

MA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
BROCK UNIVERSITY  
2022-2023

These Policies and Procedures are intended to conform to the requirements and regulations of  
the Brock University Faculty Handbook,  
the Brock University Graduate Calendar,  
and, where relevant,  
the Collective Agreement between the University and CUPE 4207.

Content is subject to change.

Last revised: June 30, 2022

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## Contacts

<b>Faculty of Graduate Studies</b> <a href="https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/contact-us/">https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/contact-us/</a>	
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## Web Page Links

English MA main Graduate Web page	<a href="https://brocku.ca/humanities/english-language-and-literature/programs/graduate/">https://brocku.ca/humanities/english-language-and-literature/programs/graduate/</a>
Graduate Calendar, English, 2022 - 23	<a href="https://brocku.ca/webcal/2022/graduate/engl.html">https://brocku.ca/webcal/2022/graduate/engl.html</a>
Important Dates (FGS)	<a href="https://brocku.ca/important-dates/graduate-studies/">https://brocku.ca/important-dates/graduate-studies/</a>
Important Dates (Registrar's Office)	<a href="https://brocku.ca/important-dates/">https://brocku.ca/important-dates/</a>
Faculty of Graduate Studies (main page)	<a href="https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/">https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/</a>
Graduate Tuition and Fees	<a href="https://brocku.ca/safa/tuition-and-fees/overview/graduate/">https://brocku.ca/safa/tuition-and-fees/overview/graduate/</a>
Drops Withdrawals and refunds	<a href="https://brocku.ca/safa/drops-withdrawals-and-refunds/">https://brocku.ca/safa/drops-withdrawals-and-refunds/</a>
Timetable (includes instructions for students)	<a href="https://brocku.ca/guides-and-timetables/registration/graduate/">https://brocku.ca/guides-and-timetables/registration/graduate/</a>
Humanities Research Institute (HRI)	<a href="https://brocku.ca/humanities/research/institute/">https://brocku.ca/humanities/research/institute/</a>
Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre	<a href="https://brocku.ca/health-wellness-accessibility/">https://brocku.ca/health-wellness-accessibility/</a>
Human Rights and Equity	<a href="https://brocku.ca/health-wellness-accessibility/">https://brocku.ca/health-wellness-accessibility/</a>

## SECTION I: GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### I.1 THE GRADUATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

The Graduate Program Director (GPD) is recommended by the Departmental Deployment Committee to the Departmental Committee. It is the duty of the GPD to oversee the graduate program in consultation with the Chair and the Deployment Committee. The usual term is three years. The GPD receives a half-credit course release per academic year. Specific duties include the following:

**a.** serving as Chair of the Graduate Program Committee; **b.** providing guidance to students who are enquiring about the program and/or their options in general; **c.** providing general guidance for resident graduate students, in consultation with the departmental Grants Officer and others with appropriate expertise, with respect to their applications for internal and external scholarships and fellowships, as well as applications to PhD or other programs outside the department; **d.** providing guidance for students with respect to their interactions with the program and the department, including selection of courses; **e.** overseeing the preparation and appropriate distribution of graduate program materials, which may include updating information and application materials, advertising posters, the graduate section of the departmental web site, the Brock Graduate Calendar, and other university publications; **f.** meeting with the incoming class to welcome them and to review departmental policies and expectations; **g.** assisting students in procuring Supervisory Committee members including Supervisor and Second Readers; **h.** ensuring that all student department files are kept up-to-date with respect to their progress, grades, graduate record forms, and so on; **i.** overseeing student progress by monitoring grades and bringing any related problems to the attention of the Graduate Program Committee; **j.** bringing unresolved student concerns to the attention of the Graduate Program Committee; **k.** mentoring new graduate supervisors as required; **l.** overseeing arrangements for thesis defences; **m.** serving as a member of the university Graduate Council—the purpose of the Council is to provide a forum for GPDs and others involved in graduate programs to meet and exchange ideas about administrative aspects of graduate programs; **n.** consulting with the Chair regarding deployment to the Graduate Program Committee; **o.** assigning, on an annual basis, a Graduate Program Designate to serve as a substitute for the Director when necessary (in the case of the Director's absence or a conflict of interest, for instance).

