

Department of Surgery Graduate Program Manual

Revised August 2021

WELCOME STUDENTS

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Department of Surgery. I hope that your research will be productive and meaningful to your career. The Graduate Program Office in our department is in place to facilitate the success of all graduate students.

The Department of Surgery has a well-established graduate research program in addition to the clinical training offered through the residency program. These are the Master of Science (MSc), Master of Science (MSc), specialization in Surgical Education, and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs in Surgery.

As the Graduate Program Director, I serve as a liaison between the faculty and the graduate students and to ensure that the students are meeting requirements for completion of their program. We strive to make our graduate program an inclusive environment and respect the diverse views that our members can bring. If you feel you need further assistance or have any questions regarding any aspect of graduate studies, even if it does not directly apply to your studies, please feel free to contact me and I can provide advice if required. Tracey and I can answer most questions and if we cannot, we generally know who to ask.

The Department of Surgery graduate program understands that welcoming and supporting individuals from diverse backgrounds will improve the research and educational experience that we offer. We believe that all individuals can make a contribution to our shared goals and values. We strive to provide an inclusive and supportive environment that does not tolerate discrimination against individuals regardless of their background, race, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity, age, or abilities. We value the input and discussion of views from diverse perspectives and experiences. The Department of Surgery graduate program also understands that adopting mechanisms to address equity, diversity and inclusion is a constantly evolving process that requires constant reflection and readjustment.

Once again, I welcome you, and I wish you best of luck in your research endeavours.

Dr Fred Berry
Graduate Program Director
fberry@ualberta.ca

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1. General Information

The Department of Surgery offers full-time programs leading to the degrees of Master of Science (MSc), Master of Science (MSc), Surgical Education and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Surgery. Each program requires coursework, completion of a research project, the fulfilment of ethics and professional development training, and the successful defense of a written thesis. Research conducted in our Department towards these degrees include:

- Transplantation Sciences
- Diabetes & Islet Transplantation
- Orthopedics – Bone, cartilage, scoliosis
- Oncology – Neurologic, Urologic, Thyroid
- Organ & tissue preservation – Meniscus, Liver, Intestine, Heart, Lung
- Regenerative Sciences - Stem cell biology & Tissue engineering
- Otolaryngology & Reconstructive Sciences
- Minimally Invasive Surgery, Bariatrics
- Surgical Education
- Surgical Simulation
- Immunology, Virology
- Ischemia-reperfusion
- Neonatal physiology
- Thoracic Surgery
- Neurosurgery
- Molecular biology of wound healing

The following are the regulations governing graduate studies in the Department of Surgery at the University of Alberta. Official policy is provided in the [Graduate Program Section](#) of the University Calendar. Additional policy and procedures are set forth by the [Faculty of Graduate Studies Research \(FGSR\)](#). The Department of Surgery has specific regulations that may supersede those of the [FGSR Graduate Program Manual](#).

2. Graduate Program Contacts

Graduate Program Director:

Dr. Fred Berry (he/him; fberry@ualberta.ca)

3002D Li Ka Shing Centre

Graduate Program Administrator:

Tracey Zawalusky (she/her; surggrad@ualberta.ca)

3002 Li Ka Shing Centre

[Department of Surgery:](#)

<https://www.ualberta.ca/surgery>

[Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research \(FGSR\):](#)

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/>

[Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry:](#)

www.ualberta.ca/medicine

[Graduate Students' Association:](#)

www.gsa.ualberta.ca

3. Graduate Program Learning Outcomes

The **MSc in Surgery program** provides students with an understanding of research methods to generate and apply new knowledge to address unanswered questions in the field of surgical research.

Upon completion, students will be able to:

1. Develop a broad understanding of topics of their research field and can integrate this information into their research.
2. Conduct research projects to create new knowledge in the field using a range of advanced research skills and methodologies.
3. Critically evaluate the current literature of their research field.
4. Communicate ideas, issues, and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences through written and verbal means.
5. Understand and apply the principles of research integrity.

The **PhD in Surgery program** provides an advanced level of education for students to develop the skills required to conduct research to generate and apply new knowledge in an independent manner.

Upon completion, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate expertise in the topics of the research field and can integrate this information into their research.
2. Conceptualize, design, and implement research for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the surgical research.
3. Critically evaluate the current literature and make informed judgement on complex issues in their research field.
4. Communicate ideas, issues, and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences through written and verbal means.
5. Understand and apply the principles of research integrity.

Surgical Education specialization provides graduate students an advanced training in surgical education, with a specific focus on how surgeons are trained for their roles as expert practitioners.

Upon completion, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a sound understanding of the field of surgical education, highlighting current debates, controversies and problems.
2. Conduct independent research projects to create new knowledge in the field using a range of advanced research skills and methodologies.
3. Disseminate new knowledge through development and clear communication of a sustained argument.
4. Recognize the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in the field of surgical education.

5. Develop new curriculum and instructional methods for teaching surgery.
6. Develop new tools for assessment and evaluation in surgery.

4. Program Description and Requirements

The minimum requirements to obtain an MSc or a PhD degree in the Department of Surgery are as follows:

| MSc | PhD |
|---|---|
| Minimum of 4 courses (★11) | Minimum of 5 courses (★14) |
| Ethics Training (8 hours) or Completion of FGSR Ethics and Academic Citizenship courses: Master’s students must complete INT D 710: Ethics and Academic Citizenship | Ethics Training (8 hours) or Completion of FGSR Ethics and Academic Citizenship courses: Doctoral students must complete INT D 710: Ethics and Academic Citizenship and INT D 720: Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship] |
| Professional Development (IDP and 8 hours training) | Professional Development (IDP and 8 hours training) |
| Attendance at SURG 600 presentations | Attendance at SURG 600 presentations |
| Documented supervisory committee meetings and progress reports (at least 1x/year) | Documented supervisory committee meetings and progress reports (at least 1x/year) |
| Written thesis | Candidacy Exam |
| Thesis Defence | Written thesis |
| | Thesis Defence |

Time Limits for Completing Programs:

Students are to complete their degree requirements within a set time (see [Calendar](#))

MSc: 2-4 years

PhD: 3-6 years

PhD: All program requirements other than the thesis defense must be completed within *three years* of the commencement of the PhD program.

Good Standing Requirements:

Students must fulfil the above requirements to remain in good standing. Supervisors should also ensure that students are meeting the appropriate program requirements. Those students who are not in good standing, may be ineligible for awards or studentships.

Program Extensions:

In exceptional circumstances, a student who has failed to complete the requirements for the degree within the appropriate period of time specified in the Calendar may be considered for an extension. Requests for extensions will be considered if there are well-documented reasons specific to a particular type of research that precludes completion within the time limit, or if there are sufficient and substantial unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the Student and/or Supervisor which prevent completion of the program within the time limits.

