

Graduate Student Handbook

Department of Neuroscience
Carleton University

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Welcome

Welcome to the Department of Neuroscience, one of Carleton's newest and most dynamic units. We hope that your time with us will be stimulating, rewarding and fun.

While the purpose of this document is to help you navigate successfully through your degree, you can always seek advice from your supervisor, the Graduate Administrator, Graduate Chair, or Departmental Chair – we are here to help you. Information about Carleton's policies for graduate students can also be found at the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs (FGPA) website at <http://gradstudents.carleton.ca>

Contact information can be found at <https://carleton.ca/neuroscience/our-people/staff/>

Your Responsibilities as a Graduate Student

As a graduate student, it is your responsibility to ensure you meet all degree requirements and deadlines, including meeting regularly and requesting feedback from your supervisor(s), completing your research projects in a timely manner, and organizing your advisory committee and examination meetings.

A detailed description of the responsibilities and expectations of both students and supervisors can be found on the FGPA website at <http://gradstudents.carleton.ca/thesis-requirements/graduate-supervision-responsibilities-expectations-policy/>

Guidelines for Working with your Supervisor

It is your responsibility to ensure you meet with your supervisor regularly, and to determine whether you are making sufficient progress through your thesis and research project(s).

When preparing written work (e.g.: prospectus, thesis) that requires input from your supervisor, it is your responsibility to have an agreed time-frame for you to submit drafts of those documents. Be mindful that your supervisor has many commitments on his/her time, and may not be able to return drafts of written work rapidly, especially if a time frame for submission of the draft has not been established well in advance.

Is your primary supervisor an adjunct professor, an affiliated member of the department, or a retired member of the department?

If the answer to this question is yes, you will also require a co-supervisor who is a member of the Department of Neuroscience. It is important that you meet your co-supervisor from within the department on a regular basis (recommended 2 times per semester) to ensure your progress is appropriate.

Recommended Timeline for your Degree

If you do not complete your degree within the regular time frame (2 years M.Sc., 4 years Ph.D.), it can result in major negative financial implications and you would be required to submit an application for extension to FGPA – completing on time is therefore in your best interests. In order to maximize your chances of completing your degree on time, it is recommended that you follow the timeline described below:

Recommended Timeline: Master of Science

Year One	
Fall Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 5100 Fundamentals in Neuroscience • NEUR 5201 Statistics for Neuroscience I • NEUR 5909 Thesis • Determine thesis project, learn techniques, data collection
Winter Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 5100 Fundamentals in Neuroscience • NEUR 5202 Statistics for Neuroscience II or other eligible 0.5 credit course • NEUR 5909 Thesis • Learn techniques, data collection • Identify members of your thesis committee
Summer Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 5909 Thesis • Data Collection • Complete and submit Progress Report 1 to your committee (By May 31st)
Year Two	
Fall Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 5909 Thesis • Data Collection • Write prospectus • Defend prospectus by end of semester
Winter Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 5909 Thesis • Data Collection • Write thesis • Potentially defend thesis
Summer Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 5909 Thesis • Complete thesis • Defend thesis

Please note: At the time of admission, your supervisor may recommend additional coursework if he/she feels it will benefit you in the completion of your M.Sc.

Recommended Timeline: Doctor of Philosophy

Year One	
Fall Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 6100 Advanced seminar in Neuroscience • NEUR 5201 Statistics for Neuroscience I (unless taken previously, in which case substitute with different course) • NEUR 6909 Thesis • Determine thesis project, learn techniques, data collection
Winter Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 6100 Advanced seminar in Neuroscience • NEUR 5202 Statistics for Neuroscience II (unless taken previously, in which case substitute with different course) • NEUR 6909 Thesis • Learn techniques, data collection • Complete and submit Progress Report 1 to your supervisor(s) by May 31st
Summer Semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 6909 Thesis • Data collection • Identify members of your thesis committee
Year Two	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 6200 is to be completed by December 31st year two. Enroll for the semester in which you plan to complete your comprehensive exam • Complete and submit Progress Report 2 to your committee by December 31st • Complete and defend prospectus exam by December 31st • NEUR 6909 Thesis • Data collection
Year Three	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 6909 Thesis • Data collection
Year Four	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEUR 6909 Thesis due August 31st year four. • Data collection • Write thesis • Defend thesis

Potentially Equivalent Courses at Other Institutions

Supervisor permission is required in order to replace Carleton courses with potentially equivalent courses at other institutions. Approval will be based upon written justification. This process requires students to obtain the thesis supervisor's signature on the justification and submit it, along with a course syllabus, to the Graduate Administrator along with any forms required by the host institution. The Administrator will present the application to the Graduate Chair and Chair of the Department for approval.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports (M.Sc)

One progress report is to be submitted to your committee members by May 31st of your first year. Your committee should consist of your supervisor(s) plus two additional faculty members from the Department of Neuroscience. The report is divided into two sections: Progress to Date and Action Plan and is at the end of this Handbook as Appendix A.

