigned grade. The following is a brief overview of the sequence of the appeals process as outlined by Graduate Studies. For more detailed information review the comprehensive process for academic appeals for more information.

The academic appeals process should start with the student discussing the matter with the instructor, who will review the work in question; this discussion must take place within 10 business days of the grade being posted. The instructor will complete a review within 21 business days of the start of the discussion with the student. If the instructor confirms the original grade, and the student is still dissatisfied, the student can appeal to the Academic Head of the program, clearly stating the grounds on which the grade should be adjusted. If the Academic Head does not agree to review the grade, the student has the right to formally request a grade review through the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Candidacy Examination

The purpose of the Candidacy Exam is to evaluate an independently prepared research proposal, to determine if the candidate understands the background material related to their proposal, and to identify any areas of weakness which the candidate can work on prior to their final oral exam. The Candidacy Examination should normally be held within 21 months from the start of the student's program.

The Candidacy Exam consists of a defence of a written proposal on the student's proposed dissertation research project and an oral exam on the research components of the proposal and the background/general knowledge material (as identified by the candidate in consultation with their examiners).

The written proposal must clearly state the rationale and aims of the proposed research, provide relevant background information, the research plan (methods used to test the hypothesis), expected results, as well as the limitations/potential pitfalls and significance of the proposed research. The written component should be single spaced, use 12-point font and be 8-10 pages (excluding references), with up to 5 additional pages for tables and figures.

Both the oral and written components of the exam must be successfully completed to advance in the program. The examining committee may require a student to be re-examined on either component of the exam if performance in the first instance is deemed unsatisfactory. Students are permitted one re-test of either component and it must be undertaken within two months of the initial exam. Failure

on both components of the exam initially, or one component twice, is considered grounds for removal from the Neuroscience Graduate Program.

The candidate's supervisor is permitted to be present during the exam but is not permitted to participate or aid the student in any manner and must leave the room when the committee reviews the candidate's performance. Upon completion of the candidacy exam, a report is completed by the examination Chair and signed by the Examination Committee. This document is submitted to the Graduate Secretary who circulates it to the candidate and their supervisor.

In the event of a force majeure wherein a committee member (excluding the external examiner) is unavailable for the exam, the exam will be able to proceed with a minimum of two examiners present (unless the student requests a deferral). If a force majeure prohibits the Chair from attending, the Graduate Secretary will find a suitable faculty member replacement (excluding the supervisor or committee members).

Preparing for the Candidacy Exam

Students should begin planning for their candidacy exam 5 or more months in advance with the help of their supervisor, committee members, examiners, and the Graduate Secretary. Below are the steps that a student must take to best prepare themselves for a successful candidacy exam.

1. **5 months before exam**: Meet with your supervisory committee to request an advance to candidacy, discuss potential external examiners and confirm candidacy exam committee composition requirements are fulfilled.
2. **4-5 months before exam**: Meet with candidacy committee (in person or through email) to determine study topics based on a short presentation or a one-page research proposal outline. Also, at this meeting you will set a tentative date and time for the exam.
3. **1-2 months before exam**: Finalize exam date, time, and room with the assistance of the Graduate Secretary.
4. **3 weeks before exam**: Submit your written proposal to all examiners and the Graduate Secretary. Examiners will then have **2 weeks** to communicate any concerns about the proposal to the student's supervisor.

Note:

- Familiarity with the material in your list of identified study topics and resources is intended to help you adequately prepare for the question periods of the Candidacy Exam. It is not your committee members' responsibility to provide you with a "complete list" of study topics and resources. Committee members are **not** restricted to asking questions exclusively on the study topics and/or content of the resources identified on your list.

Candidacy Exam Committee Composition

The exam committee will be comprised of a Chair (current Graduate Advisor of the Neuroscience

program or their designate) and at least three examiners. Members of the student's supervisory committee (excluding the supervisor) may serve as examiners; however, at least one examiner must be from outside of the supervisory committee and another member, whether they are apart of the supervisory committee or not, must be from outside of the candidate's supervisor's department.

