

Registration

Policy Category:	Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Subject:	Registration
Subsections:	Initial Registration ; Registration Requirements ; Categories of Registration ; Transfer from Master's to Doctoral Degree Status in a Program ; Leave of Absence ; Student Progress and Withdrawal ; Admission After Withdrawal
Approving Authority:	Senate
Responsible Committee:	Senate Committee on Academic Policy
Related Procedures:	Procedure for Registration
Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:	Vice-Provost (Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies)
Related Policies:	*Assessing Student Progress in Multi-Year Research Based Graduate Programs
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1. Initial Registration

A candidate whose application for admission has been approved by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) must register in the term indicated on the "Offer of Admission". In exceptional circumstances, registration may be deferred, with approval of the program and SGPS. The candidate should consult the appropriate program for details about registration.

2. Registration Requirements

a) Continuous Registration

Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in the SGPS in each successive term from initial registration until all requirements for the degree are completed.

b) Maximum Registration Period

The maximum registration period for completing a Master's degree is three calendar years from initial registration and, in the case of a Doctoral degree, six calendar years from initial registration. For students who transfer from a Master's program to a Doctoral program without completing the Master's program or Direct-Entry to a Doctoral program, a maximum of seven calendar years from the initial registration in the Master's program or Doctoral program (Direct Entry) will be given to complete the Doctoral degree. For students admitted part-time to an approved part-time Master's program, the maximum registration period is four years.

The student will be withdrawn at the end of their maximum registration time limit unless the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) has approved an extension.

3. Categories of Registration

a) Full-Time Student

To be registered as a full-time student, a student must meet the following criteria:

- Make satisfactory progress toward degree completion in alignment with full-time program expectations and requirements. Failure to meet progression requirements may result in being required to withdraw from the program.
- Be present on campus as required by their program.
- Have paid, or make arrangements to pay, full-time tuition fees.

b) Part-Time Student in Approved Part-Time Program

Students may be admitted as part-time students in approved part-time programs as stipulated in the program's regulations. During the course of study, and with the approval of the program and SGPS, such a part-time registrant may be approved to register as a full-time student; they may then register as a part-time student at a later date by meeting the requirements as stipulated in (c) below. Students who begin as full-time students in programs that have an approved part-time course of study may only change to part-time registration as stipulated in (c) below.

Students registered part-time may take no more than two courses in a term. Undergraduate courses taken as extra courses or as degree requirements are to be included in the totals above.

c) Part-Time Students in Full-Time Programs

Part-time registration in full-time programs may be granted in exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of both the Graduate Program and the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). Examples of such circumstances are: admission to another full-time university program or medical or compassionate circumstances that make it impossible for the student to continue to devote full-time attention to their program of study. Supporting documentation must be submitted with the request for part-time status.

Part-time status is not to be used as a means for reducing or avoiding tuition fees. Being beyond the funding eligibility period will not, by itself, constitute grounds for a change from full-time to part-time status. Part-time status may be granted for up to a cumulative total of three terms.

Students registered part-time may take no more than two courses in a term. Undergraduate courses taken as extra courses or as degree requirements are to be included in the totals above.

d) Thesis Defense Only Student

The purpose of this status is to allow a student who: a) has completed all program requirements (including thesis submission), but b) has not been able to defend their thesis before the end of term, to register at the University in the subsequent term without paying tuition fees. Thesis Defense Only registration (TDO) can be held for only one term.

- This registration category will not require payment of tuition fees; however, students will be required to pay part-time ancillary fees.
- In order to be considered for TDO status students must upload their thesis electronically.
- TDO status will be granted to those students who have submitted a thesis by the final official day of term but have not been able to secure an examination board and/or examination date that falls before the end of the term.
- Programs are required to inform SGPS as soon as possible (and in any case no less than 10 working days before the last working day of the term) when a thesis examination will need to be scheduled into the subsequent term.
- The thesis examination must be successfully completed, all required revisions done, and the final thesis submitted to SGPS prior to the end of the TDO term. A student who does not meet these conditions will be required to pay part-time tuition for the TDO term and will continue to be registered until the final thesis is submitted.
- TDO applies only to students in programs that have a thesis requirement.

