

Program Handbook

MA/MSc in Applied Health Sciences

MA Specializations:

Community Health • Health and Physical Education
Leisure, Health and Wellbeing • Recreation, Sport and Community
Nursing • Sport Management

MSc Specializations:

Health Sciences • Kinesiology

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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, program chair or the Faculty of Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs on critical matters where they are unsure.

This program handbook should be read in conjunction with general policies and guidelines as outlined in the [Brock University Graduate Calendar](#) and the [Brock Faculty Handbook](#).

1 MASTER'S PROGRAM IN APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

1.1 Introduction

The Master's Program (MA/MSc) in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences (FAHS) at Brock University is centered in the development of knowledge through the systematic evaluation of evidence related to the health and well-being of individuals and groups. The Master's Program provides students with intensive research training and the fundamental educational background skills necessary to critically examine applied health science issues. Issues will range from an examination of those practices that contribute to disease or enhance health to identifying the mechanisms and processes that mediate effective management and development of sport, recreation, and health-related phenomenon. Consequently, course work will emphasize a broad approach to the subject area, with particular attention to techniques and application of research methodology, current paradigms and theories in applied health science, and related conceptual, philosophical, and theoretical issues. Thesis work will provide students with the opportunity to explore a particular question/issue in depth, under the mentorship of an individual FAHS faculty member. **Faculty members and their research interests are listed on the FAHS website <https://brocku.ca/applied-health-sciences/faculty-research/faculty-directory/> under Faculty & Research.**

1.2 Mission of the Applied Health Sciences Master's Program

The Master's Program (MA/MSc) in the FAHS offers a unique educational opportunity that emphasizes an individualized program of study, including mentorship-style learning and concentrated inquiry in an area of interest, leading to the completion of a research thesis. Course work in the student's key area will complement the student's research focus and provide additional breadth of knowledge.

Students gain in-depth training, knowledge and research experience through their thesis work, while also benefiting from a broad, cross-disciplinary pedagogical approach, with extensive small group learning. The Master's Program will prepare students to pursue a wide variety of career paths in health, kinesiology, nursing, physical education, recreation/leisure, and sport management. Advanced course work and extensive research experience will prepare students for further graduate training at the doctoral level.

Thus, the Master's Program in Applied Health Sciences will provide students with in-depth knowledge of conceptual and theoretical issues, while fostering superior research skills and an understanding of the scientific process. The objectives of the Master's Program are to:

- *foster students' ability to do high-quality, scientifically rigorous research;*
- *expand students' understanding of concepts, theories, and research practices in their discipline;*
- *provide students with the knowledge-base and analytical skills to undertake research in the various fields of applied health science;*
- *enhance students' abilities to apply and disseminate new knowledge and practices to*

colleagues, practitioners, policy makers and other professionals in applied health sciences.

2 GOVERNANCE OF THE PROGRAM

2.1 Senate Committee on Graduate Studies

The Graduate Program in the FAHS is overseen by the Dean of Graduate Studies and subject to review by the Senate Committee on Graduate Studies. The Senate Committee on Graduate Studies is responsible for considering and reporting to Senate on all matters relating to Graduate Studies, making recommendations to Senate on matters relating to graduate student admission, awards, curricula, examinations, promotion, and regulations with respect to Graduate academic matters.

2.2 Faculty of Applied Health Sciences Graduate Committee

A Graduate Committee, comprised of faculty members representing the Departments of Health Sciences, Kinesiology, Nursing, Recreation and Leisure Studies, and Sport Management, manages the Graduate Program on behalf of the FAHS. This committee establishes FAHS policies and procedures regarding admissions, curricula, and examinations. The Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, FAHS, chairs the Graduate Committee as well as oversees and administers all day-to-day operations of the Graduate Program through the FAHS Graduate Studies Office.

3 ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

3.1 Admission Policy - General

Admission to the Master's Program in the FAHS requires that students fulfill admission requirements of both the Brock University Faculty of Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Affairs (FGSPA) and the FAHS. Recommendation for admission comes from the FAHS Graduate Committee. Final approval and the offer for admission are by (FGSPA).

The Brock University (FGSPA) establishes regulations for admission, which specify the minimum entrance requirements. These requirements are designed to ensure that students entering a Graduate Program have both the capacity and preparation necessary to effectively undertake a program of study at the graduate level.

Possession of the minimum entrance requirements, however, does not guarantee admission. Because resource allocations play a significant role in the number of students that any graduate program can adequately accommodate, the University reserves the right to limit enrolment and to refuse admission to any student.

Brock University has a non-discriminatory policy to ensure against discrimination of applicants based on race, colour, national or ethnic origin, creed, sex or sexuality.

3.2 Registration Requirements

Guidelines for course registration and residency requirements are provided to current and incoming students prior to Fall registration and are outlined in the “Academic Regulations” section of the current [Graduate Studies Calendar](#). Students will receive registration materials including the deadline date for registration by email.