Oral Examination Format

1. The candidacy exam starts with a brief (~15 minutes) presentation by the candidate on their written proposal for dissertation research.
2. The exam proceeds with an initial round of oral questions focused on the proposal, followed by a second round of questions that may involve more general knowledge relevant to the candidate's research endeavours.
    a. Questions should be aimed at determining the candidate's comprehension of the background knowledge required to undertake the proposed research, and on other related subject areas (e.g. a demonstrated knowledge of the historical context of the field, the ability to design clear experiments, an understanding of the advantages or limitations of relevant methods, etc.).
3. In between the two question periods the candidate may be asked to leave the room for an *in-camera* discussion by the Examination Committee. The Chair will ask each member of the committee to review and comment on the candidate's performance. This break is to be no more than 15 minutes in duration and is counted toward the three-hour maximum for the examination. Following the completion of the *in-camera* discussion the student will re-enter the room for the second round of questions.
4. At the end of the exam, the candidate will leave the room for the *in-camera* discussion by the Examination Committee. The Chair will ask each member of the committee to review and comment on the candidate's performance on each component – Written Proposal, Oral Exam of the Written Proposal, and the Oral Exam of General Knowledge – with a grade of pass or fail being assigned for each.
5. The exam may be adjourned if the candidate fails any of the three components of the exam. The candidate will be required to re-take any failed portion(s) of the exam within 60 days.
    a. If the candidate subsequently fails any portion of the re-taken exam, then the candidate will normally be removed from the PhD program within 30 days.
6. A candidate who fails all three components of the exam will normally be removed from the PhD program within 30 days. The candidate may transfer into the MSc program if they, and their supervisor, agree following which the Neuroscience Graduate Committee must be petitioned for the student to be re-classified as an MSc candidate in the Neuroscience Program. Faculty of Graduate Studies approval for the transfer is also required.

Thesis & Dissertation Guidelines

Students of the Neuroscience Program are required to write and orally defend an MSc Thesis or PhD Dissertation. Refer to the NPG website for the timeline steps to the Thesis/Dissertation and the Faculty of Graduate Studies for general guidelines and formatting requirements (including sample

pages).

Final Oral Examination

All students in the NGP must present and defend their thesis/dissertation which consists of a public oral presentation of the experimental findings followed by a series of questions from the exam committee.

Before a student is permitted to start writing their thesis/dissertation they must first have a supervisory committee meeting wherein they are granted permission to start writing. Students must then submit a signed Progress Report Form to the GPDA.

Upon reaching the Thesis/Dissertation portion of a student's program they must schedule a meeting with the GPDA to outline next steps and timelines.

The thesis/dissertation submission and oral examination timeline will vary based on business days and holidays each year. Generally, this period can take up to 2/3 of an entire term for MSc students and an entire term for PhD students.

Master's Submission Timeline

This timeline serves as an example, exact dates will vary:

Submit thesis to Supervisory Committee & the GPDA	Minimum 10 business days for committee review	GPDA submits Request for Oral Exam	Mandatory 20-business day waiting period	Oral Exam Date	Revisions	Submit your finalized thesis
Oct 18	Oct 21-Nov 1	Nov 4	Nov 5 – Dec 4	Dec 5	Dec 6 – 16	Dec 17

Doctoral Submission Timeline

This timeline serves as an example, exact dates will vary:

Submit thesis to Supervisory Committee & GPDA	Minimum 10 business days for committee review	GPDA submits Request for Oral Exam	Mandatory 30-business day waiting period	Oral Exam Date	Revisions	Submit your finalized thesis
Feb 5	Feb 7 – 21	Feb 25	Feb 27 – Apr 7	Apr 9	Apr 13 – 29	Apr 30

Examination Committee Composition

Oral exams are held publicly, and the exam committee includes: the supervisory committee, an external examiner* who has no previous involvement with graduate supervision of the candidate and a Chair appointed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

The supervisor is responsible for choosing and coordinating the attendance of the external examiner, with final approval by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Chair is responsible for conducting the exam, are a member of the FGS and are assigned by FGS.

If necessary, any member of the examining committee may attend the oral exam by audio or video conferencing.

Refer to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for additional information on guidelines.

External Examiner

- For **MSc students**, the external examiner may be from within the home academic unit, provided there is at least one non-unit member on the supervisory committee.
- For **PhD students**, the external examiner must be from outside the home academic unit and must be at arm's-length from the supervisor and supervisory committee in the field of research being conducted.
- Graduate students are not permitted any contact with their external examiner prior to their oral exam.

Oral Examination Format

Please review the FGS Guidelines for Oral Examinations, Chair's and External's Thesis Guidelines.

The purpose of the oral exam is to assess the student's knowledge of the field and thesis/dissertation related subject areas that may include, but is not limited to, methodology, advantages/limitations of experimental designs and historical context of the field.

