

Program Handbook

PhD In Applied Health Sciences

Specializations:
Behavioural & Population Health · Health Biosciences
Social & Cultural Health Studies

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About This Handbook

The content in this Program Handbook is accurate at the date of posting and is applicable for the current academic year. Program Handbooks are updated annually, and students should ensure they are referring to the current version. Occasionally, changes to policy and program requirements do occur so students should also check with their supervisor, Graduate Program Director (GPD), or the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (FGSPA) on critical matters where they are unsure.

This Program Handbook reflects general policies and guidelines from Brock University's [Graduate Calendar](#) and [Faculty Handbook](#). The specific documents can be consulted for further details.

1 WELCOME

Welcome to the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Applied Health Sciences (AHS) Program in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences (FAHS) (herein referred to as the “Program”). The Program centres on the development of knowledge through the systematic evaluation of evidence related to the health and well-being of individuals and groups. The goal of the Program is to provide students with the fundamental educational background and rigorous research training to gain the skills and independence necessary to critically examine basic and practical issues related to the health sciences. Course work emphasizes a broad approach to the subject area, with attention to research techniques and the application of research methodology, current paradigms, and related conceptual, philosophical, and theoretical issues in health science research.

Additional information about starting your graduate studies at Brock can be found on the [New Student Welcome](#) webpage, including details about course registration, Brightspace (Brock’s Learning Management System), and housing options.

2 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

2.1 Program Overview

Students in the Program pursue a course of study in one of the following fields: Behavioural and Population Health; Health Biosciences; Social and Cultural Health Studies. Each of the three streams is designed as a four-year program involving a combination of course work (see Section 8.2), and a focused program of research. The streams are highly flexible and designed to enable each student to collaborate individually with a supervisor and Supervisory Committee to construct a program of study and research that meets the students’ interests and needs. Lastly, the development of a program of research studies, the writing of a thesis, and the defence of the thesis to an Examination Committee consisting of both an External and an Internal Examiner are common elements for all streams.

2.2 Program Objectives

The Program prepares students for careers as university and college faculty, research scientists, teachers, and public policy analysts. The overall goals of the Program are to develop well-trained individuals who think creatively, are able to evaluate critically both their own work and that of others, and who can conduct research and scholarship at the forefront of their chosen fields.

Specific objectives of the Program are as follows:

- to foster students’ ability to do high-quality, scientifically rigorous research;
- to expand students’ understanding of concepts, theories, and research practices in their discipline;
- to provide students with the knowledge base and analytical skills to undertake independent research in the various fields of health sciences; and

- to enhance students' abilities to apply and disseminate new knowledge and practices to colleagues, practitioners, policy makers and other professionals in health sciences.

2.3 Program Outcomes

The Program offers students an educational opportunity that emphasizes an individualized program of study, including mentorship-style learning and concentrated inquiry in an area of interest, which leads to the completion of a research thesis. The required course work provides students with in-depth knowledge of conceptual and theoretical issues, while fostering superior research skills and a thorough understanding of the scientific process. The optional course work specific to the student's research area complements the student's research focus and provides additional breadth of knowledge. Thus, students gain in-depth training, knowledge, and research experience through their thesis work, while also benefiting from a broad, cross-disciplinary approach and extensive small group learning. A PhD student must demonstrate the ability to conduct research independently with a program of research that is both original and makes a significant contribution to the student's field.

3 PROGRAM GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The Program has several governance and administrative bodies that support students and faculty. An overview of Brock University's governance structure can be found on the [University Secretariat](#) webpage. The following committees and units are responsible for varying aspects of the governance and administration of the Program.

3.1 Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (FGSPA) works closely with Brock's six academic Faculties — Applied Health Sciences, Education, Humanities, Mathematics and Science, Social Sciences, and the Goodman School of Business — to:

- provide quality administrative service and support to current and future graduate students, supervisors, and graduate programs;
- support the personal and professional development of graduate students and supervisors;
- offer competitive funding packages to financially support students through their studies;
- integrate graduate studies into the research, pedagogical, and outreach missions of the University; and
- support the growth and development of graduate programs and the graduate studies sector.

For more information, visit the [Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs](#) website, including the [Contact Us](#) page.

3.2 Program Governance

Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

The Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University is dedicated to understanding health broadly to help gain, maintain, and restore it.

Through progressive teaching and research, our students and faculty examine topics ranging from developing forward-thinking health policies that benefit specific groups to revolutionary health care delivery that treats the individual.

Graduate Program Committee (GPC)

Graduate Programs at Brock University are governed by a Graduate Program Committee (GPC), administered by a Graduate Program Director (GPD), and supported by a Graduate Program Administrative Coordinator (GPAC).

- **Graduate Program Committee (GPC):** The GPC has responsibility for recruitment and admissions, preparation of the Graduate Calendar submission, course offerings, teaching allocations, scholarship adjudication, student progress, community liaison, responding to student concerns, changes to the structure of the Program and the selection of the GPD. The GPC is normally composed of the GPD (who serves as chair), faculty members representing the Departments of Health Sciences, Kinesiology, Nursing, Recreation and Leisure Studies, and Sport Management, and three doctoral student representatives from each of the specializations (when possible).
- **Graduate Program Director (GPD):** The GPD is appointed by the GPC to oversee the Program. The GPD carries out all duties in regular consultation with the GPC. The GPD typically serves a three-year term and has the support of an administrator/coordinator (see description of the GPAC below).
- **Graduate Program Administrative Coordinator (GPAC):** The GPAC oversees the day-to-day operations of the Program and provides administrative support to the GPD. The GPAC is often the individual who assists students with questions about the Program.
- **Graduate Student Representatives (GSR):** Each September, students in the first year of study elect three doctoral student representatives to represent each specialization for a 1–2-year term. Responsibilities include providing a graduate student perspective in discussions of Program issues, collecting and bringing student concerns to the attention of the GPC, serving as an information resource to other students, and facilitating graduate student social interaction (in-person or online), as appropriate. Representatives are excused from those parts of meetings where there is discussion of student admissions, student progress/evaluation, or other confidential matters as determined by the GPD. The Program also encourages students to elect a representative to the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) – see details below in Section 3.4.

3.3 Program Administration and Faculty

Important: All inquiries regarding the Program should be directed to ahsgradstudies@brocku.ca.

Graduate Program Director (GPD)

Shawn Beaudette, PhD

sbeaudette@brocku.ca

Graduate Program Administrative Coordinator (GPAC)

Joanne Kremble

ahsgradstudies@brocku.ca

A full faculty listing for the Program, along with profiles and research interests, can be found in the Program's [faculty directory](#).

3.4 Graduate Students' Association

The [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\)](#) is a student organization that represents the interests of all graduate students enrolled in a diploma, master's or doctoral program at Brock. Upon course registration each term, a graduate student becomes a member of the GSA and will gain access to all member benefits, including optional health and dental coverage, a transit pass, student clubs, and other supports and services.