- The first extension to a student's program is granted by the department for a period of up to one year.
- To request a second or subsequent extension, the department must submit a Request for a Program Extension form and accompanying documentation to FGSR. Students whose time limit has been reached are not permitted to register until an extension to the program has been granted.
- Documents required:
 - a summary of the student's progress to date
 - the timetable for completion preferably approved by the Supervisor and/or Supervisory Committee
 - an explanatory letter from the Supervisor
 - an explanatory letter from the student with the expected date of completion
 - written departmental recommendation

A. Coursework

All course work must be approved by the Supervisory Committee and the Director of Graduate Education. Courses can be a combination of graduate-level courses (500-level or higher) offered by the Surgery Department or by other departments. Students intending to register for thesis-relevant undergraduate *courses must justify their course selection with the Director of Graduate Education and their Supervisor.*

Note: Under the Western Deans' Agreement it is possible to register in courses at some other universities without incurring additional fees. Information is available on the [FGSR website](#)

Students are responsible to ensure their continued registration during each term to remain active in the program. For students admitted in Fall 2011 and onwards, Spring and Summer term registration only will occur automatically. After the completion of

coursework, continued registration in a THESIS course is required to remain in the program.

MSc students must complete SURG 530, SURG 600, plus two additional ★3 graded courses relevant to their thesis or research which must be approved by their Supervisory Committee and the Director of Graduate Education. It is encouraged that one of the courses focus on statistics in scientific research or experimental design.

PhD students must complete SURG 530, SURG 600, plus 3 additional ★3 graded courses relevant to their thesis or research. Courses must and must be approved by their Supervisory Committee and the Director of Graduate Education. It is encouraged that one of the courses focus on statistics in scientific research or experimental design.

SURG 530 is a Directed Reading in Biology and Medicine. This course is taken during the student's first year in the program. Students are required to submit an in depth literature review related to their thesis topic including background of the field of study to the current status of the research. The document can serve as the basis of the first chapter of the student's thesis.

MED 650 is a course covering Fundamentals for Clinical Investigators. This is a mandatory course for students enrolled in the CIP specialization program only.

SURG 600 is a seminar series course taken in the student's second year in the program. This course runs over 2 terms. In the fall terms the students will develop effective scientific communication skills including abstract writing, studentship preparation and seminar presentation. The students will give an in class research presentation and receive feedback from class participants. In the Winter term the students will give a research presentation to the entire Department.

Statistics Courses

There are two statistics courses offered by the School of Public Health that are typically recommended however other stats courses exist that may be more appropriate.

SPH 531 Statistical Methods in Health Research - Basic bio-statistical concepts and methods used in health science research.

SPH 519 Biostatistics I - An introduction to elementary bio-statistical methods used to analyze epidemiologic data.

Students must register in these courses in Bear tracks once they have been opened to non-Public Health students.

Additional Course Accepted:

EDPY 500 (Introduction to Data Analysis in Educational Research)

Other Surgery Courses:

SURG 555: Microvascular Surgery – This course reviews the fundamentals of microvascular surgery and then allows supervised instruction in techniques including dissection, vascular anastomosis, mobilization of free flaps of vascularized tissue, transplantation and vein grafts.

SURG 570: From Basic to Clinical Immunology - This course will begin with the fundamentals of basic immunology to provide the basis for understanding subsequent clinical immunology lectures. Invited basic science and clinical professionals will also give lectures on the application of immunology in clinical fields such as transplantation, immunodeficiency and cancer followed by a full class discussion. Topics will typically include; innate and acquired immunity, autoimmunity, transplantation immunology, immunodeficiency, hypersensitivity, tumor immunology, immunochemistry and vaccines. Common and new techniques used in Basic and Clinical Immunology research will also be covered.

Other Approved Courses:

The Supervisor, Student and Supervisory Committee should work out an acceptable program to determine courses needed to complete the research program. It is encouraged that students find the most suitable courses relevant to their specific research interests. Excellent courses are offered by other departments including: Cell Biology, Biochemistry, Oncology, Medical Microbiology and Immunology and Laboratory Medicine and Pathology. Contact the Program Administrator for details.

Examples of other approved courses are:

- ANAT 600 – Medical Gross Anatomy
- ANAT 603 – Medical Histology
- ANAT 604 – Medical Embryology
- BIOCH 510 - Signal Transduction
- BIOCH 530 - Biochemistry of Eukaryotic Gene Expression
- BIOCH 555 – Biochemistry of Lipids and Lipoproteins
- CELL 502 – The Birth and Death of a Cell
- CELL 505 – Cell Biology of Disease
- CHEM 582 – Introduction to Biomaterials
- CHEM 655 – Advanced Biomaterials Science
- LABMP 500 – Introduction to Human Disease
- LABMP 510 – Cryobiology I
- LABMP 511 – Cryobiology II
- LABMP 530 – Experimental Design and Scientific Communication
- MMI 515 – Mechanisms of Pathogenicity II
- MMI 552 – Advanced Immunology
- ONCOL 520 – Tumor Biology
- ONCOL 522 – Biological Complexity and Cancer
- PHYSL 513 – Fetal Physiology

- PThER 567 – Neuroanatomy and Neuroscience for Rehabilitation
- SPH 619 – Biostatistics II
- SPH 685 – Methods for the Assessment of Health-Related Quality of Life
- SPH 692 – Systematic Reviews

Please note that this list is not exclusive. Selecting courses not found on this list must have approval from the Director of Graduate Education. The Director will require a course outline or syllabus prior to approving the course.

Surgical Education Specialization provides graduate students an advanced training in surgical education, with a specific focus on how surgeons are trained for their roles as expert practitioners.

MSc Surgery with Specialization in Surgical Education course requirements

SURG 530 - Directed Reading in Biology and Medicine

SURG 600 - Research Seminar

One ★3 graduate level statistics course

Electives

One ★3 elective course in research methodology, chosen from the following:

- EDPY 501 Introduction to Methods of Educational Research
- EDPY505 Quantitative Methods I
- EDPY 605 Quantitative Methods II
- EDEL 665 Qualitative Research Methods in Education
- EDPY 604 Mixed Methods Approaches to Educational Research

Two ★3 elective courses relevant to their field of study:

- EDPS 521 Learning and Teaching at the Adult Level
- EDPY 615 Program Evaluation
- EDPY 524 Psychology of Technology-based Learning
- EDPY 597 Special Seminars

B. Ethics Requirement

Ethics and Academic Integrity training is mandatory for all graduate programs in the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. Please note the focus of this ethics training is on *research and academic integrity*. The student is expected to complete the equivalent of at least eight (8) hours of structured academic activity to meet this requirement prior to convocation. It is strongly recommended that graduate students obtain training hours through at least one of the following :

- [Ethics and Scientific Integrity Day \(ESI\)](#) organized the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry = 5 Hours
- [G.E.T. \(Graduate Ethics Training\) web course](#) offered by FGSR = 5 Hours

Note: The ESI day takes place one day a year. Please ensure timely completion of this requirement after commencement of the program.

Additional hours can be obtained through:

- Animal Ethics Part I = 1.5 hours
- Animal Ethics Part II = 1.5 hours
- [Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans: Online Tri-Council Policy Statement](#)= 2 hours
- [Programs offered by FGSR](#)

Mandatory for Incoming Students Beginning in the 2022 Fall Term The Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement will replace the current Academic Integrity and Ethics Training Requirement. The Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement will consist of two zero-credit, self-paced online courses: [INT D 710: Ethics and Academic Citizenship](#) (for both Masters and doctoral students) and [INT D 720: Advanced Ethics and Academic Citizenship](#) (for doctoral students). Completion of these courses will be mandatory for the fulfilment of the Ethics and Academic Citizenship Requirement. **Early registration is available for INT D 710 and INT D 720 for current students and those beginning their program of study in Fall 2021.** The link for information on both the Ethics and Professional Development requirements has been provided below:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-studies/professional-development/ethics/new-ethics/index.html>

The Program Administrator must be advised by the student of their completion of each ethics activity.

