



Department of Psychiatry

M.Sc. in Psychiatry Research

# **Graduate Handbook**

## **2018/2019**

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## 1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### a. M.Sc. in Psychiatry Research

The two year M.Sc. in Psychiatry Research program equips students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed as professionals in clinical and neuroscience research concerning mental health and illness. The coursework covers relevant current topics including clinical trials, genetics, neuroimaging, participatory research, psychotherapy research, early interventions, and personalized psychiatry. Students will improve their skills in critical appraisal, study design, statistics, data analysis, and scientific writing. Each student will complete an independent Masters' thesis research project under the supervision of one of our faculty. The program aims to educate both clinicians and non-clinicians in the scientific bases of mental disorders and their treatment. The emphasis of this program is to educate trainees on methodologies common to all medical disciplines (e.g., research design) and those which are more specific to psychiatry (e.g., diagnostic classification). The program does not aim to provide clinical training, but aims to develop highly skilled psychiatric researchers and clinician scientists who are well versed in the fundamentals of psychiatry and mental health research.

The six key objectives are to:

1. produce competent, skilled, ethical, and intellectually curious researchers of topics related to areas of psychiatry and mental health,
2. ensure that graduates have a thorough understanding of the nature of various forms of psychiatric and mental health disorders,
3. produce graduates who have an understanding of the neural and psychosocial contributors to various psychiatric and mental health disorders,
4. provide exposure to different modalities of research aimed at the understanding of origins and treatment of psychiatric/mental health disorders,
5. impart knowledge and skills in conducting psychiatric outcome and process research, whether psychotherapeutic or psychopharmacological, and
6. provide trainees with the opportunity to develop high-level research expertise on a relevant topic in psychiatry or mental health.

In order to meet these objectives, the methods by which learning will occur are flexible, including didactic coursework, seminars and thesis research. For some, the thesis project will provide the opportunity to gain exposure to clinical populations, while for others it will provide the opportunity to obtain relevant basic science research exposure.

### b. Research Areas

The Department of Psychiatry has active research programs in the following areas: mood disorders, early psychosis, cognitive health and rehabilitation, early detection and intervention in childhood psychiatric disorders, addictions and personality, sleep, impact of emotions and on mental health, brain imaging, and molecular mechanisms underlying psychiatric and neurological disorders.

## 2. APPLY TO OUR GRADUATE PROGRAM

### a. M.Sc. in Psychiatry Research

Admission to the program will require an undergraduate Bachelor's Honours degree, or equivalent from a recognized University. Applicants with non-honours Bachelor's degrees may be considered for admission based on subsequent equivalent research experience (e.g., honours equivalent). Students may be accepted with undergraduate degrees in a variety of relevant science disciplines, including, for example, neuroscience, psychology, biology, medical sciences, biochemistry, etc.

### b. General Information for All Applicants

Admission decisions for the upcoming academic year are made from mid January to February with the final deadline for applications and all supporting documents to be received by the Department of Psychiatry on December 1. Applicants will be required to identify one or more faculty members in Psychiatry who might serve as thesis supervisors. It is expected that students will contact these faculty members **prior** to the time of application and

discuss the faculty member's potential role as supervisor. A faculty member must agree to serve as the student's thesis research supervisor for the two-year duration of the degree program before a student can be admitted. Joint supervision ("co-supervision") will be permitted. Prospective students must apply for all external funding for which they are eligible and most applications for funding must be completed well in advance of graduate school admission decisions (See section 4b below).

c. Information for Clinician Scientist Program Applicants

CIP applicants are required to hold a medical degree from an LCME accredited medical school, current registration in a Royal College, or College of Family Physicians, Accredited Residency Program, and an Honours Bachelor's Degree in a basic science discipline. More information on the CIP program can be found here: <https://medicine.dal.ca/research-dal-med/programs/cip.html>

d. Information for International Applicants

International degree equivalencies can be found on the Dalhousie University Faculty of Graduate Studies web site. As the standard language of study at Dalhousie University is English, candidates whose native language is not English must demonstrate their capacity to pursue a graduate-level program in English before admission to any of our graduate programs. The standard test is the TOEFL. The minimum acceptable score is 580 for the written TOEFL, 92 for the internet-based test, and 237 for the computer based test. We recommend that potential students taking the non-computer TOEFL test should also take the Test of Written English (TWE) component. The following other tests will also be accepted with the following minimum scores: MELAB, 90; IELTS, 7, CanTest, average of at least 4.5 with no band score lower than 4.0; CAEL, 60 overall, with no band score lower than 50. The TOEFL requirement is waived if the applicant has completed a degree at an institution where the language of instruction is English.

e. How to Apply to the M.Sc. program

Faculty of Graduate Studies, Dalhousie University:

- Complete the graduate application form online or on paper.
- \$100 application fee.

Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University:

- ❖ Two reference letters from individuals who are familiar with your academic and research experience and your potential as psychiatric researchers either through the online reference system or by paper:
  - If using the e-reference system, Dalhousie University will only accept university email addresses [i.e. not Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, business, or government addresses]. The referee will be sent an email and directed to a secure website to complete the reference form. Please allow 5 business days for your referees to be contacted by our system.
  - If you are submitting a paper reference letter, it must be in a sealed, stamped envelope which is endorsed across the back seal by the referee and mailed to the address indicated on the form. If the reference is given to the student directly, do not open the envelope. Reference letters can be sent to:

Research Coordinator  
Department of Psychiatry  
Dalhousie University  
Abbie J. Lane Building  
5909 Veteran's Memorial Lane  
Halifax, NS B3H 2E2
- ❖ A written personal statement (two page max.) describing your goals and interests with respect to the program, as well as indicating a potential research supervisor and topic within the department .
- ❖ A current copy of your CV listing funding, publications, and presentations to date.
- ❖ An official academic transcript for each post-secondary institution attended, sent directly from the host university in a sealed envelope (a notarized translation is also required for each non-English transcription addition to an original transcript sent directly from the host university in a sealed envelope). Notarized copies will not be accepted.

f. Accepting a Position in Our Program

Offers of admission will be set in January and February. Students who are accepted into the program will receive an official letter from the Faculty of Graduate studies, following an email from the Department of Psychiatry. Waitlisted students and students who are not accepted into the program will receive a letter from the Faculty of Graduate Studies only.

Students who are offered a position in our program are asked to accept/reject the offer by April 15<sup>th</sup>. A response can be made directly to the Graduate Coordinators with a cc to the Research Coordinator. Students who accept a position are required to pay a non-refundable deposit which will be credited against the tuition and fees due in the Fall term.

### 3. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

#### a. M.Sc. in Psychiatry Research

The M.Sc. in Psychiatry Research program is a two year Masters Degree program with a thesis and a one year residency requirement. Students will be required to take two core courses (coordinated and led by members of our Department), one elective course related to their area of interest (which may be offered by other Departments), and a statistics course. Students must enroll in REGN 9999 every term for the duration of their degree.

##### ❖ Required courses in 1<sup>st</sup> year

Term	Course Code	Name
Fall	PSYR 6001.03	Core Perspectives on Psychiatric Disorders
Fall/Winter	PSYR 9000	Master's Thesis
Winter	PSYR 6002.03	Fundamentals of Psychiatry Research
Winter	PSYO 6001.03	Fundamentals of Stats & Design

##### ❖ Required courses in 2<sup>nd</sup> year

Term	Course Code	Name
Fall/Winter	PSYR 9000	Master's Thesis
Fall or Winter	Elective (to be determined with the supervisory committee)	
OR		
Fall or Winter	PSYR 5001.03	Independent Study

#### Course descriptions:

- **Core Perspectives on Psychiatric Disorders (PSYR 6001)**  
This course will provide instruction on the classification, description, treatment, and neurobiological and psychosocial underpinnings of the psychiatric and mental health disorders including, but not limited to: psychotic, anxiety, substance, mood, developmental, and personality disorders. As well, psychiatric aspects of sleep, pain, psychopharmacology, and animal models will be discussed. Emphasis will be placed on recent developments in these potential topics.
- **Fundamentals of Psychiatric Research (PSYR 6002)**  
This course will cover aspects of psychiatric research not discussed in the Neurobiology of Psychiatric Disorders course. It will touch on aspects of research methodology that are common to most forms of medical research, but focus on issues that are specific to research on psychiatry and mental disorders.
- **Fundamentals of Statistics and Experimental Design (PSYO 6001)**  
Offered through the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, this course will survey some common parametric statistical procedures in psychology, including analysis of variance and covariance. Major emphasis is placed on the general linear model and how best to apply the model as a function of the type of data, experimental design, and hypotheses under investigation. Some knowledge of basic statistics is assumed.
- **Independent Study (PSYO 5001)\***  
Students work closely with a faculty supervisor (who may be, but is not necessarily, their own program supervisor) on a topic of mutual interest. The faculty supervisor for the course is considered the instructor of the course. Study may focus on laboratory research or library research and empirical, methodological, theoretical and/or professional issues may be covered. A final report is required. \*option for elective requirement.
- **Elective requirement**  
Elective options can be found in Appendix 1.

#### b. Additional Expectations of All Graduate Students

It is expected, in addition to their thesis research, that students in the MSc program will become involved in “extra-curricular” research projects in their supervisor’s lab.

