ESRC Graduate Programs (Sustainability Science and Society (MS), Sustainability Science (PhD)) Rules of Procedure 2023-2024

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INTRODUCTION

The ESRC is home to the Sustainability Science and Society (SSAS) as well as the Sustainability Science (SSCI) graduate programs and they are governed by ESRC Graduate Program Committee (hereafter 'the GPC').

The GPC will be chaired by the Graduate Programs Director (GPD) or their designate.

GRADUATE PROGRAM COMMITTEE (GPC) MEMBERSHIP

The GPC is comprised of all faculty members who teach in the programs and other individuals as described in Article 16 A.02 of the Brock University FacultyAssociation (BUFA) Collective Agreement (CA) 2023-2026.

Student Representatives

The SSAS student body will select one representative annually who will attend meetings of the GPC.

The SSCI student body will select one representative annually who will attend meetings of the GPC.

The responsibilities of a graduate student representative are clearly articulated in the SSAS and SSCI Student Handbooks and will be clearly outlined by the GPD at the graduate program orientation sessions each Fall Term.

Student representatives are responsible for attending GPC meetings to represent student views to faculty. Student members will be excused from the meeting when the GPC holds in-camera discussions.

GENERAL RULES OF PROCEDURE

Meetings of the GPC

The GPD (or their designate) will notify all members of each GPC meeting and provide a written agenda. Notification should be provided at least seven calendar days in advance of each meeting.

Meetings of the GPC can be called at the discretion of the GPD or through petition by at least half of the GPC membership.

The GPC will meet no less than once per term.

Meetings will be minuted by the ESRC Coordinator. The meeting minutes will be distributed via e-mail to all members of the GPC.

All meetings of the GPC will be guided by Robert's Rules of Order and the current Collective Agreement between Brock University and the Brock University Faculty Association in its proceedings.

The GPC will review, approve, and publish its Rules of Procedure by October of each year, with copies furnished to each member of the GPC, to the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and to the BUFA as per Article 16A.03 (c, d) of the CA.

Quorum and Voting

A quorum for voting on motions at meetings of the GPC will consist of 40% of the members. Quorum will be based on those eligible to vote on a given motion. Absentee ballots count toward quorum.

The voting majority is a simple majority on all business, including appointments. The GPD is entitled to vote on all motions.

Remote Meeting Attendance

Virtual attendance can be accommodated without undue disruption of the meeting, potential violation of confidentiality in proceedings, technological difficulties, or other problems arising from the process.

The Graduate Program Director should be given notice of absences as soon as possible in advance of the relevant meeting.

Electronic Voting

E-mail voting may be used to conduct the business of the GPC.

E-mail votes may be used if a motion to be considered is time sensitive and the GPC is unable to meet to consider the matter in a timely fashion and/or establish quorum. E-mail votes may not be used for motions that require secret ballots. All votes will be sent in confidence to the ESRC Coordinator (esrc@brocku.ca).

If the GPD wishes to initiate a process of e-mail voting on a motion, they shall adhere to the following process:

a) The GPD shall write to members of the GPC with the text of the motion and any supporting materials.

b) The first two members of the GPC who respond in the affirmative shall be deemed to be the mover and seconder of the motion.

c) GPC members shall then have 3 business days to vote on the motion.

d) Once every member of the GPC has voted by e-mail, or after 3 business days have passed, the GPD shall disclose the vote totals to the entire GPC via e-mail and declare the motion carried or defeated.

The results of any voting conducted via e-mail shall be recorded in the minutes at the next meeting of the GPC along with the wording of the motion.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR (GPD)

Duties of Program Directors are outlined in Article 16A.04 of the CA. Further to Article 16A.04, the GPD is responsible for:

- Working with the Centre Administrator and ESRC Coordinator, with regards to the SSAS and SSCI graduate programs;
- Consulting with appropriate Deans of Faculties and Chairs/Directors of other units as required (for teaching and supervision), liaising with the Co-op, Career and Experiential Education Office, and serving as a member of the Graduate Council;
- Overseeing the creation and distribution of publicity material, the Graduate Studies Calendar entries, and the Graduate Faculty and Student Handbooks;
- Overseeing the admission processes, allocating Graduate Teaching and Graduate Research Assistantships;
- Offering guidance to students on program plans; and
- Overseeing the general progress of students through the program, organizing thesis defences, and reviewing course outlines to ensure program integrity.

Graduate Program Committee Members

ESRC Home Unit faculty are members of the Graduate Program Committee. All faculty (Core and Participating) associated with the ESRC graduate programs are recognized as Faculty Affiliates of the ESRC.

Any BUFA member can apply to participate in the ESRC graduate programs (see Membership section below). Prospective applicants must submit a CV and a one-to two-page statement of intent outlining the relevance of their research and their planned contributions to the GPD of the ESRC graduate programs no later than June 1 of each year. The GPC will then be consulted, and individuals can be extended an invitation to participate (Article 16A.02), beginning July 1.

