



SDH Student Handbook

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This Handbook

We have prepared this handbook to serve as a resource for you, the SDH students. Whether you are just starting the program or are nearing completion, we hope that this handbook serves as a useful guide for expectations and procedures. You will find an overview of the SDH program as well as links to University resources and policies. If you have suggestions for improving this handbook, please do not hesitate to reach out to either of us.

Sincerely,
Matt and Laleh

*** A note on this handbook:* The [Graduate Calendar](#) is the primary record of policies and procedures pertaining to your degree. In the case of a discrepancy between the information in this handbook and Graduate Calendar, **the Graduate Calendar should be followed**. Please notify the Graduate Advisor if you discover any discrepancies so we may update the handbook.

This handbook is updated annually. Please note that it is your right to adhere to the policies and procedures of either the version of the SDH Handbook that was in place at the time you commenced your studies or the current version. However, once you and your supervisors have decided which version to use, you may not subsequently switch between them.

Contact Information

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SDH Program Overview

The SDH program offers graduate studies leading to the degrees of Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MSc), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Focused specifically on interdisciplinary health research, the program links the research and academic mandates of the Faculties of Social Sciences, Humanities, Education, and Human and Social Development, as well as the research mandates of the University's many interdisciplinary research centres, to offer a unique training opportunity to students interested in health research that cross-cuts traditional disciplines.

Designed as an interdisciplinary, research-intensive graduate program, the SDH program incorporates theoretical and methodological perspectives from the humanities, health, and social sciences. The program is flexible, allowing students to create a tailored program that fits with their background and future goals. The final output is a thesis (MA/MSc) or dissertation (PhD), which the student must successfully defend according to regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS).

The SDH program is an interdisciplinary program within FGS. However, as of July 2020, the program is administered by the School of Public Health and Social Policy (PHSP) in the Faculty of Human and Social Development. This gives students the advantage of having a home within an academic unit at the University, while still allowing the program to maintain its unique interdisciplinary focus and strengths.

Given its interdisciplinary focus and strengths, the SDH program benefits from the guidance of a program committee. For the 2024-25 academic year, the program committee includes the following faculty members:

Matthew Little (commencing January 1st, 2025) – Chair
Monique Auger (PHSP)
Simon Carroll (Sociology)
Farah Mawani (PHSP)
Sarah Nutter (Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies)
Heather Castleden (Public Administration)
Michael Ma (Sociology)
Justin Leifso (Political Science)

Student Expectations

Program expectations for students include:

- Actively participating in courses and maintaining at least a B average (cumulative GPA of 5.0 or higher)
- Assembling a supervisory committee, including a primary supervisor and co-supervisor
- Meeting with supervisors on a regular basis
- Meeting program deadlines and milestones
- Completing an Annual Progress Review
- Completing the program within the time limits

More information on each of these topics can be found below.

The Graduate Calendar

The [Graduate Calendar](#) is your friend! It is the primary record of policies and procedures pertaining to your degree, including registration, tuition, leaves of absence, exams and defenses, course and program

descriptions. It is updated at the beginning of each term. Familiarize yourself with it and use it throughout your degree. When you have questions about the program, the Calendar should be your first go-to place to look for answers.

Registration, Tuition, Leaves of Absence, and Other Administrative Matters

This section contains an overview of administrative matters pertaining to being an SDH student. We include here the answers to some frequently asked questions. Please refer to the ***Fees, policies and regulations*** section of the [Graduate Calendar](#) for more information on each of these matters.

Paying tuition: Tuition must be paid for all three terms in the academic year: fall, spring, and summer. Due dates are typically the last day of the first month of each term (e.g., September 30 for the fall term).

Full time versus part time status: You are defined as a full-time student if you are enrolled in a minimum of 3.0 units of courses (which typically equates to two courses per term). Note that you automatically meet the definition of a full-time student if you are enrolled in any of the following courses: thesis (SDH 599), candidacy exam (SDH 693), or dissertation (SDH 699).