Progress Reports (Ph.D)

The following reports are due during your program:

Progress Report Yr 1

- One page report submitted to your supervisor(s) providing an overview of your research plan
- Submission deadline is May 31st of your first year (for students with September entrance)

Progress Report Yr 2

- Two page report submitted to your thesis advisory committee providing an overview of your research plan, and the progress of your research to date
- Submission deadline is December 31st (for students with September entrance)
- **Please note: This progress report is due at the same time as the Comprehensive Exam, so be prepared to have both finished at the same time**

Progress Report Yrs 3 and up

- One page report submitted to your supervisor(s) providing an overview of your progress
- Fill out and obtain signatures on <https://gradstudents.carleton.ca/wp-content/uploads/PHD-Progress-Report-Feb-15-2018.pdf>
- Submission deadline is May 31st (for students with September entrance)

Prospectus Guidelines (M.Sc. and Ph.D.)

M.Sc. Prospectus

The prospectus document typically forms the basis of the introduction and methods of your final thesis document. Components of the document include an abstract and title page, your aims and hypotheses, experimental design, and a brief literature review that provides an adequate background to your proposed research project.

The introduction, objective, and hypothesis of the prospectus should be brief.* This section should be modelled after a journal article introduction that can range in length from 500 words (e.g. J. Neuroscience) or as long as 2-2.5 pages (other mainstream journals).

The methods section should be detailed, just as one would see in a journal article. Likewise, a brief section should be included that describes the statistical methods that will be used.

The document should describe your proposed research study with sufficient detail for your prospectus examination committee to assess the likelihood of success. When writing the document, remember that your internal examiner will not be a member of the Department of Neuroscience, so extensive detailed knowledge of Neuroscience should not be assumed.

**Students wishing to submit a lengthier document in alignment with former guidelines may do so, as long as it does not affect timeline of completion.*

Ph.D. Prospectus

The prospectus document for the Ph.D. is a 4-page “action plan” plus methods section.* The 4 page action plan should briefly outline the area of interest, followed by a research plan with specific rationale and research aim(s). The methods section should be detailed, just as one would see in a journal article.

The document should describe your proposed research study with sufficient detail for your prospectus examination committee to assess the likelihood of success. When writing the document, remember that your internal examiner will not be a member of the Department of Neuroscience, so extensive detailed knowledge of Neuroscience should not be assumed.

**Students wishing to submit a lengthier document in alignment with former guidelines may do so, as long as it does not affect timeline of completion.*

Thesis Advisory Committee (for the prospectus – M.Sc. or Ph.D.)

It is your responsibility to form your thesis advisory committee, with members identified through consultation with your supervisor(s). The committee should be identified by the end of year one of your M.Sc. or Ph.D. degree, at the latest, and consist of your supervisor(s) plus two additional faculty members from the department of Neuroscience. The finalized prospectus document must first be approved by your supervisor(s), and then submitted to your committee at least two weeks before the date of your defence.

Arranging the Prospectus Exam

It is the responsibility of the student to arrange (both time and location) meetings of their thesis advisory committee. Inform the Graduate Administrator when your prospectus has been scheduled.

Prospectus Examination

Your prospectus examination will take the following format:

1. 15 minute presentation from student	
2. First round of questions	Each committee member asks questions on a one-to-one basis. During this period, no comments from other members of the committee are permitted. Each member of the committee can ask questions for up to 15 minutes, with the supervisor(s) asking questions last.
3. Second round of questions	Any member of the committee can ask questions, and comment on the questions/answer.

Prospectus Grading Policy

The prospectus is graded as either:

- Accepted as submitted
- Accepted with recommendations attached
- Accepted in principle, but with recommendations of a major substantive nature (attached) requiring additional written and/or another meeting of the committee; or
- Not Accepted.

If not accepted, the candidate may be given the opportunity to produce a new prospectus document at a later date, but that is at the discretion of the prospectus committee.

M.Sc. Final Thesis Guidelines

Format of Thesis Document

The final thesis can take the form of either a traditional thesis, or an integrated article thesis. Details of these formats can be found under item 12 at

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/gradregulations/administrationoftheregulations/#12>

Thesis Examination Committee (M.Sc.)