### I.2 THE GRADUATE PROGRAM COMMITTEE

1. It is the duty of the Graduate Program Committee to oversee and monitor the graduate program and to plan for further program development when appropriate. Relevant proceedings of the Graduate Program Committee meetings are presented at regularly scheduled department meetings for discussion and approval.

2. The Graduate Program Committee is composed of the GPD and, normally, three additional Department members. Specific duties of the Committee include the following: **a.** to act as the Admissions Committee; **b.** to assist the GPD in their duties as required; **c.** to approve all Supervisors, Second Readers and Supervisory Committees; **d.** to review the progress of each student in January and May of each year that the student is in the program (see Section III.6); **e.** to consider feedback about the program provided by the students. On the basis of this feedback, the Committee may make recommendations to deal with student concerns. These recommendations are forwarded to appropriate individuals through the Department Chair or are presented to the Department as a whole if the issues are related to general policy or procedures.

3. The Graduate Program Committee shall normally include one member designated as the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer's duties are the following: **a.** to publicize OGS- and SSHRC-award competitions and pertinent deadlines to senior undergraduate and current graduate students; **b.** to conduct, in the Fall, workshops for

undergraduate and graduate students on OGS- and SSHRC-award competitions; **c.** to review draft proposals for these competitions and to assist applicants in their search for appropriate letter writers; **d.** to serve on university awards adjudication committees established by the Dean of Graduate Studies in order to promote the value of applications from the Faculty of Humanities.

### I.3 ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

1. Applications for admission to the MA program, on either a full-time or a part-time basis, will be accepted from students holding an Honours degree or equivalent in English Studies, with an overall average not less than B+. Students with a co-major in English and a related discipline will be considered, although such students may be required to take additional qualifying undergraduate courses. Exceptions for students with unique circumstances will be considered. International students should consult the information on admissions offered online by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Owing to the subject matter treated, higher English language proficiency scores may be required for this program than for others.
2. In addition to the material required by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Department requires the following: **a.** a statement (of no more than two pages in length) of the student's specific scholarly (or, in the case of a writing project, literary) interests, with particular attention to a topic or topics and potential supervisor(s) appropriate for the Major Research Paper component of the program; **b.** a recent writing sample demonstrating the student's ability to generate an informed academic argument pertinent to the field (or, in the case of a writing project, an accomplished work in prose or poetry). The suggested length for this sample is between 10 and 25 pages.
3. The decision to admit rests with the Graduate Program Committee. Upon approval by the Committee, the admission process will be handled by the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
4. For application procedures, see <http://brocku.ca/nextstep/apply/>
5. Applicants accepted for program entry in the Fall academic term may request a deferral of one year if they are unable to enter as planned in September. This request is to be presented in writing to the GPD and must be accompanied by an explanation of the circumstances leading to the delay. If entry is delayed beyond the following September, reapplication for admission will generally be required.

### I.4 FUNDING AND EMPLOYMENT

1. Tuition and other fees for the current academic year are listed at the web site for Financial and Administrative Services: <https://brocku.ca/finance/students/graduate>
2. Students offered admission to the program shall be informed of the minimal level of financial support promised and the period of time over which this support will be provided. The minimum total financial support includes amounts received from internal University awards and from teaching and/or research assistantships.
3. Students are encouraged to apply for internal and external scholarships and grants and to consult the departmental Grants Officer, early in the Fall, to learn more. Canadian citizens and permanent residents are eligible for Ontario Graduate Scholarships and can apply to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and other provincial and federal funding agencies for scholarships and fellowships. There are also many scholarships and bursaries available to particular groups or students who can demonstrate need. Information about scholarships and bursaries can be obtained from the Faculty of Graduate Studies (<https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/scholarships-awards/>) and the Graduate Calendar.