Continuity of Registration: You are expected to register as a full-time student each term, including the summer term. Allowances for part-time registration can be made with permission; please speak with the Graduate Advisor if you are considering registering in fewer than 3.0 units in a given term. Once you have completed your coursework, you will enroll in the thesis (SDH 599), candidacy exam (SDH 693), or dissertation (SDH 699) each term until you have completed your degree. Once you are registered in one of these courses, you are automatically a full-time student.

Eligibility to Register: If you are in good academic standing and were registered or on a leave of absence in the most recent session at the University, you will be automatically eligible for registration in the next session. Students who have withdrawn under any other circumstances and who wish to return are required to complete an Application to Re-register.

Adding Courses: Use **Online tools** to add courses before the deadline in each term (see [Academic Year Important Dates](#)). Beginning in Summer of 2023, all methods and elective courses listed in the SDH sections of the graduate calendar are now cross-listed, meaning you will be able to register in them without prior approval (Submitting the Course Registration form is not needed anymore). However, some courses, including those listed below, may have extra requirements that you must comply with. Be sure to discuss your course selections with you co-supervisors prior to registering. You may not take or receive credit for courses in which you are not registered.

Courses with additional requirements:

- All HINF courses (503, 570, 571, 573, 591) – SDH students **MUST** complete HINF 572 (offered annually in September) prior to registering for any of these courses. Please plan accordingly.

Dropping Courses: Use **Online tools** to drop courses before the deadline in each term (see [Academic Year Important Dates](#)). Failing to do so means you will receive a failing grade (N) for the course. You may not take or receive credit for courses in which you are not registered, and may not drop courses after FGS deadlines without permission of the Dean.

Auditing Courses: If you wish to audit a course, you should first discuss it with your supervisor and the Graduate Advisor.

Time Limits: Master's students have to complete all degree requirements within **five (5)** years from the date of first registration in the program. PhD students have to complete all the requirements within **seven (7)** years from the date of first registration in the program. If you need extra time to complete your program, you will need to apply for an extension before the time limit expiry date. To apply for an extension, work with your supervisors, the Graduate Advisor, and the Program Assistant to complete the Program Extension Request Form (access all FGS forms [here](#)).

Leaves of Absence and Withdrawal Requests: Unexpected events may cause you to seek a leave of absence with permission or withdrawal from the program. Different types of leaves have different documentation requirements and carry different consequences for your timeline for program completion. Read the subsection of the [Graduate Calendar](#) on leaves of absence carefully so that you are familiar with these details.

Leaves should be arranged in advance. You should only request a leave of absence when necessary, not as a means of tuition break. Note that while on leave, you should NOT be involved in any academic or research work, use University facilities or resources, or interact with your supervisors or committee members. Before you consider taking a leave, consult with your supervisors and the Graduate Advisor. **If you are going on leave, please notify your supervisor and copy the Program Assistant in writing of the type of leave and its duration.**

Promotion from Master's to PhD program: If you are currently enrolled in a Master's program, in some instances, a student may wish to be considered to change to a PhD. Often referred to as "fast tracking," this opportunity is reserved for only the most exceptional cases, and will proceed only with the following criteria:

- Completion of all core SDH courses, with A or A+ grades exclusively;
- Having the confirmed written support of BOTH co-supervisors as evidenced in exemplary and detailed feedback written in the annual progress report; submitted at the end of Year 1 of the program;
- Completion of a previous Master's degree OR extensive professional and/or research experience.

In order to be considered for promotion/fast tracking, you will submit the same materials as if you were applying as a new student. This includes: A statement of intent that articulates your rationale and proposed area of study at the PhD level, two letters of reference, a statement of support from your co-supervisors that includes information about the training environment and level of support being offered for the duration of your PhD studies, updated transcripts, and writing samples. The SDH program committee will review your application to determine your eligibility and suitability for the program prior to recommending you to FGS for admission.

Enrolling in a PhD after completing SDH Master's: For students considering applying to a PhD after graduating with an SDH Master's degree, please note that, as an invariable dissertation credit degree, you will be required to enroll in 30 credits of courses and find suitable substitutes for the four SDH core courses.

