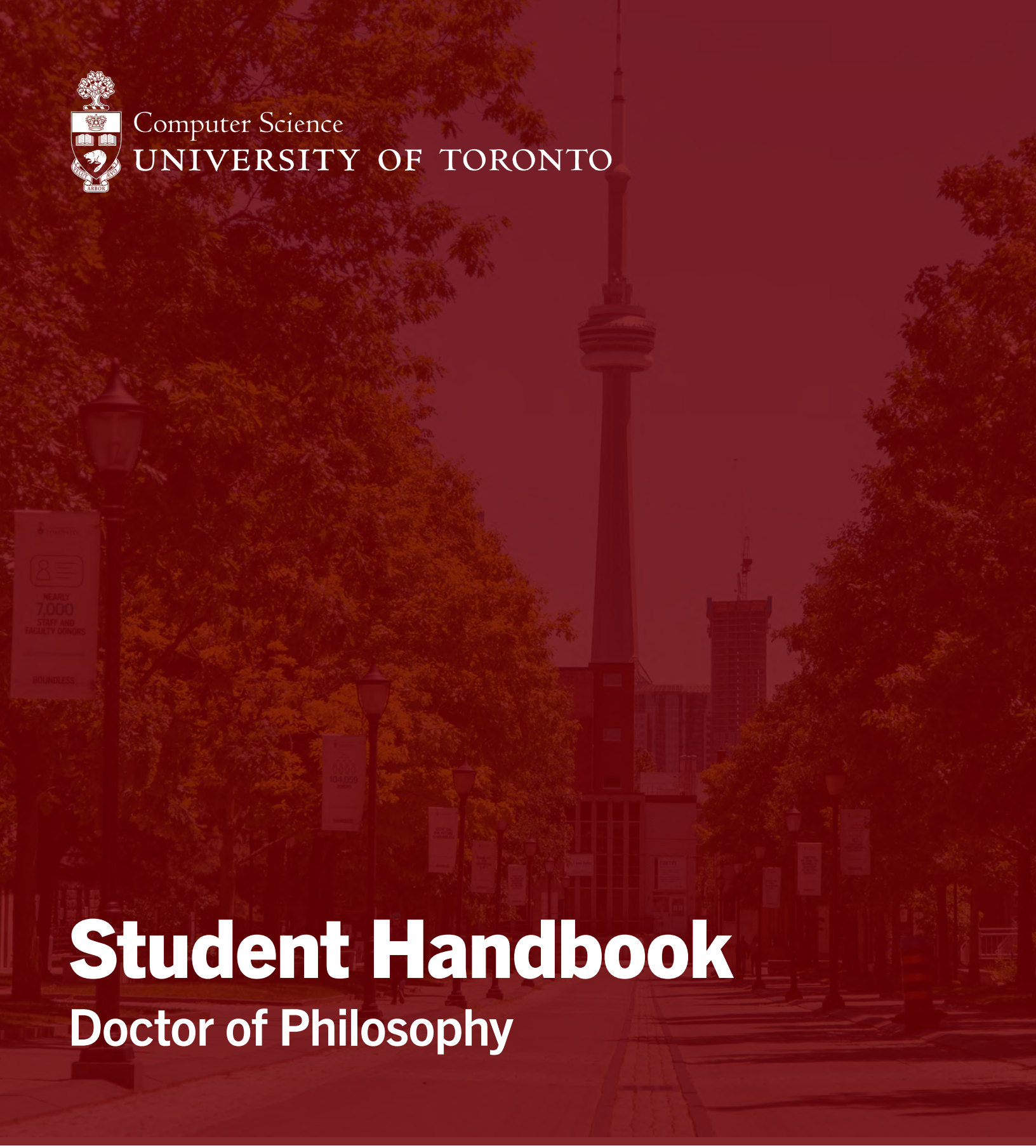

Computer Science
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Student Handbook

Doctor of Philosophy

2025–2026

Computer Science
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Department of Computer Science Graduate Handbook
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Program

2025-2026

Important Dates 2025–26

Fall 2025

June 30	Deadline to request a leave of absence for Fall 2025 session.
July 2	Deadline to submit Plan of Study for Pre-enrolment in Fall and Winter session courses.
July 2	Final day to submit the Final Oral Exam Scheduling Form for November convocation without registering for Fall 2025 session.
July 14	Final day to submit the Final Oral Exam Scheduling Form for November convocation.
July 14	Registration (fee deferral) for Fall session on ACORN begins.
July 28	Open course enrolment for Department of Computer Science (DCS) courses begins for Fall and Winter courses.
Aug. 1	Presidential Day – University closed.
Aug. 4	Civic Holiday – University closed.
Aug. 22	Recommended tuition fee payment deadline for students registering or starting their program in the Fall session to ensure payment is received by the registration deadline. International students must make a payment by this date to ensure they are covered by the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP) at the beginning of September. Students with a funding package which will cover the 'minimum payment to register' may register without payment (tuition deferral).
Sept. 1	Labour Day — University closed.
Sept. 2	DCS Graduate and cross-listed courses and seminars begin.
Sept. 12	Registration deadline for students registering or starting their program in September. After this date a late registration fee will be assessed
Sept. 15	Final date to submit defended and approved doctoral theses to ProQuest to avoid registration and fee payment for the 2025-26 academic year.
Sept. 17	Final date to add Fall and 'Y' courses without an Add/Drop Course(s) Form.
Sept. 29	Final date to submit defended and approved theses to ProQuest for November convocation.
Oct. 13	Thanksgiving holiday — University closed.
Oct. 15	Deadline to request a leave of absence for Winter 2026 session.
Oct. 27	Last day to drop Fall courses on ACORN without academic penalty. After this date an add–drop form must be submitted.
Oct. 27-31	Reading Week — no classes in some courses. Check with course instructor for details.

Nov. 3	Final day to submit the Final Oral Exam Scheduling Form for March convocation (no ceremony).
Dec. 1	Last day of classes in Fall session.
Dec. 24	First day of winter break — University closes.

Winter 2026

Jan. 5	University re-opens.
Jan. 5	DCS graduate and cross-listed courses and seminars begin.
Jan. 14	Grades for Fall 2025 session courses available for viewing by students on ACORN.
Jan. 15	Final date to submit defended and approved theses for doctoral degrees to avoid registration and fee payment for the Winter 2026 session.
Jan. 16	Registration deadline for students registering or starting their program in January. After this date a late registration fee will be assessed.
Jan. 19	Final date to add Winter courses without an Add/Drop Course(s) Form.
Jan. 23	Final date to submit final doctoral theses to SGS for March graduation (*in absentia)*.
Feb. 10	Deadline to request a leave of absence for Summer 2026 session.
Feb. 13	Final day to submit the Final Oral Exam Scheduling Form for June convocation.
Feb. 16	Family Day holiday — University closed.
Feb. 16-20	Reading Week — no classes in some courses. Check with course instructor for details.
Feb. 27	Final date to drop Full-Year and Winter courses without an Add/Drop Course(s) Form.
Feb. 27	Deadline to submit Plan of Study for PhD-Transitioned students commencing their program in January.
Apr. 3	Good Friday — University closed.
Apr. 8	Last day of classes in Winter session.
Apr. 10	Final date to submit defended and approved theses to ProQuest PhD thesis for June convocation
Apr. 30	Payment deadline to avoid service charges on unpaid Fall/Winter (September to April) session tuition and non-tuition fees for students who have successfully registered without payment because they are receiving a full funding package via a research stipend, a major award or scholarship, teaching assistantships, and/or sponsorships. Monthly service charges will begin accruing on May 15.