C. Professional Development Training

(Effective for Graduate Students admitted on or after September 1, 2016.)

Professional development refers to knowledge and skills that complement the disciplinary knowledge and technical skills that remain the most important aspects of graduate education, with a view to assisting graduate students to transition into employment.

All Graduate Students at the University of Alberta are required to submit an individualized professional development plan to the department for their program of studies within 12 months of the program's commencement for Master's Students and within 18 months of the program's commencement for Doctoral Students. The students then meet with their supervisor to discuss this plan. In addition, Graduate Students will spend at least 8 hours of training to complete the components of their plan.

D. Additional Program Requirements

Tom Williams Surgical Research Day is an annual one-day event organized by the Department of Surgery. The goal of Tom Williams is to provide students and residents with opportunities for scientific exchange within and across Divisions and to invite a distinguished keynote speaker to provide a lecture at this event. The format is that of a typical scientific meeting. Selected students and residents present their thesis work. Depending on the stage in their program, this can include planned research or research findings. Formats usually are oral or poster presentations. Participation and full-day attendance at Tom Williams is required for all Graduate Students.

Students are also required to attend Department research seminars including Surg 600 presentations.

MSc Surgical Education Specialization Additional Requirements

Students are expected to attend bi-monthly “Surgical Education Rounds” in which recent papers and developments in the field are discussed. There are regular “Grand Rounds in Surgical Education”, in which a visiting speaker will be brought from another center to provide an update of their work. There is an active summer student program in Surgical Education and Graduate Students are expected to be involved in working with summer students. Students will be encouraged to present their work at the Canadian Conference on Medical Education (CCME), the International Conference on Residency Education (ICRE), and at the International Conference on Surgical Education and Training (ICOSET).

5. Student responsibilities

Graduate Students are expected to be familiar and understand all regulations and deadlines relating to their program as outlined in this document, the University Calendar, FGSR Program Manual. Continuing students should refer to the Calendar in effect at the time they were admitted or readmitted for the regulations governing their degree program requirements (see Calendar section 23.1.2). Students who interrupt their program and must apply for readmission to the program will be required to comply with any new regulations upon resumption of their studies.

- Ensuring that program registration is accurate and does not lapse. The Program Administrator may not at all times be able to help with registration.
- Submitting appropriate forms to the Department for signature and processing.
- Paying all fees required by the deadline dates set out in the Calendar.
- Maintaining open communication with their Supervisor and the Director of the Graduate Program concerning any problem either real or perceived.
- Informing the Supervisor regularly about progress and provide their Supervisor with information to submit on their Annual Report.

- Be aware of deadlines for possible scholarship applications and actively seek advice and assistance from their Supervisor and other Members of the Department if required.
- Being aware of the Supervisor's expectations and asking for clarification if in doubt.
- Making themselves available in person, by phone, and/or email (at minimum at regular working hours) and informing the Supervisor regularly about their progress.
- Making research results accessible (beyond their appearance in a thesis) to an appropriate audience, i.e., in the form of scholarly publications.

Academic Standing and Grades

- As a minimum, Graduate Students must maintain a minimum cumulative program grade point average of 2.7 throughout their graduate program.
- If the cumulative grade point average falls between 2.3 and 2.7, the Department may recommend termination of the program or continuation in the program for a specific probationary period.
- Notwithstanding the above, a student whose academic standing falls below a grade point average of 2.7 may be required to withdraw at any time.

Courses

Outside of SURG courses, Graduate Students are expected to register for all of their own courses using Bear Tracks. This includes their THES courses in order to maintain their full-time status. All SURG courses should be confirmed through the Program Administrator at the start of each term.

6. Supervisor's Responsibilities

Supervisors must be faculty members of the Department of Surgery. Adjunct full-time faculty members outside Surgery are required to appoint at least one member of the Department of Surgery to the Supervisory Committee of their student. New Investigators and Clinical Academic Faculty will normally be required to appoint a secondary Supervisor.

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

- be a tenured, tenure-track, or retired faculty member of the Department of Surgery
- be active in the general subject area of the student's research
- demonstrate continuing scholarly or creative activity of an original nature
- 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.

Supervisor Responsibilities

- Arrange a first meeting with the student within 1 month of the student's start date to complete the First Meeting Checklist and send it to the Program Administrator.
- Ensure that the Student knows and meets all the administrative requirements of the Department of Surgery and FGSR, and, when necessary, assists the Student in meeting these.
- Provide the research support necessary for completion of the thesis research.
- Arrange the Supervisory Committee and ensures Supervisory Committee Meetings are held and documented with the Progress Report form, to be submitted to the Program Administrator twice per year.
- Secure continued financial support for the student.
- Arrange all examinations (as applicable: Candidacy Exam, Thesis Defense) with the support of the Program Administrator.
- Stay informed about the student's research activities and progress.
- Have adequate time to supervise each student.
- Review the thesis both in draft and in final form.

Further Guidelines for Supervisors

- Provide an environment for the student that is conducive to research and in which the student can grow intellectually.
- Maintain open communication with the student concerning any problem; and in the event of a conflict in the Supervisor-Student relationship, discuss the issues with the Student and Director of Graduate Education in a timely fashion.
- Provide appropriate guidance to the student on the nature of their research and the standards expected, and is accessible to give advice and constructive feedback; at the beginning of the supervisory relationship, the Student should be made aware of any expectations held by the Supervisor and the Department that are not already defined in the Calendar, the FGSR Graduate Program Manual, or the Surgery Graduate Program Manual.
- With the student, establish a realistic timetable for completion of various phases of the program.
- When going on leave or an extended period of absence, ensure that the student is adequately supervised by the provision of an Acting Supervisor. This should be a member of the Supervisory Committee.

7. Graduate Student Funding.

Students may receive a stipend under the Graduate Research Assistantship Fellowship (GRAF). Please see the GSA collective agreement for more information.

- Stipend support will be provided from either an operating grant or an independent award to the Student. The minimum level of funding is currently set at \$28,000 per year.
- Supervisors must make Students aware of their financial situation by providing an Appointment Contract at enrollment into the Graduate Program. The contract needs to detail the funding amount and source. The contract is signed by both the Supervisor and the Student. If funding is provided by an alternate source such as a different department then a letter from that source needs to accompany the contract of commitment outlining these details. The letter(s) are required for admission and must accompany the application.
- Initial funding commitments should be made for a minimum of two years for MSc students and 4 years for PhD. At least 3 months prior to the end of a stipend commitment, a new funding contract should be completed, signed by the Student and Supervisor, and submitted to the Graduate Administrator. If any changes to the funding have occurred this should be updated and submitted to the Director of the Graduate Program. A supervisor is encouraged to offer a stipend for the duration of the program, however this cannot be guaranteed.

Scholarships and Awards

Students are expected to actively seek sources of alternative funding through competitive scholarships from the university and granting agencies. A few of the many scholarships can be found below. If a scholarship value is less than the minimum stipend, the Supervisor must supplement the award.