Supervisory Committee

Your supervisory committee will oversee your program of study and support you in achieving program milestones. At the Master's level, a supervisory committee must consist of a primary supervisor and co-supervisor; a third committee member is optional. For PhD students, a supervisory committee must consist of a primary supervisor, co-supervisor, and a third committee member; a fourth committee

member is optional. Refer to the [Graduate Supervision Policy](#) for up-to-date information on student and faculty responsibilities pertaining to the supervisory committee.

You should form your supervisory committee and hold your first meeting before the end of your first term in the program. You will have already identified your primary supervisor and possibly your co-supervisor as part of your application for admission to the SDH program. Discuss with your supervisors to identify additional committee members. Only members of FGS or those approved by FGS can be on a supervisory committee. Additionally, at least one of your co-supervisors must be listed on the current SDH [Faculty](#) list. Qualified individuals from outside of the University of Victoria may be considered to join a supervisory committee; they will need to first be approved by FGS (if they are not already). As you assemble your supervisory committee, consult with the Graduate Advisor and Program Assistant to ensure that your committee meets all requirements.

When you intend to add an individual to your supervisory committee (or make changes to the existing structure of your committee), first confirm with your existing committee members and the prospective committee member to ensure all are comfortable with the prospective committee. Next, send an email to the SDH Graduate Advisor and the SDH Program Assistant and CC all committee members, including the prospective committee member, indicating the new structure of your supervisory committee. The SDH Graduate Advisor will confirm that the structure of the supervisory committee meets FGS guidelines.

You should meet with your supervisors on a regular basis (ideally no less than twice per term) to discuss your progress with course work and research. You will also meet with your supervisory committee periodically (at least once per year, but more frequently if needed) to ensure that all members are kept up to date on your progress, with a mandatory annual progress report submitted each year to the graduate assistant.

Master of Arts (MA) or Science (MSc) Degree

| Summary of Course Requirements | Units |
|--|-------------|
| Total: | 18.0 |
| Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Health Research (SDH 500A) | 1.5 |
| Interdisciplinary Methods Applied to Health Research (SDH 500B) | 1.5 |
| Colloquium I: Perspectives (SDH 501A) | 1.5 |
| Colloquium II: Methods (SDH 501B) | 1.5 |
| Methodology: two 1.5-unit methods courses from the approved list | 3.0 |
| Electives: two 1.5-unit electives from the approved list | 3.0 |
| Thesis (SDH 599) | 6.0 |

The Master's program is designed to be completed in two years (with a time limit of 5 years, as noted above). You will typically complete the four SDH core courses, methods courses, and electives over the first year of the program (three terms; see **Appendix A for a program plan**). Course descriptions are available in the [Graduate Calendar](#). Work with your supervisory committee to identify the best methods courses and electives to support your learning.

If you require training in a specific topic for which no course is available at the University of Victoria, you may be able to take a graduate course at another university in Western Canada. Refer to the Western Deans' Agreement and Application Form on the FGS website (access all FGS forms [here](#)). You also have the option of creating and taking a Directed Studies course for credit (SDH 590). A maximum of 3.0 units of Directed Studies courses can be counted toward your degree. Discuss options for Directed Studies courses with your supervisors. A Directed Studies course must be led by a faculty member and planned in advance. Work with the proposed instructor to develop the weekly schedule, reading list, assignments, and grading structure for the course, and complete a Pro forma proposal form (access all FGS forms [here](#)). Submit completed forms, signed by the instructor and primary supervisor, to the Program Assistant.

Thesis Proposal

After you have completed your coursework, you will register in the thesis course (SDH 599) each term until the remaining requirements of your program (thesis proposal, thesis) are complete. You will prepare a thesis proposal and defend it to your supervisory committee in an oral examination. There is no requirement for a chair at this examination.

The thesis proposal should be 15-20 pages long (excluding references) and include the following sections: statement of the research question; literature review (why this question is relevant); methods and analysis plan; ethical considerations; anticipated outcomes; anticipated limitations; and timeline. Normally, the thesis proposal should be approved no later than the beginning of the second year of the program. As such, you should expect to be preparing your thesis proposal while you are completing your coursework.