Summer 2026

May 4	DCS Graduate and cross-listed courses and seminars begin.
May 11	Final date to enrol in May-June or May-August session courses
May 13	Grades for Winter 2026 session courses available for viewing by students on ACORN.
May 15	Presidential Day — University closed.
May 18	Victoria Day holiday — University closed.
June 1	Final date to drop May-to-June F section courses without academic penalty
June 22	Final date to drop May-to-August session Y courses without academic penalty
July 1	Canada Day — University closed.
Aug. 3	Civic Holiday — University closed.

Please see the School of Graduate Studies Sessional Dates 2025-2026 for a more complete list of dates.

Table of Contents

1. What is a PhD?

The main goal of a successful PhD is to train a researcher and prepare them for further professional development. One aspect of this training is to ensure that they have both broad and deep knowledge of Computer Science. The starting point for this aspect is the completion of the PhD course and breadth requirements. However, course work is, by design, limited to relatively narrow and well-defined assignments, projects, and exams. To be a successful PhD student, a candidate needs a much broader set of skills, including the maturity as a researcher to cope with significantly more uncertainty than is typically seen in course work. Additional skills include the abilities to evaluate the current literature, to select promising directions for future work, and to follow some of those directions through to nuggets of new contributions. In our experience with our students, we typically see these skills develop slowly, continuing through to their graduation from our PhD program. However, our expectation is that the foundations for these skills should already be in place and evident by the beginning of the second year of PhD studies.

Specific foundational skills to be developed by a PhD candidate include these:

(a) The ability to **apply the basic tools of the field** in potentially new ways, along with understanding what they know and what they have yet to learn.
(b) The ability to **select significant research contribution**s from a larger set of published papers, and justify that selection (for example, on the basis of the significance of the results or the novelty of the approach).
(c) The ability to **relate the papers to one another**, and to other research in the literature.
(d) The ability to **critique the research methods** used in these papers, including the strengths and weaknesses of these methods and likely threats to validity, whether these are acknowledged in the papers or not.
(e) The ability to **identify limitations of the results** (and possibly errors) reported in the papers, along with their implications.
(f) The ability to **suggest alternative approaches** to answering the research questions posed in these papers.
(g) The ability to **identify and prioritize lines of investigation for further research**, based on an understanding of significant limitations of the research described in the papers and/or important open problems that the papers fail to answer, and also on the likelihood of being able to make progress on such issues.

This handbook describes the program requirements for the PhD programs in Computer Science. These requirements are meant to ensure that our students receive regular assessment and feedback on their progress toward these goals and that our graduates meet expectations.

2. PhD Programs in Computer Science

The Department of Computer Science has three PhD programs that are appropriate for students with different backgrounds. Students are assigned to one of these PhD programs upon admission. The end result of these programs is the same, namely a PhD in Computer Science.

1. **PhD-Transitioned:** Students who entered the PhD program after completing the MSc program in our department. (**PHD-T**)
2. **PhD-External Master's:** Students who entered the PhD program after completing a Master's degree in Computer Science (but not in our department) or in a related field. (**PHD-EM**)
3. **PhD-Direct Entry:** Students who entered the PhD program directly after completing an undergraduate Bachelor's degree in Computer Science or in a related field. (**PHD-U**)

As described below, the degree requirements vary across these three programs due to differences in the student's prior education.

3. PhD Course Requirements

3.1 Minimum number of courses

The **course requirement** covers the minimum number of courses required by a degree program. More courses can be taken. PhD-Transitioned and PhD-External Master's students are required to complete at least **four** graduate half-courses (2.0 Full Course Equivalencies or FCEs) within the first 28 months of their program. Students in the PhD-Direct-entry program must complete at least **eight** graduate half-courses (4.0 FCEs) within the first 40 months of their program. To obtain credit for a course, students must obtain a mark of B– or higher. (Note that when a graduate course is cross-listed with an undergraduate course, graduate students must enroll in the graduate course to receive credit. This is because graduate and undergraduate students may be assessed differently in cross-listed courses.) Courses offered as pass/fail or CR/NCR will not count towards fulfilling program requirements.

Transfer credits: In some cases, students may reduce the number of courses they are required to complete by requesting transfer credit for graduate courses that were completed but never used toward the requirements of another degree, diploma, certificate, or any other qualification (either at UofT or elsewhere), or as a Non-Degree Special Student. Students may request to transfer up to 1.0 FCE (that is, up to two half-credit courses) to their graduate program using the Transfer Credit Form.

For students who have completed the MSc program in DCS, any graduate half-courses completed beyond the MSc course requirement (and taken while the student is registered as an MSc student in DCS) may be used towards the PhD course requirement.

3.2 Breadth requirement

The breadth requirements for the PhD programs ensure that students complete courses from a sufficiently wide range of topics within Computer Science. Only courses that are on the List of Approved Courses Eligible for Fulfilling Breadth Requirements when they are taken can be used to satisfy the breadth requirement. This list is updated annually by the Graduate Affairs Committee. It includes almost all graduate courses taught in our department and a small number of courses offered by other departments on topics that have substantial Computer Science content.

The courses on this list are divided into 4 groups, depending on their subject area:

- **Group 1:** Algorithms, Complexity, Cryptography, Theory of Distributed Computing
- **Group 2:** Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Knowledge Representation, Computational Linguistics, Computational Biology and Medicine, Robotics, Vision

- **Group 3:** Systems, Networks, Databases, Security, Programming Languages, Compilers, Software Engineering, Scientific Computing
- **Group 4:** Human Computer Interaction, Computational Social Science, Visualization, Graphics, Sustainability Computing, Computer Science Education

The group to which each course on the approved list belongs is given in the course timetable on the DCS website.

The PhD breadth requirement depends on the student's program:

- **PhD-Transitioned**: For a PhD student who has transitioned from a Master's degree in our department, the eight graduate half-courses (4.0 FCEs) taken over their Master's and PhD together must include **at least 5 courses on the approved list from at least 3 different groups.**
- **PhD-External Master's:** Students who completed a Master's degree elsewhere must complete four graduate half-courses (2.0 FCEs). These courses, together with the graduate courses completed during their Master's degree, must include **at least 5 courses on the approved list from at least 3 different groups**. Graduate courses taken during a previous graduate program may be deemed equivalent to courses on the approved list with the permission of the Associate Graduate Chair. Note that students who did not complete a Master's degree in Computer Science may have to take additional courses to fulfill the breadth requirement.
- **PhD-Direct Entry:** PhD students who are entering the program directly from a Bachelor's degree are required to take a total of eight graduate half-courses (4.0 FCE). These must include **at least 5 courses on the approved list from at least 3 different groups**.

3.3 Breadth Evaluation

Graduate courses that were completed in a prior **graduate** program (either at UofT or elsewhere) may be deemed equivalent to courses on the approved list and, hence, qualify to fulfill the breadth requirement. The optional Breadth Evaluation Form allows a student to request that graduate-level courses taken in a prior graduate program (either in another department at UofT or elsewhere) be deemed equivalent to courses on the approved list. (Breadth evaluation is distinct from transfer credit and does not result in a reduction in the number of courses a student is required to take.) The assessment is done by the Associate Graduate Chair, sometimes in consultation with other faculty members. To support such a request, the student should submit:

- a syllabus or a copy of the course notes,
- course grading scheme
- copies of assignments or exams,
- copies of their course projects, and
- proof of their grade in the course (e.g., their transcript; unofficial copies are okay)

along with their Breadth Evaluation Form. Note that graduate courses taken during a Bachelor's degree (including graduate courses from our department) do **not** count towards the breadth requirement. The Breadth Evaluation form should be submitted to gradoffice.cs@utoronto.ca.