4 ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND UNIVERSITY POLICY

Academic regulations and University policies pertaining to graduate studies at Brock University are outlined in the [Graduate Calendar \(Academic Regulations page\)](#) and the [Faculty Handbook \(section 3.B\)](#). All students are required to be aware of, and adhere to, these regulations and policies. Some relevant sections have been included in this handbook below for reference.

The Graduate Calendar sets out the regulations, programs and courses for the academic year indicated. Students may follow the academic policies and program regulations set out in the calendar of the term in which they were first admitted to the program or any subsequent calendar. Students whose studies have been interrupted for one or more years (by not enrolling in at least one course) become subject to the Calendar regulations in effect at the time of their re-registration.

Students can check their regulation and calendar year by accessing my.brocku.ca and visiting the Program Status page. For current course descriptions, restrictions, and prerequisites a student will refer to the current [calendar](#) and/or the [course timetable](#).

5 STUDENT STATUS

The Program is normally offered on a full-time basis. This status can only be changed for valid reasons with the permission of the GPD and the FGSPA.

Full-time graduate students are defined as students whose main focus is graduate study for the purpose of obtaining a graduate degree. Graduate study differs from undergraduate study in that it is, for most students, an activity that is highly concentrated, demanding and all-consuming. Full-time status is not solely dictated by the number of credits a student is enrolled

in each term. Additional details can be found in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, II. Student Status.

5.1 Continuous Registration

Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in each successive term from the time of initial admission until degree requirements are complete. This includes registration in a student's thesis course, AHSC 7F90, from the time of initial registration until degree requirements are complete.

Students who fail to register for any term, and who have not been granted inactive status or a leave of absence, are considered to have withdrawn from their program of study.

Additional details can be found in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, II. Student Status.

6 FEES AND FUNDING

6.1 Fees

The fee structure of graduate programs is outlined by Brock University and the FGSPA. Students should consult the [Graduate Tuition and Fees](#) webpage and the information provided in their offer letter for the most up-to-date information.

6.2 Funding and Financial Assistance

There are many sources of funding that may be available to graduate students.

- Brock internal funding support packages are available to eligible full-time, research-based PhD students. Details about your personalized funding package are normally included as part of your offer of admission and can differ from student to student. Funding sources may include scholarships, Research Fellowships, Graduate Fellowships, and Graduate Assistantships (employment income earned through teaching assistant or research assistant positions). Details are on the FGSPA's [Funding Information](#) webpage.
- Students may be eligible for a variety of scholarships, bursaries, and awards administered by Brock University. A complete listing of available awards is available on the FGSPA's [Internal Scholarships and Awards](#) and the [FGSPA Awards](#) webpages.
- External funding is generally secured by students through an application for grants and fellowships offered by provincial or federal governments, foundations or other agencies. These applications may be accepted prior to a student beginning their studies, or during their graduate studies.
- Check your eligibility to apply for loans through the [Ontario Student Assistance Program \(OSAP\)](#). Additional information is also available on Brock's [OSAP](#) webpage.

The student's supervisor will normally provide a minimum of \$5000/year in the four-year funded period through a research fellowship and/or research assistantship. This funding is at the discretion of the supervisor. A research fellowship has no expectation of additional work to

be completed by the student, outside of their thesis research. A research assistantship is employment, with a student completing work outside of the thesis research.

6.3 Graduate Student Employment

Full-time graduate students must limit their paid University employment, including Graduate Teaching Assistantships and Research Assistantships. There is no restriction with respect to time spent in paid employment for part-time students.

Additional details can be found in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, II. Student Status. For full regulations regarding Teaching Assistantships, including duties and rates of pay, see the [CUPE 4207 Collective Agreement](#).

7 SUPERVISION AND COMMITTEES

To complete the Program, each must have a supervisor and a supervisory committee.

7.1 Supervisor

Graduate students must identify a supervisor who oversees their program of study, including course selection, development and defence of the comprehensive exam, development and defence of the research proposal, progress through ethics review (if applicable), conduct of research, and writing and defence of the thesis and also encourage and support the dissemination of research findings.

In accordance with the statutes of the Brock University Senate Committee on Graduate Studies, it is the responsibility of the GPD to ensure the continuity of graduate students' supervision.

Students should be aware that only faculty members appointed to the Program can supervise graduate students. Furthermore, acceptance of a graduate student for supervision is the prerogative of the Faculty member and students are not usually admitted to the Program unless a Faculty member has expressed interest in supervising their studies.

Note: During discussions regarding any future supervisor-student relationship, Faculty members must not make any promises regarding admission into the Program. The ideal process for the matching of student and supervisor is one in which the interests of both student and supervisor are represented well and expressed deliberately. This implies that both would have to declare an interest in collaborating with each other. Initiation of the PhD Progress Report formally establishes a contract between the student and the supervisor regarding:

- 1) the expected steps and suggested timelines to be followed by the student; and
- 2) the supervisor's obligations to the student.

Note: The PhD Progress Report is an online form sent by the FGSPA throughout the duration of the Program.

PhD students may change supervisors through notification in writing to, and approval from, the GPD. Students are not permitted to continue in the Program for more than six months without a designated supervisor.

7.2 Supervisory Committee Composition

A PhD Supervisory Committee must comprise four members, the graduate supervisor and three additional faculty members. Programs (supervisor, graduate student, and GPD) may determine if additional members are required for a PhD student Supervisory Committee.

By the end of the second term, the supervisor, in consultation with the student, recommends the members of the Supervisory Committee to the GPD, who confirms their appointment. The Supervisory Committee must include:

- **Supervisor:** a FAHS Faculty member, appointed to the FAHS Graduate Program, and is approved for inclusion in the PhD supervisory list.
 - Oversees the student's:
 - selection of courses
 - development and defence of the comprehensive examination
 - development and defence of the research proposal
 - progress through ethics review
 - conduct of research
 - writing and defence of the thesis

If Supervisor is a FAHS faculty member:

- **Committee Members 1 and 2:** are FAHS faculty members appointed to the Program, holding the rank of Assistant Professor or higher
 - The Supervisory Committee advises the student *specifically* on:
 - the comprehensive examination
 - the research proposal
 - conduct of the research
 - write-up of the thesis
 - The Supervisory Committee will also examine the student at the comprehensive examination, the proposal defence, the internal assessment of the final thesis, and the final oral examination of the thesis.
- **Committee Member 3:** one member who need not be from the FAHS but holds an academic appointment AND a doctoral degree
 - The Supervisory Committee advises the student *specifically* on:
 - the comprehensive examination
 - the research proposal
 - conduct of the research
 - write-up of the thesis
 - The Supervisory Committee will also examine the student at the comprehensive examination, the proposal defence, the internal assessment of the final thesis, and the final oral examination of the thesis.

If Supervisor is a Participating Faculty member:

- **Committee Members 1, 2, and 3:** are FAHS faculty members appointed to the Program, holding the rank of Assistant Professor or higher
 - The Supervisory Committee advises the student *specifically* on:
 - the comprehensive examination
 - the research proposal
 - conduct of the research
 - write-up of the thesis
 - The Supervisory Committee will also examine the student at the comprehensive examination, the proposal defence, the internal assessment of the final thesis, and the final oral examination of the thesis.

