DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
2021-2022

This booklet contains guidelines set by the Department of Economics which are intended to assist supervisors and students in the successful administration of the graduate program. If you have any concerns with the policies outlined in this document, please raise them with the graduate advisor.

Note: Hyperlinks contained in this document will be checked annually for accuracy. If you notice a link that is no longer functioning, please email gradecon@uvic.ca. This document was approved at the Department Meeting January 15, 2019 and is updated annually for accuracy by the graduate committee.
INTRODUCTION

MA program

Our Master’s program provides a rigorous foundation in economic theory and econometrics, supplemented by electives with an applied focus. It prepares students for professional research and analysis careers in both public and private sectors or for doctoral studies and academic careers in economics. We offer two Master’s degree options: thesis-based and extended essay-based.

PhD program

Our PhD program provides students with a sound knowledge of an expanded range of theory and tools, and provides a consistent emphasis on the application of these tools to areas of policy importance. The program combines training in core economic theory and econometrics with electives in modern areas of applied economics. Graduates of the program are prepared to compete effectively for research positions in the public and private sectors, or to pursue academic careers.

Contact Information

Primary resource personnel in the Economics Department:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Contact Info</th>
<th>Resource For</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>250-721-8969 <a href="mailto:sscoopcoord@uvic.ca">sscoopcoord@uvic.ca</a></td>
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</table>
**Curriculum**

**MA Program**

The thesis and essay options consist of a total of 15 units of coursework and research as follows:

**MA Economics Core Courses**

- ECON 500 Microeconomic Analysis 1.5 units
- ECON 501 Macroeconomic Analysis 1.5 units
- ECON 545 Econometric Analysis 1.5 units

**Essay Option**

- 5 elective courses (7.5 units total)
- ECON 598 Master’s Essay 3.0 units

**Thesis Option**

- 4 elective courses (6.0 units total)
- ECON 599 Master’s Thesis 4.5 units

Elective courses are normally chosen from the graduate course offerings of the department, but, with the permission of the Graduate Advisor, may include 3 units of courses numbered at the 400 level as well as graduate courses in other departments.

**2021-22 Course Offerings**

The following courses will be offered in the 2021-2022 academic year:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEPTEMBER 2021</th>
<th>JANUARY 2022</th>
<th>MAY 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECON 500 Microeconomic Analysis</td>
<td>ECON 501 Macroeconomic Analysis</td>
<td>Graduate courses are typically not scheduled for the summer term. Students are encouraged to pursue a co-op work term or register in ECON 598 or 599 to begin working on their essay or thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON 516 Cost-Benefit Analysis</td>
<td>ECON 530 Economics of Natural Resource</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON 529 Financial Economics</td>
<td>ECON 546 Themes in Econometrics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ECON 531 Environmental Economics</td>
<td>ECON 548 Applied Econometric Modelling</td>
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<td>ECON 545 Econometric Analysis</td>
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<td>ECON 550 Game Theory</td>
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</table>

**PhD Program**

The PhD program is tailored to each individual student based on the degree they are entering the program with and the courses they have already taken. Students are required to complete 37.5 units although they may receive a waiver for up to 12 units of required coursework, depending on the nature of the courses they have already completed as part of their MA program.
At the time of application, PhD students are matched with one supervisor or two joint-supervisors. They consult with their supervisor(s) to determine the appropriate courses required to satisfy the coursework component of the degree. This includes any course exemptions, transfer credits and field courses. This plan, which is subject to approval by the graduate advisor after possible consultation with the graduate committee, is recorded in the PhD Program Approval Worksheet.

**OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS**

**MA Timeline**

The Department of Economics recommends a **28-month timeline** (7 terms) for completion, although it is possible to complete the program in one year. The Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) requires that MA students complete their program in 5 years.