The oral exam format is as follows:

1. Chair introduces themselves.
2. Chair introduces the candidate.
3. Chair asks the examining committee members to introduce themselves.
4. Chair reviews the process
5. Examination is conducted (1 1/2 – 2 hours):
    a. Candidate begins with a 10 to 20 min presentation summarizing their work.

Examiner begins two rounds of questions, beginning with the examiner that is most removed from the thesis/dissertation (e.g. external examiner, departmental members, and lastly, supervisor).

6. If there is sufficient time, other members of the FGS may ask questions.
7. If there is sufficient time, members of the audience may ask questions.

At the end of the question period, the student and attendees will be asked to exit the room as the oral exam committee evaluates the thesis and defence *in camera*. The student will then be invited

into the room to discuss the results of the exam.

Examinations normally last from 1 ½ - 2 hours, including the *in camera* committee discussion. While this time may be extended, the total may not exceed 2 ½ hours from the scheduled start.

Below are the possible results of oral examinations:

1. Independent research work is acceptable as presented or, at most, subject to **editorial** changes, and the oral defence is acceptable.
2. Independent research work is acceptable subject to **minor** revision and the oral defence is acceptable.
3. Dissertation or thesis is acceptable subject to **major** revision and the oral defence is acceptable.
4. Examination will be Adjourned.
5. The examination is Failed.

Notes:

- In the case of minor or major revisions, a specific list of revisions or experiments will be provided. The supervisor will approve the amended dissertation or thesis and will then distribute it to the rest of the examining committee for approval.
- In the case of "adjourned", the examining committee submits a written report to the Dean of Graduate Studies within 3-10 working days. The Dean is then responsible for determining the appropriateness of the examination committee composition, and chooses a date to reconvene the oral exam, no later than six months from the first exam.
- In the case of "failure", two or more examining committee members have chosen to not pass the student, and do not recommend the student for the degree. The examining committee will write a report to the Dean of Graduate Studies within 14 calendar days. At this point, the student has the right to appeal and should consult the Dean of Graduate Studies. A student who is not recommended for the degree by the examining committee is ineligible for readmission to the NGP and will receive a failing grade.

Graduation Dates, Deadlines, and Fees

All graduation requirements (including deadlines and fees) can be found on the Graduation & Convocation for Graduate Students webpage.

To complete your program by the end of the current term:

- Submit everything to the Graduation Admission and Records Office (GARO) by the last day of the last month of the term: April 30, August 31, or January 2 (aim for the last working day in December)
- Make all thesis/dissertation format corrections immediately to avoid paying tuition in the following term.

Completion Postponement Fee Adjustment (CPFA)

Students who have defended their thesis or dissertation within the first 15 days of a term may be eligible for the Completion Postponement Fee Adjustment ($255 in lieu of a full tuition fee payment).

To complete your program within the first month of the next term and be eligible for the Completion Postponement Fee Adjustment you must:

1. Register in your thesis/dissertation course for the term in which your defence will occur (full tuition will be assessed)
2. Pay your minimum program fee installment prior to the start of the term.
3. Defend your thesis on or before the 15 of the first month of the new term.
4. Submit everything to GARO by the last day of the first month of the new term: January 31, May 31, September 3
5. GARO will adjust your tuition from the regular fee assessment to the reduced CPFA amount.
6. Ancillary fees will be assessed for the term. Questions should be addressed to the GSS.

Unit Funding Information

Stipend

All students accepted into the program are guaranteed a **minimum stipend which can be comprised of a combination of scholarship, fellowship, Teaching Assistantship or Sessional Lecturing, and support payments from individual research grants**. MSc students deemed to be making satisfactory progress towards their degree requirements are guaranteed a minimum of $24,000 per annum for two years and PhD students $24,000 per annum for four years.

At the outset of a student's program, both the student and supervisor must sign an expectation document outlining this information; this document can be amended to extend support beyond the eligible periods outlined above. It is at the supervisor's discretion to increase grant support for students beyond the minimum guaranteed level. Students should discuss their stipend with their supervisor prior to their start date and at a minimum of once per academic year.

Note: Individual donor awards cannot be used as part of a student's stipend.

Awards & Scholarships

Awards, scholarships, and fellowships are offered both internally and externally and are indicators of excellence for young researchers. Internal / external awards and scholarships are advertised through emails from the NGP Graduate Secretary, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Graduate Advisor and the NGP website. Students are encouraged to seek out these resources as well as those offered by their home departments (if outside of the DMS).

