

2026-27
Graduate Handbook
Mathematics and Statistics
University of Victoria



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Welcome

It's my pleasure to welcome our new and returning graduate students to the 2026-27 academic year. I look forward to meeting each of you in person, if we haven't met yet – introduce yourself to me anytime! Please consider the Graduate Advisor (currently me) and the Graduate Program Assistant (Kei Takada) a source of information and support for the duration of your graduate studies at UVic.

Graduate students play a truly vital role in the research and teaching excellence of our department – thank you in advance!

David Goluskin
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Department of Mathematics and Statistics

Preface

This handbook has been prepared with the help of many faculty, staff and students. It aims to (1) summarize information relevant for grad students in the Department; (2) indicate where to find more up-to-date information for policies that change often or that are not controlled by the Department; and (3) clarify what our grad program expects of grad students, and what students can expect of the program. The handbook is an unofficial guide; the official policies exist elsewhere and are referenced in the relevant places. Specific questions or concerns should be addressed to the Graduate Advisor.

The UVic Graduate Calendar explains your rights and responsibilities as a grad student, gives general policies and regulations, and summarizes the services available at the University. The rules in the Graduate Calendar take precedence, but in some situations they leave room for stronger departmental policies.

Questions regarding the interpretation of items in the handbook should be directed to the Graduate Advisor. Corrections (typos, broken links, etc.) and suggestions, especially for places where extra detail is needed, are welcome and can be directed to the Graduate Program Assistant.

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1 General Information

Your home unit is the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, which belongs to the Faculty of Science. But, as is true of all graduate students at UVic, your primary academic faculty is the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS). Applications, admissions, registration, and records for graduate students are handled by the Graduate Admissions and Records Office (GARO).

Together, FGS and GARO set and enforce the University-wide policies surrounding graduate studies. They also perform a number of other functions. For instance, FGS is involved with recruiting students, the adjudication of student awards, and the co-ordination of interdisciplinary studies. GARO handles transfer credit, program changes, and similar registration-related functions.

Faculty of Graduate Studies

Graduate Admissions and Records

Department Grad Info

Your Supervisor and Committee

Students admitted to our department are automatically assigned a supervisor (or co-supervisors). **During your first year you should form a supervisory committee and have the first meeting** with them. The Graduate Supervision Policy defines the expectations and responsibilities in the supervisory relationship and the supervisory committee, and you should be familiar with it. A healthy and well-informed student-supervisor relationship is of primary importance for a good experience in graduate school. The Graduate Advisor, supported by the Graduate Committee, oversees the graduate program in the department, and *you should always feel free to contact them for information or help.*

Progress Reports

Your supervisory committee should meet at least once per year (including in the first year), and the committee should submit a progress report after the meeting.

The Graduate Calendar

The UVic Graduate Calendar describes academic regulations for your program. If academic regulations change while you are studying for your degree, always refer back to the calendar for your entrance year. In addition, the calendar maintains up-to-date lists of courses, personnel, and important dates for the academic year.

Registration

As a graduate student, you must ensure that you are registered full-time in all 3 terms. Here is the naming convention for our academic terms.

term	months	
fall	September to December	winter session
spring	January to April	
summer	May to August	summer session

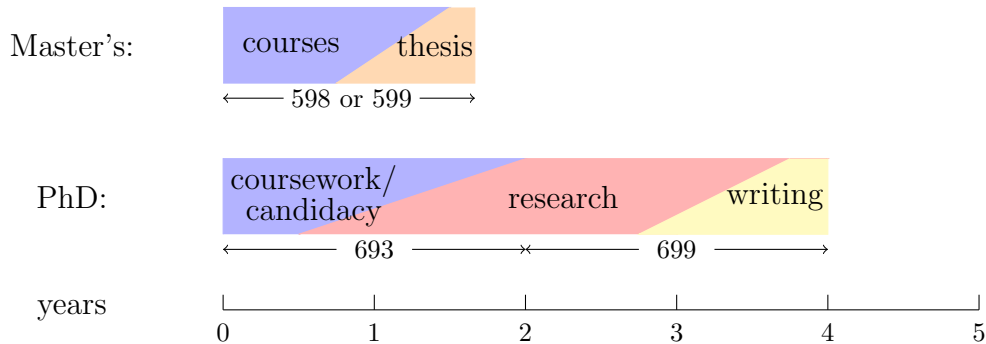
In addition to your planned coursework, you will need to (repeatedly) register in one of the following ‘shell courses’ that indicate you are preparing for specific graduation requirements. When you do so, you automatically have full-time status as a graduate student, even if you are taking no academic coursework.

course	purpose	
MATH 599	thesis	Master’s
STAT 598	project	
STAT 599	thesis	
MATH 693	candidacy	PhD
MATH 699	dissertation	
STAT 693	candidacy	
STAT 699	dissertation	

For the PhD program, register in MATH or STAT 693 every term until you have completed your candidacy. Then, register in MATH or STAT 699 every term thereafter.

Master’s students are required to take MATH 585, which builds communication and professional skills. Currently this course runs only in the fall, and Master’s students are advised to take it in their first year.