4. Some support is available from the university to full-time graduate students who apply for the reimbursement of expenses incurred in presenting original research at academic conferences. Students are encouraged to contact the GPD in advance of such expenses for advice on how to apply to the Department and the Faculty of Graduate Studies for such funds. Graduate students whose applications to the Humanities Research Institute are accepted may be eligible for further support. Please note that, according to University regulations, original receipts must be submitted to be reimbursed for expenses, and not all expenses are eligible for reimbursement.
5. Graduate Teaching Assistantships are governed by the provisions of the CUPE 4207 Unit 1 Collective Agreement: general information at <http://4207.cupe.ca> and Unit 1 CA at <https://4207.cupe.ca/files/2021/03/UNIT1-CA-Sept-7-2019-Sept-6-2022-Final2-1.pdf>. The nominal number of hours of work per term is 120 (see Article 22.01 [b]). According to Article 22.04 (a), “Graduate Students enrolled at Brock University shall not accept an appointment in excess of an average of ten (10) hours per week over an academic term, in which she is enrolled as a full-time student, without the prior permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies. Such permission shall not be unreasonably denied; however, the Parties recognize the importance of this workload limit as it relates to a student’s time to completion.”
6. It is each individual course instructor’s responsibility to meet with their TAs at the beginning of the term for advance discussion of the work expected and the scheduling of duties throughout the term. These will be detailed in an Allocation of Hours form distributed by the Department at the start of each contract. Teaching Assistants are expected to lead seminars, hold office hours, correspond by email with students, attend course lectures, and grade student participation, tests, essays and examinations, as outlined in the Allocation of Hours form. It is the Department’s responsibility to ensure that adequate preparation time is allowed, and it is the graduate student’s responsibility to be prepared. Graduate students are urged to familiarize themselves with the relevant articles from the [CUPE 4207 Collective Agreement](#), with further information available through <http://4207.cupe.ca>. See especially the following articles: Preference in Hiring (15.02); Academic Freedom (17); Graduate Student Teaching Assistantship (22.01 [b]); Workload Limits (22.06 [a]); Allocation of Hours (22.05); and Rates of Pay (Appendix B).
7. Graduate Research Assistants are usually paid from research grants and contracts for assistance with specific research projects. When payment is for assistance with research not closely related to the student’s thesis research, the average number of hours worked per week must not exceed 10 (including TA hours, if applicable). Permission for a graduate student to work more than an average of 10 hours a week requires prior permission of the Dean of Graduate Studies.
8. Research Fellowships are research training stipends offered in some cases to applicants at the point of admission. They are deposited to the student account in terms specified by the supervisor.

## SECTION II: THE PROGRAM

### II.1 THE MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER STREAM

1. The normal path to the MA in English is the Major Research Paper (MRP) stream. The advantages of the MRP MA are that it is more likely than the alternative to lead to timely completion, there is no mandatory oral defence, it presents an opportunity to increase the student’s grade average, since the research paper is graded (where the thesis is awarded a Pass or Fail), and it is at least as suitable for entry into further studies in the discipline, because students gain more breadth through their coursework.

2. This stream requires six half-credit courses, including ENGL 5P00 and 5F01, and (for ENGL 5F90) a piece of independent research of 30 to 35 pages in length, exclusive of notes, references, and appendices.
3. In the Fall, the GPD will guide students in selecting research topics and suggest students consult with possible supervisors. The GPD will assist in making arrangements for a Supervisor and (in conjunction with the Supervisor) a Second Reader.

## II.2 THE THESIS STREAM

1. This stream may only be pursued with the permission of the GPD, which shall normally be secured in the first month following a student's acceptance of an offer of admission.
2. This stream requires four half-credit courses (including ENGL 5P00 and 5F01), a piece of independent research of 80-100 pages in length, inclusive of notes, references, and appendices, and an oral defence with an external examiner in attendance.
3. The student is responsible for securing a Supervisor and committee in consultation with the GPD. The GPD shall be a member of the Supervisory Committee.

