Kinesiology Graduate Program Handbook

for Kinesiology Students and Faculty Members

THIS IS A LIVING DOCUMENT. This manual is updated throughout the year. Although the policies remain virtually unchanged, details and processes are revised as improvements are made. We endeavour to provide clear and current information for the benefit of those associated with our graduate program. If you have questions, suggestions, or concerns please contact the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. The procedures described herein are not immutable, however, and consideration will be provided on an individual basis if warranted, whilst assuring equity and departmental standards. January 2017

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- MSc Program
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Link to School of Graduate Studies
The policies and procedures for the Master’s and PhD Programs in Kinesiology are set out at the University level by the School of Graduate Studies. The University’s Policy and Procedures relevant to Graduate Programs can be found in the School of Graduate Studies Calendar which is revised each summer and posted to the digital commons at the beginning of the fall term. The calendar can be found at: http://www.mcmaster.ca/graduate. It is the responsibility of individual graduate students and department faculty members to be familiar with and to comply with university and SGS Policy and Procedures, as well as the regulations and guidelines in this handbook.

General Information

2.1 Administrative Procedures

Students will be required to complete a number of official forms as they progress through their studies. Please remember to give a copy of all these forms to Carol Robinson, the Graduate Administrator, IWC Room 219C, who will place copies in the student's file so that a record can be kept of all your academic transactions. Do not take or send any forms directly to the School of Graduate Studies.

In September of an incoming year, students should meet informally with their supervisor to discuss course work to be taken while in the program and possible thesis topics. Students will be notified of their TA assignments and will have to determine if course schedules will be in conflict with any of the
assigned TA duties. If a conflict arises, immediately contact Dr. Audrey Hicks, the Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies, IWC 204 to discuss possible changes.

2.2 Coursework Requirements

In early September, students must register for the courses to be taken during the year. This process is done through MOSAIC. Courses for the full year may be submitted in September; however, should you wish to make changes to your course selection, you will have to do so before the date indicated in the Graduate Calendar (Final Dates to Delete Courses). Wait until January to make your second semester course selections if you are undecided. **NEW for MOSAIC - in any term in which you are NOT taking a course, enroll in SGS 700 in order to remain registered as an active graduate student.**

Please note that it is necessary for all graduate students to register, and

- successfully complete SGS 101 - Academic & Research Integrity and Ethics training;
- successfully complete the government mandated Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA, also listed as SGS 201) training before payroll will be authorized. AODA training is listed as SGS 201.
- successfully complete a minimum of six Health & Safety modules
  These are Asbestos Awareness, Ergonomics, Fire Safety, WHMIS, Slips/Trips/Falls, and Dealing with Violence in the Workplace

These modules must be completed by incoming students before their first payroll will be released. All students must complete these modules before they will be permitted to graduate.

Attendance at and participation in the Department Seminar series is a program requirement for graduation. **Students are expected to attend all Grad Seminars during the years of their studies whether they are registered on a full or part-time basis.** A percentage of 75% attendance is necessary for those who wish to apply for departmental travel funds (said student must be first author and presenter on a paper, provide proof of paper's submission, acceptance of same for presentation, and receipts for expenses incurred at the conference in question). Those who claim travel funds before satisfactory attendance is possible to obtain are expected to behave honourably and continue to attend the seminars to ensure eligibility percentage is obtained. Failure to do so will result in the student’s loss of eligibility for such funds in the future.

It is possible to complete all course work in the first year; however, for Master’s students some courses, e.g. KIN 702 Individual Study, may be deferred to, and completed during the second year. **Do not register for KIN 702 course unless you are able to finish it in the term specified.**

2.3 External Scholarship Applications

Scholarship applications are often available to be downloaded from, or filled out directly online at the appropriate websites. For scholarships that are ranked through SGS, deadlines for major scholarships
are set by the School of Graduate Studies; from there, departmental deadlines are determined. Please respect the department deadlines which provide the department ranking committee with much needed time to assess Kinesiology applications. There will be no extensions to department deadlines.

**Student’s Responsibilities**

- know the rules, regulations, and requirements of the awards to which they are applying;
- solicit letters of reference from the appropriate faculty members, and ensure that such documents are forwarded to the appropriate person/place.
- if necessary, remind your referees of the pending deadlines if recommendations are not received in a timely manner;
- obtain all transcripts required by the granting agency and/or ensure originals have been sent and received in the Admin Centre, IWC 219C. ISSUED TO STUDENT copies are not valid for external scholarship applications;
- fill out application forms correctly and as completely as possible.

The availability of OGSST QE 2 scholarships is never firm; however, if the opportunity continues, SGS will alert all departments.

