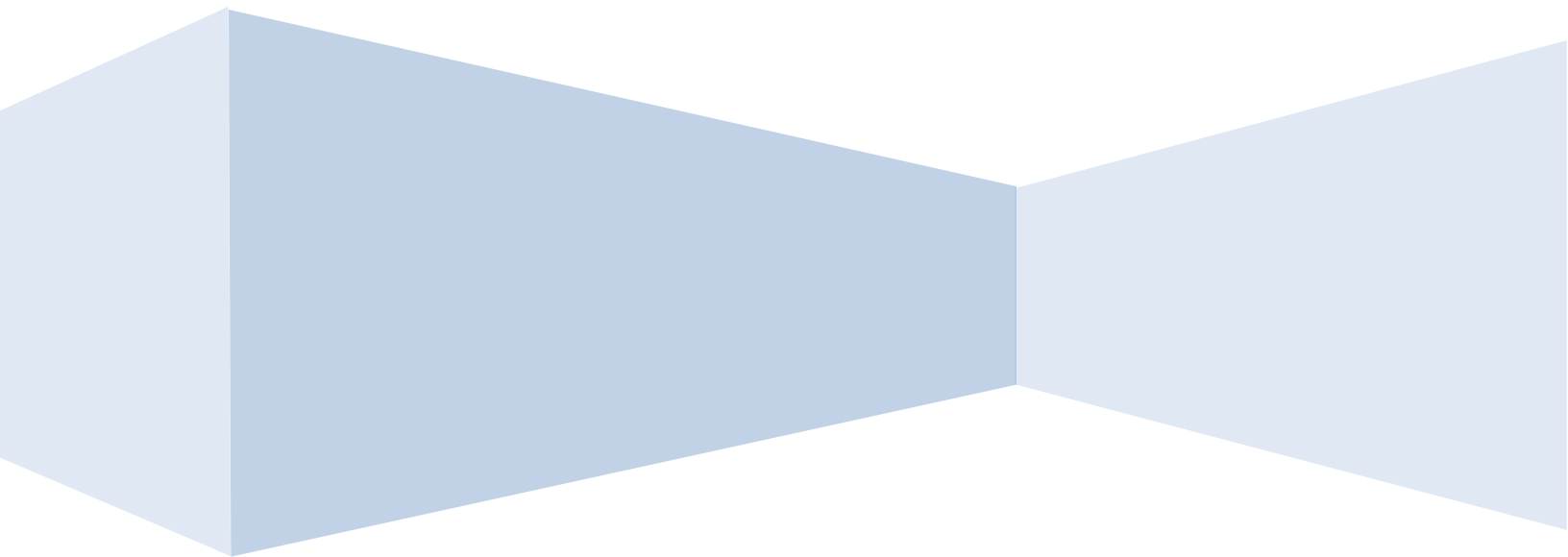




THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Reproductive and Developmental Sciences

Student Handbook



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Disclaimer

You are ultimately responsible for making sure that you know all the requirements for completion of your degree. This Handbook aims to provide RDS-specific policies and guidelines relevant to successful progression through your program, and guidance to frequently asked questions.

The Handbook is thoroughly revised once a year, and updated more frequently. The most updated version is available on the program website: <https://obgyn.ubc.ca/education/rds-graduate-program/current-students/program-policies/>.

Students should carefully read this Handbook (and refer to it frequently!) and discuss any questions or concerns with their supervisor, supervisory committee Chair, Program Administrator, or Program Co-Directors.

There may also be policies or requirements **specific to your work site or area of research**. These will be communicated to you by your research supervisor, and should be adhered to/completed in addition to those included in this Handbook.

The regulations of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS) are imposed by, interpreted by, and enforced by the Faculty; the RDS program's requirements merely supplement those of G+PS.

Where G+PS policies are discussed, links will be provided to the relevant policy or form. Key updates will be reflected in this manual, but where differences appear, please refer to the G+PS source as the most up-to-date.

Please do not hesitate to bring questions or complex situations to the attention of the Program Co-Directors and Program Administrator.

RDS Program Contacts

	Contact	Roles/When to Contact
Program Co-Director Dr. Paul Yong	pyong@cw.bc.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair, RDS Steering Committee • Ensures supervisors/students are aware of, and adhere to applicable policies and procedures • Graduate Advisor signatory for G+PS forms
Program Co-Director Dr. Alexander Beristain	alexander.beristain@ubc.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair, Graduate Program Awards Committee • Chair, Curriculum Committee
Program Administrator Natalie Twohey	natalie.twohey@cw.bc.ca 604-875-2424 x3108	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point of contact for all administrative questions • Liaison with G+PS • Point of contact for student-supervisor concerns • Form submission
Education Manager Leah Solomon	isolomon@cw.bc.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unresolved items after first contacting Program Administrator or Program Directors

RDS Committees

Committee	Chair	Members
RDS Admissions Committee	Paul Yong	Michael Anglesio, Alexander Beristain, Nichole Fairbrother, Sarka Lisonkova, Sarah Munro
RDS Awards Committee	Alexander Beristain	Michael Anglesio, Gillian Hanley, Sarka Lisonkova, Aline Talhouk, external member (TBD)
RDS Curriculum Committee	Alexander Beristain	Michael Anglesio, Mohamed Bedaiwy, Lori Brotto, Gillian Hanley, Sarka Lisonkova, Paul Yong

Planning for success as a graduate student

The following advice is adapted from the G+PS Graduate Student's Orientation "[7 Keys to Success to Graduate School](#)". Throughout this Handbook, you will find more details and resources to help you employ these principles and practices.

As a graduate student, you will have significant academic and research goals. Where possible, seek to include learning and growth opportunities that will help you to succeed in your desired career path: networking, developing effective presentation skills, learning about how to conduct yourself as a professional, and connecting with your community.

1. Be proactive – taking responsibility for your graduate school experience

- Be your own “project manager” – take **initiative** to get what you need from your program/supervisor/committee.
- Look for (or create) **opportunities** to help you get what you want from graduate school.
- Continue the mental **transition** from waiting for direction to charting your own course.

2. Establish positive relationships with your supervisor and others

- Seek **regular contact** with your supervisor. Make your time together productive.
- **Follow up** on items discussed in meetings – keep your supervisor(s) informed of your progress and challenges.
- Act as a “**junior colleague**” – ask questions, advance ideas, show interest and support for shared goals.
- **Deal with problems** sooner rather than later.

3. Embrace the wider academic community

- Don't isolate – **reach out** within and beyond your program to find collaborators and community. Most research is global!
- **Get out there!** Look into research mobility grants; present at conferences.
- Become involved with UBC and research institute activities **beyond** your own work – seminars, committees, events.

4. Develop effective project management strategies

- Know your program requirements, and set a personal roadmap for achieving milestones – revisit as needed. Set **deadlines**.
- Structure your time and efforts – develop a **regular work schedule** that works for you.
- Stay focused on your **goals**. Reduce distractions, where possible.

5. Plan for various career paths

- There are **many options** - explore, then hone in on what seems most interesting to you.
- Build both specific and diverse skills for possible careers. Watch for offerings through the [Graduate Pathways to Success](#) program, the RDS program, and elsewhere.
- Develop a **network** of positive contacts.
- **Engage** with the wider UBC and Vancouver communities.

6. Prevent and deal with problems

Problem	Prevent	Resolve
Supervision	Clarify expectations early; develop shared goals	Communication; seek help from RDS program or G+PS
Academic Progress	Clarify expectations early; set and stick to plan	Reflect on goals, seek help early from supervisor or RDS program
Financial	Plan ahead; make a budget	Seek help from program of ESP advisor in Brock Hall
Personal	Good self-care; connect with others; watch for early trouble signs	Reach out to those who care; Counselling Services
Academic Misconduct	Learn about plagiarism & research ethics, get support when feeling pressured	Ensure you complete the Responsible Conduct of Research course; familiarize yourself with the definition of academic misconduct

7. Seek balance and support in your life

- Stay connected to friends and family **outside school**.
- **Eat** well, **sleep** consistently, **exercise** regularly.
- Reach out to those around you – staff, faculty members, and especially students who can help you through the tough times.
- Keep graduate school in perspective – be a finisher!

Other resources

- G+PS Graduate Game Plan: Advice for students for attaining academic and career success, beginning with the primary stages of graduate education.
<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/professional-development/graduate-game-plan>
- G+PS: Managing Your Program: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/managing-your-program>
- G+PS Graduate Student Orientation: <https://orientation.grad.ubc.ca/>
- Life as a UBC grad student: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/campus-community/life-grad-student-ubc>
- Life in Vancouver: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/campus-community/life-vancouver>
- G+PS Checklist for Newly Admitted Students: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/newly-admitted>
- UBC International Student Guide (not graduate-specific): <https://students.ubc.ca/international-student-guide>

How Do I...?

A guide to frequently asked questions about student life at UBC

Obtain a student card?

You can apply for the UBC Card online, here: <https://ubccard.ubc.ca/obtaining-a-ubccard/students>

The UBC Card is your library card, U-Pass, and the identification required for exams. There is no charge for your first card, but replacements for lost or damaged cards cost \$15.

To pick up your UBC Card, you will need to visit the [UBC Bookstore](#) on the Point Grey campus, and bring government-issued ID. Pick up your Compass Card (bus pass) at the same time!

Create a Campus Wide Login (CWL)?

Visit the UBC Student Service Centre: <https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca/sscportal/> and select the 'Create CWL' button.

Full instructions: <https://it.ubc.ca/services/accounts-passwords/campus-wide-login-cwl/how-create-account>

You will use your CWL to sign into all UBC online services. You should create a secure password, and do not share this information with others. You will be asked to change your password several times a year.

Obtain a UBC student email address?

You can obtain a UBC student email account by following the directions here:

<https://it.ubc.ca/services/email-voice-internet/ubc-student-email-service>

The UBC student email address will also mean that you have access to **Microsoft [OneDrive](#)** and **[Teams](#)**, and **[Office 365](#)**.