3.4 Plan of Study

By the end of the first month of registration in the PhD program, students must submit a Plan of Study Form to the Graduate Office for approval, listing the courses that they propose to take in order to satisfy the breadth requirement. Note that not all courses are offered each year, and it is not always known in advance which courses will be offered. Therefore, it is understood that a student's proposed list of courses might need to be altered in the future. If the list of courses a student will use to satisfy the breadth requirement changes, the student must submit a revised Plan of Study Form. Students who submit their Plan of Study Form by the advanced deadline (July 2, 2025) will be eligible for priority enrolment in up to 2 CS graduate courses in each of the fall and winter sessions.

3.5 Courses outside Computer Science

Students are allowed to take courses offered by other departments, provided that the offering department gives the student permission to enroll and provided that the student's courses, overall, meet the breadth requirements of their degree.

Students may propose courses to be added to the List of Approved Courses Eligible for Fulfilling Breadth Requirements by contacting the Graduate Office and providing a course syllabus, grading scheme, projects, and assignments.

3.6 Breadth Requirements for Students who began Prior to September 2024

Students who began their PhD program prior to September 2024 or who began their MSc program in DCS prior to September 2024 and transitioned to the PhD can either fulfill the breadth requirements described above or can fulfill the breadth requirements described in the PhD handbook from any year since they began. The handbooks from previous years can be found here. To change to the new breadth requirements, a student should submit a new Plan of Study Form.

4. PhD Student Supervision

4.1 Supervisor

Every PhD student is assigned a supervisor (and possibly a co-supervisor) upon admission to the program. (Students in the Theory Group will be assigned an interim advisor prior to registration and will be assigned a research supervisor by the beginning of their second term. Once a supervisor has been assigned, the student should submit a Change of Supervisor form to the Graduate Office.) The supervisor advises on course selection and thesis topic selection and provides continuing help while the student is doing research. All students are required to consult frequently with their supervisors throughout their graduate studies, to report on their progress, to ask questions, to obtain advice regarding their research, and to get approvals for plans of study and internships. When a PhD student is co-supervised, one of their co-supervisors must be identified as the primary supervisor (also known as the supervisor of record). To be the primary or sole supervisor of a PhD student, a faculty member must hold full membership in the School of Graduate Studies, with a specific graduate faculty appointment in the Department of Computer Science (i.e., a CS-SGS membership). The other co-supervisor must hold full, emeritus, or associate membership in CS-SGS. With approval from the Associate Graduate Chair, faculty with an emeritus appointment in CS-SGS may also supervise or co-supervise PhD students.

Successful supervision is a shared responsibility between the student and the supervisor. Students are responsible for attending mutually agreed upon meetings and for being responsive to supervisor feedback. The supervision guidelines provided by SGS are excellent resources for making the most of the relationship between a student and their supervisor. Take note of the checklists in Appendix 2 of both the Supervision Guidelines for Students and the Supervision Guidelines for Faculty. The Department of Computer Science supports the expectations stated in these guides, and we encourage students to discuss these checklists with their supervisor(s).

Even when their supervisor is on leave, a student is responsible for continuing to make good academic progress. Prior to taking a leave, a supervisor should meet with their student to discuss how the student will be supervised during the leave. If a student has questions about supervision during a leave, they can contact the Graduate Office.

Occasionally the student–supervisor match is not productive. Any student who finds themselves in such a situation should discuss difficulties or concerns with their current supervisor, a member of their supervisory committee, a member of the Graduate Office, including the Associate Director, Graduate Academic Services, or the Associate Graduate Chair. In many cases, the issues might be resolved by talking about them. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the resources provided by SGS as well as the confidential support of the Centre for Graduate Mentorship and Supervision. If no resolution can be found, students who feel a need to change their supervisor are welcome to seek

advice from the Associate Graduate Chair. However, the ability to switch supervisors depends on the availability of another faculty member to serve in this role. When a change in supervisor is made, submit the Change of Supervisor Form to obtain formal approval. Students considering a change of supervisor should first consult with a member of the Graduate Office.

4.2 PhD Supervisory Committee

The purpose of the student's PhD supervisory committee is both to aid the student by providing timely advice and to evaluate the student's progress towards a PhD thesis.

By the end of the **4th month** of registration in the **PhD-Transitioned** program, by the end of the **8th month** of registration in the **PhD-External Master's** program, and by the end of the **12th month** of registration in the **PhD-Direct Entry** program, a student should form a PhD **supervisory committee.** The committee must consist of at least three members, including the supervisor and, if applicable, the co-supervisor. All members must hold associate or full SGS membership (although not necessarily in CS-SGS). At least two members of the committee must hold full SGS membership in CS-SGS. The committee must contain at least one Research Stream Faculty member in DCS.

In addition, external experts can participate in a supervisory committee. An external expert would normally be someone who provides special expertise that is not available within the university. External experts are not formal members of the supervisory committee. However, they can take part in all the student's committee meetings with the following exceptions: (a) they do not contribute to a quorum, and (b) although they are permitted to attend the student's Final Oral Examination, they cannot vote. The request for an external expert to serve as an advisor on a PhD committee can be made by e-mail to the Graduate Office, accompanied by a brief rationale and CV to be reviewed by the Associate Graduate Chair.

The supervisory committee is chaired by a member who is neither the supervisor nor the co-supervisor. Students should consult their committee members about who will serve as chair. The chair is responsible for running the meetings of the committee and reporting the results to the Graduate Office.

Students should notify the Graduate Office of the formation of the PhD supervisory committee and of any changes to that committee using the Supervisory Committee Composition form. Changes to the supervisory committee should only be made in consultation with the Graduate Office and all changes must be reported immediately.

5. Milestones and Annual Supervisory Committee Meetings

To ensure that students are making satisfactory progress in their program, a series of **milestones** must be passed, beginning with the Research Presentation (Section 5.2) and ending with the Departmental Thesis Examination (Section 5.8), in preparation for the Final Oral Examination (Section 5.9).

The purpose of each milestone is different, and hence, it is NOT permitted to combine milestones. For example, the thesis topic approval meeting may not be combined with either the qualifying exam meeting or the thesis proposal meeting. Distinct milestones should be **a minimum of eight weeks apart.**

5.1 Annual Supervisory Committee Meetings

Students must meet with their supervisory committee on a regular basis. The purpose of supervisory committee meetings is to assess the student's research progress and to provide feedback on the student's research plans for the coming year. The first supervisory committee meeting is the Research Presentation (Section 5.2). The second supervisory committee meeting is the Qualifying Examination (Section 5.3). Subsequent annual committee meetings **must be held at least once every 12 months** prior to the Departmental Thesis Examination (Section 5.7). The supervisory committee may require that a student's next meeting be held earlier. Students are encouraged by SGS to schedule supervisory committee meetings every six months following their Qualifying Oral Examination to discuss their progress with their supervisory committee.

To be official and appear on their student record, a student **must schedule all supervisory committee meetings through the Graduate Office** by submitting the Supervisory Committee Meeting Scheduling form. In addition, the chair of the supervisory committee must submit their report to the Graduate Office following the meeting. The scheduling form must be submitted at least two weeks before any supervisory committee meeting, except for the Departmental Thesis Examination, which requires submission at least three weeks in advance.

