

# Student Handbook 2025

# PhD Program in Business Administration



**DeGroot**  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
EDUCATION WITH PURPOSE



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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to provide one place of reference for current students about the internal administration and operation of the PhD program in Business Administration at the DeGroot School of Business (DSB) at McMaster University.

This document is **not** intended to replicate or modify the information found in the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) Calendar (available at

[McMaster University - Modern \(romcmaster.ca\)](http://romcmaster.ca)

If there is any discrepancy between this document and the SGS Calendar, then the School of Graduate Studies Calendar shall prevail. Students and faculty are encouraged to look at the SGS Calendar for information about:

- Graduate study at McMaster
- General regulations of the School of Graduate Studies
- University regulations for the PhD degree
- Graduate fees and financial assistance
- University regulations affecting graduate students
- University services
- Fellowships, scholarships, bursaries and other awards
- University governing bodies
- Student appeals
- Degree programs (including the degree requirements of the PhD program in Business Administration)

## PROGRAM GOVERNANCE

All academic matters pertaining to the PhD program are handled by the Areas for their respective fields. These include making recommendations for admission of new students; establishing Supervisory committee members, determining program of study, and assessing progress of individual students; conducting comprehensive examinations; nominating students for

scholarships; recommending changes to the field curriculum, and dealing with student concerns about academic matters including supervision. For all practical purposes, Area Chairs act as the “Graduate/Program Chair” for their respective PhD fields.

All administrative processes are centralized within the PhD program office currently located on the first floor of the DeGroot School of Business building (DSB 104). There are a variety of administrative positions and committees involved in the governance of the PhD program. These are described below.

#### Associate Dean, Graduate Studies

The [Associate Dean, Graduate Studies](#), has the primary responsibility within the DeGroot School of Business for furthering McMaster’s goals regarding graduate education, and provides leadership and coordination of all activities related to those goals. The Associate Dean reports jointly to the Associate Vice-President and Dean (Graduate Studies) and to the [Dean of the Faculty of Business](#).

#### Program Director, Business Administration PhD Program

The [Program Director, Business Administration PhD Program](#) oversees the operations of the Program on an ongoing basis. A major responsibility of the position is to provide overall leadership in planning, developing and administering the PhD program. The Program Director reports to the Dean, Faculty of Business.

#### Program Administrator, Business Administration PhD Program

The [Program Administrator, Business Administration PhD Program](#) is responsible for providing administrative, financial, and recruiting support for the PhD program. These duties include, but are not limited to: identifying and analyzing administrative problems within the program; developing or modifying administrative policies and making recommendations to address issues and presenting these to the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) for approval; collaborating with the Associate Dean on program strategy development and implementation by collecting, analyzing, assessing, and

summarizing information relevant to the decision making process; and preparing and maintaining the program budget.

#### Ad Hoc PhD Advisory Committee

This committee addresses matters pertaining to current and prospective PhD students. This specifically includes the program-wide ranking of scholarship applications and selecting PhD Award winners.

The Ad Hoc PhD Advisory Committee is chaired by the PhD Program Director. It includes one faculty member from each field appointed by the Dean after seeking the advice of each field's Area Chair. The Program Administrator (PhD Program) serves as a non-voting consultant. Since this committee deals with private student information, no doctoral students serve on this committee.

#### [DeGroote Doctoral Students Association \(DDSA\)](#)

Though not part of the formal governance and operation of the PhD program in Business Administration, this association provides a mechanism by which students enrolled in the doctoral program collectively organize and interact with the program's governance structure.

The primary objectives of the DDSA are to encourage a community environment, facilitate communication both within its membership and between its membership and the DeGroote School of Business (DSB), and act as a unified voice representing the interests of DeGroote PhD students within the McMaster community, specifically through participation in committees concerning graduate student curriculum and policy (via the GCPC), and general graduate student issues (via McMaster's [Graduate Student Association](#)).

#### PhD Supervision

Upon admission to the PhD program, a student is assigned a PhD Supervisor. The Supervisor is normally assigned to the student for the duration of his/her degree. In some extenuating circumstances, (e.g., change in research direction) Supervisors and Supervisory committees can change.

In compliance with the [SGS regulations](#) a Supervisory committee is established for incoming students within the first 12 months of starting the study. The Supervisor is responsible for recruiting Supervisory committee members. Normally, there are three faculty members on a student's Supervisory committee. One of these members must be the student's PhD Supervisor.

Supervisors are typically tenure-track faculty members. Untenured faculty members may be allowed to supervise students if a support letter from the Area chair together with the written consent of a tenured faculty member to serve as co-supervisor is provided. The process for Emeritus professors to supervise students is similar to that for untenured faculty members.

PhD supervision is normally done by a single faculty member. However, the School of Graduate Studies at McMaster does recognize co-supervision. In all cases, a Supervisor on record must be designated. In the case of co-supervision, one Supervisor is seen as the "primary" Supervisor.

Normally, to qualify as a primary supervisor for Ph.D. students a faculty member will have demonstrated many of the following: 1) a programme of research, as shown by research grants or contracts; 2) a regular flow of peer-reviewed publications, consistent with expectations in the discipline; 3) experience with the supervision of graduate research papers or masters theses; 4) experience with designing and teaching a graduate course; 5) membership on Ph.D. supervisory committees, or involvement with graduate supervision as a secondary supervisor. Please note that the above list is intended to be suggestive, rather than comprehensive.

