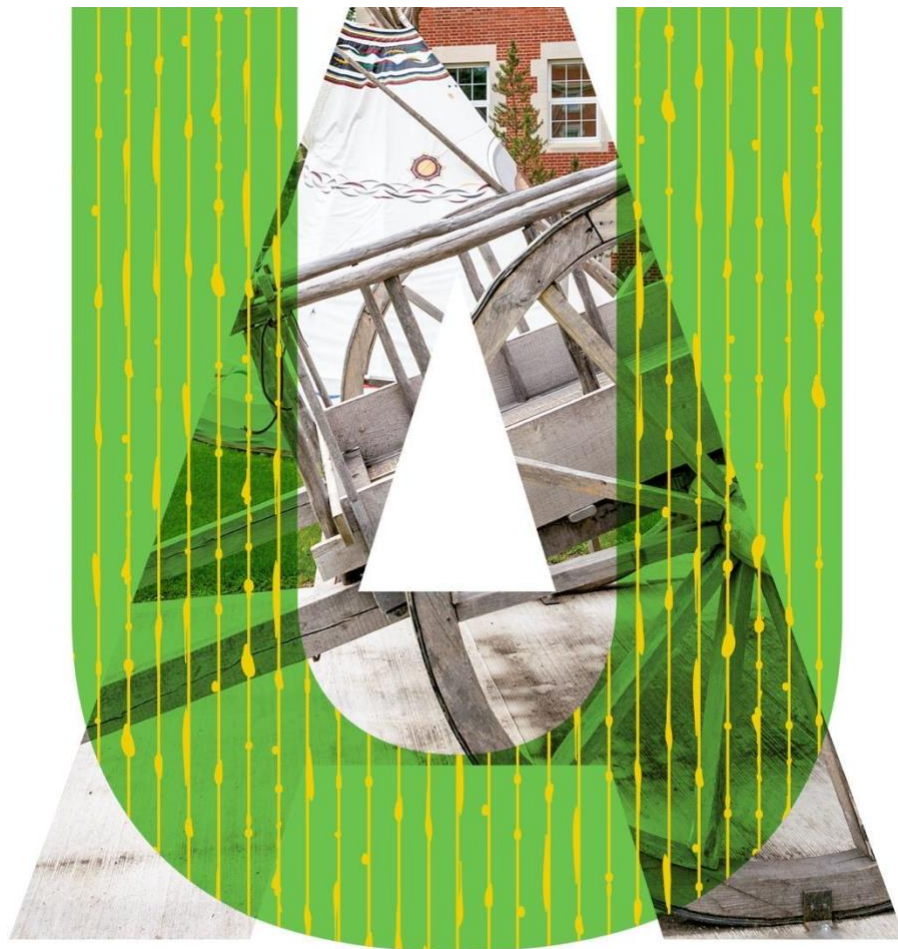


# FACULTY OF NATIVE STUDIES

## Graduate Student Handbook

2024–2025 Academic Year



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## The Purpose of this Handbook

The Faculty of Native Studies Graduate Student Handbook is a compilation of the Faculty's graduate policies to guide FNS graduate students in the completion of their degrees. It also contains a significant amount of advice for success in the Faculty's graduate programs. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with this handbook and to adhere to its policies.

At the University of Alberta all graduate programs are administered through the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (GPS) and as such, the Faculty of Native Studies' graduate programs must follow GPS policy. In areas where FNS and GPS policy conflicts, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research policy shall prevail.

All students are also expected to familiarize themselves with the appropriate GPS policies for the completion of their degree and conduct of their studies. These policies in the GPS's Graduate Program Manual at: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual>

This handbook draws substantially from a number of policies developed at the university, including those from individual departments and GPS. We are appreciative of their support and generosity.

### About: The Faculty of Native Studies (FNS)

The idea of creating an academic unit focused on Native Studies was first discussed in 1972. In 1978, the Senate received recommendations to improve services for Aboriginal people and to create a more coherent Native Studies program. The program was approved in 1984, and, by 1986, the School of Native Studies and the Bachelor of Arts in Native Studies degree were established. In June 2006, the School of Native Studies became the Faculty of Native Studies (FNS) to reflect the expanded teaching and research activities of the Faculty's staff and students.

FNS is North America's only faculty dedicated to research on Indigenous experiences and issues. It is highly regarded for the quality of its BA and certificate programs. Our interdisciplinary faculty members are engaged in a wide array of scholarly pursuits and rank among the most successful scholars at the University of Alberta (UofA) in securing external, national-level funding. Therefore, the FNS is a dynamic and lively research-intensive setting. The Faculty is further strengthened by its dedicated staff members, many of whom played a significant role in establishing the FNS as an entity at the province's flagship university. We are privileged to have you spend a few years with us while you develop academic and professional skills, pursue career goals, and contribute to the Faculty of Native Studies and the discipline of Indigenous Studies.

The leadership of the Faculty includes the Dean, Dr. Chris Andersen; Vice-Dean, Adam Gaudry; Associate Dean (Academic), Dr. Sean Robinson; Associate Dean (Research), Dr. Nancy Van Styvendale, and Faculty General Manager, Ms. Sara Horseman. The Faculty contains 16 faculty members capable of supervising graduate students and 9 staff members that support the Faculty's operation in many different capacities.

In respect to the graduate program, Dr. Paul L. Gareau oversees FNS's graduate programs and can be reached at [nsgrad@ualberta.ca](mailto:nsgrad@ualberta.ca). The Graduate Program Advisor can be contacted at [nsadvisor@ualberta.ca](mailto:nsadvisor@ualberta.ca). Should you have any questions about your program *not answered in this handbook* you may contact the Grad Chair or the Graduate Program Advisor.

### About: The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS)

The [Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) (GPS) is responsible for ensuring the quality of graduate programs at the UofA. It is responsible for things such as:

- Final admission of students;
- Setting of minimum entrance requirements and academic standing requirements;
- Administration of awards;
- Conduct of thesis examinations;
- Final acceptance of theses; and,
- Convocation.

FNS supervises graduate students in their degree programs and is responsible for its graduate courses. FNS is responsible for overseeing the supervisory process and ensuring that GPS regulations are followed. FNS will notify GPS of changes in a student's status, such as meeting degree requirements, and keeps track of developments or changes in the student's program.

## Supervision Guidelines: Graduate Students and Supervisors

### Graduate Students

Graduate students are responsible for their own program—i.e., you are responsible for managing your degree requirements and making progress. You are expected to familiarize yourself with regulations and deadlines that affect you. The University of Alberta Calendar is the official rulebook. The Graduate Policy and Regulations related to GPS, should be understood by all graduate students:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13729>

Additional important information is provided at the GPS website, <http://uofa.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies> and in particular in the **Graduate Program Manual**: <http://uofa.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/about/graduate-program-manual>

All general University policies are located on UAPPOL (University of Alberta Policies and Procedures On-Line):

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/Pages/default.aspx>

**NOTE:** The UofA and GPS sources supersede any information contained in this FNS Graduate Student Handbook.

In particular, you should:

- Note that graduate students are responsible for ensuring their registration does not lapse and all their fees are paid. See Academic Schedule for key dates: <https://www.ualberta.ca/registrar/registration-and-courses/registration-dates-and-deadlines/2021-2022-term-dates-and-deadlines.html>
- Establish a habit of frequent communication with your supervisor.
- Report program progress yearly to the Grad Chair and your supervisory committee. Each May, you will be required to complete a short annual written report and given the opportunity to discuss it with the Grad Chair.
- Communicate with your supervisor or the Grad Chair if you face any problems or emergencies that may arise during the course of your study.
- Meet deadlines for any scholarship applications that you make and seek assistance from your supervisor in the application process.

### Supervisors

The Faculty supervisor is directly responsible for guidance and monitoring of a student's program. The supervisor assists in planning the program; informs students of relevant FNS and GPS regulations; provides advice in all aspects of the program; and keeps informed of the student's progress. The supervisor provides guidance so that the student conducts research in a manner that is scholarly, safe, and productive. The supervisor gives input on a course of study for the student; arranges for and chairs

supervisory committee meetings; signals to the student when the supervisory committee and/or examination committee should be sent copies of the thesis in whole or in part; arranges for the student's examination; communicates with the Grad Chair about proposal and thesis completion, as well as the scheduling of examinations; and reviews the thesis both in draft and final form.

The Supervisor is expected to:

- Treat the student as a junior colleague in research.
- Provide guidance in research and set standards expected, and offer advice and constructive criticism. The student shall be made aware of expectations of the supervisor and FNS at the beginning of the supervisory relationship.
- Establish with the student a realistic timetable and milestones for completion of the phases of the degree program. The FNS Graduate Program Advisor has a template that may assist in establishing the timeline.
- Establish a supervisory committee by the end of the second term of the program, ensure that meetings are held at least twice a year, and report on meetings to the Grad Chair in the FNS.
- If going on leave or a period of absence, supervisors will continue their supervision duties
- Ensure that the student is aware of their responsibilities (see [above](#)) and assist in meeting them. Expectations not included in the Calendar or GPS Graduate Program Manual must be in writing at the beginning of the supervisory relationship.
- Schedule degree examinations in consultation with the student.
  - Submit forms to the FNS Grad Chair and Graduate Program Advisor for processing to GPS.

It is important to note, however, that while the supervisor's role is to provide guidance and support and to ensure administrative requirements of the degree are met, students are responsible for the completion of course work, as well as meeting all deadlines and degree benchmarks.

### Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies: Responsibilities Related to Graduate Programs

Please read the GPS Calendar regarding the responsibilities related to graduate programs regarding students, supervisors, academic advisors, graduate coordinator, the Faculty, and GPS Council: [link](#).

## Master's Degree (MA)

### Purpose of the Master's

A Master's program allows a student to improve their understanding of a specialized area of knowledge and complete a research project of restricted scope under expert supervision. The program provides experience in planning, conducting, executing, and reporting research at an advanced level.

### Two-Year Degree Structure

An MA is expected to be completed within two academic years. A student normally completes data collection for the thesis in the summer of the first year (before the beginning of the second academic year). In the second academic year, the thesis is expected to be written and defended. The Faculty does not guarantee financial support or office space to a Master's student whose program extends beyond two academic years. The GPS-set time limit for completion is four years:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13568#time-limit-for-completion-of-graduate-programs>



### Degree Requirements

A student is admitted into the Master's program only if a faculty member is willing to act as supervisor. The MA requires course work and research leading to a single-authored, original thesis:

[https://calendar.ualberta.ca/preview\\_program.php?catoid=44&poid=55018](https://calendar.ualberta.ca/preview_program.php?catoid=44&poid=55018)



### Residency Requirement

The residency requirement for the master's program is one academic year:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13568#residence-requirement>

An academic year is defined as the eight-month period between September and April. Students are expected to be on campus for all required courses and any teaching assistantships. In some instances, it is possible to live in Edmonton part-time during the residency stage, such as renting a space for three days per week. Students interested in this option can stay at the UofA's Commuter Study Hostel:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/residence/commuter-study-hostel.html>

Daily commutes from outside of the Edmonton region during the residency period are not feasible for the rigor of a full-time MA program.