You are advised to complete most required coursework in the first half of your degree, subject to course availability. This provides training for your research and helps build early relationships with faculty and fellow students. It also clears up substantial time for focus on research and writing in the second half. A rough timeline is shown below; you should discuss details such as course selection and deadlines with your supervisor.



NetLink ID and Email

If you haven't done so already please apply for a NetLink ID. The NetLink ID is used to access computing resources on campus. An email account associated with your NetLink ID will also be created. The university will use this email address for all correspondence with you and may post it on an online directory. Please check this email account regularly at <https://outlook.office.com/>. Be aware that you will get some phishing emails, many pretending to be from UVic, threatening to remove a service if you don't provide your NetLink ID and password. You can report phishing received at your UVic email address via Outlook.

Our department uses a number of mailing lists to communicate information. For graduate students, the key list is `msgrad-1@lists.uvic.ca`. As a grad student in our department, you may post to this list. There are similar lists for faculty and staff. General information for the department often comes from the address `msdistribution@uvic.ca`. You may also wish to join and monitor various specific lists, such as for seminar announcements. See Department Mailing Lists.

For additional general information on email at UVic, including set-up and support, see the UVic Systems Email and Calendar page.

Computers

An overview of the department and UVic computing resources can be found on the [Math and Stats Computing Resources](#) page.

Department and Office Info

The department's general office is DTB A418. This is located in the David Turpin Building, A wing, on the fourth floor; DTB is our building code.

Department offices are located on the fourth and fifth floors of DTB. There are shared office spaces for Master's students on the second floor and fifth floor. There is also a shared kitchen in DTB A218, with a sink, fridge, and microwaves.

As a graduate student, you receive keys to access your shared office space (if applicable) and to the building for after-hours entry. You can sign out keys from the general office at no charge. Please be careful with your keys; if you lose any, there will be a charge to replace them. Please return all keys to the general office when you complete your program or when you no longer need them (such as when changing offices).

If you require an audio visual key for teaching or giving a talk, you can sign one out temporarily for the day, or for the term with a \$10 deposit. This deposit will be refunded to you once the key has been returned.

You also receive an entry code for the mailroom (DTB A427), which contains office supplies, photocopiers, a printer and mail slots. You should check your mail slot regularly.

If you are a PhD student, an office and desk will be assigned specifically to you by the department. Each desk is numbered and so we ask that you do not switch desks. If there is an issue with your assigned office or desk, please contact our admin officer at aofficerms@uvic.ca. For heating, electrical or furniture repairs, please contact the administrative assistant at deptms@uvic.ca.

You are assigned a personal photocopier code. Please do not share your copier codes as these codes keep track of the number of copies you make. There is no charge for printing, scanning or faxing. However, high volumes of printing may be questioned and could result in having your photocopier access revoked.

There are several rooms that may be booked in DTB. Room bookings can be made on [Sharepoint](#).

Here is a table of the key office contacts in the department.

Directory of Personnel				
position	name	office	phone	email
Chair	Gary MacGillivray	A418c	721-7435	chairms@uvic.ca
Assistant to Chair	Amy Almeida	A418	721-7436	chairasstms@uvic.ca
Grad Advisor	David Goluskin	A539	721-7467	gradadvms@uvic.ca
Grad Program Assistant	Kei Takada	A418	721-7468	gradasstms@uvic.ca
Admin Officer	Marie Marlo-Barski	A418b	721-7459	aofficerms@uvic.ca
Admin Assistant	Leandro Guaiato	A418	721-7437	deptms@uvic.ca
TA Coordinator	Jane Butterfield	A445		jvbutter@uvic.ca

Student Card

Your UVic student identity card goes by the name ONECard. The default version is no longer a physical card; set it up electronically on your mobile device.

The ONECard has several additional features. It is also your library card, recreation facility access card, and UVic Health Services identification. You can also store money on your ONECard to use as a debit card for on-campus food services.

Welcome Centre

The Welcome Centre, located in the Jamie Cassels Centre, provides orientation programs and other introductory events. Drop by the Welcome Centre if you need help finding your way around our campus or have a question about UVic.

Tuition and Fees

For degree students at the graduate level, tuition is assessed as a total degree program fee, not as a per course fee. Payment of the fee is broken down into ‘fee installments’. You will be charged an installment once per term while you are registered in a degree program. Fees are assessed in September, January and May. There is a minimum number of fee installments (5 for Master’s and 7.5 for PhD). After a maximum number of fee installments (6 for Master’s and 9 for PhD), your tuition drops to a lower ‘re-registration

fee'. However, students who remain registered after exceeding the time limit for their degree (normally five years for a master's degree and seven years for a doctoral degree) will be assessed a program extension fee at the regular fee installment rate each term.

You will be assessed domestic fees if you are a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. International fees will be assessed if you are studying on a student visa.

For current fees, see the tuition and fees schedule.

In addition to tuition, you are also required to pay smaller 'student fees' each year, which fund benefits such as bus passes.

If you are studying at UVic as a non-degree student, you will pay for individual courses on a per-unit basis.