Thesis Research and Defense

Upon successful defense of the thesis proposal, you are approved to begin your thesis research. If your thesis research will involve human or animal subjects, you will need to obtain approval from the University's [Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#) before starting the research (and after defense of your thesis proposal).

A thesis can take on different formats in different disciplines – work with your supervisory committee to decide on the optimal format for your thesis. More generally, there are a number of helpful [resources](#) available to support you in writing your thesis, including workshops, writing groups, templates, and examples. Check these out for tips and tricks, inspiration, and guidance.

You will produce the thesis and defend it successfully in an oral examination. Your examining committee will include your supervisors, an external examiner nominated by your supervisors, and a chair assigned by FGS. The thesis defense will normally take place by the end of the second year. More information on the thesis defense is available in the ***Fees, policies and regulations*** section of the [Graduate Calendar](#).

As you near completion of the program and when you think you are getting close to completing your thesis, it is important for you and your supervisor to contact the Program Assistant, Laleh Mousavi (sdhadmin@uvic.ca) to make sure all of the necessary steps and paperwork have been completed. The Program Assistant can advise you on the timeline for graduation in a particular term. In addition to the final draft of your thesis, there are also forms that must be submitted within specified time frames. These affect the scheduling of your oral defense and completion of your degree. More information on graduation requirements and deadlines can be found [here](#).

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree

| Summary of Course Requirements | Units |
|--|-------------|
| Total: | 30.0 |
| Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Health Research (SDH 600A) | 1.5 |
| Interdisciplinary Methods Applied to Health Research (SDH 600B) | 1.5 |
| Colloquium I: Perspectives (SDH 601A) | 1.5 |
| Colloquium II: Methods (SDH 601B) | 1.5 |
| Methodology: two 1.5-unit methods courses from the approved list | 3.0 |
| Electives: two 1.5-unit electives from the approved list | 3.0 |
| Candidacy (SDH 693) | 3.0 |
| Dissertation (SDH 699) | 15.0 |

The PhD program is designed to be completed in four years (with a time limit of 7 years, as noted above). You will typically complete the four SDH core courses, methods courses, and electives over the first year of the program (three terms; see **Appendix A for a program plan**). Course descriptions are available in the [Graduate Calendar](#). Work with your supervisory committee to identify the best methods courses and electives to support your learning.

If you require training in a specific topic for which no course is available at the University of Victoria, you may be able to take a graduate course at another university in Western Canada. Refer to the Western Deans' Agreement and Application Form on the FGS website (access all FGS forms [here](#)). You also have the option of creating and taking Directed Studies course for credit (SDH 690). A maximum of 3.0 units of Directed Studies courses can be counted toward your degree. Discuss options for Directed Studies courses with your supervisors. A Directed Studies course must be led by a faculty member and planned in advance. Work with the proposed instructor to develop the weekly schedule, reading list, assignments, and grading structure for the course, and complete a Pro forma proposal form (access all FGS forms [here](#)). Submit completed forms, signed by the instructor and primary supervisor, to the Program Assistant.

Candidacy Examination

Once you have completed your coursework, you will register in the candidacy examination (SDH 693) each term until the requirements are complete. Candidacy exams will normally be completed by the end of your second year (or sixth term) in the program. The purpose of the candidacy exam is to prepare you for the dissertation process through intensive reading and synthesis of literature in your area of focus and oral defense of your work. The candidacy exam includes three steps:

- Step 1: Development of the reading lists and exam questions
- Step 2: Preparation of candidacy essays
- Step 3: Oral defense

The candidacy exam will take on one of two formats:

- Two exam questions, to be answered in essays of approximately 45 pages each

- Three exam questions, to be answered in essays of approximately 30 pages each

Work with your supervisory committee to decide on the optimal format for you.

You will start **Step 1** by setting an initial meeting about the beginning of the third term with your supervisory committee. Your supervisory committee is strongly encouraged to seek the support of a Chair (a faculty member who is not on your supervisory committee to guide you on procedures and act as an impartial mediator) to oversee the candidacy process. A Chair is particularly helpful if one or more members of the committee are not conversant in SDH policies and procedures. The SDH Graduate Advisor can assist with this as needed. If your supervisor is experienced in SDH procedures, they may act as Chair.