During the first year, students are encouraged to take 6 to 8 courses and they must pass (grade B or higher) at least 4 courses. The MA program can be completed within the department’s recommended timeline with or without two co-operative education terms:

**Expected Timeline for MA students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Term 1 Fall</th>
<th>Year 1 Term 2 Spring</th>
<th>Year 1 Term 3 Summer</th>
<th>Year 2 Term 4 Fall</th>
<th>Year 2 Term 5 Spring</th>
<th>Year 2 Term 6 Summer</th>
<th>Year 3 Term 7 Fall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enroll</td>
<td>coursework (3-4 courses per term)</td>
<td>begin research (essay/thesis); co-op term</td>
<td>complete coursework; begin/continue research</td>
<td>complete essay/thesis</td>
<td>program completion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit ideas of research proposal and meet with potential supervisors</td>
<td>submit the essay/thesis registration form</td>
<td>submit progress review form</td>
<td>nominate examiner</td>
<td>oral examination</td>
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PhD Completion Timeline

The Department of Economics recommends a 5-year timeline for completion. FGS requires that PhD students complete their PhD program within 7 years.

- **Coursework:** Students are expected to take three or four courses per term so that the entire coursework sequence is completed within two years of admission.
- **Candidacy:** ECON 693 Candidacy must be completed within 30 months of registration and no later than 6 months before the final oral examination (see section ‘PhD Candidacy Examination’).
- **Dissertation:** After successful completion of required coursework and ECON 693, students register in the PhD dissertation ECON 699 and remain registered until the completion of their program.
- The timeline for the PhD program varies from student to student based, in part, on waivers they may receive for coursework completed as part of their MA program. The PhD program can be completed with or without the co-operative education option:

**Expected Timeline for Doctoral Students**

![Timeline Diagram]

Note: This is an illustrative timeline for a PhD student who has no course exemptions and does not take the co-op option.

Registration Requirements

Continuous full-time registration in two or more courses (3 units or more) each term, from the time of admission until degree requirements are met, is required for all students. A student who is registered for a single term is defined as full-time if:

- enrolled in courses totaling a minimum of 3 units, or
- enrolled in a Candidacy Exam (693), dissertation (699), thesis (599), essay (598), Approved Exchange (502), Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program (601, 602) or co-operative education work term (800+).

Alternately, a student may (a) register for a personal leave, (b) request a parental, (c) compassionate or (d) medical leave of absence, or (e) formally withdraw from the program in accordance with FGS regulations. Students who do not do any of the above are considered to have abandoned their program and will be withdrawn from the university with the entry “Withdrawn without Permission” reported on their transcript. Students are encouraged to use the summer session to complete a co-op work term or to register in ECON 598/599/699 and work on their research. Graduate courses are not typically offered during the summer.
term. Course work in the summer can be exceptionally granted on a case by case basis (e.g. a course uniquely matches the student's research).

Only registered full time students can be actively supervised by Faculty members. It is each Faculty member’s duty and responsibility to verify that a student who requests supervision in any given term is properly registered. It is expected that students meet their supervisors on campus during regular working hours unless the student is doing field work or exceptional circumstances which should be reported to the supervisor and graduate advisor.

**CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION**

Participation in the Co-operative Education program is optional for Master’s and PhD students. Co-op placement is competitive and requires submission of applications and participation in interviews. Flexibility regarding job location and work setting increases a student’s chance of placement. Students interested in applying for the co-op program should contact the Economics Co-op Coordinator.

To earn co-op designation, master’s students complete two work terms, each consisting of four months of full-time paid employment, and PhD students complete three terms. Students who complete less than the required co-op work terms are eligible for work experience designation.

To be eligible for a work term, students must maintain a B (5.0) average and receive permission from their supervisor and the graduate advisor. MA students are typically required to complete 9.0 units of graduate course work including ECON 516 prior to the commencement of their first work term. PhD students are typically required to complete ECON 693 Candidacy prior to the commencement of their first work term. Students are assessed co-op fees during work terms. Regular tuition installments are not assessed unless students are also registered in courses.

**SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

Each graduate student selects a supervisor who must be a faculty member from the department and on the FGS membership list. The supervisor is responsible for providing direction on the supervisory committee.