A note on student email addresses: Often students have an email address for the hospital site or research institute where they work, in addition to a UBC address. You can use either the UBC or hospital/institution email – but be sure to let the program and your supervisor know which you use primarily. You should also be sure to **forward** emails from the address you are not using to your preferred UBC/institutional email. Even if you only use an email address for logging into certain systems, it may end up on automated contact lists, or be used for broadcast emails, which you won't want to miss!

Use my bus pass (U Pass)?

The U Pass provides significantly discounted transit fares across all zones, including unlimited use of the bus, SkyTrain, and SeaBus services in Metro Vancouver. The U Pass fees are assessed as a mandatory student fee. The cost is \$43.35/month.

Pick up a Compass Card at the UBC Card office vending machines. Request your U Pass to be linked to this Compass Card via upassbc.translink.ca

Full instructions: <https://ubccard.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2018/01/UPassBCinfographic-rackcard-1.pdf>

Please note: You will need to request your U Pass each month – set a reminder!

Possible U Pass exemptions: <https://planning.ubc.ca/transportation/transit/u-pass-compass-card>

Register for courses?

You will register for courses via the UBC Student Service Centre: <https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca/sscportal/>. Sign in with your CWL and search for and register in courses using the 'Registration' tab.

For each term, you will receive an email indicating your registration date (the earliest date/time at which you can register in courses). In your first year, your registration date will become available when the conditions on your offer of admission have been cleared (for instance, your official transcripts have been received by G+PS).

Find term and course drop dates?

The UBC Academic Calendar defines the start/end dates for terms, and course drop/withdrawal dates: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?page=deadlines>

Please note: Graduate programs do not adhere to the exam periods listed. You should check with each course's syllabus/instructor as to when your exam will be scheduled.

Pay tuition and student fees?

You can view the [tuition](#) and [student fees](#) assessed to your account, along with payment deadlines, on the 'Finances' tab of the UBC Student Service Centre: <https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca/sscportal/>

You can find more information on the assessment of graduate student fees here, along with the refund/opting out policies, here: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=14,267,786,0>

Update my personal information?

You can update your phone number, emergency contact, email address or home address on the 'Personal Information' tab of the UBC Student Service Centre: <https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca/sscportal/>

Please note: The RDS program does not receive an update when your personal information is changed. Please ensure that the program is notified of these important changes as well, so that the Awards Team and program will have accurate information.

View my grades and/or order transcripts?

You can check your course grades, order transcripts, and download proof of enrolment letters on the 'Grades & Records' tab of the UBC Student Service Centre: <https://ssc.adm.ubc.ca/sscportal/>

Please note: For some awards applications, you will not need to order your UBC transcript, but instead can request a certified copy of your Academic History from the RDS program. Please read the transcript requirements for awards applications carefully.

Access UBC library resources remotely?

You can access UBC library resources from the UBCSecure wireless network, available on campus and in some off-campus sites. Otherwise, current UBC students can access UBC library resource remotely by using EZproxy, an authentication service: <https://services.library.ubc.ca/electronic-access/connect/>. You will log in with your CWL. (UBC myVPN will not be sufficient for accessing the library.)

Access Workday (view my pay, and submit items for reimbursement)?

You will be contacted by OBGYN Human Resources to set up your Workday access (and complete your personal profile and provide banking information), when you are appointed as a Graduate Research Assistant (how your stipend is paid.)

If you had a CWL before being appointed as an employee, you will need to call UBC IT at 604-822-2008 and ask them to help you link your CWL with your employee ID, in order to gain access to Workday. They will typically ask you to do a password reset and then try logging in via <https://myworkday.ubc.ca/>.

Access my tax forms?

Some tax forms are available on the UBC [Student Service Centre](#), and some on [Workday](#).

UBC SSC: Tax forms for the previous year are made available in late-February. The following tax forms are available on the UBC SSC: T2202, T4A, 1098-T.

Workday: Use your CWL to log in. You can review your pay here, and access tax forms in February of each year (under Pay – My Tax Documents.)

You can find lots of information on student taxes, including UBC Tax Assistance Clinics, here: <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/finances/taxes>

Getting Started

The Student – Supervisor Checklist of Expectations

You will find the RDS Student-Supervisor Checklist of Expectations in Appendix A. **You should complete this checklist with your supervisor within the first two months of your program. A copy of the completed checklist must be sent to the Program Administrator for your file.**

This checklist is a valuable tool, and can be used to guide an important conversation with your supervisor about each of your roles and responsibilities, mutual expectations, and workplace and academic norms.

The RDS program encourages you to address each item, ask questions, and add any extra items important to establishing a quality working relationship and mentorship, such as:

- The student's and supervisor's roles with regards to data collection and analysis.
- Expectations about work hours.
- Who will provide training for technical work.
- Standard hours for office space or laboratory, and policy for work done outside these hours.
- Safety training that must be completed.
- Dress code or appropriate laboratory attire.
- Presentations at conferences and meetings: how many are expected, whether funding is available.

We also ask that the expectations checklist is revisited and signed **annually** and attached to your progress report for annual supervisory committee meetings.

Setting the Research Project

The topic and scope for your research project should be established as early as possible, and at latest by the end of the first year. You should be ready to present your research proposal for approval at your first supervisory committee meeting.

For MSc students, the research project is typically already well-defined by the supervisor, although consultation with the student as to their specific goals and interests may influence the direction or scope. You may also be offered the choice of several available projects. A MSc research project should be accomplishable in 2 years, have a clear research question, include a component of literature review, and include data collected by the student.

For PhD students, the research project should be developed in consultation between the student and supervisor. A PhD research project should include an original contribution to scientific or medical knowledge.

Please note that your supervisor should keep the research and tasks assigned to the student aligned with your research topic, and career trajectory/development. Some tasks may not be directly related to your thesis project, but should be related to the overall research program. If you have concerns about the balance of this arrangement, please discuss with your supervisor at your regular meetings.

Coursework: General Guidelines

Below are the minimum academic requirements for RDS students.

You must maintain **continuous registration** as a graduate student. This means that you must be registered in at least one course for each term. When you are not taking a class, OBST 549 or OBST 649 will serve this role. You can also register in the thesis course along with other courses.

Term	Months	MSc Thesis Course	PhD Thesis Course
Winter Term I & II	Sep - Apr	OBST 549 001	OBST 649 001
Winter Term I only	Sep - Dec	OBST 549 002	OBST 649 002
Winter Term II only	Jan - Apr	OBST 549 003	OBST 649 003
Summer Term	May - Aug	OBST 549 941	OBST 649 941

You can add or drop courses via the UBC SSC until the second week of each term. Past this deadline, you will need to complete the Add/Drop form (<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/forms/registration-change-registration-form>) and submit to Program Administrator. If you drop a course past the 'withdrawal' deadline, your transcript will list the class with a standing of 'W', rather than fully removing the class.

You may register in courses from other departments/schools. You are responsible for meeting the pre- or co-requisites, or seeking special permission from the course instructor. Your supervisor may be able to assist with this. In some cases, you may be added to a waitlist, to be registered after the hosting program's students.

You are responsible for completing all courses and achieving the minimum grade required, even if the course is additional to the requirements below and/or unrelated to the program. A minimum grade of 68% (B-) must be achieved in all coursework for doctoral students. A minimum grade of 60% (C) must be obtained in order to pass a course for master's students, however only 2 courses can fall in the 60-67% (C-C+) range. For more information on the UBC graduate grading scales and the definition of satisfactory academic progress, please see: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/academic-progress>

Many scholarships and awards are adjudicated on the basis of academic excellence. For these reasons, you should carefully discuss with your supervisor how to set a plan for your coursework that is rigorous and provides you with the skills and background necessary for your program, but that is not overwhelming.

Registering in courses at other universities under the Western Deans Agreement

UBC graduate students are permitted to register in courses at other universities offering graduate programs in Western Canada (Simon Fraser University, University of Northern British Columbia), with an automatic tuition waiver for visiting students. You must be in good financial and academic standing, and the course you are requesting must be **integral** to your program.

Application process and form: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/forms/western-deans-agreement-authorization-course-registration>

Please note: Fully completed forms must be received by G+PS a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the start date.

MSc Coursework

Minimum 30 credits:

- 18 credits – OBST 549 – MSc thesis and oral exam
- 3 credits – OBST 506 – Mandatory for all RDS students

- 6 credits – Two additional OBST courses
- 3 credits – One additional course, OBST or external

Courses should be selected in discussion with the supervisor. **Deviations from the “two additional OBST courses” are possible, with permission from a Program Co-Director.**

The [minimum course requirements](#) are 30 credits, of which at least 24 must be numbered 500 to 699. A maximum of 6 credits at the undergraduate level in courses numbered 300 to 499 may be counted toward the requirements of a 30-credit master's degree.

MSc Coursework Checklist

- OBST 506
- 9 additional credits (6 in OBST courses)
 - If >3 credits of these credits are not in OBST courses, send to program for approval.
 - If >3 credits are at the 400-level or lower, send to program for approval (ie. 1 course of 3 credits in a course numbered 300-499 is permitted without special approval.)
- OBST 549: maintain continuous registration

PhD Coursework

Regular program (PhD students who have completed Master's degree):

Minimum 21 credits:

- 18 credits – OBST 649 – PhD dissertation and oral exam
- 3 credits – OBST 506 – Mandatory for all RDS students

Students transferring from MSc program, or offered direct entry from Bachelor's:

Minimum 30 credits:

- 18 credits – OBST 649 – PhD dissertation and oral exam
- 3 credits – OBST 506 – Mandatory for all RDS students
- 9 additional credits (6 in OBST courses)
 - If >3 credits of these credits are not in OBST courses, send to program for approval.

To maintain registration as a doctoral student, 9 of the above credits must be completed in the first two years of your program. Nine credits must be at the 500-level or higher, and at least 9 credits must be of first-class standing (80%+). Reference: [UBC Vancouver Academic Calendar: Doctoral Degrees](#)

Additional coursework may be selected in consultation with the supervisor and supervisory committee.

PhD students are also required to pass a **comprehensive examination**. More information on the comprehensive exam can be found in the 'Examinations' section of this Handbook, and in Appendix A.