Note: If there is co-supervision, two additional FAHS Faculty members are required to form a Supervisory Committee.

Note: A committee member who does not hold an academic appointment must be approved by the GPD. Likewise, a committee member who is not affiliated with Brock University must be approved by the GPD.

Note: If a Supervisory Committee member should become unavailable (e.g., leaves the University), the student, in consultation with their supervisor, should seek to replace this individual.

If a student's graduate supervisor leaves Brock University during the student's Program, the GPD has the responsibility to ensure that the student can exercise one of the following options:

- 1) Remain at Brock and change supervisor and if appropriate change thesis topic.
- 2) Remain at Brock and in the event that the supervisor has acquired adjunct status within a Department at Brock University, complete the existing thesis, adding a FAHS faculty member appointed to the Program as co-supervisor to the committee.
- 3) Remain at Brock and complete the existing thesis even though the appropriate expertise may not be available at Brock for supervision. In this case, the Supervisory Committee may seek advice from experts off campus or may arrange for the student to work off campus. It will be the responsibility of the Supervisory Committee (augmented, if necessary, by outside expertise) to advise the student on all matters regarding thesis preparation. The student is not precluded from seeking advice from the former Brock faculty member, but the former Brock faculty member has no privileged position with respect to the thesis. The Supervisory Committee will take precedence in all cases.
- 4) Apply to transfer to the university to which the student's former supervisor has moved.

If either the graduate student or supervisor wishes to initiate a change in supervision as described 1) and 2) above, it must be presented in writing with explanation to the GPD for approval. Any special arrangements described in 3) or 4) above must be approved by the GPD and the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, FAHS.

7.3 Meetings and Monitoring Research Progress

A successful collaboration between a graduate student and their supervisor is dependent upon effective, regular consultation. This implies that there should be regular and frequent contact during all stages of the Program, including course work, research, writing and defence of the thesis. It also implies that graduate students have the right of reasonable access to their supervisors. Under normal circumstances, students should be able to expect to have written work (of reasonable length) returned to them with the supervisor's comments within two weeks after it was submitted.

There should be a regular schedule of meetings between graduate student and supervisor; however, the frequency of meetings at any given time depends on the stage and nature of the research project.

As a rule of thumb, monthly contacts between a graduate student and their supervisor are desirable, if only to convey information about progress in the interim period.

Regular meetings with the Supervisory Committee are also recommended once each term.

8 DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Overview of Degree Requirements

The PhD in AHS is a four-year program involving a combination of coursework, a comprehensive exam, the conduct of an original research program, and the writing and subsequent defence of a thesis. Students are expected to complete their course requirements within the first three terms of study and conclude all program requirements (including a thesis defence) within twelve academic terms (four years).

The 'Academic Performance and Progress' section of this handbook, (Section 9), describes the suggested timeframes for completion of degree milestones. Students should consult with their supervisor when planning a program of study.

For a full list of graduate course offerings by subject area, please refer to the Courses tab within the navigation menu in the [Graduate Calendar](#). For a full list of scheduled courses for the current academic year, please visit the [Graduate Academic Timetable](#). Additional details about course registration can be found on the FGSPA's [Graduate Course Registration](#) webpage.

8.2 Courses

8.2.1 Required Courses

As outlined in the [Graduate Calendar](#), students enrolled in PhD Program must complete a minimum of four half-credit courses in addition to their research and thesis. Courses will be chosen in consultation with the student's supervisor, but normally will include:

- **AHSC 7F90** – PhD Research and Thesis

- **AHSC 7P01** – PhD Seminar in Applied Health Sciences (must be taken in first year of study)
- One of **AHSC 7P17** – Advanced Qualitative Analysis *OR* **AHSC 7P27** – Advanced Biostatistics in Applied Health Sciences Research

8.2.2 Elective Courses

Students must complete a minimum of **two half credit electives** numbered 5(alpha)00 or above with at least 0.5 credit being selected from the graduate level course offerings across the FGSPA. Students may take a Directed Study (AHSC 7P60) and/or Directed Reading (AHSC 7P61) course as an elective.

Instructions to register for non-AHSC elective courses can be found in the FAQs on the FGSPA's [Graduate Course Registration](#) webpage.

Please note that it is important to carefully consider your elective courses. Electives should complement other course offerings in the Program and inform your independent research or career objectives. For this reason, you are encouraged to speak to your supervisor, supervisory committee and/or GPD about your elective courses.

For a full list of graduate course offerings by subject area, please refer to the Courses tab within the navigation menu in the [Graduate Calendar](#).

Note: If a student has already taken a required graduate course during the Master's degree, the student must replace the required course with another graduate level course as approved by the GPD.

Note: If a student has already taken a graduate level statistics or research methods course equivalent to AHSC 7P17 or 7P27 during the Master's degree, the student may substitute an additional graduate level course as approved by the GPD.

Note: The 2.0 full credit course requirements are a minimum for the Program; a student's Supervisory Committee may recommend that a student needs additional course work to develop an area of expertise.

Note: GRST 5P01 will not be counted towards an elective to satisfy course program requirements and will be marked as "extra".

8.2.3 Course Evaluation

At the beginning of each course, course instructors must provide students with a course syllabus that outlines details about their evaluation, assignments required, as well as deadlines and associated penalties if applicable.

Students must meet the minimum academic performance criteria set out in the Brock University [Graduate Calendar](#) (see Academic Regulations, Section II). Additional details are below in section 9.1.

Grading. Evaluation procedures for courses will follow the current academic regulations for Graduate Studies at Brock University. A student must achieve and maintain satisfactory academic performance, with a standing of at least B in graduate level courses. Grades A+, A and B, and C are passing grades, but graduate credit will only be given for grades A+, A and B.

8.3 Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the Comprehensive Examination is to provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to synthesize current research, discuss strengths and weaknesses of area-specific research methodology and design, and to engage in knowledgeable academic discourse with other individuals in the chosen field of study. The comprehensive examination process is typically completed in a period of 3 to 4 months – this includes the time from receipt of the list of readings to completing the written and oral components. The **Examination Committee** will be comprised of the four faculty members that make up the Supervisory Committee.

8.3.1 Procedures

The **student** is responsible for initiating a meeting with their supervisor no less than six months prior to the time when they wish to take their Comprehensive Examination.

The **student** is responsible for informing the Examination Committee of their intent to take their Comprehensive Examination no less than four months prior to the anticipated date.

Through a collaborative process, the student and each Examination Committee member should develop an outline of the respective knowledge expectations and the associated reading materials (i.e., reading list). A reading list should be developed regardless of the format chosen. The student and supervisor should complete this process with each Examination Committee member, preferably during a committee meeting to allow a discussion among the student and all Examination Committee members, no less than three months prior to the agreed upon date of the written component of the Examination.

The **supervisor** must then formalize the date with the GPAC to ensure that an examination room is available and that all Examination Committee members can be present for the oral examination.