During both years, students must maintain a minimum 75% attendance rate at the regular Wednesday morning Clinical Academic Rounds. Weekly attendance will be taken. There is also an option to attend rounds electronically,

although in person attendance is always encouraged. You can attend on a laptop or desktop here:  
<https://dal.adobeconnect.com/a840580711/dalpsychiatryrounds/>

Students are also expected to respond to emails from the graduate program, Research Coordinator, etc. that request information from them. This may include but is not limited to providing information about presentations and publications, scholarship applications, progress, committee meeting dates/feedback, confirmation of funding, etc. Any email correspondence from the program will be sent to the student's Dalhousie email address.

#### 4. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Students are expected to apply for all funding support for which they are entitled.

##### a. Student Stipends

The department guarantees financial support of \$20,000 per annum for all non-resident graduate students in our M.Sc. in Psychiatry Research program for a maximum of 2 years, provided they are making satisfactory progress. For a funded student, an incentive is in place for students to apply for as many awards as possible for which they are eligible. If a non-resident student is successful in securing an external award, they will be topped up by 15% of the value of the award. For example, if the student secures an award for \$20,000, they would be topped up by \$3,000 for a total of \$23,000 each year they hold the award. Each term's funding is first put towards any outstanding balance on the student's account with the remainder being divided up for the monthly stipend. The outstanding balance would include the tuition/fees as well as anything else on the account (library fees, etc.)

##### b. Main Sources of Scholarship Support

Funder	Amount	Details	Deadline	Submit to
CGSM - Tri Council	\$17,500 Non-renewable	Select NSERC, SSHRC, or CIHR based on research interests.	December	Research Portal
Killam	\$20,000 Renewable	Must have applied to at least one other large ( $\geq$ \$10,000) scholarship. Nominated by the GPC. Must have $\geq$ 3.7 GPA in last 60 credits	January	Psychiatry- Research Admin.
IWK	\$13,400 Renewable	Supervisor must have significant research presence at the IWK and primary research occurring and funds held at the IWK.	January	Psychiatry- Research Admin
MSSU - SPOR	\$18,000 Non-renewable	For patient oriented research: Research considering patient interests and needs - the minimum unit of analysis is the patient.	January	MSSU
NSGS	\$10,000 Renewable	Must have $\geq$ 3.7 GPA in last 60 credits.	February	Psychiatry- Research Admin.
NSHRF	\$10,000 Renewable	Must have $\geq$ 3.7 GPA in last 60 credits.	March	NSHRF GMS (online)
SSCF CCNP (contact Jen for application)	\$18,000 Renewable	Pursuing research aimed at identifying the causes of or developing novel interventions for schizophrenia and related psychosis.	May	CCNP Admin

Information about how to apply for these awards is available on-line; additional information is available from the Research Coordinator or from the Faculty of Graduate Studies in the Henry Hicks Academic Administration Building. Pay particular attention to the deadlines and application requirements and note that internal deadlines may be several weeks earlier than the deadlines indicated on the websites. Be sure to follow all formatting guidelines and page restrictions.

##### c. Travel Grants

Travel funding is provided by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Department of Psychiatry. In order to be eligible, students must present a poster or paper based on the results of their graduate thesis research at a national or international scholarly meeting or conference. Travel costs can be claimed only for travel from Halifax to the location of the conference, and must be based on the lowest available fares. For conferences held in Nova Scotia only registration costs can be claimed, travel costs and per diem costs are not eligible. (Abstract, poster, banquet, and visa costs not eligible.) A letter of acceptance from the conference, or a copy of the conference program must be attached to the application. The letter of acceptance or conference program must include the name of the applicant, the title of the poster or paper to be presented and the date and location of the conference.

The maximum travel grant awarded is \$500 from the Faculty of Graduate Studies or \$1000 Department of Psychiatry/Faculty of Graduate Studies and this amount is subject to change. Applications can be found on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website and from the Psychiatry Research Coordinator.

d. **Conditions of Financial Support**

Financial support is contingent on engagement in full-time study/research and satisfactory progress in the graduate program. Progress is measured with respect to performance in classes and the completion of program requirements; it is also considered with respect to laboratory involvement, performance, and other measures of academic achievement and involvement (including regular communication with supervisors). Note that there is an expectation that all graduate students will be involved in ongoing research projects beyond the scope of their thesis research. These arrangements are often not formally controlled and depend on mutual agreement and trust.

Funding (and possibly also continued registration in our graduate program) is also contingent on the completion of an annual progress report (see Section 7.e), including the section that confirms an annual committee meeting and written feedback from that meeting. Progress reports are made annually and students who are experiencing difficulty will be alerted to any concerns that the Department has about their progress. Disagreements should be brought to the attention of the Graduate Coordinator. In addition to being contingent on satisfactory progress, financial support from the Department is also contingent on students having applied for external sources of funding, as recommended by their supervisors.

e. **CIP Funding Information**

Residents will receive an equivalent salary to their clinical counterparts. The funding for the students enrolled in the program can come from a variety of sources which include outside scholarships from national funding bodies, such as CIHR; specialty foundations, such as the Heart & Stroke Foundation; local bodies, such as the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation; or from internal sources, such as departments, divisions, and individual operating grants and contracts held by Faculty of Medicine researchers.

