



Brock
University

Program Handbook

Master of Arts, Political Science

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	WELCOME	5
2	PROGRAM DESCRIPTION.....	5
2.1	Program Overview	5
2.2	Program Objectives.....	5
2.3	Program Outcomes.....	6
3	PROGRAM GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION	6
3.1	Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs.....	6
3.2	Program Governance	7
3.3	Program Administration & Faculty.....	7
3.4	Graduate Students' Association	8
4	Academic Regulations and university policy	8
5	Student status	8
5.1	Continuous Registration.....	9
6	fees and funding.....	9
6.1	Fees.....	9
6.2	Funding and Financial Assistance.....	9
6.3	Graduate Student Employment.....	9
7	SUPervision and committees.....	10
7.1	Supervisor	10
7.2	Supervisory Committee Composition	12
8	Degree requirements	13
8.1	Overview of Degree Requirements	13
8.2	Courses	14
8.2.1	Required Courses	14
8.2.2	Course Evaluation	15
8.3	Thesis Defence	15
8.3.1	Procedures	16
8.3.2	Committee Composition	16
8.4	Post-Defence Requirements	16
8.4.1	Required Forms.....	16
8.4.2	Submission to Brock Digital Repository	17

9	ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE & PROGRESS.....	17
9.1	Academic Performance and Continuation	17
9.2	Progress Reports	17
9.3	Final Stage Status	18
9.4	Application to Graduate.....	19
10	ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT, APPEALS	19
10.1	Academic Integrity	19
10.2	Academic Misconduct.....	19
10.3	Appeals	20
11	HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLNESS	20
12	STUDENT RESOURCES	20
12.1	FGSPA Graduate-Specific Resources	21
12.2	Additional Resources at Brock	21

About This Handbook

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

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

1 WELCOME

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to welcome you to the Department of Political Science and to the graduate program. In deciding to complete a Brock graduate degree in political science, you are joining a department with a proven commitment to teaching and research excellence. We have a strong record in placing students in PhD programs, and our graduates have gone on to work in both the public and private sectors. We are a close-knit department that prides itself on our small-group seminars and a commitment to working closely with our students to complete their independent research projects. Our goal is to make the time you spend with us an intellectually stimulating and rewarding experience. We look forward to working with you.

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

Dr. Paul Hamilton, Associate Professor of Political Science and Graduate Program Director

2 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

2.1 Program Overview

However uncertain we are about the human good, it is clear, as Aristotle observed, that the pursuit of that good is the work of politics and the understanding of that good the aim of political science. Whether we regard politics as the pursuit of justice, the uses of power, or the securing of "peace, order, and good government," its study appeals to students interested in government, law, and international affairs, and to those who want to understand the shaping of our political world. At Brock, the MA program in political science usually entails specialization in one of five fields of study: Canadian politics, comparative politics, international relations, political theory or philosophy, and public policy. Our faculty and our students are joined in the common endeavour to see how their diverse interests can contribute to the political understanding of ourselves and our world. This aim is at the heart of our curriculum: It is reflected in the program requirements and in the design of our Core Seminars. Graduates of the program have proceeded to successful careers in government, politics, and business; many have pursued further study to become scholars and teachers.

2.2 Program Objectives

The objectives of the program are to:

- Expose students to leading scholarship in the discipline and its sub-fields, new insights and current problems in the literature relevant to their areas, and an advanced level of critical thinking and analytical skills.

- Provide students with the skills and understanding of the methodologies, ontologies and epistemologies needed to undertake an independent research project.

2.3 Program Outcomes

The Political Science MA program is designed to enable students to:

- Acquire a sophisticated understanding of the fundamental problems and promise of a scientific approach to politics and of understanding the contributions of different research traditions.
- Gather and evaluate leading scholarship on key concepts, theories, and debates in their area of study, and to use these sources to support their verbal and written arguments.
- Situate their work within the broader literature and approaches in their areas (primarily through essays and other written assignments), and to apply advanced knowledge to analyzing questions and problems in political science.
- Acquire the skills needed to successfully undertake independent research projects, including the ability to communicate arguments and conclusions, orally and in writing, at an advanced level to academic audiences.