The GPD (or designate) will serve as the Chair.

The supervisor must submit the assigned reading list a minimum of three months prior to completing the written portion of the comprehensive examination to the GPAC.

8.3.2 Conduct and Format

The Comprehensive Examination is to be conducted upon successful completion of no less than 75% of the student's course work and within the first 18 months of the student's enrolment in the Program. At the time of taking the Comprehensive Examination, the student should have no standing deferred or incomplete grades, and the Comprehensive Examination must be successfully completed prior to the defence of the Research Proposal.

The Comprehensive Examination will consist of both Written and Oral components. The format of the Written exam must be agreed upon by all members of the Examination Committee. All written responses must be submitted electronically to the GPAC. The Written component of the Comprehensive Examination may take one of the following formats:

1. A total of four questions, of which three must be answered within an examination room at Brock University. Responses to each question are to be written within a six to eight-hour time frame, or as otherwise agreed by the Examination Committee and approved by the GPD. There is no page limit for the responses. The student submits the responses to the GPAC electronically. The student is eligible to receive their responses to the answered questions.
2. A total of four questions, of which three must be answered in a take home format. Responses to the three questions are to be written within 72 hours of receipt of the questions, or as otherwise agreed by the Examination Committee and approved by the GPD. There is no page limit for the responses. The student submits the responses to the GPAC electronically.
3. A Tri-Council grant application. The student and the Examination Committee must decide on the specific Tri-Council funding agency (i.e., SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR) to employ as the written comprehensive component. Submission rules and regulations of the specific Tri-Council agency, as well as reviewer criteria should be used as assessment guidelines regarding the quality of the written component. Assessment criteria and expectations including page or word limit and referencing format must be discussed with the student and documented by the Examination Committee upon choosing this option. The student submits the grant application to the GPAC electronically.
4. A review paper of which the topic must be decided upon in consultation with the Examination Committee and encompasses the areas of expertise of each Examination Committee member. Assessment criteria and expectations including page or word limit and referencing format must be discussed with the student and documented by the Examination Committee choosing this option. As well, although this paper maybe publishable, it will not be a component of the thesis document. The student submits the review paper to the GPAC electronically. For guidance on types of reviews that fit within the time frame for the comprehensive examination, please refer to the summary in Appendix 1.
5. A total of three research/scholarly or creative works in a take home format. Each of the three research/scholarly or creative works are to be written within four months of receipt of research topics, or as otherwise agreed by the Examination Committee and approved by the GPD. Assessment criteria and expectations must be discussed with the student and documented by the Examination Committee upon choosing this option. One research/scholarly or creative work is typically methods-related, while the other two are topics that must be decided upon in consultation with the Examination Committee (e.g. salient bodies of literature, theoretical approaches). If in a written format (e.g., traditional research paper), the responses to each research/scholarly paper should be no longer than 6,000 words, double-spaced, excluding references. If in a creative works format, the representation form and output must be decided upon in

consultation with the Examination Committee (e.g., art-based forms of representation, decolonizing methodologies). The responses must be prepared according to guidelines of sole authorship in the discipline. The student will submit the responses to the GPAC electronically if in written format or as agreed upon by the committee and the GPD if in a creative works format.

Any deviation from choices 1 through 5 above must be agreed upon by all members of the Examination Committee and receive approval by the GPD.

Note: Throughout the process, examination committee members and students are encouraged to schedule regular 'check-in' meetings (see Appendix 2 for "Tips"). These meetings can be used to support students as they prepare for the comprehensive examination process; clarify questions about examination material/readings and examination expectations. Meetings with examination committee members will not include providing direct feedback on the written component, including both draft and final versions of responses prior to the student's submission.

8.3.3 Evaluation

Responses to the Written Examination questions (see Section 8.3.2 #1. and #2.) will be graded on a PASS/UNSUCCESSFUL basis by the individual Examination Committee member who developed the question. A PASS (i.e., a grade of no less than a B- (70%) as described in the Graduate Studies Calendar) is required on EACH of the three questions to PASS the Written component of the Comprehensive Examination.

Evaluation of the Tri-Council grant proposal or review paper (see Section 8.3.2 #3. and #4.) will be graded on a PASS/UNSUCCESSFUL basis by each Examination Committee member. Documented assessment criteria should be used to assess the student's written work. A PASS (i.e., a grade of no less than a B- (70%) as described in the Graduate Studies Calendar) is required from each of the four Examination Committee members to PASS the Written component of the Comprehensive Examination.

Responses to the Written Examination questions (see Section 8.3.2 #5) will be graded on a PASS/UNSUCCESSFUL basis by all committee members for each of the three responses. A PASS (i.e., a grade of no less than a B- (70%) as described in the Graduate Studies Calendar) is required on EACH of the three questions to PASS the Written component of the Comprehensive Examination.

It is the responsibility of each Examiner to provide their evaluation of the student's response no more than 72 business hours following completion of the Examination, to both the student's supervisor and to the GPAC. The student should be notified of the results of the Written component of the Examination by the GPAC no later than 48 hours prior to the Oral examination.

Failure to Successfully Complete the Written Examination:

When a student fails to successfully complete the Written component of the Comprehensive Examination, they will be eligible to retake the Written component within six months. In

conjunction with the Examination Committee, the student should identify the content weaknesses and develop a plan (course work, supplementary reading, etc.) to address deficiencies in their knowledge base. The second examination will consist of the same content areas, but not necessarily the same format or questions, and should be conducted whenever possible by the same Examination Committee. Failure to successfully complete the Written component of the Examination after two attempts will result in the student's withdrawal from the Program.

8.3.4 Procedure for Oral Comprehensive Examination

The Oral component of the Comprehensive Examination will be conducted within five business days of successful completion of the Written Examination. **Please note, there is no oral presentation by the student at the start of the Oral Comprehensive Examination.** In addition, students are not allowed to bring notes to the oral exam, as they are to rely on their knowledge of the assigned reading lists. The Examination will be approximately three hours in duration and will consist of a minimum of two rounds of questioning. All members of the Examination Committee must be present.

For students who choose the answer three of four question format (see Section 8.3.2 #1. and #2.), they will respond first to the question which was not answered during the Written Examination, with subsequent questions being directed towards further clarification/enhancement of the Written Examination responses (Round 1). Round 2 follows with more in-depth exploration of topics within the body of knowledge in the area of expertise. The Examination Committee may deem subsequent rounds of questioning necessary. The Chair will record the questions being asked.

For students that choose to complete a Tri-Council grant application, review paper, or research/scholarly or creative works format (see Section 8.3.2 #3., #4., and #5.), Round 1 question will focus on further clarification/enhancement of the Written Examination, while Round 2 will consist of more in-depth exploration of topics within the body of knowledge in the area of expertise. The Examination Committee may deem subsequent rounds of questioning necessary. The Chair will record the questions being asked.