Funding for Graduate Studies in the Clinician Scientist Program must be secured through your Clinical Department Head or other source prior to acceptance into this program. A letter from the funding source will serve as sufficient documentation for this purpose.

Students in this program are not eligible for funding through the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

f. **Inform the Graduate Coordinator/Research Coordinator of Awards**

Graduate students are asked to please inform the Graduate Coordinator and Research Coordinator of the outcome of all award competitions – successful or not. While we appreciate learning about all scholarships, awards, travel prizes, research grants, and honours, it is critical that we learn the outcome of any large scholarship/stipends for which students apply. Not only does early notification allow us to prepare the paperwork needed to manage successful awards and calculate any required top-ups, it also allows us to determine how much departmental funding and grant money must be generated to support current students and/or new admissions. We are equally interested in all monetary and non-monetary awards that students may win; tracking this information over time will allow us to identify sources of graduate funding and also help promote the quality of our students and programs.

g. **Teaching Assistantships**

Because we have no undergraduate program in psychiatry, we cannot offer teaching assistantships. In some departments, funding is tied to teaching assistantships. The Department's funding model is different as students are funded independent of them providing TA duties. However, some students (particularly those desiring an academic career path) may wish to pursue teaching assistantships elsewhere. This would be their responsibility to approach the departments where they wish to TA and to organize that around their schedule in psychiatry. Supervisor approval must be granted before approaching any departments.

h. **Other Sources of Funding**

Students who hold a Dalhousie Graduate Scholarship, external, or Killam scholarship are permitted to do "extra" work for pay, but this is limited to a maximum average of 16 hours/week (unless a lower limit is established by an external funding agency). Note that this maximum is defined by semester, such that a student cannot elect to work, for example, 32 hours/week in the fall term and 0 hrs/week in the winter term and hope to have their funding eligibility maintained. Students who are not funded by a scholarship are not limited in the number of hours of "extra" employment they may undertake, but should consult with their supervisor and Graduate Coordinator when the workload is expected to exceed 16 hours/week.

i. Resident Clinical Responsibilities

During their Graduate Studies, residents may be permitted to participate in clinical work up to a maximum of 16h per week. All clinical commitments must be approved by the GPC and must not interfere with the research program.

j. Vacation

Graduate students are allowed 4 weeks of vacation per calendar year, unless otherwise specified by the agency that provides funding to the student. We expect students to discuss their plans for vacation time with their supervisors, well in advance of the intended absence. Graduate students should keep in mind that they are on a 12-month schedule that runs September 1-August 31 and that undergraduate holidays (e.g., Reading Week) are not necessarily university or graduate student holidays.

k. Leaves of Absence

The M.Sc. in Psychiatry Research is only offered as a full-time program. If circumstances arise that interfere with (or have strong potential to interfere with) a student's ability to engage in study and research on a full-time basis, FGS offers several options for leave: Leave of Absence (includes parental and sick leave, Program Continuance and Suspension of Studies). In the absence of a formal leave, students will be evaluated with the expectation that they should be, and are, engaged in full-time studies. Taking leave when it is needed is to the student's advantage; otherwise, a student risks dismissal from the program due to insufficient progress. Leave will not be granted or recognized retroactively (i.e., insufficient progress cannot be excused by referring to an interruption of studies for which no formal leave had been taken).

Students should carefully review these policies, as each type of leave has different implications for the student's total time in the program. For example, time spent on parental leave does not count toward a student's total time in the program (i.e., the clock stops ticking), whereas time spent on a suspension of studies leave continues to count toward the student's total time in the program (i.e., the clock keeps ticking). Further, students must be aware that their external funding may be affected by their leave of absence and should contact the Faculty of Graduate Studies or the appropriate funding agency for more information. As indicated in the FGS regulation, an application for leave must be completed by the student in consultation with the student's supervisor, and leave must be recommended by the Graduate Coordinator.

l. Health Coverage

Nova Scotia's Medical Services Insurance (MSI) covers all residents of Nova Scotia, but Canadians from out of province continue to be covered by their provincial medical system. All Visa students must have proof of health insurance prior to registration at Dalhousie.

Unless they can provide proof of existing coverage by the required deadline (see <https://studentvip.ca/dsu/>), all full time students will be automatically enrolled in the DSU Health Plan which is included in the fees for students who are admitted into the program in September; students with a January or May admission should contact the Health Plan Office for information about coverage.

International students are covered by the International Student Health Plan, the cost of which is included in the fees for students who are admitted into the program in September; students with a January or May admission should contact the International Student and Exchange Services for information about coverage. International students who are on a study permit are eligible to apply for MSI coverage the first day of the thirteenth month following the date of arrival in Nova Scotia as a student. Persons on Study Permit are eligible for MSI insurance services in NOVA SCOTIA ONLY; services rendered while outside the province would be the responsibility of the individual.

