

PURPOSE: Clarify and update DCS's rules for graduate student supervision.

This update is, in part, motivated by a stricter application and approval process for DCS graduate faculty memberships (i.e., CS-SGS memberships).

Note: ROSI makes a distinction between supervisor (primary), and co-supervisor (secondary). As far as ROSI is concerned, a student cannot have two co-supervisors, with neither designated as supervisor. The supervisor has the responsibility of overseeing the student's progress, and s/he is responsible for the DCS's obligations to the student. We use this terminology here.

PhD supervision and supervisory committees:

For each student who starts their PhD program on or after Nov. 1, 2013:

0. [Approved in 2012-13] Before an offer is made to a prospective student, one or more full members of CS-SGS must have agreed that they are willing to supervise and fund this student. The identity of these "sponsors" should be included in the student's offer letter.

1. **[PROPOSAL]** A new student student may take some time to find an official supervisor (for example, when there is more than one "sponsor"). The supervisor should be selected within six months. (This needs to be explained better: the point is to encourage new students to try to find the supervisor who is the closest match to their research interests, not to force students to compete for a limited number of supervisor vacancies.)

2a. **[PROPOSAL]** Within six months of the start of their program the student must have one (and only one) supervisor. [The grad handbook currently mentions the possibility of two co-supervisors and no supervisor.]

2b. **[PROPOSAL]** The supervisor must be a full or emeritus* member of CS-SGS (this individual has the primary responsibility for supervision)**.

3. The student may, in addition, have one co-supervisor who is a member of SGS [broader than CS-SGS].

4a. **[PROPOSAL]** Within twelve months of the start of their program, the student must form a PhD supervisory committee.

Currently, the time limits for PhD committee formation is 3 months for PhD students with an MSc from UofT, 12 months for PhD students with a relevant MSc from elsewhere, and 6 months for PhD-direct students. SGS rules(see notes from the SGS calendar near the end of this document) require that the supervisor and the supervisory committee must be chosen within 4 sessions, i.e., 16 months.

4b. The PhD supervisory committee must consist of the student's supervisor, the co-supervisor (if any), plus at least two more members of SGS [broader than CS-SGS].

[DEBATE: Should a PhD supervisory committee consisting of the supervisor, co-supervisor, and one additional SGS member be allowed? Or should we continue to require two more SGS members?]

[DEBATE: Do we wish to require that the supervisory committee (including the supervisors) needs to include at least two **CS-SGS** faculty?]

[DEBATE: DCS can also constrain the composition of the FOE committee. Do we wish, for example, to require that the FOE committee must include at least two full members of CS-SGS (i.e., the student's supervisor plus an additional full member of CS-SGS)?]

5. The student may have one or more "external advisors" [without SGS status] on their PhD committee. External advisors do not contribute to the quorum, but can fully take part and vote at all the departmental checkpoints. They have a restricted status at the SGS Final Oral Exam

6. **[PROPOSAL]** A student who decides to switch from an existing supervisor has up to six months to find a new supervisor.

Failure to maintain good academic standing (PhD students):

1. Failing Grad Courses: Students will be asked to either repeat a graduate course they failed or pass an alternative course recommended by the graduate chair.

[PROPOSAL] A student who fails two or more graduate courses will not be considered to be in good academic standing. They may have their funding stopped, and may be asked to either withdraw from the program or have their registration terminated.

2. **[PROPOSAL]** A student without a supervisor for six months or more will not be considered to be in good academic standing. They may have their funding stopped, and may be asked to either withdraw from the program or have their registration terminated.

3. (SGS Calendar, 2013-14, p. 55): A student is expected to meet with [their PhD supervisory] committee at least once a year, and more often if the committee so requires. At each meeting, the supervisory committee will assess the student's progress in the program and provide advice on future work. In each of two consecutive meetings, if a student's supervisory committee reports that the student's progress is unsatisfactory, the graduate unit may recommend to the School of Graduate Studies the termination of registration and eligibility of that student. (Typically, the student should be offered the chance to withdraw from the program first.)

Time Limits on the PhD program:

1. Achieving Candidacy (2013-14 SGS Calendar p.54):

To achieve candidacy, students in doctoral degree programs must:

1. complete all requirements for the degree exclusive of thesis research ...
and

2. have an approved thesis topic, supervisor, and supervisory committee.

Candidacy must be achieved by the end of the third year for all doctoral programs, except for [the PhD-direct program, in which case candidacy must be achieved by the end of the fourth year of registration.]

In "exceptional circumstances", up to two 12-month extensions can be applied for.

[PROPOSAL] Currently, DCS requires only that a PhD student has completed all course and breadth requirements, and has passed the Qualifying Oral, before they are considered to have achieved candidacy. We should require that the DCS Research Proposal checkpoint must be passed, instead of simply the Qualifying Oral, in order for a student to achieve candidacy.

2. Completion of Degree (SGS, Calendar, p. 70): All requirements must be completed within six years from first enrolment for the PhD program [given a previous, relevant MSc] and within seven years for the [PhD-direct] program. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate who has failed to complete all the requirements for the degree within this period may be considered for a maximum of four one-year extensions.

MSc supervision:

For each student who starts their MSc program on or after Nov. 1, 2013:

0. [Approved 2012-13] Before an offer is made to a prospective student, one or more members of CS-SGS must have agreed that they are potentially willing to supervise** and fund this student. This information is included in the student's offer letter.

1. **[PROPOSAL]** A new student may take some time to find an official supervisor (for example, when there is more than one "sponsor"). The supervisor should be selected within six months. (This needs to be explained better: the point is to encourage new students to try to find the supervisor who is the closest match to their research interests, not to force students to compete for a limited number of supervisor vacancies.)

2a. **[PROPOSAL]** Within six months of the start of their program the student must have one (and only one) supervisor.

2b **[PROPOSAL]** The supervisor must be an associate, full or emeritus* member of CS-SGS (this individual has the primary responsibility for supervision)** (The current grad handbook requires "at least one of the co-supervisors" to be members of CS-SGS.)

3. The student may, in addition, have one co-supervisor who is a member of SGS [broader than CS-SGS].

4. May have one or more "external advisors" [without SGS status] to provide additional advice.

5. After completing the MSc research paper, the paper must be evaluated and approved by two readers, one of whom must be the student's MSc supervisor. The second reader must be a member of SGS. (Note: While an external advisor can provide feedback on the research paper, they cannot serve as a one of these formal readers.)

[DEBATE: Require that the second reader to be a member of CS-SGS?]

6. **[PROPOSAL]** A student who decides to switch from an existing supervisor has up to six months to find a new supervisor (the student's funding will continue during this time, up to the maximum number of months provided in the guarantee).

Failure to maintain good academic standing (MSc students):

[PROPOSAL] Same as points 1 and 2 for a PhD student, that is, cannot fail two or more courses, or be without a supervisor for more than six months.

Time Limits on the MSc program:

1. Completion of Degree (SGS, Calendar, p. 42): The time limit for the MSc program is three years (part time MSc, 6 years). All requirements must be completed within six years from first enrolment for the PhD program [given a previous, relevant MSc] and within seven years for the [PhD-direct] program. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate who has failed to complete all the requirements for the degree within this period may be considered for a maximum of three one-year extensions [WHERE IS THIS IN SGS CALENDAR?].

MSc to PhD Transition: Currently, the transition is approved on the same form as the MSc research paper evaluation. One of the readers (perhaps a third reader) must check boxes that say they have read and evaluated the research paper, a box that says they are willing to supervise this student's PhD, and a questionnaire about the student's performance. This may be inappropriate if a student plans to switch research areas for their PhD.

[PROPOSAL] In order to transition to the PhD program, one or more full members of CS-SGS must have agreed that they are willing to supervise and fund this student. The identity of these "sponsors" should be communicated to the student before the transition. (The change here is that these sponsors need not have read the student's MSc research paper, and would now be committing funding. The MSc-PhD transition, and recruiting a new PhD student with an MSc from elsewhere, would then be similar processes.)

MScAC supervision:

For each student who starts their MSc program on or after Nov. 1, 2013:

1. **[PROPOSAL]** On admission, the student may have no official academic supervisor, and has six months to arrange for one.

2a. **[PROPOSAL]** Within six months of the start of their program the student must have one (and only one) academic supervisor. (This needs to be explained better.)

2b. **[PROPOSAL]** The supervisor must be an associate, full or emeritus* member of CS-SGS (this individual has the primary responsibility for academic supervision)**.

3. The student may, in addition, have one co-supervisor who is a member of SGS [broader than CS-SGS].

4. The student may have one or more "external advisors" [without SGS status] to provide additional advice.

5. In addition, the student will have an industrial supervisor during their internship.

Failure to maintain good academic standing (MScAC students):

1. **[PROPOSAL]** A student who fails two or more graduate courses will not be considered to be in good standing. They may be asked to either withdraw from the program or have their registration terminated. (Students will be asked to either repeat a course they failed or pass an alternative course recommended by the director of the MScAC program. Students must repeat the required courses in this program if they fail them the first time.)

Footnotes:

* Emeritus SGS members need to have written approval from DCS before taking on new supervisory duties.

** CS-SGS members with "associate (restricted)" or "full (restricted)" status are typically not permitted to take on new supervisory duties. Members with a restricted status should check their most recent appointment letters for details.

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NOTES from the 2013-14 SGS Calendar:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/Documents/2013-2014-SGS-Calendar.pdf>

1. (p. 158) The SGS calendar has a recent (but not quite up to date) list of DCS graduate faculty members: http://www.cs.toronto.edu/~jepson/gac/DCS_Grad_Faculty.pdf

2. (p.54) All doctoral students should have an identified supervisor and supervisory committee as early as practicable in their program.

3. (p.54) The supervisory committee should consist of the **supervisor chosen from among the graduate faculty members of the graduate unit** and two other members of the graduate faculty.

4. (p.54) Unless the graduate unit has specified earlier deadlines, supervisory committees should be established no later than the end of the fourth session in all doctoral programs, except in five-year (direct-entry) PhD programs, ..., where the supervisory committee should be established no later than the end of the seventh session

5. (p.55) A student is expected to meet with [their PhD supervisory] committee at least once a year, and more often if the committee so requires. At each meeting, the supervisory committee will assess the student's progress in the program and provide advice on future work. In each of two consecutive meetings, if a student's supervisory committee reports that the student's progress is unsatisfactory, the graduate unit may recommend to the School of Graduate Studies the termination of registration and eligibility of that student.

6. (p.54) Satisfactory performance in a degree program requires the completion of every course taken for graduate credit with a grade of at least a B- ... If a student fails to complete a graduate course in a satisfactory manner (i.e., receives a grade report of FZ or NCR in a course or receives a grade report below the minimum acceptable by the graduate unit), then the graduate

unit in which the student is registered may recommend to the School of Graduate Studies the termination of registration and eligibility of that student. If the student is permitted to continue, he or she must repeat the relevant course, or an alternative course recommended by the graduate unit and approved by the School of Graduate Studies, and obtain a satisfactory grade. The report for the course that was not completed in a satisfactory manner as well as the report for the repeated or alternative course will appear on the student's academic record.

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ToDo:

1. Review by GAC and DCS faculty.
2. Existing supervisory relationships that do not satisfy these constraints will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis (and, typically, grandfathered).
3. If such a policy is approved, then notifications need to be sent.
 - a) This impacts grad student recruiting, the faculty will need to know.
 - b) It also impacts students who plan on transitioning from the MSc to the PhD program. They will need to know any new policies asap.
 - c) Modify Grad Handbook and place a FAQ accessible from web.cs