3.3 Academic Regulations and University Policies

Academic regulations and university policies are outlined in the [Graduate Studies Calendar](#). All students are required to be aware of and adhere to these regulations and policies. In the event of a change in policies, students shall be guided by those policies that were in effect upon their entry to the degree program. See Academic Regulations and University Policies within the [Graduate Studies Calendar](#).

3.4 Fees

The fee structure of the degree programs offered through the FAHS is outlined by Brock University and (FGSPA). Students should consult the Graduate Studies Calendar and the information provided in their registration package for the most current fee scale for their program of interest. Graduate students can view their funding package on the Student Funding page (GradStuFunding) in their Brock student portal.

3.5 Financial Assistance

Graduate students require financial assistance to pursue their studies. Graduate students in the FAHS are eligible for a wide variety of scholarships, fellowships, and awards administered by Brock University and the Provincial and Federal Governments (e.g., NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR, OGS). For a listing of scholarships available to graduate students, see the Faculty of Graduate Studies [External](#) and [Internal](#) Scholarship pages.

FAHS attempts to offer financial support, where possible, in the form of research and teaching assistantships. Based on an agreement with the Province of Ontario, the upper limit for hours of paid work in activities, other than those related to a student’s thesis, is a maximum of 520 hours per year, with a maximum of 240 hours per academic term. This includes all paid employment on campus including Graduate Teaching Assistantships and Research Assistantships. While FAHS cannot guarantee the maximum number of hours to each student, FAHS does provide opportunities on the basis of the availability of resources and student qualifications. Upon acceptance to the program, and every May thereafter, students will have an opportunity to apply for available assistantship/instructor positions within the FAHS. A listing of available positions and information on how to apply can be found in the Career Opportunities section of the Human Resources website <https://brocku.ca/careers/>.

4 APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES - MA AND MSC PROGRAMS

4.1 Overview

It is the intent of the Master's Program in the FAHS to broaden the students' level of understanding of their chosen discipline and provide them with the necessary scholarly and technical research skills to pursue a high-quality research project culminating in the presentation of a formal written thesis and oral defence of the thesis. The program emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach that fosters students' appreciation of theories and research developments in the various disciplines represented in the program, sharpens their critical thinking skills, and expands their analytical competence both within their area of interest, as well as outside the realm of a particular discipline.

The Master's Program in Applied Health Sciences is divided into seven fields with six fields in the MA option (Community Health; Health and Physical Education; Leisure, Health and Wellbeing; Recreation, Sport, and Community; Nursing; Sport Management) and two fields in the MSc option (Health Sciences; Kinesiology). Students are expected to pursue a course of study that emphasizes one of the fields represented within the FAHS. Students enter either the MA or MSc stream based on the field area of their supervisor and the subject matter of their thesis. Both streams are designed as two-year programs involving a combination of course work (see Section 4.4.1), and a focused program of research. Both streams are highly flexible and designed to enable each student to work individually with a supervisor and Supervisory Committee to construct a program of study and research, which meets their own needs. Lastly, the development, writing, and defence of a thesis are common elements for both streams.

4.2 Residency Requirements and Recommended Timelines

Full-time Master's 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 Master's Program in the FAHS is three terms (one year) of full-time registration.**

Students must maintain adequate progress towards degree completion to remain eligible for further enrolment and financial support. Students must maintain continuous registration each term in the thesis course, AHSC 5F90 from the time of initial registration until degree requirements are complete. The program is designed to be completed in two years and offer a funding package of two years. All data collection for the thesis should be completed no later than the end of the fifth term after initial registration. Six months should be allowed for analysis of data and thesis writing. There are maximum time limits for the completion of Graduate Programs. Master's students must complete all degree requirements within three years from the date of first registration.

Application for extension beyond these terms can be made to the relevant Graduate Program

Director (GPD) and must be approved by (FGSPA). Recommended timelines for completing various “landmarks” leading to degree completion are presented via the Timeline for Completion of the Master’s in Applied Health Sciences Degree (**Appendix A**). To document progress toward their degree, students are required to complete the Master’s Student Progress Report Form (**Appendix B**) once every year. Students are also advised to have one Supervisory Committee meeting per term.

4.3 Supervision

4.3.1 Selection of a Supervisor

Graduate students must identify a supervisor who oversees their program of study, including: selection of courses, development and defence of the research proposal, progress through ethics review (if applicable), conduct of research, and writing and defence of the thesis. In accordance with the statutes of the Brock University Senate Committee on Graduate Studies, it is the responsibility of the GPD/to ensure continuity of graduate student supervision.

Students should be aware that only faculty members appointed to the Graduate 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 Graduate Program unless a faculty member has expressed interest in supervising their studies. When approached by a student, potential supervisors are expected to inform the student of their availability, noting plans for sabbaticals or other planned leave that will occur during the student’s normal period of study.