International students can opt out of the mandatory Dalhousie International Student Health Plan if the Nova Scotia MSI program covers them, but students should be aware that MSI coverage is limited and should weigh all their options before deciding to opt out of the International Student Health Plan. International students who elect to opt out of the International Student Health Plan after becoming eligible for MSI will need to make sure they have adequate health coverage any time they travel out of the province – as may be expected if students travel to conduct research or attend conferences.

For more information on MSI coverage please visit their website at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/msi/eligibility.asp>  
For more information on the International Student Health Plan please visit the DSU Health Plan Office website at <http://www.dsu.ca/services/health-plan> or the Dalhousie International Student & Exchange Services website at [http://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/student\\_services/international-centre.html](http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/international-centre.html).

m. Tuition and Fees



Current schedules for Graduate fees (including tuition) can be found at [https://www.dal.ca/admissions/money\\_matters/tuition\\_fees\\_costs/fee\\_schedules.html](https://www.dal.ca/admissions/money_matters/tuition_fees_costs/fee_schedules.html). Tuition fees are highest in residency years and reduce substantially in non-residency years. Tuition fees for residency years can be found under the heading for the *Faculty of Medicine/Masters*. Tuition fees for non-residency years can be found under the heading *Continuing Fees: All Other Programmes*. There is also a worksheet that can be used to calculate your monthly payments available from <http://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/funding/forms.html> under Forms and Documents.

n. **Payroll Errors**

Students are responsible for knowing their expected levels of financial support, tuition, and fees. Occasionally, errors occur in payroll or student accounts that must be corrected after-the-fact. Even if the error is unrelated to anything that the student or department has done, an overpayment of support (or an undercharge of fees/tuition) will result in the student being assessed the amount owing to Dalhousie; late fees and interest charges may also apply. Thus, it is vital that students use Dal Online to monitor their fees/charges and to review their bank deposits to ensure accuracy. Questions or concerns can be addressed to the Research Coordinator.

## **5. Master's Programs**

a. **Program Requirements**

Every graduate student must have an individually approved program of studies. The program of study for each graduate student must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator and submitted for final approval to the Faculty of Graduate Studies. By the end of the first term, the Research Coordinator will enter the proposed program (with the total number of credits required, the names and numbers of all courses required, including ancillary courses and any other requirements and conditions) on the Graduate Student Information System (GSIS). The graduate program requirements must be approved electronically by the student, supervisor (where applicable), the Graduate Coordinator and the Faculty of Graduate Studies. At this stage, the student and GPC are approving the requirements for the degree. Confirmation that the degree requirements have been met will be carried out in the Faculty of Graduate Studies as part of the degree audit for convocation. Once approved, the program requirements in GSIS constitutes an agreed contract between the student and the University and is used to audit the student's file for graduation. Any changes to the approved program requirement must be agreed to by the Graduate Coordinator and the Faculty of Graduate Studies by way of an update to the existing requirements already approved in GSIS.

b. **Course Assessment and Grading Policy**

Students will be provided with a course outline (syllabus) by the instructor at the first meeting of the class. In order to complete a course satisfactorily, a student must fulfill all the requirements as set down in the course outline. Changes to the outline that affect assessment components, the weight of individual assessment components, or examination requirements with a value of 10% or more must have the approval of at least two-thirds of enrolled students in order to be valid. When collaboration is included as part of course expectations, as in group projects or group assignments, the instructor will provide in the course outline a statement of the degree of collaboration permitted in preparation and submission of assignments.

Within four weeks after the beginning of each term, course outlines must be placed on file with the appropriate home faculty/school/college. The official grading system at the University is a letter-grade system. Students can expect that their final grade will appear on their record seven calendar days after an exam scheduled by the Registrar or 14 days after the last class where there is no final exam scheduled by the Registrar.

c. **Pass Standard**

Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations stipulate that graduate students must achieve a minimum grade of "B-" in all courses required for their degree program. Any lower grade will be recorded as a failure (F). A student who fails to meet these requirements in any year is immediately and automatically withdrawn (academically dismissed) from the program. A dismissed student may apply, in writing, to the Department of Psychiatry for reinstatement. Reinstatement to a program after a failing grade must be supported by the Graduate Coordinator, and must be approved in writing by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. If readmitted, any subsequent "F" will result in a final program dismissal. Note that academic withdrawal and reinstatement will be recorded on the student's official transcript. Students who receive two grades of "F" will receive a final program dismissal and will not be eligible for reinstatement.