You are responsible for paying your own tuition and ensuring it is paid on time. If you are receiving funding for your studies, you may use that money to pay your tuition account. This is not done automatically. More information on tuition and fees, as well as payment options, can be found on the graduate finances page. That page also links to some additional budgeting considerations, such as living expenses.

Societies

The official UVic society for Students In Graduate Mathematics And Statistics is known as SIGMAS. This society organizes social activities, including outdoor adventures, intramural sports teams, and weekly tea gatherings on Friday afternoons in the 4th floor lounge (DTB A425). Fundraising is done through solved undergraduate final exam sales.

The Graduate Students' Society (GSS) advocates for UVic graduate students, and also runs a number of important programs. Each department has a student representative. Students are encouraged to register for the weekly GSS email bulletin. For more information, visit <https://gss.uvic.ca/>.

Our department is an institutional member of both the American Mathematical Society (AMS) and Canadian Mathematical Society (CMS). As such, our department has the right to nominate students as members. In the case of the AMS, student memberships are free and typically automatic; in the case of the CMS, student membership prices are significantly reduced. If you are interested in either of these (or other) professional societies, please contact the graduate advisor.

Graduate Co-Op Program

The University of Victoria offers a co-operative education program and career services to assist students in preparing for post-graduation careers. You are encouraged to discuss such opportunities with your supervisor and a co-op advisor. By completing relevant 4-month work terms during your program you may receive salary, work experience, and a ‘Co-Op’ designation on your degree. Grad students are also eligible for a shorter ‘Work Experience’ endorsement. To get started, visit the Co-op and Career page.

Our co-op program office is located in Bob Wright Centre A241.

Grad students earn 3.0 units of credit for each co-op work term completed. These credits go toward the Co-Op designation; they don’t replace the course and thesis credit units you need to complete your degree.

Note that you maintain full-time student status during work terms.

There is a work term fee in addition to other fees.

If you are interested in either Co-Op or Work Experience, consult with your supervisor and a co-op advisor. If you plan to enrol, please inform the Graduate Program Assistant.

Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation

The Division of Learning and Teaching Innovation (LTI) runs teaching workshops, courses and TA conferences.

The Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LATHE) program focuses on the foundational principles and practical skills involved in post-secondary instruction. It challenges participants to reflect on their practical teaching activities in a scholarly way. LATHE is a certificate program taken concurrently with your graduate program. There is an application process and certificate fee. For more information, find LATHE at the LTI website above, and contact one of the program coordinators.

Some General Campus Info

Bus Passes: All graduate students registered in on-campus courses are automatically given (and pay fees for) a ‘universal bus pass’ (U-Pass). The U-Pass is valid on all transit routes in Greater Victoria and can be used any time during the semester.

To access your bus pass, you will need to use the UMO electronic bus fare system through either the UMO mobile app or using a reloadable UMO card. You may pick up a reloadable UMO card at the GSS front office. You will need to activate your bus pass through your UMO account at the beginning of every semester. For instructions on how to activate your bus pass, visit <https://gss.uvic.ca/services/u-pass-package/>.

Health and Dental: UVic has a medical clinic, a dentist, and counselling services on campus.

In the case of the medical clinic, you should bring your BC Care Card or other provincial services card to each visit.

Insurance: In 1999, a student referendum established an extended health and dental plan for students. Successive referendums have set the price and benefit levels of the plans. The plans are currently carried by Pacific Blue Cross, a non-profit insurance company.

You can pick up a benefit booklet from the GSS office, or find more information on the GSS health and dental page. Furthermore, the GSS Health and Dental Plan Coordinator is a good resource for specific questions about using your insurance. Their contact information and working days may be found on the GSS contact page.

Athletics: CARSA (Centre for Athletics, Recreation and Special Abilities) is a world-class venue providing state-of-the-art training and recreation facilities. Membership to CARSA is not included in your tuition, but is offered at a discounted rate while you are registered as a student. To find more information on membership tiers and current pricing, visit <https://vikesrec.ca/membership>.

Information on recreation classes, intramurals, and Victoria Vikes varsity team sports can be found on the Vikes Rec page.

Parking: Long-term parking permits can be purchased online.

Campus Maps: Maps for accessibility, parking, and planned construction, can be found at the Campus maps page.

2 Financial Support

Your personal funding offer is stated in the admission letter you received. Typically it comes in the form of an Academic Research Assistantship, which does not involve work other than that associated with being a student, and so this funding is not taxable. In most cases the sources of funding include supervisor research grants, Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) fellowships, and sometimes other awards or external sources. The department has minimum funding levels: unless otherwise justified, funding is at least \$8,000/year for Master's students and \$12,000/year for PhD students. This does not include earnings from TA work. As stated in the admission letter, the funding offer is continuing (2 years for Master's and 4 years for PhD) but is contingent on satisfactory performance, continued enrolment, and availability of funds.

Tuition and fees are not automatically deducted from your funding. It is your responsibility to know the amounts and deadlines for tuition and fees, and to pay them. For information on tuition and fees at UVic, please see the UVic tuition costs page. It is important to understand that the different funding sources operate with different payment schedules. For instance, scholarships from research grants are paid on the 18th of each month, while FGS fellowships are typically paid in one or two installments.