Note: During discussions regarding any future supervisor-student relationship, faculty members are strongly advised not to make any promises regarding admission into the Graduate 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 working with the other. Initiation of the Master’s Student Progress Report Form (**Appendix B**) formally establishes a contract between the graduate student and the supervisor regarding:

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

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

4.3.2 Regular Meetings of Student and Supervisor

A successful collaboration between graduate student and 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, graduate 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 submission.

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 graduate student and supervisor are desirable, if only to convey information about progress in the interim period. Regular meetings with the Supervisory Committee are also recommended once in each term. (see section 4.4.3)

4.3.3 Structure of the Supervisory Committee

A Supervisory Committee that includes the supervisor will oversee a student's thesis research program. The student's Supervisory Committee advises the student specifically on the research proposal, conduct of the research, and write-up of the thesis. The Supervisory Committee will also examine the student Thesis Proposal Defence (see section 4.6).

By the end of the second term, the supervisor, in consultation with the student, recommends the members of the Supervisory Committee to the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, FAHS, who confirms their appointment to a particular Supervisory Committee. The Supervisory Committee must include:

- 1) The supervisor, who is a FAHS Faculty member or Participating Faculty, appointed to the FAHS Graduate Program.
- 2) Two Supervisory Committee members, who, in addition to the supervisor, are FAHS Faculty members appointed to the FAHS Graduate Program and hold the rank of Assistant Professor or higher as per the following:
 - If the supervisor is a FAHS Faculty member, one Supervisory Committee member who can be but need not be from the FAHS but holds a Doctoral degree (Note: A committee member who does not hold an academic appointment at Brock University must be approved by the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, FAHS).
 - If the supervisor is a Participating Faculty member, both Supervisory Committee members are FAHS tenure track or tenured faculty.

4.4 MA and MSc Degree Requirements

4.4.1 Course Work

Course Requirements. Students 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 5N01:** Current Issues in Applied Health Sciences Research (**non-credit course** required by both MA and MSc students)
- **One of AHSC 5P07, 5P17, 5P27, 5P37, 5P38, 5P47 or 5P57:** Research Methods – Quantitative or Qualitative Analysis (one of these courses is required)
- **Three half-credit course equivalent elective courses** at the graduate level, of which at least one **MUST** be from the offerings of the FAHS Graduate Program ([Graduate Studies Calendar](#))
 - For elective courses, students can choose to undertake only **ONE** unscheduled Directed Study (AHSC 5P60) **OR** a Directed Reading (AHSC 5P61) course.
 - Or can choose to take a scheduled graduate level course from FAHS, another* department within Brock University, or a course from another University as their elective credit(s).
 - Students in Leisure Studies, Nursing and Sport Management fields are required to take AHSC 5P32 (Leisure Health & Wellbeing), AHSC 5P30 (Recreation, Sport and Community), NURS 5P10 (Nursing) or AHSC 5P08 (Sport Management), respectively as one of the **three half-credit electives**.
* Students wishing to register in a course offered by another department at Brock University, or a course from another University, will need to contact the FAHS Graduate Program for special permission.
- In addition to the course requirements, a research thesis course (AHSC 5F90) must be completed. **Students must officially register in this course each term of your program.** The research project for the thesis will be chosen in consultation with the student's supervisor.

When to Register. Students are expected to complete their course requirements within the **first three terms** of study.

- **AHSC 5N01:** Current Issues in Applied Health Sciences Research – enroll in the first semester of study in which it is available.
- **One of AHSC 5P07, 5P17, 5P27, 5P37, 5P38, 5P47 or 5P57 AND three half-credit elective courses** in either the first or second term of study.

Grading. Evaluation procedures for courses will follow the current academic regulations for graduate studies at Brock University. As such, a student must achieve and maintain satisfactory academic performance, with an overall average of at least 70% each term in graduate level courses.

A student whose academic performance is considered unsatisfactory may be required to withdraw from the program. For more information regarding grading, please see Academic Regulations in the ([Graduate Studies Calendar](#)).

4.4.2 Original Research and Thesis

Research Proposal and Defence. The purpose of the research project/thesis in the Master's Program is to introduce students to the basic technical and scholarly skills of research. The student may choose to take a specific or multidisciplinary approach to the examination of a broader issue within the various fields of Applied Health Sciences. The research project should be one that can be completed, from proposal to successful defence, within 16-20 months.

Evaluation of Proposal and Defence. The student should note that, in addition to the evaluation associated with the required course work, Master's Degree students are evaluated at two stages during the research/thesis phase of their program. The first of these evaluations involves the presentation and defence of the thesis proposal. This evaluation should normally take place after the student – in consultation with their supervisor and Supervisory Committee – has developed a research plan, and prior to submission of the project to ethics review (if applicable). The second evaluation is the formal defence and examination of the thesis. The specific procedures, which should be followed for the proposal defence, as well as for the final written thesis and oral defence of the thesis, are outlined in Sections 4.5 and 4.6, respectively.

4.4.3 Supervisory Committee

A student's thesis research program will be overseen by the Supervisory Committee that is chaired by the supervisor.