PhD Coursework Checklist

- OBST 506
- Discuss additional coursework with supervisor
- OBST 649: maintain continuous registration

Ethics and Safety Training

The following courses/modules are required for all RDS students:

1. Responsible Conduct of Research

All biomedical graduate students conducting research are required to complete the Responsible Conduct of Research course. You will be contacted with an invitation to register in September, when the next session dates are set. The course consists of two in-person sessions and one set of online modules (to be completed between the in-person sessions).

You can find out more information, and view past syllabi here: <http://grad-postdoc.med.ubc.ca/current-students/research-conduct-course/>

2. Bullying and Harassment

All students employed by UBC are required to receive training about workplace bullying and harassment policies, including how to recognize, prevent and address these issues.

Online course (mandatory): <https://wpl.ubc.ca/browse/srs/mandatory/courses/wpl-srs-bulhar>

Please send the Program Administrator your completion certificate when you have finished this module.

Other ethics and safety training courses/modules may be required, depending on your area of research and work site. Your supervisor or lab manager will provide you with a list of the appropriate requirements. These may include:

- **TCPS 2 CORE** training is expected for all individuals who engage in research involving humans. Graduate students are required to have completed the online tutorial before submitting an application for REB approval. This training is free and requires about 2 hours to complete: [CORE Training](#)
Certificates of completion do not need to be included in the REB application, but copies should be printed and retained by the study supervisor to ensure GCP compliance.
- **PHSA Privacy & Confidentiality:** This is the mandatory online course and required by all students who are involved in clinical research studies at Children's & Women's. The training is free and requires ~1 hr. Access via [PHSA Learning Hub](#)
- **CREB Ethics Review Process:** Ethics education and training will help to improve the quality and efficacy of your application. The Office of Research Ethics has several videos designed to assist you with a basic understanding of the UBC CREB process: <https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/education-training/training-ubc-researchers>

- **Biosafety training:** Any activities conducted at UBC facilities or affiliated institutions that involve biohazardous materials must be reviewed and approved by the UBC Biosafety Committee prior to the start of the research project. This includes research and teaching with: cultured animal cells, cell lines, recombinant DNA, plasmids, parasites, toxins, microorganisms (including viruses and bacteria), and primate body fluids (including blood), and prions. For more information: <https://ors.ubc.ca/compliance-reporting/compliance-requirements/biosafety>
- **Hands-On Animal Care and Use training:** All personnel working with animals in research at UBC and affiliated institutions are required to complete the CCAC Experimental Animal User Training Program. For more information: <https://animalcare.ubc.ca/training>

Scholarships, Awards, Stipends & Financial Assistance

To search for UBC-administered scholarships and awards by eligibility, visit the **G+PS Award Opportunities** page: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/scholarships-awards-funding/award-opportunities>

For **Faculty of Medicine awards**, visit: <https://grad-postdoc.med.ubc.ca/current-students/awards/>

All RDS students are **expected to apply for scholarships for which you are eligible**, as a condition of your receiving financial support in the form of your stipend.

Communications regarding the opening and deadline for applications will be communicated via the **RDS listserv**. You may also find other external scholarship opportunities for which you are eligible (for instance, based on your area of research).

You are expected to read the instructions and prepare for applications carefully, and in advance. If you need to request transcripts or other documents from the Program Administrator, please do so **at least 2 weeks prior to the application deadline**. Similarly, it is wise to plan to submit your application in advance of the deadline, as unanticipated technical issues or heavy applicant traffic could cause issues with submission.

Key competitions include:

- **Canada Graduate Scholarships Masters** (CGS-M) program (also referred to as Tri-Agency): <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/canada-graduate-scholarships-masters-cgs-m-program>
- **Affiliated Fellowships Masters Program:** <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/affiliated-fellowships-masters-program>
- **Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships** (PhD): <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/vanier-scholarship>
- **Canada Graduate Scholarships Doctoral** (CGS-D) program (also referred to as Tri-Agency): <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/canada-graduate-scholarships-doctoral-cgs-d-program>
- **Affiliated Fellowships Doctoral Program:** <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/affiliated-fellowships-doctoral-program>

- **Four Year Doctoral Fellowship (4YF):** <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/four-year-doctoral-fellowship-4yf>
The 4YF recipient(s) are selected by the RDS Awards Committee. Information regarding this award will be communicated to incoming doctoral students.
- **Spring Graduate Awards:** <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/spring-graduate-awards-competition>
- **Friedman Award for Scholars in Health:** <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/friedman-award-scholars-health>
- **BCCHR Graduate Studentships** (for BCCHR-affiliated graduate students): <https://www.bcchr.ca/about-us/training-opportunities/graduate-students>
- **WHRI Graduate and Fellowship Research Award in Women's Health Grant** (for WHRI-affiliated graduate students): <http://whri.org/research-resources/research-funding/graduate-and-fellowship-research-award-in-womens-health-grant-competition/>
- **MSFHR Research Trainee Program:** <https://www.msfhr.org/our-work/activities/trainee-awards%20>

Awards that are assigned automatically to eligible students:

- **International Tuition Award:** <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/international-tuition-award>
Assigned to international students registered full-time in research-oriented master's and doctoral programs, to assist with tuition fees.
- **President's Academic Excellence Initiative PhD Award:** <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/presidents-academic-excellence-initiative-phd-award>
Assigned to new and continuing PhD students, except those whose tuition is paid by an external sponsor. See website for current award values.
- **Graduate COVID Program Delay Tuition Award:** <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/graduate-covid-program-delay-tuition-award>
Students who were registered during the Summer 2020 term will receive an award equivalent to their tuition assessment (less any tuition awards) for the same term, if they remain registered in their program past the median duration of that graduate program.

You might also be interested in:

- Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, DA Boyes Memorial Research Award: <https://obgyn.ubc.ca/da-boyes-memorial-research-award/>
- Awards for Indigenous students: <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/finances/awards-scholarships-bursaries/awards-indigenous>
- Awards for students with disabilities: <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/finances/awards-scholarships-bursaries/awards-disabilities>

Graduate Support Initiative (GSI) Awards

GSI funding is allocated to UBC graduate programs, and distributed as scholarships or tuition awards, as per each program's policy. The RDS program currently uses its GSI allocation to provide tuition awards to PhD students (for a maximum of 4 years) and MSc students with an 85%+ average (for a maximum of 2 years). Please see the **GSI Allocation Policy** in Appendix A for details.

The amount and distribution of GSI funds is not guaranteed to be consistent each year, and the RDS GSI Allocation Policy is subject to change at the discretion of the RDS Awards Committee.

Student Stipends

A condition for admission of all RDS students (both MSc and PhD) is the confirmation of a minimum funding package of \$22,000/a. This may be made up of a stipend from your supervisor's grant, a scholarship or external award, governmental funding, or some combination of these. MSc students receive this funding for a minimum of 2 years, and PhD students for 4 years.

Your funding package is contingent on you maintaining continuous registration (ie. it is suspended for leaves of absence), and on your making satisfactory academic and research progress (as determined by your supervisory committee). If your supervisor plans to terminate your funding, they should give you appropriate notice.

If you have questions about your funding/salary support, please contact the program via the Program Administrator.

Please note: While not all stipends are administered by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (for instance, the grant you are paid from may be managed by another department), all RDS student stipends must adhere to the RDS program's student funding policy.

Financial Assistance

Needs-based funding is managed by **UBC Enrolment Services**.

Enrolment Services, Finances: <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/finances>

Each student has an assigned enrolment services advisor. You can find their information on the UBC SSC, under the Personal Information tab (UBC Contacts).

The **UBC Bursary Program** is available for domestic students experiencing a gap between their costs of living and their available funds (including student loans). For more details:

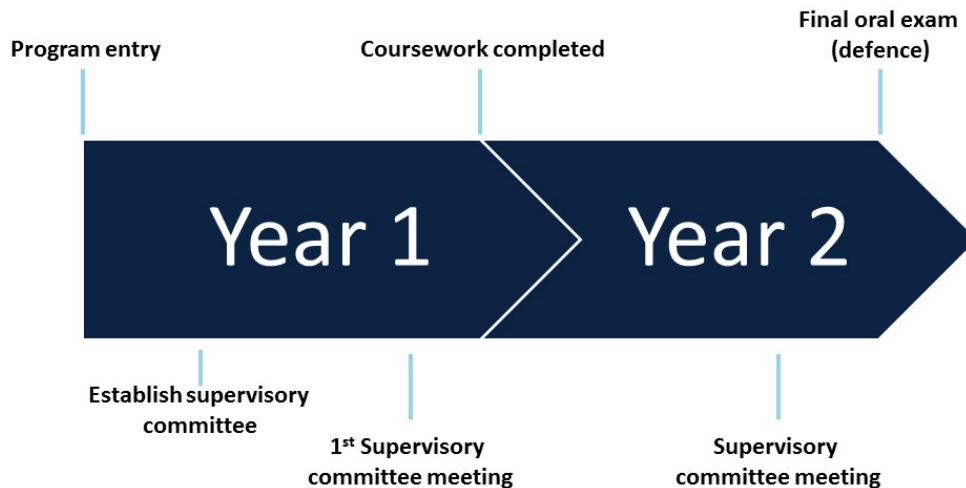
<https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/finances/awards-scholarships-bursaries/ubc-bursary-program>

You may also be referred to the **GSS Graduate Student Financial Aid** fund (<https://gss.ubc.ca/studentfunds/>), but please note that in order to apply for these funds, you must be referred by a UBC office or department (ie. contact Enrolment Services first).