FGS funding

The Faculty of Graduate Studies provides funding to graduate students of sufficiently high academic standing. Our department is given a budget of FGS funding that we allocate for each academic year during the preceding summer. Amounts vary from year to year, and usually the funding from your supervisor's grant will be varied accordingly so that the total of the two funding sources remains the same.

Whereas funding from your supervisor's grant is typically paid throughout the year, FGS fellowships up to \$8000 come in a single payment at the beginning of the first term. FGS fellowships between \$8000 and \$12,000 are split into two payments during different terms, and those over \$12,000 are split into three payments.

For more information, see the UVic awards page.

Donor Awards

UVic ‘donor awards’ are a source of additional funding, beyond the funding level in your offer letter. They are funded by endowments from donors. You do not apply for most of these awards.

Some donor awards are specifically for the Math & Stats department, and our current practice is to divide these awards between 1st and 2nd year grad students.

Other donor awards are competitive across the Faculty of Science or the whole University. Your supervisor has the option to nominate you for these, and winners are informed during the fall term.

External Awards

Graduate Scholarships from NSERC (or another Tri-agency funder, if applicable) exist to support both Master’s and PhD students. The NSERC Master’s scholarship is only for Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or ‘protected persons’. The NSERC PhD scholarship also allows international students who are already enrolled in a Canadian PhD program.

These prestigious scholarships are very competitive. Recipients meet a very high standard for academic excellence. Early in the fall term, the University hosts workshops designed to help you prepare a successful NSERC scholarship application. Information about such workshops is generally emailed to students. The Graduate Advisor can assist with general questions on the application, and your supervisor can offer advice on your research proposal.

Other awards may be relevant for you, such as scholarships funded by a company or by your home country’s research council (the China Scholarship Council, for instance).

If you have earned a major external award before starting at UVic, you should notify the Department and the Faculty of Graduate Studies. As the holder of a major external award, you may be eligible for an additional top-up from UVic in the form of a President’s Research Scholarship, or a Petch/Strong Award. At the same time, your external award may replace any ordinary funding you were offered. Typically, large scholarships and fellowships provided by government agencies, like NSERC scholarships and BC graduate scholarships are announced much later than admission to the program, and they trigger

a reallocation of funding. (The total amount of funding you receive will not be negatively impacted by receiving an external award.)

If you hold an NSERC scholarship, there are forms that you are responsible for submitting to NSERC. These forms can take some time to process, so make sure you submit them well in advance. (Neither the department nor the university will prompt you to do so.)

Employment-based Research Assistantship

Sometimes faculty receive funding for specific, time-limited, research projects and hire graduate students for an Employment-based Research Assistantship. These assistantships are considered employment, and they are taxable.

Travel Grants

Concerning conference travel, the Faculty of Graduate Studies offers travel grant funding. Travel and conference funding provided by FGS may only be used once per fiscal year. You may submit an application one-to-four months in advance of your conference. For more information and the application, visit the FGS travel fund page.

If you have worked as a TA in the 12 months prior to your conference, you can also apply for conference funding from CUPE 4163. You may only receive conference funding from CUPE once per academic year. For more information and the application, visit CUPE's conference funding page.

Many conferences offer student travel support, which usually must be applied for well in advance of the conference.

You may also be able to help fund your conference travel through a supervisor's research grant; ask your supervisor if this is possible.

Emergency support

The university has sources of emergency funds for students. Please note these are not scholarships and are a source of short-term financial aid for emergencies only. There is no deadline to apply for emergency bursaries, but you must be a full-time student during

the semester in which you receive a bursary. For more information and instructions on how to access emergency support, please visit SAFA Bursary program website.

3 Courses

Graduate students select courses in consultation with their supervisor and/or supervisory committee.

All of our courses are valued at 1.5 units. PhD students with a Master's degree must complete a minimum of four courses (6 units). PhD students without a Master's degree must complete eight courses (12 units). Master's students normally complete a minimum of six courses (9 units) if their degree is thesis-based, but the project-based Stats Master's degree requires eight courses (12 units).

You are required to obtain a minimum grade of B (73%) for every course.

Course descriptions are available in the UVic calendar. Scheduling and instructor information is available in the UVic timetable.

Topics courses, such as MATH 529 or MATH 550, may be taken more than once with different topics.

Fourth- and Fifth-year Courses

Some 500-level courses are also offered at the 400-level. Graduate students should register in the 500-level version only, but these courses may be taken by both graduate and undergraduate students.

Some 400-level courses may be taken as 500-level 'topic' courses. These offerings are often automatic and carry an appropriate subtitle. In other cases, the opening of a 500-level topics section to mirror a 400-level offering may be possible, but this is subject to permission of the Department.

In combined 400/500 level courses, many instructors require additional work of students in the 500-level cohort (e.g. a class presentation or challenge homework questions).

Some courses may only be taken at the 400-level. Master's students may include up to two courses at the 400-level for credit in their program. PhD students may not include 400-level courses for credit in their program.