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

- **Supervisor:** a FAHS faculty member, appointed to the FAHS Graduate Program, and holding the rank of Assistant Professor or higher
 - Oversees the student's:
 - selection of courses
 - 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 Member 1:** is a FAHS faculty member appointed to the FAHS Graduate Program, and holding the rank of Assistant Professor or higher

- The Supervisory Committee advises the student *specifically* on:
 - the research proposal
 - conduct of the research
 - write-up of the thesis
 - The Supervisory Committee will also examine the student at both the proposal defence and at the final oral examination of the thesis.
- **Committee Member 2:** 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 research proposal
 - conduct of the research
 - write-up of the thesis
 - The Supervisory Committee will also examine the student at both the proposal defence and at the final oral examination of the thesis.

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

If Supervisor is a Participating Faculty Member:

- **Committee Member 1 and 2:** FAHS faculty member appointed to the FAHS Graduate Program, and holding the rank of Assistant Professor or higher
 - The Supervisory Committee advises the student *specifically* on:
 - research proposal
 - conduct of the research
 - write-up of the thesis
 - The Supervisory Committee will also examine the student at both the proposal defence and at the final oral examination of the thesis.

If a student's graduate supervisor leaves Brock University during the student's program, the relevant 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 FAHS Graduate 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 in 1) and 2) above, it must be presented in writing with explanation to the relevant GPD for approval. Any special arrangements described in 3) or 4) above must be approved by the relevant GPD and the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies.

4.5 Research Proposal Procedures

4.5.1 Research Proposal Document

Master's students must submit and have approved by their Supervisory Committee a research proposal, which should normally include the sections described in the table below.

Section	Content
Introduction	Brief background on the area of study and detailed statement of the research problem and its significance in terms of its contribution to knowledge and/or practice.
Literature Review	Review of the literature in the area of study to establish student's level of understanding of the research topic.
Objectives/Research Questions & Hypotheses	A clear and concise overview of the major objectives/research questions to be undertaken and corresponding hypotheses (if applicable).
Methodology	A precise account of the methodology or research techniques to be employed, plus an outline of the proposed data analysis procedures to be used.

4.5.2 Proposal Defence Format and Evaluation

Students must present and defend the research proposal to their Supervisory Committee. It is the purpose of the proposal defence to establish the student's level of understanding of the research topic and to ensure that: (1) the proposed research design and methodology are consistent with standardized practice in the student's area of study, and (2) the methods chosen will enable the student to develop a scholarly piece of research. 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 (if applicable).

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 this defence is an evaluation of the student's readiness to move further with the research phase of the degree. Therefore, it is also required that this time be used to update the committee on other aspects of the students' progress (e.g., coursework) and academic preparation (e.g., conference attendance, teaching experience, etc.).

The quorum of the evaluation is comprised of all appointed Supervisory Committee members.

4.5.3 Evaluation of the Proposal Defence

The proposal defence will be chaired by the supervisor who will track the questions being asked and note any issues or areas that need to be addressed regarding the research and/or thesis. 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 rigour, 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 on the basis of 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 oral defence of the thesis.

Defence of the Proposal. The student should be evaluated on their ability to defend the scientific merit of the study, to explain clearly the rationale and need for the study based on existing literature, and to discuss the strengths/potential weakness of the design, methods, and data analysis of the study.

Proposal Defence Timeline	
Time	Components
Minimum 2 weeks prior to the defence	Distribute to all members of the Supervisory Committee the research proposal document. A copy should also be sent to the Office of the Associate Dean, Research & Graduate Studies
At the Proposal Defence Meeting	
5-10 minutes	Summary of student's academic progress to date including: timelines for course work and research activities list of courses completed/in progress

	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. Proposed timeline for remaining (if any) course work and research activities
20 minutes	Research proposal, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduction including research rationale and overall purpose • specific objectives and hypotheses • methods • proposed data analyses
45 minutes (15 minutes per examiner)	First Round of Questions: normally follow the format of questioning and the type of questions similar to what is likely to occur at the final oral examination
20-40 minutes	Second Round of Questions: normally follow the format of a formal committee meeting during which the committee would discuss, revise and agree on the final protocol and procedures of the study

4.5.4 Notification of the Student and Record of Evaluation/Completion

Upon completion of the questioning of the student, the student leaves the room, and the Supervisory Committee discusses the thesis proposal in order to ascertain that the research plan is appropriate and what remains to be done before the student can apply for ethics approval (if applicable), and subsequent to ethics approval, begin data collection. Both verbal and written follow-up instructions should be provided to the student. It is both the graduate student’s and the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that each Supervisory Committee member approves the research proposal prior to submission to the Research Ethics Board (if applicable). Formal approval to submit to the Research Ethics Board is verified by the signature of the supervisor on the FAHS Master’s Student Progress Report (**Appendix B**).