3 PROGRAM GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

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

3.1 Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs

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

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

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

3.2 Program Governance

Faculty of Social Sciences

Political Science is a department within the Faculty of Social Sciences. Dr. Ingrid Makus is the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Dr. Dawn Zinga is the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research.

Department of Political Science

The Department of Political Science is governed by the Departmental Committee, consisting of all full-time faculty members in the Department of Political Science, as well as student representatives and any other persons to whom membership is extended by a majority vote of the full-time faculty members.

Graduate Program Committee (GPC)

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

- **Graduate Program Committee (GPC):** The GPC has responsibility for recruitment and admissions, preparation of the Graduate Calendar submission, course offerings, teaching allocations, scholarship adjudication, student progress, community liaison, responding to student concerns, changes to the structure of the program and the selection of the GPD. The GPC is normally composed of at least 3 faculty members, including the Graduate Program Director and the Department Chair.
- **Graduate Program Director (GPD):** The GPD is appointed by the Graduate Program Committee to oversee the graduate program. The GPD carries out all duties in regular consultation with the GPC. The GPD typically serves a three year term and has the support of an administrator/coordinator (see description of GPAC below).
- **Graduate Program Administrative Coordinator (GPAC):** The GPAC oversees the day-to-day operations of the program and provides administrative support to the GPD. The GPAC is often the individual who assists students with questions about the program.

3.3 Program Administration & Faculty

Graduate Program Director (GPD)

Paul Hamilton Email: phamilton@brocku.ca

Graduate Program Administrative Coordinator

Diane Leon Email: dleon@brocku.ca

A full Department of Political Science faculty listing, along with profiles and research interests, can be found on the Department's website: <https://brocku.ca/social-sciences/political-science/people-in-the-department/> .

3.4 Graduate Students' Association

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

4 ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND UNIVERSITY POLICY

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

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

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

5 STUDENT STATUS

Students are admitted to the University either as a full-time or part-time student and this status can only be changed for valid reasons with the permission of the GPD and the FGSPA.

Full-time graduate students are defined as students whose main focus is graduate study for the purpose of obtaining a graduate degree. Graduate study differs from undergraduate study in that it is, for most students, an activity that is highly concentrated, demanding and all-consuming. Full-time status is not solely dictated by the number of credits a student is enrolled in each term. Additional details can be found in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations, II. Student Status.

5.1 Continuous Registration

Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in each successive term from the time of initial admission until degree requirements are complete. This includes registration in a student's thesis or MRP course for the spring semester and each term thereafter until completion.

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

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

6 FEES AND FUNDING

6.1 Fees

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

6.2 Funding and Financial Assistance

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

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

6.3 Graduate Student Employment

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

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

7 SUPERVISION AND COMMITTEES

7.1 Supervisor

Graduate students must complete as part of their degree requirements an independent research program, in the form of either a Major Research Paper (MRP) or Thesis, with the assistance of a Supervisor who is a member of the Department's graduate faculty. The quality of supervision is an important variable contributing to the quality of the major research paper/thesis, and to a suitable completion time for the major research paper/thesis work. It is vital that students are provided with responsible, professional supervision that is sensitive to student needs and free of personal conflict that might interfere with intellectual development.

Attempts are made during the graduate admissions process to identify potential Supervisors for those students offered admission, and students will be advised of suitable prospects for Supervisors by the Graduate Program Director shortly after they begin their program of study. The Department recognizes, however, the need for flexibility based on possible changes in the student's area of interest or the workload of faculty. The onus is therefore on students to secure a Supervisor by contacting faculty directly; students should do so by the end of the Fall term. The decision by a faculty member to become a Supervisor is a voluntary one, in keeping with the Normal Departmental Workload Standard.