## II.3 FULL-TIME STUDENTS

1. Upon accepting a place in the program, students should consult the Schedule of Important Dates in the Graduate Calendar for the upcoming academic year: <https://brocku.ca/webcal/current/graduate>.
2. Upon registration, students will consult with the GPD to plan a program of study.
3. The program is designed to be completed in twelve months (three terms) of full-time study. The program pattern described below is the normal way to proceed.
4. In the Fall term, MRP-stream students will **a.** enroll in ENGL 5P00, "Theoretical Foundations," **b.** enroll in ENGL 5F01, "Graduate Seminar in Research and Professional Development" (this full-year course meets over two terms), **c.** enroll in two additional half-credit courses, **d.** with the assistance of the GPD, consult faculty who might serve as Supervisors or Second Readers, and **e.** begin preliminary work on their MRP.
5. In the Winter term, MRP-stream students will **a.** continue in ENGL 5P01, **b.** enroll in two additional half-credit courses, **c.** by February 1, follow the GPD's recommendation in securing a Supervisor and Second Reader for the MRP and inform the GPD, in writing, of their agreement to serve, **d.** continue preliminary work on the MRP, **e.** secure formal approval of the MRP Proposal, a copy of which is to be submitted to the GPD with the signatures of the Supervisor and Second Reader by May 1.
6. In the Fall term, Thesis-stream students will **a.** enroll in ENGL 5P00, "Theoretical Foundations," **b.** enroll in ENGL 5F01, "Graduate Seminar in Research and Professional Development" (this full-year course meets over two terms), **c.** enroll in two additional half-credit courses, **d.** by September 30, secure the approval by the Supervisory Committee of a brief preliminary Thesis Proposal (to be signed by the Supervisory Committee and submitted to the GPD), **e.** secure formal approval of the Thesis Proposal, a copy of which is to be submitted to the GPD with the signatures of the Supervisory Committee by December 15.
7. In the Winter term, Thesis-stream students will **a.** continue in ENGL 5F01, **b.** otherwise devote themselves to their Thesis.
8. In the Spring and Summer terms, students will complete their MRPs and Theses.

9. For full-time students, all degree requirements must be completed within three years from the date of first registration.

#### II.4 PART-TIME STUDENTS

1. Upon accepting a place in the program, students should consult the Schedule of Important Dates in the Graduate Calendar for the upcoming academic year: <https://brocku.ca/webcal/current/graduate>.
2. Upon registration, students will consult with the GPD to plan a program of study.
3. Part-time students are normally restricted to two courses per term.
4. Normally, part-time students take ENGL 5P00 in their first term of study.
5. Normally, a part-time student's MRP or Thesis proposal is due by September 30 of the student's second year of study.
6. A pattern of study different from 2 and 3 above requires the permission of the GPD.
7. For a student completing their entire graduate program as a part-time student, all degree requirements must be completed within five years of the date of first registration.

#### II.5 COURSE OPTIONS

1. The courses available in any given year are to be found in the Graduate Course Timetable available in the Registration Guide provided by the Registrar's office: <https://brocku.ca/guides-and-timetables/timetables/?session=FW&type=GR&level=All&program=ENGL>.
2. With the permission of the GPD and the agreement of the program or faculty in question, a student may take a half-credit course from another MA program in the university or a research tutorial (ENGL 5P02) in place of a course from the variable topics list; alternatively, students may be able to take one half-credit course from another Ontario University through the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student Plan (OVGS), or from a university outside Ontario on a Letter or Permission. In the case of any of these options, consult as early as possible with the GPD to allow for arrangements to be made.

#### III.6 EVALUATION, ACADEMIC PROGRESS, AND APPEALS

1. In graduate courses, grades in the range of A (80 to 100), B (70 to 79), and C (60 to 69) are passing grades, but graduate credit is only given for grades A and B. If a student has a standing of less than B in one half-credit course, continued candidacy is subject to review by the Graduate Program Committee. For graduate courses, the grades A+, A, B, C, F, IN (incomplete), IP (In Progress), Pass/Fail, CR/NC (Credit/No-Credit), SA/UN (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory), NW (Not Withdrawn), or AG (Aegrotat standing) will be recorded on the transcript. Further university regulations regarding evaluation can be found in the Faculty Handbook and Graduate Calendar.
2. Upon completion of the Thesis, a public oral defence is required with the participation of an external examiner. The thesis is graded on a Pass/Fail basis.
3. The GPD may convene a meeting of the Graduate Program Committee in January and/or April in order to discuss student progress, where the GPD or any member of the Graduate Program Committee believes such a meeting is warranted. Such a meeting may be used to determine whether a particular student is making satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress in the program. The GPD may consult with faculty who have taught