### Courses

Students in the Master's program take six [3\*] graduate-level courses. See details in MA Degree Requirements below.

The list of graduate-level 500- and 600-level Native Studies courses is available on-line in the [UofA Course Calendar](#) on [Bear Tracks](#). Note that there is no guarantee that a course can be offered in a particular academic year, as a result of varying faculty availability.

MA students may take up to two [3\*] graduate courses from outside the Faculty. Some possibilities may be found at other institutions through the Western Dean's Agreement, including online options:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/resources/policies-procedures/graduate-program-manual/section-6-program-planning-and-registration/6-8-western-canadian-graduate-deans-agreement-students.html>

Additional courses may be required in some instances, such as when incoming MA students do not have a substantial background in Indigenous Studies.

### *Cross-listed Courses*

Cross-listed courses are graduate (500-level) courses that have the same lectures as a 400-level undergraduate course. They have separate course outlines and separate assessment procedures for the graduate and undergraduate students. Although course content is similar, course workload and performance expectations are higher for graduate students. Examples include additional reading lists, more extensive assignments, more substantial term projects or papers, and more challenging exams.

### *Directed-Reading Courses*

A reading (or individual study) course is available to graduate students as [NS 503](#) and [NS 504](#). If the course has a primary research or data focus, [NS 599](#) may be an option. These courses must be relevant to the student's program and cover material or topics not found in other courses. It is appropriate that these courses form the basis for thesis chapters. In terms of using previously submitted work (from a directed reading or elsewhere), students should carefully consult the [Code of Student Behaviour](#):

"30.3.2(2) d No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere."

The instructor and, where appropriate, the student shall prepare a reading list. Thereafter, the instructor provides the student with a written course outline and syllabus comprised of a title and a description of content, reading list, workload, and grading before the course begins. A copy of the syllabus is placed in the student's file.

The instructor and student meet regularly at scheduled times, at least once every two weeks. At each meeting, the readings and the topic of discussion for the next meeting may be adjusted.

MA students may take up to two [\*3] reading courses for credit in their degree program.

*NOTE: PhD students cannot take a reading course for credit in their degree program.*

### *Upgraded Courses (400-level)*

A 400-level undergraduate course may be taken as part of a [500-level Directed Reading Course](#) provided that:

- Additional reading assignments are set and a separate course outline and syllabus submitted (as per *Directed Reading Courses*, [above](#)).
- Instructor and student meet regularly at scheduled times, at least once every two weeks, outside class hours.

\*\* Registration for directed reading courses and upgraded courses require the agreement and approval of the instructor, and the approval of the supervisor, Associate Dean (Academic) and the Grad Chair. In all cases, students should begin by providing the Grad Chair with a copy of the proposed syllabus. \*\*

\*\* Registration for any cross-listed courses and graduate courses from **outside** of FNS require the approval of the supervisor and the Grad Chair. Approval may also be required by the instructor. \*\*

## MA Thesis Guidelines

### Appointment of the Supervisor:

Every student in a thesis-based program is required to have a supervisor:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13569#appointment-of-the-supervisor>

The Faculty that admits a student to a thesis-based graduate program is responsible for providing supervision within a subject area in which it has competent supervisors, and in which the student has expressed an interest.

Normally there is only one supervisor. Departments may consider the appointment of more than one supervisor for a student.

It is expected that every effort will be made to arrive at a mutually agreeable arrangement for supervision between the student and the department. Students are normally involved in the process for selecting their supervisor(s) although this process varies from program to program.

The authority for the appointment of supervisors rests with the disciplinary Dean. Such appointment decisions are final and non-appealable.

Article 7.02.1 of the Faculty Agreement lists the “supervision of graduate students” as a form of “participation in teaching programs.” It is expected that a department will monitor and review the performance of supervisors.

### Eligibility for Appointment as Supervisor:

Each of the following criteria must be met by at least one of the supervisor(s):

1. be an Employee, Academic Colleague or Professor Emeriti, as outlined in 1. b, c and d of the [UAPPOL GPS Adjunct Academic Appointment and Graduate Student Supervision Policy](#);
2. be active in the general subject area of the student’s research;
3. demonstrate continuing scholarly or creative activity of an original nature; and
4. either hold a degree equivalent to or higher than that for which the student is a candidate, or have a demonstrated record of successfully supervising students for the degree.

If one of conditions (2)-(4) is not satisfied by any of the proposed supervisors, then a departmental justification (with the proposed supervisors’ CV) is put forward to the Dean of the department’s Faculty for approval.

Both the student and supervisor may request a change of supervisor during the program.

### Resolving Conflicts in Supervisor-Student Relationships

The relationship between students and supervisors is normally close and long-lasting. At times, conflicts may arise between a student and the supervisor. In such cases, the first step should be to try to resolve the misunderstanding or conflict informally. This is more likely to be successful if attended to as early as possible. The supervisor and student should discuss the problem together. The supervisor should document the discussions and keep a record of any agreements made. This document should be shared with the student. In the event of a conflict that cannot be resolved, the graduate coordinator should be consulted as early as possible by the parties involved.

It is the responsibility of the graduate coordinator to arrange for consultation and mediation. The graduate coordinator or the parties involved may request advice and/or mediation assistance from their Faculty, GPS, and/or other appropriate services such as the Office of the Student Ombuds. The student and supervisors shall not be required to participate in informal resolution.

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate and the graduate coordinator determines that the supervisor-student relationship is beyond repair, the department will attempt in good faith to work with the student to find alternative supervision within the department and will keep GPS apprised of these efforts.

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.

If the best arrangements of the department and GPS fail to meet the expectations of the student, the student may choose to withdraw without prejudice. If the student refuses to accept the supervision provided, or if no supervision can be secured, then the student is not fulfilling the academic requirement of having a supervisor and may, on academic grounds, be required to withdraw.

### Size and Composition of Examining Committees

Formal examining committees are required for thesis-based master's final examination, doctoral candidacy examinations, and doctoral final examinations. Members of these examining committees perform two functions: 1) they bring knowledge and expertise to the assessment of the thesis, and 2) they ensure that the University's expectations are met regarding the conduct of the examination, adherence to all relevant policies, and the suitability of the thesis for the degree.

The University of Alberta is committed to equity, diversity and inclusivity. To the extent possible, academic units should intentionally constitute examination committees that are diverse and inclusive.

For all examination committees, at least half of the examiners must have a degree equivalent to or higher than the degree being examined.

### Master's Thesis Committee:

There are two options for the MA Thesis committee:

1. Where there is a supervisor only, the examining committee is *the supervisor and two university examiners or one university examiner and one specialized knowledge examiner.*
2. Where there is a supervisory committee, *the examining committee is the ex-officio examiners and one university examiner or one specialized knowledge examiner.*

The Master's thesis Examination Committee must have a minimum of 3 members. In the FNS, the Committee usually consists of 3 members:

- At least one additional arms-length examiner (one of which should normally be from outside the Faculty of Native Studies).

GPS recognizes the following categories of examiners:

1. Ex-officio Examiners
2. University Examiner
3. Specialized Knowledge Examiner
4. External Examiner

Committee = 3 people

Supervisor(s)

FNS Scholars

University  
Examiner

Knowledge  
Keeper

External  
Examiner

See website for definitions and detailed explanations:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13569#categories-of-examiners-and-eligibility>

In consultation between the student and the supervisor and subject to the approval of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, a Supervisory Committee of at least two faculty members from the Faculty of Native Studies shall be named by the Grad Chair. The supervisor is considered one of the faculty members. Even in a situation of co-supervision with another Native Studies faculty member, no further Supervisory Committee members are required.

The FNS faculty members must be one of the following: tenured, tenure-track, or retired University of Alberta faculty member, or Faculty Service Officer, (current or retired categories A1.1, A1.3, or current category C1.1, as defined in the University of Alberta's "Recruitment Policy (Appendix A) Definitions and Categories of Academic Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows, Academic Colleagues and Excluded Academic Staff":

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Procedures/Recruitment-Policy-Appendix-A-Definition-and-Categories-of-Academic-Staff-Administrators-and-Colleagues.pdf>

This committee shall be constituted by the end of the student's second term in the MA program and is responsible for assisting with and examining the student on the student's thesis research. In consultation with the student, if the supervisor and committee see value in a community partner being on the committee, then this partner may be added.

Changes to the membership of the Examining Committee must follow the procedures established by the Dean of the department's Faculty.

### MA Thesis Regulations:

#### *Proposal*

Under the guidance of the MA supervisor, the MA student shall be required to develop a written proposal no later than the *end of May in the first year of their program*. Upon approval of the proposal by the supervisor and the other member(s) of the supervisory committee in writing, the supervisor shall inform the Grad Chair in writing. The lack of submission by deadline is considered as unsatisfactory program performance; it may be referred to GPS for termination of the student's program. The MA proposal length is normally 2,000 words.

Upon approval of the MA proposal by the supervisory committee, the MA student will then be considered an MA candidate.

The thesis proposal shall establish the research problem or knowledge gap, theoretical approach, background literature, community, scientific or other objectives, methods, anticipated outcomes, timeline, and budget. The proposal must also include a 20–30-source reference list (not counted as part of the 2,000 words).

#### *Thesis*

The thesis should demonstrate original research whenever possible (theoretically and/or empirically), and it should include a number of elements, explained below. Please note: though these elements are to be included in the thesis, they need not necessarily be in this format or constitute individual chapters. When creating your *proposal*, consult with your supervisor and supervisory committee on the format that works best for your topic.

## 1. Introduction

- a. sets out your research problem, poses questions and explains how the thesis addresses a gap, builds upon relevant academic literature and is a significant contribution to the discipline of Indigenous Studies (or related body of work). Where relevant, the introduction should also suggest how the work is practically significant (e.g., how will this work contribute to policy, be useful to a community or organization, or address a social, economic or cultural issue of concern in Alberta, Canada, or internationally).
- b. provides a brief “roadmap” for the thesis itself – what are the different chapters, how do they link together and what are you hoping to accomplish with them?

## 2. Literature Review

- a. establishes the theoretical lens, key concepts, and terminology to be used in the research and thesis;
- b. includes a summary and engagement with the relevant literature. The literature review must identify previous research relevant to your research and situate it in the context of that literature. (e.g., are you replicating a previous study in a new area/community or are you adding to the literature by using a new method or theory, or do you critique the literature by identifying previously overlooked issues or perspectives?). Personal experiences can certainly form part of this argument, but they must be supported by relevant debates in the Native Studies literature.
- c. the literature review is meant to: (i.) identify the most important ideas relevant to your thesis, including some of the key debates of the literature you use; (ii.) identify what you seek to critique and/or extend upon; (iii.) demonstrate the practical, community, public or policy context need for the research.