If either the graduate student or supervisor wishes to initiate a change in supervisor the request must be presented in writing, with explanation, to the Graduate Program Director, and approved by the Faculty Dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies in consultation with the Graduate Program Director.

Responsibilities of Major Research Paper/Thesis Supervisors

It is recognized that when faculty members agree to supervise a graduate student, they thereby assume a number of responsibilities. Major research paper and thesis Supervisors are expected to be actively engaged in scholarly activity and linked to a wider scholarly network. The student has the right to expect from the Supervisor scholarly expertise, accessibility, and assistance with the design, planning and conduct of feasible research projects.

Specific Guidelines for Supervisors

1. Be reasonably accessible to the student for consultation and discussion of academic progress and research problems and give timely response to written work with constructive suggestions for improvement. It is recommended that Supervisors and students agree to explicit guidelines (preferably in writing) about expectations regarding deadlines for the student to submit work and corrected drafts, and for the Supervisor to return submitted work with feedback.

2. Offer supervision and advice appropriate to the stage of the student's work (proposal stage, research stage, analysis and writing stage, oral defense stage if necessary and if appropriate, with the publication of results).
3. Part of the supervisory role includes advising students in the development of a research proposal as part of POLI 5P81.
4. Help the student establish and maintain a suitable timetable for completion of the various stages of the major research paper/thesis requirements (i.e. selection of Supervisory Committee, approval of Major Research Paper/Thesis proposal, Research Ethics Board approval if required, preparation for defense if required, etc.). The Supervisor should be aware that full-time students receive a significant reduction in fees if both the Supervisor and Graduate Program Director agree that the write-up of a major research paper or thesis is at a stage that could be considered a "first draft" prior to the payment of fees for an additional term (e.g. fourth term).
5. Review the student's progress in preparation for the mid-January, mid-May and end-of-August progress reports.
6. Ensure the student is aware of University and Faculty requirements and standards for the graduate program as available in this document and in the Graduate Studies Calendar. Ensure that regulations on Intellectual Property and Research with Human Participants (if necessary) are followed before a student is permitted to begin working in any research capacity associated with the University. See web pages: Research Ethics Approval Forms, Human Ethics.
7. Conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism in the supervisory role and in any subsequent publication efforts based on the student's independent research project. Supervisors are encouraged to clarify with the student (preferably in writing) early in the supervisory relationship how contributions will be acknowledged in such future publication efforts depending on the roles performed by the faculty member and the student, and the degree to which the student's research is part of the Supervisor's larger research project. In particular, the threshold level of contribution for a faculty member to claim co-authorship in future dissemination efforts should be specified. See web page: Graduate Student Intellectual Property Form.
8. Make a suitable alternative arrangement for supervision when on extensive leave or absence from the university.
9. The Supervisor, as an active member of a research community within Brock University and beyond, necessarily serves as a role model for students, and must be prepared to devote the time required to share his or her knowledge and skills with students and other colleagues. For this to happen the Supervisor must undertake to be available as a resource person for students interested in his or her areas of expertise, and endeavour to attend academic and social activities organized by the program.
10. Respect commitments to other members of the Supervisory Committee, including: keeping them apprised of the student's progress, including the estimated date of delivery of the

research proposal and final draft; and delivering the research proposal and final draft by the deadlines specified in the Graduate Student Handbook.

7.2 Supervisory Committee Composition

Major Research Paper Option

The Supervisor and the student are jointly responsible for selecting an additional member of the Department of Political Science's graduate faculty to serve as a Second Reader, who with the Supervisor forms the student's Supervisory Committee. The committee's composition must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and must be in place and operational by no later than the proposal stage of the major essay, project or thesis. The Supervisor will work closely with the student to produce a complete major research paper that is then read by the Second Reader. The Supervisor and Second Reader will then consult and jointly determine the final grade for the MRP.