## **6. Master's Thesis**

The student's program, determined by the GPC in conjunction with the student and supervisor, will be recorded by the Graduate Coordinator and submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate studies. Each Master's candidate is

admitted to work under the supervision of a particular faculty supervisor. The student and his/her supervisor agree upon at least two additional members of staff to serve on his/her Master's supervisory committee. This committee should be established by October 31 of the first year of studies. The primary function of the student's Master's supervisory committee is supervision of his/her thesis.

Any member of a student's Master's supervisory committee may be changed at the student's request, provided he/she can obtain the agreement of the two staff members involved in the change. There is no financial support for Master's work beyond the second year.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies require that you submit electronic copies of the final, successfully defended, committee accepted, properly formatted thesis by late August/early September in order to be eligible to convocate in the Fall following the second master's year. Information about the submission of electronic theses and specific deadlines can be found on the Faculty of Graduate Studies website  
<http://www.dal.ca/faculty/gradstudies/currentstudents/thesesanddefences.html>

Note that funding will end on the last day of the month in which the Master's thesis is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, as students who have submitted their final theses are considered to be finished their degree requirements and no longer in the program. Before this final copy of the thesis can be submitted, there must be a public, oral examination of the thesis. The written thesis must have been approved for defense by the student's Master's supervisory committee. The student must coordinate a defense date with the supervisor and Master's supervisory committee members; by agreeing to a defense date, the committee members are committing to be available in person on that day to examine the thesis at the oral defense. At least one month ahead of the agreed-upon defense date, the student must inform the Research Coordinator of the intended defense date so that a departmental representative can be appointed by the Chair of Department. The student must submit hard copies of the thesis to the Research Coordinator normally no fewer than 4 weeks before the defense date.

The Departmental Representative presides over the examination in the role of Chair. The Departmental Representative normally does not vote on the outcome of the defense but would vote only in the case of breaking a tie in votes from the other four examining committee members. An external examiner must also be invited. The external examiner will normally be an "internal-external" i.e., from another Dalhousie department and with expertise pertaining to the thesis content and/or methodology. An external can be invited from another university, but they must first be approved by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The external examiner must not be a member of the student's supervisory committee. In total, two members of the examining committee must not have served on the student's advisory committee (i.e., the external examiner and the Departmental Representative). A report on the defense, prepared by the Departmental Representative, will go in the student's file and will be presented to the Dean; it is helpful if this report includes information about whether the committee felt that the thesis was 'award-worthy'. The Departmental Representative should also send an email to the Graduate Coordinator to report on the successful defense and to indicate whether the committee felt that the thesis was 'award-worthy'.

- The supervisor will carry a large share of the responsibility for ensuring that the research problem is formulated and an appropriate study designed. Frequent consultation with the student's Master's supervisory committee is desirable, and at least two meetings of the committee and the student are suggested per annum. At least one such meeting must be held prior to the May departmental meeting at which graduate student progress is discussed (see below).
- The Master's supervisory committee is required to provide the student with written feedback on thesis progress on at least an annual basis. A copy of this feedback must be provided to the Research Coordinator to place in the student's file. The date of each committee meeting must be noted; this will have to be reported to FGS for the annual evaluations that the department completes each May.
- The main criterion for acceptance of the thesis will be the demonstration of research capability, rather than the production of a definitive or highly original research contribution. Where pilot work forms an essential aspect of the research effort, it can be reported in the thesis without jeopardizing the evaluation of the thesis by the Committee.
- Supervisors of students in the second year of the Master's program must monitor their progress closely. If a supervisor judges that his/her student will have difficulty completing the thesis by the end of the second year, the Graduate Coordinators should be alerted. If possible, this information should also be reported at the annual closed meeting to discuss student progress.
- To provide an interim assessment of second year Master's students, a GPC meeting will be held in January to which all supervisors will be invited.

a. Recommended Timeline for Formation of Master's supervisory committees

To accommodate the requirement that students hold a Master's supervisory committee meeting at least once per year and that the outcome of this meeting must be reported in the mid-May Annual Progress we suggest the following guidelines:

- ❖ Incoming MSc students should form a Master's supervisory committee no later than October 31 of their 1st year and must hold a meeting with that committee no later than the beginning of February in their first year.

Note: Students are encouraged to form their Master's supervisory committee early in their program, with the recognition that they may elect to change the composition of their committee, if necessary, as their project develops. Faculty supervisors are encouraged to discuss committee composition with students and to help guide the selection of appropriate committee members.

b. Master's Supervisory Committee Membership

The Master's supervisory committee must consist of the supervisor or co-supervisors plus two other members. This means that students with one supervisor will have a minimum of three committee members; a student with two co-supervisors will have a minimum of four Master's supervisory committee members. All members of the committee must hold an appointment through the Dalhousie Faculty of Graduate Studies or be approved as an External Scholar by the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

c. Master's Supervisory Committee Reports

The Faculty of Graduate Studies Guidelines recommend that:

*Supervisory Committees should meet at least twice a year during the thesis research period and more often in the writing stages of a student's program. Normally the agreement of all committee members is required before a department brings forward a thesis for examination.*

In conjunction with this recommendation, FGS requires that students be given written feedback following each committee meeting. To facilitate this, a ThesisCommitteeReport.doc form may be obtained from the Research Coordinator. This form-fillable word document is to be completed by the thesis supervisor and signed by all committee members following each student Master's supervisory committee meeting. Detailed feedback emailed to the student and cc'd to all committee members, the Graduate Coordinators, and the Research Coordinator may also suffice in place of this form. At least one completed form or equivalent evidence of written feedback must be on file in advance of the mid-May evaluation of student progress.