**MA Essay and Thesis Supervisory Committee**

The supervisory committee has one additional member who could be a co-supervisor. Although the supervisor is selected within the fall term of the second year of a student’s program, the committee member may not be determined until later, in consultation with the student based upon the student’s research interests and availability of faculty. For the essay option, the role of the committee member is to: (a) review the penultimate draft of the essay/thesis, suggesting changes and revisions that are limited to making the essay acceptable for proceeding to defense, and (b) attend the oral examination, along with the supervisor. For the thesis option, the committee member should be nominated no later than three terms after the beginning of the research work (ECON 599) and is expected to be involved in the supervision of the thesis.

**PhD Supervisory Committee Structure**

The supervisory committee has two additional members, one of which could be a co-supervisor. The supervisor, in consultation with the student, may declare the additional members on the PhD Program Planning Approval Worksheet or may recommend delaying the selection of the committee until the end of the first year of a student’s program.

**Determining Your Supervisor: MA Program**

Upon enrolment, all MA students are supervised by the graduate advisor, who receives advice, as needed, from the graduate committee. During their first year in the program, students are responsible for seeking out potential supervisors and selecting a supervisor with guidance from the graduate advisor, as needed.
The graduate advisor facilitates the matching of students and supervisors based upon a student’s research interests and availability of faculty. The timeframe for selecting a supervisor is as follows:

- **On or before March 31 of 1st year**
  - Students submit the Research Proposal Form to the graduate advisor indicating field and supervisor preferences
  - Graduate advisor connects faculty members and students to discuss their research interests

- **On or before May 31 of 1st year**
  - Students are required to have met with potential supervisors
  - Student selects a supervisor
  - Student must submit the Essay Registration form or Thesis Registration form to graduate secretary which declares the supervisor and research topic

- **On or before September 30 of 2nd year**
  - Students who do not submit the form by this date are required to meet with the graduate advisor

**Determining Your Supervisor: PhD Program**

Supervisors are determined during the graduate program application process. PhD applicants research faculty bios and research interests using the listing of faculty available for supervision. Students indicate their supervisor preferences in their application and the graduate advisor works to match each potential student with a supervisor that is suitable. All PhD students enter the program with an appointed supervisor. Background information on selecting a supervisor can be found on the FGS’s website.

**SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP**

The Department recognizes that different students and faculty members have different expectations of the supervision process and that different models — frequency of contact, role of supervisory committee — can work equally well. What is required in all situations is early and clear communication between the supervisor and student about the supervision process. In particular, the supervisor and student should discuss and agree to the following matters: 
(a) Frequency of contact; (b) The specific nature of the project and methods to be used; (c) Expectations of research outcomes; (d) Expectations of the presentation of research; (e) Timing and selection of committee member; (f) Time frame for submission of drafts and completion of written work. It is recommended that the supervisor prepares a written summary plan of arrangements, providing an email copy to the student, and updating this plan when needed.

**Responsibilities**

Faculty and students are bound by university policies listed in the appendix and in particular the Graduate Supervision Policy which outlines the rights and responsibilities in the supervisory relationship and provides extensive information on graduate supervision. It is expected that the student and Supervisory Committee members are familiar with these documents.

**Minimum Meeting Frequency**

The minimum frequency with which students and supervisors would normally meet—either by direct meeting, by virtual meeting, or through detailed correspondence—to discuss the student’s research should not exceed 40 business days – i.e. supervisors and students should meet at least twice per term. In addition, students will also meet with other members of their Supervisory Committee by direct or virtual meeting, to discuss the student’s research at least once a year.

**Maximum Turnaround Time for Comments on Submitted Work**

The supervisor and committee members are expected to read and provide clear comments on submitted work in a timely fashion. However, students need to be aware that faculty members require time to read written work, both because of other commitments and in order to provide the required care and attention.
The expected maximum length of time required for supervisors and members of the supervisory committee to return comments on a thesis, dissertation or essay to a student should not exceed 20 business days from time of receipt, unless a delay is required by field work, remote study, supervisor or student vacation, sick leave, or exceptional circumstances.