Thesis Option

Students pursuing the thesis option require a thesis supervisory committee of three members, including the graduate supervisor and two additional faculty members. At least one of the three must be a full-time Brock University faculty member. The graduate supervisor in consultation with the graduate student will propose the supervisory committee composition. The committee composition must be approved by the Graduate Program Director and must be in place and operational by no later than the proposal stage of the thesis. The Supervisor will work closely with the student to produce a draft of the thesis that will be sent to the rest of the supervisory committee for approval. If the supervisory committee approves the draft, the student will be required to defend the thesis as outlined in the Graduate Calendar.

7.2.1 Responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee Members

Supervisory Committee Members are expected to follow the guidelines laid down for the primary Supervisor with the exception that they do not have primary responsibility for the student. It will be the responsibility of the Supervisory Committee Members to:

1. Offer advice appropriate to the stage of the student's work.
2. Review student's MRP or thesis proposal and suggest improvements. The student's research should not proceed further until the Supervisory Committee approves the proposal.
3. Approve the final draft of the thesis and participate as a member of the Examining Committee, if applicable.

7.3 Responsibilities of Students

By engaging in a Graduate Program, the student has made a commitment to devote the time and energy necessary to complete courses and conduct a major research paper/thesis project. The Supervisor and Supervisory Committee have the right to expect that the student demonstrate ability, initiative, and receptivity. Additional guidelines for the student are as follows. The student should:

1. Conform to University and Faculty requirements and procedures with regard to registration, graduation requirements, and to major research paper/thesis style and standards.
2. In co-operation with the Supervisor develop and maintain a timetable for completion of all stages of course and major research paper/thesis work.
3. Meet regularly with the Supervisor to review progress.
4. Give serious consideration to and respond to the advice and criticism received from the Supervisor/ Supervisory Committee.
5. Recognize that Supervisors, Second Readers, and Thesis Examination Committee Members have other personal, teaching, research and administrative obligations that may preclude an immediate response to queries or the immediate provision of feedback.
6. Familiarize themselves with University and Faculty requirements and standards for graduate studies as available in this document, in the Graduate Studies Calendar, the University's policy on Intellectual Property and Research with Human Participants.
7. Conform to provisions regarding hours of employment at Brock University.
8. Conform to basic principles of academic integrity and professionalism with respect to the handling of data and in the development of a mature and professional relationship with the Supervisor, other scholars, as well as fellow students and staff at the University.
9. Consult with their Supervisor and Graduate Program Director if major changes are required during the conduct of the research and submit a revised major research paper/thesis proposal if necessary.
10. Participate in the academic life of the program, including attendance at program-sponsored events when possible.
11. Maintain open lines of communication between themselves and the faculty. This can be facilitated through the Graduate Student representatives who attend Graduate Program Committee meetings.

8 DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

8.1 Overview of Degree Requirements

The Major Research Paper stream is the default option, and the one taken by most students. Full-time students are expected to complete their course requirements within the first two terms of study and complete their major paper in the third consecutive term.

Acceptance into the thesis stream requires explicit agreement by the Graduate Program Director, based on the candidate's ability to pursue advanced scholarly research, the student's preparation of an acceptable thesis proposal, and the availability of appropriate faculty and other resources for the supervision and completion of the proposed thesis. Coursework is

completed in the first two terms of study. The thesis usually takes an additional two terms to complete.

8.2 Courses

8.2.1 Required Courses

The core seminars provide an opportunity for critical examination of some of the most significant writings in the various subfields of the discipline and constitute a key component in the Political Science MA program.

Major Research Paper Stream

As outlined in the [Graduate Calendar](#), students in the Major Research Paper stream must complete POLI 5P80, 5P81, POLI 5F90, three core graduate seminars (POLI 5P82-POLI 5P86), and one course related to their research interest.

POLI 5P80: Great Works in Politics – fall semester

POLI 5P81: Research and Research Methods – winter semester

POLI 5F90: MA Major Research Paper – spring/summer semester - The major research paper is typically about 60 pages.