Seminar Courses

All Master's students are required to take the seminar course MATH 585. The course is also open to PhD students. The course is offered only in the fall semester. It is recommended that Master's students take 585 in their first year, but taking in the second year is allowed.

The main purpose of this course is to develop and hone your ability to communicate mathematically. This includes planning and delivering oral presentations. Other professional skills will also be addressed, such as career planning, use of AI, and preparation of a CV.

In addition to Math 585, there are several subject-specific seminar courses that are listed in the calendar. Seminars are typically attended by interested students for no credit, but it is sometimes possible to take such a course for credit. Discuss this with your supervisor and the seminar organizer if you are interested. A brief list is given below.

MATH 586: Operator Theory Seminar

MATH 587: Applied Math Seminar

MATH 588: Discrete Mathematics Seminar

STAT 589: Statistics Seminar

Pro Forma and Directed Studies Courses

A pro forma registration form is required to assign a course number for specialized courses not shown in the calendar. It is typical to use 'MATH 581: Directed Studies' as a shell. The Graduate Program Assistant can guide you through the process of setting up a pro forma registration.

If you are planning to attend an intensive short course or summer school hosted off-campus and wish to have it counted as UVic course credit, speak to the graduate advisor well in advance. Graduate transfer credit or a pro forma may be used, depending on the situation.

Grades below B

If a grade below B (5.0, or 73%) is earned in any course taken for credit, the Dean of Graduate Studies must review the student's degree progress. The supervisor must make a recommendation to the Dean, potentially in consultation with the supervisory committee and Graduate Supervisor. The supervisor might recommend that the student be withdrawn, or that the student remain in the program and do one of the following:

- (a) repeat the course or take a similar course and achieve a grade of at least B (73%);
- (b) complete an assignment;
- (c) continue without remedial action.

If option (a) is recommended, it is possible that a required grade higher than B will be specified. See the FGS policies for more information.

4 Candidacy Exams

Within the first year of the beginning of your PhD program, your supervisory committee should meet to create a plan for you to advance to candidacy. The plan will include details such as: (a) a description of which written or oral examinations are required; (b) approximate dates; and (c) clear minimum standards.

PhD students are required to pass three candidacy examinations within the first two years (24 months) of study.

Written Exams

A candidacy plan may include written exams in various subjects. Each exam typically lasts three hours. Standard subject exams are:

- Optimization
- Numerical analysis
- Ordinary differential equations and dynamical systems

- Partial differential equations
- Real analysis
- Topology
- Algebra
- Combinatorics
- Graph theory
- Probability and stochastic processes
- Statistical inference
- Applied statistics

For most of these subjects, there is a standard syllabus and sample exam(s) available on Sharepoint. To access the Department Sharepoint site, contact the Computer Help Desk.

To schedule each of your candidacy exams, complete a candidacy exam request form, available on the department candidacy exams page.

Once your exam invigilators are determined, you should contact them for more detailed information on the topics to be covered, especially optional topics to be emphasized or omitted. It is your right to know the grading structure of the exam and what expectations exist to pass the exam. Please ask your supervisor and exam invigilators about what to expect in this regard.

Dissertation preparatory exam

Your committee may agree that one of your three candidacy exams can be a “dissertation preparatory exam”. This examination typically involves a written document, accompanying oral presentation, and answering questions on the topic. In order to pass the examination, you’ll need to demonstrate to your committee, through the written paper, the presentation, and the answers to the committee’s questions, that you are prepared to pursue your dissertation.

The written document should demonstrate your mastery of the corresponding topic. It generally consists of a study of material needed in preparation for your dissertation work. A (non-exhaustive) list of possibilities for content is:

- a research plan for a dissertation, setting out methodology and background work, putting it in context with related work;
- a literature survey setting out prior knowledge in an area and presenting it in a unified and thoughtful way;
- a new result, typically as an initial step in your dissertation research.

A date for the examination should be selected and agreed upon by you and your supervisory committee. The written paper should be submitted to the committee at least 10 working days before the date of the presentation. The presentation may be fairly brief (about half an hour), with additional time after the presentation to answer questions from your committee.

Repeating Exams

Failing an exam or project will result in a meeting between you and your supervisory committee to discuss a remedy. If the subject is deemed essential, you have one further attempt at the exam or project. In other cases, a different subject exam may be attempted.

Failure of the same subject exam twice or of three subject exams in total will result in termination of your program. Extenuating circumstances will be considered. Students are encouraged to discuss any difficulties with their supervisor or the graduate advisor prior to the exam and postpone their exam to a different term, if necessary.

Feedback

Your supervisor or written exam invigilators will endeavour to inform you of the result of your exam within one week. You may request to view written exams up to two weeks after you are informed of the results. Additional feedback on the exam and how it fits with your overall candidacy progress can be discussed with your supervisor or the graduate advisor.

If you believe the result of your exam was incorrect or unfair, contact the graduate advisor or department chair as soon as possible.

Extensions

If you anticipate difficulties meeting the 24 month deadline for candidacy due to medical or personal difficulties, you should discuss this with the graduate advisor. You may be directed to complete a candidacy extension request form. The Faculty of Graduate Studies typically approves such requests, provided there is a concrete plan to finish the following term.