Program Guidelines & Checklists

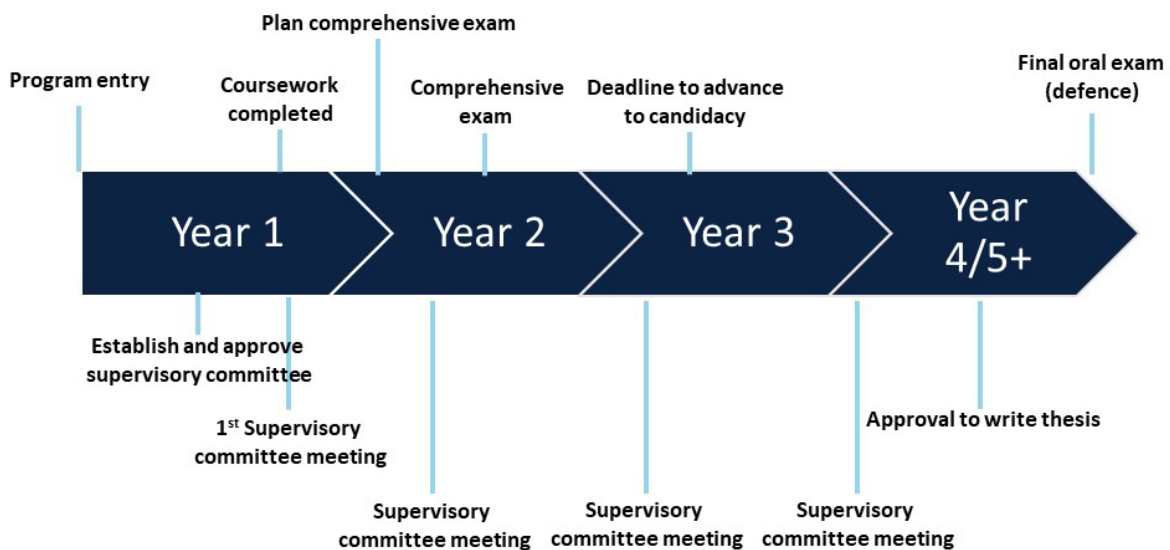
Typical program timelines for MSc and PhD students are shown below. Significant deviations (longer or shorter programs) should be discussed at supervisory committee meetings.

MSc



PhD

Some PhD programs may be completed in less time, ie. 4 years.



Student Progress Checklists

The checklists below include required and recommended activities to complete during your RDS program. If you are concerned about the completion or timing of a checklist item, please discuss with your supervisor or the Program Administrator.

Your progress will be monitored to ensure you are making satisfactory academic progress (maintaining continuous registration, passing courses, holding regular supervisory committee meetings, completing your comprehensive exam and advancing to candidacy (for PhD students)). However, every student has a different path and timeline, and for most items an element of flexibility exists. As adult learners, you are expected to take ownership of your program and demonstrate initiative towards your learning.

MSc Progress Checklist

Before your program begins:

- Complete HR forms; Bullying and Harassment module
- Register in courses, including OBST 506
- Pay tuition

During your first month:

- Ensure the Program Administrator has your new UBC or research institute email address
- Update your contact information, if needed
- Meet with supervisor, complete Student-Supervisor Checklist of Expectations
- Start attending RDS Journal Club
- Lab or research team onboarding

First year:

- Establish supervisory committee
- Complete coursework
 - OBST 506
 - 9 additional credits (6 in OBST courses)
 - If >3 credits of these credits are not in OBST courses, send to program for approval.
 - If >3 credits are at the 400-level, send to program for approval (ie. 1 course of 3 credits at 400-level is permitted without special approval).
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research course
- Apply for scholarship funding, where eligible
- Identify research project and draft research proposal
- Convene first supervisory committee meeting to discuss proposed research:
 - Progress report
 - Research proposal
 - Student-supervisor checklist
- Present at RDS Journal Club
- End of first year: initiate transfer to PhD program, if applicable

Second year:

- Register in OBST 549 thesis course (continuous registration)
- Convene supervisory committee meeting to discuss research results, possible further research, and timeline to thesis completion:
 - Progress report
 - Student-supervisor checklist

- Complete research and writing of thesis
- Present at RDS Journal Club
- Recommended:* Apply to present at OBGYN Academic Day and/or national or international conference
- Recommended:* Submit 1 or more publications.

Defense and graduation:

- Prepare for MSc defense (see **MSc Oral Examination: Planning Tool** in Appendix A)
 - Thesis reviewed by all supervisory committee members
 - Examining committee selected
 - Defense date set
- Apply for graduation (UBC SSC)
- Present exit seminar in OBST 506
- Apply for publication [delay/embargo](#), if needed
- Submit final thesis and signed thesis approval form to G+PS via cIRcle
- Receive approval from G+PS and program completion letter
- Exit interview
- Apply for [tuition refund](#) if program completed >1 month prior to the end of the term

Master's students have a **5 year time limit** for completion of their degree. [Program extension requests](#) must be fully justified and supported by the student's supervisor and program. Such requests must also be prepared well in advance of the date of the extension requested.

PhD Progress Checklist

Before your program begins:

- Complete HR forms; Bullying and Harassment module
- Register in courses (OBST 506 + others, if applicable)
- Pay tuition

During your first month:

- Ensure the Program Administrator has your new UBC or research institute email address
- Update your contact information, if needed
- Meet with supervisor, complete Student-Supervisor Checklist of Expectations
- Start attending RDS Journal Club
- Lab or research team onboarding

First year:

- Establish supervisory committee
- Complete Responsible Conduct of Research course
- Complete coursework:
 - OBST 506
 - Discuss additional coursework with supervisor
- Apply for scholarship funding, where eligible
- Identify research project and draft research proposal
- Convene first supervisory committee meeting to discuss proposed research, and timeline for comprehensive exam:
 - Progress report
 - Research proposal
 - Student-supervisor checklist
- Present at RDS Journal Club

Second year:

- Register in OBST 649 thesis course (continuous registration)
- Set date/examining committee and prepare for comprehensive exam
- Convene 2nd supervisory committee meeting
 - Progress report
 - Student-supervisor checklist
- Present at RDS Journal Club
- Recommended:* Apply to present at OBGYN Academic Day
- Recommended:* Submit 1 or more publications

Third year, onward:

- Register in OBST 649 thesis course (continuous registration)
- Ensure advancement to candidacy completed by end of 3rd year
- Convene annual supervisory committee meetings
 - Progress report
 - Student-supervisor checklist
 - Permission to write?
- Present at RDS Journal Club
- Recommended:* Apply to present at national or international conference
- Recommended:* Submit 1 or more publications.

Defense and graduation:

- Prepare for doctoral defense (see **PhD Oral Examination: Planning Tool** in Appendix A)
 - Dissertation reviewed by all supervisory committee members
 - Dissertation sent to external examiner
 - University examiners and defense date confirmed
- Apply for graduation (UBC SSC)
- Present exit seminar in OBST 506
- Apply for publication [delay/embargo](#), if needed
- Submit final dissertation and signed approval form to G+PS via cIRcle
- Receive approval from G+PS and program completion letter
- Exit interview
- Apply for [tuition refund](#) if program completed >1 month prior to the end of the term

PhD students have a **6 year time limit** for completion of their degree. [Program extension requests](#) must be fully justified and supported by the student's supervisor and program. Such requests must also be prepared well in advance of the date of the extension requested.

Leaves of Absence

Students who find it necessary to interrupt their studies may request a leave of absence of up to 1 year (3 terms). A leave of absence must be requested **before** the date on which the leave will start. Retroactive leaves will only be approved in highly exceptional cases.

Please note: International graduate students should consult [International Student Advising](#) before pursuing a Leave of Absence to discuss the impact on your ability to stay in Canada, study permit and post-graduation plans.

To request a leave of absence:

- Read the policy to ensure you are eligible, and be sure to note the UBC services/resources that will or will not be available to you during a leave of absence: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/leave-status>
- Discuss leave of absence with supervisor, supervisory committee, and the RDS program.
- Download and complete the ["Request for Leave of Absence" form](#). Attach required documentation.

Supervisory Committee

The supervisory committee is established by the research supervisor and student, in conjunction with the Program Co-Directors. The committee should be formed as soon as possible.

The Program Administrator can assist with scheduling supervisory committee meetings, as initiated by the student and/or supervisor.

The supervisory committee must meet at least annually, with the first meeting taking place before the end of your first year (ideally by the end of your second term of registration).

Because a MSc project typically takes two years, the schedule may be more like: first meeting between 6 and 12 months (so protocol/proposal is reviewed before data is collected or experiments begin, second meeting at 18-20 months, defense. Alternative timelines may also be appropriate, depending on your project.

Supervisory Committee Composition

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies has the following requirements for supervisory committees:

“Doctoral supervisors, co-supervisors, and committee members, and master's supervisors and co-supervisors, must be members of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies or have been approved by the appropriate bodies (see [Non-members of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies as Supervisory Committee Members](#) and [Supervision of Graduate Students by Non-members of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#), as appropriate, for approval processes). It is recommended that at least one committee member be from a graduate program other than the student's. **At least half of the members of the supervisory committee must be members of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.**”

The RDS program recommends the following:

The supervisory committee must have a minimum of four (MSc) or five (PhD) members, including:

- The supervisor (or co-supervisors)
- A Chair, who is appointed by a Program Co-Director
The Chair is a member of the RDS faculty with significant experience in the supervision of graduate students, who will ensure that the meetings proceed according to protocol, and also serves to provide a point of contact for the student that is not directly aligned with the supervisor, thus acting as a counsel or mentor, if needed.
- An additional RDS faculty member
- A G+PS faculty member from either the Faculty of Medicine or the Faculty of Science who is not a full member of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- PhD supervisory committees require an additional faculty member (from 1 of the 2 categories above)

Other members may be suitable for inclusion on the supervisory committee. Please consult with the Program Co-Directors if you are unsure.

Inclusion of supervisory committee members not meeting the criteria above require:

- MSc: approval by a RDS Program Co-Director
- PhD: approval by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

The Program Administrator will facilitate the approval of PhD supervisory committee members.

Responsibilities of the Supervisory Committee

- Provides general supervision of your research and academic studies. Reviews your program of study.
- Reviews and approves your research proposal.
- Reviews your research progress and confirms that there is sufficient material for inclusion in the thesis.
- Makes note of any concerns in the above areas to the Program Co-Directors.
- Certifies that your thesis is ready for final examination (defense). At least two members will be asked to serve as examiners for the final oral examination.
- Additionally, two members (who are not the Chair) will be asked to serve as examiners for the comprehensive examination for PhD students.