There is flexibility in the composition of the Supervisory committee in terms of non-supervising faculty members. For example, these committee members can come from different Areas within the School of Business or from different faculties within McMaster University. In compliance with the SGS regulations, no more than one committee member may be from outside McMaster (i.e. external member).

The duties of a PhD Supervisor [as per section 1.2.5. of the Graduate Calendar](#) are as follows:

- to ensure that the student complies with all SGS regulations as stipulated and described in the [School of Graduate Studies Calendar](#);
- to meet with the student in the first week of the program to complete a study plan that ensures the student meets all course requirements, ideally within 20 months;
- to guide the selection and development of the student's dissertation research;
- to review and give advice on the student's scholarship applications;
- to provide the student with regular appraisals of progress or lack of it; and,
- to initiate appropriate action if the student's progress is unsatisfactory, including any recommendation that the student withdraw, for approval by the Area Chair.

The duties of the PhD Supervisory committee (including the PhD Supervisor) [as per Section 1.2.4 of the Graduate Calendar](#) are as follows:

- to meet with the student at least annually to discuss progress, set future goals and complete the Supervisory Committee Meeting Report;
- to maintain knowledge of the student's research activities;
- to give advice on research either directly to the student or through the student's Supervisor;
- to approve the dissertation proposal;
- to assess drafts of the student's dissertation;
- to suggest external examiners for the student's oral defense, and,



- to act as members of the examination committee for the final oral defence of the dissertation.

The student's responsibilities in terms of PhD supervision [as per section 1.3 of the Graduate Calendar](#) are as follows:

- to comply with all School of Graduate Studies policies and procedures;
- to meet all expectations of the doctoral program;
- to maintain regular contact with the Supervisor and Supervisory committee;
- to follow the guidance and direction given by the Supervisor and Supervisory committee;
- to apply for all external scholarships for which they are eligible (students unsure of their eligibility should check with the PhD Program Office);
- to attend the program all three terms of the university calendar year as specified in the SGS calendar (e.g., normal vacation entitlement is normally two weeks of vacation during the year, however it must not interrupt scheduled course work or teaching/research assistantships; any vacation must be scheduled by mutual agreement and should be approved in writing via e-mail by the student's Supervisor copying the PhD Program Office for inclusion in the student's file);
- to attend campus a minimum of two to three times per week;
- to monitor email and voicemail on a regular basis; and,
- to meet all administrative deadlines (e.g., scholarship applications, forms, registration).

If a student encounters a problem with supervision, it is his/her responsibility to consult with the Area Chair of his/her field and seek an acceptable resolution.

If the student's Supervisor is the Area Chair, then the student should consult directly with the Program Director.

The School of Graduate Studies has created a document titled [Getting the Supervisory Relationship off to a Good Start](#). The document facilitates discussion of expectations and responsibilities to help avoid Supervisor and student conflicts.

As per [section 3.1 of Graduate Calendar](#), it is possible to change supervisors or the membership of a supervisory committee, although this is not the norm. If the direction of the research changes, membership can be changed by mutual consent of the parties involved. Supervisors and/or supervisory committee members may not resign without the department's/program's approval. A change in supervisor is at the discretion of the department/program, not the student or supervisor.

If a student feels that they are receiving unsatisfactory supervision, they should consult the Area Chair/Program Director. If this avenue is not sufficient, the student is encouraged to speak with the appropriate Associate Dean of Graduate Studies about the problem. A student without supervision may be withdrawn due to the requirement of supervision to complete the degree.

## **FIELDS OF STUDY**

The DeGroot School of Business offers a PhD program in Business Administration where students choose to focus on one of eight fields of study. The fields of study are listed below along with the disciplinary Areas they are associated with:

- Accounting – Accounting and Financial Management Services Area
- Finance – Finance & Business Economics Area
- Health Management – Health Policy and Management Area
- Information Systems – Information Systems Area

- Management of Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources – Human Resources & Management Area
- Management Science – Operations Management Area
- Marketing – Marketing Area
- Strategic Management – Strategic Management Area

The **Accounting (ACCT)** field of study is designed to prepare students who are planning to assume an academic career in a university setting to become excellent accounting researchers and educators. The program of study provides students an exposure to issues and techniques of various research methods and designs in the context of accounting research. Typically, successful applicants will have a university degree in accounting or related fields. Applicants with other university programs of study, including economics, finance, computer science, engineering, engineering and management, and mathematics may also be qualified.

The **Finance (FIN)** field is designed to prepare and graduate students with theoretical and empirical training that is required to conduct significant academic research in finance. The topics of study include, but are not limited to, the pricing of securities, investment and risk management, corporate finance, and other financial decisions of individuals and firms. This field of study is intended for individuals who are interested in the field of Finance and in a career in university teaching and research, as well as research-based careers in the financial services sector. These may include fund management and investment banking. Typically, successful applicants will have a master's degree in economics, finance, business administration, or any quantitative field.

The **Health Management (HM)** field is concerned with a broad range of business administration issues and topics within the health care sector such as leadership, change management, strategic resources allocation, as well as economic and policy analysis. The program design exposes students to a blend of theoretical and applied content that will support them to advance

their careers in education, research, and senior leadership positions within the health sector. Students are encouraged to gain exposure to content from one or more of the other business administration fields. The HM field is expected to be most attractive to students who currently hold a management position in the health sector and who want the flexibility of a program that is offered on both a full-time and part-time basis.