5 Teaching and TA Work

Teaching Assistantships

A teaching assistant (TA) is an individual who assists with instructional responsibilities. Every year, our department has a number of TA positions available in the fall and spring terms, as well as a much more limited number of positions available in the summer term. Graduate students are encouraged to apply for TA positions as desired.

When recommending TA appointments to the department, the TA Coordinator's primary concern is the quality of our courses. Necessary qualifications for each TA position are outlined in that position's posting.

The terms and conditions of TA positions are covered by CUPE Local 4163 (Components 1 & 2) Collective Agreement, and up-to-date pay rate information can be found on their website.

Important Dates

In accordance with the collective agreement, we normally post positions no later than twelve weeks in advance. For example, fall positions are usually posted in early June. All current and incoming graduate students in the department will be notified of this posting by the department's Administrative Officer, so make sure to read any correspondence from aofficerms@uvic.ca carefully. Applications are submitted through an online form, and you will need to fill out a new application for each term in which you would like a TA appointment.

Applications received after the posted deadline are considered late, and late applicants might lose their priority ranking.

Types of TA Positions

A typical TA appointment for a first-time TA is approximately 98 hours per term, spread over 12-13 weeks depending on the courses involved. This means a new graduate student can generally expect 196 hours of work in their first year, possibly more if enough positions are available.

There are three general types of TA positions, and a TA Appointment can be divided between one or more of them:

- **Markers** are TAs who mark for a specific course. For large courses, there is generally a team of markers who either work together to team-mark assignments or who divide the assignments between them and mark individually. Markers must be able to accurately evaluate student work in a specific course. Markers report directly to the course instructor, course coordinator, or a senior lab instructor, depending on the scale and structure of the course.
- **Math & Stats Assistance Centre Tutors** are TAs who tutor in our Math & Stats Assistance Centre (MSAC). Tutors must be able to assist with a variety of first- and second-year math and/or statistics courses. Tutors report to the Math & Stats Assistance Centre Manager and Coordinator.
- **Tutorial leaders** are TAs who lead 50-minute “tutorials” or in some cases “labs” for specific courses. The structure and size of tutorials depend on the course and on the course coordinator. Tutorial leaders report directly to the course instructor, course coordinator, or a senior lab instructor, depending on the scale and structure of the course.

TA Position Progression

A first-time TA is usually appointed to mark for one or several courses, although TAs who come to us with previous teaching experience are sometimes interviewed for a position in our Assistance Centre in their first term. It is helpful to spend your first term marking for our courses before jumping into the Assistance Centre – it gives you a chance to see how our instructors run our courses and what our students are like.

After a term marking for the department, you might consider applying for an Assistance Centre position. There is an interview process for prospective MSAC tutors, to make sure that we hire TAs with reasonably broad content knowledge who also have strong communication skills and are comfortable interacting with students, including students in distress. You are also welcome to continue applying only for marking positions if that is what you prefer to do – experienced markers are always in demand. Most first-time MSAC tutors also continue to mark for at least one course.

After at least one term in the Assistance Centre you would be eligible to apply for a position leading tutorials. Any graduate student who is interested in a career in academia or education is strongly encouraged to apply for a tutorial leader position, particularly because it is unusual for a graduate student to be considered for a Sessional Instructor position (see below) if they have not yet led tutorials.

Some of our instructors prefer tutorial leaders who also mark for the course, and the Assistance Centre manager likes to have some MSAC tutors who are also leading tutorials, so most of our senior TAs have TA Appointments that are a combination of two or more types of work.

TA Training and Professional Development

Every time you start a new type of TA position, you will be required to attend a training workshop with the TA Coordinator (Jane Butterfield). Attendance at required training sessions is considered time worked, which means you are paid to attend these workshops.

In addition, the TA Coordinator periodically offers professional development workshops designed specifically for Math & Stats TAs and future educators. The Division of Learning & Teaching Innovation also offers workshops throughout the term, some of which are appropriate for Math & Stats TAs.

You are encouraged to meet with the TA Coordinator if you ever have questions or concerns about your work or your supervisor, if you want advice about your work, or if you just want to talk about education in general.

If you are leading a Tutorial, you are encouraged to request a teaching observation from the TA Coordinator at some point. This is especially important if you are likely to request a letter of recommendation in support of teaching! If you would like a formal record of the observation, you can request a form or a letter. This is for you to include in your Teaching Dossier; unless you request it, an observation form will not go into your TA file or your

student file, and will not be used for subsequent TA appointments. You might request the form to be made available in support of your application for a sessional appointment, or you might include it in your TA applications in subsequent terms, if you wish.

Resources

Mailboxes: Most supervisors make extensive use of the department mailroom (DTB A427) mailboxes for passing work to their TAs and getting work back from them. Make sure you know the location of your mailbox, your supervisor's mailbox, and any other relevant mailbox (for example, you might collect work from your students to pass on to a different TA, or you might be handing in grade sheets to the Senior Lab Instructor). See the General information section.

Photocopier: Most TAs will not need to make photocopies, but if you do, you have access to the photocopiers in the department mailroom. Again, information on this can be found under General information.