Appointment of GPD

Appointment of the GPD is governed by Article 16A.04(g) of the CA. Any member of the GPC can make nominations and stand for election to the GPD. The GPD will be selected through the following procedure:

During the Fall term of the final year of a GPD's term, the GPC shall record a vote indicating its choice for the next GPD.

This choice will be forwarded to the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences (hereafter "FOSS") who may consult further.

The Dean will forward the results of the vote and their recommendation to the Provost and Vice-President, Academic who will appoint the next GPD.

MEMBERSHIP

Core Faculty[1]

Individuals who are members of Brock academic staff (BUFA) are eligible to be Core Faculty. Core Faculty must have a PhD, supervisory experience, and an active research program.

Core Faculty have full voting rights in the proceedings of the GPC, are eligible to stand for appointment to the Sub-Committee of the GPC, supervise students, and teach in the graduate program.

Core Faculty are expected to participate in the proceedings of the GPC and serve on a minimum of one committee / sub-committee annually.

The process for becoming Core Faculty is as follows:

- Prospective applicants must submit a CV and a one to two-page statement of intent outlining the relevance of their research to the graduate programs and their planned contributions to the ESRC graduate programs.

- The GPD (or designate) will circulate all applications received to the GPC, as well as assess the fit of the application with the ESRC graduate programs.

- The GPD (or designate) shall bring forward all membership applications to the GPC at their next scheduled meeting, where membership decisions will be decided by a simple majority vote.

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[1] The category encompasses Faculty and Librarians in their respective responsibilities, roles and expectations when participating in Centres, Research Centres and Graduate programs as set out in the BUFA Collective Agreement, Brock University Faculty Handbook, and IQAP process.

- Faculty affiliations will be for five years. All Faculty members must apply for re-affiliation.

Participating Faculty[1]

Individuals who are Brock academic staff (BUFA) are eligible to be Participating Faculty. Participating Faculty must have a Ph.D.

Participating Faculty may apply to take part in the ESRC graduate programs but may not vote in GPC proceedings nor may they stand for election or hold office on sub-committees of the GPC Committees. They are eligible to be on supervisory committees and teach in the graduate program. They are also eligible to co-supervise students.

The process for becoming Participating Faculty is as follows:
- Prospective applicants must submit a CV and a one to two-page statement of intent outlining the relevance of their research to ESRC graduate programs.

- The GPD (or designate) shall bring forward all membership applications to the GPC at their next scheduled meeting, where membership decisions will be decided by a simple majority vote.

- The GPD (or designate) shall notify each applicant of the results of the vote.

- Faculty affiliations will be for five years. All Faculty members must apply for re-affiliation.

COMMITTEE PROCEDURES FOR TEACHING MATTERS

The roles and responsibilities of the GPC are set out in 16A.03 of the CA and it makes recommendations to the Centre Committee.

Assignment of Grades

Members of the GPC will acquaint themselves with the wording in the graduate calendar around the evaluation of student performance in graduate courses. For example, an A+ is reserved for work of outstanding quality that provides clear evidence of a rare talent for the subject andof an original and/or incisive mind.

Appeal of Grades

Student appeals are governed by Section B, 11 of the Faculty Handbook.

Course Evaluations

Refer to Environmental Sustainability Research Centre Rules of Procedure, Committee Procedures for Teaching Matters.

Freedom of Information Privacy Protection Act (FIPPA)

Full-time faculty members, part-time faculty members, and teaching assistants are required to retain all communications with students for at least one year.

Accommodation for Students with Mental Health Disabilities

The Student Accessibility Services office will communicate with instructors regarding students requiring accommodation for mental health disabilities. See guidelines posted at https://brocku.ca/health-wellness-accessibility/sas/.

STANDING SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE GPC (Graduate Program Sub-Committee)

The standing sub-committee of the GPC shall assist the GPD with operations of the ESRC graduate programs including faculty applications, feedback on course evaluations and course curriculum, admissions, scholarship adjudication, student progress, comprehensive examinations, and responding to student concerns. The sub-committee will also bring forth recommendations to the GPC regarding curriculum changes, program assessment, and reviews.

The standing sub-committee of the GPC is comprised of the following terms:
Graduate Program Director (ex-officio, voting)
Member (three-year term)
Member (one-year term for the first holder, then a three-year term thereafter)
ESRC Centre Administrator (ex-officio, non-voting)
ESRC Coordinator (ex-officio, non-voting)
ESRC Director (ex-officio, voting)

Any member of the GPC can make nominations and stand for election to the standing sub-committee. All individuals on the standing sub-committee of the GPC (except the ESRC Director and ESRC Graduate Program Director) are elected by simple majority vote of the GPC.

AD HOC COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

The GPC may strike ad-hoc subcommittees or task forces as deemed necessary.

Approved: October 18, 2023