8.3.5 Evaluation

Responses to the Oral Examination questions will be graded on a PASS/UNSUCCESSFUL basis by each member of the Examination Committee. To successfully complete the Oral component of the Comprehensive Examination, the student must receive a passing grade (i.e., a grade of no less than a B- (70%) as described in the Graduate Studies Calendar) from each of the four Examination Committee members. The Examination Committee will make an immediate evaluation at the *in-camera* meeting that follows the Oral Examination. If the student is not successful at the Oral Examination, a decision about re-examination and the timeframe for doing so (within 6 months) is also established at this meeting. A second unsuccessful examination will lead to the student's automatic withdrawal from the Program.

8.4 Research Proposal

In addition to the evaluation associated with the required course work and Comprehensive Examination, PhD students are formally evaluated at two stages during the research phase of the Program. The first of these evaluations involves the presentation and defence of the Research Proposal. This evaluation should take place after the student, in consultation with their supervisor and Supervisory Committee, has developed a research plan and, typically, prior to submission of a project for ethics review.

The aims of the Research Proposal are:

- a) To provide the student with the opportunity to present, discuss and defend the research plan;
- b) To ensure that the proposed research design and methodology are consistent with standardized practice in the student's area of study;
- c) To examine whether the methods chosen will enable the student to develop a scholarly piece of research; and
- d) To obtain feedback on the research plan and readiness to proceed with the research.

The Proposal Defence should be within 24 months of enrolment in the Program.

8.4.1 Procedures

The specific procedures used for the Proposal Defence will be identical to those used for the final Thesis Defence, which are outlined in Section 8.6.

The Proposal Defence should also be seen as an opportunity for the student to give and receive feedback so that weaknesses can be identified and addressed in preparation for the submission to the appropriate Research Ethics Review Committee. Finally, while it is important that this evaluation be viewed as a positive opportunity for scholarly exchange and discussion of the topic between the student, the Supervisory Committee, and other members of the academic community, it must also be recognized that the Proposal Defence is an evaluation of the student's readiness to move further with the research phase of the degree. It provides an opportunity for the student to update the Supervisory Committee on other aspects of the student's progress (i.e., coursework) and academic preparation (i.e., conference attendance, teaching experience, etc.).

8.4.2 Format

This defence will be scheduled for three hours and will be chaired by the GPD (or designate). All members of the Supervisory Committee must be present at this meeting.

The following materials must be received by the GPAC for distribution to all members of the Supervisory Committee a minimum of two weeks prior to the Proposal Defence:

- 1) Research proposal document, and
- 2) An up-to-date CV.

In the Proposal Defence, the student will verbally present:

- 1) A proposed timeline for course work and research activities (*approximately 5 minutes*)
- 2) An overview of any teaching experience, research progress, publications, conference presentations, or other scholarly or academic activities such as seminar attendance, journal club participation, student council activities, etc. (*approximately 5 minutes*)
- 3) A summary of their academic progress to date (*approximately 5 minutes*)
- 4) Their research proposal, including introduction, objectives, hypotheses, methods, proposed statistical or data analyses (*approximately 15-20 minutes*)

The format of the defence following the presentation will involve two rounds of questions, with each Examiner questioning the student for 10-12 minutes in each round. The Examiners may request a third round if they feel it is necessary. The Chair will record the questions being asked and note any issues or areas that need to be addressed regarding the research and/or the thesis.

8.4.3 Evaluation

The student will be evaluated on the following components of the proposal:

Written Research Proposal. It is advisable that the Proposal be evaluated using criteria related to the theoretical framework, the scope, scientific vigour, feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed methods so that the student is aware of the expectations of the various Supervisory Committee members and so that specific suggestions regarding content, timelines, proposed methodology, and analysis can be incorporated into the planning of the work.

Presentation. The presentation should be evaluated based on both content and style. It is important that the student be made aware of features associated with good scientific presentation, style, and format. Feedback from the presentation should serve to better prepare the student for the presentation associated with the final University Oral Thesis Defence.

Defence of the Proposal. The student should be evaluated on their ability to defend the scientific merit of the study, to clearly explain the rationale and need for the study based on existing literature, and to discuss the strengths/potential weakness of the research questions, experimental design, methods, and data analysis of the study. Whenever possible, the format of questioning and the type of questions should be similar to what would occur at the final Oral Thesis Defence.

Upon completion of the questioning of the student, the Supervisory Committee meets *in-camera* to discuss the thesis proposal to ascertain what remains to be done before the student can apply for ethics approval (if applicable), and subsequent to ethics approval (if applicable), begin data collection. Both verbal and written follow-up instructions should be provided to the student.

In the instance when the proposal is deemed “unsatisfactory”, a second Proposal Defence must be scheduled 6-8 weeks after the first to allow the student opportunity to follow-up with each Supervisory Committee member. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that the changes being made to the proposal are in accordance with the requirements of the Supervisory

Committee. A second “unsatisfactory” Proposal Defence will result in the student’s withdrawal from the Program.

8.4.4 Original Research and Thesis

The purpose of the research and thesis in the Program is to give the student an opportunity to undertake advanced research in a significant problem in the field of health science. The student shall present a thesis embodying the results of original investigation, which has been conducted by the student. The thesis shall constitute a significant contribution to the knowledge of the field and must be based on original research conducted while registered in the Program. The results of the thesis should be publishable, either in whole or in part, by the student as first author. Upon successful completion of the thesis, the student will be qualified to conduct original, authoritative, independent research.

Appropriate clearance by [Brock University’s Research Ethics Board](#) or [Animal Ethics Committee](#) must be obtained before data collection can begin. Submission of ethics proposals is typically concurrent with or following the Thesis Proposal.

When the supervisor and Supervisory Committee believe a defensible thesis research document has been written, the formal Internal Assessment Meeting is scheduled to discuss the thesis (see Section 8.5 for more information). If the thesis passes the Internal Assessment meeting, a formal Oral Thesis Defence is scheduled (see Section 8.6 for more information). Successful completion of the Oral Thesis Defence, in conjunction with the fulfillment of the other degree requirements, constitutes completion of the PhD Program.

Note: Students are strongly urged to submit chapters to their supervisor throughout the writing process. This will reduce the chance of the thesis moving too far in an inappropriate direction. Depending on the nature of the research, it is often wise to submit selected chapters to appropriate members of the Supervisory Committee as well.

8.5 Internal Assessment

Once the student has a completed thesis and has received approval from their Supervisory Committee to proceed to the Internal Assessment Meeting, the student and/or supervisor should contact the GPAC to arrange a date and time for the meeting. **The student and all members of the Supervisory Committee must be present at the Internal Assessment Meeting.**

Before a Thesis Defence can be requested, the Supervisory Committee must ascertain the student’s readiness to successfully defend what is anticipated to be a final version of the thesis. This version of the thesis will have been reviewed by each of the Supervisory Committee members with their respective feedback incorporated. This evaluation occurs via an Internal Assessment Meeting, which should take place a minimum of two months before the GPD requests the Thesis Defence to ensure sufficient time for any revisions to the thesis. This meeting is not public. The final version of the thesis must be submitted to the GPAC no less than two weeks prior to the Internal Assessment Meeting for circulation to the Supervisory Committee.