IMPORTANT: The FGS Annual Progress Reports require confirmation of meetings and written feedback; failure to provide such confirmation may have implications for student awards and funding.

d. Departmental Representative at Thesis Defenses

For each thesis defense, a faculty member not otherwise serving on the student's Master's supervisory committee will be asked to serve as the Departmental Representative. In advance of the defense, the representative will be given a copy of the student's thesis. While some Departmental Representatives choose to read the thesis and participate in the oral examination of the thesis, this is not required. The primary responsibility of the Departmental Representative is to serve as an observer to the defense proceedings to ensure that they are conducted in a fair and impartial manner.

The Departmental Representative will conduct the thesis defense by introducing the candidate and the examining committee; prompting the candidate to start the presentation and reminding the candidate of the 20-minute time-limit; ensuring no interruptions during the presentation; initiating rounds of questions, in the order that committee members are listed on the thesis announcement; ensuring that the dialogue is between each examiner and the candidate and that there is no 'cross-talk' between committee members or with members of the audience; opening the final round of questions to the audience; closing the defense; asking the candidate and audience to leave; overseeing the decision-making about the status of the thesis, including ascertaining whether the thesis is considered to be 'award-worthy'.

Following the defense, the Departmental Representative is asked to send a report by email to the Graduate Coordinator, cc'd to the Research Coordinator, to confirm that the thesis defense took place as scheduled and to report the outcome. It is very helpful to indicate whether the thesis and defense were deemed by the committee to be potentially "award-worthy".

## 7. ADMINISTRATION, REGULATIONS, AND GUIDELINES

### a. Graduate Program Committee (GPC)

The graduate programs of the Department of Psychiatry are administered by the Graduate Program Committee. The major responsibilities of the GPC are: Admissions, finances, student evaluation, curriculum (including course evaluation), advising and record keeping. The GPC is chaired by the Graduate Coordinators. A list of current GPC members can be obtained by contacting the Research Coordinator.

### b. Independent Study

#### i. Requirements

Registration requires written approval of the Graduate Coordinator of the unit. The syllabus will be developed together by the student and course instructor and each student must be provided with a final syllabus by the instructor. In order to complete the class satisfactorily, a student must fulfill all the requirements as set down in the class outline. By the end of the first week of class, the Independent Study / Directed Reading / Special Topics form must be submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies to be placed in the student's file, with a signed copy given to one of the Department of Psychiatry Research Coordinator.

Changes to the outline that affect assessment components, the weight of individual assessment components, or examination requirements with a value of 10% or more must have the approval of the enrolled student(s) in order to be valid. Changes must be sent to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and submitted to the Department of Psychiatry Research Coordinator no later than four weeks after the beginning of the term in which the class is conducted.

#### ii. Grade Submission

Grades for independent study/reading courses must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinators with a cc to the Research Coordinator.

For independent study courses if an extension is needed beyond the end of term deadline a grade of IP (not INC) must be submitted so that an "F" is not recorded on the student's transcript. Final submission of grades for independent study classes is April 30 for fall term and August 31 for winter term and full-year classes.

Note that if an extension is needed beyond the end of term deadline a grade of IP or INC must be submitted by the instructor.

#### iii. Registration

Students must continue to register for the class during each term until a final grade has been assigned.

### c. Courses Taken Outside the Department

To fulfill the course requirements of their degree program, students are allowed to complete courses at Dalhousie that are offered through departments other than Psychiatry. Courses taken outside of Psychiatry must be graduate-level courses; undergraduate classes cannot be taken for credit towards a graduate degree, regardless of the department or faculty in which the course is taken. Students must receive permission from the course instructor and the Graduate Program Coordinator to take the course. Once permission is granted, the student must see the Research Coordinator to ensure that the course is listed on the student's program form so that the student's tuition is used to cover the costs (otherwise the student may receive an additional charge for the course).

Students may not normally take a course at any other university and expect it to count towards their Dalhousie degree program.

### d. Minimum Passing Grade in Graduate Classes

As indicated in the FGS graduate handbook the minimum passing grade for graduate classes is a B-. With the exception of classes that use a pass/fail grading scheme, the grading scheme is A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, F.