The **Information Systems (IS)** field stands at the vital intersection of technology, business, and management. This interdisciplinary field integrates principles and research from diverse domains such as organizational behavior, strategic management, marketing, psychology, and computer science. By blending rigorous theoretical knowledge with hands-on practical applications, we equip graduates to tackle real-world challenges across various industries. Tailored for individuals with a master's degree in business administration, computer science, information systems, or related fields, our program emphasizes managerial, technical and behavioral perspectives. It prepares graduates to lead and innovate in the dynamic and rapidly evolving field of information systems. Our IS program cultivates innovative thinking and advanced problem-solving abilities, ensuring that our graduates are exceptionally well-prepared to excel and lead in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

The **Management of Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources (MOBHR)** field is broad in scope and is concerned with all aspects of the employment relationship. The field has a strong research emphasis and is designed to prepare highly motivated individuals for academic careers as scholars in Organizational Behaviour, Human Resource Management, Employment Relations, Management, Entrepreneurship. A major strength of the field is that students can draw on diverse faculty interests to develop a research program that suits their own objectives. It is intended for students with a master's degree in business administration or in social science disciplines such as psychology, economics, sociology as well as a broad range of interdisciplinary programs.

The **Management Science (MS)** field is concerned with the development and application of quantitative modeling and systematic approaches to the solution of management problems. Areas of application for these techniques include operations management, logistics, and supply chain management. The field has a strong research emphasis and is designed to prepare highly motivated and capable individuals for making significant advances in management science knowledge. It is intended for students with master's degrees in business administration or in disciplines such as mathematics, engineering, science, and computer science.

The **Marketing (MK)** field of study is designed to prepare and graduate students with a solid foundation in theoretical and empirical methodologies, focusing largely on firm-level research in the discipline of marketing. Doctoral students will work closely with their supervisors to conduct leading-edge research in the discipline of marketing which explores the processes and mechanisms by which value is created and delivered to the customer. The current research interests of the faculty span new product development and innovation; distribution channels, pricing and promotion strategies; digital marketing; and the marketing-finance interface. The program is designed for students who have an interest in pursuing an academic career. Typically, successful applicants will have a master's degree in business administration, economics, psychology, sociology, mathematics, statistics or engineering. Applicants from other disciplines with demonstrated competence in business management, marketing, or a related field may also be considered.

The **Strategic Management (STRM)** field of study designed to prepare doctoral candidates for scholarly careers in academia or research in the field of business strategy. The program is interdisciplinary, drawing upon a variety of fields including general strategy, business policy, economics, psychology, sociology, knowledge management, governance, international business, innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and organizational behaviour among others. The main learning objective of this specialization is to provide Ph.D. students with a well-rounded understanding of the complex dynamics

of strategic decision-making. The academic program is structured to provide students with a strong foundation in the theoretical and empirical principles of strategic management, as well as advanced research skills to conduct independent research in the field.

## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

### Program Timeline & Duration

The time required to complete the program varies and is largely dependent upon each student's personal experience while in the program. In general, students are expected to complete the program within four years with an upper limit of six years. The annual [Sessional Dates](#) are included in the Graduate Calendar.

A typical timeline for students enrolled in the PhD program is as follows:

Years 1 & 2:	Course Work (students complete between 6 and 12 courses)
May/June of Year 2:	Comprehensive Exam
Year 3:	Dissertation Proposal Defence
Year 3: & 4:	Data Collection and Analysis
End of Year 4:	Write-up of Dissertation and Oral Defence

Students are guaranteed funding for their first four years in the program. Merit-based funding is available for eligible students in years 5-6. In order to keep students on a four-year timeline, student performance is assessed on an annual basis or more through their Supervisory committee.

In cases where a student does not manage to complete the degree requirements before the end of the time limit specified in the SGS calendar (i.e., six years from the start date of enrolment in the PhD program), the University has no further obligation to provide supervision. In such cases and upon consultation with the Area and on its recommendation the student may be withdrawn from the program and shown as having been "withdrawn in good standing due to time limit". If at a later point in time, a completed dissertation is submitted, and is acceptable to the School of Business, the student can be

readmitted in order to defend the dissertation. Students who have been withdrawn in good standing should be aware that they may be required to complete additional course work before being permitted to proceed to a defence of their dissertation. In all cases, the Area must first declare that the submitted dissertation is ready for defence before the student will be readmitted. At the time of readmission, the student will be required to pay a fee (\$125.00), to compensate for the costs of the defence and subsequent processing of the dissertation.

### Course Work and Performance Requirements

Students are encouraged to check the PhD program website or the SGS Calendar for exact program requirements and course offerings. [Section 2.6 of the Graduate Calendar](#) outlines the following policies.

Each field has specific course requirements; however, some commonality is built into the program. For instance, all students are required to take one common course B790 (Management Theory). Further, certain groupings of fields share common courses (e.g., students in the HR and IS fields are required to take B784 (Research Methods & Design: Quantitative), B785 (Research Methods & Design: Qualitative) and B793 (Applied Multivariate Statistics).

The minimum number of courses students must take is six; the maximum number of courses a student can take is twelve, as determined by the Area. Ordinarily, course work and the comprehensive exam are completed within two academic years of starting the program. Students with prior knowledge may be exempt from certain required course/s; however, they may have to substitute the exempted course/s with another similar level course in order to meet the 6 course minimum. Students without sufficient background knowledge may be required to take additional courses but may not exceed the 12 course maximum. Course selection is discussed and reviewed between the student and their Supervisor, and each individual student will follow his/her own academic path, which is dependent on what the Supervisor deems necessary to succeed in the program.