8.5.1 Procedures

Student:

- The student must ensure that the thesis is complete and follows the format guidelines specified by the FGSPA and meets the [E-Thesis Format Specifications](#).
- The student must ensure that all members of the Supervisory Committee, the GPD, and the GPAC receives a copy of the thesis at least two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.

Supervisory Committee:

- The thesis must be reviewed and approved, with feedback incorporated, by all Supervisory Committee members before the meeting is scheduled.

GPAC:

- After being notified by the supervisor that the student is prepared to progress to the Internal Assessment Meeting, the GPD will ensure that the student has completed all other degree and course requirements. (**Note:** the Internal Assessment Meeting cannot be scheduled if there are any outstanding grades).
- The Internal Assessment Meeting is chaired by the GPD or designate (under extenuating circumstances the designate may be the supervisor).
- The GPAC will notify all members of the Supervisory Committee of the scheduled date and time of the Internal Assessment Meeting.
- Finally, the GPAC will arrange the booking of a room.

8.5.2 Format

The Assessment Committee consists of the Supervisory Committee (supervisor and three appointed committee members). All Supervisory Committee members must be present at the Internal Assessment meeting.

Chair of the Internal Assessment Committee:

- The Chair is responsible for verifying that there has been satisfactory completion of all degree requirements and that the appropriate documentation is available to confirm completion of the degree requirements.
- The Chair is responsible for verifying that all members of the Supervisory Committee have read the thesis and have enough knowledge of the thesis to examine the student and will not abstain from the voting based on a lack of knowledge.
- The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the examination is conducted properly, within the guidelines and timelines outlined in this document (see Section 8.5.3).
- The Chair, who is expected to exercise full control over the examination, does not participate directly in the assessment process (unless the supervisor acts as the Chair).

Members of the Assessment Committee:

- The specific responsibilities of the Assessment Committee are to examine the student on the content and implications of the thesis, to assess whether the thesis meets the proper standards of scholarship, and to vote on whether the thesis is acceptable, and that the student and thesis are ready to proceed to the Thesis Defence.
- At the end of the meeting, the Assessment Committee will also propose a list of three potential External Examiners, three potential Internal Examiners, and a minimum of 3 potential examination dates.
- The supervisor must complete the Appointment of External Examiner and Internal Examiner forms and submit both forms to the GPAC who will then submit it to the FGSPA. Note that this must occur at least 10-12 weeks before the expected date of the Thesis Defence. The FGSPA will formally contact and invite the External Examiner and send the completed thesis to the External Examiner.

Student:

- The PhD student will present and defend the thesis as described below.

8.5.3 Conduct of Internal Assessment Meeting

All members of the Assessment Committee will assemble at the scheduled location 10 minutes before the planned start of the defence. Currently, the procedures for the examination are reviewed by the Chair of the Assessment Committee.

These procedures include:

- The Chair confirms that all members of the Assessment Committee are present. It is the responsibility of the Chair to determine whether to delay the assessment or to postpone it to another date if all the Supervisory Committee members are not present.
- The Chair reports on the completion of all course requirements.
- The Chair confirms that each member of the Assessment Committee has read the thesis and has enough knowledge of the thesis to form a judgment as to its acceptability; this ensures that there will be no abstentions in voting on the grounds of ignorance of the contents of the thesis.
- The Chair discusses with the Assessment Committee the preferred format of the meeting, and the time allotment.
- The Chair reminds the Assessment Committee of the scope of the examination, specifically that the student is to be judged on both the content of the thesis and the oral presentation.

Conduct of the Examination:

- Once the Assessment Committee completes its pre-examination meeting, the room will be opened to the student.
- The Chair will make the introductions, explain the procedures to be followed, and invite the student to begin their presentation. The presentation can be a maximum of 35-minutes and summarizes the research and conclusions.
- This presentation will be followed by a brief discussion and/or comments and questions.

- As part of the dialogue of learning and as a collegial courtesy, the student is given an opportunity to make final remarks or address questions for clarification to the members of the Assessment Committee. Once the discussion period is complete, the Chair asks the student to retire while the Assessment Committee makes its deliberations.

8.5.4 Evaluation

Prior to voting, both the thesis and the presentation of the thesis should be discussed. As the decision concerns the readiness of both the document and the student for the University Oral Thesis Defence, the decision is essentially PASS or UNSUCCESSFUL. With either decision, the Assessment Committee makes recommendations concerning the presentation, necessary changes to the document, and further preparation that should be undertaken by the student.

8.6 Thesis Defence

The Internal Assessment Meeting determines whether the completed thesis is representative of proper standards and to examine the student on both the substance and implications of their research. It is the responsibility of the GPD, to ensure that all other requirements for the degree have been satisfactorily completed. The Thesis Defence is open to all members of academic staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, and public who wish to attend. Planning for a Thesis Defence should consider the deadlines for convocation as noted on the Brock University [Convocation site](#). Note that difficulties in scheduling a Thesis Defence may be compounded by holiday schedules.

Additional details can be found on the FGSPA [Doctoral Thesis](#) webpage and in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, X. Thesis Defences.

All members of the Examination Committee will assemble at the scheduled location 20 minutes before the planned start of the defence. Currently, the procedures for the examination are reviewed by the Chair of the Examination Committee.

The FGSPA outlines the required [format and procedures for a doctoral defence](#) here.

8.6.1 Procedures

Students are advised to use the following timetable to work backwards from the tentative date of the Thesis Defence. To arrange for a Thesis Defence, it is critical that the thesis be ready and submitted to the GPAC ten to twelve weeks prior to the Thesis Defence. Upon receiving the thesis, the GPAC submits a Supervisory Committee Approval of Thesis Form to the FGSPA, determines an official examination date for FGSPA approval, and suggests the names of the three prospective [External Examiners](#), and three potential [Internal Examiners](#).

8.6.2 Committee Composition

The Examination Committee will consist of the members of the student's Supervisory Committee, an Internal Examiner from Brock University, an External Examiner, and the Chair (designated by the FGSPA).

The **External Examiner** criteria can be found on the [External Examiner Approval form](#).

The approval of the External Examiner is the responsibility of the Dean of the FGSPA or designate.

The External Examiner's Report is directly received by the FGSPA. The report must be submitted ten business days prior to the Thesis Defence. The External Examiner's report will be shared with the Supervisory Committee and the graduate student prior to the defence.

The **Internal Examiner** criteria can be found on the [Internal Examiner Approval form](#). The internal examiner must be a faculty member of Brock. For programs with a faculty-wide doctoral program, the internal examiner may be from the program but must not be a current or planned collaborator or have collaborated within the past 5 years with the graduate student, supervisor or any of the supervisory committee members. The approval of the Internal Examiner is the responsibility of the AHS Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research or designate.

The Chair of the Thesis Defence is designated by the FGSPA.