Student preparation: The student should prepare a paper (for a supervisory committee meeting that involves a milestone) or a progress report (for a supervisory committee meeting that does not involve a milestone) to discuss with their committee. The nature of the paper depends on the milestone and is described in the following subsections.

Meeting format: Supervisory committee meetings should be held in person. If this is not possible, a good reason must be provided, and approval must be obtained from the Associate Graduate Chair at least 2 weeks in advance. If approved, a protocol for handling the committee's deliberations, both before the presentation and after the questioning, will be sent to the committee chair in advance of the meeting.

Quorum: A quorum requires three members, including the supervisor(s). If a quorum is not met, the milestone must be rescheduled. If quorum is met but a committee member

is absent, the student should present their material to that member individually. The member should then communicate their assessment to the chair of the committee for inclusion in the committee's report. If a committee member cannot attend the supervisory committee meeting and is not available to have the material presented to them individually, an alternate faculty member can serve in the committee member's absence with the approval of the entire supervisory committee and the Associate Graduate Chair.

Committee recommendations: After each supervisory committee meeting, the chair of the supervisory committee will provide written feedback to the Graduate Office, which will be forwarded to the student, and the student will be invited by the Graduate Office to respond to this feedback. In addition, one of the following results will be provided:

1. **Pass**: A pass is usually accompanied by constructive feedback and/or suggestions for activity in the next session(s).
2. **Conditional Pass**: The student is given one or more concrete tasks to complete by a specific deadline (no more than 12 months later). The tasks and the deadline are also communicated to the Graduate Office. The chair of the supervisory committee is responsible for reporting to the Graduate Office whether or not the student has cleared the conditions by the deadline. If the student fails to clear the conditions by the deadline, their progress will be considered unsatisfactory.
3. **Fail (with the option to repeat):** The student is not considered to be making satisfactory academic progress and must hold another supervisory committee meeting within 6 months.
4. **Fail (no option to repeat):** The committee recommends that the student must either withdraw from the program or have their registration terminated. This result is possible only for students who were not considered to be making satisfactory academic progress prior to the meeting. The Associate Graduate Chair will review such a recommendation.

5.2 PhD Programs Milestone Deadlines

There are different deadlines for achieving the milestones for each of the PhD programs. To remain in good standing, students are required to achieve these milestones by the stated deadline number of months in the program. To avoid delays caused by scheduling and other problems, it is a good idea to plan to pass the milestones significantly earlier than the stated deadlines.

PHD-Transitioned (completed MSc in Department of Computer Science at U of T)	
Milestone	**Deadline**
Plan of Study Approval	1 month
Supervisory Committee Approval	4 months
Research Presentation	4 months
Qualifying Examination	12 months
Supervisory committee meeting with Thesis Topic Approval	24 months
Achieve candidacy	28 months
Supervisory Committee Meeting with Thesis Proposal Approval	34 months
Departmental Thesis Examination	40 months
Final Oral Examination	43 months

PHD-External Master's	
Milestone	**Deadline**
Plan of Study Approval	1 month
Supervisory Committee Approval	8 months
Research Presentation	8 months
Qualifying Examination	16 months
Supervisory committee meeting with Thesis Topic Approval	28 months
Achieve Candidacy	28 months
Supervisory Committee Meeting with Thesis Proposal Approval	38 months
Departmental Thesis Examination	44 months
Final Oral Examination	47 months

PHD-Direct entry	
Milestone	**Deadline**
Plan of Study Approval	1 month
Supervisory Committee Approval	12 months
Complete CSC4000Y and Research Presentation	16 months
Qualifying Examination	28 months
Supervisory Committee Meeting with Thesis Topic Approval	40 months
Achieve candidacy	40 months
Supervisory Committee Meeting with Thesis Proposal Approval	50 months
Departmental Thesis Examination	56 months
Final Oral Examination	59 months

5.2 Research Presentation

A student must have formed their PhD supervisory committee and have had it approved at least two weeks in advance of this milestone.

PhD-Transitioned students should present the research project they completed in CSC4000Y to their supervisory committee. A copy of a paper they wrote about this research project should be submitted to their committee at least one week in advance of the meeting.

PhD-External Master's should present a graduate research project equivalent to that required for CSC4000Y. A copy of a paper they wrote about this research project should be submitted to their committee at least one week in advance of the meeting.

PhD-Direct Entry students should present the research project they undertook in CSC4000Y. This project should demonstrate their ability to do independent work in reviewing the relevant literature, identifying a problem in a research area, organizing existing concepts, suggesting and developing new approaches to solving problems in a research area, and reporting the results. The standard is that this work could reasonably be submitted for peer-reviewed publication, such as a conference or a workshop. Negative results are also acceptable, given a reasonable prior hypothesis and a thorough analysis of the reasons for these negative results.

A major component of the research project is writing a research paper. It should contain a thorough discussion of related work and a comprehensive list of references. Depending on the nature of the research, the paper should contain a clear description of motivation, the model, the algorithms, experimental methodology, experimental results, or the results of user studies. All claims must be fully supported. This may include complete

proofs or links to code or other artifacts, such as videos, that are part of the student's research project. As an example, a research paper might be an expanded version of a workshop or conference publication, including details that may have been omitted. A rough guideline for the length is 25 to 60 double spaced pages using an 11 or 12 point font. This paper should be submitted to the committee at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

At the beginning of the Research Presentation, the student will give a 15–20 minute talk about their paper. This will be followed by one or more rounds of questioning by their supervisory committee. During this questioning, it is critical that the student demonstrate an understanding of CS tools and techniques that are relevant to pursuing research in the area.

5.3 Qualifying Examination

The student, working with their supervisor, should **select 5–10 important research papers in one research area of CS**. It is expected that the student will have read and understood more than just the selected papers, but it is not expected that the student master the majority of the relevant literature at the time of this exam. The report must be distinct from any work prepared as part of any coursework. This research area need not correspond to the student's eventual choice of PhD topic. Students are not required to have committed to a thesis topic at this stage.

The student will prepare a short report (around 4,000 words or 16 double spaced pages in a reasonable font) about these papers, focussing on points (c) through (e) in Section 1. If the student has begun to investigate this area themselves, then they are welcome to briefly describe their progress so far. This report should be submitted to their committee at least one week in advance of the meeting.

At the beginning of the Qualifying Examination, the student will give a 15–20-minute talk about their report. This will be followed by one or more rounds of questioning by the supervisory committee in which the student will be examined on points (a) through (e) listed in Section 1. A student may discuss the expected overall scope of the questioning with their supervisory committee prior to the exam.

5.4 Thesis Topic Approval

For this milestone, a student should present a proposal describing the research they want to do for their PhD thesis. As with a grant proposal or a scholarship application, it should include:

- a clear description of the topic,
- why it is interesting to study,
- the relevant related research from the literature, and
- an initial research plan.

The student should submit a written description of their research vision to their committee at least one week before the supervisory committee meeting. The student will also give a 15-to-20-minute talk clearly describing their research vision to their committee. This will be followed by one or more rounds of questions by the members of their committee about it and related topics. Passing this checkpoint satisfies the approval of the thesis topic for admission to candidacy.

5.5 Candidacy

A PhD student is said to have achieved *candidacy* when they have completed all the requirements of their program except for the dissertation. (At some other universities, this is called "all but dissertation" or "ABD".) SGS requires that PhD-External Master's and PhD-Transition students achieve candidacy within the first 36 months of their program, and PhD-Direct Entry students within the first 48 months. Note that this is 8 months after the departmental deadlines.