graduate seminars in the preceding term, and with Thesis Supervisors and Second Readers when relevant, to prepare for such a discussion. Progress deemed to be unsatisfactory may result in a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies that the student be withdrawn from the Program. If the Dean concurs, the Dean will send a notice of termination to the student.

4. All graduate students have the right to appeal academic decisions. An appeal is a request that an academic decision (e.g., a grade or standing in a program) be changed, based on the evidence supplied by the student, or that a regulation be waived on compassionate grounds or because of extenuating circumstances. Details regarding appeals can be found in the Graduate Calendar.

## II.7 RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

1. The Department expects students will **a.** demonstrate ability, initiative, and receptivity to constructive criticism related to program matters, **b.** learn and conform to pertinent University, Faculty, and Department requirements, standards, and procedures, including those outlined in this document and the Graduate Calendar (including the policy on Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities and the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures in Non-Academic Matters), **c.** conform to provisions regarding hours of employment at Brock University, **d.** conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism with respect to the handling of data and in the development of a mature and objective relationship with supervisory faculty, other scholars, fellow students, and staff at the University, **e.** recognize that faculty have other teaching, research and administrative obligations that may preclude immediate feedback or responses to queries, **f.** give serious consideration and respond to the advice and criticism received from instructional and supervisory faculty, **g.** participate in the academic life of the program, including attendance at program colloquia and departmental speaking events (including presentations by candidates for faculty appointments), **h.** initiate and maintain open lines of communication with the GPD and other pertinent faculty, especially with regard to matters related to progress through the program, **i.** in co-operation with the Supervisor, develop and maintain a timetable for completing all stages of MRP or Thesis work, **j.** consult with the Supervisory Committee if major changes are required during the conduct of the research.

## SECTION III: MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER AND THESIS SUPERVISION

### III.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

1. Graduate research is a partnership involving students, Supervisors, Second Readers and other Supervisory Committee members. It is vital that students are provided with responsible, professional supervision that is sensitive to student needs and free of personal conflicts that might interfere with intellectual development. The quality of supervision is an important variable contributing to the quality of student work and to its timely completion.

2. The GPD will, through the best means available, communicate to students the relevant research interests of Departmental faculty. The GPD will suggest possible supervisors for a student research project based on faculty research interests.

3. In the case of conflicts arising between students and supervisory faculty, students should first attempt to resolve matters in conversation with the faculty in question. If the conflict cannot be resolved in this way, the student should bring the matter to the GPD for discussion and steps toward further resolution.

4. In cases where conflicts arise between students and the GPD, students should first attempt to resolve matters in conversation with the GPD. If the conflict cannot be resolved in this way, the student should bring the matter to the Chair of the Department for discussion and steps toward further resolution.

### III.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF MRP AND THESIS SUPERVISORS

1. Supervisors are expected to be actively engaged in scholarly activity and linked to a wider scholarly network, and students have the right to expect from Supervisors scholarly expertise, accessibility, and assistance with the design, planning, and conduct of feasible research projects.