The Graduate Calendar states that “grades in graduate courses are reported as letter grades”. The passing grades for courses at the graduate level are A+, A, A-, B+, B, and B-. Failing grades are reviewed by the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, acting on behalf of the School of Grad Studies and a recommendation from the Area must be supplied to determine whether the student should continue in the program or be required to withdraw. If the student remains in the program, they must either repeat or replace the failing course. Students who fail a second course will not normally be allowed to continue in the program (Graduate Calendar Section [2.6.10 Incomplete Grades](#) & [2.6.11 Failing a Course or Milestone](#)).

Courses taken by PhD students are either categorized as Doctoral (‘D’ course) or an Extra Course (‘EC’ course). A ‘D’ course is a degree requirement and students must receive a passing grade as noted above. In the case of an ‘EC’ course, a student is taking the course on the approval of the Supervisor, but it is not a requirement for the degree. If a failing grade is received, the course and grade will not appear on the student’s transcript unless it is a case of academic dishonesty. Students may petition to change the designation of an ‘EC’ course to a ‘D’ course before the deadline to drop a course provided that the change is supported by the Supervisor ([Graduate Calendar Section 2.6.4 Course Requirement & Designations](#)).

### Registration

Students are responsible for meeting the deadlines for program registration, course registration and any change in course selections, as specified in the [Sessional Dates Section](#) of the School of Graduate Studies Calendar.

All PhD students should confirm their status and enrol for PhD courses on the Mosaic system. Students will require their MacID and password to access Mosaic. For the Fall term, enrollment generally begins in late July. Registration for all terms must be done at this time. If courses are undecided for the Winter and Summer terms, students should use the SGS 700 course placeholder. Students who have completed their course work and are focusing on research must register for all three terms with the SGS 700 placeholder. The selection and registration of courses requires the approvals of both the student’s



Supervisor and the Area Chair of his/her field. Course selections should be determined in the student's first week of the program. Students are expected to follow the program requirements for their field of study as outlined in the School of Graduate Studies Calendar. Any deviation from this plan should be discussed with and approved by the Supervisor and the Area Chair. All course requirements should be met within the first 20 months (terms 1-5) of the program to ensure that the comprehensive exam can be written in the student's sixth term.

Except where MBA courses are a program requirement, students who wish to register for MBA level courses or courses from other departments should request permission from their Supervisor and Area Chair. Once approval is obtained, students should forward approval to the PhD Program Office. The Program Administrator (PhD Program) will reach out to the MBA Office if the student is unable to register for the approved course in Mosaic.

Program tuition and fees associated with the Business PhD program can be found on the [Student Accounts and Cashiers website](#).

### Required Training

According to [Section 2.6.8](#) of the Graduate Calendar, all graduate students are required to register for, complete and pass two training courses within the first term of their program:

SGS #101 Academic Research Integrity and Ethics

SGS #201 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

In addition, as employees of the University, PhD students are also required to complete Health and Safety training (e.g., Fire Safety, Ergonomics, Violence & Harassment in the Workplace, etc.). This required training must be signed off by the student's supervisor in the early part of your first term on campus (ideally within the first week).

### Academic Integrity

Students are obliged to act ethically in conducting graduate work. This includes, but is not limited to, following McMaster University policies on the ethical conduct of research and academic integrity. The student is required to document and honestly report research data, to conscientiously cite information and data sources, and to seek guidance on any data exclusions. He/she must acknowledge contributions of the Supervisor/advisor, committee members and others, in accordance with the norms of their academic discipline. For more information, please refer to [Section 5.2](#) of the Graduate Calendar and [the Office of Academic Integrity](#).

### Supervisory Committee Reports

The completion of the Supervisory Committee Report is an annual requirement by the School of Graduate Studies to ensure that a student's progress is monitored throughout the duration of their program. In anticipation of the meeting, students are expected to prepare the section including details of the progress made through the previous year including courses completed, comprehensive examination preparation/writing/oral defense, thesis proposal, research, chapters written/revised, conference presentations, and publications.

These details are presented to the Supervisor in order to complete the Progress section identified in Part A. In conjunction with the Supervisory Committee members, specific goals must be outlined in Part B to ensure the student has a clear idea of the expectations set forth for the coming year. These goals form the foundation of assessing the progress made in the next year's report. The form also includes a section for areas for improvement and additional direction (Part C) that should be shared with the student, Area Chairs and School of Graduate Studies. The final section requires each of the Supervisory Committee members to rate the student's progress based on their ability to achieve the goals set out in the previous year's report. The scale includes the following ratings:

- E – Excellent
- G – Good

- S – Satisfactory
- M – Marginal
- U – Unsatisfactory

If the Committee determines that the progress is either Marginal or Unsatisfactory, they must include a detailed explanation in the comments section of what the student must accomplish within the next 6 months to remedy the situation. The Committee must convene for a follow-up meeting with the student no later than 6 months after the original meeting to assess if the student has improved their progress since the last report. If the student continues to make unsatisfactory progress, the School of Graduate Studies will request a recommendation from the department of whether the student should continue in the program.

### Comprehensive Exams

The general guidelines for program expectations and requirements are outlined in [Section 3.4.3](#) of the Graduate Calendar. To assess that PhD students have “a comprehensive knowledge of the discipline or sub-discipline to which their field of research belongs”, each Area with a PhD field conducts a Comprehensive Exam for students in their second year of study.