Textbook: Ask your TA supervisor if you will need a copy of the textbook in order to do your job. If so, anyone in the department's general office (DTB A418) should be able to check one out to you. It is important to return the textbook at the end of the term, as we get only a few copies from the publisher.

Marking supplies: You can find coloured pens for marking in the department mailroom. Most markers will also be responsible for recording student grades, which often requires computer access. Please let the TA Coordinator know if you do not have access to a computer that is private enough to maintain the confidentiality of your students' records.

If there are any other resources you need to do your job, but cannot find, please ask!

Hiring Priority and Appointment Sizes

The Department of Mathematics & Statistics follows the Appointment Priority Policy A, laid out in the CUPE Local 4163 (Components 1 & 2) Collective Agreement.

In particular, graduate students from our department who are in their first or second year of a Master's program or their first through fifth year of a Ph.D. have priority over other graduate students, undergraduate students, and non-students.

In accordance with the Appointment Procedures in the Collective Agreement, appointments to particular positions are made based on the qualification and ability of the candidates in question; if two or more applicants are tied within a priority category and are otherwise equally qualified for a particular position, then seniority will be the tie-breaker.

TA work and other teaching opportunities play an important role in the professional development of future academics. We recognize, however, that our graduate students are students and researchers first, and expect that our graduate students will usually spend at least half their time on course work and research. Students can request appointments of fewer-than-standard TA hours if desired. They can also request more TA hours, although this is not always possible, and history indicates that it can be hard to make time for more than 140 TA hours per term.

Graduate Student Sessional Appointments

Sessional Instructors are full teachers: they give lectures, hold office hours, and design assignments and tests in collaboration with other instructors and their coordinator or faculty mentor – see below. This is a more intensive teaching experience than TA positions, and for graduate students interested in pursuing a career in academia, a Sessional Appointment can be valuable work experience.

Sessional Appointments, as you can imagine from that description, require a significant time commitment. The terms and conditions of Sessional Lecturer positions are covered by the CUPE Local 4163 (Component 3) Collective Agreement, and up-to-date pay rate information can be found there.

In the fall of each year, usually late in the term, a form is distributed to Graduate Students asking them to declare an interest in teaching during the following academic year (May through April). You must have permission of your supervisor to be considered for a sessional teaching assignment. A teaching CV will also be requested along with completion of this form.

Graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and continuing sessionals have priority appointment processes; offers will generally be made to Graduate students in late January, late May, and late September for teaching in the following term.

Any remaining positions are posted in an open competition at the beginning of February, June, and October. This posting is sent to all graduate students, continuing sessionals, and other interested parties. This posting usually closes within two weeks and offers are

made within two weeks of the position closing. Applicants for these positions will also be considered for any additional positions that may open up after the posting has closed.

Guiding Principles of Grad Student Teaching Requests

- Sessional teaching is an important component of a doctoral student's teaching dossier, and an integral part of their learning. The Department of Mathematics and Statistics strives to ensure that PhD students graduate with a well-rounded teaching dossier.
- Coursework, research and thesis completion is, however, the primary objective for all students and must remain paramount. In order to support a well-rounded student development, the department may limit sessional teaching assignments to 1 section per academic year.
- It is preferred that students have demonstrated teaching effectiveness developed through the TA position progression prior to being offered a sessional teaching appointment;
- Initial teaching assignments will often be made in spring or fall in coordinated courses in order to provide supervision and mentorship throughout the first assignment;
- Faculty mentors will be assigned for all new instructors;

Support for Graduate Student Sessional Instructors

Faculty mentors and course coordinators will guide and mentor grad student sessional instructors, as they would any other sessional instructor assigned to their course. For questions of course design (including course outlines) and assessment instruments (particularly midterms and final exams), your course coordinator or faculty mentor is the best resource.

The department's TA Coordinator, Jane Butterfield, is also happy to meet with you at any time in the term. Drop by for a casual conversation, ask for a second opinion on a tricky student email, or request a teaching observation to include in your teaching dossier. She can also recommend further resources, such as Learning & Teaching Innovation (LTI) workshops or presentations at the Centre for Academic Communication.

The LATHE Graduate Certificate pairs well with sessional teaching work. Although it is not a requirement for teaching, doctoral students can take LATHE the year before a sessional appointment to get a head start on the scholarship of teaching. A brief summary of LATHE can be found in the introductory material of this handbook, and more information can be found [here](#).

6 Project/Thesis/Dissertation

Graduate students in our department finish their programs with a substantial written document. The name of the type of document depends on your program. Students enrolled in the Master's program write a 'project' or 'thesis'. Students in the PhD program write a 'dissertation'. Any of these may be informally called a thesis.

Style and Structure

There is a thesis format checklist and sample pages available from the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Visit the FGS page on [Scope, Structure & Format](#) for additional information and resources. You may be able to obtain a L^AT_EX template for your thesis from another student, but it is your responsibility to ensure that it complies with FGS guidelines.