Achieving candidacy involves:

1. The formation of the supervisory committee (Section 4.2);
2. completing all required courses and satisfying breadth requirements (Section 3);
3. successfully passing the Research Presentation (Section 5.2);
4. successfully passing the Qualifying Examination (Section 5.3); and
5. having a thesis topic approved at a meeting of the student's supervisory committee (Section 5.4).

Students who do not achieve candidacy within the required time are not considered in good standing and may be terminated from the program. Requests for an extension will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

5.6 Thesis Proposal Approval

The **thesis proposal approval** is a meeting of the supervisory committee at which the student's plan for the overall scope of the eventual thesis is considered for approval. In preparation, the student should submit a written proposal to the supervisory committee, at least one week before the meeting, that:

1. outlines both the completed and the anticipated results of the thesis;
2. demonstrates that a substantial portion of research has been successfully completed; and
3. provides a clear plan for completing the remaining research.

Typically, a thesis proposal is a draft of a substantial portion of the dissertation itself, along with a clear description of the remaining work to be completed. At the beginning of the meeting, the student should give a 15-to-20-minute talk about their thesis proposal. The supervisory committee assesses the scope and relevance of the problems the student intends to solve in the proposed PhD dissertation. The thesis proposal is typically completed 6–12 months prior to the Departmental Thesis Examination.

Legacy System for PhD Supervisory Committee Meetings

PhD students who enrolled in their program **before 1 September 2015** and who are maintaining regular meetings with their supervisory committees may continue with the previous PhD milestone system. Alternatively, they may opt into the present system for supervisory committee meetings, as described above. However, if a student under the legacy milestone system fails to have a committee meeting for 18 months or more, they will be automatically placed into the new system. PhD students in the legacy system must complete progress monitoring reports prior to each milestone. These reports will be reviewed by the student's supervisory committee.

PhD-Transitioned and PhD-External Master's students who began their PhD program prior to September 2024 and PhD-Direct Entry students who began before September 2023 may choose to fulfill the milestones described in this PhD handbook or to fulfill the milestones described in the 2022–2023 PhD Handbook. Such students must explicitly inform the Graduate Office and their committee of this choice prior to September 2025.

5.7 Departmental Thesis Examination

At the Departmental Thesis Examination, the student defends their dissertation before their supervisory committee. Other members of the department are also invited. A draft of the dissertation should be given to the committee members three to four weeks in advance of the examination. Each member of the committee is expected to read the dissertation in sufficient detail to form a judgement about its acceptability.

In the examination, the student presents an overview of their dissertation, in 20 minutes or less, with an emphasis on the novel aspects and contributions. The committee members then question the student in as many rounds as necessary.

Unlike other milestones, the student's presentation and committee questioning of the Departmental Thesis Examination are open to all members of the department, and students are encouraged to attend. (Exams are announced two weeks before the event.) The committee's deliberations, both before and after the presentation and questioning, remain private and confidential.

5.8 Final Oral Examination at the School of Graduate Studies

Upon the successful completion of at the Departmental Thesis Examination and any required revisions to the dissertation, the candidate will be ready to go forward to the Final Oral Examination (FOE) at the School of Graduate Studies.

The Examination Committee of the FOE consists of one to three members of the student's original Supervisory Committee and at least two examiners who have not been involved in the supervision of the thesis, including an External Appraiser approved by SGS and one or two members of SGS, from DCS or other departments of the university. At least one Research Stream Faculty member of the Department of Computer Science must be a member of the Examination Committee. Quorum is 4 voting members, with at least two who were not part of the supervisory committee. The FOE is chaired by a non-voting member appointed by SGS from another department of the university. The external appraiser must be at arm's length from both the student and the supervisor(s). Normally, this will exclude anyone who has served as Master's or PhD Supervisor/Supervisee of the Candidate or the Supervisor or has, in the past six years, been a departmental colleague of the Candidate or the Supervisor, or has collaborated on a research project, scholarly work or publication, with either of them. SGS qualifications for external appraisers can be found here. The SGS Vice Dean, Students will assess whether the nominee is at arm's length.

The Supervisor is responsible for finding an external appraiser and confirming their availability, sending their nomination to the Graduate Office for approval by the Graduate Chair, and scheduling the Final Oral Exam once the external examiner is approved by SGS. A nomination should include a *brief* rationale attesting to the proposed appraiser's expertise on the subject of the thesis as well as a CV listing **all** publications (not just selected publications) and **all** graduate student supervision (including dates of supervision and when students completed their degrees) *or* links to online sources for this information.

SGS Approval of the external appraiser may take up to ***two weeks***. Once approved, the student may submit the Final Oral Exam Scheduling form. This will start the scheduling process with SGS. ***The exam must be scheduled at least 8 weeks after the form has been submitted.*** Moreover, SGS is under no obligation to find a chair for the FOE if less than six weeks notice is provided; and, without a chair, the exam cannot proceed. The exam date and time must not be changed once it has been scheduled, except with the permission of the SGS Vice-Dean, Programs, typically only for illness or extenuating circumstances. Please contact the Graduate Office immediately if such circumstances arise.

At least 8 weeks before the exam, the student must submit a copy of the thesis to the Graduate Office through the scheduling form or by email at gradoffice.cs@utoronto.ca so that it can be sent to the external appraiser and the committee. The Graduate Office will distribute a copy of the final dissertation along with a formal program to the members of the FOE Committee and the external appraiser. Students may not have any contact with the external appraiser once the external appraiser has received the dissertation until the exam.

You must allow 10 weeks for the complete process. This time is required for SGS to approve the external appraiser; for the external appraiser and other new committee members to read the dissertation; and for the external appraiser to write a detailed report that is received by the student ***at least two weeks (10 business days) before the exam***. The Graduate Office will be responsible for distributing copies of the appraisal to the candidate and to all members of the examination committee. Once the student has received the report, the student can prepare any necessary rebuttals or answers to the appraiser's questions.

If the appraisal is not available two weeks prior to the exam, the Graduate Office will contact the candidate to determine if they wish to proceed with the exam under these circumstances. If the student wishes to proceed despite the delay in receiving the appraisal, the student must sign a waiver; otherwise, the oral exam is postponed.

All forms and instructions are available on the DCS Graduate Forms and Handbooks web page. Full FOE details and regulations, including details of how the exam is conducted and hence how to prepare for it, can be found on the SGS website. All students preparing to schedule their Final Oral Exam are invited to meet with the Graduate Office to go over timelines and procedures for scheduling their final oral examination.

5.9 Graduation

Following the completion of the Final Oral Exam and the submission of the final dissertation with any corrections or revisions as required, to the Electronic Thesis Database, SGS will submit a Recommendation for Degree Completion and the student's name will be added to the convocation roster. Timelines for the final submission of the dissertation are dictated by SGS. Students who complete their FOE with the result "As Stands" will have 7 days from the date of the examination to submit their dissertation to the Electronic Thesis Database. Those who receive the result "Editorial Corrections" will have one month and those who receive the result "Minor Revisions" will have three months. Candidates who upload their approved thesis in advance of the September thesis deadline (by September 29) will convocate in November. Candidates who upload their approved thesis in advance of the January thesis deadline (by January 15) will have the option to choose to convocate in either March (without a ceremony) or in June. An email with graduation information and instructions regarding convocation dates, receiving diplomas, and reserving tickets will be emailed to the student's mail.utoronto email address from the Convocation Office.