**Formal Progress Review of MA Student**
The Graduate Advisor reviews each student’s performance at the end of each term for students taking courses. Should a graduate student receive a grade lower than a ‘B’ (lower than 73 percent), the instructor should notify the Graduate Advisor. The Graduate Advisor will meet (or use email correspondence if meeting is not possible) with both the instructor and individually with the student prior to submitting the grade, to determine appropriate remedial action, which may include: repeating the course in a future term, registering in a different course in a future term or withdrawal from the program.

From their second year onwards, each graduate student reviews in April and October the work completed during the previous 6 months, and reports on the Graduate Student Progress Review form progress toward their essay/thesis completion. This form has to be submitted to the supervisor before April 15th and October 15th. The supervisor assesses whether academic progress is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. In the event of satisfactory progress, the form is simply returned to the graduate secretary by April 30th and October 30th and filed. The following steps are taken in the less common event of unsatisfactory progress:

1. The supervisor, after consulting the committee member in the case of a thesis, completes the portion of the Student Progress Review form that explains the lack of progress and documents deficiencies in skills, knowledge, or expertise. The form is returned to the graduate secretary and the supervisor, possibly with the graduate advisor, notifies the student in person of the results of the review prior to April 30th and October 30th.
2. The supervisory committee meets with the student no later than four weeks from the day the form was returned to the graduate secretary. The student will be given the opportunity to communicate progress and research results and members of the supervisory committee must (a) explain what the concerns are, (b) specify mechanisms for addressing identified problems, and (c) set a review date within 8 to 12 weeks.
3. The student completes a Graduate Student Progress Review form prior to the review date, submits it to the supervisor and the progress is assessed by the supervisory committee on the basis of the written material supplied.
4. In the case of two or more determinations of unsatisfactory progress on formal assessments, the supervisor will meet with the Graduate Advisor to decide whether to request the Dean of Graduate Studies to withdraw the student for failure to meet academic standards.

**Formal Progress Review of PhD Student**
The formal annual review for PhD students has two components: First, the student completes the Graduate Student Progress Review form and submits it to their supervisor by April 15th. The assessment is conducted by the supervisor until the supervisory committee has been formed, and by all members of the supervisory committee afterwards. The supervisor is responsible to return the form to the graduate advisor prior to April 30th. The same procedure as described above for MA students is also followed for PhD students in the event of unsatisfactory progress.

Second, the supervisory committee is required to meet with the student at least once a year to review the students’ work. This meeting can be held together with the completion of the progress review form or independently.
Dealing with Conflicts
Faculty members and students need to attempt to first resolve issues within the Department, involving, as deemed useful, other members of the supervisory committee, the Graduate Advisor and the Departmental Chair. Should issues still remain after seeking assistance from these internal resources, FGS may be utilized to assist with resolution. It is important to keep a record of efforts at resolving issues.

PhD Candidacy Examination
Requirements for the student’s PhD Candidacy Examination, including comprehensive examinations and the format of the oral examination of the dissertation proposal, are determined by the supervisory committee. The student must complete:

- Two written comprehensive examinations, selected from the topics of econometrics, and one of microeconomic theory or macroeconomic theory. Students are expected to take both comprehensive exams in the spring of their first year in the program. Comprehensive exams cannot be taken more than twice. Students who fail a comprehensive exam will have the opportunity to take the exam again at the next offering, typically held in September.

- An oral examination on the student’s dissertation proposal. The supervisory committee determines the timing, format and requirements of the oral examination. The oral exam has one of three outcomes: pass, fail or defer (did not pass but a 2nd attempt is recommended). (See form Oral Examination of the Dissertation proposal).

A PhD student must pass both the comprehensive examinations and the dissertation proposal oral examination to pass the candidacy examination. In the event the candidacy examination is failed, the student is recommended to withdraw from the program by the Graduate Advisor for failure to meet academic standards. Read the Department of Economics Candidacy Requirements for further information.

In exceptional circumstances, a student’s supervisory committee, with the approval of the Department’s Graduate Committee, may set alternative Candidacy requirements.

Essay, Thesis, Dissertation and Oral Examination

MA Essay and Thesis
The extended essay is an independent research project, which may consist of an extended version of a course project. Students can expect to take the equivalent of one term of full-time work to complete an extended essay. A list of past essays is available here. The essay should have a title page, table of contents, section numbering and references. The length is expected to be between 30 and 40 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font). More specific guidelines may be required by individual supervisors.