Responsibilities of the Student

- Ensures that the first supervisory committee meeting takes place by the end of the first year of registration in the program (and ideally by the end of your second term of registration).
- Works with the Program Administrator to schedule the supervisory committee meetings. If a supervisory committee meeting is scheduled without the assistance of the Program Administrator, they must be made aware of the date and time.
- Submits an **annual progress report** and any supporting material to all supervisory committee members and Program Administrator, 1-2 weeks prior to the supervisory committee meeting.
- Presents research proposal for approval within the first year of registration.

Agenda for Supervisory Committee Meetings

Annual meetings of the supervisory committee are intended to be a supportive endeavor through which you can demonstrate progress in your studies and research, and seek guidance from experts. It may also be an important tool for helping students experiencing difficulties with their research project or academic progress.

In preparation for the meeting, you should distribute the following to each of the supervisory committee members and the Program Administrator, at least 1-2 weeks before the meeting:

1. A complete progress report/research proposal (**Graduate Student Annual Progress Report**, Appendix A)
2. Student-Supervisor Expectations Checklist
3. Research proposal
4. Additional documents, including papers in press and accepted abstracts

You will begin the meeting by reporting on your academic and research progress, including further research work necessary to complete the project, in a presentation of 20-30 min. The supervisory committee reviews and evaluates this information, asks questions, and offers guidance and direction. The Chair submits a written report to the Program Administrator following the meeting. This report is circulated to the student and supervisory committee members for your records.

If there are concerns identified regarding your progress, a Program Co-Director will follow up and help to determine an appropriate course of action. In extreme cases, this may result in voluntary or recommended withdrawal for unsatisfactory academic progress.

A final supervisory committee meeting is required in order for PhD candidates to be given permission to write their dissertation. In order to proceed with writing the dissertation and planning the defense, a quorum must approve this course of action. This quorum consists of: the supervisor, Chair, and two other members.

Transfers

Transfer from MSc to PhD

MSc students are eligible to transfer into the PhD program if you have completed:

- 1 year in the MSc program
- 9 credits at the 500-level or above, with first class standing (80% or better)

Transfers need to be approved by the research supervisor and Program Co-Directors, and supported by the supervisory committee.

Transfers can be requested for the start of January, May, or September, and you should plan supervisory committee meetings accordingly, in order to receive their support in time for your planned transfer. Your supervisory committee should be made aware of your intention to request this transfer as soon as possible.

Students entering the doctoral program after partial completion of a master's degree must:

- Have completed at least 12, and no more than 24, months of study in the master's program.
- Demonstrate research ability/potential.
- Complete a total of 12 credits, with a first class average, during their first 2 years of study. Of these, 9 credits must be 500-level or above, and 9 credits must have first class standing.
- Receive unanimous support from their supervisory committee.
- Be in good academic and financial standing.

The start date of the PhD program will be the date of first registration in the MSc program. **This is important to keep in mind for candidacy and graduation deadlines.** You should familiarize yourself with the requirements for the comprehensive exam and advancement to candidacy as you prepare to request this transfer.

Lastly, doctoral supervisory committees require an additional member, and approval from G+PS.

Additional information and form: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/transfer-masters-doctoral-programs-without-completing-masters>

Transfer from PhD to MSc

PhD students may apply for a transfer to the MSc program, with the support of their research supervisor and Program Director. This should be initiated early in your program, be appropriate for your professional goals, and include a recommendation from the RDS program documenting the reasons for the transfer. Such transfers may have implications for student funding. Students must complete all the requirements for the MSc degree program (including coursework) in order to graduate.

Additional information and form: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/transfer-doctoral-masters-programs>

Transfer between Graduate Programs

In exceptional cases, students may transfer between closely-related programs, with the support of both the current and receiving programs, and an academic justification from the receiving program's Program Director. Transfers involving a change of discipline are treated as new admissions.

Additional information and forms: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/faculty-staff/policies-procedures/transfer-between-closely-related-programs>

Student Transfer between Supervisors

While rare, circumstances may arise that necessitate a supervisor and student ending their working relationship.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Supervisor retires, leaves UBC, or is on an extended leave
- Incompatibility
- Funding issues
- Student changes area of interest

Such circumstances need to be brought to the attention of the Program Co-Directors and Program Administrator as soon as possible.

The process for moving forward will depend on the nature of the situation. Generally, student-initiated changes in supervision require the student to identify a suitable new supervisor, with the support of the program.

Students are not permitted to continue in the program without a supervisor, and may be required to withdraw if you are not able to identify an alternative supervisory arrangement.

Examinations

Comprehensive Examination (PhD)

It is a G+PS requirement for all PhD students advance to candidacy by 36 months from their start date. A key requirement for candidacy is the successful completion of the comprehensive examination.

In the RDS program, the comprehensive exam is an oral exam with 4 examiners, to assess your knowledge of your chosen field of study, the general area of reproductive and developmental sciences, and your ability to communicate your understanding and critical thinking abilities in English.

Upon successful completion of the comprehensive exam, the RDS Program will recommend to G+PS that you advance to candidacy (assuming the other requirements of completion of coursework and approval of research proposal have also been met).

It is critical that you realize the importance of the comprehensive exam, a crucial milestone for doctoral students. This exam is at least as important as your final oral exam/defense. The exam is intended to determine whether you have the knowledge base and critical thinking skills to make an original contribution to your area of research. This is a crucial mechanism for ensuring that students do not begin dissertation work that they are not prepared to complete and defend successfully.

By the time of the defense, PhD candidates will likely be, with the possible exception of their supervisor, more knowledgeable about their project than any of the examining committee members. This is not the case with the comprehensive exam.

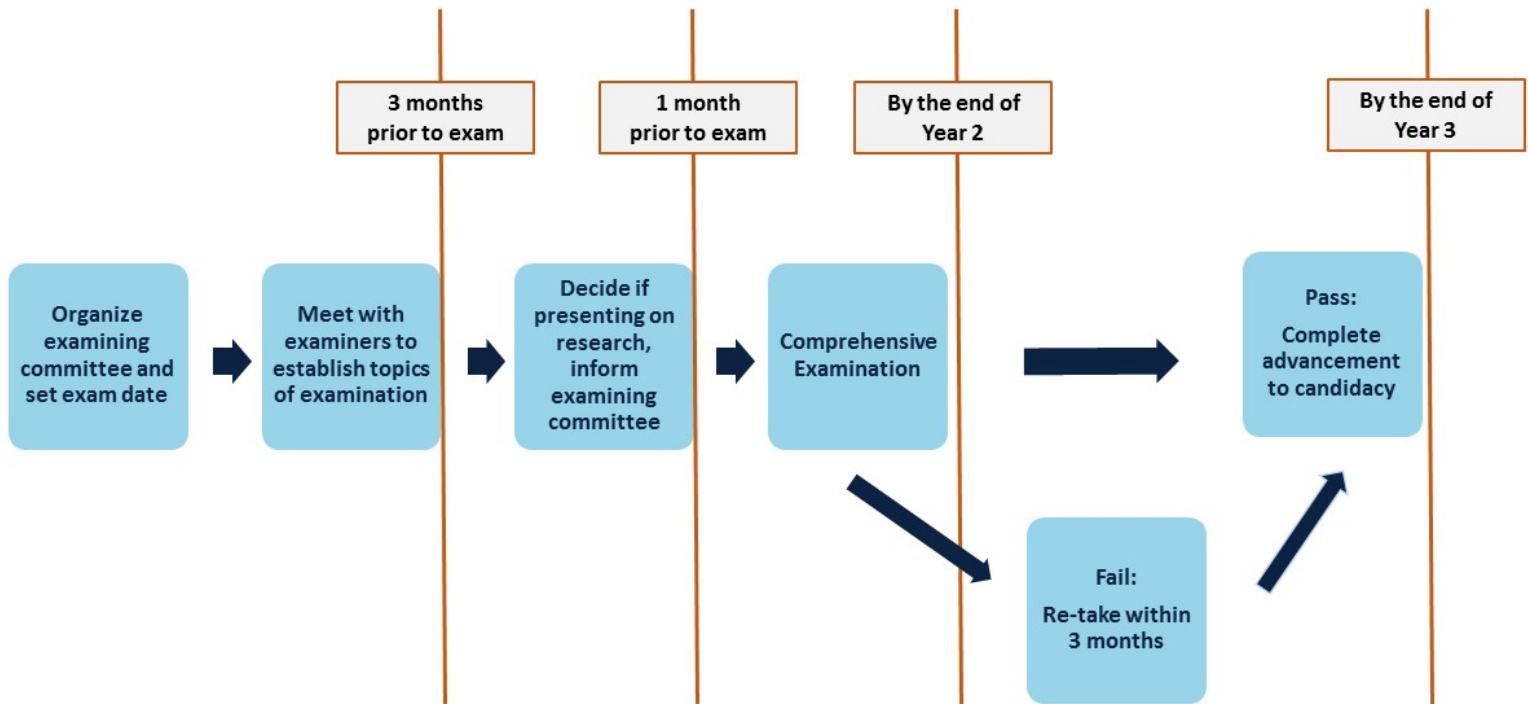
A student who fails 2 attempts at the comprehensive exam will not be permitted to continue as a PhD student.

Students should:

- Familiarize yourself with the RDS guidelines for the comprehensive exam.
- Understand the importance and weight of the exam.
- Prepare to complete this exam in a timely manner (by the end of your second year).
- Meet with examining committee members to discuss the scope of topics to be covered, and avail yourself of the resources suggested by examining committee members.
- Decide whether you will include a presentation of your research project, and inform examining committee members accordingly.

See Appendix A for:

- Guidelines – Comprehensive Exam (PhD)



Advancement to Candidacy

It is required that all doctoral students be admitted to candidacy within **36 months** from your date of initial registration. If you transferred to the PhD program following partial completion of the MSc program, your date of initial registration is the date of MSc registration. If you transferred to RDS from another graduate program, your date of initial registration is the date of registration in the first program.