The exam will differ from one field of study to another; however, the content, format, and timing of the exam will be the same within each field. That is, students in a specific field are expected to write the same examination over the same time period. Examinations that include a common element (that all students in a specific field write) and an elective element (where individual students choose questions according to their respective areas of research specialization) are deemed acceptable as being “the same examination.”

The exact format of the comprehensive exam is left to the discretion of each Area. Typically, there is an in-house written portion conducted on site at the School of Business and a take-home written portion usually due within one week. Some areas, including Accounting, Information Systems, MOBHR and Marketing, have incorporated an oral component.

Approximately five months prior to the exam, the PhD Program Office, in consultation with the Area Chairs will organize a Comprehensive Exam Committee for each field. The Comprehensive Exam Committee will determine the format and structure of the exam. It is also responsible for establishing the exam reading list, preparing the exam questions, and marking the exams. The reading list and exam questions will be determined in consultation with the Supervisors of students who are writing the exam. There must be at least two faculty members (ideally three) marking a student's exam (typically one of whom will be the Supervisor of the student). The exam will first be marked independently by each faculty member on the committee. Later, these faculty members will get together to reach agreement on a final mark for each student. Students will receive a grade of Pass, Pass with Distinction (P+) or Fail.

The exact timing for the administration of the examination will be determined in consultation with the comprehensive examination committee and the students slated to write the examination. However, the examination must be scheduled to allow enough time for a second attempt (should one be needed) to be written and graded before the end of the student's 24th month in the doctoral program. The exam is marked on a pass/fail basis.

PhD students receiving two failures in Comprehensive Examinations will be withdrawn from their degree program. These students are not allowed to switch to another Business PhD field of Specialization.

### Advisement Report

Your Advisement Report is a personalized tool that outlines the courses you have completed, and have outstanding, towards your degree requirements. To access your Advisement Report, click the 'owl' tile on your Mosaic homepage. Once your Advisement Report loads, be sure to "Expand All" to see a full list of courses required for your program. Additional information on your Advisement Report can be found here: <https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Academic-Advisement-Report-05.01.pdf>

It is your responsibility to ensure you are understanding and completing your requirements. If you have any questions or concerns about your Advisement

Report or the courses you have outstanding, please contact the PhD office. Please ensure you include your student number in all correspondence with our team.

### Dissertation Proposals

The dissertation proposal is the mechanism by which students gain approval from their Supervisory Committees to embark on their proposed dissertation projects. A proposal is required before students collect data (for empirical investigations) or begin any analysis work (for theoretically-oriented dissertations).

Typically, dissertation proposals occur at the beginning of Year 3 of a student's program – shortly after completion of a student's comprehensive exam. It is not recommended for students to defend proposals just prior to their actual oral defence of their completed dissertations.

In terms of timeline, students first submit a written dissertation proposal to his or her Supervisory Committee. A public oral defence of the proposal follows shortly thereafter. An announcement of the date and location of this defence is sent to DeGroote PhD students and faculty.

The format of this defence is similar to that of a student's PhD oral dissertation defence. Normally, the proposal defence will consist of a 20 minute presentation followed by two rounds of questions from the exam committee members, and then questions from the general audience. After this, the PhD student and members of the general audience are asked to leave while the Supervisory Committee deliberates its decision. The student is later be called back into the room and told the results of the defence by his or her Supervisor.

### Dissertations

General guidelines of the dissertation can be found in [Section 3.2](#) (Theses) of the Graduate Calendar. Information about the Examining Committee, and scheduling and conducting the defence is in [Section 3.3.3](#) of the Graduate Calendar. The School of Grad Studies (SGS) also has detailed information on the steps for [doctoral degree completion](#) including tabs for 'Write', 'Defend',

and 'Submit'. Students must initiate the defence process in Mosaic after they have received approval to proceed from their Supervisory Committee.

The final date for submitting the dissertation to Graduate Studies for autumn or spring convocation can be found in the [Sessional Dates Section](#) of the SGS calendar.

### Preparation of the "Sandwich" Thesis

As per [the Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses](#), Some of the research undertaken by the student may have previously been published or prepared as one or more journal articles, or chapters of books; these items may be included within the thesis subject to certain regulations (as described in [Section 5](#) of the Guide for the Preparation of Master's and Doctoral Theses) and to obtaining permission from the supervisory committee. A thesis consisting of peer-reviewed scholarly works (e.g., journal articles), whether previously published, submitted for peer-review, or prepared for publication but not yet submitted, is often referred to as a "sandwich" thesis. A minimum of **three completed publishable manuscripts** in a doctoral thesis must be included within the sandwich thesis; normally, at least one of these must be published or 'in press' at the time the thesis is submitted for defence.

### Full-Time vs. Part-Time Study

The PhD program at the DeGroote School of Business is offered on a full-time basis, with the exception of the Health Management field of study, which offers a part-time option. The regulations of the Government of Ontario which define a full-time graduate student are listed under [Section 3.3.2](#) of the Graduate Calendar.

It is recommended that full-time students who are participating in McMaster-based paid employment should work no more than an average of 20 hours a week to a maximum of 1005 hours in the academic year. Students are required to track the number of working hours in an academic year. A standard Teaching Assistantship (TA) is considered 130 hours (e.g. Fall TA) and a sessional teaching contract is considered 238 hours. Full-time graduate students are responsible to ensure that any employment obligations do not

interfere with academic progress and should be aware that employment obligations are not an acceptable basis for unsatisfactory progress ([section 2.5.3](#)). These hours will be audited periodically by the School of Grad Studies. Employment and academic matters must be handled separately. Students applying for employment hours as a TA or Research Assistant (RA) will be considered based on their qualifications relative to other applicants for the position. As noted above, students' progress will be assessed solely on their academic merits and completion of program milestones through meetings with their Supervisor and their Supervisory Committee, including the completion of the annual report.