Thesis Examination Committee	
Thesis Advisory Committee	Your supervisor plus two additional faculty members from the Department of Neuroscience (The same members that were on your committee for the Prospectus).
Internal Examiner	Typically a faculty member at Carleton University, from a department other than the Department of Neuroscience.

	(An examiner from a different institution may be appropriate, but requires specific justification and approval).
Chair of the Examination Board	Can be any faculty member of the Department of Neuroscience who is not a member of your thesis advisory committee.

In conjunction with your supervisor, you need to confirm a total of five committee members listed above. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange (both time and location) meetings of your examination committee. It is important to schedule your defence as early as possible because it can be difficult to coordinate the availability of faculty members.

The final thesis exam for the M.Sc. takes the same form as the prospectus exam, except for the addition of the internal examiner, and the chair that is not a member of the advisory committee. The internal examiner is typically the first member of the thesis examination committee to ask questions of the candidate.

Coordinate a Date

Coordinate a date with all members and email the Graduate Administrator with the following information:

Title of thesis

Date/Time

Names of the committee members (indicate which member is the Chair of the Examination Board)

The Graduate Administrator will book a room for you and send confirmation of location.

Confirm Notice of Examination

The Graduate Administrator will send you a draft exam notice of your approval before distributing to the committee, the Dean, and the Dean of Graduate Studies

Examinable Copies

An examinable copy should be uploaded to Carleton Central at least two weeks prior to defence.

Forms

All forms, as well as your final thesis, are now uploaded through the electronic thesis deposit system. Please read the content within the following link carefully for details on forms and formats.

<http://gradstudents.carleton.ca/thesis-requirements/electronic/>.

Prepare to Defend your Thesis

It is a good idea to ensure a few days before your defence that you are familiar with the equipment in whichever room you choose.

Questions

Ask the Graduate Administrator.

After the Final Thesis Defence

After a successful defence of the thesis document, the committee may recommend revisions to the document before it is finalized. Once the revisions have been completed, you can then upload your final copy via e-thesis submission. Your supervisor will login to the system to verify the final version is the

correct version and to ensure any required revisions have been completed. It is possible that these changes have to be completed within a limited timeframe, so candidates are advised to be able to continue to work on the thesis document for a period of time immediately following the scheduled defence.

Ph.D. Final Thesis Guidelines

Format of Thesis Document

The final thesis can take the form of either a traditional thesis, or an integrated article thesis. Details of these formats can be found under item 12 at

<http://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/gradregulations/administrationoftheregulations/#12>

Thesis Examination Committee (Ph.D.)

Your examination is conducted by your thesis advisory committee (the same members who were on the committee of your prospectus).

Thesis Examination Committee	
Thesis Advisory Committee	Your supervisor plus two additional faculty members from the Department of Neuroscience (The same members that were on your committee for the Prospectus).
Internal Examiner (External to the Department)	Typically a faculty member at Carleton University, from a department other than the Department of Neuroscience.
External Examiner	Not a member of Carleton University.
Chair of the Examination Board	Faculty member appointed by FGPA

In conjunction with your supervisor, you need to confirm a total of five committee members - listed above. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange (both time and location) meetings of your examination committee.

Coordinate a Date

Coordinate a date with all members (for PhDs, FGPA will appoint a chair based on your date) and email the Graduate Administrator with the following information:

Title of thesis

Date/Time

Names of the committee members (indicate which member is the Chair of the Examination Board)

The Graduate Administrator will book a room for you and send confirmation of location.

Confirm Notice of Examination

The Graduate Administrator will send you a draft exam notice of your approval before distributing to the committee, the Dean, and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Examinable Copies

An examinable copy should be uploaded to Carleton Central six weeks prior to defence; **a hard copy must be submitted to FGPA (which is passed to the Chair) four weeks in advance of exam date.**

Forms

All forms as well as your final thesis are now uploaded through the electronic thesis deposit system. Please read the content within the following link carefully for details on forms and formats.

<http://gradstudents.carleton.ca/thesis-requirements/electronic/>.

Prepare to Defend your Thesis

It is a good idea to ensure a few days before your defence that you are familiar with the equipment in whichever room you choose.

Questions

Ask the Graduate Administrator.

After the Final Thesis Defence

After a successful defence of the thesis document, the committee may recommend revisions to the document before it is finalized. Once the revisions have been completed, you can then upload your final copy via e-thesis submission. Your supervisor will login to the system to verify the final version is the correct version and to ensure any required revisions have been completed. It is possible that these changes have to be completed within a limited timeframe, so candidates are advised to be able to continue to work on the thesis document for a period of time immediately following the scheduled defence.

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam NEUR 6200 Guidelines

Format

Students will have two options for their comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination will consist of either:

- 1) Three “journal editorial style” brief articles, or;
- 2) One large review style article.