- A student will be given TDO status for no more than one term.
- When the thesis examination is unsuccessful at either the preliminary or examination stages, the student will not have met the TDO conditions and will be required to pay part-time tuition and fees for the TDO term.

e) Non-degree Part-time Student

Non-degree part-time students must meet normal admission requirements. If a student in this category is subsequently admitted to a degree program, no more than 20% of the course requirements for the degree may be credited from courses taken while a non-degree student. Non-degree part-time students are not required to maintain continuous registration. For each term in which they are registered, however, they must inform their Graduate Chair before the start of the next term whether they plan to take courses during that term or whether they plan to withdraw. Without withdrawal, they will receive a tuition bill for the following term, as if they were in a degree program. Once withdrawn, they must apply for readmission to resume their non-degree part-time studies. In such cases, SGPS waives the readmission fee.

f) Concurrent Degree Student

Students in the following programs will be registered in both programs and are eligible to receive degrees in each:

- MD-PhD
- MBA-LLB in Business and Law

g) Doctoral Flex-time Registration

Students must select flex-time registration prior to commencing their program of study and cannot alter their registration status once selected.* Students enrolled in flex-time studies pay full-time tuition fees for the first four years of their registration, and part-time fees until they complete their program. As the flex-time option is intended for working professionals, Western's doctoral funding guarantee does not apply to students in flex-time studies. Flex-time enrolment will normally require two additional years of study for students to complete the program, in comparison to students in a regular full-time enrolment status. Completion within six to eight years while in flex-time enrolment is expected.

*Please note that the flex-time registration option is available only for doctoral programs with an approved flex-time option.

h) Interdisciplinary Combined PhD

A Western Interdisciplinary Combined PhD entails the completion of the combined degree requirements of two Western doctoral programs (Home Program and Partnering Program) simultaneously under the supervision of a faculty member from each program. The Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Program duration is the same as a regular PhD Program.

To enrol in an Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Option, students must first contact the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) and complete the “Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Agreement Form” prior to the first term of registration but no later than two terms into the student’s registration in the Home Program.

Although the Partnering Program should reasonably contribute to the student’s funding package, the Home Program has ultimate responsibility for the student’s funding. If one program has a higher funding level, the student should receive the higher level, shared appropriately by the Home and Partnering Programs. The funding eligibility period for the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Program is the same as regular PhD Programs.

DEFINITIONS

Home Program: For the purposes of the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Agreement Form, “Home Program” will refer to the graduate program in which the student is registered and which ~~that~~ has administrative responsibility for the student, including, if appropriate, providing work/office space, assignment of GTAs, completion of annual progress reports, etc. The Home Program is also the “fall-back” program in the event that the student wishes to discontinue in the combined option.

Partnering Program: For the purposes of the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Agreement Form, “Partnering Program” will refer to the second graduate program.

i. Program Structure

- A student in an Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Degree Program participates in two (2) doctoral programs, a Home Program and a Partnering Program, and is required to progress toward and meet the respective requirements of the two (2) doctoral programs concurrently.
- The student shall have two supervisors – one supervisor with doctoral membership in each graduate program. In exceptional circumstances, a single supervisor, with doctoral membership in both programs may be approved by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS), conditional upon the supervisory committee representing both programs. If variation in the structure of the supervisory committee is warranted, such variation must be clearly described and must be in alignment with SGPS Regulations.
 - All thesis submission and examination-related forms must be completed and submitted to SGPS by the designated Home Program.
- ~~One of the two programs will be identified as the “Home Program” for the purpose of registration and administration.~~

Registration

- It is expected that Pprograms ~~are encouraged to~~ will “share” or “merge” some of their ~~usual~~ requirements.
 - For example, comprehensive/qualifying examinations can be restructured to meet the expectations of both programs. ~~a required course in one program can also be counted as an optional or elective course in the second program.~~
- One thesis is to be completed; the thesis must meet the expectations of both programs; the content of the thesis should represent a blending of the disciplines. The composition of the Thesis Examination Board for the dissertation will include representation of both participating programs and disciplines. If variation from the usual PhD Examination Board structure is necessary, approval by SGPS is required. Composition and approval of the Thesis Examination Board, the public presentation, and examination date will be administered by the Home Program, in consultation with the Partnering Program.
 - Some variation from SGPS Thesis Procedures is expected to ensure that the examination board appropriately represents the research conducted in the Interdisciplinary Combined PhD Program. However, it is strongly encouraged that the examination board does not include more than one additional member (i.e., the usual PhD examination board includes four (4) examiners.).
- ~~The composition of the examining board for the dissertation will include representation of both participating programs and disciplines.~~
 - i. ~~Some variation from the usual PhD Examination Board structure may be needed to achieve this; such variation must be approved by SGPS.~~
- The student's individual program (structured in the same way as regular PhD programs ~~to support completion in 4 years~~) must be determined and agreed upon by the two programs (Graduate Chairs or equivalent, Supervisors, and student) normally no later than ~~by~~ the second term, ~~including~~. The student's individual program design, timeline and plan must meet the learning outcomes of both programs and include:
 - ~~All courses to be completed to meet the learning outcomes of both programs~~
 - The topic of the dissertation/research
 - The course requirements
 - The nature and timing of comprehensive(s)/qualifying exams ~~to satisfy both programs (if feasible, the comprehensive exam requirements of the two programs can be merged into one exam)~~
 - Any additional milestones ~~required to meet the learning outcomes of both programs~~
 - ~~The topic of the dissertation/research~~