Note: All eligible students are strongly encouraged to apply for both internal and external awards. Being recognized for these awards is a demonstration of academic excellence.

FGS Fellowships, Graduate and Graduate Entrance Awards

Internal scholarships and awards are offered by the University of Victoria. The Faculty of Graduate Studies offers Graduate Fellowships, Graduate, and Graduate Entrance Awards. Each year, FGS allocates funds to each academic unit (e.g. Biology, DMS, EPHE) to provide graduate student support. Applications for these awards are made through the student's home department. Recipients of awards will be notified by email, through digital application submission portals or by post according to the granting agency.

Review the Faculty of Graduate Studies Awards and Fellowship webpage for further information.

FGS and GSS Travel Awards

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Students' Society (GSS) offer travel grants to support travel to conferences, meetings, workshops, or research activities.

Each department within the NGP also offers various department-specific awards that may include travel awards. Please refer to the Graduate Secretary for information regarding the deadlines and application process for these awards.

See Appendix II for more information on student travel.

External Awards

External awards may be granted by any organization outside of the University; however, some require internal departmental nominations prior to the University application deadline. Consult the scholarships officers or your Graduate Advisor prior to September for more information regarding the internal nomination procedures.

Note: Students are encouraged to refer to the application criteria for all external awards, as international students may not be eligible for all awards.

All students who receive tri-council funding must read and abide by the respective award holder guidelines. These guidelines will vary based on the source and will stipulate expectations of output and identify any progress reporting required throughout the award's tenure. These guidelines may also place restrictions on outside employment and time spent on a student's research project. Failure to comply with the regulations listed in the award holder's guidelines can result in termination of dispensation of the award.

Donor Awards

Students can submit applications for a variety of awards made possible by the generous donations and bequests to the University of Victoria. Information will be circulated to students by the Graduate Secretary regarding the formal application process. Below is a non- comprehensive list of potential donor awards for which NGP students may be eligible.
Nomination and granting of awards by the student's home department (e.g. BIOL, SMSC, EPHE) will be based on eligibility, publication record, grades, existing funding and financial need.

Additional Awards

Outside of the awards described herein, students may be eligible for other sources of funding. Students are advised to consult the Graduate Advisor and scholarships officers at the Faculty of Graduate Studies regarding the specific University of Victoria nomination and application processes as applicable. Additionally, students are directed to the Financial Aid Office and the NGSA for more information about additional scholarships. Nomination for awards by the department will be based on meeting eligibility criteria, publication record, grades, existing funding and financial need.

Note: Students who hold major funding (e.g. Tri-Council or others) may not be eligible for some specific donor awards. Students are strongly encouraged to carefully read the descriptions and eligibility requirements for each award. Donor awards can change year to year.

Award Adjudication Process

Departmental nomination may be required for adjudication of some external and donor awards. Generally, adjudication for awards is based primarily on academic success which can include grades, publications, as well as poster and oral conference presentations.

In addition to academic measures, criteria such as leadership, volunteerism and employment experience may be considered, depending on the award. A student's eligibility, degree of fit for an award, and financial need may also be assessed depending on the award criteria. For some awards, existing funding, financial support, and amount of time in the program may influence award nomination and granting.

Typically, each department will have an awards and scholarships committee that may set forth additional criteria depending on the award. Students are strongly encouraged to contact their home department regarding these awards.

Teaching Assistantships

Availability of Teaching Assistant (TA) appointments for students in the NGP can never be guaranteed. Before applying for a TA-ship, students are strongly encouraged to consult with their supervisor. Earnings from TA-ships can make up a part of a student's minimum stipend. If TA-ships are not included in a student's minimum stipend, a student may still participate in TA-ships pending

permission from their supervisor. Earnings will be granted in addition to the stipend, if mutually agreed upon by the student and the supervisor; this agreement must be clearly communicated in writing.

- It is the student's responsibility to apply for TA-ships in a timely manner. If a student fails to apply for a necessary TA-ship to meet their minimum stipend, the supervisor is not responsible to compensate the difference.
- If a student is denied a TA position under Union priority rules due to a shortage of positions, the supervisor will provide the compensation required to maintain the minimum stipend for the eligible periods.

