INSERT WELCOME LETTER HERE from either Department chair or Associate Chair (Graduate Program)
# Table of Contents

**Websites of Interest**  
Page 9

**General Information**  
Page 10

**Administrative Procedures**  
Page 10

**Academic Integrity, Appeal Procedures and Academic Dishonesty Explanations**  
Page 10

**Program Requirements for MSc and PhD Studies**  
Page 10  
- Composition of Supervisory Committee  
- Supervisory Committee meeting requirements  
- Graduate Seminars and Department Travel Award  
- Health and Safety Training, SGS 101 and SGS 101  
- Course Registrations  
- Graduate Course offering for both MSc and PhD programs

**Additional Program Requirements Specific to MSc. Studies**  
Page 13  
- MSc Thesis defence procedures  
- Final Steps to Thesis Completion  
- Thesis Defence  
- Summary of Master’s Thesis procedures  
- Acceleration to PhD

**Additional Program Requirements Specific to PhD Studies**  
Page 16  
- PhD Comprehensive Examinations and Thesis Defence Procedures  
- Summary of comprehensive Examination Procedures  
- PhD Comprehensive examination Regulations  
- PhD Comprehensive Exam Committee Structure  
- Roles and Responsibilities of Comprehensive Examiners  
- Comprehensive Examination Chair  
- Overview of Committee Structures and Roles  
- PhD Thesis  
- Graduate Student Funding Expectations  
- Funding Expectations specific to MSc studies  
- Funding Expectations specific to PhD studies  
- Teaching opportunities for PhD candidates  
- Termination of Departmental funding applicable to MSc and PhD Studies

**Additional Funding Opportunities and Scholarships**  
Page 24  
- Travel Grants  
- The Naomi Cermak Memorial Graduate Travel Award  
- Joan Heimbecker Scholarship

**Additional Resources for Master’s and PhD Studies**  
Page 27
Appendices

Appendix A - Recommendation of External Member for Appointment to MSc or PhD Supervisory Committee form
Appendix B – MSc Annual Supervisory Committee form
Appendix C – PhD Supervisory Committee Report form
Appendix D – Sessional Dates 2017-2018
Appendix E – Timeline MSc.PDF
Appendix F – Acceleration to PhD program form
Appendix G – Comprehensive Exam Tips
Appendix H - Comprehensive Examination – PhD Supervisor’s Arrangements
Appendix I – Comprehensive Examination Reading list form
Appendix J – Recommendation of External Examiner for appointment to PhD Comprehensive Examination Committee form
Appendix K – PhD Comprehensive Exam – Guide for Chairs – This needs to be updated to reflect new PhD regulations
Appendix L – PhD Defence Timeline
Appendix M – PhD Defence Tips for Students from former students
Appendix N – Timeline of PhD
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Websites of Interest</th>
<th>URL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Contacts</td>
<td><a href="https://www.science.mcmaster.ca/kinesiology/people">https://www.science.mcmaster.ca/kinesiology/people</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Course Schedule</td>
<td><a href="http://registrar.mcmaster.ca/scheduling/coursett.html">http://registrar.mcmaster.ca/scheduling/coursett.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Course Schedule</td>
<td><a href="https://www.science.mcmaster.ca/kinesiology/graduate-studies/graduate-courses.html">https://www.science.mcmaster.ca/kinesiology/graduate-studies/graduate-courses.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Kinesiology Forms for Graduate Students</td>
<td><a href="https://www.science.mcmaster.ca/kinesiology/graduate-studies/forms.html">https://www.science.mcmaster.ca/kinesiology/graduate-studies/forms.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Studies Dates and Deadlines</td>
<td><a href="http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/index.php">http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/index.php</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student Services</td>
<td><a href="http://ois.mcmaster.ca">http://ois.mcmaster.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking and Transit Services</td>
<td>Parking: <a href="http://parking.mcmaster.ca/">http://parking.mcmaster.ca/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office of Sustainability – Alternative Transportation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.mcmaster.ca/sustainability/alternative_transportation.html">http://www.mcmaster.ca/sustainability/alternative_transportation.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting up your McMaster Email Address</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/students/gettingstarted/activateMACID.html">http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/students/gettingstarted/activateMACID.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Wellness Centre</td>
<td><a href="http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/">http://wellness.mcmaster.ca/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWHAT (Students Walk Home Attended Team)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.msumcmaster.ca/swhat.htm">http://www.msumcmaster.ca/swhat.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.H.M.I.S. Training Schedule</td>
<td><a href="http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/eohss/training/">http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/eohss/training/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UHIP</td>
<td><a href="https://iss.mcmaster.ca/our-services/university-health-insurance-plan-uhip.html">https://iss.mcmaster.ca/our-services/university-health-insurance-plan-uhip.html</a></td>
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</table>
General Information

The policies and procedures for the Master’s and PhD Programs in Kinesiology are set by the School of Graduate Studies at McMaster University. 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. \textit{It is the responsibility of individual graduate students and department faculty members to be familiar with and to comply with McMaster University and SGS Policy and Procedures, as well as the regulations and guidelines in the Kinesiology graduate handbook.}

Administrative Procedures

Students may be required to complete a number School of Graduate Studies forms, such as Petitions for Special Consideration, Change in Graduate Student Status etc. as they progress through their studies. These forms generally require the signature of either the Department Chair or Associate Chair – Graduate Program. Should you need to complete such a form, please bring the form to Carol Robinson, the Graduate Administrator, IWC Room 219C, who will obtain the signatures of either the Department Chair or Associate Chair-Graduate Program. The forms will then be sent to the School of Graduate Studies for you. \textbf{Please 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. \textit{If a conflict arises, immediately contact Dr. Audrey Hicks, the Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies, IWC 204 to discuss possible changes.}

Academic Integrity, Appeal Procedures and Academic Dishonesty Explanations

All graduate students should be aware of McMaster’s policy regarding Academic Integrity, Codes of Conduct and Appeal procedures. Please refer to the \textit{Additional University Regulations Affecting Graduate Students Section 6} of the School of Graduate Studies Calendar.

Explanations of what Academic Dishonesty is can be found in the \textit{Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3 – February 10, 2016 Senate Secretariat website http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf}

Program Requirements for MSc and PhD Studies

The following sections pertain to regulations that are applied to both Master’s and Doctoral studies in the Department of Kinesiology

Composition of Supervisory Committee

Within the \textbf{first 6 months} of a student's time in the master’s or doctoral program, a supervisory committee must be constituted for each candidate. The committee will consist of

- three to four members, that is comprised of two members considered ‘internal’ to the department (Associate members and Faculty members in Kinesiology are considered ‘internal’). Please contact Carol Robinson for the appropriate paperwork for ALL non-internal Kinesiology committee member requests. Specifically, members may be appointed from outside the Department of Kinesiology but employed at McMaster University with the written
approval of the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies Kinesiology. A supervisory committee member may be appointed from outside of the University upon approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies. A CV of the non-internal member and the Recommendation of External Member for Appointment to an MSc or PhD Supervisory Committee form (Appendix A) will be required in both cases. The composition of supervisory committees for those students supervised by Associate members to the Department must be approved by the Associate Chair, Graduate Program, before the committee is convened.