6. Timelines, Deadlines, and (Un)Satisfactory Progress

6.1 Time Limit to Degree Completion

There are **two** program time limits. The **departmental** time limit refers to the amount of time that a student receives guaranteed funding from the department. **SGS** time limits refer to the amount of time that a student may register in their program.

Program	Departmental guaranteed funding period	SGS time-limit for degree
PhD-Transitioned	43 months	72 months
PhD-External Master's	48 months	72 months
PhD-Direct Entry	60 months	84 months

In exceptional circumstances, a PhD student who does not complete all the requirements for the degree within the SGS time limit may be considered for a maximum of up to four one-year extensions, bringing the final limit to 10 years for the PhD-Transitioned and PhD-External Master's programs and 11 years for the PhD-Direct-Entry program.

Students who have serious health problems or personal circumstances that prevent them from making satisfactory progress are entitled to take a leave from graduate studies. Such a leave effectively stops the clock for funding and time to degree completion; on return, the student is entitled to resume at the point where they left, without penalty. Students encountering difficulties should connect with the Graduate Office at gradoffice.cs@utoronto.ca.

6.2 Deadlines are serious

Students who fail to meet the deadlines for the milestones and progress reviews will be considered to not be making satisfactory academic progress. Students who anticipate being unable to schedule a committee meeting before the deadline should contact the Graduate Office as soon as possible. See also the SGS General Regulations section on Degree Regulations for Doctoral Degrees; and specific program requirements for Computer Science in the Programs by Graduate Unit section of the SGS Calendar.

Students should notify the Graduate Office of all scheduled committee meetings **at least two weeks in advance** of the meeting, so that the appropriate forms and the student record can be sent to committee members. If the Graduate Office is not notified of a milestone or annual supervisory committee meeting in advance of the meeting, it will not be official and will not count in the student's progress.

6.3 Unsatisfactory progress

A student who fails a course or a milestone meeting, who misses a second consecutive deadline, or who is not moving forward in research is considered to be making unsatisfactory progress. This can have serious consequences. A student who is making unsatisfactory progress may lose all or part of their Departmental Fellowship. A student who continues to make unsatisfactory progress may be offered the option to either withdraw from the program or have their registration terminated (see SGS information on termination).

6.4 Dropping down to the MSc Program from the PhD Program

Students in the PhD-Direct Entry and PhD-External Master's programs may request to drop down to the MSc program with the approval of the Associate Graduate Chair, in which case they will be required to complete the standard MSc program requirements (namely, the MSc course requirements along with the MSc research project CSC4000Y). The student's guaranteed funding period will be reduced to 17 months, the limit for the MSc program. If the student has been funded for more than 17 months, their funding will be terminated. A Program Transfer Form must be submitted prior to the student's anticipated last session of registration (e.g., for a student who plans to finish in the summer, the form must be submitted to the Graduate Office in April). A student transferring may not graduate in the same session that the transfer occurs. A student is not required to register for the session in which they convocate provided they complete the requirements of the MSc program by the required deadline. Please see the MSc Handbook for detailed instructions about MSc program completion. International students who wish to transfer to the MSc are encouraged to transfer by the beginning of the summer session and to complete the MSc requirements in the summer session to avoid higher fees for international MSc students. PhD students who have not registered for four sessions may be required to pay any balance of degree fees outstanding on their account. PhD students who transfer down to the MSc program will not be eligible to return to the PhD program. All PhD students considering transferring to the Master's program should make an appointment with the Graduate Office to discuss potential fee and funding implications.

6.5 Withdrawal

Students considering program withdrawal must contact the Graduate Office at gradoffice.cs@utoronto.ca to discuss their options. Any student who withdraws from their program and is interested in rejoining must re-apply to the program to continue the program. Re-admission is not guaranteed.

7. Forms, Fees, and Administrative Procedures

DCS and SGS forms for all common requests are available here.

7.1 Adding and dropping courses

Students may enrol in courses for the 2025-26 Fall and Winter sessions starting on July 28 on ACORN. The last day to add courses for the Fall session is September 17 and for the Winter session is January 19; after these dates, an Add/Drop Course(s) Form is needed to enrol in courses. For the Fall 2025 term, courses may be dropped in ACORN until October 27, and for the Winter 2026 term, February 27. After that, a drop form is required to petition that the drop be done without penalty.

Coursework Extension Requests: Occasionally due to unforeseen circumstances (such as a documented medical reason) students may require additional time beyond the grade submission deadline to complete course work. Course work extensions must be signed by the course instructor and submitted to the Graduate Office at gradoffice.cs@utoronto.ca through the submission of an Extension to Complete Coursework Form. Approved extensions will be marked as SDF (Standing Deferred) on the student's transcript until the final course grade is received. Students requiring additional time beyond the initial extension must contact the Graduate Office.

7.2 Registration and fees

Students are considered to be registered as soon as they have paid the minimum tuition and incidental fees or have made appropriate arrangements to defer their fees. Regardless of whether they are taking courses, students are expected to register every year and remain continuously registered until they finish their degree unless they take an approved leave. When students return from an approved leave, they must register again. Students who fail to register or are not permitted to register because they have reached the time limit for their degree (and a program extension was not approved) will have their registration end. Students who fail to register may not make demands upon the resources of the University, attend courses, or expect advice from their supervisor. Students who fail to register by the sessional registration deadline will be charged a late registration fee.

General fee information:

- Fee schedules are available on the University Registrar's website and students may pay, or defer their fees if eligible, as soon as their invoice is updated on ACORN.
- UHIP charges for international students are included on their fees invoice.
- Students wishing to make a fees payment from **outside of Canada** may choose one of the fee payment options outlined on the University Registrar's website.
- While students with outstanding severe conditions will be blocked from requesting registration without payment on ACORN, they can still pay fees at the bank. The payment will not change an INVIT status to REG.

- Continuing students with outstanding conditions from the previous year, who have allowed their registration to lapse, or have met their candidacy or program time limit, do not have an INVIT created for the session and will not be able to pay fees until conditions are cleared.

Failure to register: If you fail to register and wish to return to your studies, you must request to be reinstated in your program. Reinstatement is permitted, upon approval by the Associate Graduate Chair, if you are still within the maximum allowable time for your degree program. For more information, please contact gradoffice.cs@utoronto.ca.

Reinstated students in programs requiring continuity of registration must pay fees owing for any session(s) in which they did not register. More information is available on the School of Graduate Studies webpage, Manage Your Program.

Arrears: Students with arrears — that is, fees owing from prior sessions — are not eligible for registration until they have paid their outstanding balance in full. Students are encouraged to clear their arrears early and seek prompt advice from the SGS Financial Aid and Advising team if they are unable to make full payment before the final day to register.

Outstanding Conditions: Students admitted to the program are usually admitted with two types of conditions: severe and non-severe. The most common severe conditions are the receipt of formal transcripts directly from the issuing institutions to the graduate office. Students will not be permitted to register until all severe conditions are cleared. Some students will also have severe conditions related to English Language Proficiency testing. Students can see their conditions on their formal SGS admission letter. Students should consult with the graduate office if they have any questions about their conditions. Non-severe conditions must also be cleared by the end of the first Fall term of registration, or by the deadline stated in the admission letter, whichever is earlier. Failure to clear all conditions will result in a student having their registration revoked.

Requesting to register without payment (Tuition Fee Deferral): Students can request to register without payment via ACORN if they have no outstanding fees from a previous session and they are the recipient of one of the following awards, which exceeds the Minimum Payment to Register amount on their invoice:

- University funding (major award, research stipend, or teaching assistantship);
- Award from an external agency (for example, NSERC or OGS);
- OSAP loan;
- Other provincial government loan; or
- U.S. government loan

However, if a student is receiving a major award, research stipend, or teaching assistantship which is not part of a funding package, or requesting to register without payment after the registration deadline, the Register Without Payment (Fee Deferral) form must be used. Policies about deadlines to pay tuition after a deferral are outlined on the form.

Invoices and paying tuition fees: Fee deferral only defers the payment of tuition. Students with a funding package will have a part of that package automatically applied to their tuition charges by the university. Students who defer their tuition who are not receiving one of these payments (generally University of Toronto Fellowships, NSERC, or OGS/QEII), will have to arrange for payment themselves. Graduate students who receive their funding through different sources (such as Human Resources Information System - HRIS or payroll) are still eligible to defer their fees; however, they will need to pay their tuition and incidental fees manually on ACORN. Graduate Students can learn more about the different sources of their income and how these are paid by reviewing their annual funding letter. Students are informed of fees payable through ACORN. Students should remain aware of the status of the various items in their account. Failure to pay the full invoice amount by the deadline will result in accrual of interest charges and a block on registration for the next academic year.

Final year doctoral fees: Full-time students in the final year of their doctoral program pay a prorated tuition fee based on the full-year tuition fee for their program (i.e. number of months registered times one-twelfth of the annual fee). Incidental and ancillary fees are prorated on a whole-term basis in the Fall and Winter. Fees are based on the date of final thesis submission to SGS, not the date of the defence.

Doctoral students who complete all degree requirements (i.e., defend and submit a final dissertation to SGS with all corrections and modifications approved) by **September 15** do not pay fees for the September session. After September 15, and the 15th of every month thereafter, a monthly fee is charged for each month the degree requirements are not completed.

Doctoral students will be billed for the annual fee but may choose to pay: (1) the full fee, (2) the minimum first payment, or (3) the fee based on the expected date of completion. If a student pays less than the full-year fee, a monthly service charge will be applied to any outstanding balance, starting October 15. When degree requirements are complete, the Student Accounts Office will adjust the fees accordingly, including service charges to outstanding balances that have accrued since September 16.

Request for Off-Campus Registration: Full-time students must be geographically available and visit the campus regularly. In some cases, it may be appropriate, with the approval of the student's supervisor, to be absent from the University for an extended period. In these cases, the student must submit a Request for Off-Campus Registration form to the graduate office for review by the Associate Graduate Chair. Students who plan to be outside of Canada (including in the U.S.A), must register with the University of Toronto, Centre for International Experience, Safety Abroad Database.

7.3 Personal Time Off Policy

The Personal Time Off Policy allows full-time registered graduate students to take up to 15 business days per academic year (Sept–Aug) in personal time off, in addition to statutory holidays and days designated as University closures or holidays. Students who are

enrolled for only part of the academic year (for example, because of a leave of absence), will have their allowable personal time off pro-rated. This will not result in any changes to registration or funding. The time off is not mandatory. See the SGS Personal Time Off Policy and Understanding Personal Time Off for more information.

A student must consult with, and receive approval from, their supervisor in advance of the time off. The time off must not compromise student research, coursework, overall progression through the curriculum, or deadlines. This time off only applies to the students' academic program, and not their obligations as teaching assistants (which are regulated by the CUPE 3902 Unit 1 Collective Agreement) or other research assistant/casual work. Students are responsible for documenting time off information and keeping their annual records for the duration of the program.

7.4 Leaves of Absence —internship, personal, medical, and parental

Personal, medical, and parental leaves: Students requiring an extended period away from their studies for personal, medical, or parental leave should notify the Graduate Office as soon as possible. (See "How to request a leave" below.)

All students considering a leave of absence should meet with the Graduate Office in advance. Leaves of absence cannot be taken without formal approval from the Associate Graduate Chair.

Leaves are always granted for an entire session and cannot be prorated to months or weeks. A scheduled leave can begin at the beginning of September, January or May. If it is necessary to take a leave outside of a normal academic session, please consult with the Graduate Office.

Paid parental leave: (1) If the supervisor is supporting the student from an NSERC, CIHR, or SSHRC grant, then the student may be entitled to continued support for up to 12 months while on parental leave (in addition to the amount of the grant); see the Tri-Agency Financial Administration guide for details. To apply for this support, contact the Graduate Office. (2) The student may be eligible for an SGS Parental Grant for two or three sessions; see the SGS Parental Grant webpage for details.

Internships: Internships are not a component of the research programs in the Department of Computer Science. However, they are recognized as an important experience for many of our graduate students. SGS does not distinguish between personal and internship leaves, so students considering an internship leave should select "personal" on their leave of absence form.

It is important to notify the Graduate Office well in advance of taking up an internship (see table below) to see if a leave of absence is appropriate. Failure to meet these deadlines may mean paying back tuition and funding from the department and scholarships. If there is a substantive reason why a student is unable to meet the notification deadline, contact the Graduate Office.

Session	Notify the Grad Office of intention to take leave by
Summer (May–August)	February 10
Fall (September–December)	June 30
Winter (January–April)	October 15

How to request a leave of absence: Students thinking about taking a leave should consult the Graduate Office. Students may request an official leave of absence for one to three sessions by completing an SGS Request for Leave of Absence form, and submitting it to the Computer Science Graduate Office with a brief statement of the reasons that the leave is requested. The statement must be approved by their supervisor. Students who are applying for a parental leave and want to be considered for an SGS Parental Grant should also submit an SGS Parental Grant application.

How is time to completion affected by a leave of absence? For approved leaves, the remaining funding, the remaining components of the program, and the time-to-completion for the degree will be extended by the amount of time (number of sessions) taken for the leave. This is calculated per session and cannot be prorated by weeks or days.

How are tuition fees affected by a leave of absence? Students who are on an approved leave of absence are not registered in the program. Since tuition and fees are assessed on a term basis (not a per course basis), students will only be charged for the terms in which they are registered. For students registered in full-time programs, tuition and fees are assessed only during the fall and winter sessions.

How are funding and scholarships affected by a leave of absence? Student funding will be put on hold for the duration of an official leave. Students must notify the Graduate Office when they return from leave so that registration and funding can resume. Students who receive their sessional funding prior to a leave of absence commencing may need to repay a portion of the payment they received. This can be avoided by submitting the necessary paperwork by the deadline outlined above.

Agencies such as OGS and NSERC allow for medical leave. However, students on personal or internship leave must check the regulations of any scholarships that they are receiving to make sure that the agency will allow a break for work experience and deferral of payments.

A break in registration may also impact income tax calculations. Further, it may mean that any student loans will be immediately payable! Students should check with their loan agency about repayment regulations.

How does a leave of absence affect international students? International students should ensure that they have an appropriate visa that will allow them to not be registered

as a student while they work at an internship and ensure that they will have health insurance coverage in this period. International students should consult the Graduate Office as well as a licensed immigration advisor (such as at the Centre for International Experience). Failure to do so may have severe implications on immigration status as well as financial ramifications.

How does a leave of absence affect access to university services (health insurance, access to athletic centre)? Students taking a leave of absence should note that their UTGSU health insurance is paid in two parts: Fall and Winter (which covers insurance for the winter and summer terms). Students returning from a leave at the beginning of the summer session will not have access to health insurance until the start of the fall session. Students should consult with the University of Toronto Graduate Student Union or CUPE concerning potential changes to their health insurance. Students on leave will generally not have access to university services, unless they pay to continue for them. Fees for this are listed in the leave of absence form.