Students are advised that the internal scholarship allotment stipulated in the Department’s original offer of acceptance will be modified if the student is successful in obtaining external scholarship support. See the sections on student funding expectations in the Master’s and PhD program sections below for a more detailed explanation of student salary calculations and expectations. Once in the program, changes in the student’s funding status for whatever reason (e.g., increased research involvement) that differ from the original letter of offer shall be agreed to by the student and duly documented in their departmental file. If you are applying for scholarships that are not reviewed by the Kinesiology ranking committee or the School of Graduate Studies (otherwise known as ‘direct submissions’), it is your responsibility to make sure that a copy of the completed application package is included in your department file. The Grad Administrator can also provide assistance for direct submit applications. If you are considering unusual grant opportunities or niche funding please involve the Grad Administrator or Associate Chair, Graduate Studies for assistance in planning your submissions.

**Eligibility for OGS Scholarship**

*Must have an overall average of at least A minus, or the equivalent, on the last 20 completed one-term/semester courses.*

**Eligibility for Tri-Agency Scholarship (NSERC, CIHR, & SSHRC)**

*Must have obtained at least a first-class average (A minus) in each of the last two completed years of study.*

Please refer to the internet web sites for [NSERC](#), [SSHRC](#) and [CIHR](#) details.
IMPORTANT Before completing an application form, please ensure that you meet the eligibility requirements. Please contact the Graduate Administrator, IWC 219C or ext. 23582, if you have any questions regarding your eligibility.

REMEMBER it is the student's responsibility to monitor ALL scholarship websites from mid-August on for information/guidelines, application forms, etc.

2.4 Travel Grants

You will have the opportunity to attend conferences and symposia during your grad studies. We encourage students to apply for GSA Travel Assistance Grants to help offset costs. Competitions are held 3 times a year. Travel Assistance Grants are designed to assist graduate students to present their research findings at conferences or to undertake off-campus research relevant to their field of study. GSA application deadlines for various travel periods are listed on the front page of the grant application forms.

There are often travel grants offered to presenting students by the conference organizing committees. Please remember to explore these funding options through the conferences' site maps. Deadlines for application for travel funds from the conference committee are usually the same deadline for abstract submission.

Regardless of whether you receive a travel grant or not, please remember to retain all receipts and conference programs. When finances allow, the department offers funding to help defray costs for those who are first author, presenting at a conference. If such monies are available, in-course in-time grad students will be eligible and will receive an email alerting them to the opportunity.

2.5 Important 1st & 2nd Year Program Activities

The student has informal meetings with his/her supervisor from the beginning of his/her time in program. Based on these discussions, a potential thesis topic is identified. Within the first 6 months of a student's time in program, the supervisor should discuss with the student the composition of his/her supervisory committee; members of which should be knowledgeable in the area of the potential thesis topic. Within the first year in program, the student meets formally with his/her supervisor and supervisory committee to discuss progress towards that thesis topic. Reporting of this meeting will be on approved forms, submitted to the Grad Administrator, IWC 219C. IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THE FORM IS PREPARED FOR THE MEETING. Failure to have AT LEAST one committee meeting per grad student for every 12 months in program will result in the supervisor bearing the responsibility for the normal SGS annual allocation of funding for that student.

SUMMARY OF 1st and 2nd YEAR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

In early September

- Review Grad Studies regulations via the SGS website
- Review the department’s Grad Handbook
- Review TA assignment for conflict with course schedule; complete appropriate forms
- Complete all required Health & Safety modules, SGS 101 and 201
- Request copies of transcripts for scholarship applications (if applicable)
- Complete course registration forms; remember to copy the Grad Administrator
- Apply for external scholarships; obtain references in good time for deadlines
- Meet with supervisor to discuss course options & potential thesis topic

Later in 1st/2nd year

- Confirm thesis topic and study plan with supervisor
- Report your progress to your supervisory committee before 12 months have passed

MSc Studies

3.1 Student Funding Expectations

All full time Masters students are guaranteed some portion of a Teaching Assistantship (TA) or equivalent RA, and graduate scholarship funds for each of their two years in Master’s Studies. For reference, a full TA involves 260 hours of work at a current rate of $41.80 per hour. Such employment is taxable income.

If the student does not receive a major external award, the department guarantees a minimum salary of $14,500 per year, prior to the usual deductions of tuition and taxes.

Should the student win a major external award (NSERC, SSHRC, CIHR, OGS, OGSST, ONF), annual funding will exceed the major award by $7,500. This will include:

- a portion of TA (at $41.80 per hour for 2015/16)
- an ENTRANCE scholarship, if the student is in his/her first year of the MSc program OR
- a GRADUATE scholarship, if the student is entering 2nd yr of the MSc program

If the award is lost or expires during the student’s time in program, the student’s annual salary will revert to the current departmental minimum salary of $14,500, prior to the usual deductions of tuition and taxes.
We guarantee a full time MSc student this level of teaching/scholarship assistantship for both years of the Master’s program. Please note that the guarantee of ongoing employment as a teaching/research assistant is subject to the student maintaining satisfactory work performance.