Students in the NGP may teach a maximum of 2 TA appointments per calendar year (2 x 196 hours). No more than 1 TA appointment may be held in a single academic term. Please refer to the CUPE 4163 Collective Agreement for rules and regulations regarding hours of work and scheduling. Any student may freely choose to teach less than the maximum, provided that TA-ships are not included in the minimum stipend.

Outside Employment

The NGP is a full-time program which demands the necessary time and effort for timely completion of the desired graduate degree. Generally, students are expected to treat their graduate education as full-time employment. The specific expectations of the supervisor for the student's work hours can be outlined in the signed expectation document. If a student must participate in employment outside of the NGP, this must be clearly requested in writing by the student and agreed upon by the supervisor, who may set terms for making up missed work time in the laboratory. The timelines for completion of the desired graduate degree are not changed unless specifically agreed upon by both the student and the supervisor.

Note: International students who hold a VISA will have specific directions/limits regarding employment outside of graduate school.

Tuition Fees

Throughout their time in the Neuroscience Graduate Program students are required to be enrolled in courses, including the summer, and pay the associated tuition. Tuition fees can be paid online through the UVic MyPage Student tab or by cheque, money order or wire transfer. Credit cards are not accepted as a form of payment. Graduate students can apply for the Graduate Student Tuition Income Offset Plan where tuition payments are made over 4 equal installments automatically from a student's bank account.

Following a certain period of time within the graduate program, students pay reduced 're-registration' fees. For MSc students this occurs after 6 regular tuition payments and for PhD students this occurs after 9 regular tuition payments. Re-registration fees will be charged

until a student completes their program. For students not completing their programs within the FGS maxima, program extension fees will apply if a program extension is granted.

Deadlines for fee payment

Term	Deadline for Payment
Fall (Sept-Dec)	September 30
Spring (Jan-Apr)	January 31
Summer (May-Aug)	May 31

Refer to the Graduate Student Society website for a breakdown of membership fees.

Seminars

Special "Seminar Series" lectures occur throughout the academic year (usually on Friday's and 1-2 lectures per month between September and April). To be kept in the loop on upcoming seminars please refer to the SMS website. Emails will be sent 1-2 weeks in advance detailing the title and abstract of an upcoming lecture.

Student **attendance** at lectures is strongly encouraged. While it is not mandatory as part of the Neuroscience MSc or PhD programs, supervisors are expecting full compliance with participation, and we will be taking attendance. The attendance records will be kept and may influence internal student ranking lists for award competitions (i.e. showing initiatives to be involved in SMS activities, networking, and leadership qualities). For students **attending the lectures virtually** please email the Graduate Program Assistant at the start of the lecture that you are connected into the lecture by zoom (this will count as your digital signature). Attendance at lectures is not linked or planned to be linked to any NRSC course at this time.

A student of the host faculty member may be asked to take up the ***host* role** during the guest lecturer's visit. This will include greeting the guest in the lobby and ushering them between one-on-one meetings, introducing them at the start of the lecture, and facilitating the student discussion. This hosting support could also influence internal student ranking lists for award competitions (i.e. extra curricular volunteer activities).

Generally, **refreshments** (lunch and coffee) will be served immediately preceding the lecture (e.g. refreshments available at 11:45 am with a lecture starting at 12:00 pm). **RSVPs** not required; refreshments will be offered on a *first-come first-serve* basis.

Research Ethics and Lab Safety

Researchers must obtain the appropriate ethical approvals (biosafety, human ethics, animal care) prior to commencing any new research at the University of Victoria. Appropriate Occupational Health Safety and Environment (OHSE) training must be taken prior to commencing work in the lab.

Note: In the School of Medical Sciences, the Operations Manager will provide students with training information.

Academic Integrity within the Research Environment

Students and their supervisors must conduct research in an honest manner, fostering an environment of academic freedom, integrity, accountability, public trust and in a manner free from conflict of interest. Strict adherence to academic integrity related to research is expected in the NGP. For more information see the Graduate Supervision Policy and the UVic webpage on Academic Integrity.

Violations relating to graduate theses, dissertations, and final projects are dealt with in a serious manner and all content that is deemed a violation must be re-written in its entirety. Falsification of research results is dealt with more seriously than any other first violation of academic integrity and the Graduate Advisor may refer such a case to the Dean.

All members of the NGP (students, supervisors, research staff) will identify appropriately (including through co-authorship) the contributions of all persons who make an intellectual or otherwise substantive contribution to publications, conference presentations, exhibitions, or other disseminations of scholarly works in a manner appropriate for the field. In these disseminations of scholarly work, sources of fellowships, grants and awards which supported the research must be recognized.