For research completed at a more advanced level, students are encouraged to undertake the thesis option. Students and their supervisory committee determine the thesis topic based on a major research project. The thesis option involves more extensive supervision and examination (see pgs. 5 & 9). Students can expect to take the equivalent of two terms of full-time work to complete a thesis. Past theses are available on UVicSpace here.

Students should discuss early in the process a timeline for the completion of their essay or thesis with their supervisor. Students should bear in mind that supervisors and committee members will require adequate time to read drafts. Note that the draft submitted for the MA essay to the committee member is in effect a final draft. Students must ensure that the draft submitted for examination does not violate the University’s regulations on plagiarism.
**PhD Dissertation**

The PhD dissertation is a substantial piece of original research work which should, in the opinion of scholars in the field, merit publication in international journals. It must embody original work and constitute a significant contribution to knowledge in the candidate’s field of study. It should contain evidence of broad knowledge of the relevant literature, and should demonstrate a critical understanding of the works of scholars closely related to the subject of the dissertation. Students determine the research topic in consultation with their supervisory committee. Length of the dissertation will vary with the field and the nature of the work presented. Past PhD dissertations are available on UVicSpace [here](http://www.uvic.ca).

All dissertations shall be presented in a form which constitutes an integrated submission. The dissertation may include materials already published by the candidate, whether alone or in conjunction with others, but conducted while registered in ECON 693 or 699. When joint work is included, the dissertation should include a statement of contribution that identifies the student’s own work from the work of other researchers. At the final oral examination, the doctoral candidate is responsible for the entire content of the dissertation, including the work done by co-authors in joint papers.

**Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Requirement**

A student’s thesis or dissertation will be submitted to FGS and placed in the University of Victoria's electronic collection, UVicSpace. Before doing so, the student must ensure that the thesis adheres to FGS’s formatting requirements. Students who are concerned about copyright issues are advised to contact FGS to withhold their work from publication in UVicSpace.

**Examination Committee**

For the MA essay, the supervisor is responsible to select a committee member and arrange an examination chair. For the MA Thesis and PhD dissertation, the supervisor is responsible to nominate an external examiner who has not been involved with graduate supervision of the student. FGS approves the external examiner and nominates the chair. For the MA thesis, the external examiner may be from within the home academic unit, provided that there is at least one non-unit member on the supervisory committee. In the case of the PhD dissertation, the external examiner must be from outside the University. The oral examining committee is composed of the supervisory committee and, in the case of the MA Thesis and PhD dissertation, the external examiner.

**Notification Deadlines for Oral Examinations**

Once a student and the examining committee have agreed on a date for the oral defense of an essay, thesis or dissertation, the student must notify the graduate secretary of their intended defense date and time by following the deadlines below:

- **MA Essay**: 10 business days prior to their defense date
- **MA Thesis**: 25 business days prior to their defense date
- **PhD Dissertation**: 35 business days prior to their defense date

Failure to comply with these deadlines may result in a delay of the intended defense date, program completion date or convocation.

**Transfer from the Masters to the Doctoral Program**

Transfer from the Masters to the PhD Program is decided on a case-by-case basis by the graduate committee. Students should have achieved an A- average in their graduate courses and must nominate a faculty member who is willing to act as their PhD supervisor. Together with their supervisor, they set up a plan which includes any course exemptions, transfer credits and field courses (see subsection Curriculum PhD Program) and fill out the PhD Program Approval Worksheet. The graduate committee reviews each application and decides whether to authorize the transfer after possibly consulting with the supervisor. MA
students who are considering applying to the PhD program have the option to challenge a comprehensive exam that is offered as part of the PhD candidacy examination.

**FUNDING POLICIES**

All students admitted to the Economics Graduate Program, whether domestic or international, are automatically considered for financial support, with the level of support determined on a competitive basis (amounts range from $1,000 to $25,000). The three principal sources of financial assistance are teaching assistantships, FGS funding (fellowships and graduate awards; the difference between the two being their monetary value) and donor awards. In addition, some faculty members offer research assistantships. UVic has regulations for fellowships and graduate awards and graduate students should ensure they are aware of the regulations associated with their funding.