Should a proposal be deemed “unsatisfactory”, a second defence of the proposal must be scheduled after the student has had an opportunity to follow up with each Supervisory Committee member. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that the changes made to the proposal are in accordance with the requirements of the Supervisory Committee. A second “unsatisfactory” proposal defence will result in the student being asked to withdraw from the Program. Upon the completion of the defence, the Office of the Associate Dean, Research & Graduate Studies should be sent a memo by the supervisor, acting as Chair of the proposal defence, detailing the meeting’s progression as well as the specific outcomes of the defence.

4.6 Procedures for Defence of the MA/MSc Thesis

4.6.1 Thesis Defence Preparation

The research project will be assessed by an Examination Committee to determine whether the completed thesis is representative of proper standards of scholarship, and to examine the student on both the substance and implications of their research. It is the responsibility of the relevant GPD, to ensure that all other requirements for the degree have been satisfactorily completed.

Graduate thesis defences will normally be open to faculty, students, and the public and are scheduled for **3 hours**. A request for a closed defence must be approved by the Faculty Dean and Dean of Graduate Studies and will be based on certified medical or compassionate grounds.

The arrangements for a thesis defence will commence once all members of the Supervisory Committee have signed the **Appointment of the External Examiner Form (available from the program)** indicating their approval that the thesis is ready for defence. **Students must schedule a meeting with the Supervisory Committee at least 6 weeks in advance in preparation for the defence.** The key agenda items should be: the thesis final corrections and approval, the names of potential external examiners, and the committee members' availability for the defence.

Note. If a member of the Supervisory Committee disagrees on the readiness of the thesis, the committee must consult with the relevant GPD.

Planning for a thesis defence should take into account deadlines for convocation as noted in the Brock University ([Graduate Studies Calendar](#)). Note that difficulties in scheduling a thesis defence may be compounded by holiday schedules. Therefore, in order to arrange for a defence, it is critical that the thesis be ready at least six weeks prior to these dates.

4.6.2 Examination Committee Structure

Examination Committee. The Examination Committee will consist of at least:

- A designated faculty member or the relevant GPD – will act as chair for the Examination;
- the External Examiner;
 - The approval of the External Examiner is the responsibility of the relevant GPD.
 - With the approval of the relevant GPD, the External Examiner can be external to the student's graduate field and supervisor's department and may be internal to Brock University.
 - The External Examiner must have an *arms-length* relationship to the student and

the project, as well as being a recognized expert in the field, with considerable knowledge and experience in the area upon which the thesis is based.

- The External Examiner must be full-time, graduate appointed, faculty member from academic institutions with expertise in the area of the thesis.
- the student's supervisor;
- and the Supervisory Committee members.

4.6.3 Roles and Responsibilities Prior to the Thesis Defence

Member of Thesis Defence	Responsibilities Prior to Defence
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensure that the thesis is complete and follows a recognizable format for journals and the National Library ● ensure that all members of the Examination Committee (and any other member appointed to the committee) receive a copy of the thesis at least four weeks prior to the scheduled defence ● bring an additional copy of the thesis to the examination
Supervisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensure approval of final thesis document ● complete the Appointment of External Examiner form. Note that this must occur at least 6 weeks before the expected date of defence ● supervisor to submit a copy of the thesis, as well as the Appointment of External Examiner form to the Office of the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, to begin the process of scheduling a defence
Office of the Associate Dean, Research and Graduate Studies, FAHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensure that the student has completed all other degree and course requirements ● The relevant GPD will approve the Appointment of External Examiner form in consultation with the supervisor. Note that this must occur at least 6 weeks before the expected date of defence ● notify all members of the Examination Committee of the scheduled date, time and location of the defence ● will formally contact and invite the External Examiner, and is responsible for sending the completed thesis to the External Examiner ● will arrange the booking of a room, the necessary equipment, and will distribute notices of the defence to all academic faculty and students in FAHS, and to other Brock communication resources.

<p>External Examiner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsible for the provision of an independent and objective evaluation of the academic quality of the thesis • prepare a written appraisal of the thesis (External Examiner’s Report), which provides an assessment of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding of the subject matter (adequacy of literature review, identification of gaps addressed by research) ○ contribution to knowledge (originality, quality, and quantity) ○ adequacy and thoroughness of research and experimental work ○ analysis of results and value of conclusions ○ presentation of thesis (organization of material, presentation of results, style and references) ○ quality of typescript (format, freedom from errors) • This report must be sent to the FAHS Graduate Office at least 1 week prior to the defence • The External Examiner’s report will be sent to the supervisor and Chair; the supervisor may wish to share the report with the student and committee.
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Note: only supervisors can contact External Examiners. **Students are not to contact potential externals (this may be deemed a breach of academic integrity).**

Note: a defence cannot be scheduled if there are any outstanding grades.

Note: the Supervisory Committee (including the supervisor) must not contact the proposed External Examiner after the thesis has been sent to the External Examiner.