## 3. Methodology

- a. presents your area of theoretical or empirical focus;
- b. establishes the methodological approach using methodological theory, identifies methods used, and defends why these are the most useful and/or appropriate for addressing the research problem/questions posed;
- c. positions your research approach in the context of other work (i.e., how have others researched your topic?);
- d. explains the ethical issues that arise from the research (e.g., builds on the ethics proposal that would have been approved by the Human Ethics process at the University of Alberta and/or any Research Agreements developed with a particular organization or community);

## 4. Results/Analysis

- a. where relevant, presents research findings;
- b. presents an analysis of the research questions posed;

- c. explains how the findings are situated in and how they have contributed to the literature;
- d. explains how the findings or the project itself respond to the practical, community, public, or policy context/need (e.g., through capacity building), and/or how it adds to a debate in Indigenous Studies.

#### 5. Conclusion

- a. summarizes and synthesizes the thesis (i.e., addresses issues raised in the introduction while summarizing your research findings to produce new questions or directions for future research);
- b. discusses limitations of the research.

Wordcount: 25,000–50,000 words.

### GPS Thesis Requirements

Regulations for thesis preparation, requirements, and deadline are available from the GPS: [link](#).

In case of uncertainty about allowed formats of thesis preparation, consult GPS before proceeding.

### MA Thesis and Oral Examination (The Defence)

#### Conflict of Interest for Graduate Student Supervisory and Examination Committees

As with the composition of the supervisory committee, there must be no **conflicts of interest** among any of the parties to the examination. The **Supervisor** ensures that none exist among the Supervisor, Committee Members, the Chair, External Examiner, and the Student. It is a best practice to request examiners and the Chair declare any potential conflicts of interest prior to approval of the examination committee. Where potential conflicts of interest emerge, the matter may be referred to an Associate Dean at GPS for advice on how to best manage unavoidable conflicts of interest.

Conflict of interest in these relationships is defined by the [University of Alberta Code of Conduct Policy](#) & the [University of Alberta Conflict Policy – Conflict of Interest and Commitment and Institutional Conflict](#). Any personal or professional relationships that alter or affect this academic relationship may constitute a conflict of interest.



In the event that a conflict of interest cannot be avoided:

- the conflict must be openly disclosed to the student, in writing, by the department;
- the student must be informed of their right to consent to the committee member or not. The student must also be advised that they can discuss their choices with an Associate Dean, GPS, once the disclosure is made;
- if the student does not consent, it would be the responsibility of the proposed committee member to recuse themselves and the student would have the right to continue working with the original supervisor and a different committee member without suffering any form of negative treatment and/or behaviour (e.g. intimidation, bullying, harassment) as a result of the decision;
- the disclosure of the relationship and consent of the student must be recorded in writing and filed with the department and with GPS;
- the conflict of interest must be disclosed on the annual UofA Conflict of Interest and Commitment form by the parties involved; and
- the student may rescind their consent later in their program if the measures put in place to manage the conflict of interest change or are perceived to no longer be effective. In this case, the student would indicate this change in writing to the department and GPS.
- No changes to committee membership can be made after the final submission of the thesis to the supervisory committee for examination.

FNS policy is, in the case of a conflict of interest, such as that arising from a relationship outside the normal course of university business (e.g., friendship), the policy could be implemented as follows:

1. all parties (student and faculty member) disclose the relationship in writing
2. give the student the option to have a discussion with an GPS Associate Dean
3. the student must consent (or the faculty member must recuse themselves) AND
4. provide written accounts of the disclosure and the consent to both FNS and GPS.

### Scheduling of Thesis Defence:

The selection of and all contact with the External Examiner is handled by the Supervisor. *The student does not make these arrangements.* The thesis is submitted to the supervisor *at least six weeks* before the oral examination. If deemed “ready,” it is forwarded by the Supervisor to the Examining Committee *at least four weeks* before the oral examination. Please note that these are minimum requirements so that committee members have adequate time to read the thesis and prepare for the examination. Students must plan their defence timeline accordingly as these timelines are not flexible.

Students must successfully defend the thesis in an oral examination. Normally the oral exam will take place in the second year. The thesis should demonstrate that the candidate is able to work in a scholarly manner and is acquainted with the principal works on the subject of the thesis. As far as possible, the thesis should be an original contribution to the discipline of Indigenous Studies or related field.

The Master's thesis Examination Committee must have a minimum of 3 members. In the FNS, the Committee usually consists of 3 members:

- the Supervisory Committee (see [Master's Thesis Committee](#) section above)
- at least one additional arms-length examiner (one of which should normally be from outside the Faculty of Native Studies).

Committee = 3 people

Supervisor(s)

FNS Scholars

University  
Examiner

Knowledge  
Keeper

External  
Examiner

The master's thesis examination is normally chaired by a faculty member from within the Faculty who is not a supervisor or co-supervisor of the student. This person will be chosen by Grad Chair.

Persons other than the examiners, such as other graduate students, may attend the oral examination with the permission of the Grad Chair and the chair of the examination committee. Note that:

- Permission must be obtained from the candidate and the chair of the examination.
- The non-examining persons may be present only when the candidate is in the room.
- The non-examining persons may not be present when the examination committee's decision is conveyed to the candidate.

#### Teleconferencing Guidelines for Examinations:

The term 'teleconferencing' is used here generically to include all forms of distance conference facilitation including telephone, video and synchronous electronic communication.

Teleconferencing may be used for any member of an examination committee, the chair, and the student. Examiners participating in examinations by this means are considered to be in attendance.

### Exam Procedure

Given that the Chair's role is to direct the proceedings, complete required forms, and take notes, it is recommended that a member of FNS support staff be asked to attend all examinations in order to operate any technology, such as Zoom or other teleconferencing equipment.

At the start of the examination, the process is explained by the Chair and then the candidate and guests are asked to step out. In their absence, the Chair confirms that the thesis is ready for the exam, and the Supervisor outlines the candidate's academic background, courses taken for the degree, grades, and information relevant to program progress.

The candidate makes a presentation (not more than 20 minutes) of the research results. The order of questioning is established by the chair, but typically the external examiner goes first. One or more rounds of questions take place. The entire defense will normally take no more than two hours, or until all examiners are satisfied that they can make a decision.

A discussion by the committee without the student present follows the questioning. Each committee member states a decision. If all members except one agree, the final decision is that of the majority. If two or more dissenting votes are recorded, the matter is referred to GPS. The chair recalls the candidate and informs them of the decision. This is done with the committee present.

### Decision of the Master's Final Examining Committee:

There are four possible decisions:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13569#thesis-based-masters-program-examination>

1. Pass
2. Pass subject to revisions
3. Adjourned
4. Fail

**Pass:** The defense is satisfactory and no changes are required to the thesis.

**Pass subject to revisions:** The student has satisfactorily defended the thesis but the revisions to the thesis are sufficiently minor that it will not require a reconvening of the examining committee. The FNS shall complete a Thesis Approval/Program Completion form and submit it to the GPS indicating, "pass subject to revisions". *The student must make the changes within six months of the date of the final examination.* These changes should be checked and approved by the committee chair or supervisor, who does not sign until the required changes are satisfactorily completed. Other committee members may also wish to withhold their signature

until they can verify that their required revisions have been made to their satisfaction.

**Adjourned:** An adjourned examination is one that has been officially abandoned. A majority of examiners must agree to an outcome of Adjourned. The final examination should be adjourned in the following situations:

- The revisions to the thesis are sufficiently substantial that it will require further research or experimentation or major reworking of sections, or if the committee is so dissatisfied with the general presentation of the thesis that it will require a reconvening of the examining committee. In such circumstances the committee cannot pass the student, and must adjourn the examination.
- The committee is dissatisfied with the student's oral presentation and defence of the thesis, even if the thesis itself is acceptable with or without minor revisions.
- Compelling, extraordinary circumstances such as a sudden medical emergency taking place during the examination.
- Discovery of possible offences under the Code of Student Behaviour after the examination has started.

A new examination will be held within six months of the initial examination.

**Fail:** If the committee decides that the student has failed the examination, the chair shall provide the reasons for the decision to the FNS. The FNS' recommendation for the student's program will be provided in a report to the Dean of GPS and to the student. GPS may meet with the candidate and with the FNS before making a final decision on the student's status, following the procedures outlined in the calendar.

### Time Limit for Completion

For the thesis-based MA, full- or part-time students must complete all requirements within *four years* of the term in which they first register (either as a candidate or a qualifying student).

In exceptional circumstances, students may be granted an extension upon application. Extensions will only be granted with well-documented reasons that usually involve substantial unforeseen circumstances beyond the student and/or supervisory committee's control. It is rare that commitments outside of the student's program are considered as reasons for a program extension.

While the first extension may be granted by FNS, any subsequent extensions are granted by the Dean of GPS. Students should not count on the granting of extensions to complete their degree, as they are regularly denied by GPS's dean.

Please see Regulations of GPS for full details on GPS's completion requirements:  
<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13568#time-limit-for-completion-of-graduate-programs>

### Thesis Format and Style Requirements

Students must also adhere to GPS requirements for formatting and submission, which are found here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/resources/graduate-students/thesis-preparation.html>

FNS recommends that students use the most recent version of the Chicago Manual of Style as this is the standard style used in the discipline of Indigenous Studies. See UofA library system for citation and reference management:  
<https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/citing/chicago>

## Doctoral Program (PhD)

### Purpose of the PhD

A PhD is a research-intensive degree intended to produce expertise in a given research area. It is a terminal degree initially intended to train future academics, but an increasing number of PhDs occupy a number of diverse professions, both inside and outside of the academy. The end result of a PhD is a dissertation, an original contribution of knowledge to the candidate's chosen field.

### Degree Requirements

All PhD students are required to complete three [3\*] courses, in most cases during the first term of their program. These courses will provide students with tools for advanced critical thinking, researching and writing skills; contemporary theory and methodology; as well as a basis for understanding the professional elements of the discipline of Indigenous Studies. Students will complete a comprehensive exam and candidacy proposal which demonstrates knowledge and skills in the discipline required to carry out work on the dissertation. Finally, students will write a dissertation that is theoretically and empirically rigorous and demonstrates the student's ability to carry out original and independent research. The dissertation will be orally defended by an examining committee, in accordance with GPS regulations.

### Three-year Degree Program Structure

The PhD program is a three-year program, which is accelerated in comparison with most PhD programs in North America. Students must be cognizant of this condensed nature, ensuring they meet all benchmarks in a timely manner.

