University of Victoria
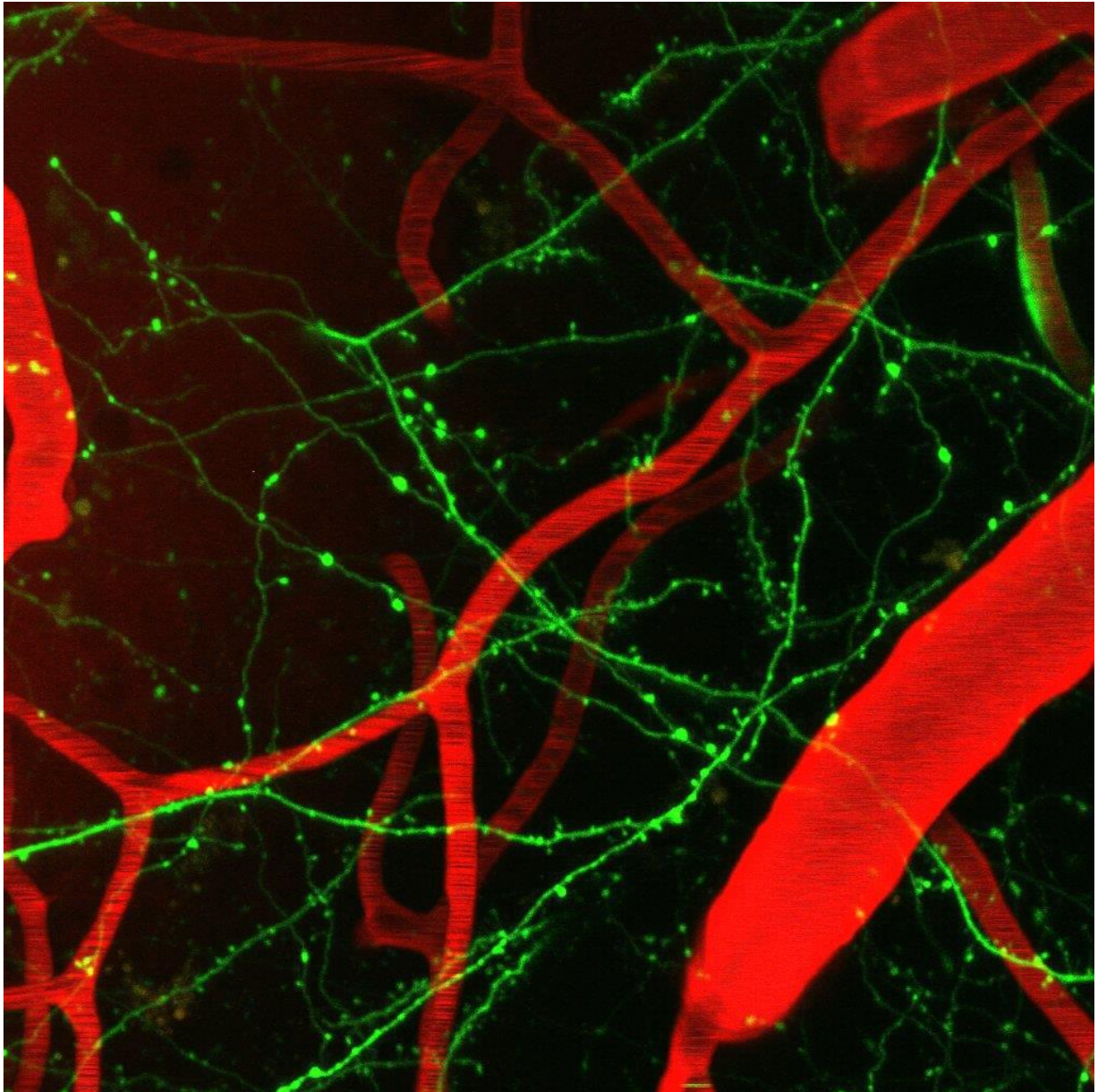
Neuroscience Graduate Program

Student Handbook

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

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

Updated: April 2024

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

A warm welcome to the Neuroscience Graduate Program at the University of Victoria. We are excited that you have chosen to join our exceptional program. We take pride in the multidisciplinary nature of our program and the scholarly and scientific contributions our students and researchers make to the field of Neuroscience. Our multi-disciplinary program features faculty from a number of departments including Biology, The School of Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education, Mechanical Engineering and the Division of Medical Sciences.