Note: if the External Examiner’s evaluation of the thesis is so unfavorable as to jeopardize the final approval of the thesis at a defence, the defence will be postponed, and the student must revise the thesis within a reasonable period of time in response to the External Examiner's comments. The thesis will then be re-submitted to the FAHS Graduate Office for delivery to the External Examiner. A decision by the External Examiner that the thesis is not ready for defence is binding.

Note: a change of External Examiner (exceptional circumstances only), must be justified in writing to the relevant GPD.

4.6.4 Roles and Responsibilities at the Thesis Defence

The quorum for an examination is three appointed Examination Committee members plus the Chair of the Examination Committee. Voting members of the Examination Committee include: the External Examiner, and the Supervisory Committee members, including the supervisor. The Chair of the Examination Committee does not vote.

Member of Thesis Defence	Responsibilities During the Defence
Chair of the Examination Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verifying that all members of the Examination Committee have read the thesis, and have sufficient knowledge of the thesis to examine the student, and will not abstain from the voting on the basis of a lack of knowledge • responsible for ensuring that the examination is conducted properly, within the guidelines outlined in the document provided to chairs by the FAHS Graduate Studies Office • does not participate directly in the questioning of the student • to guarantee that the student is given fair opportunity to defend the thesis • to ensure that the student alone, and not the supervisor or other members of the Examination Committee, defends the thesis • to protect the student from harassment
Examination Committee (including supervisor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operates within the full authority of the Brock University Senate Committee on Graduate Studies with respect to the examination of the student and the thesis • consider the appraisal(s) of the thesis prior to the oral defence • to examine the student on the content and implications of the thesis • to assess whether the thesis meets the proper standards of scholarship • to vote on whether the thesis and its defence are acceptable
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present and defend the thesis as described below

4.6.5 Format of the Thesis Defence

Timeline & Format of Thesis Defence	
15 minutes	Precursory Meeting of Examination Committee (see details below).
5 minutes	The Chair will make the introductions, explain the procedures to be followed, and invite the student to begin his/her presentation.
35-40 minutes	Student presentation summarizing the research and conclusions.
40-48 minutes (10-15 minutes per examiner)	Round 1 of Questions
20-40 minutes (5-10 minutes per examiner)	Round 2 of Questions
10 minutes	Round 3 of Questions (if deemed necessary) and few additional questions from the audience (if time allows).
5 minutes	Final remarks from the student
Deliberations and Voting	

Note: It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Examination Committee to intervene if, at any time during this questioning, the examination is becoming an inquisition of the student and/or is being unduly dominated by an Examiner.

Precursory Meeting of Examination Committee. All members of the Examination Committee will assemble at the scheduled location. At this time, the Chair of the Examination Committee will ask everyone but the Examination Committee to leave the room. The Chair will take up to **15 minutes** to review all procedures for the examination. These procedures include:

- The Chair of the Examination confirms that a quorum of a minimum of three appointed members is present. Should there not be a quorum, it is the responsibility of the Chair to determine whether to delay the examination or to postpone it to another date.
- The Chair confirms that each Examination Committee member has read the thesis and has sufficient knowledge of the thesis to form a judgement 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 reminds the Examination 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 defence of the thesis;
 - all modifications, other than minor corrections (i.e., typographical errors), that might be requested, must be raised in the questioning of the student to allow the student an opportunity to defend the issue;
 - the study represents an independent piece of scholarship/research. It is particularly important that when the study is part of a larger investigation, or when an individual other than the student is the principal investigator, that the Examination Committee fully establishes that the student's personal

contribution is sufficient to meet the requirements of the Master's degree.

- The written assessment of the thesis is read by the External Examiner. The supervisor and other Supervisory Committee members, should they wish, are invited to make an oral statement concerning the student and the thesis.
- The Chair discusses with the Examination Committee the order of questioning, the number of rounds of questioning, and the time allotment per Examiner. The recommended sequence is:
 - 1) External Examiner
 - 2) Members of the Supervisory Committee
 - 3) Supervisor

It is also recommended that there be two rounds of questions, with each Examiner allotted 10-12 minutes for questions in the first round and 5-10 minutes in the second round. A third round of questioning may occur if an Examiner has issues concerning the thesis which have not been raised, and which are important to the outcome of the defence.

4.6.6 Evaluation of Thesis and Defence of the Thesis

Voting. Prior to voting, both the thesis and the oral defence of the thesis should be discussed with regard to the various options (accept, accept with minor modifications, accept with major revisions, reject) available. Upon conclusion of the discussion, a vote is taken to *accept*, or *not to accept*, the thesis and its defence.

Decisions Regarding the Thesis and the Thesis Defence. Acceptance of the thesis and its defence requires acceptance by two-thirds of the Examination Committee, with all Examination Committee members having an equal vote. If the vote is in favour of acceptance, then a second vote will be taken to determine the terms of acceptance and nature of the changes to the thesis. The Examination Committee will specify the necessary revisions to the thesis and the date by which the revised 'final' draft of the thesis is to be returned to the FAHS Graduate Office. Students should typically plan:

- a) that it will require two to four weeks to complete minor revisions, and that the revisions must be approved by the student's supervisor and,
- b) that it will require four to twelve weeks to complete major revisions, and that the revisions must be approved by the student's supervisor plus one other member of the Supervisory Committee.