There are numerous awards offered throughout the academic year, with many of the major awards having deadlines in the Fall term. Award details are available on the [FGSR webpage](#). Notifications are also forwarded from the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry and Surgery Graduate Program offices. Some applications have earlier, internal departmental deadlines.

8. Supervisory Committees (MSc and PhD)

The purpose of a Supervisory Committee is to represent complementary expertise to that of the Supervisor and to provide academic mentoring as well as program planning advice. Supervisory Committees consist of the Supervisor and at least 2 other faculty members. Supervisory Committees must be appointed for students in both the MSc and in the PhD program. Once approved by the Director of the Graduate Program and the FoMD Associate Dean of Research, the names of Supervisors and Supervisory Committee Members will be forwarded to FGSR.

Guidelines for Supervisory Committees

- Supervisory Committee Meetings are to be arranged by the Supervisor, not the student.
- The Supervisory Committee meets at least once a year to determine the student's progress and to advise on academic and research matters. The first Supervisory

Committee meeting must be held within the first 12 months of the student's first year.

- Supervisory Committee Meetings may be held more frequently if deemed necessary by the Supervisor, Supervisory Committee or the Graduate Student.
- Meetings can be initiated by either the student or the Supervisor.
- The Supervisory Committee takes part in all examinations required by the FGSR (Candidacy Examinations; Final Oral Examinations) and in Transfer Meetings (MSc to PhD), if applicable.
- The committee must consist of three (3) faculty members including the supervisor.
- Completion of the Appointment of Supervisor and Supervisory Committee form and submitted to the Graduate Administrator for the student's file and to send to FGSR.

Student-Supervisor Conflicts

The relationship between a Graduate Student and Supervisor represents a long-term commitment on both sides. Occasionally, problems will arise between a student and supervisor, which, if left unresolved, may severely jeopardize the student's chance of completing a graduate degree. A student encountering problems that cannot be resolved through discussion with the supervisor should immediately consult the Director of the Graduate Program before taking any other action. The Director, Division Director, and Associate Chair of Graduate Studies may meet with the supervisor and members of the supervisory committee to discuss the problem further. Courses of action include suggestions for changes to the composition of the Supervisory Committee, transfer of the student to another supervisor within the Department or transfer of the student to another University Department. In cases where the conflict cannot be resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may be asked to withdraw from the program without prejudice.

9. MSc Thesis Defense.

The final MSc examination is normally held after two years of the MSc program. MSc students have a maximum of 4 years from their first term of registration to complete all degree requirements, including the final MSc Examination. The student will meet with their committee to determine whether sufficient progress has been made in the research project to write the thesis and will be granted in writing through completion of a "Permission to Write Form." This form is to be submitted to the Graduate Program Office.

Purpose of the Examination

The purpose of the final MSc examination is to assess the student's: 1) knowledge of the literature relevant to their research area, 2) understanding of their data collection and analysis methods, 3) understanding of the significance of their research in the context of their research area, and 4) knowledge of the limitations and pitfalls of their chosen methods.

Role of the Examination Committee

The committee will review the thesis and conduct an oral examination to test the student's knowledge of the thesis subject. The final decision of the committee will be based both on the quality of the thesis document and on the student's defense of their work.

Examination Committee Composition (Minimum four members).

- The chair of the Final MSc Examination oversees the examination process to ensure all procedures are followed. The chair can not be the supervisor or member of the supervisory committee. In exceptional circumstances, the chair can also act as an Examiner.
- The supervisory committee (including the supervisory)
- At least one arm's length examiner who must not be (or have been) a Member of the Supervisory Committee, or have been connected with the thesis research in a significant way. An Arm's Length Examiner should not have been associated with the student, outside of usual contact in courses or other non-thesis activities within the University, nor be related to the Student or Supervisor(s). Except in special circumstances (fully justified in writing to the Vice-Dean, FGSR), an Arm's Length Examiner should not be a close collaborator of the Supervisor(s) within the last six years.
- The supervisor, often in discussion with the student, selects and invites the 1 Arm's Length Examiner to be on the committee. The Supervisor, not the student, is responsible for scheduling the examination.
- At least half of the examiners must hold a master's degree or higher

MSc Thesis Document

The MSc thesis, at a minimum, should reveal that the student is able to work in a scholarly manner and is acquainted with the principal works published on the subject of the thesis and is an original contribution. Ensure copyright release for all work that has been previously published is obtained. The supervisor should work with the student to ensure the thesis is at sufficient quantity to proceed to defense. The FGSR sets all regulations regarding the [preparation and formatting](#) of the thesis.

Timeline

At least four (4) weeks prior to the final MSc examination:

Supervisors will arrange the examination committee and exam date and communicate arrangements to the program administrator. This includes identification of the arm's length member(s) and scheduling. Students cannot arrange their own MSc examination committees or examination dates.

A Notice Examining Committee & Examination Date will be completed by the Program Administrator and signed by the supervisor.

At least three (3) weeks prior to the final MSc Examination:

Students will send the final thesis to all members of the examining committee at least 3 weeks prior to the defense.

Format of the MSc Final Examination

- The examination begins with any introduction that needs to be made between the student and the examination committee.
- The student is excused from the room and the supervisor will then review the student's progress to-date, including coursework, awards, publications and presentations.
- The chair will ask whether there are any concerns about the thesis that would prevent the exam from going forward.
- The order of questioning will be determined by the chair in discussion with the examining committee, usually following the system from the most external examiner to the supervisor, with the chair asking questions last if so desired.
- Typically there are two rounds of questioning with each examiner having 20 min to ask questions in the first round and a second round of 5 min each. A break is offered between the first and second round of questions.
- The overall time for a Final MSc Examination should not exceed 3 hours.
- The student is then asked back into the room and informed of the format and order of examiners. Prior to commencing the examination, the student should be given the opportunity to ask for clarification.
- The student will give 20-30-minute oral presentation of the student summarizing their thesis work
- Then the question period will ensue for two rounds of questions from the examining committee.
- Immediately before closing the Final MSc Examination, the Chair will provide the student with another opportunity to express any concerns or questions that might have arisen during the examination.
- The student will then be asked to leave the room while the committee makes a decision on the outcome of the examination.

Possible Outcomes of the MSc Final Examination

- Pass: If the student passes the examination, the Committee shall sign the "Thesis Approval/Program Completion" form and submit it immediately to the Program Administrator. The Administrator will arrange for the final signatures and submit the form to FGSR.
- Pass subject to revisions: The student has satisfactorily defended the thesis but there are some revisions to be made to the thesis before final approval. If the revisions are deemed not to require a reconvening of the Examining Committee, the process is as follow. It is expected that the student will make the changes in

time to submit the thesis to the FGSR on or before the deadline for the next convocation.