For all research being conducted in the NGP, the appropriate ethical approvals from the Office of Research Services must be obtained prior to undertaking any research project. Students will work closely with their supervisor(s) on requests for approval and if any changes are required mid-research. Where appropriate, the research must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee, the Institutional Animal Care Committee, and the Biosafety Committee.

Laboratory Safety Procedures

All individuals working in laboratories at the University of Victoria are required to undergo safety training pertaining to the type of work being completed. Everyone working in a laboratory must complete:

1. Workplace hazardous materials information system (WHMIS)
2. Laboratory Safety Training – Part 1
3. Biosafety Awareness

Please see the OHSE training information page to see all the available training. Your supervisor will confirm any additional training required beyond the mandatory OHSE courses.

For more information, see the Occupational Health, Safety & Environment Page.

Research & Teaching with Animals and Humans

For all research involving animal or human subjects the appropriate ethical approvals must be granted before commencing any work and must be maintained throughout the period of study. All researchers must read and adhere to procedures related to their project(s) listed in the approved Animal Use Protocol(s) and Standard Operating Procedure(s).

Animal Ethics

All animal use at the University of Victoria is subject to the approval of the institutional Animal Care Committee (ACC), which meets regularly to ensure that animal research is in accordance with the standards set by the Canadian Council for Animal Care (CCAC). All individuals conducting research with animals are required to undergo theoretical and practical training through Animal Care Services (ACS).

Human Ethics

The Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) ensures that all research involving human subjects or the use of human biological materials meets Canadian regulatory body standards. Faculty, students and staff conducting this research must obtain and maintain approval throughout the duration of the project.

Academic Advising in the Neuroscience Graduate Program

Students may ask for confidential advice and/or assistance concerning any aspect of university life from any appropriate authority at the University of Victoria **without fear of reprisal**. In addition to the procedures described below, there are many resources available to students on campus. For any meeting students have the right to meet in the presence of an advocate of their choice.

Within the NGP students may request a confidential meeting with the Graduate Advisor whose responsibilities include:

1. To meet in confidence with any student about whom there is a concern.
2. To be knowledgeable regarding protocols and resources involved in the University of Victoria Mental Health Initiatives.
3. To be knowledgeable regarding protocols and resources involved in assessing and complying with academic, and research accommodations for students with a disability.
4. To assist students requesting extensions from FGS; to provide information on external scholarships and awards as well as information about university; and program policies and procedures.
5. To assist students and faculty in addressing problems in the supervisory relationship or supervisory committee membership in an impartial and confidential manner.

A full list of responsibilities of the Graduate Advisor are included in the Graduate Supervision Policy.

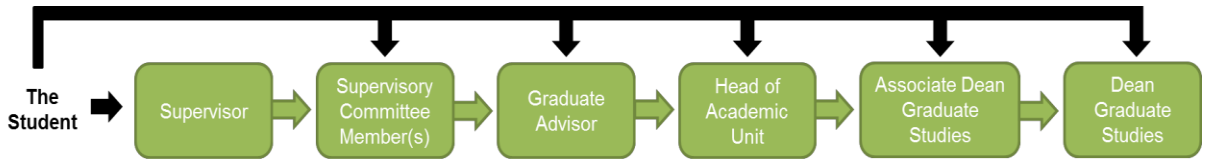
Conflict in the Neuroscience Graduate Program

All members of the FGS and of the NGP have a responsibility to maintain professional and respectful relationships with students, staff, members of the NGP, the university community and the general public. With this, members must deal directly with individuals whenever possible to resolve disagreements, dissatisfactions, issues and conflicts. If for whatever reason the situation cannot be resolved directly, individuals may consult the appropriate authorities as described in the chain of authority or access other resources on campus including the Office of Equity and Human Rights (EQHR).

Any member of the university community may consult with the Director of the Office of EQHR at any time for confidential advice and may initiate a formal or informal complaint as appropriate. The procedures for these processes are outlined on the Equity and Human Right's webpage on Discrimination and Harassment. Also on this page is the policy on discrimination and harassment.

For more information (including procedural processes) regarding Conflict of Interest, review the Graduate Supervision Policy.

Chain of Authority for Conflict Resolution



Resolution of Conflict of Interest

All supervisors, supervisory committee members and students have the responsibility to be aware of potential conflict of interest, roles and commitments and to address with them according to official university guidelines.