Please ensure that you read this handbook as it outlines University and Departmental Policies, your Roles, and Responsibilities as a student, as well as valuable Student Resources. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I can be contacted through the Neuroscience Graduate Student Association or email my office.

My own background is as a family physician (specializing in geriatric medicine) and as an educator. My research interest is in medical education with particular emphasis on curriculum development, learning in a professional school environment, and career choices of medical students. I joined the University of Victoria as the Academic Head, Neuroscience Graduate Program and the Head, Division of Medical Sciences on July 1, 2014. At this time, I also took on the role of the Regional Associate Dean, Island Medical Program, for the University of British Columbia, Faculty of Medicine.

I would like to thank the Neuroscience Graduate Program Committee and the Neuroscience Graduate Student Executive (2017) for their hard work putting this document together.
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 Neuroscience Graduate Program is committed to the respectful and fair treatment of all members of the program and university community.

I look forward to meeting you and am excited for you as you begin this academic journey.

Sincerely,

Bruce J. Wright, MD, CCFP, FCFP
Academic Head
Neuroscience Graduate Program Head
Division of Medical Sciences
University of Victoria

Graduate Advisor's Welcome

Are you interested in how the brain works? Then this is the right place for you! The Neuroscience Graduate Program offers an excellent opportunity to develop your intellectual and cognitive skills, and at the same time learn how the brain works. On behalf of our team in the Neuroscience Graduate Program, I welcome you and invite you to become all you can be in a vibrant environment rich with friendly colleagues, strong academics, and state-of-the-art instrumentation to unlock the hidden secrets of the brain. You will develop your ability to reason and postulate and put that into action by performing hands-on experiments to answer specific questions about the inner workings of neurons, blood vessels, stem cells, and other important features of the brain in the laboratories of our faculty.

We are proud of our success since our inception in 2011, and have graduated over 30 highly qualified students with either Master's or PhD degrees. I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. Craig Brown (former Graduate Advisor) and Dr. Brian Christie (inaugural Graduate Advisor) for their dedication and commitment to the development of our program. Their contributions have brought the program to where it is today, and I commend them for their efforts.

As the Neuroscience Graduate Advisor my roles will be:

1. To provide guidance on how to progress through the program.
2. To meet in confidence with any student about whom there is a concern.
3. To be knowledgeable regarding protocols and resources involved in the University of Victoria Mental Health Initiatives.
4. To be knowledgeable regarding protocols and resources involved in assessing and complying with academic, and research accommodations for students with a disability.
5. 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.
6. To assist students and faculty in addressing problems in the supervisory relationship or supervisory committee membership in an impartial and confidential manner.

I recommend that you become familiar with the Neuroscience Graduate Program Handbook which has pertinent details about your degree and the policies related to our program. We also have an excellent Neuroscience Graduate Student Assistant, Kailah Sebastian, who is a great resource for information and I'm sure you'll get to know her well during your studies.

We encourage you share your thoughts with us and let us know how we can improve your experience in the Neuroscience Graduate Program. I am always available and will have an open door to all students if there are any questions or concerns. We are happy that you chose to be part of our talented group of world-class researchers and educators in the field of Neuroscience and I sincerely welcome you and wish you all the best on your journey to understanding the brain.