The first year is divided into two sections:

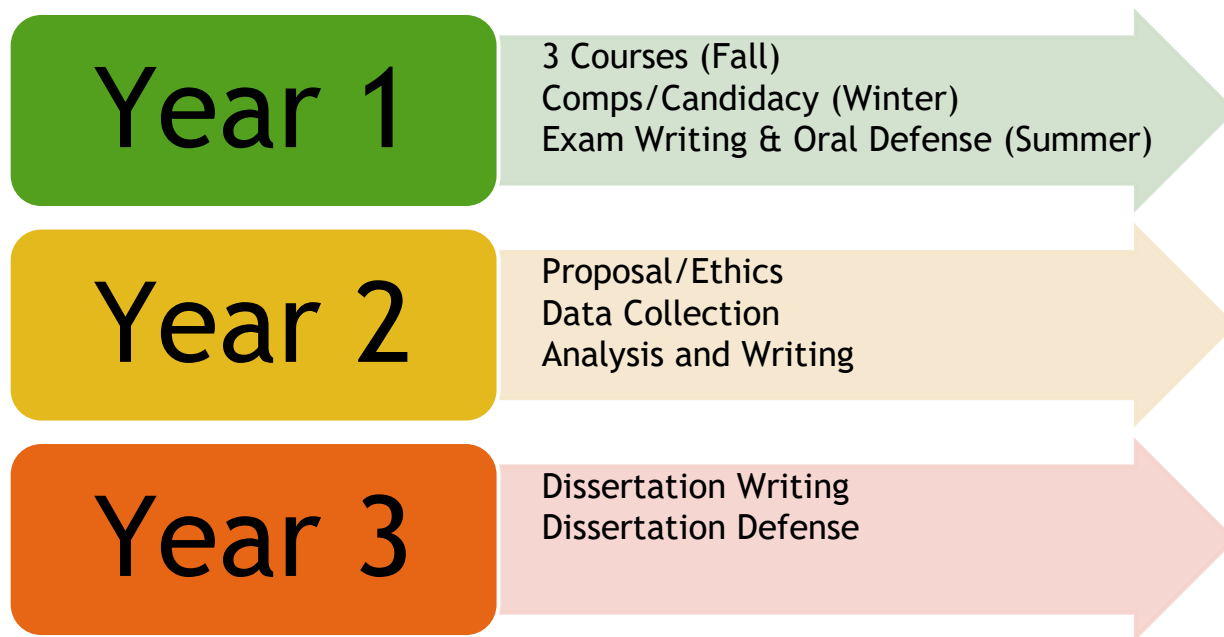
1. Fall Term: students will take three [3\*] courses (as well as any other courses that may be required in the student's letter of offer);
2. Winter Term: students will complete their comprehensive reading and submit their written exam and candidacy proposal by spring, with an oral defence date in May or June.

Upon advancing to candidacy, students will complete their ethics review (if needed), and begin primary and secondary research.

In the third year, candidates will complete their research, with the goal of having a completed dissertation and defence date by the end of year 3 (likely in June).

While these benchmarks are important to meet in order to stay on track, we also recognize that students have other responsibilities outside of their studies and so these timeframes may be adjusted to meet personal circumstances. However, it is also easy

for students to get off-track and lose momentum, so it is vital that students continue to meet adjusted benchmarks and keep in touch with their supervisory committee in order to ensure timely completion of their degree program.



### Residency Requirement

It is the prerogative of the FNS PhD program that the residency requirement be two academic years: [link](#). An academic year is defined as the eight-month period between September and April. Students are expected to be on campus for all required courses and any teaching assistantships. In some instances, it is possible to live in Edmonton part-time during the residency stage, such as renting a space for three days per week.

Students interested in this option can stay at the UofA's Commuter Study Hostel: [link](#). You can also make alternative arrangements. Daily commutes from outside of the Edmonton region during the residency period are not feasible for the rigor of a full-time PhD program. As such, this will not be considered an adequate option for the residency period.

### Courses

All PhD students are required to complete three [3\*] required courses before completing any other requirement of the degree program. These three courses are: [https://calendar.ualberta.ca/preview\\_program.php?catoid=44&poid=55033](https://calendar.ualberta.ca/preview_program.php?catoid=44&poid=55033)

- NS 620 – Advanced Theoretical Perspectives in Indigenous Studies
- NS 655 – Professional Seminar
- NS 690 – Advanced Research Methods

Students must receive satisfactory grades in each of these courses (see [Academic Standing](#) below) to advance to the comprehensive examination stage of the PhD program. Students cannot substitute these courses although they may take additional courses relevant to their program with approval of their supervisor.

Some PhD students who completed their MA in Native Studies may have taken NS 520 and NS 590 during their MA coursework. If the NS 620/690 course is substantially different from when it was taken at the MA level, students may enroll in the PhD-level course. However, if it involves significant repetition in the readings and/or course activities, students will be required to take a replacement 600-level course that satisfies the relevant requirement. This could be a similar course, such as a methods course offered in a different discipline to replace the NS methods requirement. This course may be from a different academic program or completed as a 600-level reading course with a faculty member in Native Studies. Students in this position should work with the Grad Chair to determine how to meet the coursework requirements.

Additional courses may also be required in some instances, such as when incoming PhD students do not have a substantial background in Indigenous Studies.

### Supervisory Committee Structure

#### Appointment of the Supervisor:

Every student in a thesis-based program is required to have a supervisor: <https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13569#appointment-of-the-supervisor>

The Faculty that admits a student to a thesis-based graduate program is responsible for providing supervision within a subject area in which it has competent supervisors, and in which the student has expressed an interest.

Normally there is only one supervisor. Departments may consider the appointment of more than one supervisor for a student.

It is expected that every effort will be made to arrive at a mutually agreeable arrangement for supervision between the student and the department. Students are normally involved in the process for selecting their supervisor(s) although this process varies from program to program.

The authority for the appointment of supervisors rests with the disciplinary Dean. Such appointment decisions are final and non-appealable.

Article 7.02.1 of the Faculty Agreement lists the “supervision of graduate students” as a form of “participation in teaching programs.” It is expected that a department will monitor and review the performance of supervisors.



### Eligibility for Appointment as Supervisor:

Each of the following criteria must be met by at least one of the supervisor(s):

1. be an Employee, Academic Colleague or Professor Emeriti, as outlined in 1. b, c and d of the [UAPPOL GPS Adjunct Academic Appointment and Graduate Student Supervision Policy](#);
2. be active in the general subject area of the student's research;
3. demonstrate continuing scholarly or creative activity of an original nature; and
4. either hold a degree equivalent to or higher than that for which the student is a candidate, or have a demonstrated record of successfully supervising students for the degree.

If one of conditions (2)-(4) is not satisfied by any of the proposed supervisors, then a departmental justification (with the proposed supervisors' CV) is put forward to the Dean of the department's Faculty for approval.

Both the student and supervisor may request a change of supervisor during the program.

### Resolving Conflicts in Supervisor-Student Relationships

The relationship between students and supervisors is typically close and long-lasting. However, conflicts may occasionally arise. In such cases, the first step should be to try to resolve the misunderstanding or conflict informally, ideally addressing it as early as possible. The supervisor and student should discuss the problem together, and the supervisor should document the discussions, keeping a record of any agreements made. This documentation should be shared with the student. If the conflict cannot be resolved, the graduate coordinator should be consulted as soon as possible by the parties involved.

It is the responsibility of the graduate coordinator to arrange for consultation and mediation. The graduate coordinator or the parties involved may seek advice and/or mediation assistance from their Faculty, GPS, or other appropriate services, such as the Office of the Student Ombuds. The student and supervisors are not required to participate in informal resolution.

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or deemed inappropriate, and the graduate coordinator determines that the supervisor-student relationship is beyond repair, the department will make a good faith effort to find alternative supervision within the department and will keep GPS informed of these efforts.

If the supervisor has been providing funding to the student, the funding should continue for at least 30 days from the date on which the graduate coordinator determines that the supervisor-student relationship is beyond repair.

If the department's and GPS's best efforts do not meet the student's expectations, the student may choose to withdraw without prejudice. If the student refuses to accept the supervision provided, or if no supervision can be secured, then the student is not fulfilling the academic requirement of having a supervisor and may, on academic grounds, be required to withdraw.

### Doctoral Supervisory Committee

Every doctoral student's program shall be under the direction of a supervisory committee approved by the department.

A doctoral supervisory committee must have at least three members, and must include all the supervisors.

The department should ensure that the members of a supervisory committee are sufficiently competent and experienced to serve at the required level. In forming a supervisory committee, the department should consider the rank and experience of the prospective members, their publications and other demonstrations of competence in the subject area or field of specialization, and the prospective members' experience in graduate supervision.

### Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee

GPS recognizes the following categories of examiners:

1. Ex-officio Examiners
2. University Examiner
3. Specialized Knowledge Examiner
4. External Examiner

See website for definitions and detailed explanations:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13569#categories-of-examiners-and-eligibility>

The supervisory committee is composed as follows:

- The minimum size of a doctoral candidacy committee is five examiners. The maximum size is seven examiners.
- Three ex-officio members are the supervisor and the supervisory committee members. Supervisor is from FNS and two ex-officio members can come from within the FNS or the UofA.
- Two arm's length examiners (who have not worked with the student before). Arm's length examiners can be one university examiner or one specialized knowledge examiner. Usually, it is one internal to the UofA, and one from outside of the university.

## Doctoral Committee = 3 people

### Supervisor(s)

FNS Scholars

University of  
Alberta Scholars

Knowledge  
Keeper

External Scholars

### Arm's Length Examiners = 2 people

Internal UofA

External UofA

- At least half of the examiners must hold a doctoral degree.
- At least half the examiners must fulfill the University of Alberta examiner criteria
- The chair is not an examiner, and is drawn from faculty membership in FNS
- The authority to appoint committee members ultimately rests with the Faculty of Native Studies.
- While not required, it is common practice for supervisory committees to have one faculty member from an allied discipline outside of the Faculty of Native Studies.

The supervisor is the chair of the committee. Students may also arrange for co-supervision, in which case the senior co-supervisor will serve as the chair of the committee.

The FNS faculty members must be one of the following: tenured, tenure-track, or retired University of Alberta faculty member, or Faculty Service Officer, (current or retired categories A1.1, A1.3, or current category C1.1, as defined in the University of Alberta's "Recruitment Policy (Appendix A) Definitions and Categories of Academic Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows, Academic Colleagues and Excluded Academic Staff":

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Procedures/Recruitment-Policy-Appendix-A-Definition-and-Categories-of-Academic-Staff-Administrators-and-Colleagues.pdf>

This committee shall be constituted by the end of the student's second term in the PhD program. In consultation with the student, if the supervisor and committee see value in a community partner being on the committee, then this partner may be added.

Changes to the membership of the Examining Committee must follow the procedures established by the Dean of the department's Faculty.

The supervisor is responsible for ensuring committee meetings are held and making arrangements for these meetings. The committee shall have a formal regular meeting with the student at least once a year to conduct an annual review of the student's degree progress. The supervisor shall make records of meetings to be kept by the Grad Chair and inform the Grad Chair if students (who are not on an approved leave) fail to respond to requests to schedule a committee meeting.

### Conflict of Interest for Graduate Student Supervisory and Examination Committees

Given that the Chair's role is to direct the proceedings, complete required forms, and take notes, it is recommended that a member of FNS support staff be asked to attend all examinations in order to operate any technology, such as Zoom or other telecommunications equipment.

As with the composition of the supervisory committee, there must be no conflicts of interest among any of the parties. The **Supervisor** ensures that none exist among the Supervisor, Committee Members, the Chair, External Examiners, and the Student. "It is a best practice to request examiners and the Chair declare any potential conflicts of interest prior to approval of the examination committee. Where potential conflicts of interest emerge, the matter may be referred to an Associate Dean at GPS for advice on how to best manage unavoidable conflicts of interest."