The basic requirements for a doctoral student to be admitted to candidacy are:

1. All required coursework has been successfully completed.
2. The comprehensive examination has been passed.
3. The supervisory committee has certified that the thesis proposal has been approved.

Typically this means that the student will be advanced to candidacy following successful completion of the comprehensive exam. The RDS program will make a recommendation to G+PS for this advancement.

Students should:

- Familiarize yourself with the requirements and deadlines for advancement to candidacy.
- Carefully read and complete the 'student declarations' section of the Recommendation for Advancement, when requested.

Final Exams

MSc Oral Examination (Defense)

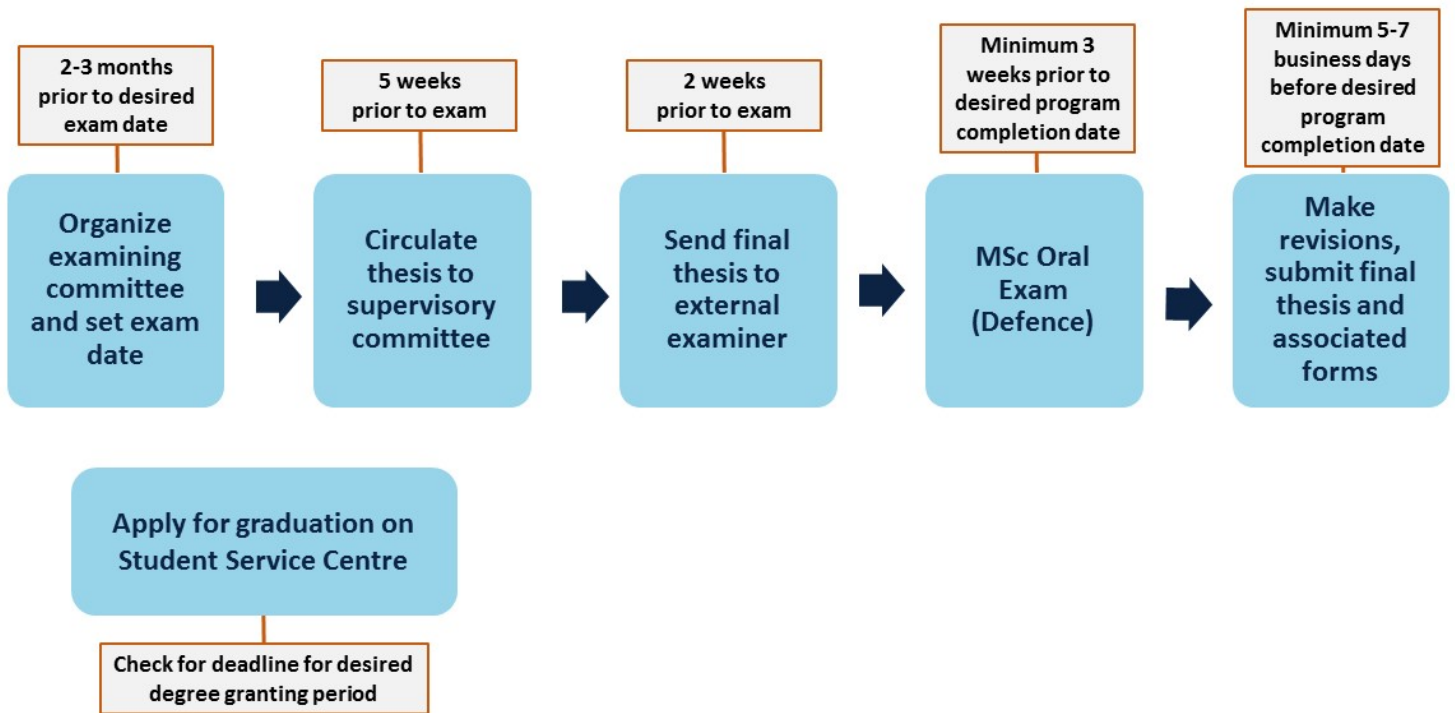
The RDS program requires a final oral examination (defense) at the Master’s level. This exam is not subject to G+PS-level policies, but should adhere to the policy/procedures included in Appendix A.

Students should:

- Familiarize yourself with the RDS requirements and procedure for the MSc oral exam.
- Ensure that your supervisor, supervisory committee members, and external examiner receive your thesis with an appropriate amount of time to review it.
- Follow graduation procedures to ensure your program is completed in a timely manner.

See Appendix A for:

- MSc Oral Examination – Conduct
- MSc Oral Examination – Planning Tool



Doctoral Oral Examination (Defense)

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies requires a final oral examination (defense) at the doctoral level. This exam is subject to G+PS-level policies and procedures, which must be followed closely. As planning the doctoral exam is a complex process, it is recommended that you review both the guidelines included in Appendix B, and the more detailed resources available online with [G+PS's Doctoral Exam Guide](#).

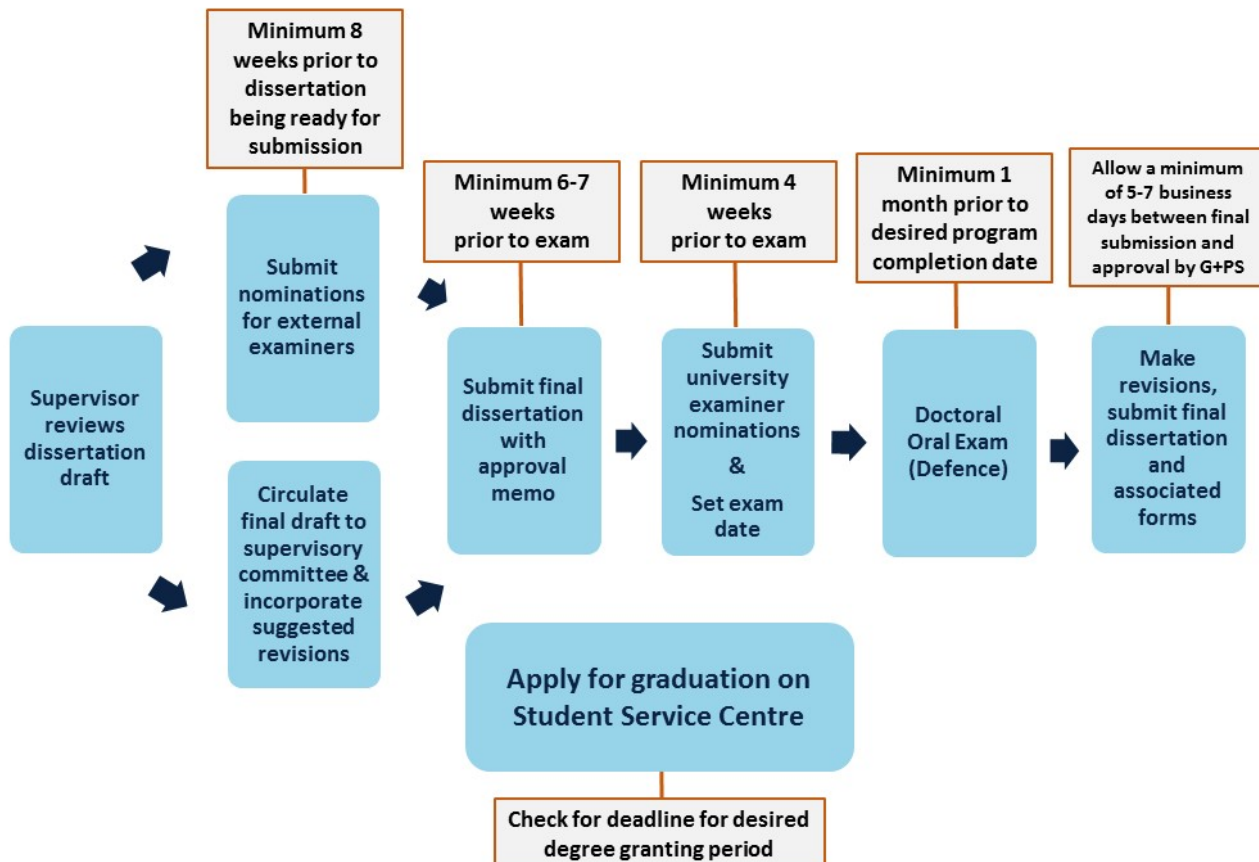
G+PS also holds workshops on preparing for a doctoral defense several times a year. You can check the workshop listing: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/professional-development/workshops-events>, or watch for the weekly GradUpdate emails.

Students should:

- Familiarize yourself with the requirements, procedure, and timeline for the PhD oral exam.
- Maintain clear and consistent communication with your supervisor and supervisory committee regarding the timeline for planning your defense and program completion.
- Ensure that your supervisor, supervisory committee members, and examiners receive your dissertation with an appropriate amount of time to review it.
- Follow graduation procedures to ensure your program is completed in a timely manner.

See Appendix A for:

- PhD Oral Examination – Planning Tool
Also accessible here: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/forms/doctoral-examinations-planning-tool-checklist-candidates-supervisors>



Other Information

ORCID ID

ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier (an ORCID iD) that you own and control, and that distinguishes you from every other researcher. You can connect your ID with your professional information — affiliations, grants, publications, peer review, etc. You can use your ID to share your information with other systems, ensuring you get recognition for all your contributions, saving you time and hassle, and reducing the risk of errors.

Register here: <https://orcid.org/>

Use of Degree Status Designations

As a matter of academic integrity, students should correctly represent their degree program status and credentials. You should not use designations that are not officially sanctioned by the UBC, or use acronyms that might be misunderstood by members of the public who are not well versed in academic requirements.

- Students in the MSc program should not identify themselves as degree candidates (e.g., MSc candidate) because candidacy is not an officially recognized degree program status at the master's level, although it is at the doctoral level.
 - The appropriate designation is to identify as a student (ie. **MSc student in Reproductive and Developmental Sciences**).
- Students in doctoral programs may identify themselves as doctoral candidates only when they have officially advanced to candidacy, and not before.
 - This degree program status should be expressed in words (e.g., **PhD candidate**, PhD all-but-dissertation) and not using acronyms that might be misunderstood by non-academics. In particular, acronyms such as PhD(c) or PhD (ABD), should not be used, as they could be mistaken for a conferred degree with some specialization.
 - The appropriate designation for doctoral students who have not advanced to candidacy is to identify as a student (ie. **PhD student in Reproductive and Developmental Sciences**).