Sincerely,

Patrick Nahirney
Neuroscience Graduate Student Advisor
Associate Professor of Anatomy and Histology
Division of Medical Sciences

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 Division of Medical Sciences (DMSC), 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 Division 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 Program Assistant	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 Division and the faculty of graduate studies.
Neuroscience Graduate Program Committee (NGP)	This committee is composed of regular faculty members from BIOL, EPHE & DMSC. It reviews all applications for graduate admission, makes recommendations for awards / scholarships, and reviews / makes recommendations regarding the NGP.

NGP Student Representative	A graduate student who represents graduate students on the NGP. The student is a spokesperson and liaison between graduate students, the Department, and Graduate Studies.
Head of Academic Unit	Regional Dean of the Island Medical Program. 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 Program Assistant]().

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. 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.
3. 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.
4. For both MSc and PhD students, the first supervisory committee meeting must occur within the first term of entry into the NGP**.**
5. Students are to complete the first two pages of the [Supervisory Committee Progress Report Form](#) and circulate 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.

Review 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
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

Note: Students should consult with their supervisor(s) prior to the committee meeting for approval of
their experimental plan and the work proposed.

Administrative Requirements and Documentation

1. Every committee meeting must be officially documented in the student's file which is
   maintained by the Graduate Program Assistant. 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 Program Assistant 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 Program Assistant
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 Program Assistant.

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 Program Assistant for review. The Graduate Program Assistant 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 Program

Assistant 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 or 500B NRSC 501A or 501B NRSC 599 Committee Meeting # 1				NRSC 500A or 500B NRSC 501A or 501B NRSC 599 Elective*				NRSC 599 Elective* Committee Meeting # 2			
Y2	NRSC 502A or 502B NRSC 599 Elective*				NRSC 502A or 502B 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 or 500B 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 Program Assistant 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 or 500B NRSC 501A or 501B NRSC 693 Committee meeting # 1				NRSC 500A or 500B NRSC 501A or 501B NRSC 693 Elective*				NRSC 693 Elective*			
Y2	NRSC 502A or 502B NRSC 693 Elective* Committee meeting # 2				NRSC 502A or 502B NRSC 693 Elective*				NRSC 693 Completion of Candidacy Exam			
Y3	NRSC 502A or 502B NRSC 699 Elective*								NRSC 699 Elective* Committee meeting # 3			
Y4	NRSC 502A or 502B NRSC 699 Elective*				NRSC 502A or 502B 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 or 500B once.
- Permission to advance to candidacy should be sought at Committee meeting # 2.

- 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 Program Assistant that the student has been approved to transfer to the PhD program (as indicated on their Student Progress Report). The graduate Program Assistant 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 or 500B NRSC 501A or 501B NRSC 599 Committee Meeting # 1				NRSC 500A or 500B NRSC 501A or 501B NRSC 599 Elective*				NRSC 599 Elective* Committee Meeting # 2			
Y2	NRSC 502A or 502B NRSC 693 Elective*								NRSC 693 Committee meeting # 3			

Y3	NRSC 502A or 502B NRSC 693 Elective* Completion of Candidacy Exam (due by March)	NRSC 699 Elective*
Y4	NRSC 502A or 502B 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 or 500B	1.5	Fundamentals of Neuroscience
NRSC 501A or 501B	1.5	Advanced Topics in Cellular Neuroscience I or Advanced Topics in Cognitive Neuroscience I
NRSC 502A or 502B	1.5	Advanced Topics in Cellular Neuroscience II or Advanced Topics in Cognitive Neuroscience II
NRSC 599	9.0-15.0	MSc Thesis
Electives	1.5	
Total minimum requirement	**15.0**	

PhD

Course	Credits	Title
NRSC 500A or 500B	1.5	Fundamentals of Neuroscience
NRSC 501A or 501B	1.5	Advanced Topics in Cellular Neuroscience I or Advanced Topics in Cognitive Neuroscience I
NRSC 502A or 502B	1.5	Advanced Topics in Cellular Neuroscience II or Advanced Topics in Cognitive 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**

Notes:
- NRSC 500 A or B can serve as an elective provided that at least one of these has been taken to meet minimum course requirements.
- Students must obtain advance approval from their Supervisory Committee for any elective(s).