ii) ~~Inclusion on Transcripts and Degrees~~

- ~~• One degree/parchment will be awarded; it will list both graduate programs.~~
- ~~• The student's transcript will note registration in both graduate programs, with one degree awarded upon completion of all requirements.~~
- ~~• The student's transcript will read under "Academic Program History":~~
- ~~• Program: Home Program
Plan: Interdisciplinary Combined Doctor of Philosophy
Home Program and Partnering Program
Status: Active in Program (or later, "Completed Program")~~
- ~~• The final degree awarded will appear on the parchment as: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, Home Program and Partnering Program~~

4. Transferring between Graduate Degree Levels

Transferring refers to a situation where a student leaves an unfinished degree program and registers in a different degree-level in the same graduate program. Students are normally given recognition for prior work in these instances. Transferring can occur from a lower-level degree program to a higher-level degree program (e.g., Graduate Diploma (GDip) to Master's or Master's to Doctoral) or from a higher-level degree program to a lower-level degree program (Doctoral to Master's). When transferring, the credential from the former degree program is not granted to the student, as they have not completed all requirements of the former degree program. Transfers must be approved by the graduate program and SGPS.

5. Laddering to another Graduate Degree

Laddering refers to an established process where a student completes a program and is given recognition for this prior work towards a subsequent degree program via this approved pathway. In the case of laddering, a student has completed the lower-level program and has been awarded the credential (e.g., a student completes a GDip program and is provided credit for prior work in a specific Master's program with an approved laddering process). The remaining requirements for the higher-level degree in these cases are also pre-determined. Students must apply for admission to the laddering degree program; admission is not guaranteed.

6. Leave of Absence

The Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) may grant a leave of absence on pregnancy/parental, medical or compassionate grounds normally to a maximum of three terms or 12 months, on the recommendation of the program.

When recommending a leave of absence to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), programs should contact SGPS about any academic considerations for outstanding coursework.

While on leave, students are expected to be away from normal activities as graduate students (e.g., attending classes, conducting research). However, students and supervisors may negotiate ongoing communication during this period. Before the end of the approved leave of absence, students notify the Graduate Chair/Director, the Graduate Assistant and, where relevant, the Supervisor(s), to discuss the transition back to their studies. If students are applying for an additional leave of absence, it is important that the program and SGPS be notified as soon as possible.

To ensure that they are optimally supported throughout their degree, students requiring leaves of absence that extend beyond three terms are encouraged to communicate with programs about potential professional, academic or research implications of the extended period away from their studies.

The start and finish of the leave may begin or end at any point in the term; normally the leave will coincide with the start and end of terms. Students are advised to consult with their graduate program to make special arrangements especially if taking courses during this period.

The date for degree completion and funding of the degree program will be extended by the duration of the time taken on leave, i.e., one, two or three terms as appropriate.

a) Pregnancy and/or Parental

Pregnancy/Parental Leave is intended to recognize the need for leave at the time of pregnancy, birth or adoption, and to permit a pause in studies in order to provide full-time care in the first year of parenting a new child. Either parent may request up to three terms of leave, which must be started within twelve months of the date of birth or custody.

Provided the student has been a registered full-time graduate student for at least one term and is not receiving additional Tri-Agency benefits, they are entitled to a \$1,500 pregnancy and parental bursary per leave.