Should a substantial conflict of interest (e.g., the existence or development of emotional, romantic, sexual, family, or financial and/or business relationship) arise between the supervisor, a supervisory committee member and the student, the individuals involved must immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Graduate Advisor and the Head of the Academic Unit.

Conflict with Supervisor

In the case of substantial personal conflicts of interest between the student and supervisor whether past or present, will result in immediate termination of the supervisory relationship. In this case, the

Graduate Advisor will step in as the interim supervisor for the student until a new supervisor can be determined. The former supervisor, supervisory committee and the supervisor's home academic unit shall be responsible for the maintenance of any existing or promised financial support for a period to be determined by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Conflict with Supervisory Committee

In the case of such a conflict of interest between the supervisory committee and the student, the member shall resign from the supervisory committee.

Conflict with Graduate Advisor

In the case where the Graduate Advisor is in any perceived or actual conflict of interest with regard to the student or the decision being made (e.g. if the student's supervisor and Graduate Advisor are the same individual), a member of the Neuroscience Graduate Committee, or any member of FGS, not in conflict shall be appointed by the Head of the Academic Unit as the Acting Graduate Advisor. Should the Academic Head be in conflict, this Acting Graduate Advisor shall be appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Dissolution of the Supervisory Relationship

In the case of the dissolution of the supervisory relationship between the student and the supervisor or supervisory committee it is unacceptable for a withdrawing student, supervisor or supervisory committee member to engage in personal recriminations related to the termination of a supervisory relationship.

Resolution through Equity & Human Rights

The Equity and Human Rights (EQHR) office provides support for sexualized violence, and discrimination, harassment or workplace bullying. EQHR provides education and assistance to all UVic community members. All discussion and inquiries with EQHR are confidential. For questions, resources, or assistance, we highly encourage you to visit them in Sedgewick C115. For more information about the informal and formal complaint process, please see the EQHR office and the resources provided in the Student Resources appendix.

Appendix I –Student Resources

Discrimination and Harassment

If you feel you have experienced or witnessed mistreatment, discrimination, or harassment, please refer to Equity and Human Rights webpage.

- Discrimination and Harassment Policy: Overview
- Discrimination and Harassment Policy: Formal Complaint Process Flow Chart
- Discrimination and Harassment Policy: Step by Step Guide to the Formal Complaint Process

Informal Complaints: a non-adversarial and neutral process in situations where individuals are seeking informal resolution (mediation, facilitated conversation, invitations to engage in educational opportunities, etc.).

Formal Complaints: a complaint submitted in writing with the intent of starting an investigation that results in the generation of a report of whether or not a policy violation has occurred.

Sexualized Violence Prevention

UVic has created a sexualized violence resource office in EQHR to serve as a main point of contact for students, staff, and faculty impacted by sexualized violence. Located in Equity and Human Rights (Sedgewick C115), the office provides information about the Sexualized Violence Prevention and Response policy, supports and services both on- and off- campus, and is a place where people can make (informal) disclosures and/or (formal) reports of sexualized violence.

The sexualized violence resource office is committed to ensuring that the campus community is a trauma-informed and survivor-centered environment where people, regardless of their sex, gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic background, religious affiliation, immigrant status, socio-economic status, ability status, and position within the university structure, can access meaningful information and support. The office recognizes the specific barriers and power relationships that impact a survivor in making a disclosure or report and are committed to devising strategies that take such barriers and power relationships into account and that work to mitigate them.

External Resources and Support

General Services

- Accommodation of religious observance
- Center for Accessible Learning (CAL)
- Equity and Human Rights
- Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS)
- Graduate Student Society (GSS)
- Indigenous Counselling Services
- International Student Services (ISS)
- Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation
- Neuroscience Graduate Student Association (NGSA) email
- Office of the Ombudsperson
- Sexualized Violence Resource and Intake Line
- Support for Indigenous students
- UVic Counselling Services
- Women in Science (WiS)

Confidential Help Lines

- BC Bereavement Helpline: 1-877-779-2223
- BC Crisis Centre: 1-800-784-2433
- BC Mental Health Information Line: 1-800-661-2121
- BC NurseLine/ Health Link BC: 8-1-1
- Substance Abuse: 1-800-663-1441
- Trans Lifeline: 1-877-330-6366
- Vancouver Island Crisis Line: 1-888-494-3888
- Victoria Hospice: 250-370-8715