The following is some general structural guidance; it should be interpreted loosely. Typically, an introductory chapter outlines or sets up the main results and findings of your thesis. (In a timeline of writing, this can be done close to last.) Background material might come in the next one or two chapters. (This can be written early on, since it relies heavily on existing literature.) Detailed findings follow in the body of the document. This is where the bulk of new work occurs. It is nice to include a forward-looking conclusion, discussing where future directions might lead. (Such a chapter is obviously best left until after you've reflected on the body for some time.) Your particular topic may be suited to a slightly different style of presentation or ordering of writing; you and your supervisory committee should decide. Generic FGS resources are available for further reference.

Doug West's web page provides additional guidance on mathematical writing.

If you publish a paper or series of papers based on work that appears in your thesis, discuss with your supervisor whether these should be written before or after the corresponding thesis chapters.

Some Planning Info

In consultation with your supervisor or committee, it is useful to have at least a somewhat formal thesis completion plan. In particular, you should anticipate many rounds of edits in the late stages of your thesis writing. Your supervisor (and possibly other committee members) may want drafts to annotate with their comments. It is important to set a schedule of drafts and edits with your committee.

UVicSpace

When finished, your thesis or dissertation will be placed in the University of Victoria's electronic collection, UVicSpace. This is a virtual shelf on the library website of published projects, theses and dissertations. Some students will have publishers interested in publishing their work, or have sensitive patent information in their thesis. If this is the case, you will likely want to (at least temporarily) withhold your work from publication in UVicSpace. To do this, you can complete a withholding form.

7 Finishing Your Degree

Preparing to Graduate

Inform the Graduate Program Assistant in the first month of the term you wish to finish. As a reminder, each term the Graduate Program Assistant will email students with deadlines and information regarding defending that term.

You should discuss a timeline for completion with your supervisor. In particular, plan a suitable date for your final oral exam (defence). To allow time for changes to your thesis your committee might request, this date should ideally be before the last two weeks of the term.

To ensure that you are able to finish in the desired term, notify the Graduate Program Assistant at gradasstms@uvic.ca with your agreed-upon defence date/time and any audiovisual needs. The Graduate Program Assistant will reserve a room and/or create a videoconferencing link for your defence and help you ensure the necessary documents are completed in time.

With a plan in place for your defence, finish the final edits of your dissertation/thesis/project. Plan for one to two weeks for your committee to agree that it represents an examinable document.

Also plan to allow one to two weeks after your defence to make final changes before submitting your thesis to the library and the FGS.

Prior to defence

1. Make sure you apply to graduate.

Check the Registrar's website for more information about these deadlines.

2. Review your degree evaluation report (CAPP or Degree Works, as applicable). Ensure that your courses and program requirements are recorded correctly, and contact the Graduate Program Assistant about any errors or omissions.
3. Submit your thesis/dissertation in PDF format to the Graduate Program Assistant, along with your Request for Oral Exam (ROE). (The ROE is not needed for the project-based Stats Master's.) The ROE must be submitted sufficiently far before your thesis defence. This requires collecting signatures of your committee members and the graduate advisor. Committee members will often want to see your thesis before signing the ROE, so allow some time. You must submit your signed ROE to the Graduate Program Assistant by the following deadlines:

Master's thesis	21 <i>working days</i> prior to defence
PhD dissertation	31 <i>working days</i> prior to defence

Be careful not to count statutory holidays or weekends when calculating dates backwards from the defence.

4. Prepare your oral presentation for the start of your defence. Consult with your supervisor or supervisory committee about its length. Try to anticipate possible questions that might come from the examining committee. You might find it helpful to hold a mock defence with some student friends, or even something more formal arranged through your supervisor.

The oral examination has a chair appointed from outside the department to represent FGS. Students may find it helpful to review the Chair's Guidelines for conducting exams.

Neither you nor your supervisor can have contact with the external examiner once they have been selected (in the case of the PhD) or once the defence date has been set (in the case of the Master's). After that, you must let the Graduate Program Assistant act as a proxy for communicating any defence information to the external examiner.

After defence

Submit all of the required documents, with signatures, to the Graduate Program Assistant. They will be submitted to GARO on your behalf. (In the case of the project-based Stats Master's, this includes submitting the Non-Thesis Checklist within four working days after the oral defence.)

Submit your thesis to UVicSpace. For access, you will need to contact our GARO advisor (currently Maria Soriano, msoriano@uvic.ca).

The deadline for completing all requirements, including submitting documentation, is 3 p.m. on the final business day of the current term. **This is a serious deadline.**

Postponement

If students cannot meet deadlines to complete their defence and submissions in the desired term, but they can do so within an additional month, there is a way to pay reduced fees rather than the full tuition of an additional term. This is called the Completion Postponement Fee Adjustment (CPFA). It has its own specific rules and deadlines, and it delays your official graduation; see the website for details.

Final Arrangements

You will need to clear out your office space and mailbox by the last week of the term in which you defended. If you require the office space past the end of term, please contact the admin officer at aofficerms@uvic.ca. When you are finished with your office, don't forget to return your keys to the office and any textbooks/materials that were borrowed. Be sure to provide the office staff with a forwarding address. Good luck and stay in touch!