During a Pregnancy/Parental leave international students can opt into UHIP for up to 12 months.

b) Medical

Graduate students may apply for a medical leave by providing a Medical Certificate completed by a health care practitioner. During a Medical leave, international students can opt into UHIP for four months in a 12-month leave period. It is possible to extend UHIP for another four months subject to the approval of the insurance provider.

c) Compassionate

Graduate students may apply for a compassionate leave for care and support of a seriously ill family member. This leave is not intended to cover circumstances related to travel, employment or other financial concerns.

d) Internship

Graduate students in programs without an internship requirement who secure an internship through Western's Internship Program may apply for an internship leave.

Students may apply for a leave of absence by completing an online request via the Graduate Student Web Services Portal. The request is then reviewed by the graduate program. If approved by the program, it is reviewed by SGPS.

Once on leave, students are not registered with the University nor will they be required to pay tuition and ancillary fees for this period; however, they are entitled to receive/maintain certain benefits as described in the related Procedures.

7. Progression and Withdrawal

To maintain good standing in their program, graduate students are expected to meet program expectations toward degree requirements for the timely completion of the degree.

To support students in meeting program expectations, graduate programs are expected to (i) communicate degree requirements and program expectations to students (for example, through a program handbook), (ii) monitor and assess student progress toward the degree over the course of the program, ~~The Graduate Chair of a program:~~

- ~~• Must approve the student's plan of study.~~
- ~~• Must ensure the preparation and filing of an annual progress report for each student.~~

Graduate faculty must (iii) provide students with timely feedback on their progress with respect to courses, milestones, examinations, or other program expectations and degree requirements, and (iv) guide students to appropriate support and resources available at the University, as applicable.

When a student fails to meet program expectations and/or degree requirements, program withdrawal may be warranted. More specifically, graduate programs, ~~The program~~ may require a student to withdraw from the program if ~~they~~ the student fails to meet the following standards:

- students must make satisfactory progress toward the degree by meeting course and milestone requirements, as set out by the graduate program, according to the program timeline.

- Students must maintain a cumulative average of at least 70% calculated each term over all courses taken for credit, with no grade less than 60%. Individual graduate programs may have grade requirements that are different from this standard and may exceed this standard.
- ~~Students must make satisfactory progress towards the degree according to milestones set by the program.~~

Withdrawal from a graduate program can occur in two ways. A student can voluntarily withdraw, ~~following formal notification to the program~~. Alternatively, the program or SGPS can withdraw a student for failure to meet admission conditions, progression expectations and/or degree requirements, specified deadlines for degree completion, or failure to pay fees. Once withdrawn from a graduate program (and SGPS), the person withdrawn is no longer a student of the University and may not attend classes, receive supervision, or have access to any resources of the University.

8. Admission After Withdrawal

Students who have voluntarily withdrawn or who have been withdrawn and wish to complete their program must formally re-apply for admission. Credit for previous work completed must be approved by the program and SGPS.

Students who are withdrawn for non-payment of fees will be considered for admission under the following payment conditions:

- Any student who has withdrawn or has been withdrawn may be required to pay fees for the terms in which registration has lapsed if readmitted.
- Payment of all fees owing at the time of withdrawal including all penalty fees incurred as a result of the default.
- Prepayment of full fees for the term in which admission is sought.
- ~~These payments must be money order, cash, direct debit, or certified cheque.~~

9. Time Away From Studies and Vacation Time

Full-time graduate students in research-based programs are expected to be active in their program for all three terms of the university year, as specified in Section 2. While engaging in their program, we recognize that personal time (i.e., time away from studies) is beneficial for student health, well-being and academic achievement. It is acceptable and expected that Supervisors, Supervisory Committee Members and Graduate Chairs will discuss expectations around students' study and research schedules; they will mentor students and support their need for time off and their pursuit of work/life balance. Time away from studies must take into account the impact on timely progression and the impact on research and other responsibilities.

It is expected that students devote a reasonable number of hours each weekday to study and to research. It is acceptable for students to take days off. In making these time management decisions, it is expected that students will learn to discern when time

away from studies supports academic productivity, and when it undermines timely progression.

Graduate Chairs are encouraged to ensure that both student and supervisor needs and expectations are met. See SGPS Regulation regarding supervisor expectations.

In addition to the above, students are entitled to be away from their studies and research responsibilities during:

- the closing of the University from late December until early January
- statutory holidays when the University is closed
- religious holidays in accordance with University policy

Graduate students are also entitled to at least two weeks of vacation time from their studies per year.