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 if applicable
- approval of thesis proposal & guidance through the research process
- serving as members of thesis examination committee if appointed

Supervisory Committee Meeting Requirements – once/year

Each student’s 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. 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. An annual supervisory committee meeting for MSc (Appendix B) and PhD (Appendix C) report is to ensure that the student has received adequate supervision and made appropriate progress. In the second year of the MSc program, the report must also be submitted even though it is expected that the student will defend within that year.

Paperwork must be submitted to the Grad Administrator to ensure accurate records. The fillable report form(s) for supervisory meetings is found on the FORMS page of the department website. 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 typical SGS annual portion of funding for that student.

Graduate Seminars and Department Travel Award

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. 75% attendance is required for those who wish to apply for departmental travel funds. Those students who claim travel funds early in the semester (i.e. before the 75% attendance threshold is possible to attain) are expected to behave honourably and continue to attend the seminars to ensure eligibility percentage is attained. Failure to do so will result in the student’s loss of eligibility for such funds in the future.

The Department of Kinesiology will provide up to $1000 per academic year, per student, who is first-author presenter (oral or poster). This allocation is intended to cover conference related expenses including travel, accommodation and registration. All non-first authors and non-authors are entitled to receive up to $250 per academic year to the above conference-related expenses. If a student submits expenses both as a first-author and second or non-author, the
maximum allocation will be $1000 per academic year. For a single conference, students may submit expenses as either the first-author or the second/non-author category only, but not both.”

To be eligible for the graduate student travel allowance, graduate students must attend a minimum of 75% of the scheduled graduate student seminars (i.e. 6 out of 8 seminars).

**Health and Safety Training, SGS 101 and SGS 201**

Please note that it is necessary for all graduate students to register, and successfully complete the following courses:

- SGS 101 - Academic & Research Integrity and Ethics training;
- SGS-201 - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA). This is a government mandated training session that is required before payroll will be authorized.
- a minimum of six Health & Safety modules listed below:

  Asbestos Awareness, Ergonomics, Fire Safety, WHMIS 2015, 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. 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 student’s program. To register for these courses on MOSAIC please go to subject code “SGS”.

**Course Registration**

In early September, students must register for the courses to be taken during the year. This process is completed 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 School of Graduate Studies Graduate Calendar or see Appendix D (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.**

**Graduate 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. A listing of our graduate Course offerings can be found on our website at: [https://www.science.mcmaster.ca/kinesiology/graduate-studies/graduate-courses.html](https://www.science.mcmaster.ca/kinesiology/graduate-studies/graduate-courses.html)
Additional Program requirements specific to MSc Studies

MSc Studies in Kinesiology consists of both course work and a research thesis and requires approximately 2 years of full time study (Appendix E). 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
- **two** other single-term elective courses, **one** of which must be KIN course
- a maximum of one independent study course (KIN 702 or KIN 723)
- 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)

*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.

*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.

MSc Thesis Defence procedures

**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 MSc supervisory committee form is available on the department 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.

**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 MSc supervisory committee form, available from the department 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. Prior to a thesis defense, the supervisory committee should convene for a final meeting to determine whether permission is granted to write and defend the thesis. A committee meeting form will be filled upon completion of this meeting indicating the approval for the writing and planning of the thesis defense. The required MSc supervisory committee form is available on the
department FORMS of the department website 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.

**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 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 examiner external to McMaster University to be of value to the process, approval for such an inclusion must be obtained from the Associate Chair, Graduate Program at least 1 month prior to the expected defense date. For such approval, supervisors should email the Associate Chair – Graduate Program with the name of the external examiner, the name of the MSc student and a copy of the external examiner’s CV. Supervisors are requested to copy the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant on these requests for inclusion in the student’s file.

Once the date and time of the defense has been determined by the student and supervisor, the student should go into MOSAIC and initiate the thesis defence process. Please see Graduate Administrator for instructions. Students 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 will be given to your defence committee by the Graduate Program Assistant and will be sent to the School of Graduate Studies once the defence is successfully completed.

**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/defend the thesis after data are collected and analyzed; 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)

**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;

• completion of the Department of Kinesiology M.Sc. Supervisory Committee Assessment for Acceleration to PhD form [Appendix F](#) 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.

• 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.

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

• Once approval for acceleration is granted, students must now comply with all regulations associated with the PhD program in Kinesiology outlined in this document including but not limited to the course requirements, committee assembly etc.

*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.

Additional Program requirements specific to PhD Studies

Doctoral studies in Kinesiology consist of both course work selected from our department website 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.

Students must:

- successfully complete 2 grad courses, one of which is KIN 713 Directed Readings in Kinesiology – Special Populations
- successfully complete at least one other course recommended by the supervisory committee as best for the candidate's success in the research program

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. 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
- students must successfully complete 2 half courses at the PhD level, one being KIN 713, plus any other courses deemed necessary by the supervisory committee
- students must successfully complete an oral and a written comprehensive exam within the first 24 months in program
- students must successfully complete their doctoral research and successfully defend their PhD thesis in order to graduate
PhD Comprehensive Examinations and Thesis Defence Procedures

PhD Comprehensive Examinations

Candidates for the Ph.D. degree are expected to complete their comprehensive examination within the first 24 months of the program and in accordance with general regulations outlined by the School of Graduate Studies. However, 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 will be on a topic that is independent of the student’s thesis area and, once selected by the candidate and supervisor, must be approved by the supervisory committee. An examination committee will consist of three faculty members who have expertise in three sub-topics related to the main topic area. The comprehensive examination will consist of a written and oral component. The written component will consist of three questions, one from each examiner. The examination will cover material from a selected set of readings provided to the student 8 weeks in advance of the exam date. The written examination will be completed within a single working day in a closed-book format. The student will advance to the oral examination stage within one week of the written exam date. If this time frame cannot be adhered to, petition must be made to the department’s Associate Chair, Graduate program for special allowances. Following the oral examination, examiners will provide a single grade of fail (F), pass (P) for the student’s combined written and oral answers to each question. The student will be deemed to have passed the comprehensive Examination if he/she obtains a pass (P) on all three questions during the oral examination. Students who are unsuccessful in the examination process will be given a second opportunity according to the Policy and Regulations set out by the School of Graduate Studies.

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 2 business days 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.

- 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 can be found in Appendix G of this document.

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.
Comprehensive Examination Regulations

Role of Graduate Faculty supervising PhD Students:

- Fill out the Department of Kinesiology Comprehensive Examination – PhD Supervisor’s Arrangements forms (Appendix H); 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 the Department of Kinesiology Comprehensive Examination Reading List form (Appendix I), 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.