- **Adjourned:** The final oral examination should be adjourned in the following situations:
 - The revisions to the thesis are sufficiently substantial (e.g., if further research or major reworking of sections are required), or the Committee is not satisfied with the general format/presentation of the thesis, a reconvening of the Examining Committee is necessary. In such case, the Committee should not propose that the student has passed, but instead adjourn the examination.
 - The Committee is dissatisfied with the student's oral presentation and defense of the thesis, even if the thesis itself is acceptable.
 - Compelling, extraordinary circumstances such as a sudden medical emergency during the examination.
 - 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 defense is unsatisfactory, it is recommended to arrange for individual or joint discussions with the student prior to reconvening the examination.
 - Decide upon a date to reconvene. If the date of the reconvened oral 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 original examination date. A final decision of the Examining Committee must be made within six months of the initial examination.
 - Before the examination is reconvened, the student is required to be given detailed instructions from their Supervisor and/or Supervisory Committee about the changes required compared to the original MSc thesis or its defense.
 - The Committee is to specify the supervision and assistance the student may expect from the Committee Members in meeting the necessary revisions.
 - The Vice-Dean (FGSR) and the Graduate Director need to be advised by the Supervisor in writing of the adjournment and the conditions.
 - When the date is set for the adjourned final oral examination, the Supervisor will notify the Director of Graduate Education who will then notify FGSR.
- **Fail:** If the Final examination committee agrees that the student has failed, the committee chair shall provide the reasons for this recommendation and the

department's recommendation for the student's program in writing to the Vice-Dean (FGSR), to the student, and to the Director of the graduate program. The Vice-Dean (FGSR) will arrange to meet with the student and with department representatives before acting upon any department recommendation. A decision of the FGSR which affects a student's academic standing (e.g., required to withdraw) is appealable.

Time Limit for Submission of Thesis to FGSR

Following completion of the Final Oral Examination at which the thesis is passed or passed subject to revisions, the student shall make the appropriate revisions where necessary and submit the approved thesis to FGSR within 6 months of the date of the Final Oral Examination.

The Examining Committee may impose earlier deadlines for submitting revisions. If the thesis is not submitted to FGSR within the 6-month time limit, the student will be considered to have withdrawn from the program. After this time, the student must apply and be re-admitted to FGSR and register again before the thesis can be accepted.

If the Final Oral Examination is adjourned, the 6-month time limit will take effect from the date of completion of the examination where the thesis was ultimately passed with or without revisions.

In order to convocate, students must submit their thesis to the FGSR for approval before the deadline dates set out in the Academic Schedule of the Calendar.

Students must also ensure that they are registered in the appropriate Thesis course in their last registration prior to convocation.

10. Transfer from MSc to PhD Program

A transfer from the MSc program to the PhD program is expected to occur within two years of entering the program. Transfer to the PhD program will be based on the graduate student's performance in coursework and demonstrated ability to conduct PhD level research. The student will write a research proposal that meets the expectation of PhD level research and submit it to the supervisory committee. The student then meets with the committee and the transfer to a PhD is discussed. In particular the committee will assess whether the research project is feasible and meets the advanced level of research required to earn a PhD.

A Change of Category form along with a Timeline and PhD Thesis Proposal Document is required to be submitted to the Director of the Graduate Program for review and consideration.

11. PhD Candidacy Examination

The candidacy examination is to be held within three years of the commencement of the PhD program when most, if not all, of the course work is completed and the research project is started or well defined. The candidacy examination must be passed no less than six months prior to the final thesis defense.

Purpose of the candidacy examination

The Candidacy Examination is for the Graduate Student to demonstrate their ability to pursue and complete original research at an advanced level. This entails demonstration of knowledge beyond their own area of interest. The student is to provide their PhD research proposal to members of the examination committee. Both scientific and surgical aspects of the clinical problem are expected to be covered. There will be 2 types of questions:

- i) those focusing on the underlying theory and understanding of the general field, and;
- ii) those directly relating to the students' specific area of research and study design without any of the student's data

Examination Committee Composition

- Minimum of five examiners and maximum of seven examiners
- The Student's Supervisory Committee.
- 2 arm's length examiner who must not be (or have been) a member of the supervisory committee, or have been connected with the thesis research in a significant way. An arm's length examiner should not have been associated with the student, outside of usual contact in courses or other non-thesis activities within the University, nor be related to the student or supervisor(s). Except in special circumstances (fully justified in writing to the Vice-Dean, FGSR), an Arm's Length Examiner should not be a close collaborator of the Supervisor(s) within the last six years.
- The chair is a faculty member in the student's home department or with experience chairing doctoral examinations. The chair is not an examiner

At least half of the examiners must have the degree equivalent or higher than that being examined.

The supervisor, often in discussion with the student, selects and invites 2 arm's length examiners to be on the examining committee. The supervisor, not the student, is responsible for scheduling the examination and informing the program administrator before and after the examination.

Responsibilities:

Supervisors:

- Arrange the Candidacy Examination Committee and exam date. This includes identification of the Arm's Length Members and scheduling. Students cannot arrange their own Candidacy Examination Committees or examination dates.
- The Chair of the Candidacy Examination will be assigned by the Graduate Administrator who will then inform the Supervisor and the student.
- The Supervisor will complete the FGSR Notice Examining Committee & Examination Date form which the Supervisor must sign and return to the Program Administrator.
- It is expected that the Supervisor allows the Graduate Student to take adequate time away from their regular Graduate Student duties in order to prepare for the candidacy exam.

Candidacy Examination Committee Members:

- Members are to make the student aware what areas he/she is expected to be knowledgeable in. Suggestions should extend past the student's direct research topic and may include the Committee Member's broader area of expertise. Suggestions may be in the form of a reading list.
- Reading suggestions should be available to the student without financial cost if possible.

Students:

- Provide a copy of the PhD proposal at least 3 weeks prior to the examination date
- Meet with the examination committee to discuss expectations for and receive suggestions of areas that will be addressed in the exam. These may be in the form of a reading list.

The Program Administrator ensures that the Notice Examining Committee & Examination Date form is complete and submits the form to FGSR.

Format of the Candidacy Examination

- Any introductions between the committee and the student are made.
- The student is excused from the room. The supervisor will then review the student's progress to-date, including coursework, awards, publications and presentations.
- This review will be complemented by the chair if necessary. The order of questioning will be determined by the chair in discussion with the committee, usually following the system from the most external examiner to the supervisor.
- There should be two rounds of questions and the overall time for a candidacy examination should usually not exceed 3 hours.
- The student is then asked back into the room and informed of the format and order of examiners. Prior to commencing the examination, the student should be given the opportunity to ask for clarification.

- This will usually be followed by a short (15-20 minutes) oral presentation of the student outlining their thesis work to-date, including a timeline for completion of the remainder of the thesis. During the candidacy examination only minor attention should be given to the thesis work.
- Then the question period will ensue for two rounds of questions from the examining committee.
- Immediately before closing the Candidacy Examination, the Chair will provide the student with another opportunity to express any concerns or questions that might have arisen during the examination.
- The student will then be asked to leave the room while the committee makes a decision on the outcome of the examination.

Possible Outcomes of the Candidacy Examination:

- Pass: If the student passes the Candidacy Examination unconditionally, the FGSR “Report of Completion of Candidacy Examination” form is signed by the supervisor and submitted to the program administrator following the exam. The program administrator will arrange for the final signatures and will submit the form to FGSR.
- Conditional Pass: If the candidacy examining committee agrees to a conditional pass for the student, the chair of the examining committee shall provide in writing to the Vice- Dean (FGSR), the student, and the director of the graduate Program:
 - the reasons for this recommendation,
 - details of the conditions,
 - and the timeframe for the student to meet the conditions.
 - The approval mechanism for meeting the conditions (i.e., approval of the committee chair or supervisor; approval of the entire committee; or select members of the committee).
 - The supervision and assistance the student can be expected to receive from the committee members, chair, and/or ad hoc assigned experts in order to fulfill the conditions set out.

Once the conditions have been met, via approval through one of the above-stated mechanisms, the Program Administrator will complete the Report of Completion of Candidacy Examination form and submit it to FGSR. If unmet, the subsequent outcome will be selected.

- Fail: If the Candidacy Examining Committee agrees that the student has failed, the Chair shall provide the reasons for this recommendation and the department’s recommendation for the student’s program in writing to the Vice-Dean (FGSR), to the student, and to the Graduate Program Administrator. For failed candidacy examinations, the Vice-Dean (FGSR), normally arranges to meet with the student and with the Department representatives before acting upon any Department recommendation. A decision of the FGSR which affects a

student's academic standing (e.g., required to withdraw or transfer to a master's program) is appealable.

The following options are to be considered by the Examining Committee when the outcome of a Student's Candidacy Exam is "fail:"

- Repeat the Candidacy: If the student's 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. If the recommendation of a repeat candidacy is formulated by the Examining Committee and approved by FGSR, the student is to be notified in writing of his/her exam deficiencies by the Chair of the Examining Committee. The second Candidacy Exam is to be scheduled no later than 6 months from the date of the first Candidacy Exam. In the event that the student fails the second candidacy, the Examining Committee shall recommend 1 of the next 2 options:
- Change of Category to the MSc Program: If the student's Candidacy Exam performance was inadequate and the student's performance, but the courses and research completed to date indicates that the student has the potential to complete an MSc degree, the Examining Committee should consider the possibility of recommending a change of category to the MSc program. In this case a "Change of Category" Form needs to be submitted to the Program Administrator.
- Termination of the PhD Program: If the student's performance was inadequate and the work completed during the program is considered inadequate for both a PhD and an MSc program, the Examining Committee should recommend termination of the student's program.

12. Final PhD Examination

The final exam for PhD Students is normally held at the end of the fourth year in the Graduate Program. PhD Students have a maximum of 6 years from their first term of registration in their first program to complete all degree requirements.

The students will meet with their committee to determine whether sufficient progress has been made to proceed to write the thesis and will be granted in writing through completion of a "Permission to Write Form." This form is to be submitted to the Graduate Program Office.

Purpose of the Examination

The purpose of the final PhD Examination is to assess the student's: 1) knowledge of the literature relevant to their research area, 2) understanding of their data collection and analysis methods, 3) understanding of the significance of their research in the

context of the broader subject area, and 4) knowledge of the limitations and pitfalls of their chosen methods.

Role of the Examination Committee

The Committee will review the thesis and conduct an oral examination to test the student's knowledge of the thesis subject. The final decision of the committee will be based both on the quality of the thesis document and on the student's defense of their work.

Examination Committee Composition

- Minimum five and a maximum seven examiners
- The chair of the PhD examination is to be a member of the surgery graduate program committee, who is not the supervisor or member of the student's supervisory committee. The chair should have familiarity with conducting PhD thesis examinations. The chair is not an examiner
- The student's supervisory committee.
- External Examiner from outside of the University of Alberta (can attend physically or virtually). The external examiner must have experience in evaluating students at a PhD level. The examiner must not be a collaborator with the supervisor.
- Arm's length examiner who must not be (or have been) a member of the supervisory committee, or have been connected with the thesis research in a significant way. An arm's length examiner should not have been associated with the student, outside of usual contact in courses or other non-thesis activities within the University, nor be related to the student or supervisor(s). except in special circumstances (fully justified in writing to the Vice-Dean, FGSR), an arm's length examiner should not be a close collaborator of the supervisor(s) within the last six years.

The External Examiner

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to provide the program administrator with a list of potential names of the external examiners at least three months in advance of the prospective examination date. The external examiner is invited by the Department and not the supervisor. The name of the arm's length examiner must be provided to the program administrator at least two months before the examination date.

Once an external examiner has been chosen, the supervisor must complete the Approval External Reader or Examiner for Final Doctoral Oral Exam form and submit this form to the program administrator for additional signatures. In addition, a Conflict of Interest Checklist form must be completed by the supervisor and student. A CV for the external examiner will also need to be provided that indicates the number of doctoral students supervised (current and previous) & doctoral exams served on.

An External Examiner:

- Must be a recognized authority in the specific field of research of the student's thesis.
- Must be experienced in evaluating doctoral area work.
- Must be in a position to review the thesis objectively and to provide a critical analysis of the work and the presentation.

It is essential that the external examiner not have an association with the student, the supervisor, or the department, within the last six years as this could hinder objective analysis. For example, a proposed external examiner who has within the last six years been associated with the student as a research collaborator or coauthor would not be eligible. Also, a proposed external examiner must not have had an association within the last six years with the doctoral student's supervisor (as a former student, supervisor, or close collaborator, for instance). Under normal circumstances the same person will not be used as an external examiner at the University of Alberta if that examiner has served in the same capacity in the same department at this University within the preceding two years; this does not preclude an External serving in another department.

The director of the graduate program will review the external examiner suggestion and, with provisional departmental approval, forward the External Examiner Approval Form and CV to the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry Research Office for approval. Once the FoMD Research Office approves the external examiner, they will forward the form to FGSR.

The Graduate Program Administrator and Director of the Graduate Program will receive a copy of the correspondence from FoMD to FGSR, by which time the official letter of invitation is sent out to the External Examiner. The letter is to be prepared by the Program Administrator based on a standard invitation letter template, and signed by the Director of the Graduate Program. The Program Administrator will inform the Supervisor and student when the invitation has been sent, at which time neither the Supervisor nor student can have any contact with the external examiner.

In the letter of invitation, the external examiner is requested to prepare and send to the Director of the Graduate Program, at least 1 week in advance of the examination, a brief written commentary (approximately 2 to 3 pages) on the structure, methodology, quality, significance and findings of the thesis. This commentary should not be given to the student prior to the examination.

Limited travel funds for the external examiner may be available from FGSR. The supervisor will have to supplement the remainder of the expenses.

Alternatively the external examiner can participate remotely using teleconference software. The supervisor should discuss arrangements with the graduate administrator.

PhD Thesis Document

A doctoral thesis, at a minimum, must embody the results of original investigations and analyses and be of such quality as to merit publication, meeting the standards of reputable scholarly publications. It must constitute a substantial contribution to the knowledge in the student's field of study. Please visit the [FGSR webpage](#) for the latest formatting requirements.

Timeline

At least **2 months** prior to the examination:

- Complete PhD thesis to be sent to the Supervisory Committee
The student sends the complete PhD thesis to their Supervisory Committee. The Committee is given two weeks to review the thesis..
- All members of the Supervisory Committee must recommend, on the Preliminary Acceptance of Thesis form that the thesis is acceptable for examination. Note: This is a mandatory precaution governed by FGSR to avoid dissemination of substandard PhD thesis to examiners external to the University of Alberta. Committee members are to judge on the completeness of the thesis and whether or not it can go forward for defense. Committee members are not to suggest revisions or corrections unless these are needed to bring the thesis to a minimal standard for defense.

At least **6 weeks** prior to the examination:

- The student submits the Preliminary Acceptance of Thesis form, signed by all members of the supervisory committee, to the program administrator. Committee members do not have to all sign the same form.