The topic(s) of the comprehensive examination must be outside of the candidate’s primary area of specialization to ensure it increases the candidate’s breadth of knowledge, though it can be tangentially related to the thesis. For example, it would be entirely acceptable for a student whose thesis is based on rodent models of anxiety to prepare a comprehensive paper based on fMRI research into depression in humans.

Three editorials option

The three editorials will be 1500-2000 words each (each can be supervised by anyone on the committee) and will be of the same format as commonly found in popular Neuroscience journals (e.g. Journal of Neuroscience, Neurobiology of Disease). Individual editorials will have a maximum of 25 references. In consultation with the supervisor and committee, the student will also pick one of the three editorials for a 15-minute presentation (followed by two rounds of questioning) to the supervisory committee. Finally, students will also be required to prepare a blog (essentially a lay summary of the editorial) on one of the two topics not selected for the presentation.

Large style review comprehensive option

In consultation with their supervisor, students will prepare a sizable (typically 20-50 pages) review article that is suitable for, or has the possibility of, being published. Accordingly, the article will follow style guidelines by one of the popular Neuroscience journals (such as Trends in Neuroscience). Once prepared, the paper will be defended in a 15-minute presentation to the supervisory committee, followed by two rounds of questions. Students are encouraged to gain breadth from the comprehensive, so the topic of the review paper can be related to but not identical to that of the PhD research being conducted.

Comprehensive examination committee

It is the responsibility of the student to convene their comprehensive examination committee. This committee is composed of the supervisor(s) and two additional members of the Department of Neuroscience. The committee composition may differ from the student’s thesis advisory committee, as deemed appropriate by the supervisor and student depending on the topic of the comprehensive.

Timeframe

The comprehensive examination is to be completed by the end of the 6th term of the Ph.D. degree.

To avoid extension disruption to the candidate's research thesis, the entire comprehensive project must be completed within an 8 week period.

For students choosing the three editorials option, the timeline will be as follows:

- At the start of the 8 week period, the student submits their three editorial topics to their supervisor and committee. During this stage, the supervisor and committee can provide feedback and advice to the student regarding the proposed topics, including which of the three will be presented, and which will have a blog written on it.
- At the end of the 8 weeks, the student submits the final drafts of all three editorials and the blog, and makes a 15-minute presentation to the supervisory committee on one of the three editorials.

For students choosing the large style review option, the timeframe is as follows:

- At the start of the 8 week period, the student arranges a committee at which he/she will submit a lay summary or abstract (each limited to 250 words) of the proposed comprehensive examination. At this stage, the committee can provide feedback and advice to the student regarding changes to the proposed topic.
- From the date of the first committee meeting, students have 6 weeks to submit a complete draft of the comprehensive to the supervisor, with an additional 2 weeks only to submit the finalized comprehensive examination to the committee.

Evaluation of the comprehensive exam

The formal evaluation of the comprehensive will be an oral examination by committee, based on the written document(s). The format will be similar to that of the Ph.D. prospectus examinations. A grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory will appear on your transcript.

Sources of Funding

All graduate students are encouraged to apply for external scholarship funding. These scholarships typically come from federal or provincial granting agencies. Typically, graduate students work together with their supervisor(s) in the preparation of applications to these granting agencies. Carleton Neuroscience students have been very successful in obtaining these external awards. In particular, this success has been attributed to the high caliber of students, as well as the exciting health-relevant research being conducted by the faculty members. Examples of funding sources include:

- NSERC Scholarships
- CIHR Scholarships
- Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS)
- Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS)
- Internal Awards
- Travel Awards

Details of various internal and external awards can be found on the FGPA website at <http://gradstudents.carleton.ca/awards-and-funding/>

Travel awards are available to you through the Graduate Student Association. If you are a PD McCormack Scholarship recipient, you can also apply for support from the PD Travel Fund, through the Graduate Administrator. The department also has some travel bursary funds that is distributes throughout the year.

Internal Awards

A list of internal awards can be viewed on the Graduate Studies website at <http://gradstudents.carleton.ca/awards-and-funding/internal-awards/> The following is the process for internal awards:

- Students interested in applying for an internal award need to discuss their interest in the award with their supervisor.
- If the supervisor supports the application, the supervisor needs to submit a letter of nomination to the Graduate Committee (via e-mail to the Graduate Administrator) by September 1st.
- The Graduate Committee will review the nominations as there is a limit to one application per award. The only exception to this rule are both awards in dementia: Graduate Award for Ontario Students for Research in Dementia and Graduate Award for Research in Dementia. As a department, for these two awards only, we are permitted to nominate and submit applications for more than one student.
- The Graduate Committee will decide by September 25th as to which nominations will be sent forward to Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs (FGPA)
- If your nomination is selected you will have until September 30th to provide a half-page to one-page statement on why it is important for you to receive this award.
- Nominations and statements will be forwarded to FGPA on October 1st.