The DeGroot School of Business requires full-time students to be physically on campus at least two to three times a week and in regular attendance at planned events. This would include: guest speakers, seminars, research days, town hall meetings, dissertation proposal defences and dissertation defences. Under no circumstances should students plan vacations (outside of the regularly scheduled breaks) during the Fall and Winter terms. This is especially true for students that are registered in courses. PhD students are expected to spend the Summer months conducting research but may take limited vacation time with their Supervisor's approval.

We understand that students may occasionally face a family emergency that requires them to leave campus for a period of time. Students should speak with the PhD Program Administrator, their Supervisor and any professors they are assisting as TAs or RAs if this occurs.

In rare circumstances, full-time students, with the approval of their Supervisor, may apply to the School of Graduate Studies for part-time status. Such approval is not given unless the student has met the following criteria:

- passed the comprehensive examination;
- defended the dissertation proposal; and,
- has made significant progress in the completion of the dissertation, including data collection and analysis.

Students switching to part-time status are not eligible for scholarship payments and are not guaranteed department funding. Part-time students are still responsible for tuition payments and must make arrangements through the Cashier's office for payment prior to the beginning of each term. Switching to part-time status does not extend the maximum duration of the program.

### Leaves of Absence

Situations arise where students require a Leave of Absence. A Leave of Absence (LOA) may be permitted for up to one year for illness and students are required to provide medical documentation to support their LOA request. In the case of personal circumstances, a LOA can be permitted up to one year and should be requested in consultation with the PhD Program Administrator, Supervisor and Area Chair. Students should not exceed a maximum total of one-year LOA during the course of the program. [Section 2.5.7](#) of the Graduate Calendar provides further details including the regulations regarding parental Leaves of Absence. If a Leave of Absence or Parental Leave is granted by the School of Graduate Studies, the time in the program will be paused for the duration of the leave. Students will not receive scholarship support during this time period and the expectation is that the student will resume their studies and return to the program upon the conclusion of the leave. Eligible students can also apply for a Parenting Grant. More information on this is available on the School of Graduate Studies Website at the following link: [SGS Resources - Parenting Grant](#).

## **STUDENT FUNDING AND ADDITIONAL BENEFITS**

Students admitted to the doctoral program are currently guaranteed four years of funding at a minimum of \$34,000 per year. Students typically receive their annual guaranteed funding through some combination of scholarships, research assistantships (RAs), and teaching assistantships (TAs). The following funding is offered to "[In-Time](#)" full-time PhD students:

- School of Graduate Studies Scholarship: \$15,000.00
- Summer Research Scholarship from Supervisor(s): \$ 6,400.00



- Teaching Assistantships: \$ 13,172.32\*

\*Increases periodically per the collective agreement with CUPE 3906.

In addition to this guaranteed funding, “top-up” funding can be offered to students upon admission from various sources including additional graduate or research scholarships, research assistantships or sessional lectureships.

Over-time (OT) students, those in their fifth and sixth years, may qualify for funding subject to meeting certain requirements (including having successfully completed their thesis proposal), progress in the program and availability of additional grant funds from their supervisors. The PhD Office will send an announcement to the OT students to submit their applications in Summer. The deadline to submit the OT funding application is firm and no exceptions will be made.

#### PhD Student Allotment

All doctoral students have access to \$1,000 for any valid research-related purpose to use within their years of study (e.g., travel to conferences, dissertation expenses, specialized software). These expenses need to be approved by the PhD Program Administrator. In addition, PhD students have two additional sources of funding available to them for travel and conference costs: i) financial support from the Dean’s Office for conference travel; and ii) funds from their PhD Supervisor.

#### Conference Travel Support

The DeGroote School of Business Conference Related Travel program provides financial support for participation in national and international conferences of major significance, as well as representational and executive office activities in scholarly and professional organizations; thereby enhancing the reputation of the DeGroote School of Business and the University and encouraging excellence in research, teaching and professional development.

A maximum of \$4,000 will be available for support for each PhD student during their time in the PhD program. There is no annual maximum and the funds may

be spent any time during the student's time in the program. Students may use this funding to attend conferences for presenting papers as well as professional development opportunities, job hunting and interviews.

To receive the form to apply for such funding, students can email the PhD Program Administrator at [busphd@mcmaster.ca](mailto:busphd@mcmaster.ca).

To apply for funding, email a completed electronic copy of the Conference Travel Application to the PhD Program Administrator ([busphd@mcmaster.ca](mailto:busphd@mcmaster.ca)) and CC the PhD Program Director ([drbusphd@mcmaster.ca](mailto:drbusphd@mcmaster.ca)), DeGroot School of Business, in advance of the conference. Applicants who have attended, or plan to attend, more than one conference must submit a separate application for each conference.

All travel expenses must be in accordance with McMaster University's travel policy. This policy can be found at: [McMaster Finance - Travel Resources](#).

The PhD Program Administrator will review all travel applications promptly and will notify the student in writing of the decision. **This notification must be included with the Expense Report when expenses are submitted.**

If the application is approved, the student may submit a request to cover expenses incurred in advance of travel (e.g., flights). An expense report (including all receipts) must be submitted promptly upon return from the conference. Remember to keep a copy of all itemized receipts, boarding passes and forms to process the expense report. **Students must submit for reimbursement within 12 months from the day expenses were incurred. Expenses that are over one year old will not be reimbursed.**

Travellers that have not been approved prior to travel will not be reimbursed. Reimbursement requests shall be submitted on a timely basis, ideally within fifteen (15) days of return from travel or from the date the expense was incurred and not exceeding twelve (12) months after the expense is incurred.