At an initial meeting you will agree on the timetable for the exam and the subject areas that will form the basis for the readings. **Step 2** begins after this meeting, where you will compile reading lists (either two or three lists, depending on the format of your exam). These lists should be compiled in collaboration with your supervisory committee and finalized by the end of the third term, or early in the fourth term of your program. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the SDH program, it is difficult to prescribe how many readings the lists should include. They should be manageable and include readings of central importance to the proposed dissertation topic. The readings will typically cover aspects of study design, methodology and methods, theory, and content specific to the relevant disciplines or fields of study. As a guide, the reading lists will be about 40-50 readings per essay for the two-essay option and 30-35 for the three-essay option. These are guides only and need to take account of the balance of sources (e.g., books, journal articles, reports) – ultimately the process rests upon the exercise of professional discretion.

About four months after the reading lists have been approved, your supervisory committee will give you, via the committee chair if you have chosen to use one, the exam questions (two or three, depending on the exam format), and you will have approximately three months to prepare the candidacy essays. The exam questions will be broad and will require you to critically synthesize the literature on the reading lists. The essays are not meant to simply describe the approaches and findings from a body of work; you will need to synthesize, appraise, and comment on the literature in your own words. While you may communicate with your committee during this time, and you may ask clarifying questions regarding the exam questions, the candidacy essays should be written with minimal direct support or oversight from your supervisory committee, and they should not be reviewed by the committee prior to submission. You will submit the completed essays to your examining committee chair (either in a staggered fashion or all together, depending on what your committee decides). The essays will be due seven months from the time the reading lists have been approved.

Each essay will be evaluated by all supervisory committee members (except the chair if one has been assigned) who will submit their assessments to the supervisor (or chair if there is one) at least one week (five business days) prior to the oral defense date. The date will be scheduled with your supervisory committee one month before the final essay is due. Normally, the oral defense should take place about 3 weeks after the final essay is submitted.

Prior to scheduling the oral examination, each essay will be evaluated on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis by all members of the supervisory committee. An assessment of “satisfactory” does not imply perfection, but that the work is of sufficient quality and rigour that it is likely to be defensible at the oral examination, subject to questioning. At least 50% of the essays (e.g. 1 of 2, or 2 of 3, depending on how many essays were assigned) must achieve a score of satisfactory by more than one half of the committee (normally two of three examiners, but three of four in cases where there are four examiners) for the oral examination to take place. If more than 50% of essays receive an unsatisfactory rating, the oral exam will be canceled, and the committee will submit a recommendation, through the SDH Graduate Advisor, to the

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies that you be withdrawn from the program. If 50% or more of the essays are deemed satisfactory, the oral examination can proceed. You may be given the opportunity to revise one or more essays, irrespective of the assessment provided, as a requirement to successfully pass the candidacy.

Step 3 is the oral portion of the examination, where you will present a brief overview of the essays and your supervisory committee will ask questions relating to the essays and readings. Typically, questions will be posed by each committee member in turn over two rounds, allowing for 15 minutes per questioner. The second round is typically shorter than the first. After the oral examination is complete, you will be required to leave the room while the committee confers. If the oral examination is deemed unsatisfactory by more than one half of the committee, the committee will submit a recommendation, through the SDH Graduate Advisor, to the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies that you be withdrawn from the program. In addition to requiring possible revisions to essays, the committee also reserves the right to assign other remedial actions in order to correct any perceived shortfalls in your level of academic preparation (e.g. taking an additional course, writing an additional paper).

Unless extenuating circumstances permit, as a doctoral student you must pass a candidacy examination within three years of the first registration and at least six months before your final oral examination. If you are not ready for the candidacy examination because of exceptional and extenuating circumstances, complete a [Request for Candidacy Extension](#) form in consultation with your supervisory committee and Graduate Advisor and forward to sdhadmin@uvic.ca for submission.

Upon successful defense of the candidacy exam, please submit both your signed [candidacy examination form](#) and the signed [FGS program update form](#) to the SDH Program Assistant in order to be approved to begin your dissertation research.

Dissertation Proposal

You will begin your dissertation research by enrolling in SDH 699. Your first step is to prepare and submit a dissertation proposal to your supervisory committee. You will also complete an oral defense of your dissertation proposal. The proposal defense is public and includes a presentation of your proposal (20-25 minutes), followed by questions from your supervisory committee and others in attendance. The dissertation proposal should be 20-25 pages long (excluding references) and should include the following sections: statement of the research question; literature review (why this question is relevant); methods and analysis plan; ethical considerations; timeline of the work to be undertaken; and budget. Your supervisor may choose to amend this format as they see fit. Normally, you will prepare and defend the dissertation proposal within three months of defending your candidacy essays. Notify the Program Assistant when you have successfully defended your dissertation proposal.

Dissertation Research and Defense

Upon successful defense of the dissertation proposal, you are approved to begin your dissertation research. If your dissertation research will involve human or animal subjects, you will need to obtain approval from the University's [Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#) before starting the research (and after defense of your dissertation proposal).

Dissertation formats vary across disciplines – work with your supervisory committee to decide on a format, based on the requirements or policy of their departments or schools. Traditional and paper-based formats are both acceptable in the SDH program, provided that this is allowable in your supervisors' home department or schools. All members of the supervisory committee must agree to the use of the

format that has been chosen. Notify the Graduate Advisor of the selected format in a memo with the dissertation format policy attached. More generally, there are a number of helpful [resources](#) available to support you in writing your dissertation, including workshops, writing groups, templates, and examples of completed theses. Check these out for tips and tricks, inspiration, and guidance.

The dissertation defence will normally take place by the end of the fourth year. Deviations from this timeline should be documented in writing and agreed to by the supervisory committee and Graduate Advisor. More information on the defense is available [here](#).

As you near completion of the program, work with your primary supervisor and the Program Assistant to make sure all of the necessary steps and paperwork have been completed. The Program Assistant can advise you on the timeline for graduation in a particular term. In addition to the final draft of your dissertation, there are also forms that must be submitted within specified time frames. These affect the scheduling of your oral defense and completion of your degree. More information on graduation requirements and deadlines can be found [here](#).

Track your progress

Curriculum Advising and Program Plan (CAPP) Report

You can track your progress through the program with a CAPP report, an online tool that you can access via **Online tools**. Your CAPP lists your degree requirements and shows how your completed, transferred, and in-progress courses apply toward your degree completion. We encourage you to review it once per term. If you notice a discrepancy, please complete a Program Update Form (access all FGS forms [here](#)), have your primary supervisor sign it, and then forward it to the Program Assistant.

SDH Annual Progress Review

In addition, you are required to complete an Annual Progress Review. This Review has been designed to help you to stay on track and to complete all required milestones in a timely manner. It also helps us to stay up-to-date on your progress and to identify any challenges as they arise. For more information on roles and responsibilities pertaining to the annual review, see the [Graduate Supervision Policy](#).

The Annual Progress Review is conducted over the Summer term. You will receive an email from the Program Assistant with instructions on how to access and complete the report online. You will be asked to report on your progress with courses and thesis/dissertation, and dates of supervisory committee meetings.

You are encouraged to meet with your supervisors to discuss the report and address any outstanding issues. Once you have completed your report, send it to your primary supervisor and co-supervisor for review and sign off. Your supervisors will be asked to respond to your account of your progress, and to rate your progress as:

- Excellent (the student has exceeded all expectations, and the progress made on the thesis/dissertation work is exceptional)
- Very good (the student has exceeded most expectations and made significant progress on the thesis/dissertation work)
- Good (the student has met most expectations and made some progress on the thesis/dissertation work)

- Needs improvement (the student has struggled to meet expectations, some but not all expectations met, or progress is below what is reasonably expected)
- Unsatisfactory (for example, that a student does not pursue goals in a vigorous fashion, does not take direction well, shows disregard for ethics/safety, or repeatedly fails to complete routine procedures)

Funding

The SDH program does not have guaranteed core funding for students. Graduate students receive funding from many different sources, including: fellowships, scholarships, teaching assistantships, and research assistantships. Please familiarize yourself with University policies and guidelines for each of these funding sources. While the eligibility requirements and conditions differ across awards, fellowship and scholarships, it is the case that you must be registered full time and not be on a leave to be eligible for any awards. Please note that the Program Committee takes into consideration your satisfactory progress in the program, as reported in your Annual Progress Report, as a factor in recommending students for awards. You can approach FGS or the Graduate Advisor with questions, concerns, or for guidance on funding matters. More details on funding opportunities can be found on the [FGS website](#).