Teaching Assistantship

Most graduate students in the department will be awarded a Teaching Assistant position, as part of their offer of admission. Each position requires you to work for 130 hours per semester, to facilitate the operation of an academic course. These position should be taken very seriously by all students, and it is important that you work with the course instructor to determine when the 130 hours of work are required, so you can arrange your schedule accordingly.

Details of TA positions, including details on the CUPE 4600 union (to which teaching assistants belong) can be found at <http://gradstudents.carleton.ca/teaching-assistants>

Research Assistantship

Some graduate students may receive funding in the form of a research assistance position (RAship). You may therefore be asked to conduct research-related tasks that are not directly related to your thesis, but will enhance your laboratory experience. If you receive an RAship, expectations will be determined through consultation with your supervisor(s).

Contract Instructor Positions

As a Ph.D. graduate student, you may have the opportunity to apply for a position as a contract instructor (CI), teaching course(s) for the university. While these experiences can be very rewarding, the workload associated with teaching a course should not be underestimated. Students interested in applying for CI positions are *strongly* advised to discuss the idea in advance with their thesis supervisor(s).

Students employed as a contract instructor cannot work simultaneously as a teaching assistant. Acceptance of a CI position will result in the student *forfeiting* one TAship, along with the funds associated with that TAship.

Employment while Studying as a Full-time Student

There are maximum time limits for the completion of degree programs and the University strictly enforces these limits. Refer to the Graduate Calendar for the policy on Extensions of Time Limit. Keep in mind it can be a challenge to balance employment outside of your graduate studies, as it is a full-time commitment. If you are suffering financial distress, you are encouraged to meet with your supervisor to discuss options.

Carleton Neuroscience Society

Carleton graduate students are highly involved in the Ottawa chapter for the Society for Neuroscience <http://sfn-ottawa.ca>. Everyone is encouraged to become a member of this very active and rewarding society.

Library Support

Carleton University library subscribes to large numbers of neuroscience and life science publications. We recommend that you attend an introductory tour of the library facilities. Details can be found at <http://www.library.carleton.ca/services/tours-and-workshops/>

Off-Campus Access to Library Resources

Articles published in journals to which Carleton library subscribes can be easily accessed from computers on campus by following journal access links from PubMed. However, accessing articles from off campus is more complex, requiring you to login through the library website. An easier option is to establish a Virtual Private Network (VPN) link from your home computer, which essentially makes your home computer

function like any computer on campus. Instructions on obtaining free VPN access are found at <https://carleton.ca/its/help-centre/remote-access/>

Citation Management

Reference manager software is an essential tool for any student writing a thesis, as it allows you to easily organize and format your citations/bibliography. Carleton University library offers resources on citation management here: <https://library.carleton.ca/help/citation-management>

Student Support Resources

For help and advice on matters that are not directly related to your degree, the following websites should be of assistance. Neuroscience administrators can often assist you should you not find that information that you require.

Carleton – Current Students

<http://students.carleton.ca> is aimed at all current students, and has links to on-campus resources such as:

- Awards and Financial Aid
- Co-op and Career Services
- Health & Counselling Services
- International Student Services Office
- Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities
- Student Academic Success Centre
- Student Experience Office
- Undergraduate Recruitment Office
- Admissions Services (Undergraduate)
- University Registrar's Office
- Student Affairs

Carleton – Current Grad Students

<http://gradstudents.carleton.ca> is aimed specifically at current graduate students, and has links to many resources including:

- Awards and Funding
- Thesis Requirements
- Professional Development
- Forms and Policies

Help and Advice

For help and advice on most matters relating to your degree, you can contact your supervisor, our Graduate Administrator, Graduate Chair, Department Chair, or any member of your thesis advisory committee.



Department of Neuroscience
MSc Graduate Progress Report

Student Name:

Banner ID:

Supervisor Name:

Program:

**** Email submission deadline to your committee is May 31st of your first year****

Progress to Date

Please describe below your accomplishments as an MSc student to date, including:

1. courses completed and
2. a description of lab experiences and techniques learned

Action Plan

Describe your thesis research proposal, including the techniques involved, followed by:

- a) What you hope to accomplish over the next four months (summer semester)
- b) A proposed timeline for data collection, data analyses, prospectus and thesis write-up for your second year

Student Signature: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____