2. Supervisors must devote the time required to share their knowledge and skills with students. For this to happen, Supervisors must undertake to be available to students interested in their areas of expertise. Specifically, Supervisors must **a.** assess MRP and Thesis draft proposals and offer constructive feedback as needed with the aim of approving final proposals by the stated deadlines, **b.** be reasonably accessible to the student for consultation and discussion of academic progress and research problems and give timely responses to written work with constructive suggestions for improvement, **c.** offer supervision and advice appropriate to the stage of the student's work, **d.** help the student establish and maintain a suitable timetable for completion of the various stages and requirements, **e.** ensure the student is aware of University, Faculty, and Departmental requirements and standards for the graduate program, **f.** conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism, **g.** make a suitable alternative arrangement for supervision when on extensive leave of absence from the university, **h.** notify the Second Reader of the expected date of submission of the MRP by the student and the deadline for the Second Reader to submit their grade for it, **i.** in the case of MRP supervisors, offer (in conjunction with the Second Reader) a grade for the MRP to the student and provide the MRP title and grade to the GPD at least two weeks in advance of the deadline set each year by the Faculty of Graduate Studies for its receipt of a Graduate Record Form (in Fall, usually early September—see the Faculty of Graduate Studies for exact dates) which indicates that all degree requirements are complete, **j.** in the case of Thesis Supervisors, recommend to the GPD a short list of appropriate External Examiners and establish and maintain (with the student and GPD) a timeframe for the scheduling of the defence and related deadlines.

### III.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF MRP SECOND READERS AND THESIS SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Second Readers of MRPs and members of Thesis Supervisory Committees are expected to follow, in general, the guidelines laid down for the primary Supervisor, although they do not have primary responsibility for the student.

2. Specific duties of MRP Second Readers are to **a.** offer appropriate advice upon request, **b.** assess draft proposals and offer constructive feedback, with the aim of approving the proposals by the stated deadlines, **c.** read the penultimate draft in a timely manner and discuss the draft with the Supervisor and student, **d.** approve the final draft and agree with the Supervisor on the grade to be awarded.

3. Specific duties of Thesis Supervisory Committee Members are to **a.** offer appropriate advice upon request, **b.** assess draft proposals and offer constructive feedback, with the aim of approving the proposals by the stated deadlines, **c.** approve the Thesis Proposal by December 15, **d.** review and report to the GPD on the student's progress in preparation for the January and May Academic Progress Reviews, **e.** approve the final draft of the thesis, **f.** participate in the Examining Committee at the oral defence.

4. As a departmental standard in a normal term, all student work submitted to Supervisors, Second Readers and other Supervisory Committee members should be returned within two weeks (14 days). Students should be clearly informed of any delays caused by exceptional circumstances in advance whenever possible.

## SECTION IV: MRP AND THESIS REQUIREMENTS

### IV.1 MRP AND THESIS PROPOSALS

1. MRP proposals should be approximately 8 pages in length while thesis proposals should be approximately 15 pages in length. Both should include a title for the paper, an overview of the topic, a review of relevant scholarly literature, a description of the methodology being employed, a proposed timeline for completion of the project (including the exchange of drafts with Supervisory Committee members), and a bibliography of works cited. Creative writing MRP and thesis proposals may be considered in some cases, but they must be pre-approved in principle by the GPD, they will be of the same length given above, and their constitutive features are to be determined in consultation with the Supervisor.

2. Once the final proposal has been circulated with Supervisory faculty, the Supervisor will convene a meeting at which the student and the supervisory faculty discuss the research project. Faculty members will offer constructive feedback and any guidance that is required.

3. The Supervisor and Second Reader or Supervisory Committee must sign the Departmental Proposal Approval Form, attach to it a copy of the approved proposal, and submit both to the GPD by May 1.

### V.2 MRP REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

1. MRPs must be prepared according to current scholarly style guidelines appropriate to the field of study. They should be 30 to 35 pages in length, exclusive of notes, references, and appendices.

2. The MRP must be presented in final form to the Supervisor at least two weeks in advance of the deadline set by the Faculty of Graduate Studies for the receipt of final grades in a given term. This allows time for the Supervisor and Second Reader to assign a grade to the student and communicate it to the GPD and for the GPD to communicate the grade to FGS.

3. In the case of disagreement between the Supervisor and Second Reader on the assignment of a grade, the GPD and/or the Chair will attempt to mediate; failing that, the average of the grades will be assigned.

4. If the student believes that the Supervisor or Second Reader is unduly delaying grading of the research paper, the student may petition the GPD to review the matter.

5. If a failing grade is awarded for a major research paper, the student will be withdrawn from the program (see Faculty Handbook B.10.2.B).