**Eligible years for guaranteed funding**

MA graduate students are typically funded for their first year in the graduate program. PhD graduate students are typically offered funding for the first 3 years of their program. Funding for additional years may be available in the form of future teaching assistantship (TA) positions and/or additional awards based on academic achievement.

**Teaching Assistantships (TA)**

Graduate students may apply through the Department of Economics for a TA position. Information regarding the TA program including guidelines, responsibilities and appointment selection can be found on the department’s website.

**FGS Funding and Donor Awards**

The Department of Economics distributes FGS funding each year. The amount of this funding varies from year to year and students are not required to apply:

- **Eligibility**: The academic performance of students will determine eligibility. To qualify, students must hold a minimum GPA of 7.0 or 6.5 depending on the funding offered.
- **Award Values**: Graduate awards are between $1000 and $10,000 per year; Fellowships are between $10,000 and $17,500 (MA) per year or between $10,000 and $20,000 (PhD) per year.
- **Decision Timeline**: The Department of Economics distributes most of its funding in the fall term but may reserve some funds for the spring and summer terms which are awarded on the basis of availability and academic performance in the program.
- **Distribution of funds**: FGS funding is processed once a student arrives for the fall term and is typically distributed by the end of September or early October.

In addition, the department nominates students for donor awards each fall. Donor awards are distributed to recipients in November. Information regarding FGS funding (UVic awards) and donor (external) awards can be found on the Graduate Studies website. Eligibility and award values vary, but all students nominated for donor awards must hold a 6.0 GPA to be considered. Finally, the department offers the following donor awards that require students to apply: (a) The Phillips, Hager and North Scholarships for Research in Environmental and Resource Economics (b) The Women in Economics Graduate Scholarship.

**Termination of Awards**

Awards are only paid out to students who are registered in the Economics graduate program. Award payments will not continue in a subsequent term if fees from the previous term have not been paid in full. Students who take a personal leave during the course of their program will lose their award funding.
Students on parental, compassionate or medical leave do not receive funding during the term of their leave but carry forward the award.

**Research Assistantships**

Students interested in research assistant positions with a particular faculty member or in a particular field of economics are advised to contact the faculty member directly. [Current student opportunities](#) can be found on our website.
**APPENDIX A: GRADUATE STUDENT ONLINE FORMS AND DOCUMENTS**

**Department of Economics Forms**
- A1: Research Proposal Form
- A2: MA Extended Essay Registration Form
- A3: MA Thesis Registration Form
- A4: Graduate Student Progress Review Form
- A5: PhD Program Approval Worksheet
- A6: Oral Examination of the Dissertation Proposal form

**Department of Economics Policies and Guidelines**
- A7: Department of Economics PhD Candidacy Examination Requirements

**Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS)**
- A8: FGS Graduate Supervision Policy
- A9: FGS Thesis and dissertation format requirements

**APPENDIX B: GRADUATE STUDENT ONLINE RESOURCES**

**Department of Economics**
- Economics Faculty Listing
- Graduate Calendar: Economics Program
- Economics Co-op Program
- Economics TA/RA Employment Opportunities
- Economics Financial Assistance and Fees
- Completed MA Essays
- List of PhD Supervisors

**Faculty of Graduate Studies**
- Faculty of Graduate Studies Supervisor Selection
- UVic Graduate Calendar
- Fellowship and Graduate Award Regulations
- UVic Space Completed Theses and Dissertations
- Policy on Academic Integrity
- Tuition and Fees

**University of Victoria**
- Office of Student Life
- Graduate Students Society
- International Student Services
- Centre for Accessible Learning
- Campus Security
- Counselling Services
- Health Services
- Occupational Health, Safety & Environment
- Equity and Human Rights
- CUPE 4163
- Labour/Employee Relations
- Indigenous Student Services
- Office of the Ombudsperson
- Centre for Academic Communication