Conflict of interest in these relationships is defined by the [University of Alberta Code of Conduct Policy](#) & the [University of Alberta Conflict Policy – Conflict of Interest and Commitment and Institutional Conflict](#). Any personal or professional relationships that alter or affect this academic relationship may constitute a conflict of interest.

In the event that a conflict of interest cannot be avoided:

- the conflict must be openly disclosed to the student, in writing, by the department;
- the student must be informed of their right to consent to the committee member or not. The student must also be advised that they can discuss their choices with an Associate Dean, GPS, once the disclosure is made;
- if the student does not consent, it would be the responsibility of the proposed committee member to recuse themselves and the student would have the right to continue working with the original supervisor and a different committee member without suffering any form of negative treatment and/or behaviour (e.g., intimidation, bullying, harassment) as a result of the decision;
- the disclosure of the relationship and consent of the student must be recorded in writing and filed with the department and with GPS;
- the conflict of interest must be disclosed on the annual UofA Conflict of Interest and Commitment form by the parties involved; and

- the student may rescind their consent later in their program if the measures put in place to manage the conflict of interest change or are perceived to no longer be effective. In this case, the student would indicate this change in writing to the department and GPS.
- No changes to committee membership can be made after the final submission of the thesis to the supervisory committee for examination.

FNS policy is, in the case of a conflict of interest, such as that arising from a relationship outside the normal course of university business (e.g., friendship), the policy could be implemented as follows:

1. all parties (student and faculty member) disclose the relationship in writing
2. give the student the option to have a discussion with an GPS Associate Dean
3. the student must consent (or the faculty member must recuse themselves) AND
4. provide written accounts of the disclosure and the consent to both FNS and GPS.

### PhD Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy Proposal Procedures

#### Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy Proposal Reading and Writing

Starting in the Winter term, after completing their coursework, students are required to read, write, and defend both a comprehensive exam and a candidacy proposal. This unified exam process involves engaging with four reading lists and preparing two written documents, which will be evaluated during a single four-hour examination. Successful completion of both the written and oral components will advance the student to candidacy, equipping them with a robust intellectual foundation in Indigenous studies.

This new process includes the following components:

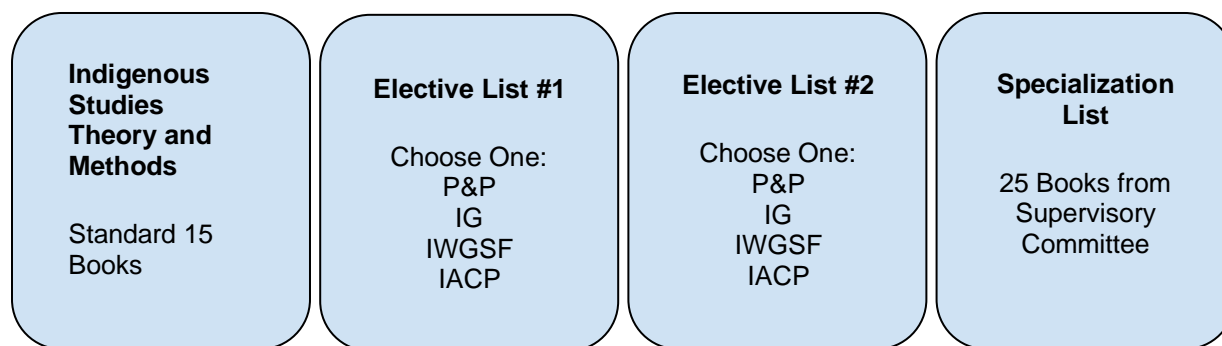
1. A comprehensive exam.
2. A candidacy proposal.
3. An oral defense of the comprehensive exam and candidacy proposal, conducted in one four-hour oral assessment.



For the comprehensive exam and candidacy proposal, students must work with the following reading lists:

1. **Critical Indigenous Theory (core list)**: This standardized list is developed by FNS faculty and currently includes 15 books.

- 2. Elective Lists:** Students choose two lists from the following standardized options:
- Indigenous Governance
  - Indigenous Peoples and Place (with emphasis on the Prairies)
  - Indigenous Women: Gender, Sexuality, and Feminisms
  - Indigenous Arts and Creative Practices List (*This list is still in development—TBD*)
- 3. Specialization List:** This list is tailored to the student's specific field and is developed by the student's committee to provide essential background knowledge for candidacy proposal.



At this time, students will also consult with their supervisors and ex-officio committee members to select their two elective lists and specialization list.

### Reviewing the Literature:

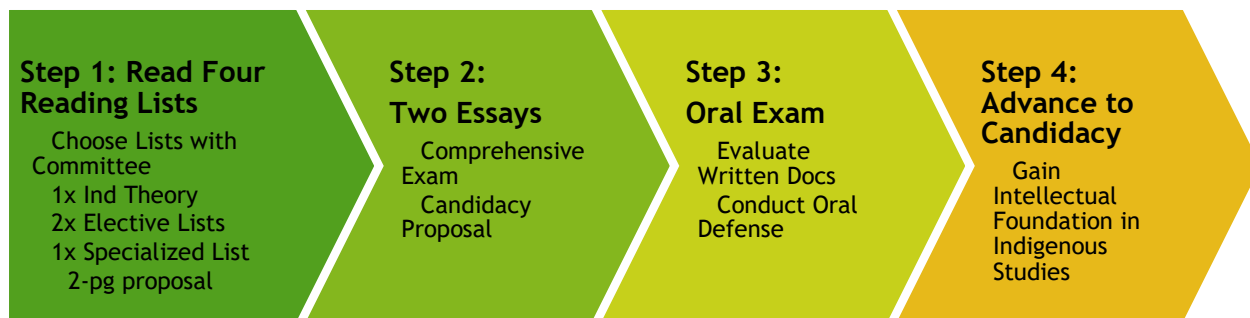
- 1. Critical Indigenous Theory List + Two Elective Lists:** Students are required to read the Indigenous Studies Theory and Methods List and select two Elective Lists. Each list has been developed by FNS faculty committees, with each subject area led by a GSAC member. Please see above for the exact number of items for each list.
- 2. Specialization List:** This list is specific to the student's dissertation and is crafted by the supervisory committee. It will be assigned to the student during the first month of the term following the completion of their coursework (i.e., the beginning of the Winter semester). This process involves the supervisor and/or committee consulting with the student to ensure alignment with the direction of their dissertation. Furthermore, the student must provide a two-page description of their dissertation vision to help refine the reading list. Ultimately, this list will include 25 books, with four articles or book chapters considered equivalent to one book (i.e., 1 book = 4 articles/chapters).

### Preparing for your Examination:

1. **Comps Exam Question(s):** You will be assigned comprehensive exam questions by the ADGS that encompass the Critical Indigenous Theory list and the two elective lists. In consultation with your committee, you can choose the questions that match your chosen readings lists. The student is expected to address these in a 12,000-word written essay. This task requires the student to develop a comprehensive understanding of the literature and articulate a well-supported position, demonstrating a sophisticated grasp of the readings from all three lists. Because this is an examination, the supervisor and committee can provide advice but are not permitted to proofread the text. This ensures that the work remains independent.
2. **Candidacy Proposal:** The candidacy proposal should be developed using the literature outlined in the comprehensive exam, which includes the Critical Indigenous Theory List and the two elective lists, along with the specialization list specific to the candidacy. The student must write a 12,000-word proposal.

**Overall Reading:** Students will engage with a total of 70–75 books, considering the equivalency of articles and book chapters.

### Comprehensive Exam & Proposal Process



This flow chart outlines the steps for advancing to candidacy in the Indigenous Studies PhD program. Students first read four lists to prepare, then write a Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy Proposal. These documents are evaluated during a four-hour exam that includes an oral defense. Successful completion allows students to advance to candidacy, strengthening their foundation in Indigenous Studies.

### Proposed Exam Process

As mentioned above, students are required to complete two written documents before their oral examination. The comprehensive exam consists of a 12,000-word response to a question or questions assigned by the student's supervisory committee. The

candidacy stage requires the student to submit a 12,000-word dissertation proposal. The comprehensive must reflect the Critical Indigenous Theory List + Two Elective Lists. While the candidacy proposal must reflect the Specialization List as well as relevant materials from the comprehensive exam lists. Successful submissions will demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the readings and their interrelation, as well as their connection to the student's dissertation research.

Once the supervisor determines that the student's written work is ready for the oral exam, the supervisor will inform the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (ADGS) and nominate two arm's-length examiners, consistent with GPS candidacy exam policies. The ADGS will appoint a chair to oversee the oral defense, and schedule the exam date. This date must be at least one month after the entire examining committee has received the written work.

(Refer to the above section "[Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee](#)" for more information.)

### Summary of Structure:

- 1. Comprehensive Exam (written):** 12,000 words
  - a. Respond to one question (or a series of questions) developed by the student's supervisory committee.
  - b. The questions are drawn from three lists: one Critical Indigenous Theory list and two elective lists.
  
- 2. Candidacy Proposal (written):** 12,000 words
  - a. A two-page summary of the thesis proposal is required beforehand to assist the supervisory committee in developing the Specialization List.
  - b. This is a dissertation proposal that includes a literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, and research plan.
  - c. Literature should be utilized from four lists: a Specialization List focused on the student's topic as well as the Critical Indigenous Theory list and two elective lists.
  
- 3. Oral Defense (oral):** Four-hour exam in one sitting
  - a. **Approval:** Prior approval from the supervisor is required to proceed to the exam and candidacy.
  - b. The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (ADGS) appoints a chair for the exam.
  - c. The committee follows the Calendar Policy for Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committees, identifies external examiners, and selects a date and time suitable for both the exam committee and the student.
  - d. The oral exam must be conducted at least one month after the examination committee receives the written exam materials.



**Comprehensive Examination:** Two hours

- The results of this exam determine whether the student can move on to candidacy.

**Candidacy Examination:** Two hours

- The results of this exam determine whether the student can move from doctoral student to doctoral candidate.

**Scheduling of Oral Defence:**

The selection of the External Examiner and all related contact is handled by the Supervisor. The student is not involved in these arrangements. Both the exam and the proposal must be submitted four weeks before the comprehensive/candidacy exam. Please note that these are minimum requirements to ensure that committee members have adequate time to read the exam/proposal and prepare for the oral defense. Students must plan their defense timeline accordingly, as these timelines are not flexible.

**Teleconferencing Guidelines for Examinations:**

The term "teleconferencing" is used here generically to include all forms of distance conference facilitation, including telephone, video, and synchronous electronic communication.

Teleconferencing may be used for any member of an examination committee, the chair, and the student. Examiners participating in examinations by this means are considered to be in attendance.

**Procedure for the Oral Examination**

Given that the Chair's role is to direct the proceedings, complete required forms, and take notes, it is recommended that a member of the FNS support staff be asked to attend all examinations to operate any technology, such as Zoom or other teleconferencing equipment.