If there is more than one negative vote and/or abstention, the thesis is deemed unacceptable, and the examination is adjourned.

In the instance of an unacceptable thesis/defence, the student may, at the discretion of the Examination Committee, be permitted the option of re-working, re-submitting, and re-defending the thesis a second (final) time. This defence must be scheduled no later than one calendar year after the original defence. Voting Examination Committee members must provide the student with specific written feedback to guide the revision of the thesis. Under normal circumstances,

the composition of the Examination Committee for the second thesis defence will be identical to that of the original Examination Committee, and the same examination format will be followed.

5 APPEAL PROCEDURES

5.1 Grades/Academic Decisions

Students who have concerns about a grade in a particular course or decisions regarding academic standing (e.g., passing the Proposal or final Thesis Defence) should refer to the procedures outlined in the ([Graduate Studies Calendar](#)).

6 DIRECT TRANSFER FROM THE MASTER'S TO THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

6.1 Application Procedures

This opportunity is intended for *exceptional* students who show a rare talent commensurate with Doctoral work during their first year of their Master's program. A student in the Applied Health Sciences Master's program who meets *all* of the below criteria is eligible to apply to transfer directly to the PhD program:

- Completion of all Master's coursework.
- A minimum grade of 88% in each of the Master's courses and an overall average of 90% for these courses.
- Successful defence of the Master's research proposal.
- A publication record appropriate for the applicant's stage of career (as documented in their CV).
- Letter of support from each Supervisory Committee member (including the supervisor and appointed committee members).
- Submission of a completed application package to the FAHS Graduate Program Office by June 1st in the first year of the MA/MSc program.
- There must be available spots in the PhD program after all eligible applicants for the upcoming academic year have been considered.

The application package will be reviewed by the FAHS Graduate Committee, where additional information and/or an interview may be required. Members of the Committee who are a supervisor or member of the applicant's supervisory committee will not be present for the discussion and will not vote on the motion.

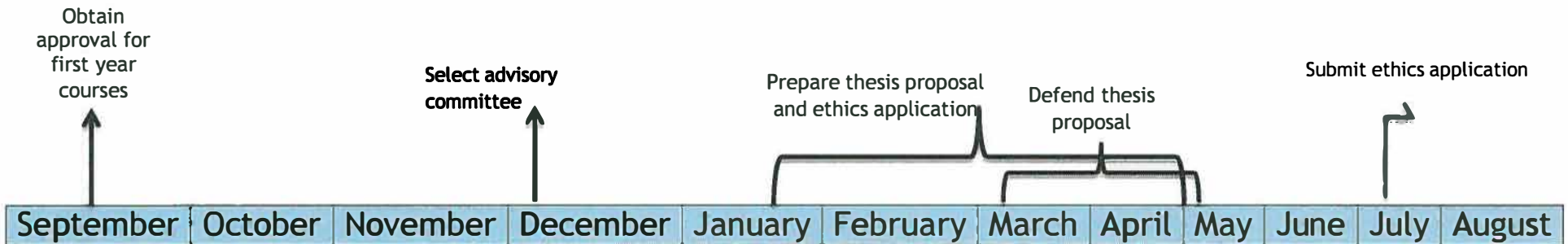
If the transfer is approved by the FAHS Graduate Committee, an admission recommendation will be forwarded to the FGSPA in time for a September 1st entry. January transfer admissions will not be considered.

Relevant 500-level credits previously earned will be transferred to fulfill the PhD course requirements except for AHSC 5N01, as it is a non-credit course.