Comprehensive Examination Committee Structure:

- Comprised of at least 3 members (supervisor may be a member, but this is not required)
- 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 Department of Kinesiology Recommendation of External examiner for Appointment to a PhD Comprehensive Committee form (Appendix J).

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 2 business days 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.

**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 can be found in Appendix K.

**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>

**PhD THESIS**

**Thesis Proposal**

The student will give a formal presentation of his/her thesis proposal to the supervisory committee for approval. A typical timeline for the defence process can be found in Appendix L. 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. Some helpful hints from some previous Kinesiology PhD students can be found in Appendix M.

**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.
Funding expectations specific to MSc studies

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 Master’s Studies [Appendix E]. For reference, a full TA involves 260 hours of work at a current rate of $43.31 per hour. Such employment is taxable income.

If the student does not receive a major external award, the department guarantees a minimum salary of $15,000 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 $43.31 per hour for 2017/18)
- 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 year 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 $15,000, 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.

Funding expectations specific to PhD studies

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 [Appendix N]. For reference, a full TA involves 260 hours of work at a current rate ($43.31 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. Please note that ongoing employment as a teaching/research assistant is subject to the student maintaining satisfactory work performance.

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 (Appendix N)) of the doctoral program.

**Teaching Opportunities for PhD candidates**

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.

**Termination of Departmental Funding applicable to MSc and PhD studies**

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.

**ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS**

The following information pertains to both Master’s and Doctoral programs. 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.

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.
The Naomi Cermak Memorial Graduate Travel Award

Background

This award was established in 2015 with a gift from Maastricht University. It constituted the balance of research funds originally intended to support Dr. Cermak and her collaborative research at McMaster in the area of nutrition and metabolism. The funds were redirected after her untimely passing in December, 2013. Dr. Cermak completed undergraduate and doctoral degrees in Kinesiology at McMaster before pursuing postdoctoral training at Maastricht University.

Terms of Reference

Established in 2015 in memory of Dr. Naomi Cermak B. Sc. (Class of ‘04) PhD. (Class of ‘10). An accomplished scientist and competitive athlete, Dr. Cermak was a passionate advocate for translational research that could enhance human health and performance. To be awarded by the School of Graduate Studies to doctoral students or post doctoral fellows in the Department of Kinesiology who are travelling to Maastricht University, or to registered full-time visiting students or fellows who are travelling from Maastricht University to study in the Department of Kinesiology, and who are engaged in research related to nutrition, exercise or health.

Department Guidelines and Procedures

The award is generally intended to support student travel and accommodation costs that facilitate a collaborative research experience in a laboratory at the partner institution. One award is usually made each academic year to a student from the Department of Kinesiology at McMaster or the Department of Human Movement Sciences at Maastricht University, on an alternating basis. The nature and spirit of the award necessitates considerable planning and communication between the partner laboratories to facilitate the student research experience. The award amount is $6,000 CAD payable directly to the recipient. The funds cannot be combined with another travel award.

McMaster trainees who are interested in applying for the award should initially engage their supervisor to discuss project ideas, and informally communicate with the laboratory at the other institution. Formal applications consist of a cover letter, a one-page project proposal including project timeline, a one-page budget with proposed expenditures and a curriculum vitae (Common CV or McMaster format). Applications may be submitted in electronic format at any time to the Academic Program Assistant, Graduate Studies. A three-person committee including the Chair (or designate) and two faculty members from the Exercise Metabolism Research Group, will review applications annually during the fall, in consultation with representatives from the M3 Research Unit at Maastricht University. Preference will be given to senior doctoral candidates. The award recipient will be announced annually each winter.

Joan Heimbecker Scholarship

The scholarship and bursary will be awarded by the Department of Kinesiology to a full time graduate student who has made significant contributions to McMaster University and the community at large in athletic, professional or social organizations. The recipients must also demonstrate strong academic and scientific merit. In addition, the recipient should possess qualities of leadership and significantly impact the lives of others through such involvement, thus representing the spirit of Joan Heimbecker. All full time Kinesiology graduate students are eligible for the Heimbecker scholarship. To be eligible for the Heimbecker bursary the individual must also demonstrate financial need. Financial need is defined as receiving less than $24,500 in total funding in the year of application.
Students who wish to apply for the Joan Heimbecker Scholarship must also apply via the Scholarship portal on MOSAIC and complete the departmental application found on our Forms page.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR MASTER’S AND PHD STUDIES**

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.

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 cited 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

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**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.**

Department of Kinesiology  
McMaster University  
1280 Main Street West  
Ivor Wynne Centre  
Hamilton, ON L8S 4K1  
Canada

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Recommendation of External Member for Appointment to an MSc or PhD Supervisory Committee form

Appendix B – MSc Annual Supervisory Committee form

Appendix C – PhD Supervisory Committee Report form

Appendix D – Sessional Dates 2017-2018

Appendix E - TIMELINE MSC.PDF

Appendix F– Acceleration to PhD program form

Appendix G – Comprehensive Exam Tips

Appendix H - Comprehensive Examination – PhD Supervisor’s Arrangements

Appendix I – Comprehensive Examination Reading list form

Appendix J – Recommendation of External Examiner for appointment to PhD Comprehensive Examination Committee form

Appendix K – PhD Comprehensive Exam – Guide for Chairs – This needs to be updated to reflect new PhD regulations

Appendix L – PhD Defence Timeline (we could provide a link to the School of Graduate Studies website for this instead)

Appendix M – PhD Defence Tips for Students from former students

Appendix N – Timeline of PhD Studies
### Recommendation of External Member for Appointment to an MSc or PhD Supervisory Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>ID:</th>
<th>Degree:</th>
<th>Supervisor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>[name]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Supervisory Committee:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
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<tr>
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<td>[name]</td>
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<td>[name]</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Member:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[title]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[institution]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[coordinates]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TIME COMMITMENT AS A PHD COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINER IN KINESIOLOGY INVOLVES APPROXIMATELY TEN (10) HOURS OVER AN EIGHT (8) WEEK PERIOD.**

Comments: 
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Supervisor ___________________________ Associate Chair, Graduate Studies ___________________________ Date ______________

*February 6, 2017 revised/cr
CV attached*
Student ID: _______________________

NAME: ______________________________

Student began MSc studies: DATE: ______________________________

Student’s last supervisory meeting: DATE: ______________________________

Date of this meeting: _______________________________

A supervisory committee meeting for the above named student was held on the above date. Student’s progress was discussed and recommendations made.

Please indicate if the student is a scholarship holder of OGS □ NSERC □ SSHRC □ or has other major competitive funding _______________________________

Progress made since the last committee meeting/the start of the program:

Courses completed to date and grades obtained:

_____________________________________________________________________________

Has a research proposal been submitted? NO □ YES □ Date: _______________________ If not, when is the student expected to submit? Date: _______________________

How soon can the student expect to receive feedback on submissions? _______________________

Has student received permission to write? NO □ YES □ Date: _______________________

Has student received approval to defend? NO □ YES □ Date: _______________________

Goals for the next interval of _____ months (attach one additional page if necessary):

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

Anticipated date for completion of degree requirements: _______________________

Date
### Committee's evaluation of overall progress since last report. Please choose one of the ratings below:

- [E] Excellent  
- [G] Good  
- [M] Marginal  
- [U] Unsatisfactory*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee Members</th>
<th>Signatures</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Where progress is deemed marginal or unsatisfactory, attach a detailed explanation of what must be accomplished over the next 3 months in order to remedy the situation.*

This completed form has been seen by me:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student's Signature:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---------------------------

Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, Kinesiology  Date

Student may append additional comments. A student who thinks that he/she is receiving an unsatisfactory supervision is urged to follow the recommended grievance procedure for the Department of Kinesiology and to contact the Associate Chair, Grad Program, Kinesiology.

*Student MUST provide a single page report of his/her progress in order for this supervisory committee meeting to be complete.*
Student ID: ________________
NAME: ________________________________

Student’s submission
TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT and SUBMITTED for the COMMITTEE MEETING (one page only)

Student’s signature: ________________________________
Date: __________________

Committee members: Initial below to affirm that you have read the student’s report on this page.

Supervisor: _______  Member: _______  Member: _______  Member: _______

September 8, 2011 / rc
Sample

A supervisory committee meeting for the above named student was held on the above date. Students programs was discussed and recommendations were made.

**RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVALS** ([http://www.mcmaster.ca/ors/ethics/faculty_intro.htm](http://www.mcmaster.ca/ors/ethics/faculty_intro.htm))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does research involve human participants, their records or tissues?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes, has approval been obtained from the research ethics board?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does research involve animals or their tissues?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, has approval been obtained from the research ethics board?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIELD TRIPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does research involve international travel, which poses an identifiable additional risk under the university’s risk management policy?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes, has student completed risk management forms and obtained approval?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a Request to be Full Time Off Campus form is needed are there plans for submitting it?</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: the relevant forms and instructions can be accessed here:


- The Request to be Full Time Off Campus form is here: [https://graduate.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/full_time_off_campus_july_2016.pdf](https://graduate.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/full_time_off_campus_july_2016.pdf)

**Clarifications regarding timing of the meeting and report:**

1. Students who began their MSc. studies in January or May must have held their first MSc. supervisory committee meeting within the first 12 months of their program.
2. The deadline for a MSc. supervisory committee meeting for a student who has been on leave is extended by the duration of the leave beyond the nominal deadline.
3. Part-time students, like full-time students, are required to have MSc. supervisory committee meetings at least once during the academic year.
4. Normal deadlines apply for students who have been granted full-time off-campus status during part or all of the academic year.
Details of progress made since the last report (or toward meeting degree requirements since beginning the program if this is the first report), i.e., courses completed and grades obtained, preparation/writing/oral defense, thesis proposal, research, chapters written/revised, conference presentations, publications:

Student signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Supervisory Committee Members: Initial below to affirm that you have read the student’s report on this page.

Supervisor: ________ Committee Member: ________ Committee Member: ________ Committee Member: ________
**Supervisor’s report** *(This section must not be filled out by the student and must not be left blank.)*

### Part A: Progress

Please indicate if the student is a scholarship holder of  
- OGS ❑  
- NSERC ❑  
- SSHRC ❑  
- CIHR ❑  

or has other major competitive funding ____________________________________________

Has a research proposal been submitted?  
- NO ❑  
- YES ❑  
Date: __________________________

If not, when is the student expected to submit?  
Date: __________________________

How soon can the student expect to receive feedback on submissions?  
__________________________________________

Has student received permission to write and approval to defend?  
- NO ❑  
- YES ❑  
Date: ______________

Goals for the next interval of __________________________ (attached one additional page if necessary):

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anticipated date for the completion of degree requirements:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Committee’s Assessment

Evaluation of overall progress at this stage in the degree development during the interval since beginning MSc. studies (if this is the first Committee meeting) or since the last MSc. Supervisory Committee meeting:

RATING

[E] Excellent
The student has exceeded expectations in terms of academic and/or research progress. This rating may reflect exceptional initiatives taken by the student to address unexpected challenges in their course of study.

[G] Good
The student is meeting and achieving all expectations in terms of academic and/or research progress. There are no areas of concern with respect to meeting goals and milestones for research and academic progress. This rating is to be used for students who show promise for completing the degree in a timely manner.

[S] Satisfactory
The student is meeting and achieving most expectations in terms of academic and/or research progress. There is some concern around the pace and/or the meeting of goals and milestones for research and academic progress. The committee has some concerns with the student’s skills growth and subject area expertise. This rating is to be used when the committee identifies areas for improvement and where some expectations at this stage of degree development are not being met. Details about concerns should be provided in Part C.

[M] Marginal*
The student is meeting and achieving some expectations in terms of academic and/or research progress. There is significant concern around the pace and/or the meeting of goals and milestones for research and academic progress. The committee has significant concerns with the student’s skill growth and subject area expertise. This rating is to be used when the committee identifies several areas for improvement and where significant expectations at this stage of degree development are not being met. Areas for improvement should be provided in Part C.

[U] Unsatisfactory*
There is an unreasonably low rate of academic and/or research progress. The committee has serious concerns about the pace and/or the meeting of goals and milestones for research and academic progress, and whether these goals can be achieved in a reasonable period of time. Areas of serious concern should be provided in Part C. In cases where this category is used, the program should determine whether the student should be required to withdraw or be allowed to continue in the program until their next committee meeting.

*Where progress is deemed marginal or unsatisfactory, attach a detailed explanation of what must be accomplished over the next 6 months in order to remedy the situation.

This completed report has been seen by me.

Student’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ________

Department Chair’s Signature: ____________________________ Date: ________

The student may append additional comments. A student who thinks that s/he is receiving unsatisfactory supervision is urged to follow the recommended grievance procedure for the Department or Program and/or to contact the Department Graduate Advisor, Department/Program Chair, or the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.
### Sessional Dates 2017-2018

**DEADLINE DATES FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FALL TERM</th>
<th>WINTER TERM</th>
<th>SUMMER TERM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. - Dec., 2017</td>
<td>Jan. - April, 2018</td>
<td>May - August, 2018</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. - Dec., 2017(2HF)</td>
<td>March - April, 2018 (2HF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**On-Time Registration**

- **FALL TERM**: Tuesday, July 25 to Tuesday, August 29
- **WINTER TERM**: Thursday, November 30th to Thursday, December 14
- **SUMMER TERM**: Thursday, April 5 to Thursday, April 19

**Class Start Dates ***

- **FALL TERM**: Classes begin after September 4, 2017 - check with program for details
- **WINTER TERM**: Classes begin after January 2, 2018 - check with program for details
- **SUMMER TERM**: Class start dates vary - check with program for details

**Late Registration**

- **FALL TERM**: Wednesday August 30 to Monday, September 11
- **WINTER TERM**: Friday, December 15 to Tuesday, January 2
- **SUMMER TERM**: Friday, April 20 to Tuesday, May 1

**Final Dates to Add Courses:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Fall Term Dates</th>
<th>Winter Term Dates</th>
<th>Summer Term Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Unit Courses</td>
<td>Friday, September 29</td>
<td>Friday, January 26</td>
<td>Friday, August 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Unit Courses or 1.5 Unit Courses (1HF)</td>
<td>Friday, September 29</td>
<td>Friday, January 26</td>
<td>Friday, June 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Unit Courses (2HF)</td>
<td>Friday, October 27</td>
<td>Friday, March 2</td>
<td>Friday, June 29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Dates to Drop Courses:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Fall Term Dates</th>
<th>Winter Term Dates</th>
<th>Summer Term Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Unit Courses</td>
<td>Friday, January 4</td>
<td>Friday, February 2</td>
<td>Friday, August 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Unit Courses</td>
<td>Friday, October 6</td>
<td>Friday, January 26</td>
<td>Friday, June 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Unit Courses (1HF)</td>
<td>Friday, September 29</td>
<td>Friday, January 26</td>
<td>Friday, June 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Unit Courses (2HF)</td>
<td>Friday, November 3</td>
<td>Friday, March 9</td>
<td>Friday, July 13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Final Dates to Submit Grades:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Fall Term Dates</th>
<th>Winter Term Dates</th>
<th>Summer Term Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Unit Courses</td>
<td>Friday, May 4</td>
<td>Friday, August 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Unit Courses</td>
<td>Friday, January 4</td>
<td>Friday, May 4</td>
<td>Friday, August 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Unit Courses (1HF)</td>
<td>Friday, October 27</td>
<td>Friday, March 2</td>
<td>Friday, August 24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**The University welcomes and includes students, staff, and faculty from a wide range of cultural, traditional, and spiritual beliefs. As per the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances, the University will arrange reasonable accommodation of the needs of students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays. For more information, please refer to https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-Observances.pdf**

Graduate students may only enroll in undergraduate courses with the approval of their supervisor or graduate program. Students are responsible for meeting the deadlines and requirements of the undergraduate course as presented in class and in
the undergraduate calendar. Graduate students will be graded under the graduate grading scale. Students should consult the undergraduate calendar for enrolment.

Programs may establish earlier deadlines to add/drop courses but these dates must clearly be communicated to students. Please note that the last date to cancel a course or registration with no academic penalty is not the same as the last date to be eligible for a refund.

* The precise dates of commencement of courses are determined by the program; students are urged to contact their program for details. SGS maintains the 13-week graduate instruction period; however, if a course does not fall into the traditional 13-week period, the graduate program will inform students of important dates and deadlines in the course syllabus. There is no official fall break or reading week for graduate students (except MBA). Students should check with their program and their course instructor(s) as to whether classes will be held during these periods. Please see sections 1.3 (Responsibilities of Graduate Students to the University) and 2.5.6 (Vacations) of the calendar for more information.

** All courses on a student’s record after these dates will require a grade. Exceptions require submission of a Petition for Special Consideration. Graduate programs may establish earlier deadlines for completion of course work and may prescribe penalties for late completion of work and for failure to complete work, provided that these penalties are announced at the time the instructor makes known to the class the methods by which student performance shall be evaluated.

*** A final thesis is the corrected, approved version of thesis which is submitted to SGS following the Final Oral Examination. Note there is no grace period at the end of December or April for final thesis submission and completion of degree requirements.

**Convocation Dates**

Please consult the link below for convocation dates:

http://registrar.mcmaster.ca/grad/convo-dates/
Sample Timeline MSc

Year 1

Term 1
- Complete Coursework (Including KIN 702)

Term 2
- Thesis Proposal

Term 3

Year 2

Term 4
- Thesis Research, Analysis, Writing

Term 5

Term 6
- Thesis Defense
### Assessment for Acceleration to PhD

#### Student Information
- **Student Name:** _________________________
- **Student Number:** _______________
- **Date of Commencement in MSc program:** __________________________ YYYY/MM/DD

#### Supervisory Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Member</td>
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<td>3rd Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Member</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### MSc Courses Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Date Collection
- **Completion of date collection:**  ______________________ YYYY/MM/DD
- **Submission of written report:**  ______________________ YYYY/MM/DD
- **Oral presentation of research data:**  _____________________ YYYY/MM/DD

#### Awards/Scholarships

- **Awards/Scholarships held:** attach a separate sheet if necessary

#### Recommendation
- **Recommendation to accelerate as of**  ____________________ YYYY/MM/DD

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**March 2010 / rc**

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**Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, Kinesiology**  
**Date**
comprehensive: (kŏm’prĭ-hĕn’sĭv)

adjective
1. of large scope; covering or involving much; inclusive: a comprehensive study of world affairs.
2. comprehending or thoroughly understanding with one’s mind; having an extensive mental range or grasp, as of a particular subject or many subjects.

noun
3. Often comprehensives; also called comprehensive examination. An examination of extensive coverage given to measure a student’s general progress, proficiency in his or her major field of study, or the like.

synonyms: broad, wide, extensive, full.

The COMPREHENSIVE examination processes is a valuable aspect of Kinesiology’s PhD program. It is meant to test a candidate’s ability to read, review, and comment knowledgably on aspects of a topic that are not wholly in his/her area of expertise. Examiners endeavour to press the candidate to the extent of his/her knowledge by posing challenging questions and expecting in depth and answers that exhibit a critical appraisal of the literature. Information on the process can be found in the on line grad program handbook at http://www.science.mcmaster.ca/kinesiology/graduate-studies/grad-handbook.html

WISE MOVES:

- Discuss with your supervisor how best to fit the 9 week comprehensive period in and around your RA, TA, and research obligations. Your eight week reading period will be very time consuming. You don’t want other activities interfering with your ability to study.
- Once the general topic of your comp exam has been established, you can begin reading on your own at any time to familiarize yourself with the current literature – even before your examiners provide you with reading lists.
- Once you have your reading lists plan your study period to ensure you can cover all the readings within the eight weeks.
- Ensure you have a good understanding of how the three sub areas may converge under your general topic.
- If you have questions regarding your readings you may direct them to either your supervisor or the examiner.
- Remember – the comprehensive examination does not just assess knowledge of content! You will be asked to answer “bigger picture” questions that will probe your ability to critically assess and comment upon what you have read.

IN ADVANCE of WRITING DAY:

- Think about what will make YOU more comfortable writing for the day – if your own mouse, keyboard, office chair will help you manage the exam, bring them with you.
- Make a presentation to yourself in which you discuss the three sub areas and how they interact (or not) within your general topic. You are précising eight weeks worth of readings into about 15 minutes of self talk. This will help your recall once you are in the room writing. Generate some questions on your own that your examiners may pose. You’d be surprised how often you’ll come up with the same questions as they do!
- Don’t hesitate to ask you post-comp colleagues if they had any useful tips for making it through the writing day. Sometimes another opinion can help put things into perspective.
• Ask a colleague to bring a coffee or other desirable beverage to the admin office part way through the writing day. Make plans to have a colleague or friends meet you at the end of the day so you can relax.
• Remember - your written notes, pda/ electronic devices/ phone cannot be with you during this writing day. None of these devices can be in your writing room. Remind your friends and colleagues that you will be incommunicado for the day.

WRITING DAY

• You will find that 9am to 5pm goes by very quickly. If you need to sketch out your plan for answering the questions, draw it on the whiteboard in the room. Budget your time.
• Bring your comfort items with you - mouse, keyboard, office chair (lucky troll doll or rabbit’s foot).
• If you bring electronic devices, knapsack with you, these items must be left in the admin office before you start writing.
• Take time to stretch, take a comfort break, eat your lunch, but remember this is an exam and you are supposed to be doing this solo. Popping out of the room to consult with a fellow grad is not permitted.
• You have questions from three examiners. If you are not certain how to interpret the question, the first line of your answer to that question should be your interpretation of the question. Even if your answer to the question is “wrong” it will still have value to the examiner in terms of assessing your ability to use the readings and respond to academic inquiry in a comprehensive manner.
• Answer FIRST the question posed by the examiner who is least familiar with your work and accomplishments. Inevitably, the first question is where you will use that largest amount of your time.
• Answer LAST the question posed by the examiner who knows you best. If you run short on time, the examiner who knows you best is more likely to understand what you’re trying to say even if your answer is truncated.
• This said, it may be useful for you to work on all three questions simultaneously. Although the questions cover different sub areas, there is often a degree of overlap where your answer process for one question may aid you in answering another.
• Again, budget your time so you can cover all three questions. Your answers can be up to 10 pages in length (double spaced, font size 12) but there is no minimum length. You are expected to write your answer in complete sentences with solid arguments/justifications, not in point form.
• If you need to draw a schematic or other diagram to support your answer, ask for paper and pencil. Drawings do not constitute part of the 10 page per answer limit.

IN PREPARATION for ORAL DEFENCE DAY:

• Your answers will be emailed to you after writing day. Review them as often as you need.
• You are permitted your reading lists, questions, and answers with you during the exam. Be prepared to go to specific pages should an examiner call upon you to do so. Bring paper and pen to take notes as you require.
• Dress nicely, yet comfortably. It’s a measure of respect for your exam committee.
• Bring a bottle of water... or two.
• Your exam room has been booked for your use 30 minutes in advance of the start of the oral comp.
• If an oral examiner is attending via SKYPE, the set up is your responsibility. You can have a friend or colleague help with this aspect in advance of the exam.
• The room is equipped with chalk or markers should your examiners ask you to make use of blackboard or white board. Don’t be shy.
FORMAT of the DEFENCE:

- This is the last exam you are likely to take in which you are not the expert in the field. You will be challenged; you will be expected to speculate and extrapolate on what you have read and on the answers you provided to the examiners’ questions.
- Attending your oral comp will be the chair, and the three examiners. Your supervisor cannot attend. This is not a public event.
- Even if you are familiar with them, address your examiners by their professional titles, until/unless they ask you to do otherwise.
- The chair will ask you to leave the room at the outset while the committee decides on the order of questioning. If you have not met your examiner(s), the chair will introduce you to one another.
- Your responses to your examiners’ question should provide them with information they may not have gleaned from your written work.
- Each examiner will have a specific amount of time to ask questions. The number of questions will vary from field to field, from defence to defence.
  - If there is only one round of questions, you’ve likely provided satisfactory and fulsome answers such that your comprehensive knowledge has been proven. Be prepared for “Just one more thing, if I may…”
  - If there are three rounds of questions, rise to the challenge and promote good academic discussion in a professional manner.
  - Everyone’s oral comp experience will be unique.
- You may know the answer to the question, but let the examiner finish BEFORE you start your response.
- THINK before you speak. BREATHE before you speak.
- If you need time, take a sip of water. It creates a natural pause.
- If an examiner asks a long complicated question, asked him or her to restate it. They too are thinking while speaking and may deviate from the subject. A reiteration of the question is often clearer, more concise, and you can more readily respond to it.
- Part of the examiner’s role is to determine the limits of your knowledge. A response of “I don’t know” will usually happen eventually since this is not an area of your particular expertise. A better response might be “That’s a good question. Based on my knowledge at this point, I would say/feel/expect/assume.... Were I to suppose XYZ, then perhaps ABC might follow” (and if appropriate -) “This is something I would have liked to explore had there been time to read up on a sub area [not covered/explored by your examiners].”
- This exam may seem like a conversation between colleagues. Be respectful even if the question falls outside your assigned topic, and especially if it is asked in an unpleasant tone. This is your oral defence of your written answers so DEFEND YOUR position BASED ON FACTS, not on personal opinion, especially when this opinion is in opposition to that of your examiner.
- The chair’s role is to ensure order, that time limits are adhered to, and that the discussion stays on topic. That said, sometimes a chair will ask a question. Roll with it; the chair is as curious as the rest of the committee. Besides, he or she agreed to undertake this role.
- Remember – at this stage in your career you are considered a junior colleague; one who is expected to be able to converse in an articulate and critical manner on topics upon which you are being questioned.

SUPPLEMENTARY WORK

- Your examiners may want more information from you to prove you have comprehensive knowledge of the topic and the sub areas. You may be given a supplementary question, or you may be asked to provide a more in depth answer to one of the original questions. A time frame will be determined and you will need to submit your supplementary work to your exam chair (copy admin office) at that time.
If you had to rush to complete your final answer on writing day, supplementary work provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate a more fulsome understanding of the literature and show the examiner the extent of your knowledge.

View this, not as a failing, but as an opportunity to build on your knowledge.

REQUESTS MADE and QUESTIONS HEARD at DEFENCES:

- Can you summarize your experiences learning about this topic and its sub areas in one (two) sentences?
- What have you learned that you can take forward to future endeavours?
- Can you apply what you’ve learned to a novel situation?
- What did you not know? Does this experience change your perspective moving forward?
- Anything you would add/change now that the questions have all be asked and answered?
- Did you have any biases in your answers based on your previous experience/knowledge?
- How do the topic and the sub areas matter to the world? Your research? Why should we care?
- Which reading did you find most important/interesting/compelling and why?
- Pick one or two of your readings and tell us how you would have done things differently (ie, better). Be prepared to defend you answers.

Remember - Intelligent people disagree as often as they agree. It’s the nature of academia.

YOU’VE SPENT EIGHT WEEKS STUDYING THIS MATEIRAL INTENSIVELY.

BE CONFIDENT.

AFTER the ORAL DEFENCE:

- Thank the chair, thank your examiners.
- The examining committee may suggest more readings to improve your knowledge of the topic.
- Meet your friends to celebrate your success. You are one step closer to achieving your PhD.
- Once you have passed, you can change your cv – you are now PhD (ABD).

June 17, 2015  JLL:MJM/rc
PLEASE NOTE: Committee members EXTERNAL to McMaster must receive SGS approval before the committee sits. Please ensure such approval is sought at least one month before committee plans to sit.

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL HIGHLIGHTED SECTIONS
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION – PhD SUPERVISOR’S ARRANGEMENTS

Student:

Reading Start Date:

Reading begins no earlier than 8 wks before intended written exam; committee members may each provide UP TO fifteen (15) readings for a student. Citations only; no links, no abstract shall be included. Please copy the reading list to the Grad Administrator.

Written Date:

Written Date: 8 wks after reading begins

Room: Time:

Oral Date:

Oral Date: 1 wk after written exam is complete

Room: Time:

Checklist for progression through the process

☐ Reading lists sent to Grad Administrator
☐ Rooms, times, dates, A/V equipment & USB booked through Grad Administrator
☐ Committee members are confirmed to attend
☐ External members approved by SGS
☐ Comprehensive exam Chair confirmed through Grad Administrator
☐ Received questions from committee members; copy to Grad Administrator
☐ Reconfirm arrangements with Grad Administrator the day before written
☐ Receive answers from Grad Administrator (if answers are received direct from student, copy same to Grad Administrator)
☐ Confirm that all answers are sent to all committee members
☐ Confirm that answers are sufficient to allow oral to proceed; inform chair & Grad Administrator
☐ Reminder 1 day before oral to committee and Grad Administrator
☐ Confirm paperwork has been prepped for the Comprehensive Chair
☐ Following oral, Chair confirms that paperwork has been completed
☐ Chair returns paperwork to Grad Administrator
☐ Paperwork submitted to SGS by Grad Administrator to update student’s file

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL HIGHLIGHTED SECTIONS.
COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION READING LIST

Student: 

Committee member: 

Date of submission: 

Committee members may each provide UP TO fifteen (15) readings for a student. Citations only; no links, no abstract to be included.

SAMPLE:

**Department of Kinesiology**  
**Faculty of Science**  

**Recommendation of External Examiner for Appointment to PhD Comprehensive Committee**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student:</th>
<th>ID:</th>
<th>Supervisor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
<td></td>
<td>[name]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Supervisory Committee:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
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<td>[name]</td>
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<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Member:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[name]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[title]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[institution]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[coordinates]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Date of Comprehensive Examination: ________________________________________

SIGNATURES:

_________________________ ___________________________ ____________
Supervisor    Associate Chair, Graduate Studies Date

*CV attached*  
*March 2010 /rc*
BEFORE THE EXAM

The primary **role** of the Chair of the Oral Comprehensive Examination is
- To ensure and protect the rights of the student
- Facilitate the progress of the oral examination by
  - assigning the order of the questions
  - ensuring that questions are relevant (that is, fall within the scope of the assigned readings)
  - adjudicate conflicts
  - facilitate grading decisions

On occasion, chairs may also ask supplementary question of the candidate provided they are within the context of the examination topic.

As soon after the written comprehensive as possible, a package will be compiled that includes:
- emails from committee members indicating they are prepared to hear the oral defense of the written answers to their questions
- reading lists
- questions from the examiners
- corresponding answers from the candidate

and a cover page that lists the date, time, location of the exam, the candidate’s name, and the names of the committee members. This package contains the material upon which the candidate is to be examined and is for your use and referral.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EXAM

A Chair should formally introduce himself/herself as the representative of the department and clarify his/her **role** in the examination process.

A Chair should provide a brief overview of the structure of the Kinesiology PhD program.
- specifically, the comprehensive exam process and its place in the graduate program. This is of particular importance when the committee includes faculty members who are external to the department and unfamiliar with the department’s process.
- a Chair is encouraged to review the relevant section of the **Grad Handbook**
A Chair should outline or reiterate the program’s process, as instituted by the Graduate Curriculum and Policy committee, for both the written and the oral portion of the comprehensive exam, summarized below:

- Supervisor organizes an examining committee and between them they decide on three areas of study and project the examinations dates.
- Committee compiles reading lists and submit these to the Associate Chair/Grad Administrator.
- Upon receipt of these lists, the candidate begins an 8 calendar-week period of study.
- Written examination will be completed in a single working day closed book format. Student will advance to oral examination stage within one week of written exam date.
- Following the oral examination, examiners will provide a single grade of for the student’s combine written and oral answer to each question.
- Student will be deemed to have passed the comprehensive examination if student obtains a pass on all three questions during the oral examination.
- If decision on the oral portion is not 3/3, candidate has the opportunity to complete supplementary work to better demonstrate his/her ability to concisely and accurately synthesis the studied material.

There 2 marks possible for each portion of the exam:
- PASS
- FAIL, which may result in the commission of supplementary work

______________________________

AT THE END OF THE EXAM

The Chair shall:

- Communicate the decision of the examination committee to the candidate.
- Should it be required, ensure supplementary work is assigned and that appropriate paperwork is completed and agreed upon by all parties.
- Secure signatures and comments from each examiner; return paperwork for grad Administrator for processing.
- Thank the examiners formally on behalf of the department.

______________________________

And thank YOU for fulfilling this important service role.

Updated June 13, 2017/car  
January 14, 2010 / rc
Thesis Defence Timeline

- **Week 1**: Committee Members Approval / External Listing
- **Week 2**: Candidate Submits Pre-Defence Thesis & Submits Suggested Date
- **Week 3 - Week 7**: External Examiner reads thesis
- **Week 7**: Final Report received from external
- **Week 8**: Thesis Defence
- **Submit Final Thesis**
GRADUATE STUDIES PhD THESIS DEFENCE INFORMATION SESSION
Tips based on the experiences of Rayna & Melec, two recent PhD grads, and the input of KINES Grad Management Team
July 10, 2015

WISE MOVES:

• Keep the avenues of communication open between you and your advisor, between you and the members of your supervisory committee. This is essential for a collegial, prospering atmosphere and a great grad experience.
• You can start writing your thesis at any time. You have 4 years to make this work. Don’t wait til the last few months to start putting it on paper.
• Make sure you work well ahead of time to secure permissions to include copyrighted material in your thesis.
• Ensure you acknowledge your colleagues, and anyone who contributed to any of the work towards your dissertation.

IN ADVANCE of the DEFENCE:

• Attend defences in your field of study or defences in which your committee members are involved. Listen to the comments and questions to get an idea of how things run. This can help familiarize you with the environment and determine common questions that may also pertain to your case.
• Present your work at conference, symposia, in front of your lab group, or your Lab puppy. Attempt a 3 Minute Thesis competition – this will help you present 4 years worth of research in a very small amount of time.
• Submit your thesis to your advisor, your committee members for review/edits BEFORE you submit your final copy for the defence process. This will improve your thesis and will provide you with insight into how an examiner may review and interpret your work. Questions asked by members of your supervisory committee may foreshadow the questions asked by your examiners at the defence.
• Please spellcheck your work. Don’t hesitate to ask a layman to review your writing. Sometimes an outsider has a view that lets you to see your work in a new light.
• Once you submit your copy and initiate the defence process on line, a list of external examiners is determined by your supervisor (not by you). These potential examiners must be arms length from the process; that is, the nominees SHOULD NOT
  o have been a research supervisor or student of the supervisor or a student within the last 6 years.
  o have collaborated with the supervisor or the student within the past 6 years, or have made plans to collaborate with these individuals in the immediate future.
  o have any other potential conflicts of interest (eg., personal or financial)
  o have been employed by or affiliated with the student’s or the supervisor’s department within the past 6 years, or expect to become employed in the department in the immediate future.

IN PREPARATION for DEFENCE DAY:

• Test YOUR computer for your presentation ahead of time. You might do this as much as a week in advance, but it is essential to make sure your computer works well with the projector and any other devices.
• Dress nicely, yet comfortably. It is a measure of respect you exhibit for your exam committee.
• Arrive at the defence room early – 30 minutes recommended – to ensure everything is set up appropriately and to get familiar with conference call/SKYPE set ups.
• Make sure the room is equipped with chalk or markers should your examiners ask you to make use of blackboard or white board.
• Recruit a friend or colleague to take notes during the defence. Make sure your note taker knows your field and can write legibly. This way if you miss something, there is a back up; and knowing someone else is taking notes permits you to concentrate on the questions and formulation of your answers.
• Bring a copy of your thesis with you. Be prepared to go to specific pages should an examiner call upon you to do so. Bring paper and pen to take notes as you require.

• Bring a bottle of water... or two.

FORMAT of the DEFENCE:

• Attending your defence will be the chair, the members of the examining committee, external examiner, and your audience. A defence is a public event, so your colleagues, classmates, friends and family, and members of the public may constitute the audience.

• Even if you are familiar with them, address the examiners by their professional titles.

• If your external reviewer cannot be present for the defence, SGS will work to find an internal external examiner from the McMaster community to be present at the defence.

• The chair will introduce you and the committee members and the external examiner.

• The audience and you will be asked to leave the room while the committee decides on the order of questioning.

• When everyone is settled back into the room, you will deliver your presentation. You should speak for 15 to 20 minutes, no more. Keep in mind that your examining committee has already read your thesis. Identify any technical difficulties and how you overcame them. Try to summarize your work in general terms, explain its importance to the field, or how it may affect the world. [This is where your presentation experience can really help you get to the crux of the research in record time.]

• After you complete your presentation, feel free to ask if you can sit for the questions if that makes you more comfortable. This can create a sense of this being a discussion among peers and may be more relaxing for you. If your examiners wish to you to remain standing, please do that. If you wish to remain standing, please do.

• Each examiner will have a specific amount of time to ask questions – usually 10-20 minutes per examiner.

• There will usually be two rounds of questions, but this varies from field to field, from defence to defence.

  • If there is only one round of questions, you’ve likely provided satisfactory and fulsome answers such that your expertise has been proven. Be prepared for “Just one more thing, if I may...”
  • If there are three rounds of questions, rise to the challenge and promote good academic discussion in a professional manner.
  • Everyone’s defence experience will be unique.

• You may know the answer to the question, but let the examiner finish BEFORE you start your response.

• THINK before you speak. BREATHE before you speak.

• If you need time, take a sip of water. It creates a natural pause.

• If an examiner asks a long complicated question, asked him or her to restate it. They too are thinking while speaking and may deviate from the subject. By reiterating the question, the second version is often clearer, more concise, and you can more readily respond to it.

• Try not to say “I don’t know” if the answer is beyond you or outside your field. Part of the examiner’s role is to determine the limits of your knowledge. A better response might be “That’s a good question. Based on my knowledge at this point, I would say/feel/expect/assume.... Were I to suppose XYZ, then perhaps ABC might follow. (and if appropriate -) This is something I would have liked to explore had there been more time/money/equipment/victims.”

• Always be respectful even if the question falls outside your field, and especially if it is asked in an unpleasant tone. This is your defence, so DEFEND YOUR WORK BASED ON FACTS, not on personal opinion, especially when this opinion is in opposition to that of your examiner.

• When the examiners are finished, the chair may ask if there are questions from the audience. Be prepared to respond in plain language as your audience may not be as familiar with the field as your examiners.
The chair’s role is to ensure order, that time limits are adhered to, and that the discussion stays on topic. That said, sometimes a chair will ask a question. Roll with it; the chair is as curious as the rest of the committee. Besides, he or she volunteered to do this.

REQUESTS MADE and QUESTIONS HEARD at DEFENCES:

- Any question asked by reviewers in your past journal submissions
- Questions about the work of others that you’ve cited in your thesis
- Define basic words and terms used in your thesis
- Can/would you apply your work to another system/time/environment/ situation?
- What other factors could have influenced your results?
- Can you summarize your thesis in one sentence?
- What have you learned that you can take forward to future endeavours?
- Can you apply what you know to a novel situation?
- What did you not do? Could you not do?
- Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?
- Anything you would add/change if time and money were not a consideration?
- Alternative hypotheses? Errors in measurements? Biases in your research?
- Your career plans?
- How does your research matter to the world? Why should we care?

Remember that disagreements you’ve had with your supervisor or committee members will be brought out into the open, so expect it. Be prepared with an answer - defend using facts – for any of those conflicts. Intelligent people disagree as often as they agree. It’s the nature of academia.

IT’S YOUR DEFENCE. YOU ARE THE EXPERT IN THIS FIELD. BE CONFIDENT.

AFTER the DEFENCE:

- Thank the chair, thank your examiners, thank your committee members and thank your supervisor.
- There are licensing papers you’ll need to sign. Please read them.
- Your thesis may be embargoed. Be aware that this is to permit portions to be published elsewhere before the entire document becomes public knowledge.
- The examining committee made decide you have no changes to make, minor changes, or major changes.
- Once your thesis changes are made and approved by your supervisor, you have ONE CHANCE to load your thesis to MacSPHERE.

If you wish to graduate at November 2015 convocation, your defence process must be completed BY SEPT 23, 2015.
Sample Timeline PhD

Year 1
- Term 1: Complete Coursework
- Term 2
- Term 3

Year 2
- Term 4: Comp Exams
- Term 5: Thesis Proposal
- Term 6: Thesis Research

Year 3
- Term 7
- Term 8
- Term 9

Year 4
- Term 10
- Term 11
- Term 12: Thesis Research, Analysis, Writing & Defense