POLI 5P82: Graduate Seminar in Canadian Politics

POLI 5P84: Graduate Seminar in Public Policy

POLI 5P85: Graduate Seminar in Comparative Politics

POLI 5P86: Graduate Seminar in International Relations

0.5 credit from POLI 5P01 – POLI 5P68

Thesis Stream

Students approved for the thesis stream must complete POLI 5P80, 5P81, the core graduate seminar in their specialization, one course chosen in consultation with their supervisor, and POLI 5F99.

POLI 5F99: Thesis – spring/summer and fall semesters - an independent research project that makes an original contribution to the discipline, usually 100 - 150 pages.

For a full list of scheduled courses for the current academic year, please visit the [Graduate Academic Timetable](#).

Additional details about course registration can be found on FGSPA's [Graduate Course Registration](#) webpage.

8.2.2 Course Evaluation

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

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

In evaluating students' course work, the program will follow the regulations articulated in the section titled "Evaluation of Student Performance" in the Brock University Graduate Calendar.

For graduate courses, the grades A+, A, B, C, F, IN (incomplete) and IP (in progress) will be recorded on the transcript. Graduate credit will only be given for grades A+, A and B.

The continuing candidacy of a candidate with a standing of less than B (70%) in one half-credit or equivalent will be subject to review by the Graduate Program Committee, and FGSPA will automatically place such students on academic probation.

Major Research Paper Evaluation

Major research paper and project grades shall be reported to the FGSPA in the usual fashion with letter and numerical grades. If a failing grade is awarded for a major research paper or project, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

Thesis Evaluation

Thesis grades shall be reported to the FGSPA as either a Pass or Fail grade. A Pass grade must be further differentiated as one of: Acceptable as is, Acceptable with minor revisions or Acceptable with major revisions. If a failing grade is awarded for a thesis, one resubmission will be allowed, and a new examination will be required.

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

8.3 Thesis Defence

For full details on policies regarding Graduate thesis defences, please see Faculty Handbook [Section III.B.9.4](#).

8.3.1 Procedures

Graduate thesis defences will normally be open defences. A request for a closed defence must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs 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 off indicating their approval that the student and the thesis are ready for defence.

8.3.2 Committee Composition

The examination committee of a master's thesis defence will minimally comprise the supervisory committee and an external examiner from outside the University or from outside the program but within the University. The approval of the external examiner is the responsibility of the Faculty Dean or designate. In exceptional circumstances, an external examiner who is external to the supervisory committee but internal to the program may be appointed. Such an examiner will have to be approved by both the Faculty Dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs.

Typically a thesis defence will occur four to six weeks following the external examiner's receipt of the thesis document. 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.

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.

A change of external examiner, in exceptional circumstances, must be justified in writing to the Faculty Dean or designate for a master's thesis.

The external examiner's report will be shared with the examination committee and the graduate student prior to the defence.

8.4 Post-Defence Requirements

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

8.4.1 Required Forms

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

- Library and Archives Canada (LAC) Non-Exclusive License to Reproduce Theses

- Brock University Thesis and Major Research Paper Copyright License Form

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

8.4.2 *Submission to Brock Digital Repository*

Upon completion of thesis revisions, students must upload their final thesis document to the [Brock University Digital Repository](#). Details and instructions can be found on the FGSPA [Research-Based Students](#) webpage.

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

9 **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE & PROGRESS**

9.1 **Academic Performance and Continuation**

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

9.2 **Progress Reports**

The Department's Graduate Program Committee receives progress reports from all full-time students in mid-January, mid-May, and at the end of August, and reviews each student's progress. The progress of part-time students is reviewed annually at the end of August.

Feedback to each student and Supervisor is given in the form of a brief letter prepared by the Graduate Program Director. Student reviews may occur at other times if there is any concern regarding the student's performance (e.g., poor performance in a course). Progress deemed to be unsatisfactory (see "Evaluation of Student Performance" above) may result in the student being placed on probation, or 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.

The MA program in Political Science is a 12-month (3 term) program, regardless of which option (MRP or Thesis) is pursued. Below is a guide to help students complete their degree in the expected timeframe.

- Mid-June – on-line graduate student registration opens. Students should consult the calendar and program requirements before registering and contact the Graduate Program Director if they have questions. Full-time students are expected to complete 3 half-credit courses in the Fall term.
- Mid-December - students should have:
 - completed their first three courses (including 5P80)
 - made arrangements for a Supervisor
- Mid-January - **Submit First Term Progress Report** to the Graduate Program Director, according to the guidelines
 - If the MRP or Thesis will require Ethics Certification (see below), students and Supervisors should begin preparing the application to the Research Ethics Board during the winter term, so that it is ready for submission as soon as possible after the Supervisory Committee approves the research proposal in the Spring.
- End of April – students should have completed their remaining course requirements (3 half-credits for MRP option, 1 half-credit for Thesis option), and as part of the required POLI 5P81 course have designed their independent research project, in collaboration with their supervisor; this will form the basis of their proposal. The remaining members of the Supervisory Committee should be selected. **Register for Spring/Summer term (5F90 for MRP option, 5F99 for Thesis option).**
- Mid-May – send independent research proposal to the Supervisory Committee by this time at the latest; earlier submissions are encouraged. If Ethics Certification is required, it should be sought immediately after the Supervisory Committee approves the project.
Submit Second Term Progress Report to Graduate Program Director.
- To graduate, students apply on-line through their Brock Self-Serve account. This may be done before all degree requirements have been completed. Students who wish to graduate at Fall Convocation need to apply to graduate before July 1, or for Spring Convocation, before February 1.
- Mid-July - students should have by this date submitted a complete “first draft” of their independent research paper to their supervisor
- Mid-August – students should have by this date submitted a revised and complete paper for their Supervisory Committee.
- End of August - **Submit Third Term Progress Report** to Graduate Program Director.

9.3 Final Stage Status

If an additional term beyond the standard length of their program is required to finish the program, students can apply for ‘Final Stage Status’ (FSS) for reduced tuition in the final academic term. Students approved for Final Stage Status by their graduate program must have

completed all course work, other program requirements and must have a complete draft of their Major Research Paper or Thesis that their supervisory committee agrees requires no additional chapters/sections. Students approved for Final Stage Status must be able to complete their exit requirement within the subsequent term. Final Stage Status will be awarded only once and for only one term.

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

9.4 Application to Graduate

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

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

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

10 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT, APPEALS

10.1 Academic Integrity

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

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

10.2 Academic Misconduct

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

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

[Integrity](#) webpage and in the [Graduate Calendar](#) under Academic Regulations (XII. Academic Integrity/Academic Misconduct).

10.3 Appeals

Students who have concerns about a grade in a particular course should first discuss the issue with the instructor of the course in question.

If the issue cannot be resolved, the student should refer to the pre-appeals procedures and appeal timelines as summarized in Faculty Handbook section III, [Appendix 1](#). Additional details are outlined in the [Graduate Calendar](#) (Academic Regulations, XIII. Graduate Student Appeals) and the [Student Senate Appeals](#) webpage.

11 HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLNESS

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

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

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

12 STUDENT RESOURCES

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

Graduate Liaison and Support Coordinator

FOSS graduate students have access to the FOSS Graduate Liaison and Support Coordinator. They can connect you to other services and supports and help students with timelines to completions and important dates. This role is currently held by Allison Flynn-Bowman – aflynn@brocku.ca.

12.1 FGSPA Graduate-Specific Resources

Academic Writing Supports

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

Graduate Advising

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

GRADvantage

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

Additional Development Opportunities

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

12.2 Additional Resources at Brock

Office of Research Services

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

Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre

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

Brock University Library

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

Career Services

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

Centre for Pedagogical Innovation

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

Brock International

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