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 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

With the course instructor fill out a Graduate Pro Forma form including:

1. a course content outline including the general aims and main topic areas being covered
2. the types of evaluation (paper, test, oral presentation, etc.)
3. an assigned weight (percentage) and due date for each item

4. a description of expectations for each item (presentation length, depth and breadth of knowledge of topic, etc.)
5. the number of contact hours expected by the student and the instructor
   a. For 1.5-unit courses 3 contact hours per week are required for the term
   b. For 3.0-unit courses 3 contact hours per week are required for the session (2 terms)

During & Following Committee Meeting

Outline steps 1-4, as listed above, in a presentation format. If approval of the supervisory committee is granted, submit the form to the Graduate Program Assistant after obtaining the following signatures:

1. student's thesis/dissertation supervisor
2. Graduate Advisor

If the student's instructor, Supervisor and Graduate Advisor are the same individual, obtain the signature of the Academic Head.

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 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

of their entry into the PhD 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 background/general knowledge material and research components of the proposal. The candidate will defend their knowledge base surrounding their research project in addition to related areas 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 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 Program Assistant who circulates it to the candidate and their supervisor.

Candidacy Exam Planning Timeline

The exam must be held within 21 months of a student's direct entry to the PhD program or within 18 months of a student's transfer from the MSc to PhD program.

4 – 5 months	**Supervisory Committee and Student:** During a committee meeting, a student's readiness to progress to the Candidacy Exam will be assessed and documented on the Supervisory Committee's Student Progress Report.

3 – 4 months	**Student and Supervisor(s):**
	Select Candidacy Exam Committee members.
	Review the committee composition below.
	In consultation with the Candidacy Exam Committee members, identify study topics and resources.
	Choose possible dates for the exam. Students are responsible for contacting their exam committee to confirm a mutually agreeable exam date and time.
	
	Student and Graduate Program Assistant:
	Send to the Graduate Program Assistant (GPA) the following, once they have been confirmed:
	    • Members names and contact information
	    • Date and time for the exam
	    • Preferred room
	The GPA will book a room for the exam and send calendar invites to the student and all committee members.

3 weeks	**Student**: Send written proposal to the exam committee and GPA
2 weeks	**Candidacy Exam Committee:** Following a review of the proposal, members communicate any significant concerns to the student's supervisor
Candidacy Exam	Review information regarding the exam format and expectations

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 at least one of the examiners must be from outside of the candidate's supervisor's department.

Preparing for the Candidacy Exam

Students should begin planning for their candidacy exam several months (>3 months) in advance with the help of their supervisor, committee members and examiners. Below are the steps that a student must take to best prepare themselves for a successful candidacy exam.

1. Hold a committee meeting to request permission to advance to the candidacy exam.
2. Select an appropriate external examiner in consultation with your supervisor and supervisory committee.
3. In consultation with your examiners, identify study topics to help guide your preparation for the exam. This should be done several months (>3 months) in advance to allow sufficient preparation time.
4. 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.

5. With the help of the Graduate Program Assistant, schedule the exam and book an appropriate room. Be sure to choose a date which reflects the availability of both your examiners and the Grad Advisor (exam Chair).
6. Submit your written proposal to all examiners and the Graduate Program Assistant **3 weeks** prior to the scheduled exam date.

Note: Examiners have **2 weeks** to communicate any concerns about the proposal to the student's supervisor.

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 <u>any</u> 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 steps to the Thesis/Dissertation and the Faculty of Graduate Studies for guidelines, formatting templates, and other resources.