Academic Honesty and Standards

All UBC students are expected to behave as honest and responsible members of the academic community, and to be aware of the standards of academic honesty.

You should review the standards of academic honesty here, and by reviewing the calendar entries and policies linked: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/student-responsibilities/academic-honesty-standards>

Plagiarism

Students are strongly advised to avoid plagiarism in their coursework, theses and dissertations, and manuscripts. The consequences of engaging in plagiarism, even inadvertently, can be significant. Students are responsible for educating themselves about academic integrity and what qualifies as plagiarism. The [G+PS Dealing with Academic Misconduct by Graduate Students](#) page provides useful information on academic honesty and standards, as well as the disciplinary procedures to follow when it is detected.

Students who are under investigation for possible academic dishonesty may be placed on academic hold until the President has decided on a course of action. Students on academic hold are blocked from all activity in the Student Service Centre.

External Seminars and Professional Development

The RDS program recognizes that the academic landscape is changing, becoming more competitive, and more interdisciplinary. Graduate students not only need to excel in academics and research, but also develop skills in communication, leadership, knowledge translation, networking and professionalism that will help them in their future careers.

Notices for workshops and seminars are distributed by email (GradUpdate emails and ad hoc notices) each week via the RDS listserv. Most research groups have their own seminar series on a regular date and time throughout the year.

We urge you to take advantage of the many free seminars and workshops available to develop your skills and knowledge base, such as:

- [Graduate Pathways to Success](#) workshops (G+PS)
- [UBC Library](#) workshops
Subscribe to the UBC Library Research Commons [newsletter](#) for announcements.
- Relevant research institute seminars, research rounds, and academic days: BCCHRI, WHRI, VCHRI
- [UBC Centre for Writing and Scholarly Communication](#)
- [Careers Resources](#): career planning resources, advising appointments, and other tools

- [Instructional Skills Workshops for Graduate Students](#) (Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology). 28-hour professional development sessions designed for graduate students interested in developing and enhancing their instructional skills, indicated on your transcript as INDS 501. It caters to individuals new at teaching as well as those who wish to refresh and enhance their skills. Due to high demand, you should register as early as possible.
- OBST 506 seminars and the RDS Journal Club (following OBST 506 every second week) It is strongly encouraged that non-first year students attend these seminars as well.
- OBGYN Department conference ([DA Boyes Society Meeting](#) – first Thu/Fri of November) and the [OBGYN Annual Academic Day](#) (May)
- Join the UBC Dept of OBGYN Research News for a weekly compilation of events, awards, rounds and other opportunities: Email obgynresearch@vch.ca to be added.
- [CRCNet](#) is a BCCHR listserv intended for the clinical research community at BC Women's and Children's. Designed to share information and resources to the research community, subscribers will receive emails from group members and be able to send emails to the group. This may include information related to research protocols, processes, regulations, ethics, recruitment, training, education and relevant job postings. To be added to the listserv, email reseduc@bcchr.ca.
- If you find other valuable opportunities that may interest other RDS students, please send to the Program Administrator for distribution!

Please note: You should record workshops and professional development completed for your annual progress report.

Please be sure to work with your supervisor to ensure they are aware of the time(s) you will be away from the lab, and can successfully organize your research work around valuable professional development opportunities.

Vacation

Graduate students are entitled to a minimum of three weeks (15 working days) per year of vacation from their academic obligations. The period between Christmas (Dec 25) and New Year's Day (Jan 1) is not counted as vacation time.

You must arrange your vacation with their supervisor's approval, such that there is minimal disruption to your academic obligations.

Reference: [G+PS Graduate Student Vacation Policy](#)

Travel Funds (Conference Presentations)

RDS Travel Grant

The RDS program offers up to \$500/academic year per student to support students presenting at conferences.

Inform the Program Administrator if your oral or poster presentation has been accepted at a conference. You will need to submit your receipts for reimbursement, according to the process below, no more than **2 weeks** after your return. The following expenses are eligible for reimbursement: conference registration, economy airfare, accommodations, ground transportation.

1. Complete conference expense reimbursement form (see website or Appendix A), and return, with original receipts (or emailed receipts) – **up to \$500** - to Program Administrator, no more than 2 weeks after your return.
2. Please include a link, PDF, or hardcopy of the conference agenda, indicating your presentation.
3. Funds are sent to student via direct deposit or cheque, 3-5 weeks later.

Tips

- If you are booking your travel on **Expedia**, please do not book both flight and hotel together. These need to be separate bookings in order for UBC Finance to process them.
- **Conference registration:** Always check for a trainee/student registration rate.
- **Hotels:** please ask for a 'clean bill' upon check out (showing room charges only). If you are splitting the room with another traveller, the hotel will need to provide two bills showing half on each.
- **Receipts:** Electronic receipts for flights, registration, and other receipts that are only emailed (ex. Uber) are acceptable. Otherwise, original itemized receipts are required.
- **Currency conversion:** If possible, please make payments in other currencies with your credit card, and provide a copy of your statement, highlighting these charges. We will obscure all other information on the statement. This ensures that you will be reimbursed for the exact amount spent, rather than an estimate based on the historical exchange rate.

Graduate Student Travel and Research Dissemination Fund (G+PS)

G+PS offers a \$500 travel award once per degree program, for travel to a conference where you are presenting a paper or poster, or for open access publishing processing charges.

Application form must be completed after travel is completed, otherwise there is no deadline. Funds are assigned to student as award on the Student Service Centre.

For further information: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/awards/graduate-student-travel-fund>

Local Presentation Opportunities

OBGYN Academic Day

The UBC Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology Academic Day is an annual event where trainees present completed research projects, along with an invited guest speaker who presents their own research. OBGYN Divisions take turns hosting the event and choosing the guest speaker. It is held over 1.5 days (afternoon poster session and full day of paper presentations), and is attended by trainees and faculty. Trainees are judged within their relevant trainee category and awards are presented at the conclusion of the main day at a catered reception.

The OBGYN Academic Day normally takes place in early May. A 'save the date' announcement will be followed by a call for applications, and sent to you via the RDS listserv.

Faculty of Medicine Research Trainee Day & Lecture Series

This annual event is designed to showcase the diverse and innovative research work of Faculty of Medicine research trainees and recent senior faculty prize awardees, as well as to provide a venue for the building of new connections and collaborations throughout the Faculty at all levels. This free event is open to all Faculty of Medicine trainees, faculty, and staff.

This event normally takes place in the spring at the Vancouver General Hospital Paetzold lecture theatre. A save-the-date announcement and call for abstracts will be sent to you via the RDS listserv.

Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT)

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT) is an academic competition that helps current graduate students by fostering effective presentation and communication skills. Participants have just three minutes to explain the breadth and significance of their research project to a non-specialist audience. Founded by the University of Queensland in 2008, the popularity of the competition has steadily increased and 3MT competitions are now held in over 350 universities across 59 countries worldwide.

Normally held in later winter, the 3MT competition begins with departmental heats, the winners of which advance to the semi-finals.

For further information, and videos of previous finalists: <https://3mt.grad.ubc.ca/>

Other local presentation opportunities

You will receive notifications of other presentation opportunities via the RDS listserv and your supervisor. If you find an event that may be of interest to other RDS students, please share with the Program Administrator for further distribution.

RDS Journal Club

The RDS Journal Club is held biweekly, and is organized by the RDS student representative(s). The Journal Club is held on Thursday afternoons, 2:30 – 3:30pm, following OBST 506. All students are encouraged to attend regularly, and expected to select a paper for presentation and discussion once per year. You will be contacted by the RDS student representative(s) to organize a presentation date early in the academic year.

Graduate Student Associations & Committees

RDS Student Organization (RDSSO)

The RDSSO is a GSS-affiliated organization. Composed of RDS students, the group organizes several annual social events for RDS students. Please contact the RDS student representatives if you are interested in joining!

Current RDS student representatives: Kerri Scherbinsky

Department of OBGYN Awards Committee

Current RDS representative: Matthew Shannon

Faculty of Medicine Graduate Student Advisory Group: <https://grad-postdoc.med.ubc.ca/current-students/graduate-student-advisory-group/>

Current RDS representative: Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi

UBC Graduate Student Society: <https://gss.ubc.ca/>

Current RDS representative (GSS Council): Arezoo Alemzadeh Mehrizi

Equipment for loan

The RDS program has the following equipment available for student use:

- 1 Windows laptop (BCWH)

If you have an upcoming presentation or supervisory committee meeting and require use of the RDS program laptop, please contact the Program Administrator a minimum of 2 weeks prior. You will be responsible for picking up the laptop the day of your presentation (or day before) and returning afterwards (or the day after). The laptop and all cords must be returned in good condition.

First come, first served!

Health and Wellness

UBC strongly recommends that all domestic and international students have basic and extended health insurance for the full duration of your studies.

- The BC Medical Services Plan (**MSP**) provides basic medical benefits. Everyone living in British Columbia for **more than six months** is required to enroll in MSP, except students with existing coverage from another Canadian province or territory.
You can find more information on MSP for students here: <https://students.ubc.ca/health/health-insurance>
- You are automatically enrolled in the **AMS/GSS Health and Dental Plan**, which provides extended health and dental insurance. You can opt out of this plan if you are covered by another program. Full details on this program can be found here: <https://www.ams.ubc.ca/student-services/health-dental/>
- International students are required to register in the iMed program, which provides temporary health insurance to cover your eligibility period for MSP. You can find full details, including enrolment instructions, here: <https://students.ubc.ca/health/health-insurance/health-insurance-international>

The following is a list of health, **wellbeing, and safety resources** for graduate students, which can also be found at: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/current-students/health-wellbeing-safety>

Visit [UBC Student Services](#) to find tips, resources and in-person support open to all graduate students.