There is no provision for department funding for those MSc students who continue beyond the two years of their program length. However, there are times when the degree completion goes beyond the expected 2 years. At that point, the department cannot provide financial support but the student's supervisor may make arrangements to help support the student. These arrangements are entirely at the discretion of the supervisor.

3.2 Introduction to MSc Studies

MSc Studies in Kinesiology consists of both course work and a research thesis and takes a full time student about 2 years to complete. Candidates for the MSc degree are required to complete their courses with an overall average of no less than B plus. Requirements are successful completion of:

- KIN 701, Statistical Methods in Kinesiology
- three other single-term elective courses, two of which must be KIN courses
- any other courses your supervisory and advising committee believes you need to succeed in the program (this may include an undergrad course to fill a knowledge void)
- KIN 723, Directed Readings course requires that a detailed outline containing the reading lists and method of evaluation be filed with the Graduate Administrator.
- in addition, participation with no less than 75% attendance for Departmental Graduate Seminar series, is expected for both full and part time students

One KIN elective course may be replaced with an elective offered outside of the department with the approval of the supervisor and the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. Additionally, students may be exempted from KIN 701 if they have taken an equivalent course, provided they have permission of their supervisor and SGS. This requires a Special Permission form, available from the SGS website.

Those MSc candidates who are considering acceleration into the PhD program should complete KIN 702 Independent Study as one of their 3 electives since the public presentation of data is a requirement of the acceleration process.

Any MSc student undertaking KIN 702 should enrol in the term in which the study will be COMPLETED. Supervisor and student must submit an outline for their particular study with the administrative office.

At least 1 supervisory committee meeting is required for every 12 months in program for every graduate student in program, full time and part time. The composition of supervisory committees for those students supervised by Associate members must be approved by the Associate Chair, Graduate Program, before the committee is convened. A report of said meeting must be submitted to the
administrative office PRIOR to the student completing his/her first year. This report is to ensure that the student has received adequate supervision and made appropriate progress. In the following year, a similar report must be submitted even though it is expected that the student will defend within that year. The report form for supervisory meetings is found on the FORMS page, and is patterned on the SGS report for PhD supervisory committee meetings. 

**Failure to hold AT LEAST one supervisory committee meeting per grad student for every 12 months in program will result in the supervisor bearing the responsibility for the normal SGS annual allocation of funding for that student.**

**TABLE 1 - Course Offerings For both the MSc and PhD Kinesiology programs**

Please note that these courses have been specifically designed for Kinesiology graduate students. Not every course is offered in every year. Successful completion of a graduate course requires a grade of no less than B plus. Failure to achieve this minimum in any course will result in the student being requested to withdraw from the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE NUMBER</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>COURSE TITLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KIN 701</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Statistical Methods in Kinesiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 702</td>
<td>Elective (MSc)</td>
<td>Independent Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 704</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Advanced Cardiovascular Exercise Physiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 705</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Motor Behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 708</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Biomechanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 709</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Neuromuscular Function in Aging &amp; Disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 711</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Motor Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 712</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Skeletal Muscle Metabolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 713</td>
<td>Elective (PhD)</td>
<td>Directed Readings in Kinesiology (PhD students)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 714</td>
<td>Required(PhD)</td>
<td>Directed Readings in Kinesiology's Special Populations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 715</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Foundations of Health &amp; Exercise Psychology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| KIN 717       | Elective        | Exercise Psychology: Applications to Chronic Disease &
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KIN 718</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Human Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIN 719</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>Topics in Molecular &amp; Cellular Physiology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| KIN 720     | Elective    | Social Influences on Health & Exercise Behaviour  
**Prerequisite: KIN 715** |
| KIN 721     | Elective    | Human Muscle Protein Metabolism |
| KIN 722     | Elective    | Advances in Biomechanics & Electromyography |
| KIN 723     | Elective (MSc) | Directed Readings for Kinesiology (MSc students) |
| KIN 724     | Elective    | Sensorimotor Neurophysiology |
| KIN 725     | Elective    | Neuromuscular Biology |
| KIN 726     | Elective    | Cognitive Neuroscience of Exercise |

**3.3 MSc Thesis Proposal**

The student presents the proposal to the supervisory committee for discussion. This takes the form of both an oral presentation and a written proposal which includes a brief literature review, the rationale for the study, a clear statement of hypothesis or purpose, and the proposed design. After deliberation and discussion, the proposal is accepted as presented or modified - this may require more than one meeting - and a copy placed in the student’s department file. Acceptance of the proposal should be documented and a written summary of this meeting retained by the student and his/her committee members, and included in the student’s academic file. The required **supervisory committee** form is available on the [FORMS](#) page and must be signed by all members of the committee and included in the student's file.

Once the student begins collecting data, it is recommended that the student meet again with the supervisory committee early in the collection period but this could also be managed through a series of informal discussions.

**3.4 Final Steps to Thesis Completion**

After completion of data collection and analysis the student meets formally with the supervisory committee to discuss results and receive approval to write the thesis. Reporting of the approval requires
the completion of the same *supervisory committee* form, available from the FORMS page, and must be signed by all members of the committee and included in the student's file.