At the start of the examination, the process is explained and the order of questioning is established by the Chair. Examiners should agree to follow the order of the four questions provided to the student as closely as possible. One or more rounds of questions take place. The entire exam will normally take about two hours or end when all examiners are able to make a decision about the examination's outcome. Students may bring their written exam but may not bring any other notes or materials.

A discussion by the committee, without the student present, follows the questioning. Each committee member states their decision. If all members except one agree, the final decision is that of the majority. If two or more dissenting votes are recorded, the

matter is referred to the Grad Chair. The Chair then recalls the student and informs them of the decision with the committee present.

#### Decision of the Comprehensive Exam Committee:

There are four possible decisions:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13569#doctoral-candidacy-examination>

1. Pass
2. Pass subject to revisions
3. Adjourned
4. Fail

**Pass:** All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Pass.

**Pass with Conditions:** A Pass with Conditions is appropriate when the student satisfied the committee in all but a very discrete area of deficiency that can be addressed through a reasonable requirement (e.g., minor re-write of section, including unaddressed material or issues).

**Adjourned:** An adjourned examination is one that has been officially abandoned. A majority of examiners must agree to an outcome of Adjourned. The final examination should be adjourned in the following situations:

- The revisions to the examination are sufficiently substantial that it will require further research or experimentation or major reworking of sections, or if the committee is so dissatisfied with the general presentation of the examination that it will require a reconvening of the examining committee. In such circumstances the committee cannot pass the student, and must adjourn the examination.
- The committee is dissatisfied with the student's oral presentation and defence of the thesis, even if the thesis itself is acceptable with or without minor revisions.
- Compelling, extraordinary circumstances such as a sudden medical emergency taking place during the examination.
- Discovery of possible offences under the Code of Student Behaviour after the examination has started.

A new examination will be held within six months of the initial examination.

**Fail:** If the committee decides that the student has failed the examination, the chair shall provide the reasons for the decision to the Grad Chair. Students will have an opportunity for one rewrite of the written exam, or an oral re-examination as appropriate. A second failure will result in the termination of the doctoral program.

**NOTE:** If it the decision is to adjourn or fail, the student cannot continue on to the candidacy proposal oral defense. This exam will be held within six months of the initial examination.

### Candidacy Examination Procedure

Where *comprehensive examinations* determine whether the student has adequate knowledge of the discipline and subject matter relevant to their dissertation topic, the *candidacy examination* determines whether the student has the knowledge and ability to complete original research at an advanced level. Upon completion of the candidacy exam, PhD students will become PhD candidates and will begin their dissertation research.

See section "[Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy Proposal Reading and Writing](#)" for more information on candidacy list and instructions. The candidacy will require the student to submit a 12,000-word dissertation proposal. And remember, both the exam and the proposal must be submitted three weeks prior to the comprehensive/candidacy exam.

\*\* See section "[Doctoral Candidacy Examination Committee](#)" above for same information. \*\*

The Comprehensive Examinations Committee and Candidacy Examination Committee will typically have the same membership with the composition as follows:

- The minimum size of a doctoral candidacy committee is five examiners. The maximum size is seven examiners.
- Three ex-officio members are the supervisor and the supervisory committee members. Supervisor is from FNS and two ex-officio members can come from within the FNS or the UofA.
- Two arm's length examiners (who have not worked with the student before). Arm's length examiners can be one university examiner or one specialized knowledge examiner. Usually, it is one internal to the UofA, and one from of the university.
- At least half of the examiners must hold a doctoral degree.
- At least half the examiners must fulfill the University of Alberta examiner criteria
- The chair is not an examiner, and is drawn from faculty membership in FNS
- The authority to appoint committee members ultimately rests with the Faculty of Native Studies.
- While not required, it is common practice for supervisory committees to have one faculty member from an allied discipline outside of the Faculty of Native Studies.

### Decision for the Candidacy Examination

The candidacy oral defense follows the comprehensive exam. First, the process is explained and the order of questioning is established by the chair. One or more rounds of questions take place. The duration will take approximately 2 hours.

Upon completion of each exam, the committee will discuss the student's performance without the student present. Each committee member states a decision. If all members except one agree, the final decision is that of the majority. If two or more dissenting votes are recorded, the matter is referred to GPS. The chair recalls the student and informs them of the decision. This is done with the committee present. If the student does not pass the comprehensive exam, the candidacy exam will not take place.

There are five possible outcomes for the candidacy exam:

- Adjourned
- Pass
- Conditional pass
- Fail and repeat the candidacy
- Fail with a recommendation to terminate the doctoral program or for a change of category to a master's program.

If the Examining Committee fails to reach a decision, the department will refer the matter to the Dean, GPS, who will determine an appropriate course of action.

**Adjourned:** A majority of examiners must agree to an outcome of Adjourned. The candidacy examination should be adjourned in the event of compelling, extraordinary circumstances such as a sudden medical emergency taking place during the examination or possible offences under the Code of Student Behaviour after the examination has started.

**Pass:** All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Pass. If the student passes the candidacy examination, the department should complete the Report of Completion of Candidacy Examination form and submit it to the GPS.

**Pass with Conditions:** A Pass with Conditions is appropriate when the student has satisfied the committee in all but a very discrete area of deficiency that can be addressed through a reasonable requirement (e.g., coursework, literature review, upgrading of writing skills). Reworking of the entire candidacy proposal is not an acceptable condition and the examiners should consider the options available for a student that has failed the examination.

A majority of examiners must agree to an outcome of Pass with Conditions. If the candidacy examining committee agrees to a conditional pass for the student, the chair of the examining committee will provide in writing within five working days to the Dean, GPS, the Grad Chair and the student:

- the reasons for this recommendation,

- the details of the conditions,
- the timeframe for the student to meet the conditions, which should be no less than six weeks and no more than six months.
- the approval mechanism for meeting the conditions (e.g., approval of the committee chair or supervisor, or approval of the entire committee, or select members of the committee), and
- the supervision and assistance the student can expect to receive from committee members

Conditions are subject to final approval by the Dean, GPS. At the deadline specified for meeting the conditions, two outcomes are possible:

- All the conditions have been met. In this case, the department will complete the Report of Completion of Candidacy Examination form and submit it to the GPS; or
- If the conditions are not met by the deadline, the outcome of the examination is a fail and the committee must be reconvened to make the recommendation as described in the following section.

**Fail:** All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Fail.

The options available to the examining committee when the outcome of a student's candidacy exam is "Fail" are:

- **Repeat the Candidacy:** Repeating the Candidacy is not an option after a second failed examination. A majority of examiners must agree to an outcome of Fail and Repeat the Candidacy. If the student's first candidacy exam performance was inadequate but the student's performance and work completed to date indicate that the student has the potential to perform at the doctoral level, the examining committee should consider the possibility of recommending that the student be given an opportunity to repeat the candidacy exam. Normally, the composition of the examining committee does not change for the repeat candidacy exam. If the recommendation of a repeat candidacy is formulated by the examining committee and approved by the GPS, the student and graduate coordinator are to be notified in writing of the student's exam deficiencies by the chair of the examining committee. The second candidacy exam is to be scheduled no later than six months from the date of the first candidacy. In the event that the student fails the second candidacy, the examining committee shall recommend one of the following two options to the department:
- **Change of Category to a Master's Program:** All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Fail and Change of Category to a Master's Program. This outcome should be considered if the student's candidacy examination performance was inadequate and the student's

performance and work completed to date indicates that the student has the potential to complete a master's, but not a doctoral, program; or

- **Termination of the Doctoral Program:** All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Fail and Terminate the Doctoral Program. If the student's performance was inadequate, and the work completed during the program is considered inadequate, then the examining committee should recommend termination of the student's program.

If the candidacy examining committee agrees that the student has failed, the committee chair will provide the reasons and the recommendation for the student's program to the department. The Grad Chair will then provide this report, together with the department's recommendation for the student's program, to the Dean, GPS, and to the student.

For failed candidacy examinations, an Associate Dean at GPS, normally arranges to meet with the student (and others as required) before acting upon any department recommendation.

## PhD Dissertation and Oral Examination (The Defence)

### Expectations:

Upon the completion of the candidacy exam, the PhD student “advances to candidacy” and is now known as a PhD Candidate. This phase of the degree is often referred to as ABD, or “all but dissertation,” because after advancing to candidacy the primary task of the doctoral candidate is researching and writing the dissertation. This phase of the PhD is probably the most challenging as from here on out, the PhD candidate is expected to structure their own work schedule and ensure regular and timely progress, with the support of their supervisory committee. Self-discipline and consistency are the keys to success after candidacy is achieved.

The doctoral dissertation should be between 75,000–80,000 words and must constitute an original theoretical and/or empirical contribution to the candidate's field of study. In other words, a successful dissertation results in the creation of new knowledge. Dissertations should have all of the elements listed below. However, it is recommended that dissertation chapters are not organized along these lines, but rather that the results/empirical section involve more than one chapter and that many of the other components are included in a single chapter. Each dissertation is different, but the bulk of the writing should focus on the candidate's argument and contribution, while also showing engagement with the relevant literature in the candidate's field. In other words, the description below is a checklist of requirements, not a draft dissertation structure.

## Dissertation Structure

See GPS Minimum Formatting Requirements for Dissertation:

[https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/media-library/current-students/requirements\\_chapter\\_paper\\_based\\_theses\\_final.pdf](https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/media-library/current-students/requirements_chapter_paper_based_theses_final.pdf)

### 1. Introduction

- a. sets out your research problem, poses questions and explains how the thesis addresses a gap, builds upon relevant academic literature and is a significant contribution to the discipline of Native Studies (or related body of work). Where relevant, the introduction should also suggest how the work is practically significant (e.g., how will this work contribute to policy, be useful to a community or organization, or address a social, economic or cultural issue of concern in Alberta, Canada or internationally).
- b. provides a brief “roadmap” for the thesis itself – what are the different chapters, how do they link together and what are you hoping to accomplish with them?

### 2. Literature Review

- a. establishes the theoretical lens, key concepts, and terminology to be used in the research and thesis;
- b. includes a summary and engagement with the foundational literature in the chosen field. The literature review must identify previous research relevant to your research and situate it in the context of that literature (e.g., are you replicating a previous study in a new area/community or are you adding to the literature by using a new method or theory, or do you critique the literature by identifying previously overlooked issues or perspectives?). Personal experiences can certainly form part of this argument, but they must be supported by relevant debates in the Native Studies literature.
- c. the literature review is meant to: i. identify the most important ideas relevant to your thesis, including some of the key debates of the literature you use; ii. identify what you seek to critique and/or extend upon; iii. demonstrate the practical, community, public or policy context (i.e., need) for the research.