At least **5 weeks** prior to the examination:

- The student submits a copy (electronic and paper) PhD thesis for evaluation to the program administrator.

At least **4 weeks** prior to the examination:

- The External Examiner receives the thesis either in hard copy or through email. Please allow sufficient mailing time, if the External Examiner prefers a hard copy. This is arranged by the Graduate Program
- Supervisors arrange the examination committee and exam date and communicate arrangements to the program administrator. This includes identification of the Arm's Length Member(s) besides the External Examiner and scheduling. Students cannot arrange their own examinations or committees. The Supervisor must inform the Administrator once the examination information is confirmed.

- The Chair of the PhD examination will be assigned by the Director of the Graduate Program. The Program Administrator will then inform the Supervisor and the student.
- The Notice of Examining Committee & Examination Date is completed and signed by the supervisor.

At least **3 weeks** prior to the examination:

- The student provides all remaining examiners a copy of the thesis.
- The Program Administrator must provide FGSR with the Notice of Examining Committee & Examination Date at least 3 weeks prior to the exam.

Format of the PhD Final Examination

PhD students will give a public lecture prior to the examination. The supervisor will make arrangements for room locations in consultation with the Graduate Program Office.

- The examination begins with any introduction that needs to be made between the student and the examination committee.
- The student is excused from the room and the supervisor will then review the student's progress to-date, including coursework, awards, publications and presentations.
- The chair will ask whether there are any concerns about the thesis that would prevent the exam from going forward.
- The order of questioning will be determined. It is preferred that most time is allotted to the External Examiner and the Arm's Length Examiner(s) and the least to the Supervisor.
- Typically there are two rounds of questioning with each examiner having 20 min to ask questions in the first round and a second round of 5 min each. The external examiner is afforded as much time as needed to question the student in order to reach an outcome. A break is offered between the first and second round of questions.
- The overall time for a Final PhD Examination should not exceed 4 hours.
- The student is then asked back into the room and informed of the format and order of examiners. Prior to commencing the examination, the student should be given the opportunity to ask for clarification.
- This will be followed by a 20-30 minutes' oral presentation of the student summarizing their thesis work.
- The two rounds of questioning begins
- Immediately before closing the Final PhD Examination, the Chair will provide the student with another opportunity to express any concerns or questions that might have arisen during the examination.
- The student will then be asked to leave the room while the committee makes a decision on the outcome of the examination.

- For the adjudication, each examiner has to provide their opinion before the verdict. The Chair will solicit two opinions from each examiner: (1) on the acceptability of the thesis; and (2) on the acceptability of the defense.
- The student is invited back into the room and the Chair announces the decision and provides feedback on the committee's discussions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis and the thesis defense.

Possible Outcomes of the PhD Final Examination

- **Pass:** If the student passes the examination, the Committee shall sign the Thesis Approval/Program Completion form and submit it immediately to the Graduate Administrator. The Administrator will arrange for the final signature and submit the form to FGSR.
- **Pass subject to revisions:** The student has satisfactorily defended the thesis but there are some revisions to be made to the thesis before final approval. If the revisions are deemed not to require a reconvening of the Examining Committee, the process is as follows (note: There is no formal difference between minor and major revisions):
 - Members wishing to do so may sign immediately. The Committee Chair or Supervisor withholds their signature until the thesis is amended satisfactorily and all other Committee Members have signed. The Thesis Approval/Program Completion form needs to be signed and submitted to the Program Administrator indicating "pass subject to revisions".
 - It is expected that the student will make the changes in time to submit the thesis to the FGSR on or before the deadline for the next convocation.
 - The changes should be checked and approved by the 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.
 - Once the revisions have been satisfactorily completed, the Supervisor will visit the Program Administrator, sign the form, and the Administrator will submit the form to FGSR.
- **Adjourned:** The final oral examination should be adjourned in the following situations:
 - The revisions to the thesis are sufficiently substantial (e.g., if further research or major reworking of sections are required), or the Committee is not satisfied with the general format/presentation of the thesis, a reconvening of the Examining Committee is necessary. In such case, the Committee should not propose that the student has passed, but instead adjourn the examination.

- The Committee is dissatisfied with the student's oral presentation and defense of the thesis, even if the thesis itself is acceptable.
- Compelling, extraordinary circumstances such as a sudden medical emergency during the examination.

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 defense is unsatisfactory, it is recommended to arrange for individual or joint discussions with the student prior to reconvening the examination.
- Decide upon a date to reconvene. If the date of the reconvened oral 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 original examination date. A final decision of the Examining Committee must be made within six months of the initial examination.
- Before the examination is reconvened, the student is required to be given detailed instructions from their Supervisor and/or Supervisory Committee about the changes required compared to the original MSc thesis or its defense.
- The Committee is to specify the supervision/ assistance the student may expect from the Committee Members in meeting the necessary revisions.
- The Vice-Dean (FGSR), and the Director of Graduate Education need to be advised by the Supervisor in writing of the adjournment and the conditions.
- When the date is set for the adjourned final oral examination, the Supervisor will notify the Director of Graduate Education who will then notify the FGSR. Normally the Dean, Vice-Dean, Associate Dean or Pro Dean attends the repeat examination.
- **Fail:** If the Final Examination Committee agrees that the student has failed, the Committee Chair shall provide the reasons for this recommendation and the department's recommendation for the student's program in writing to the Vice-Dean (FGSR), to the student, and to the Director of Graduate Education. The Vice-Dean (FGSR) will arrange to meet with the student and with department representatives before acting upon any department recommendation. A decision of the FGSR which affects the student's academic standing (e.g., required to withdraw or transfer to a master's program) is appealable.

13. Post Thesis Defense Procedures

Time Limit for Submission of Thesis to FGSR

Following completion of the Final Oral Examination at which the thesis is passed or passed subject to revisions, the Student shall make the appropriate revisions where necessary and submit the approved thesis to FGSR within 6 months of the date of the Final Oral Examination.

The Examining Committee may impose earlier deadlines for submitting revisions. If the thesis is not submitted to FGSR within the 6-month time limit, the Student will be considered to have withdrawn from the program. After this time, the Student must apply and be re-admitted to FGSR and register again before the thesis can be accepted.

If the Final Oral Examination is adjourned, the 6-month time limit will take effect from the date of completion of the examination where the thesis was ultimately passed with or without revisions.

Upon successful defense of the thesis, Graduate Students must apply to graduate in Bear Tracks before submitting their thesis. Access the Apply for Graduate feature under the Academics menu in Bear Tracks. Students who fail to apply will not be eligible for convocation.

To reduce the chance of rejection, use [this checklist](#) to make sure you do not miss anything.

Prepare Thesis for Submission

Ensure that you have received permission for any copyrighted materials. Check out the following information to see how [copyright applies to graduate students](#).

Prepare your thesis for electronic submission with the following steps:
Before converting the thesis to PDF, ensure the thesis complies with [Thesis Format Specifications](#) established by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

Complete and send the following documents to FGSR. These documents must be received prior to electronic submission of your thesis.

