

Termination of a Student's Program/ Severing of the Supervisory Relationship

A supervisor **cannot** terminate a student's program of studies. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR) admits a graduate student to a degree program and only the FGSR can terminate a graduate student's program.

Attempt resolution first

Conflicts can and do arise between supervisors and students. For this reason, the FGSR Graduate Program Manual contains a section on "[Disputes and Resolutions](#)." A guidance sheet this topic can also be found in the page [Resources for Supervisors](#).

If resolution fails, a supervisor may initiate a recommendation for termination, but this must be done through the Graduate Coordinator or Chair of the program. It is the Graduate Coordinator who submits the recommendation to an Associate Dean FGSR (Section [7.14](#) of the FGSR Graduate Program Manual).

Steps to termination

Recommendation for termination can be made based on **poor academic standing, a lack of progress in research or due to lack of a supervisor**.

The Chair or **Graduate Coordinator decides whether to submit a written recommendation** for termination to an FGSR Associate Dean and with a copy to the student. Section 7.14 contains detailed guidance on what must be covered in such a letter.

A recommendation for termination is investigated by an FGSR Associate Dean to ensure the decision is necessary and sound as the consequences are very serious. The result is a "Required to Withdraw" notation on the student's transcript that will likely prevent their admission to another graduate program.

Our advice to supervisors when a student's performance is questionable, is to involve the supervisory committee and the graduate coordinator as early as possible and to document assessments of the students progress. It is important to document the lack of progress in the program through regular committee meetings. Students can be placed on academic probation for poor performance in coursework or for a lack of progress in their research (See Section 7.4.2 of the Graduate Program Manual). The program may have procedures to follow if the supervisory committee deems a student's progress unsatisfactory.

A supervisor may want to dissolve the supervisory relationship due to difficulties in the supervisory relationship and this must be declared to the Graduate Coordinator.

In the case where a student a student is in good academic standing, the Graduate Coordinator will first attempt to find an alternate arrangement for supervision of the student including transfer to another program.

Money matters...

Section 8.1.6 of the FGSR Graduate Program Manual also states that "Where the supervisor has been providing funding to the student, the funding should continue for a period of at least 30 days from the date on which the graduate coordinator determines that the supervisor-student relationship is beyond repair." Legally, the University is the party responsible for meeting contractual obligations, and we see no possibility that this type of obligation can be waived.

There is a collective agreement governing academically-employed graduate students (the AEGS Agreement). Articles 6.05 and 20.01 of the collective agreement indicate that an academically-employed graduate student can only be terminated and disciplined for just cause. A graduate student

also has a right to representation from the GSA, and can seek advice from the GSA. An information sheet on the collective agreement can be found under [resources for graduate coordinators](#).

Further guidance on the interpretation and application of the collective agreement for Departments can be sought from Faculty Relations, a unit within the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).