- [Getting Through Grad School with Grace & Grit: The Online Support Group](#): Thursdays at 1:30pm, exploring topics such as shifting and rebuilding routines, handling uncertainty and worry, dealing with loneliness and distance from support networks, coping with imposterism, procrastination and perfectionism, staying motivated and creative, and more. Register at least 1 hour before each meeting.
- [Counselling Services](#): When you drop in to Counselling Services, you can book a same day appointment with a Wellness Advisor. Wellness Advisors are trained Master-level counsellors who meet with students for a one-time 15-20 minute assessment. They'll listen to your needs and connect you with resources to best help you reach your goals. This could include self-directed resources, workshops and coaching, group therapy, or individual therapy.
- [UBC Student Assistance Program \(SAP\)](#): provides 24/7 counselling and life coaching, free for students on the AMS/GSS Health Plan. They can help with anything you're concerned about, and will give you the option of getting help online, in person, or by phone 1-833-590-1328 (toll-free).
- [Student Health Services](#): Student Health Service offers a wide range of health assessments and treatments provided by doctors, nurses, and specialists. You can book an appointment by phone, in person or online.
- [The Wellness Centre](#): At the Wellness Centre, Wellness Peer Educators are trained student volunteers who can answer your questions, talk with you, and recommend resources for everyday concerns related to health, relationships, and workload.
- [Centre for Accessibility](#): The Centre for Accessibility facilitates disability-related accommodations and programming initiatives designed to remove barriers for students with disabilities and ongoing medical conditions.
- [Help a friend](#): How to help if you're concerned about a friend who is feeling hopeless or thinking of harming themselves.

- [Graduate Student Wellbeing Ambassador Training and Support Program](#): This program is currently seeking mentors for its launch. Please check it out if you would be interested in serving as a resource for other students, while sharpening your communication skills.
- [Faculty of Medicine Graduate Student Wellbeing](#): Supported by Karen Ross, the FoM Graduate and Postdoctoral Wellbeing Support Coordinator, you can find a Peer Mentorship Program, wellbeing blog, and opportunity for virtual 'coffee chats' here. Sign up for the [Trainee Thrive Newsletter](#) for Faculty of Medicine students for monthly updates on relevant events and resources.
- You can use the 'Finding Health Support' tool to identify the best resources available, based on your needs, location etc. <https://students.ubc.ca/health/finding-health-support>
- For students at the Oak Street campus (BCCHRI, WHRI), the new [Text to Connect](#) program will provide easy and confidential weekly wellness check-ins straight to your mobile device.

Urgent Crisis and Mental Health Support

- [Urgent Care at UBC Hospital](#)
- Vancouver General Hospital (VGH): Vancouver residents can go to Vancouver General Hospital's [Access and Assessment Centre](#) (604-675-3700)
- Emergency Services (24/7): Call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department
- [Crisis Centre BC](#): If you or someone you know is feeling hopeless or thinking about suicide, call or chat online with a crisis responder any time 1-800-784-2433

Sexual Violence Support

- [Sexual Violence and Prevention Response Office](#) (SVPRO) is a safe place for faculty, staff and students who have experienced sexual assault regardless of identity, expression or orientation, regardless of when or where it took place.
- [AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre](#) (SASC) is part of the AMS Student Society and is committed to the education and support of all survivors of sexualized violence.
- [Independent Investigations Office](#)
The Independent Investigations Office (IIO) is a newly created office serving UBC Vancouver and UBC Okanagan. The IIO is dedicated to receiving and responding to complaints of sexual assault, sexual misconduct, discrimination and harassment under Policy 131 and Policy 3. The IIO is committed to a trauma-informed investigation process that is fair, impartial, and respects the rights of all parties.
 - Email: investigations.office@ubc.ca
 - Telephone: 604-827-2060
 - Website: <https://investigationsoffice.ubc.ca>

Safety and Security

- [AMS Safewalk](#) provides a transportation service that will accompany students, staff, and visitors who feel unsafe walking alone, on the Point Grey campus.
- [Campus Security](#) works towards making the campus a safe environment in numerous ways, from heading Secure Access to providing personal safety services and technologies and hosting security and safety workshops.
- [Graduate student safety](#): Everyone plays a role in making UBC's Vancouver campus a safe and welcoming place. A number of resources are available to ensure graduate student safety on campus.

Online Support Tools

- [Mind Health BC](#): take an online mental health assessment and find resources.
- [Healthlinkbc.ca](#): check physical health symptoms and find resources
- [Here to help](#): learn and assess mental health and substance use resources
- [Therapy Assisted Online \(TAO\)](#): Self-Help Sign up for a free, secure, and private account with your UBC email. Learn about managing stress, anxiety, anger, problem solving, and relationships. Evaluate your alcohol and drug use.
- [Students.ubc.ca](#): find resources, and helpful tips organized by topic.

Events, Services, and Resources

- [Health and Wellness](#): lists health and wellness events, services, and resources.
- [First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Helpline](#) offers immediate mental health counselling, crisis support, and referrals for Indigenous peoples across Canada. Indigenous people in BC can also call the [KUU-US Crisis Line](#) at **1-800-588-8717**
- [HealthLink BC](#) provides health information, including a COVID Symptom Self-Assessment tool. Call **8-1-1** to speak with a health services navigator, registered nurse, pharmacist, or registered dietician.

Students with Families

UBC offers the following supports for students with families. Please be aware that these services are often in high demand, and may have long wait lists.

- Child care:
 - UBC Child Care: <https://childcare.ubc.ca/>
 - Resources for finding off-campus child care: <https://students.ubc.ca/campus-life/diversity-campus/who-are-parents/childcare-school-registration>

You may be eligible to apply for the Affordable Child Care Benefit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-funding/child-care-benefit>

- Housing:
 - Acadia Park: <https://vancouver.housing.ubc.ca/residences/acadia-park/>
- International students:
 - Information for spouses/partners and children: <https://students.ubc.ca/campus-life/diversity-campus/who-are-parents/information-international-family>

Graduate Student Travel Outside of Canada

UBC's [Students Abroad Policy](#) is intended to facilitate safe travel experiences for student travelers. The policy applies to all graduate student travel outside of Canada in connection with a university activity including, scholarship-supported attendance at a university outside Canada, data collection or other research-related activity, and conferences or workshops (if there is any reimbursement from funds administered by UBC).

All UBC students who intend to travel outside of Canada in connection with a university activity must register online with the [Student Safety Abroad Registry](#), managed by UBC's Go Global office. This registration will confirm any travel advisories in place for the destination you select, and will inform you of any additional steps required prior to your travel.

Students with Canadian citizenship are required to also register with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) [Registration of Canadians Abroad](#) system. Students with other citizenships may register with the DFAIT system, but may also wish to register with the consulate of their home country.

If you encounter problems or conflict in your program:

We hope we have created a program that minimizes troubles, but occasionally they arise. When they do, for whatever reason, you have a variety of options.

Your supervisor is normally the first person with whom you should discuss your concerns. The RDS Program Administrator, RDS Program Co-Directors, and Chair of your supervisory committee are also there to help you in whatever way they can. Specific problems can also be brought to the attention of the Chair of the relevant graduate program committee. You can be assured that whatever issue you raise will be considered seriously, and your privacy respected.

In addition, other offices on campus exist to handle specific problems. You may consider accessing peer support from the Graduate Student Society to assist you in directing your academic, financial, or personal concerns: <https://gss.ubc.ca/peersupport/>

Publication-Related Disputes

Occasionally a disagreement develops over the publication of collaborative research. Although such disagreements are rare, they are potentially serious. If you encounter such a problem that cannot be otherwise resolved, please contact the RDS Program Co-Directors (via the Program Administrator).

The best advice is to avoid situations likely to create such disputes, by having explicit conversations prior to the collection of data about the expectations and contingencies with respect to publication, such as order of authorship. Students are also expected to write up their research for publication in a timely manner. We recommend that you use your annual review of the Student-Supervisor Checklist of Expectations to address these areas, and establish and record expectations.

Student Grievances/Complaints

Student complaints or questions should be addressed at the lowest level (as near the source of conflict) as possible:

1. Course instructor or research supervisor (or supervisory committee)
2. RDS Program Co-Directors (via Program Administrator). The Program Co-Directors may consult other Departmental or G+PS positions, as required.

If the student is protesting a decision related to their academic standing, and the issue is not resolved, it may be escalated to the Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and then the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Appeals relating to a specific course (e.g., against a mark, grade, appropriateness of assignments or examinations, or grading practices) must be initiated through informal consultation with the appropriate course instructor. If the matter remains unresolved, please consult the UBC Review of Assigned Standing policy for next steps: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,49,0,0>

Reporting Mistreatment

The Faculty of Medicine Mistreatment Help Website (<https://mistreatmenthelp.med.ubc.ca>) can be accessed on the FoM home page (<https://www.med.ubc.ca/current-learners/>) or the FoM Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website under the “Current Students” tab (<https://grad-postdoc.med.ubc.ca/current-students/>), or the RDS Program’s landing page (<https://obgyn.ubc.ca/education/graduate-studies/>).

All reports will be handled by the [Office of Respectful Environments, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion](#), completely independent of individual graduate programs, Departments, Schools, and faculty members.

You can self-report an incident of mistreatment, or an incident that you witnessed, on behalf of someone else.

Appendix A: RDS Forms & Policies

RDS forms can also be found online at: <https://obgyn.ubc.ca/education/rds-graduate-program/current-students/program-policies/>

G+PS forms can be found online by searching: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/forms>

1. Student-Supervisor Checklist of Expectations
2. RDS GSI Allocation Policy
3. RDS Student Stipend Policy
4. MSc Progress Checklist
5. PhD Progress Checklist
6. Supervisory Committee Meeting – Annual Student Progress Report
7. Comprehensive Examination – Guidelines
8. MSc Oral Examination – Planning Tool
9. MSc Oral Examination – Conduct
10. PhD Oral Examination – Planning Tool

Also accessible here: <https://www.grad.ubc.ca/forms/doctoral-examinations-planning-tool-checklist-candidates-supervisors>

11. Conference Expense Reimbursement Form