### 3. Methodology

- a. presents research setting or area of theoretical or empirical focus;
- b. establishes the methodological approach (i.e., methodological theory), methods to be used and defends why these are the most useful and/or appropriate for addressing the research problem and questions posed;
- c. positions your research approach in the context of other work (i.e., how have others researched your topic);
- d. explains the ethical issues that arise from the research (e.g., builds on the ethics proposal that would have been approved by the Human Ethics

process at the University of Alberta and/or any Research Agreements developed with a particular organization or community);

#### 4. Results/Analysis

This is the main component of the dissertation, and should be the largest section, spread over more than one chapter. These chapters:

- a. present research findings;
- b. present an analysis of the research questions posed;
- c. explain how the findings are situated in and how they have contributed to the literature;
- d. explain how the findings or the project itself respond to the practical, community, public, or policy context need (e.g. through capacity building) and/or how it adds to a Native Studies debate.

#### 5. Conclusion

- a. summarizes and synthesizes the thesis (i.e., addresses issues raised in the introduction while summarizing your research findings to produce new questions or directions for future research);
- b. discusses limitations of the research.

### Dissertation Format and Style Requirements

Students must also adhere to GPS requirements for formatting and submission, which are found here: [link](#).

FNS recommends that students use the most recent version of the Chicago Manual of Style as this is the standard style used in the discipline of Indigenous Studies. See UofA library system for citation and reference management:

<https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/citing/chicago>

### Getting a Dissertation Ready for Defence<sup>1</sup>

A completed dissertation draft is a major accomplishment, but there is still a significant amount of work and revision to be done between completing a dissertation draft and a successful dissertation defence. This process usually takes about six months from a first full draft to defence, so students should plan accordingly. Please note that a defence date cannot be rushed to avoid fee deadlines or other important career milestones as this process is intended to ensure the integrity of the process. Students must budget ample time so that dissertations are completed properly and meet the Faculty's and the University's high standards.

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<sup>1</sup> FNS would like to thank the Department of Political Science for allowing us to paraphrase this section from their guide.



While supervisors regularly provided chapter-by-chapter revisions, upon the completion of a first full draft, students should forward this document to their supervisor, who will assist in the revision of this draft before it is shared with the rest of the supervisory committee. This may involve revisions and additional writing/editing. *This usually takes about two months.*

Once the supervisor is satisfied the dissertation is ready to be forwarded to the supervisory committee, the student sends the revised draft to the remaining supervisory committee members, to provide feedback and revisions. These revisions are typically different than the supervisor's, as committees typically have numerous specialists who can focus on different elements of the dissertation. Upon satisfactory completion, the committee will agree that the dissertation is ready for defence. *This can take another two months.*

In consultation with the student, the Committee and the grad chair, the supervisor will recruit two arms-length examiners (one internal to the UofA, and one from of the university). The external examiners are:

- Recognized authorities in the specific field of research;
- Experienced in evaluating doctoral work; and
- In a position to review the thesis objectively and to provide a critical analysis of the work and the presentation.

This involves identifying experts in the doctoral candidate's research area, getting them to agree to sit on the examining committee, and having them approved by GPS. *This can take another month.* The selection of and all contact with the External Examiner(s) is handled by the Supervisor.

With the complete committee now identified, a defence date can be assigned, but must be at least four weeks after the full committee (with external examiners) receives the completed dissertation for review. *That's one more month until defence.*

**NOTE:** Dissertation defences always take longer to organize than many students think, so it is vital that students plan ahead, allocate enough time to revise their dissertation draft to their committee's satisfaction, and ensure timely responses to requests from the Faculty.

### Oral Examination (Dissertation Defence)

The dissertation defence (formally the Oral Examination) is the final component of the doctoral degree. Upon its successful completion the candidate will have their degree conferred at the next convocation. It will also mark a transition from student to academic peer.

The dissertation defence is meant to be a collegial examination of the scholarly merits of the original research conducted during the doctoral program. It is expected that

students defend the intellectual decisions made during their research and further examine the content of their project.

The Dissertation Examination Committee is the same as the comps/candidacy committee (see [above](#)) will typically have the same membership with the composition as follows:

- The minimum size of a doctoral candidacy committee is five examiners. The maximum size is seven examiners.
- Three ex-officio members are the supervisor and the supervisory committee members. Supervisor is from FNS and two ex-officio members can come from within the FNS or the UofA.
- Two arm's length examiners (who have not worked with the student before). Arm's length examiners can be one university examiner or one specialized knowledge examiner. Usually, it is one internal to the UofA, and one from of the university.
- At least half of the examiners must hold a doctoral degree.
- At least half the examiners must fulfill the University of Alberta examiner criteria
- The chair is not an examiner, and is drawn from faculty membership in FNS
- The authority to appoint committee members ultimately rests with the Faculty of Native Studies.
- While not required, it is common practice for supervisory committees to have one faculty member from an allied discipline outside of the Faculty of Native Studies.

## Doctoral Committee = 3 people

### Supervisor(s)

FNS Scholars

University of  
Alberta Scholars

Knowledge  
Keeper

External Scholars

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### Arm's Length Examiners = 2 people

Internal UofA

External UofA

The examining committee will conduct a final examination, based primarily on the thesis.

The graduate coordinator should ensure that the chair of the examining committee, the student, and all examiners have a final copy of the thesis at the examination.

The student should make a twenty-minute presentation on their dissertation. Most examination time should be allotted to the arm's length examiners, including the External Examiner, while the least time is allocated to the supervisor(s).

No final decision should be made without each examiner having given an opinion.

### Decision of the Doctoral Final Examining Committee:

The decision of the examining committee will be based both on the content of the thesis and on the student's ability to defend it. The final examination may result in one of the following outcomes:

- Adjourned
- Pass
- Pass subject to revisions
- Fail

There is no provision for a final examination to be "passed subject to major revisions".

If the Examining Committee fails to reach a decision, the department will refer the matter to the Dean, GPS, who will determine an appropriate course of action.

**Adjourned:** An adjourned examination is one that has been abandoned officially. A majority of examiners must agree to an outcome of Adjourned. The final examination should be adjourned in the following situations:

- The revisions to the thesis are sufficiently substantial that it will require further research or experimentation or major reworking of sections, or if the committee is so dissatisfied with the general presentation of the thesis that it will require a reconvening of the examining committee. In such circumstances the committee cannot pass the student, and must adjourn the examination.
- The committee is dissatisfied with the student's oral presentation and defence of the thesis, even if the thesis itself is acceptable with or without minor revisions.
- Compelling, extraordinary circumstances such as a sudden medical emergency taking place during the examination.
- Discovery of possible offences under the Code of Student Behaviour after the examination has started.

If the examination is adjourned, the committee should:

- Specify in writing to the student, with as much precision as possible, the nature of the deficiencies and, in the case of revisions to the thesis, the extent of the revisions required. Where the oral defence is unsatisfactory, it may be necessary to arrange some discussion periods with the student prior to reconvening the examination.
- Decide upon a date to reconvene. If the date of the reconvened examination depends upon the completion of a research task or a series of discussions, it should be made clear which committee members will decide on the appropriate date to reconvene. The final date set for reconvening shall be no later than six months from the date of the examination. This new examination must be held within six months of the initial examination.
- Make it clear to the student what will be required by way of approval before the examination is reconvened (e.g., approval of the committee chair or supervisor, approval of the entire committee, or of select members of the committee).
- Specify the supervision and assistance the student may expect from the committee members in meeting the necessary revisions.
- Advise the Dean of the department's Faculty following the procedures established for this purpose.
- Advise GPS in writing of the adjournment and the conditions.
- When the date is set for the adjourned final examination, the department will notify the Dean of the department's Faculty and GPS. Normally a Pro Dean attends the examination.

**Pass:** Pass is the decision given when the only revisions required are typographical or minor editorial changes. All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Pass. If the student passes the examination, the department should submit a completed Thesis Approval/Program Completion form to GPS. If one of the examiners fails the student, that examiner does not have to sign this form.

**Pass Subject to Revisions:** All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Pass Subject to Revisions. The student has satisfactorily defended the thesis but the revisions to the thesis will not require a reconvening of the examining committee. If the examining committee agrees to a "Pass subject to revisions" for the student, the chair of the examining committee must provide in writing, within five working days of the examination, to the student, the graduate coordinator, and GPS:

- the reasons for this outcome,
- the details of the required revisions,
- the approval mechanism for meeting the requirement for revisions (e.g., approval of the examining committee chair or supervisor, or approval of the entire examining committee, or select members of the committee), and
- the supervision and assistance the student can expect to receive from committee members.
- A date for the revisions to be resubmitted, as negotiated with the student, but which should be no less than six weeks and no more than six months.

The student must make the revisions within six months of the date of the final examination. Once the required revisions have been made and approved, the department shall submit a completed Thesis Approval/Program Completion form to GPS indicating the committee decision was “pass subject to revisions”. If one of the examiners fails the student that examiner does not have to sign the form. If the required revisions have not been made and approved by the end of the six months deadline, the student will be required to withdraw.

**Fail:** All or all but one of the examiners must agree to an outcome of Fail. If the examination result is a Fail, no member of the examining committee signs the Thesis Approval/Completion form.

When the outcome is a Fail, the committee chair will provide the reasons for this decision to the graduate coordinator. The department will then provide this report, together with its recommendation for the student’s program, to the Dean of the department’s Faculty, GPS, and to the student.

An Associate Dean, GPS will normally arrange to meet with the student and with the graduate coordinator before acting upon any department recommendation that affects the student’s academic standing.

### Time Limit for Completion of the PhD Program

Full-time students must complete their program within six years of the term that they first registered in their PhD program.

In exceptional circumstances, students may be granted an extension upon application. Extensions will only be granted with well-documented reasons that usually involve substantial unforeseen circumstances beyond the student and/or supervisory committee. It is rare that commitments outside of the student’s program are considered as reasons for a program extension.

While the first extension may be granted by FNS, any subsequent extensions are granted by the Dean of GPS. Students should not count on the granting of extensions to complete their degree, as they are regularly denied by GPS’s dean.

Please see “Regulations of the Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies” for full details on GPS’s completion requirements:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13568#time-limit-for-completion-of-graduate-programs>

### Thesis Format and Style Requirements

Students must also adhere to GPS requirements for formatting and submission, which are found here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/resources/graduate-students/thesis-preparation.html>

FNS recommends that students use the most recent version of the Chicago Manual of Style as this is the standard style used in the discipline of Indigenous Studies. See UofA library system for citation and reference management:

<https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/citing/chicago>

## Examination Planning Roles: Quick Guide

### MA Thesis Exam

1. Scheduling with exam committee members, NS-advisor, and GPS
  - a. Supervisor
2. Who appoints the Chair
  - a. ADGS or Grad Chair
3. Appointing arm's length examiner (ultimately rests with Dean)
  - a. Supervisor (in consultation with student, the Committee and ADGS or Grad Chair)

### PhD Comprehensive Exam and Candidacy Proposal

1. Who appoints the Chair
  - a. Grad Chair
    - i. Exam Committee Chair consults with committee and then informs the ADGS or Grad Chair and student whether exam will proceed
2. Scheduling with exam committee members, NS-advisor, and GPS
  - a. ADGS or Grad Chair
3. Appointing Exam Committee members
  - a. ADGS or Grad Chair

### PhD Dissertation Exam

1. Scheduling with exam committee members, NS-advisor, and GPS
  - a. Supervisor
2. Who appoints the Chair
  - a. ADGS or Grad Chair
3. Appointing 2 arm's length examiner (1 external) (ultimately rests with Dean)
  - a. Supervisor (in consultation with student; the Committee and ADGS or Grad Chair)

## General Regulations and Procedures of Graduate Degree Programs

### Academic Standing

Course grades obtained by graduate students are found in the University Calendar:

<https://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=13568#academic-standing>

- GPS Minimum Admission GPA: 3.0
- Minimum academic standing for convocation GPA: 2.7
- Minimum course pass grade: C+ (grade point value 2.3)

A student whose academic performance is unsatisfactory will be Required to Withdraw from graduate study (see Calendar link above). Students may not take re-examinations in any course. Students who obtain a grade lower than the minimum pass (C+) or who fail a course need permission of both the FNS and GPS to retake the course. They may take another course instead, with approval.