The student writes the thesis with guidance from the supervisor and committee members. Normally, the first draft is reviewed by the supervisor with subsequent input from the other members of the committee. When the document is considered satisfactory by the supervisory committee permission is given permission to defend the thesis. At this point the supervisory committee will sign a *supervisory committee form* indicating that the written thesis is satisfactory to defend. Please note that revisions may still be suggested. The required *supervisory committee form* is available on the FORMS page and must be signed by all members of the committee and included in the student's file.

An examining committee is struck and the oral examination scheduled; all these details are confirmed with the Graduate Administrator, IWC 219C. Master's defenses are public lectures and are advertised as such via the department mailing lists and bulletin boards. Examiners should have the final copy of the thesis in their possession for a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the examination.

### 3.5 Thesis Defense

**Composition of examining committee** The School of Graduate Studies stipulates a minimum of 3 examiners for the examining committee for the MSc degree, including the supervisor. However, within Kinesiology the convention has been that the supervisor sits as a non-voting chair of the committee with the examining committee consisting of one or both remaining members of the supervisory committee plus at least one member external to the supervisory committee. Normally, all examiners have academic appointments at McMaster. Where the supervisory committee deems an external examiner to be of value to the process, approval for such an inclusion must be obtained from the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies at least 1 month prior to the expected defense date.

Once the date and time of the defense has been determined by the student and supervisor, they should advise the Graduate Administrator so that arrangements can be booked and the necessary paperwork prepared.

The student orally defends the thesis and is judged on both the oral defense and the overall quality of the thesis. The oral defense and written thesis must be passed by a majority of the examination committee.

Revisions to the thesis as required by the examining committee must be completed and approved by the supervisor. Once the required revisions have been completed and approved by the advisor it is the student’s responsibility to submit the electronic copy of the thesis to the School of Graduate Studies for uploading to MacSPHERE.

Often students give copies to the supervisor and the committee members, and arrangements via the SGS web for electronic submission of the text to Lehmann’s Bindery, Waterloo, and payment for same can be via PayPal or credit card.
A Final Thesis Submission Sheet must be submitted to SGS following a successful Master’s Defense. This form is downloadable from the Graduate Studies website, which is accessible through the FORMS page.

3.6 Summary of Master’s Thesis Procedures

Master’s Thesis Procedures

- Confirmation of thesis topic
- constitution of supervisory committee by student and supervisor
- **Formal** oral and written presentation of proposal to supervisory committee
- Research proposal is approved, form signed; paperwork must be submitted to the Grad Administrator to ensure records are accurate
- Data collection begins; committee meeting is held early to review progress
- **Formal** committee approves student to write the thesis after data are collected and analyzed; paperwork must be submitted to the Grad Administrator to ensure records are accurate
- Initial thesis drafts are reviewed by advisor with input from committee
- Committee gives formal permission to defend the thesis; paperwork must be submitted to the Grad Administrator to ensure records are accurate
- Exam committee is struck; ONE MEMBER MUST BE EXTERNAL TO THE STUDENT’S COMMITTEE. Oral defense details are coordinated by Grad Administrator
- **Student** provides examiners with final copy of thesis at least 2 weeks before defense
- Student orally defends thesis; revisions are approved by supervisor
- Student provides electronic copy of revised thesis to School of Graduate Studies for uploading, including the Final Thesis Submission Sheet
- If appropriate, student arranges for any hardcopies to be bound through SGS’s Bindery link (on web page)

3.7 Acceleration to PhD

Students admitted into Master's Studies who excel during their first year may be considered for "acceleration" into our PhD Program if the following criteria have been satisfied:

- completion of all Master’s level coursework with a minimum of an A average, including completion of data collection and submission of a written report for an individual's selected topics study or pilot thesis project;
• analysis and oral presentation of research data from one of the aforementioned projects at an appropriate public forum (e.g., department seminar series) approved and attended by the student’s supervisory committee;

• recommendation for conversion in writing (template available on FORMS page) from the supervisory committee to the Associate Chair, Grad Studies following the oral presentation. Since a change in a student's registration status has implications in terms of TA arrangements, scholarship allocations, and space resources, such decisions must be made in consultation with the Associate Chair, Grad Studies.

• Change of Status form (accessible through the FORMS page) must be completed and submitted to the Grad Administrator to ensure processing is done appropriately and records are maintained.

Supervisors considering the acceleration option for a student for the next September must inform the department's Associate Chair, Graduate Program, of their intent in March in order that appropriate TA and scholarship resources can be planned in the coming September.

All in-program student inquiries and requests concerning the School of Graduate Studies should be initiated by the Grad Administrator, unless specifically authorized by the Associate Chair, Grad Studies.