8.6.3 Roles and Responsibilities Prior to the Defence

Student:

- The student must ensure that the thesis is complete and meets the format guidelines specified by the FGSPA Thesis Format Specifications ([E-Thesis Format Specifications](#)).
- The student must ensure that a copy of the thesis is sent to the GPAC ten to twelve weeks prior to the defence.

Supervisor:

- Submit to the GPAC the External Examiner form, providing three possible external examiners listing their academic work and contact information as well as a CV for the External Examiner listed as #1.
- Submit to the GPAC the Internal Examiner form, listing in ranked order three faculty members.
- Submit to the GPAC three possible defence dates and times that are available to all committee members and the student.

GPAC:

- Contacts the External and Internal Examiners for their availability for the defence dates and times.
- Confirms the defence date and time with all parties.
- Provides the name of the External and Internal Examiners who have agreed to serve to the FGSPA by submitting a Supervisory Committee Approval of Thesis for Oral Defence form.
- Send a formal invitation to the Internal Examiner along with the thesis.

FGSPA:

- Sends formal invite to the External Examiner along with the thesis.

- Advertises the Thesis Defence across the University campus.
- Receives the External Examiner's report and shares it with the supervisor and GPAC. This report must be received by the FGSPA at least ten business days prior to the defence.
- Thesis defence forms downloaded and provided to the Chair of the defence.

8.6.4 Written Document

The student must ensure that the thesis is complete and meets the format guidelines specified on the FGSPA webpage FGSPA Thesis Format Specifications ([E-Thesis Format Specifications](#)).

8.6.5 Evaluation and Possible Outcomes

Thesis grades for doctoral programs shall be reported to the FGSPA as either a PASS or FAIL grade. A PASS grade must be further differentiated as one of: i. Acceptable as is, ii. Acceptable with minor revisions (revisions that can be completed within 4 weeks; no new data or chapters required. Supervisor approves the revisions. In the case of Co-Supervision, both Supervisors approve.), iii. Acceptable with major revisions (revisions that can be completed within 3 months. Examination Committee chooses two or more of its members – including the Supervisor(s) – to verify that required changes have been made. In the case of Co-supervision, both supervisors and one or more members of the Examination Committee approves the revisions).

If a failing grade is awarded for a thesis, one resubmission is allowed, and a new examination is required.

Additional details can be found in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, V. Grading System for Graduate Courses.

8.7 Post-Defence Requirements

Following a successful thesis defence and completed revisions, additional steps must be completed prior to graduation. Additional details can be found on the FGSPA [Doctoral Thesis](#) webpage.

8.7.1 Required Forms

There are a number of forms that must be submitted to your GPAC, which are available on the FGSPA [Student Forms](#) webpage under Thesis Submission. Some forms are circumstantial*, but all students must submit the following:

- Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Theses
- Brock University Thesis and Major Research Paper Copyright License Form

*Under certain circumstances (e.g. to protect confidential commercial information, patentable material, pending submission to a journal for publication), the Vice-Provost and Dean of the FGSPA may approve restricting circulation of a thesis in the digital repository for up to twelve months from the date of a successful defence. Details and instructions can be found on the FGSPA [Doctoral Thesis](#) webpage.

8.7.2 Submission to Brock Digital Repository

Upon completion of thesis revisions and final approval from the supervisor, the student must upload their final thesis document to the [Brock University Digital Repository](#). Details and instructions can be found on the FGSPA [Doctoral Thesis](#) webpage. Please note, the thesis must meet the FGSPA Thesis Format Specifications ([E-Thesis Format Specifications](#)) to be approved by the FGSPA.

Important: Students will not be approved to graduate by the FGSPA until their thesis is finalized in the digital repository.

9 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS

9.1 Academic Performance and Continuation

Graduate students must achieve and maintain a minimum satisfactory academic performance to be eligible to continue in a graduate program. Graduate students must maintain a minimum cumulative average of at least a B-(70%) during each term of study. If a graduate student falls below the minimum cumulative average the student will be automatically placed on academic probation for the subsequent term by the FGSPA. A probationary student must achieve the minimum cumulative average, normally during the probationary term, to be eligible to continue as a graduate student.

As outlined in the Graduate Academic Regulations [University Faculty Handbook, Section 3-#B, 9.6](#), if the Supervisor and Supervisory Committee approves that the student has met all the candidacy requirements, such as all course requirements, comprehensive examination and successfully defending their proposal, the student will be admitted to candidacy. The GPAC will require the Supervisor to sign the PhD Candidacy Approval form to forward to the FGSPA to update the student's record.

Graduate students must demonstrate **satisfactory progress** before proceeding into the next year of the Program. Satisfactory progress is based on the timeline of activities to complete the Program as outlined in Section 9.2.

9.2 Residency Requirements and Recommended Completion Timelines

Full-time PhD students, once registered, must maintain continuous registration by registering each term until all degree requirements have been fulfilled. The residency requirement of a graduate degree program is the minimum number of terms in which the student must be registered on a full-time basis. **The residency requirement for the PhD Program is nine terms (three years) of full-time registration.**

Students must maintain adequate progress towards degree completion to remain eligible for further enrolment and financial support, as outlined in the following table:

Year 1	AHSC 7F90; required courses (Section 8.2.1); elective courses (Section 8.2.2) Establish Supervisory Committee
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	Prepare for Comprehensive Exam(s) Meetings with Supervisory Committee to discuss research / future directions Complete Progress Report
Year 2	AHSC 7F90 Comprehensive Exam Begin Research Proposal Write Literature Review and Methods Meetings with Supervisory Committee to discuss research / future directions Complete & Defend Research Proposal Submit Ethics Application Complete Progress Report
Year 3	AHSC 7F90 Begin Data Collection and Analysis Meetings with Supervisory Committee to discuss research / future directions Complete Progress Report
Year 4	AHSC 7F90 Complete Data Collection and Analysis Draft Thesis Write-Up Completed Thesis Revisions with Supervisor Distribute Thesis to Supervisory Committee Schedule Internal Assessment Meeting Further Thesis Revisions Thesis Submitted to Internal Examiner and External Examiner Thesis Oral Defense Final Thesis Revisions Complete Post-Defence Forms Thesis Uploaded to Brock Digital Repository

To document progress toward their degree, students will receive an email from the FGSPA to complete the online PhD Progress Report once every year. Students are also advised to have one Supervisory Committee meeting per term.

There are maximum time limits for completing Graduate Programs. Application for extension beyond these terms can be made to the GPD and must be approved by the FGSPA. ***PhD students must complete all degree requirements within six years from the date of first registration.***

9.3 Progress Reports

Initiated by the FGSPA, students must report on their progress annually, via the online PhD Progress Report. Students will receive an email noting that the report has been initiated and will have an opportunity to outline all relevant information requested on the report. The student's Supervisor and GPD will also review and report on the student's progress in consultation with the student and supervisory committee.