## [PhD Scholarships](#)

As stipulated in each student's offer of admission, the funding that students receive during their first four years of study is conditional upon each student applying for all the external scholarship awards for which they are eligible, such as the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS), CIHR, SSHRC or NSERC doctoral scholarship. Supervisors are encouraged to help students complete their scholarship applications and write any requisite letters of reference. Students are highly advised to approach their Supervisors for such assistance well in advance of any scholarship deadline and to provide the completed application to the Supervisor when making their requests.

In 2019, the Tri-Agency Council (CIHR, SSHRC and NSERC) harmonized the doctoral scholarship competition. The PhD Office will provide deadlines and related details about the competition. The applications are reviewed and ranked by the Ad Hoc PhD Advisory Committee at DSB. This Committee meets and discusses the ranking of students and recommends the final ranking of students to SGS. Students who are recommended to the University-wide competition will also be considered for OGS awards and Ontario Graduate Fellowships (OGF) available at that level.

For departmental OGS scholarships, the review and ranking of student applications is carried out by the Ad Hoc PhD Advisory Committee in the spring. Committee members rank domestic and international OGS applications separately and determine the winners. The PhD Program Office provides SGS with the award winners for the official award letter.

When a student is awarded a major external scholarship, the graduate scholarship funding will be adjusted (i.e., it will be \$10,000 instead of \$15,000) for that academic year. This adjustment facilitates more equitable distribution among graduate students. DeGroot School of Business informs students about the adjustment policy at the time they win an external award or scholarship. The program will always strive for the student to be better off after being awarded a major external scholarship regardless of the adjustment.

### **What is the difference between a Research Scholarship and a Research Assistantship?**

A Research Assistantship will entail work for a Supervisor or faculty member and has hours attached to it. It is set up through Human Resources with applicable taxes, like how a Teaching Assistantship is set up. Questions about Research Assistantships can be sent to Jane-Ann Best: [dsbhr@mcmaster.ca](mailto:dsbhr@mcmaster.ca).

Research Scholarships are funds provided by a Supervisor or faculty member to support the student's research. It does not involve work for the Supervisor or faculty member. Questions about Research Scholarship can be sent to the Business PhD Program Administrator: [busphd@mcmaster.ca](mailto:busphd@mcmaster.ca).

If you have further questions related to employment, you can contact any of the following:

- Jane-Ann Best, Human Resources Coordinator at DSB: [dsbta@mcmaster.ca](mailto:dsbta@mcmaster.ca)
- Labour Relations: [HR McMaster - Employees' Labour Relations](#)
- CUPE 3906: [CUPE 3906 Contact](#)

### PhD Awards

The following awards are available for Business PhD students:

#### **DeGroote International Graduate PhD Student Scholarship – Value: up to \$7,500**

Established in 2023 for Business Administration PhD Program full-time international students. To be awarded by the DeGroote School of Business to full-time international students in year 2-4, who have demonstrated the highest degree of commitment, excellence, and integrity in scholarship, in both courses taken and in research, ranked by the PhD Program Director, Associate Dean and Ad Hoc PhD Operating Advisory Committee Members.

**The Norm Archer Endowed Prize – Value: \$1,000**

Established in 2002 by Professor Archer's PhD students and the Faculty of Business, in honour of Professor Archer's outstanding contribution to this students at the DeGroot School of Business. To be awarded to a student entering level 3 of the PhD program in Business Administration in the field of Information Systems or Management Science who, in the judgment of the DeGroot School of Business, has demonstrated the highest degree of commitment, excellence and integrity in scholarship, in both courses taken and in research. The prize will be awarded at the discretion of the awards committee and may not be awarded annually.

**The Mahmut Parlar Scholarship – Value: \$1,000**

Established in 2023 by Professor Mahmut Parlar. To be awarded by the School of Graduate Studies, on the recommendation of the DeGroot School of Business awards committee, to a student entering level 3 of the PhD program in Business Administration in the field of Management Science who, has demonstrated the highest degree of commitment, excellence, and integrity in scholarship, in both courses taken and in research. The scholarship will be awarded at the discretion of the awards committee and may not be awarded annually.

**Robert C. Joyner Doctoral Student Publication Prize – Value: \$500**

Established in 1993 in honour of Dr. Robert C. Joyner, Dean of the Faculty of Business from 1974-1979, under whose leadership the doctoral program was initiated. To be awarded annually to a student in the doctoral program in Business Administration who, in the judgment of the awards committee, publishes or has accepted for publication the best research paper in that year.

**Community Engagement Student Leadership Award – Value: \$250**

This annual award recognizes students in the PhD program in Business Administration at the DeGroot School of Business. The award recipient will be a student who has demonstrated commitment to activities at the DeGroot School of Business, McMaster and in the broader community during the past year. Nominees must highlight their engagement activities and explain to the

awarding committee how they have made significant contributions to improving the community. These students lead and engage in activities and services that are not required as part of their professional duties as a PhD student. Examples of community engagement activities include participating on a faculty or university-wide committee or through external volunteer activities in the wider community.

Students from all fields and levels of the program are eligible to be faculty, peer, or self-nominated and they are encouraged to begin early in the program to make a larger impact. Nominees will complete a one-page detailed explanation of their community engagement and include their current CV. The award recipient will be determined by the awards committee and the award will be presented at the annual PhD award recognition event.

#### **Academic Leadership Award - Value: \$250**

This annual award recognizes students in the PhD program in Business Administration at the DeGroote School of Business. The award recipient will be a student who has shown initiative in an academic context through leadership roles at the DeGroote School of Business, McMaster and in the broader community during the past year. Nominees must demonstrate their leadership by illustrating the importance of the contributions to the academic environment whether it is to their specific field of study, to the school, or to the academic community as a whole. Examples of leadership initiatives include organizing an event or conference for their respective field and developing collaborations across interdisciplinary fields to reach an ultimate goal.

Students from all fields and all levels of the program are eligible to be faculty, peer, or self-nominated and they are encouraged to begin early in the program to make a larger impact. Nominees will complete a one-page detailed explanation of their leadership activities and include their current CV. The award recipient will be determined by the awards committee and the award will be presented at the annual PhD award recognition event.

#### **Best PhD Student Instructor Award – No monetary value**

Established in 2019, this annual award recognizes students working towards a PhD in the Business Administration program at the DeGroote School of

Business, in any discipline, for demonstrated excellence in teaching. The award will be given to the PhD student instructor who has most demonstrated: both effectiveness as a teacher and the ability to enrich the learning experiences of undergraduate or graduate students through thoughtful and innovative incorporation of scholarship into their teaching methodology; and commitment to creativity and fostering a sense of discovery in the design and delivery of their courses. The award recipient will be determined by the Faculty Committee of Instruction. The award, in the form of a certificate, will be presented at the annual PhD award recognition event.

### PhD Student Offices

Dedicated office space is provided to each full-time doctoral student in years 1-4. These assignments are determined by the PhD Program Administrator and students may be relocated at the end of the academic year to accommodate incoming students. There will be no space made available to students who are in year 5 and beyond. The PhD student offices are located in the Annex section of the DeGroot School of Business building on the second floor: A210 and A211.

**Recognizing that this is a shared work environment, students are expected to keep their personal offices clean and to minimize any excessive noise or activity that may impede or negatively affect other students working in that area. Thus, long conversations with others or phone calls should be taken outside of this space.**

Access to these rooms is restricted to students having office space there and appropriate administrative staff (such as the Program Administrator). Faculty members are not given key access to the PhD student offices. Faculty members wishing to meet with PhD students are encouraged to meet in faculty offices as opposed to the PhD student office area. In addition, students are not allowed to have visitors to the PhD student offices. This is to minimize noise levels in the PhD student office area and to enhance the privacy and security of student office space.

### Laptops

Each incoming full-time student will receive a new laptop upon entry into the program. The PhD budget will fund the purchase of these laptops. The supervising faculty member can pay for additional peripheral equipment including a monitor, keyboard, mouse and charging station.

### Student Teaching Opportunities

Students in all fields are encouraged to gain teaching experience as instructors for courses at DSB before graduation. It is expected that Area Chairs will work to promote such opportunities for doctoral students who have successfully passed their comprehensive exams.

## **CUPE 3906**

CUPE 3906 has been dedicated to upholding high standards of education at McMaster University by ensuring its members are well-equipped to perform their duties and compensated fairly for their hard work.

At the present time, CUPE 3906 represents around 3,500 workers at McMaster every 12 months, making it the largest union on campus, and one of the largest unions in Hamilton. CUPE 3906 currently represent three units:

Unit 1: Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Research Assistants in lieu (RAs in lieu)

Unit 2: Sessional Faculty, MELD Sessional Faculty, and Hourly Rated Sessional Music Faculty

Unit 3: Post-Doctoral Fellows

For detailed information about your Union, and to view the relevant Collective Agreement, please visit the [CUPE 3906 website](#).



## HELPING A STUDENT IN DISTRESS OR DIFFICULTY

The PhD Office is the first point of contact for a student in distress or difficulty. The PhD Program Administrator will recognize direct and indirect signs of difficulty or distress and depending on the nature and severity, will provide [Resources available](#) or identify alternate helper to reach out to the student, such as [the Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#).

Victims and survivors of sexual violence and harassment can be referred to the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO): [Home - Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office \(mcmaster.ca\)](#)

Human Rights and Dispute Resolution (HRDR) Program provides consultation for any students, staff, faculty, and other member of the University community on issues related to human rights: [Human Rights and Dispute Resolution Program - Equity and Inclusion Office \(mcmaster.ca\)](#)

### Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Under the *Discrimination and Harassment Policy* all the McMaster Community Members are responsible for contributing to and maintaining an environment that is free of Discrimination and Harassment, and for participating in education and training programs, and under the *Sexual Violence Policy* all Community Members are responsible for contributing to an environment that is free of Sexual Violence, and for participating in relevant education and training programs. All Community Members are also expected to be familiar with the Sexual Violence Response Protocol, and to act in accordance with the guidelines provided for supporting an individual who makes a Disclosure.

The policies also include a number of definitions including with regard to “workplace harassment” (which includes workplace sexual harassment), “workplace sexual harassment” and “workplace violence.”

Please refer to the **Blue Folder** for information regarding about McMaster's processes regarding matters of discrimination and harassment, and the **Gold Folder** which provides information about sexual violence prevention and responding to disclosures of sexual violence. Both Folders can be found at: <https://equity.mcmaster.ca/program-resources/human-rights-and-dispute-resolution/>