PhD Studies

4.1 Student Funding Expectations

Full time PhD students will receive a portion of a Teaching Assistantship and a guaranteed graduate scholarship for each of the four years of study. For reference, a full TA involves 260 hours of work at a current rate ($41.80 per hour). The minimum total annual salary stipulated by the University is $19,500 which will include the allotted TA hours, graduate scholarship and/or a discretionary departmental top up. This is the minimum salary for a student who does not hold a major award.

Doctoral studies in Kinesiology involve a research intensive progression. PhD students typically undertake several independent research initiatives, as well as a rigorous 8 week comprehensive examination process, during the tenure of the program. Completion of the doctoral degree is best facilitated by students dedicating themselves to their research in a full time capacity. Although there are instances where an individual student's circumstances make a registration in a part time PhD program attractive, these situations are seldom ideal. For these reasons, KINESIOLOGY does not in general encourage students to undertake a PhD on a part time basis.

Should a full time student receive a major external award, the student's annual salary will exceed the amount of the external award by $7,500. This will include the allotted TA hours and some form of scholarship, prior to the usual deductions of taxes and tuition. If the external award is lost or expires
during the student’s time in program, the department will again provide the minimum annual salary, $19,500, as stipulated by the university.

We guarantee the full time student this level of teaching/scholarship assistantship for years 1 through 4 (should four years be required) of the doctoral program. Please note that ongoing employment as a teaching/research assistant is subject to the student maintaining satisfactory work performance.

4.2 Introduction to PhD Studies

Doctoral studies in Kinesiology consist of both course work selected from Table 1 and a research thesis. Duration is normally between 3-4 years for full time study. The department is committed to providing TA funding up to, but not beyond, the 4th year should 4 years be required. On occasion, supervisors may provide funding to their PhD students who stay beyond four years. Please note this provision is entirely at the supervisor’s discretion.

Information about scholarships, courses, graduate travel grants, and MOSAIC are listed under the MSc Program and also pertain to the PhD Program.

4.3 PhD Supervision

Within the first 6 months of a student’s time in the doctoral program, a supervisory committee must be constituted for each doctoral candidate. The committee will consist of

- three to four members
- two of whom are members from the department, one being the supervisor
- additional members may be appointed from outside the Department.
- upon approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies, committee members may be appointed from outside the University (appropriate form is available on the FORMS page).

The duties of the supervisory committee include:

- planning the student’s courses, comprehensive examination topic, & research topic
- timing & scheduling of the written and oral comprehensive examinations
- approval of thesis proposal & guidance through the research process
- serving as members of thesis examination committee if appointed

The supervisory committee is required to meet formally at least once per year (usually between September and August) and to report the outcome of the meeting to the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies in the appropriate format. The student’s report (pg. 3) should not be overly detailed and should, ideally, fit into the allocated space on the form. Paperwork must be submitted to the Grad Administrator to ensure accurate records. Forms are available here. Failure to hold AT LEAST one
supervisory committee meeting per grad student for every 12 months in program will result in the supervisor bearing the responsibility for the normal SGS annual portion of funding for that student.

4.4 Coursework Requirements

Students must:

- successfully complete 2 grad courses, one of which is KIN 714 Directed Readings in Kinesiology – Special Populations
- plus successfully complete at least one other course recommended by the supervisory committee as best for the candidate’s success in the research program
- attend at least 75% of the Department Seminars.

Students should be aware that:

- KIN 702 Independent Studies cannot be taken as one of the two required PhD courses; although, it can be taken as an extra course. This course is designed for MSc students.
- Service courses, such as (but not limited to) EDU 750, and SGS 101 & 201, do not count towards the Kinesiology course requirements for PhD.
- both PhD level Directed Reading courses, KIN 713 and KIN 714, require that a detailed course outline containing the reading lists and method of evaluation be filed with the Graduate Administrator.
- evaluation of KIN 714 includes the writing and grading of a research grant proposal relevant to the topic of the reading course.
- If you have questions about whether the course you are considering qualifies towards your program requirements, please contact the Associate Chair, Grad Studies PRIOR to taking the course.

Summary of PhD Requirements

Candidates for doctoral studies

- must have a thesis-based Master’s degree in Kinesiology or a related field of study with at least the minimum course experience of our MSc graduates (i.e., 4 half courses) at entry to the program, or by the completion of their first 9 months of doctoral study
- must successfully complete 2 half courses at the PhD level, one being KIN 714, plus any other courses deemed necessary by the supervisory committee
- must maintain a satisfactory level of participation in Department Seminar series
must successfully complete an oral and a written comprehensive exam within the first 24 months in program

must successfully complete their doctoral research and successfully defend their PhD thesis in order to graduate

4.5 Comprehensive Examinations

Procedures

Unless agreed upon by the department’s Graduate Admissions and Review Committee, the comprehensive examination cannot begin until the student has been in the program (full-time) for 2 semesters and has completed all required course work.

The examination procedure will consist of a written portion and an oral portion based on a topic that is mutually agreed upon by the student and the supervisory committee. The general topic of the comprehensive examination must be independent of the student’s thesis area, as verified by the supervisory committee.