Final Oral Examination

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

Master's degree

Oral exams are held publicly, and the exam committee includes: the supervisory committee, a Chair appointed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and an external examiner who has no previous involvement with graduate supervision of the candidate. The external examiner may be from within the home academic unit, provided there is at least one non-unit member on the supervisory committee. If necessary, any member of the examining committee may attend the oral exam by audio or video conferencing.

Example Timeline for MSc Final Oral Examination

Submit thesis to the Graduate Program Assistant	Minimum 10 business days for committee review	Submit Request for Oral Exam form	Mandatory 20-business day waiting period	Oral Exam Date	Revisions	Submit your finalized thesis
Oct 28	Oct 29 – Nov 12	Nov 14	Nov 15 – Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14 – Jan 1	Jan 2

Note: The exact dates will vary based on business days and holidays each year. Students preparing to submit their thesis / dissertation are encouraged to consult the Graduate Program Assistant for more information about specific dates and deadlines for each term.

Doctoral degree

Oral exams are held publicly, and the exam committee includes: the supervisory committee, a Chair appointed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and at least one other examiner from outside the University. Such external examiners are appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies in consultation with the academic unit(s) and must be arm's-length authorities in the field of research being examined.

Example Timeline for PhD Final Oral Examination

Submit thesis to the Graduate Program Assistant	Minimum 10 business days for committee review	Submit Request for Oral Exam form	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

Note: The exact dates will vary based on business days and holidays each year. Students preparing to submit their thesis / dissertation are encouraged to consult the Graduate Program Assistant for more information about specific dates and deadlines for each term.

Examination Committee Composition

Refer to the [Faculty of Graduate Studies](#) for guidelines.

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.

For PhD oral examinations, the FGS "Nomination of External Examiner and Confirmation of Arm's-Length Status" form identifies that the proposed external examiner cannot:

1. have published with the student or have plan to in the foreseeable future.
2. have been collaborated or co-authored any publication, within the last 6 years, of joint publishing with the student, the supervisor, or any member of the supervisory committee or be in the process of any of the preceding
3. have, in the last 6 years, or be in the process of, applying for research funding with the student, the supervisor, or any member of the supervisory committee.
4. have had business, commercial, or financial relationship (or expects to enter such a relationship) with the student, the supervisor, or any member of the supervisory committee.
5. have a personal or professional relationship or has a familial relationship with the student, the supervisor, or any member of the supervisory
6. have been in a supervisor/student relationship with the supervisor, the student, or any member of the supervisory committee.
7. have ever been a student or employee at the University of Victoria

Note: 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 o f 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 Program Assistant, 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 Program Assistant for information regarding the deadlines and application process for these awards.

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 Program Assistant 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, DMSC, 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. For students in the DMSC, a scholarship and grant *ad hoc* committee is formed annually, consisting of DMSC faculty.

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.

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 Division 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.
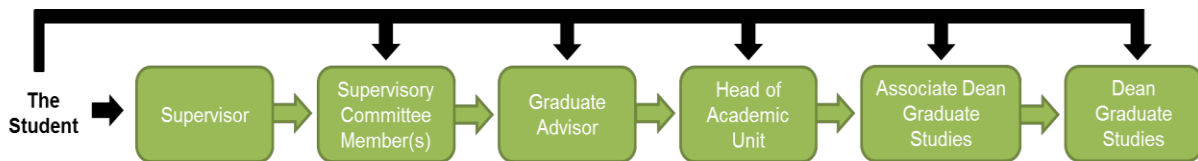
Conflict in the Neuroscience Graduate Program

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

The Student → Supervisor → Supervisory Committee Member(s) → Graduate Advisor → Head of Academic Unit → Associate Dean Graduate Studies → Dean Graduate Studies

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.

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

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.

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 the infographic on the following page. For assistance or support, please visit the [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 a policy violation has occurred.

For more information about the informal and formal complaint process please see the EQHR office and the resources provided under the [Student Resources](#) section of this handbook.

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.

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

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](#)