6. All major research paper documents must be preserved and deposited for public display in the graduate program's archive. It is the responsibility of each MA student, upon receiving a final grade, to supply to the GPD a PDF file of the complete document (including an appropriate title page featuring the author's name, the supervisor's name, the date of submission, and the document's title).

### IV.3 THESIS REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

1. Theses must be prepared according to current scholarly style guidelines appropriate to the field of study and must adhere to the FGS minimum standards for Master's Thesis: <https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/current->

[students/research-based-students/masters-thesis/](#). They should be 80 to 100 pages in length, inclusive of notes, references, and appendices.

2. Once a complete draft of the thesis is sent to the Supervisory Committee, the GPD will contact the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities or designate to indicate that a defence will be necessary.
3. The thesis submitted to the GPD for provision to the Examining Committee must be accompanied by a Faculty of Graduate Studies Certificate of Approval signed by the Supervisor attesting to the fact that the Thesis is approved by the Supervisory Committee as ready for defence.
4. The candidate must provide one copy of the approved thesis to the GPD for distribution to each Supervisory Committee member and three copies to the GPD. The GPD delivers one copy to FGS for distribution to the External Examiner and one to the Dean of Graduate Studies (or designate). The thesis must be presented to the Examining Committee at least four weeks in advance of the anticipated date of the oral defence so that appropriate arrangements can be made for its scheduling.
5. The Examination Committee will comprise the Supervisory Committee and an External Examiner from outside the university or from outside the program but within the university.
6. The External Examiner will be principally responsible for provision of an independent and objective evaluation of the academic quality of the thesis. The approval of the External Examiner is the responsibility of the Dean of Humanities or designate. The GPD will solicit from the Thesis Supervisor a ranked list of at least three possible candidates who are qualified to serve as an External examiner (including current addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and a brief statement of qualifications). The GPD will supply this list to the Dean of Humanities or designate. The Supervisor and student should not contact potential external examiners to discuss availability, and any contact with an External Examiner prior to the thesis defence should be brought to the attention of the GPD.
7. Typically, a thesis defence will occur four to six weeks following the External Examiner's receipt of the thesis document. External Examiners shall be informed at this time that their report will be shared with the student prior to the defence. External Examiners shall submit their report no later than one week prior to the defence. External Examiners shall as part of their report identify whether the thesis is ready for defence and whether the thesis is to be recommended for submission to internal/external thesis award competitions.
8. If the external examiner reports that the thesis is not ready for defence, the student must revise the thesis within a reasonable period of time in response to the examiner's comments and the thesis will then be resubmitted to the external examiner. A decision by the external examiner that the thesis is not ready for defence is binding.
9. The external examiner's report will be shared with the examination committee and the graduate student prior to the defence.
10. The Dean of Humanities or designate will act as Chair of the Examining Committee and direct proceedings at the defence. A recommended format for the defence is as follows. The candidate will present a public seminar outlining the study (limited to 30 minutes). This will be followed by a period of "open" questioning in which all present may participate. Immediately following, the Examining Committee may meet with the candidate in camera for a further period of "closed" questioning. The Examining Committee will then evaluate the thesis and

defence. Approval of the thesis will require acceptance by two-thirds of the committee and must include approval by the External Examiner.

11. If revisions are necessary, the Committee will specify the areas for revision and the date by which the revised thesis is to be returned to the GPD. Students should typically be given two to four weeks to complete minor revisions, which are to be approved by the graduate supervisor, and four to twelve weeks to complete major revisions, which are to be approved by the graduate supervisor and the chair of the defence.

12. When the thesis is in its final form (following defence and any revisions), has been approved by the graduate program, and meets FGS Thesis Format Specifications, the student will submit the thesis to the Brock University Digital Repository. Procedures are outlined here: <https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/current-students/thesis/e-thesis-submission>. The student must also submit to the Faculty of Graduate Studies the Certificate of Approval, the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Theses, and the Brock University Thesis and Major Research Paper Copyright Licence.