A duly constituted comprehensive examination committee will then be formed consisting of three members; at least one member must be from the student’s supervisory committee (excluding the supervisor). The examination committee is responsible for evaluating the student’s performance in the comprehensive examination.

It is possible to appoint examiners from outside the University on the examination committee with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. In such cases a request justifying the inclusion of the examiner and a copy of the examiner’s current curriculum vitae must be forwarded by the supervisor to the Dean of Graduate Studies via the department's Associate Chair, Graduate Studies. It is advisable to do this a month before the comprehensive examination process begins to ensure approval timely processing.

Prior to the examination, the comprehensive examination committee will identify a general “theme” for the examination and three subtopics related to the thematic area.

The subtopics must collectively address both basic and applied aspects of the main theme, and one subtopic may be related to a special population, if that aspect is of educational benefit to the candidate. Each committee member will be responsible for one subtopic, and each member will provide a list of no more than 15 readings relating to their respective subtopic.

It is the responsibility of the student’s supervisor to ensure that the readings are primary source and of reasonable length.

Students will have eight weeks to complete the readings and prepare for the written portion of the examination.
• No less than 48 hours before the scheduled day of writing, the examiners will each send one question electronically to the Associate Chair, Graduate Program, copied to the Graduate Administrator. Questions are not to be forwarded directly to the student. If questions are not submitted on time, the responsibility will become that of the supervisor to secure questions from these examiners and submit them before the day of writing.

• The candidate will be provided with a hardcopy of the questions at the start of the written portion of the examination.

• The written examination will consist of three specific questions, one from each examiner related to each subtopic. The written examination will be a closed-book format completed within a single working day (8 hours). Answers are required to be in essay form and are limited to a maximum of 10 typed pages per question, double-spaced with a sans serif 12 point font and 1 inch page margins. Although a formal; reference section is not required, in-text citations in parentheses are expected. Written responses will be saved on memory stick and submitted, at the end of the examination, to the Grad Administrator for electronic distribution to the examiners. The Grad Administrator also emails the answers to the candidate, the candidate’s supervisor, the Associate Chair, Graduate Programs, and the oral examination chair. No aids are permitted during the written portion of the examination with the exception of a clean copy of the original reading lists to which the candidate can refer. This clean copy is provided with the questions by the Graduate Administrator at the start of the writing day. Any diagrams that the candidate creates to accompany an answer are NOT considered to be part of the 10 page limit; such addendums are scanned and included as supporting documentation when answers are emailed to the examiners.

• Examiners will confirm receipt of the candidate’s answer by email to the Associate Chair, Graduate Programs, copying the Graduate Administrator, at their earliest convenience but not later than 48 hours following the day of writing.

• The oral portion of the examination involving the defense of the written answers to each of the three questions will be held one week from the day of writing.

• If, during this one week period, one or more of the examining committee members forms the opinion that the candidate has made an insufficient effort to complete the written answer to his/her question, he or she will notify the Associate Chair, Graduate Programs immediately and the examination will be considered to be failed. The associate Chair will notify the candidate’s supervisor of this outcome immediately. If no such communication is received by the Associate Chair, Graduate Programs, the oral defense will proceed.

• In grading the comprehensive examination each member of the examining committee will consider, as single entity, the quality of both the written answer to his/her question and the oral defence of that answer. In this context, each examination question will be graded on a fail (F), pass (P), or pass with distinction (P+) basis. To achieve a pass, a student must achieve a P on all
three questions. A pass with distinction will require a P+ on all three questions and is indicative of exceptional work on the part of the candidate.

- During the oral examination, the student may have at hand a clean copy of each of the reading lists, the examiners’ questions, and their own written answers, but nothing else, in order to defend his/her answers. No annotations are permitted to the allowed documentation.

- If any of the oral examination questions is deemed a fail after the oral exam, the student may be provided with the opportunity to perform supplementary work on this question in close consultation with the specific examiner responsible for this subtopic, at the discretion of the of the examiner in consultation with the examination chair.

- In the case of a failed comprehensive examination, and in accordance with School of Graduate Studies Policy and Regulations, students will be given a second opportunity to complete and pass the comprehensive examination. However, this second attempt will require the striking of a new examining committee comprised of three different examiners who will provide new reading lists and questions. The time frame for the completion of this second attempt will be identical to the first.

- Failure to pass the comprehensive examination after the second attempt will necessitate withdrawal from the PhD Program.

- All comprehensive exam papers, reading lists, written exam questions, and answers to the written exams must be filed with the Grad Administrator.

- The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the timing and scheduling of the comprehensive exams comply with these regulations. Any deviation from the timeline must be justified ahead of schedule and approved by the department’s Associate Chair, Graduate Programs.

- The supervisor is also responsible for working with the Grad Administrator on the details pertaining to the examination schedule, such as date, time, and location of the defense.

- **These tips** may aid you in your comp exam preparation.

**Summary of Comprehensive Examination Procedures**

- Minimum residency of 2 semesters (full time) in program before beginning

- Must have successfully completed all required courses with grades filed

- Must have a duly constituted comprehensive examination committee

- Must have exam topics identified and approved by examination committee

- Supervisor must notify Associate Chair, Grad Programs and Grad Administrator of start times for the examination period.
• Supervisor must solicit examining committee members, confirm willingness to participate and inform them of roles and responsibilities.

• **ALL COURSE WORK, INCLUDING COMPREHENSIVE EXAMS** **MUST BE COMPLETED WITHIN FIRST 24 MONTHS IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM** for **FULL-TIME PhD STUDENTS**. Part-time students may take up to 36 months to complete the comp exams but department preference is for an earlier comprehensive exam process.

### 4.5.1 Comprehensive Examination Regulations

**Role of Graduate Faculty** supervising PhD Students:

- Fill out the [required form](#); forward it to the Grad Administrator prior to the comprehensive exam

- Arrange booking of **all** rooms through the Grad Administrator

- Arrange booking the examination Chair through the Grad Administrator.

- Ensure that all **reading lists, papers, questions, and answers** are [dated and submitted to the Grad Administrator](#) so that it can be appropriately recorded

- If reading lists are received by the supervisor via e-mail and there is insufficient time to print them out on a [proper page format](#), forward them to the Grad Administrator who will reformat the lists.

- Should there be an external committee member, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to communicate with this person regarding the exam arrangements.

- If it is necessary to make any last minute changes regarding exam arrangements the supervisor must convey these changes to the Associate Chair, Graduate Programs.

### 4.5.2 Comprehensive Examination Committee Structure:

- Comprised of at least 3 members (supervisor may be a member, but it is not necessary)

- Two (including the supervisor, if he/she is one of the three) will be from within the department

- Additional members whose scholarly interests include the area of the student’s main interest may be from outside the department or the university

- To appoint an external member from outside the University, it is necessary for the candidate’s supervisor to send a formal request along with the CV of the proposed examiner to the School of Graduate Studies via the Associate Chair, Graduate Studies using the appropriate [form](#).

### 4.5.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Comprehensive Examiners
• For the written component of the comprehensive examination, examiners are expected to provide a concise and cogent single written examination question and a list of 8-15 readings consisting of primary research papers, relevant reviews or book chapters. Questions are to be submitted electronically to the Grad Administrator any time after the student has started the reading period but no less than 48 hours prior to the start of the scheduled day of writing.

• Examiners are expected to confirm receipt of the candidate’s answers to the Associate Chair, Graduate Programs, copying the Grad Administrator.

• For the oral component of the comprehensive examination, examiners are expected to come prepared to the oral examination with several questions related to their field of expertise and relevant to the written paper. An oral examination is approximately 1.5 to 2 hours in length and usually involves two rounds of questioning by the examiners, moderated by the chair.

• the roles and responsibilities of the examiners are detailed in the SGS calendar.

4.5.4 Comprehensive Examination Chair

• All members of the Kinesiology Graduate Faculty are eligible to serve as Chair for comprehensive examinations. The selection of the Chair will be made on a rotational basis from amongst the list of Graduate Faculty members. Guidelines for serving as a Chair are found here.

4.5.5 Overview of Committee Structures and Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PhD Committee Structures &amp; Roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervisory Committee</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directs student’s plan of study including course selection and thesis topic, approves thesis for defense and some members may participate in thesis defense. Monitors seminar attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Examination Committee</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directs comprehensive topic selection, approves topics, evaluates written papers, and conducts written and oral comprehensive exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehensive Exam Chair</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensures that examiners are aware of and have adhered to exam procedures, and advises the student whether he/she can go forward to the oral exam, after receiving feedback about the acceptability of their written answers. Facilitates the organized examination of the candidate in the oral setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Examination Committee</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6 PhD Thesis
4.6.1 Thesis Proposal

The student will give a formal presentation of his/her thesis proposal to the supervisory committee for approval. Here is a typical timeline for the defence process. Members of the supervisory committee will then sign the appropriate form indicating that the thesis proposal has been approved; and the form will be submitted to the Grad Administrator. A presentation of the proposal at either the departmental Graduate Seminar or at a specially arranged smaller seminar is preferred, but is not mandatory. Here are some helpful hints.

4.6.2 Completion of Thesis

- When the supervisory committee has approved the final version of the thesis, it may be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies for examination.

- Oral defense will not be scheduled until the report has been received from the supervisory committee and a date recommended for the defense.

- The student’s supervisor must inform the Associate Chair and Grad Administrator of the date, time, and location of the scheduled defense once finalized by Graduate Studies.

- Student must submit the thesis electronically to SGS for uploading to MacSPHERE; beyond that, it is customary to provide one copy to each member of the supervisory committee. The department does not require a copy. Student can make direct arrangements to have copies bound by linking to the bindery’s on line request form on the SGS website.

- Nomination of External Examiner for a PhD thesis is initiated through the SGS web site. Examiners must be arm's length from the supervisor and PhD candidate.

- Approval of an external examiner is the purview of the Dean of Graduate Studies.

- At least one month prior to the submission of the thesis, the names and contact information for three potential external examiners must be submitted to SGS via the on line thesis submission system.

- All communication with the external examiner must come from SGS.

- Examining committee will consist of the following members: the student’s supervisor, an external examiner, two representatives from the supervisory committee, and two representatives of the faculty at large.

- If major revision is not required, an oral defense will be convened by the Dean of Graduate Studies, chaired by himself or his delegate and conducted by all members of the examining committee.

- After the successful defense, the candidate must make revisions suggested by the readers and submit an electronic version to SGS for uploading to MacSPHERE, with the appropriate final
submission form. The student can arrange directly with the bindery for hardcopy binding, should that be desired. The student does not need to provide the department with a copy.

Copies of all forms pertaining to student’s thesis progress must be signed by the Associate Chair, Grad Studies and put on their files in the Administrative Centre, 219C. REMINDER: It is the responsibility of individual graduate faculty members to be familiar with and to comply with university and SGS Policies and Procedures, as well as the regulations and guidelines in this handbook.

4.6.3 Termination of Departmental Funding

There are no arrangements made for the department to fund full time students beyond the expected tenure of their program of study. However, degree completion sometimes extends beyond a given academic term and individual funding agreements may be made between the student and the supervisor. Please note that these arrangements are entirely at the discretion of the supervisor.

4.6.4 Recommending Submission of Thesis in Required Format to KinPubs

We have been contacted by Kinesiology Publications (KinPubs), previously known as Microform Publications of Human Movement Studies, regarding students submitting their research to the thesis and dissertation database. Submitting to KinPubs increases visibility for your work internationally and can also be sited as a published thesis. Should you decide to publish your thesis with KinPubs, it is the student’s responsibility to contact them regarding all aspects of this specialized service. For further information please contact: HSHP, 1243 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403-1243, (541) 346-0932 or kinpubs@uoregon.edu

4.6.5 Degree Completion

After having completed all of the required course work, the PhD comprehensive exams, and having successfully defended the thesis, the student has satisfied all the academic requirements for clearance to graduate.

5. Teaching Opportunities

Efforts are made to provide teaching opportunities in our undergraduate program for upper level PhD students. Opportunities are based on the needs and resources of the Undergraduate Program and the teaching experience and expertise of the graduate students.

PhD students interested in sessional teaching should ensure that their supervisor and the Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies, are informed and approval is granted by the Associate Dean, SGS. Advanced planning of 6 - 12 months is necessary for a course currently offered by the department. It is necessary to facilitate course scheduling and budgeting planning cycles well in advance. If the sessional teaching relates to a new course offering, the time may be 12-18 months to ensure curriculum approval.

Graduate students who teach a 3 unit course are paid as a sessional instructor ($6,900 at the time of posting). This requires the forfeit of TA/RA value and hours for the term in question. Graduate students
must also ensure that accepting a sessional appointment does not contravene the terms of awards or scholarships that they may already hold.

6. Useful Resources

If you are considering a career in academia after graduation, McMaster’s Centre for Leadership in Learning prepares a helpful resource booklet entitled “Entering the Academic Profession” and copies are available by contacting the Centre directly.

You may also be interested in a Graduate level course (Education 750 – Principles and Practice of University Teaching) that is offered by the Centre for Leadership in Learning.

In late summer/early fall of each year, the School of Graduate Studies sends information to the department on both the Ontario Graduate Scholarship and Tri-Council Scholarship Programs. This information is forwarded to students via their McMaster email addresses. It is the responsibility of the student to note the processes for such awards and to follow the guidelines in keeping with the departmental deadlines.

At the beginning of each academic term, SGS offers online workshops on Ethics in Human Research (aka SGS 101) and Accessibility of Ontario’s with Disabilities Act (aka SGS 201). SGS 101 is designed to introduce graduate students to the ethical issues surrounding research involving human participants, and to ensure awareness of provincial accessibility legislation, respectively. SGS 201 provides students with awareness concerning this who are differently-abled. These workshops are mandatory and must be completed within the first 2 terms of the student's entry to the program. Failure to do so can result in expulsion from the program or a decline of the clear to graduate status at the end of a students program. Register on MOSAIC under the subject "SGS".

This handbook describes the general procedures guiding the administration of our Graduate Program in Kinesiology and is subject to change. The procedures described herein are not immutable, however, and consideration will be provided on an individual basis if warranted, whilst assuring equity and departmental standards.

Contact Kinesiology

The Department of Kinesiology is located in the Ivor Wynne Centre (IWC) and IWC East Building, on the northeast side of the university's central campus.
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1280 Main Street West
Ivor Wynne Centre