### e. Annual Progress Report

By mid-May of each year, in advance of the annual GPC reviews of student progress, students will be required to complete an annual progress report. All students who are currently registered in a graduate program in our department must complete a report form for thesis students. This report is filled out online at DalOnline.

Students must complete their report through the Graduate Studies Information System which will then be sent to their primary thesis supervisor(s) to provide comments and approve it. The report will then go to the Graduate Program Coordinator. Final approval is provided by the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

Note that students are required to confirm supervisory committee membership, meetings and written feedback from their Master's supervisory committee. Failure to do so may have implications for funding and/or continued registration in our program.

f. **Recruitment and Use of Human Subjects**

All MSc thesis research must have approval from the appropriate Dalhousie or Nova Scotia Health Authority Research Ethics Board (REB). To determine which board is the most appropriate, check the guidelines in the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board website and consult with your supervisor.

Any other project that a graduate student might conduct as independent research must be approved by the Dalhousie REB. Graduate students must obtain independent approval for all their independent research projects even if their supervisor has approval for exactly the same project. This prior approval can be mentioned in the application. All grants require prior ethical approval before funds will be released. In a similar vein, all research conducted with school boards will require an additional – separate – approval from the appropriate board (school boards also require police checks). This approval can take time. Other organizations may also have separate procedures.

There are some general guidelines. Read the appropriate websites and do exactly what is asked. Most delays are caused by people who think that the rules do not apply to them. The REB has the authority to completely shut down your research if it feels that there are serious violations. The REB can shut down all research in your lab if it is felt that your supervisor was remiss. The decision of the REB cannot be overturned by the Department, by the dean, by the president of the university, or by the senate.

Pilot studies must be approved by the REB if the data collected will be retained (e.g., possibly published). Testing subjects with the intent of refining the experimental procedure while discarding any data is not a pilot study. When creating the protocol, it is best to think of the process as a part of the research program. The resulting ethics application will be of considerable use when it comes time to write the thesis, or the paper, or the grant application. Major changes require a re-review. However, minor changes can be treated as an amendment (e.g., adding undergraduates as experimenters, adding a similar task).

All of the above is subject to change without notice. The preceding should be considered as a guide.

g. **Procurement and Use of Animals in Research**

As the University-wide regulations concerning the use of animals in research may be under review, all students are urged to contact the Chair of the Animal Care and Surgery Committee. The following was true when this was written: As described in more detail below, all research projects proposing the use of vertebrates and invertebrates in research, teaching or testing at Dalhousie University must be covered by an approved protocol. If a graduate student's research is covered by their supervisor's protocol, then, in contrast to the regulations governing human research, a separate approval is not required. For further information on procurement and local handling policies, consult the Departmental Animal Care Committee.

Dalhousie Research Services (DRS) is responsible for the review of protocols proposing any use of animals. The functions and responsibilities of the DRS are defined by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) and are derived from the CCAC guidelines "Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals". Copies of the guidelines and university policies pertaining to the use of animals in research at Dalhousie are available from the DRS (<http://www.dal.ca/dept/researchservices/responsible-conduct-/animal-care-and-use-.html>). Activities relating to protocol review should be addressed to the secretary of the Chair of the University Committee on Laboratory Animals (UCLA). Requests for protocol forms, submission of new protocols or renewal of protocols and general inquiries should be directed to the secretary at 494-8075.

h. **Determining Authorship**

As part of their graduate program, students will be expected to publish scholarly work. Students and supervisors are encouraged to have an explicit discussion about expectations for authorship and order of authorship on published papers. The American Psychological Association (APA) provides guidelines that might prove a useful starting point for this discussion.

i. **Responding to Requests for Information**

As part of administering the graduate program, the department is required to periodically collect information from graduate students. Students are asked to please respond promptly to such requests so that we do not waste time and

resources repeatedly asking for the same information. Even if the purpose of the request is not always apparent, we value our students' time and will not ask for information that we do not need.

## **8. EVENTS**

### **a. Psychiatry Research Day**

Psychiatry Research Day is typically held in October and promotes student involvement in research and showcases the Department's diverse expertise to our university and local communities. Oral and poster presentations are judged by faculty members and awards are given in the following categories:

- ❖ undergraduate;
- ❖ graduate;
- ❖ resident;
- ❖ junior faculty; and
- ❖ psychiatry staff.

### **b. Graduate Student Research Day**

Graduate Student Research Day invites participation from graduate students from across the University, who are involved in health research. Normally held in May, this event typically receives over 80 abstracts, which are presented during this full-day of platform and poster presentations. Presentations are adjudicated by experienced researchers, in the spirit of helping students further develop their presentation and research skills.

In addition to providing an opportunity for students to present their research, this event allows a chance for students to learn about other health research happening in their community and to develop research collaborations with others outside their fields of expertise.