### Annual Report

Graduate students are required to state their progress in May every year in a written annual report to the Grad Chair and GPS. Student will be ineligible for consideration for university-administered awards if an annual report is not submitted. Late submissions may be considered with permission of the Grad Chair.

### Grade Appeals

Grade appeals by graduate students are not within the jurisdiction of the GPS, but instead that of the Faculty from which the student took the course (i.e., FNS).

The course instructor first hears student appeals of academic matters. If the matter is not resolved, students contact the Associate Dean (Academic), who may consult the Grad Chair, FNS' Graduate Admissions, Awards and Administration Committee, and the Dean. If the issue cannot be resolved within the FNS, then the student contacts the Associate Dean of GPS. If resolution is not obtained, the appeal may further proceed to the University's Academic Appeals Committee.

### Submission of Theses and Dissertations

Students are responsible for costs of preparing the thesis for examination and final submission. This includes drafting, printing, photography, reproduction, and thesis binding costs. With the approval of your supervisor, your thesis will need to be supplied to all examining committee members *at least four weeks* in advance of your final



examination. For final submission, in addition to providing a copy to GPS, an electronic copy must be sent to the Grad Chair at [nsgrad@ualberta.ca](mailto:nsgrad@ualberta.ca)

For the FNS copy, FNS will pay costs associated with binding.

### Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement

The GPS requires that all graduate students complete the Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/training-events/required-professional-development/ethics.html>

The new Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement consists of two zero-credit, self-paced online courses:

- INT D 710: Ethics and Academic Citizenship (completed by all MA and PhD students)
- INT D 720: Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship (completed by all PhD students).

You can register in these courses through Bear Tracks.

Students admitted prior to September 2021 may complete either this new requirement **or** the Ethics & Academic Citizenship Supplemental (the GET Program + TCPS 2 Core): <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/media-library/professional-development/get-course-supplements.pdf>

### Ethics in Research Involving Human Subjects

Students who conduct research involving human subjects (questionnaire surveys, interviews, sharing circles, etc.) must submit a proposal for review by the Research Ethics Office (REO). Students receive guidance in the process from their supervisor (who is required to review and approve the application before it is routed through the REO). Copies of the application and the decision of the Ethics Committee are kept in the student's file. For more information: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/research/research-support/research-ethics-office/index.html>

### Public Scholarly Lecture

In order to share their knowledge with fellow students, graduate students are encouraged to give at least one scholarly public talk in the FNS during their graduate program. Talks are to be a minimum of 20 minutes in duration. The subject can be in the general area of the student's specialization; i.e., it does not have to be on the results of thesis research.

The talk can take any of the following forms: in-class presentation, poster presentation, FNS-sponsored event (such as Research Day), and conference or other off-campus presentation.

### Professional Development Requirement

All graduate students (MA and PhD) are required to complete a professional development requirement before the completion of their program. Students are required to:

1. Develop an Individual Development Plan (IDP), which will assist students in career planning and skills-development associated with their degree program.
2. Complete **eight** hours of professional development activities connected to the IDP. You are encouraged to select activities that align with your career interests and develop skills not included in your academic program.

More information on the professional development requirement can be found here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/training-events/required-professional-development/eight-hours.html>

Students must complete the PD workbook: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/training-events/required-professional-development/eight-hours.html#tracking>

Evidence for all completed professional development activities must be included with the workbook, before the supervisor can sign off. Once the form and supporting documentation is approved by the supervisor, the student must submit the package to the Graduate Program Advisor for final signatures and to be included in their program file.

## Financial Support and Graduate Assistantships

### Fellowships, Scholarships, and Bursaries

Fellowships, scholarships, and bursaries for full-time graduate students come from national, provincial, university, and other funding sources.

Examples of major awards are:

- SSHRC scholarships (Master's, Doctoral, Canada Graduate Scholarship, etc.)
- Alberta Graduate Excellence Scholarship (AGES) – see GPS:  
<https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/fees-funding/scholarships-awards/alberta-graduate-excellence-scholarship.html>

While GPS will post due dates for these awards, most require FNS appraisal first. Please note that all scholarship applications and award nominations are due to the FNS Graduate Program Advisor *two weeks before the GPS due date, unless otherwise posted by the Grad Chair.*

The Faculty regularly holds SSHRC workshops for the PhD and Master's levels, students are strongly encouraged to attend these workshops before applying for these scholarships. Students who attend have much higher success rates than students who do it alone.

In general, students should consult the following for funding possibilities and consider initiating the process where applicable: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/fees-funding/scholarships-awards/index.html>

A number of specialized University awards are made each year in recognition of achievement in specific research areas or other criteria. The Grad Chair, after input from the Graduate Admissions, Awards and Administration Committee (if appropriate), forwards the nomination to the appropriate university adjudication committee. Students are reminded to provide an Annual Report so that it is possible to link student applications to award criteria. Students may also be asked to submit a short description of their research and life experience to be considered for nomination for competitive scholarships.

For general information on administering awards, see Scholarships and Awards Manual: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/media-library/forms-cabinet/awards/scholarships-awards-manual.pdf>

### Opportunities from First Peoples' House

<a href="#">The Dorothy Leslie Memorial Award</a>	To be awarded annually to a University of Alberta student with satisfactory academic standing who is of Aboriginal descent as defined by the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35(2) or persons accepted by one of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada as a member of their community. Selection will be made on the basis of academic standing.	Open	Graduate/Undergraduate, 2.0+ GPA  Deadline: Annually October 15	1	\$2,700
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<a href="#">The Dr William Morrison MacKay Memorial Award</a>	To be awarded annually to a University of Alberta student who is of Aboriginal descent as defined by the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35(2) or persons accepted by one of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada as a member of their community, on the basis of satisfactory academic standing of at least 2.7 .Financial need and involvement in the Aboriginal community will also be considered.	Open	Graduate/Undergraduate, 2.7+ GPA, financial need, community involvement  Deadline: Annually October 15	1	\$1,000
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<a href="#">The Billy Mills Award</a>	Awarded to students with satisfactory academic standing enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program who are of Aboriginal descent as defined by the Constitution Act, 1982, Sections 35(2) or persons accepted by one of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada as a member of their community; in	Open	Entrance/Graduate/Undergraduate, 70%+/2.0+ GPA, preparing thesis	1	\$1,400
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	preparation of a thesis or major paper.				
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### Research Travel Grant

GPS offer grants to provide graduate students with the opportunity for travel to present their research results or to develop their research. For the application form from GPS, go to: <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/graduate-studies/fees-funding/scholarships-awards/travel-awards.html>

GPS offers as many awards as the annual budget will allow; however, this does not always allow every graduate student to receive funding for travel to present at conferences. It is important that students apply early for their award.

Depending on budgetary considerations, FNS may have funding support available for graduate students to present at a conference, but only to those who have applied for GPS funding first. FNS cannot support conference attendance unless the student is presenting their research.

### Graduate Assistantships: Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Research Assistants (RAs)

#### Purpose of Assistantships

The Faculty of Native Studies has a limited number of teaching assistantships (TAships) and research assistantships (RAships) that will be allocated to students based on skillsets, funding arrangements, and mentorship considerations. To be considered for a graduate assistantship, students must be registered in a graduate program that is paid to carry out teaching or research duties. Usually, assistantships are only available to students who have not passed their expected completion time (MA two years; PhD three years). The purpose of assistantships is:

- To assist the Faculty in its teaching and research responsibilities; and
- To provide training to graduate students through experience in teaching or research.

A teaching assistantship carries teaching-related duties for a 4-month term. The salary amounts are adjusted regularly following contract negotiations with the Graduate Students Association (GSA).

### Duties and Responsibilities of TAships

Teaching duties can include preparation of assignments, marking assignments, and limited lecturing and/or leading class discussion under the supervision of the course instructor.

From the start of term until 5 days after final exams in both terms, assistants remain on campus and assign priority to their assistantship duties unless released by their supervisor. Students are responsible for tracking their hours, and to only work the hours assigned over the course of the term. If students are not able to complete their work assignments within the allotted time they should speak with their RA/TA supervisor. After the examination period, teaching assistants are expected to store appropriately all teaching materials used during the term. Any absence during the teaching term requires the advance approval of the course instructor and the Associate Dean (Academic).

### Criteria for Allocation of Teaching Assistantships

The following criteria guide the allocation of teaching assistantships:

- Academic quality and teaching potential or ability of the student
- Course needs for instructional support
- Appropriate distribution of teaching support among areas within the Faculty
- Satisfactory grades, submission of proposal and Annual Report by deadline
- Previous TA experience and achievement.

### Teaching Evaluations

Teaching performance of graduate students may be evaluated by the class students at the end of the course. Data are confidential. They are reviewed by the Associate Dean (Academic). They may be used in nominations for teaching awards by the Graduate Students Association and the Faculty of Native Studies, and are considered before awarding further teaching assistantship duties.

Reports may also be prepared by course instructors.

When graduate students instruct their own class they may request a teaching evaluation from the Grad Chair and Associate Dean (Academic). TAs may be evaluated by requesting one from the course instructor.

### Duties and Responsibilities of RAships

RAships may be provided by faculty members (from possible research grants) and are granted at their discretion. Ideally, the position will have some pedagogical value due to a connection with the content or methodological orientation of the student's own research. Responsibilities will be established in writing at the start of the position.

These responsibilities will involve research support which can include logistical organizing, research activities, data collection, and secondary literature surveys.

Students are responsible for tracking their hours, and to only work the hours assigned over the course of the term. If students are not able to complete their work assignments within the allotted time they should speak with their RA/TA supervisor.

### Collective Agreement

All TAs and RAs are governed by the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement. Students should familiarize themselves with the collective agreement here:

[link](#)

### University Services

Many opportunities exist for students to contribute to the governance of the university, including organizations like the Graduate Students Association. These provide experiences related to employment possibilities in the higher education and other sectors of the economy.

At the Faculty level, the graduate students are currently forming a student association for a range of purposes. They will be electing a member to sit on the FNS Faculty Council and will be invited to join in other planning activities in order to fully participate in the life of the Faculty.

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