9.4 Final Stage Status

If an additional term beyond the standard length of their program is required to finish the Program, students can apply for Final Stage Status for reduced tuition in the final academic term. Students approved for Final Stage Status by their graduate program must have completed all course work, other program requirements and a complete draft of their Thesis that their supervisory committee agrees requires no additional chapters/sections. Students approved for Final Stage Status must be able to complete their exit requirement within the subsequent term. Final Stage Status will be awarded only once and for only one term.

The Final Stage Status form is available on the FGSPA [Student Forms](#) webpage under Registration and Student Status.

9.5 Application to Graduate

To receive their diploma, a student must apply to graduate through their my.brocku portal even if not planning to attend a convocation ceremony. Brock has two graduation ceremonies in June and October of each year. The deadline to apply to graduate is February 1st for the June (Spring) ceremony and July 1st for the October (Fall) ceremony.

Please refer to the FGSPA [Apply to Graduate](#) webpage for details on applying to graduate, and the FGSPA [Important Dates](#) page for convocation deadlines and dates.

Details about post-graduation work permits (PGWPs) can be found on the [Brock International](#) website.

10 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT, APPEALS

10.1 Academic Integrity

In accordance with the Brock University [Academic Integrity Policy](#), all students are expected to display the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic integrity means upholding a strong personal and professional ethic within your own work, and that of your colleagues. In upholding the principles of academic integrity, graduate students are expected to demonstrate respect and acknowledgement of others' words and ideas when conducting research, writing, publishing, and teaching.

For more information, visit Brock's [Academic Integrity](#) webpage and the [Graduate Calendar](#) Academic Regulations page (XII. Academic Integrity/Academic Misconduct).

10.2 Academic Misconduct

Integrity is fundamental to the process of research and scholarship, and misconduct damages the entire academic enterprise. Academic dishonesty, while traditionally defined as plagiarism, also includes inappropriate collaboration with other students, data falsification, fabrication of results, and the unauthorized resubmission of previous work.

In the event a student is suspected of engaging in academic dishonesty, professors will contact the GPD and there will be an interview between the GPD and the student. During this interview students have the right to have an advisor present such as Brock's [Ombudsperson](#). Additional procedures covering academic misconduct can be found on the [Graduate Students - Academic Integrity](#) webpage and in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations (XII. Academic Integrity/Academic Misconduct).

10.3 Appeals

Students who have concerns about a grade in a particular course or decisions regarding academic standing (e.g. passing the Comprehensive Examination, Thesis Proposal, Internal Thesis Defence or Final Thesis Defence) should refer to the procedures outlined in the [Graduate Calendar, section XIII Graduate Student Appeals](#) and the [Student Senate Appeals](#) webpage.

If the issue cannot be resolved, the student should refer to the pre-appeals procedures and appeal timelines as summarized in Faculty Handbook section III, [Appendix 1](#).

11 HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS

The health and safety of individuals is to be a primary objective in every area of operation at Brock University. Every person utilizing University premises must comply with this policy and all related regulations, standards, programs, and procedures. [Health, Safety and Wellness](#) provides information, resources, tools, and support to assist the Brock community in creating and fostering a healthy, safe, and environmentally sustainable place to visit, study, live, and especially, work. Students should also be aware of Brock's [Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#), as well as [Lab Safety](#) and the process for [incident reporting](#).

As outlined in the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act, students employed by the University are required to complete the mandatory [Health and Safety Awareness Training](#) available on SharePoint in the Health Safety and Wellness Toolbox (requires a Brock employee login).

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Human Rights Code, students employed at Brock University are legally obliged to undertake [mandatory online training](#) through Brightspace, Brock's learning management system.

11.1 Program-Specific Details

Some students in the PhD Program may require additional Health and Safety training (e.g., working in wet labs). Supervisors and students should discuss the specialized safety training that is required beyond the mandatory training.

12 STUDENT RESOURCES

Below are details about some of the services and resources available to students across Brock University, including those offered by the FGSPA. For a full list of services and supports available at Brock, please visit the University's [Services, Departments and Offices directory](#).

12.1 Program-Specific Resources

Connect with your GPAC to link to relevant program resources.

12.2 FGSPA Graduate-Specific Resources

Academic Writing Supports

All graduate students have access to the FGSPA's [academic writing supports](#) to help develop their writing skills. The Graduate Academic Support Specialist, in partnership with [Learning Services](#), offers a variety of one-on-one and group support and events (with in-person, online, and hybrid options) to help graduate students at all levels of study, including bookable sessions, workshops, and events to support their writing development.

Graduate Advising

[Graduate-specific academic advising](#) is available to all graduate students to discuss a variety of topics related to their studies in a safe, confidential environment. The FGSPA's Graduate Academic and International Specialist helps students navigate their graduate studies and overcome barriers that may impact their success. Students are encouraged to reach out at any point during their studies for guidance and support.

GRADvantage

[GRADvantage](#) is a centralized hub of academic and professional development resources, workshops, and events, aimed to help guide graduate student success. This framework is organized into five areas based on a student's unique interests and goals for the future: Communicator, Community Builder, Innovator, Leader, Researcher. Current graduate students can also complete the GRADvantage pathway on ExperienceBU to earn a certificate.

Additional Development Opportunities

Graduate students are encouraged to explore other [development opportunities](#), such as the Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition, Mapping the New Knowledges Graduate Student Conference, and GRADflix to share their research and practice their knowledge translation.

12.3 Additional Resources at Brock

Office of Research Services

The [Office of Research Services \(ORS\)](#) provides support to graduate students on internal and external grant funding opportunities, improving research communications and knowledge mobilization, and discovering real-world applications to research. Students are encouraged to contact ORS for further support.

Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre

Brock's [Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre \(SWAC\)](#) offers a range of services that support student mental health (e.g., crisis management, personal counselling), wellness, medical care, and accessibility. Students requiring accommodations during their graduate studies can contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) within SWAC.

Brock University Library

The [Brock University Library](#) offers a variety of resources to students, including scholarly content in digital and print format, diverse study spaces, innovative technologies, an institutional repository and open access publication platforms, and guidelines for research strategies. Hours of operation at Brock's various library locations, including the James A. Gibson Library in the Schmon Tower, can be found on the library's website.

Career Services

Brock's [Career Education](#) team helps students with career exploration, feedback on documents (CV, resume, cover letter, statement of intent), job search strategies, interview preparation, and personal branding. Students can contact the Career Education team for further support.

Centre for Pedagogical Innovation

Brock's [Centre for Pedagogical Innovation \(CPI\)](#) supports excellence in teaching and learning across Brock University, including instructional development, support on digital tools for teaching and learning, curriculum support, and fostering effective teaching. Graduate students can explore workshops and supports tailored for teaching assistants through CPI's website.

Brock International

[Brock International](#) offers in-person and virtual support services tailored specifically to international students, including immigration consulting, academic coaching, language support, transitioning to life in Canada and living in the Niagara region, and working as an international student. Details about these services and a listing of events and workshops for international students are available on the Brock International website.

13 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Graduate Students and Evidence Synthesis Reviews: Successful Strategies

Appendix 2: Tips for PhD Students as you Prepare for the Comprehensive Examination