- University of Alberta Thesis/Dissertation Non-Exclusive License Complete, print and sign the University of Alberta Thesis Non-Exclusive License form. This grants permission to the National Library to include your thesis in its collection. The student, as author, still retains copyright
- Copyright Permission Letters. If you have copyright permission letters allowing inclusion of another person's work in your thesis, the letters must be included.
- Request to Restrict Access. If it is necessary to restrict access to a thesis for a period of time, this form must be submitted prior to thesis submission. Acceptable circumstances under which thesis access can be restricted can be found at <http://www.gradstudies.ualberta.ca/gradmanual/8.13.html>

Electronic Thesis Submission (E-Thesis)

To submit electronically, your thesis must have been prepared in a software application that can be converted to a single PDF (e.g. Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, etc.).

You will need to convert your thesis to a single PDF file and submit it to ERA, the University of Alberta Libraries' digital repository.

Once in ERA, the FGSR will review your thesis for acceptance.

Students are responsible for all expenses incurred in the production of their thesis. To register on ERA:

Visit the ERA User Registration (opens in new window) and enter your email address

- Within minutes you will receive a link by email allowing you to enter ERA; you must go in and create a password for your ERA account.

E-Thesis Review by FGSR

Once you have submitted your thesis, FGSR will review the thesis to ensure all specifications have been met. FGSR will notify you if alterations are required.

Once the thesis is approved, a Microfilming fee will be posted to your fees account in Bear Tracks. Unless alternate arrangements have been made to pay this fee (e.g. supervisor will pay), you will be responsible for the payment. Failure to pay this fee may result in withholding of transcripts, parchment, etc.

Printing Your Thesis

The Department of Surgery requires 2 additional copies (or more if you have co-supervisors) of the thesis. These copies are to be hard cover bound. One copy is to go to the Student's Supervisor(s) and the other copy is for the Office of Graduate Education. Thesis printing is available at McCallum Printing located in the basement of Cameron Library.

14. Graduate Program Committee

Members of the Department of Surgery Research Committee serve as the Graduate Program Committee. The primary role of this Committee will be to maintain a high standard of academic excellence in accordance with the regulations of the FGSR published in the University of Alberta Calendar. The Committee will advise and offer direction to the Graduate Director of the Department of Surgery.

Specific Functions

- The committee establishes, reviews, maintains the departmental regulations for the graduate program and ensures that these regulations conform to FGSR regulations in the University of Alberta Calendar.
- The committee will review all applications for admission into the Graduate Program. Recommendations for admission will be sent to FGSR. In the case of refusal, each applicant will receive written notification of the decision (successful applicants receive an admission letter from FGSR).

15. Student Services

University Student Services provides a range of services which are designed to help overcome barriers, allowing students to successfully deal with the many challenges of university life, and make it possible for them to maximize their educational experiences.

[Graduate Students' Association](#)

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) represents all Masters and PhD students at the University of Alberta. The GSA is a student run organization made up of officials elected by graduate students. The GSA negotiates a contract between the graduate students and the University of Alberta that covers all the students' rights and obligations. The Graduate Student Association website is: www.gsa.ualberta.ca.

[The Office of Advocacy & Wellbeing \(OAW\)](#)

The OAW in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry looks after issues pertaining to the health and well-being of learners. The office also advocates on their behalf. Anyone facing difficulties should contact the Advocacy & Wellbeing Office for additional advice and support.

[University of Alberta International](#)

The International Student Services team at the International Centre provides events and programming to help international students accomplish their academic and personal goals, plus share their knowledge and experiences with campus and off-campus communities.

[Dean of Students](#)

Students experiencing difficulty in their relationship with the University or its Faculty and staff, or students who find the accomplishment of their legitimate goals is being frustrated by University policy, practice, or bureaucracy may find assistance through the Office of the Dean. The Dean of Students is the senior University administrator responsible for the provision of a number of specialized services for students. As such, the Dean coordinates a variety of student services including Native Student Services, University Health Services, Student Counseling Services, Academic Support Centre, Career and Placement Services, Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Student Financial Aid and Information Centre, Sexual Assault Centre, and the Student Advisor.

[Student Financial and Information Centre](#)

University Bursaries and Emergency Funding (UBEF) and the Student Financial Aid Information Centre (SFAIC) are a collaborative service of University Student Services and the Students' Union. Their mandate is to assist students in finding the financial resources necessary to fulfill their academic objectives.

[Campus Food Bank](#)

Campus Food Bank is a confidential service that provides short-term food relief to those on campus experiencing food insecurity. It is a registered charity that distributes healthy, wholesome food hampers based on Canada's Food Guide to members of the University of Alberta community in financial distress.

[Student Ombudservice](#)

The primary role of the Ombudservice is to ensure that students receive fair and equitable treatment within the University and the Students' Union. An excellent starting point is provided for members of the University community who are unsure of the precise nature of their problem or complaint, or of the best way to handle it. The majority of problems that students encounter can be handled through informal channels – including professors, academic advisors, department heads, and deans. If a particular area of responsibility is not clear or a student has a concern about pursuing these information channels, the Ombudservice can help determine alternative courses of action.

[Accessibility Resources](#)

Students whose disabilities involve any number of conditions affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning or mental or physical health can receive assistance. Many of the disability related educational support services provided impact directly on the ability of students with disabilities to succeed in departmental courses. Students who require accommodations in a course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs.

[University Health Centre](#)

The University Health Centre is a walk-in clinic with full physician, nursing and pharmacy services. When students and staff visit the University Health Centre, they need to present their Alberta Health Care card or other valid provincial health care card.

[Student Counseling Services](#)

Student Counseling Services offers a wide range of professional counseling services directed at helping students who are experiencing personal or academic difficulties. Students are seen by Chartered psychologists or psychology interns who are supervised by Chartered Psychologists. Counselors help students deal with a variety of personal and/or academic issues such as feeling isolated, depression, test anxiety, family difficulties, stress, past sexual abuse, or relationship concerns. Generally, their services are free but some nominal charges may be charged for some group programs and/or career-related assessment. Students wishing to see a counselor are advised to arrange an appointment in advance.

[Sexual Assault Centre](#)

The Sexual Assault Centre is a cooperative effort between the Dean of Students and the Students' Union. The University of Alberta Sexual Assault Centre offers services to female and male victims of; acquaintance sexual assault, date sexual assault, stranger sexual assault, adult survivors of child sexual abuse, dating/marital violence, sexual assault by multiple perpetrators. Services are also accessible to friends, parents, and families of sexual assault victims, the heterosexual and homosexual communities, students with disabilities, and persons of all ethnic and socioeconomic classes.
<https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/sexual-assault-centre>

[Mental Health](#)

The brain like every other organ can get diseased. People with "Type A" personalities are rushed, ambitious, time-conscious and driven. Everyone in our graduate program is highly driven and ambitious; these are traits that often accompany higher than average IQ. These traits, if not properly managed, can gradually lead to stress-related illnesses. There is always some degree of anxiety in academia and clinical practice, however; under conditions of continuous stress, a person's outlook and thinking can change in a negative manner. Anxiety and depression are extremely prevalent in today's society and can typically be caused by several frequent life-events, such as:

- Stressful life events (e.g. leaving home for the first time, family changes)
- Suffering a major loss of a friend, family member, relationship or possession
- Fear or embarrassment or humiliation (e.g. failing school, job loss, not meeting expectations)
- Substance abuse

The stigma of mental illness is gradually fading but can be perceived by the individual that is affected. Please do the responsible thing and seek help if you think you might be at risk.