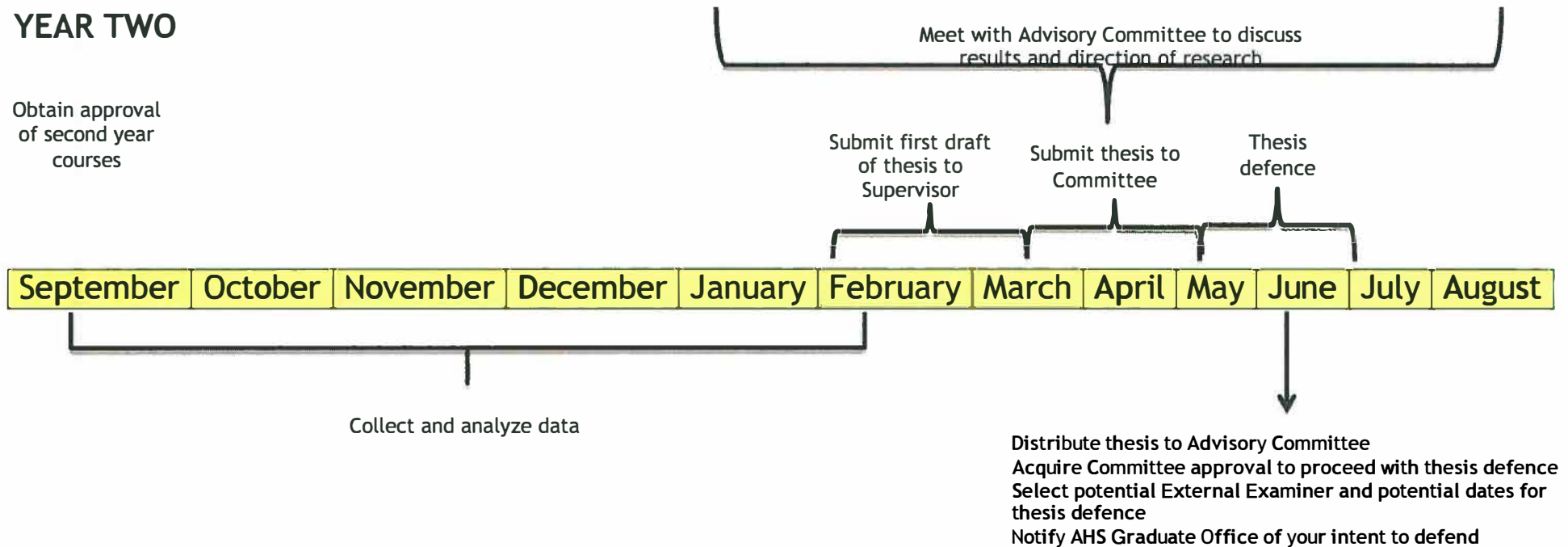
After being transferred to the Doctoral program, students who may have difficulties advancing in the program are eligible to return to the Master's program and earn their Master's degree without reapplying for admission.

Appendix A: Suggested Schedule of Tasks, Target Dates, and Approved Processes for Completion of the MA/MSc Degree in Applied Health Sciences

YEAR ONE



YEAR TWO



Date Ethics Approval Received:

Protocol Number:

Thesis Progress

Date Data Collection begun:

Date Data Collection complete:

Date Data Analysis complete:

Date First Draft of Thesis submitted to Supervisor:

Committee Approval of Thesis for Defence

Date of Meeting:

Supervisor submits the Appointment of External Examiner Form-Thesis is Ready for Defence:

Thesis Defence Date:

Approved External Examiner Name:

Chair of Defence:

Defence Results:

Result (select as appropriate): PASS FAIL

Supervisor's Approval:

Date:

Comments:



Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

Appendix C: Application for Direct Transfer from the Master's to the Doctoral Program

Section 1: Criteria for Consideration

- Completion of all Master’s coursework
- A minimum grade of 88% in each of the Master’s courses and an overall average of 90% for these courses
- Successful defence of the Master’s research proposal
- Submission of a 2-page PhD research proposal
- A publication record appropriate for the applicant’s stage of career (as documented in the CV)
- Letter of support from each member of the advisory committee
- Submission of a completed application package to the FAHS Graduate Program Office (ahsgradstudies@brocku.ca) by June 1st in the first year of the MA/MSc program
- There must be available spots in the PhD program after all eligible applicants for the upcoming academic year have been considered.

Section 2: To be completed by the student and submitted to the student's supervisor for review and approval.

Applicant’s Name: _____ **Student #:** _____

Degree: _____ **Field of Specialization:** _____

Current Term of Program: _____

Date Coursework Completed: _____ **Overall Average:** _____

AHSC 5N01: Pass _____ Fail _____

Course:	Mark:	Course:	Mark:
Course:	Mark:	Course:	Mark:
Course:	Mark:	Course:	Mark:

Date of Master’s Research Proposal Defence: _____

Title of Master’s Research Proposal: _____

PhD Proposal Document (2 pages) attached: _____ **CV attached:** _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Section 3: We have read the requirements for the applicant to transfer to the doctoral program and agree that the student's academic record, and research proposal meet the requirements for the doctoral program.

Supervisor Name:

Supervisor Signature:

Date:

Committee Member Name:

Committee Member Signature:

Date:

Committee Member Name:

Committee Member Signature:

Date:

Committee Member Name:

Committee Member Signature:

Date:

Section 4: The supervisor must submit a complete application package to the FAHS Graduate Office (ahsgradstudies@brocku.ca) before June 1st in the student's first year in the program.

Documents to be included in the Application Package:

Signed Application Form

Student's PhD Research Proposal (maximum 2 pages)

Student's CV

Letter of Support from Supervisor

Letter of Support from Committee Member #1

Letter of Support from Committee Member #2

Letter of Support from Committee Member #3 (if required)

The supervisor confirms the student meets the criteria as noted in Section 1 and the application is complete.

Supervisor's Signature:

Date of Approval by FAHS Graduate Committee:

Associate Dean, FAHS Graduate & Research Signature: