

Graduate Supervision Responsibilities & Expectations Policy

Department of History
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This document is a Department-specific adaptation of the Graduate Studies document available here, with which supervisors and students should also familiarize themselves:

<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/graduate-supervision-responsibilities-expectations-policy/>

Overview

Fundamental to a satisfactory relationship between a supervisor and a student are mutual respect and a high level of professional integrity. What follows are guidelines to assist in the functioning of that relationship.

When a supervisor-student relationship is established, the parties should understand that they assume the following responsibilities and can have the following expectations:

Responsibilities of Supervisors (including Co-Supervisors):

- To provide constructive feedback on work submitted by the student in a timely manner as governed by departmental guidelines. This includes graduate coursework, proposals, and other components of Master's and PhD thesis, MRE, or dissertation work. Where this feedback cannot be provided within one month, this delay must be handled in full consultation with the student.
- To maintain regular communication and consultation with the student.
- To be available for regular and timely consultations with the student and to provide notification of lengthy absences and the support mechanisms available under these circumstances.
- To agree to continue supervision when on sabbatical or other type of leave, or to assist the student in making arrangements for supervision during the period of the leave.
- To assist students in seeking financial support, especially in writing letters of good quality in support of scholarship and fellowship applications (e.g. well-written, informative, typed, on university letterhead).
- To convene meetings of the advisory committee.
- To agree with the student on a reasonable schedule for the completion of each portion of the research and thesis, MRE, or dissertation. Supervisors should advise their students to be aware of Graduate Studies deadlines.

- To be familiar with the regulations and standards of the faculty of Graduate Studies, and of the History Department, especially as they pertain to the conduct of research and the production of the thesis, MRE, or dissertation, and to ensure that the student is aware of these regulations and standards.
- To be aware of and abide by the university's policies on Conflict of Interest and Research Ethics:
<https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/sites/158/Conflict-of-Interest-and-Commitment.pdf>
<https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/resources-page/thesis-requirements/research-ethics/>
- To be aware of and abide by the university's Sexual Violence Policy:
<https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/sites/158/Sexual-Violence-Policy-2025.pdf>
- To be aware of and abide by the university's policies on Workplace Violence and Harassment:
<https://carleton.ca/ehs/programs/health-safety-management/workplace-violence-and-harassment/>
- To assist the student in identifying a suitable research topic and (where appropriate) setting up a program of study.
- To assist the student in the interpretation of research materials.
- To indicate clearly when a draft thesis, MRE, or dissertation is in acceptable condition for examination or, if it is clear that the work is not examinable, to advise the student in a timely fashion. In the case of disagreement between the supervisor and the student as to whether the work should move to defence, the student does have the right to proceed to examination without the supervisor's support.
- To complete all necessary departmental records and the supervisor's section of the annual audit form required by the Graduate Studies.
- To discuss with the student as early as feasible, any potential joint authorships or joint ownership of data or patents which might arise, provide a written version of any understandings reached on these matters, and also ensure that student contributions to publications are adequately acknowledged. (Granting agencies and major journals have guidelines which cover some or all of these items.)
- To discuss with the student any potential copyright issues related to external material reproduced in the thesis, MRE, or dissertation.

Responsibilities of Students

- To choose, with the supervisor's help, a feasible research topic.
- To work systematically and within agreed deadlines, as much as possible, in order to meet the program deadlines specified by both the History department and Graduate Studies.
- To familiarize themselves with the History department and Graduate Studies policies regarding the elements, course and completion of their degree.
- To make themselves available for meetings with their supervisor during regular business hours.
- To be well prepared for meetings with the supervisor.
- To participate in the professional development opportunities provided by the History department and Graduate Studies.
- To agree with the supervisor on a reasonable schedule for the completion of each portion of the research and thesis.
- To submit to the supervisor all research materials, as requested, and, at the agreed times, drafts of parts of the thesis, MRE, or dissertation for comment.
- To give serious attention to the advice and direction of the supervisor.
- To realize that the supervisor has duties and commitments that may delay access at short notice or slow down the return of a draft.
- To acknowledge direct assistance of material drawn from other scholars and researchers.
- To submit the thesis, MRE, or dissertation to the judgment of the History department via the examination procedures specified, and to abide by the judgment of the examiners, subject to any appeal on grounds of procedural irregularities.
- To respect copyright regulations when reproducing external material in the thesis, MRE, or dissertation.
- To maintain regular communication with the supervisor.

This array of responsibilities imparts certain expectations on the part of both the supervisor and student.

Expectations of the Supervisor

- To expect the student to pursue the agreed research topic, unless a change has been mutually agreed upon.
- To expect the student to give serious attention to advice concerning perceived deficiencies in the research and the thesis, MRE, or dissertation and to receive a reasonable explanation when this advice is not followed.
- To terminate supervision if the student is not displaying a reasonable effort, if they fail to heed advice on changes deemed essential, or if the student changes the agreed research topic without consent.
- To have their contribution to the thesis, MRE, or dissertation appropriately and clearly acknowledged.
- To have permission from the student for the research set out in the thesis, MRE, or dissertation to be used as part of the larger project, when the student has produced the research as a research assistant employed on the larger project (with the understanding that the student will retain scholarly credit).

Expectations of the Student

- To be assisted by the supervisor in developing a clear and feasible research topic and in solving problems and assessing progress as the work develops.
- To be assisted to a clear understanding of the substantive and formal requirements of a thesis, MRE, or dissertation (e.g., length; methodology; validation of topic; degree of originality, especially in Master's theses).
- To receive within a reasonable time frame a fair and thorough assessment of both the drafts and the completed thesis, MRE, or dissertation, and clear explanations of negative comments.
- To be permitted to seek a new supervisor (however, it is understood that an academic unit and the university cannot guarantee a suitable replacement).
- To be protected from arbitrary changes in research direction which are detrimental to the timely completion of the thesis, MRE, or dissertation.
- To have their contribution to the thesis, MRE, or dissertation fairly reflected in the attribution of authorship of publications and of patents.

- To be permitted to submit a thesis, MRE, or dissertation for examination even if the supervisor is not satisfied, providing the work conforms to the guidelines and regulations laid down by the History department and Graduate Studies.

Potential Problems and Processes for Resolution

When either the student or the supervisor feel that the supervisory relationship has failed to meet the responsibilities listed in this policy, they may request an informal resolution process. The first step would be to alert the Graduate Supervisor to the issue, which can be done by the supervisor, the student, or both. If the Graduate Supervisor cannot mediate a solution acceptable to all parties, they may involve the History Department Chair. If the issue remains unresolved, the Graduate Supervisor and Department Chair can request Human Resources support within FASS and/or Graduate Studies (and possibly involving other mediators such as the Ombuds office or CUASA if this seems appropriate) to achieve a resolution fair to all parties.