Entrance Graduate Awards: SDH receives a small amount of funding from FGS that is used to provide one-time entrance awards for incoming students. Typically, 5-6 incoming students per year will receive an entrance award. The amount per award varies depending on available funds and the number of eligible students. Not all incoming students will receive funding. To be eligible, students must have at least a 7.0 GPA on entrance to the program. You do not need to apply for these awards; all eligible incoming students will be considered automatically. Entrance awards are one-time only (they are not renewed each year).

Donor Awards: Each year, students will also have the opportunity to apply for awards established through donations to the University. These include donor awards that are specific to the SDH program, to health research more generally, or to students with specific backgrounds or areas of study. Amounts, the application process, and eligibility criteria vary across the awards. A list of donor awards will be circulated in September of each year, and eligible students will be invited to apply.

External Fellowships and Scholarships: There are numerous fellowship and scholarship programs for Canadian graduate students. Most relevant to SDH students are the fellowship programs at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and Michael Smith Health Research BC. Amounts, eligibility, and funding conditions differ across programs. Most have deadlines in the fall term. While these awards tend to be highly competitive, we encourage you to consider applying. It is a great learning experience! SDH students have had good success with these awards in the past. Please consult with your supervisor as early as possible to discuss your eligibility and competitiveness for these awards.

Research Assistantships: Joining an existing research team or project can be a great way to enrich your experience as a graduate student while earning money to support your studies. The SDH program does not have its own Research Assistant (RA) positions; however, many faculty members associated with the program routinely have opportunities for paid RA positions through research grants. Speak with your supervisory committee and other faculty to find opportunities for RA positions during the program.

Teaching Assistantships: The SDH program does not have internal opportunities for TA positions; however, you can apply for positions in their supervisors' home departments, or in departments where you have qualifications (e.g., undergraduate training).

Research Centres

UVic is home to a number of [research centres](#) – interdisciplinary hubs that focus on research in a specific area (e.g., global studies, substance use, climate change). While all SDH faculty have a home department and faculty, many are also affiliated with a research centre. Being affiliated with a research centre is not a requirement, but can be of value in enriching your graduate experience. They can give you the opportunity to connect you with other students and faculty who are doing work in your area; some host seminars and other events; some even offer graduate student funding and office space. Check out the list of research centres on campus and speak to your supervisory committee about whether there is a fit for you.

Student Supports and Services

There are various supports and services available to graduate students on campus and virtually, from arts and culture to student and family housing. Find out more about student resources [here](#).

The [Centre for Academic Communication](#) offers a wealth of supports for students, whether you are struggling with writing or just wanting to improve your practice. Resources for graduate students include in-person and online tutoring, workshops, and self-help resources. Whether English is your first language or not, these services can be helpful as you hone your skills in academic communication. Courses in writing are also available to interested students through the [Academic and Technical Writing Program](#).

The [Graduate Students Society \(GSS\)](#) is available to support you through your degree, with numerous services (e.g., bike and car sharing, travel grants, bus passes). Their website also contains useful information on health and dental insurance coverage.

International students can find more information about living in Canada and available resources and programs [here](#). Some additional, off-campus resources for international students include:

- Non-profit organizations to access supports and resources when moving to Victoria:
[Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria](#)
[Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society](#)
- International funding sources for graduate studies on fields related to SDH:
[International Development Research Centre](#)
[Open Society Foundations](#)
- Canadian funding sources open to international students:
[Vanier Graduate Scholarships](#)
[Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Doctoral Scholarships](#)

New in 2020, the SDH program has its own Student's Association! The SDH Student Association (SDHSA) is a student-run advocacy organization that represents SDH students to the academic unit (PHSP). All SDH students are members, and the activities of the SDHSA are coordinated by the SDHSA Executive Committee. Members are elected to the Executive Committee for one-year terms each February and there is no limit to the number of terms that one serves. See below of positions available through the SDHSA Executive Committee. For more information regarding by-laws of the association, or more

details about any of the positions, contact the current Chair of the Executive Committee through the Program Assistant.