Students on leave may be granted an exception to continue physician care at Health & Wellness. All conditions below must be met before an exception is considered:

- The student received mental health care OR has been treated for the medical condition which is also the reason for the Leave at the Health & Wellness Center – UTSG within 6 months prior to the start of the Leave.
- The student has a valid health insurance such as OHIP (or coverage from other Canadian provinces), UHIP, or private insurance that will cover physician visits, lab tests and hospital visits.
- The student has opted-in to continued access to campus services.

7.5 Appeals

Graduate students may appeal substantive or procedural academic matters, including grades, evaluation of program requirements, decisions about the student's continuation in any program, or any other decision with respect to the application of academic regulations and requirements to a student (SGS General Regulation 10). Students may not appeal admissions decisions, fees, or the voluntary withdrawal from a graduate program.

With the exception of the Final Oral Examination, appeals are first initiated within Department of Computer Science, with the Graduate Department Academic Appeals Committee (GDAAC). Academic appeals are heard only from students who are currently registered in the School of Graduate Studies or who were registered at the time the ruling or action was taken. Students must file an appeal within eight weeks of the initial decision being made.

Students must first attempt to resolve the matter with the instructor or other person whose ruling is in question. Should the matter not be resolved with that person and should the student wish to pursue the matter, the student must discuss the matter with the Associate Graduate Chair. Should such discussions fail to resolve the matter, the student may then make a formal appeal to the Chair of the GDAAC.

After receiving the Notice of Appeal, the Chair of the GDAAC will provide the person who made the decision being appealed with a copy of the Notice of Appeal and request a written response. This response, along with the student's Notice of Appeal will be considered by the GDAAC committee. The GDAAC committee will make a recommendation to the Chair of the Department, who will render a decision. See the GDAAC Guidelines and the appeals policy in the General Regulations in the *SGS Calendar* for further information.

The decision resulting from the GDAAC may be appealed to the Graduate Academic Appeals Board (GAAB). The decision of the GAAB may be appealed to the Academic Appeals Committee of the Governing Council.

7.6 University of Toronto Policy for Official Correspondence with Students

The University and its divisions will communicate with students primarily via email, and all students are required to obtain and maintain a University of Toronto email address. This is the only email address that will be used for official correspondence. Official correspondence may include, but is not limited to, matters related to students' participation in their academic programs, important information concerning University and program scheduling, fees information, and other matters concerning the administration and governance of the University.

Students are responsible for maintaining and updating their contact information on the student information system (ACORN). This information must include current and valid mailing and permanent addresses as well as a University of Toronto email address. Failure to provide and maintain this information may result in a student missing important information and will not be considered an acceptable rationale for failing to receive official correspondence from the University.

8. Contact Information and Resources

Graduate Office
If you have any questions regarding administrative matters such as registration, enrolment, grades, fees, financial support, and awards, please feel free to contact gradoffice.cs@utoronto.ca. The Graduate Office offers drop-in in-person meetings as well as, virtual and in-person by appointment. Please make sure to bring your TCard with you. The Graduate Office is open Monday to Friday 9:30 am – 4:30pm.

BA4281, BA4237, and BA4239
Bahen Centre for Information Technology
Department of Computer Science
University of Toronto
40 St. George Street, Room 4283
Toronto, ON M5S 2E4
Departmental Website: https://web.cs.toronto.edu/graduate/programs
DCS Graduate Student SharePoint site: https://utoronto.sharepoint.com/sites/ArtSci-DCS-grad

ACORN – Student Web Service
The Accessible Campus Online Resource Network (ACORN). ACORN will be your main online resource for updating contact information, student account information and student life resources. Access ACORN using your UTORid and password. Use ACORN to: defer fees; view tuition invoices and financial account; update contact information; order transcripts; print tax forms; access information on housing, health and support, cocurricular programs and more. Visit the ACORN website for more information, including frequently asked questions and how-tos.

Arts & Sciences Support for Graduate Student Development
Graduate Writing Support: https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/graduate/graduate-opportunities/support-graduate-student-development#gradsupportwriting

Graduate Professional Development Support: https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/graduate/graduate-opportunities/support-graduate-student-development#gradprofessionaldevelopment

Graduate Mental Health & Wellness Support: https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/graduate/graduate-opportunities/support-graduate-student-development#grad-mentalhealthwellnesssupport

Join their Quercus site for resources and information about up-coming workshops.

Health and Wellness
Health & Wellness: https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/health-wellness/

Graduate Mental Health & Wellness Support: https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/graduate-wellness-services-at-sgs/

U of T Telus Health Student Support (THSS): https://mentalhealth.utoronto.ca/telus-health-student-support/

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) –https://people.utoronto.ca/employees/efap/

International Student Resources
SGS International Portal: info on immigrating and studying in Canada (SIN, taxes, Health insurance, etc.): https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/international-portal/before-you-arrive/

The Center for International Experience (CIE): https://internationalexperience.utoronto.ca/

CIE offers a range of programs and services to support international students, as well as global learning for all students. The student immigration advisors at CIE are the only people on campus who are authorized to give immigration advice.

Quercus
Quercus (https://q.utoronto.ca/) is U of T's online course communication system. Some instructors will use Quercus for their course websites. Those courses will become active on Quercus before the first week of classes. Login to Quercus using your UTORid.

SGS GradHub:
Grad Hub is designed to help you navigate grad life at U of T and connect you to workshops, social events, campus services and resources. It provides community through programs where you can gain balance, build skills, seek support and connect with other graduate students across disciplines. To view more information on activities and support resources, visit the Grad Hub website: https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/gradhub/

SGS Supports for Program Progress and Mentorship
Graduate Centre for Academic Communication: https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/gcac/

Centre for Graduate Mentorship and Supervision: https://www.cgms.utoronto.ca/

Centre for Graduate Professional Development: https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/resources-supports/cgpd/

TCard
The TCard is the campus ID card, which provides access to services and facilities such as libraries, athletic facilities, exams, meal plans, printing services. Once students have their TCard, they can also enable their UTORid, U of T email address, and access U of T WiFi. As of May 1, 2025 students can begin initiating their TCards by uploading a photo for their TCard. More information is available at tcard.utoronto.ca.

Teaching Assistantship Resources
CUPE Benefits plan: https://www.cupe3902.org/unit-1/benefits/

CUPE Local 3902: https://www.cupe3902.org/

CUPE Local 3902 Unit 1 Job Postings: https://unit1.hrandequity.utoronto.ca/

HR Self-service, to access payslips (choose Employee Self-Service – ESS): https://people.utoronto.ca/hr-service-centre/

Teaching Assistant's Training Program (TATP) at the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI): https://tatp.utoronto.ca/

University of Toronto Graduate Student Union
UTGSU (University of Toronto Graduate Student Union): https://utgsu.ca/

Health and Dental Plan: https://utgsu.ca/health-and-dental/

University of Toronto Multi-Factor Authentication (UTORFMA)
UTORMFA is the University of Toronto's multi-factor authentication solution. It verifies your identity using a second factor, like a mobile device or hardware token, to ensure that only you can log in. Self-Enrolment for UTORFMA (University of Toronto Multi-Factor Authentication): https://security.utoronto.ca/services/utormfa/

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

University of Toronto – Department of Computer Science
40 St. George Street, Room 4283
Toronto, ON M5S 2E4

Contact Us

gradoffice.cs@utoronto.ca
web.cs.toronto.edu/graduate