Library Resources

- Data Analysis with Excel workshop
- DSC and library workshops
- LibGuide for Neuroscience
- Research Data Services: Data Management Plans

On-Going Support and Counselling Off-Campus

- Men's Trauma Center: 250-381-6367
- Victoria Sexual Assault Center: 250-383-3232

Online Resources for Mental Health Disorders and Support

- Addictions Help Guide
- Anxiety BC
- BC Schizophrenia Society
- Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) Society of BC
- Capital Mental Health Association
- Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health
- Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention
- Depression Hurts
- Early Psychosis Intervention
- Here to Help
- Kelty Eating Disorders
- Mind Check
- Mind your Mind
- Mood Disorders Association of BC
- NEED2 Services (Suicide Prevention)

Other Helpful Resources

- Addressing mental health stigma: Stigma Free Zone
- Centre for Biomedical Research (CBR)
- Let's Talk Science (LTS)
- MITACS
- Poison Control Center
- Speaker's Bureau
- Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair

Appendix II – Student Travel

General Information

It is the responsibility of the student to have supervisory approval at least one month prior to travel for an estimate of travel expenses that will be covered by their supervisor. This includes whether travel, accommodation, meals (per diems or receipts), and/or general incidentals are permitted expenses. Whenever possible students will seek out additional travel funding through Travel Awards.

It is also the responsibility of the student to review all policies and procedures on travel to/from conferences and to understand what expenses are allowed/not allowed PRIOR to travel. When in doubt students should always contact their supervisor and Graduate Secretary for clarification and approval.

Travel Awards

Students must apply for travel awards prior to attending a conference.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Students' Society (GSS) offer travel grants to support travel. If a student is also employed under CUPE 4163 they may be eligible for their travel award. Each of these awards are highly competitive so students should be familiar with all award criteria and apply as early as possible.

Each department within the NGP also offers various department-specific awards that may include travel awards. Students should contact their respective department administrators; School of Medical Sciences students contact the Graduate Secretary.

Policies and Procedures

All policies and procedures follow the UVic policy on Travel and Business Expenses (FM5610) and the UVic Research Expenses Guide.

Travel Dates – Generally, the day before and after a conference are included in the allowable travel days; however, if a student is travelling a considerable distance (e.g. 6 +/- time zone change) then + 1-2 days may be allowed and not considered part of "personal time".

For example, *Student A* attends a conference is held May 19-22 in Vancouver, they may expense a May 18 arrival, but cannot claim May 17 or 23. (An exception is if the end of a conference runs late into the evening (then a student can expense that last night). *Student B* attends a conference held May 19-22 in Norway, they may expense a May 17 arrival and May 23 departure.

Extended Personal Time – Personal time prior to or following a conference is allowed. If a student is leaving early or delaying their return to UVic they will be responsible for their personal travel,

accommodation, meals, and incidental expenses.

If, during this personal time, the student travels to another city, province or state, or country and travels back to UVic from a location other than their conference destination partial travel coverage may be an allowed expense. For more information and to confirm eligibility please reach out to the Graduate Secretary.

Insurance for International Travel

It is highly recommended that students have insurance that covers international travel. If a student is not covered under their parents, spouse, or own extended insurance they should strongly consider temporary insurance when attending conferences outside of Canada.

Graduate Student Society (GSS) has basic emergency medical coverage under their Extended Health Plan.

World Nomads – Lonely Planet also provides extended travel insurance.

Students can also review travel insurance coverage through their Canadian Bank Institutions or Credit Card Companies.

Reimbursement

Refer to the NGP website for the Neuroscience Travel Reimbursement form. Students should fill out this form in its entirety then submit back to the Graduate Secretary, along with all receipts, and email confirmation of their supervisor's approval for expenses.

Depending on the time of year and influx of reimbursement requests a student's reimbursement may be processed within 1-3 weeks of submission.

Receipts – All receipts must be kept for reimbursement. If a receipt is damaged or lost students should fill out the Declaration Form for Missing Receipts and submit it as part of their reimbursement package.

Shared Expenses – It must be clearly stated on the Neuroscience Travel Reimbursement form if an expense is shared between a few students, staff, and/or faculty as well as who paid for the service or item. For example, a taxi ride from an airport to hotel was shared between three people; denote who shared the ride and who paid. It is preferred that shared expenses, whenever possible, are paid by a single person and thus claimed by that person on their reimbursement.