13. In the case of empirical research, one copy of all data should be maintained by the Supervisor as well as any copies of coding sheets or important analyses. When human participants have been involved, all original material which contains participant identification shall be turned over to the Supervisor for disposal or safekeeping, as required by University guidelines.

14. Thesis grades shall be reported as either a Pass or Fail grade. A Pass grade must be further differentiated as one of: Acceptable as is, Acceptable with minor revisions, Acceptable with major revisions. All aspects of the written work as well as the student's performance during the defence must be taken into consideration when determining the grade. Normally, if all but one member of the committee agree on a decision, the decision shall be that of the majority, except when the single dissenting vote is that of the external examiner. If this happens, it must be reported to the Dean of Graduate Studies, who in consultation with the Faculty Dean will determine an appropriate course of action. A failing grade will be awarded if two or more committee members find the thesis unacceptable or if the External Examiner does not approve the thesis.

15. In the instance of a failed defence, the candidate may, at the discretion of the Examining Committee, be permitted a second and final thesis submission and defence. This will be scheduled for no later than one calendar year after the original presentation and defence. In preparing the thesis for resubmission, the student will be guided by the written criticisms of members of the Examining Committee. Under normal circumstances the composition of the Examining Committee of the second thesis defence will be identical to that of the original Examining Committee. A fee may be charged for re-examination. Appeals relating to the procedures followed in a thesis examination or to the grade assigned shall be considered by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

## SECTION V: FURTHER INFORMATION

### V.1 COURSE EVALUATIONS:

Normally students and instructors will provide each other with feedback throughout the course. The Department will provide a more formal course evaluation once the course is completed and/or Instructors can "opt in" to the online course evaluation system (<https://brocku.ca/pedagogical-innovation/teaching-tools/course-evaluation/#move-course-evaluations>). As the number of students in a group may make anonymity difficult to maintain, students have the option of preparing a group assessment, including minority opinions where applicable. If not online, evaluations are to be submitted to the Administrative Assistant, who will forward them to the Chair. Evaluations are not released to instructors until after the submission of grades.

## V.2 GRADUATION DATES AND DEADLINES

1. Graduations take place in October and June. A formal application to graduate must be submitted several months in advance; see the Faculty of Graduate Studies for pertinent deadlines and instructions.
2. Thesis students should allow at least one month between the defence and the time when a revised version is ready for binding. This means that, for Fall graduation, Committee-approved copies should be submitted to the GPD by mid-June so that defence arrangements can be made for late July, and time allowed afterward for any necessary revisions; for Spring graduation, Committee approved copies should be submitted to the GPD by mid-February so that defence arrangements can be made for late March and time allowed afterward for any necessary revisions.

## V.3 HUMANITIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

All students in graduate programs in the Faculty of Humanities are eligible to apply for Graduate Student Associate status in the Humanities Research Institute (HRI). The Department strongly encourages MA candidates to apply for Associate status. Graduate Student Associates will receive announcements of and invitations to HRI symposia and special events and events geared towards graduate students. MA Student Associates may apply once during their program for competitive HRI funding to support travel to present at professional conferences. See HRI for details, including deadlines for the twice-yearly competitions.

<https://brocku.ca/humanities/research/institute/graduate-student-associates/>

## V.4 APPLYING FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Students who wish to apply for further graduate studies should also apply for financial support (see Section I.4.3 above); consult the Departmental Grants Officer early in Fall to learn more. The GPD and other faculty may be able to provide advice on particular programs and institutions. Note deadlines and procedures for applications at different schools as early as possible. Request reference letters well in advance of deadlines, especially on first requesting a letter from a potential referee.

## V.5 TEACHING ASSISTANT TRAINING

As a Teaching Assistant (TA), you will be a member of CUPE 4207 (<https://4207.cupe.ca>); your work expectations and hours will be explained in writing as required by the union. The Department holds a mandatory information session for new TAs in September. Brock's Centre for Pedagogical Innovation also offers support and courses on university-level teaching (<https://brocku.ca/pedagogical-innovation/what-we-offer/instructional-development/#teaching-assistant-program>).