SDHSA Executive Committee Positions:

- Chair/convenor
- Representative to meetings of the department
- Representative to the GSS
- CUPE 4163 Shop Steward
- Secretary - Treasurer
- Director of Social events
- Director of Academics

The SDH program also has a student listserve, through which we distribute important information about the program, funding opportunities, events, and so on. It is important that you are on the SDH student listserve so that you do not miss out on this information. You are automatically enrolled on the listserve at admission, based on the email address that we have for you on file. If you suspect that you may not be receiving emails from the SDH program, please contact the Program Assistant. While we appreciate that you may have several existing email accounts, you are **STRONGLY** encouraged to use your UVic email address as this ensures that messages will not end up in your (or our) junk folders.

Appendix A: Program Plans

MA/MSc Program Plan (2 years full-time)

| Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| Sept-Dec | Jan-Apr | May-Aug | Sept-Dec | Jan-Apr | May-Aug |
| SDH501A SDH perspectives colloquium (1.5 units) | SDH500A Interdisciplinary perspectives on health research (1.5 units) | SDH500B Interdisciplinary methods applied to health research (1.5 units) | SDH599 Thesis (6.0 credits) ** | SDH599 Thesis (6.0 credits) ** | SDH599 Thesis (6.0 credits) ** |
| Methods/Elective Course (1.5 units)* | Methods/Elective Course (1.5 units)* | SDH501B SDH methods colloquium (1.5 units) | Thesis proposal defense (approximate) | | Thesis defense (approximate) |
| Methods/Elective Course (1.5 units)* | Methods/Elective Course (1.5 units)* | | | | |
| *In consultation with your supervisors, select two courses from approved list of methods courses (3.0 credits total) and two courses from the approved list of electives courses (3.0 credits) offered in other graduate departments. You may take other courses not on the approved list with permission from the Graduate Advisor. | | | ** Once coursework requirements are successfully completed, repeat registration in SDH599 each term until thesis is successfully defended | | |

PhD Program Plan (4 years full-time)

| Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | | Year 4 | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Sept-Dec | Jan-Apr | May-Aug | Sept-Dec | Jan-Apr | May-Aug | Sept-Dec | Jan-Apr | May-Aug | Sept-Dec | Jan-Apr | May-Aug |
| SDH601A SDH perspectives colloquium (1.5 units) | SDH600A Interdisciplinary perspectives on health research (1.5 units) | SDH600B Interdisciplinary methods applied to health research (1.5 units) | SDH693 Candidacy Exam (3 credits) ** | SDH693 Candidacy Exam (3 credits) ** | SDH693 Candidacy Exam (3 credits) ** | SDH699 Dissertation (15 credits) *** | SDH699 Dissertation (15 credits) *** | SDH699 Dissertation (15 credits) *** | SDH699 Dissertation (15 credits) *** | SDH699 Dissertation (15 credits) *** | SDH699 Dissertation (15 credits) *** |
| Methods/ Elective Course (1.5 units)* | Methods/ Elective Course (1.5 units)* | SDH601B SDH methods colloquium (1.5 units) | | | Candidacy exam oral defense (approx.) | Thesis proposal defense (approx.) | | | | | Thesis defense (approx.) |
| Methods /Elective Course (1.5 units)* | Methods/ Elective Course (1.5 units)* | | | | | | | | | | |
| *In consultation with your supervisors, select two courses from approved list of methods courses (3.0 credits total) and two courses from the approved list of electives courses (3.0 credits) offered in other graduate departments. You may take other courses not on the approved list with permission from the Graduate Advisor. | | | ** Repeat registration in SDH699 each term until candidacy examination is successfully defended | | | *** Once candidacy examinations are successfully completed, repeat registration in SDH699 each term until thesis is successfully defended | | | | | |