



Western University

Department
of
Medical Biophysics

Handbook for
Graduate Students
in Thesis-Based
Programs

Revised August 2024

Medical Biophysics Web Site: <http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/biophysics/>

The School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS)
Web Site: <http://grad.uwo.ca/>

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Who We Are

Introduction

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The Medical Biophysics graduate program is fully committed to its mandate to ensure that all students meet their graduate education goals in an academically fulfilling and timely manner. In support of this mandate, this graduate manual aims to introduce new and continuing Medical Biophysics graduate students to the policies and procedures set by the graduate program and Western's School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

The policies and procedures described in this manual apply to the Master's, Doctoral, and Master's CAMPEP students registered in the Medical Biophysics graduate program.

Medical Biophysics Graduate Executive

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The Graduate Chair (medbiogradchair@uwo.ca) and the members of the Department's Graduate Executive Committee guide the Medical Biophysics graduate program. The Graduate Executive members are faculty members in Medical Biophysics. Their role is to advise the Graduate Chair on matters of graduate policy, act as stand-ins for the Graduate Chair for a variety of graduate milestones, and act as points of contact for graduate students in Medical Biophysics. Contact information for Graduate Executive members is available [here](#).

Academic Program Coordinator

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The Academic Program Coordinator (askmbp@uwo.ca) supports students in all Medical Biophysics Programs. They are the first point of contact by email, phone or in person for inquiries on applications/recruitment, admissions, orientation, program requirements, eligibility, courses, milestones, graduate funding, teaching assistantships, thesis defenses, and graduation.

Learning Outcomes for Medical Biophysics Graduates

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Graduates of the Program will have learned throughout their studies to become innovators, communicators, and leaders as follows:

Innovator

Independent, creative, critical thinker. Problem-solver who can evaluate and ascertain the validity of a result while discovering new knowledge. Ability to hypothesize, define and answer research questions using divergent, lateral thinking across disciplinary boundaries. Analytical skills based on numerate and literate comprehension. Depth and breadth of understanding that is required for original discoveries, developments and disruptive concepts that focus on gaps in medical, biological and physical health determinants.

Communicator

Freely interacting and communicating across disciplines. Building arguments and defending them based on scientific evidence. Global understanding and sensitivity to disciplinary and cultural contexts for oral and written communication. Literate across physics, mathematics and biomedical domains. Critical reader and listener with deep understanding and comprehension that interpolates between written and oral concepts. High-level, culturally appropriate communication across disciplines for accelerated translation of innovations to multiple domains, including public policy, commercial and clinical use.

Leader

Integrity in pursuit of innovation. Ethical, scientific and professional competency and communication at core of decisions and leadership of teams and processes. Mentorship and civic engagement in the local and broader research community. Understands limitations of processes and people with a focus on team and individual strengths to generate deliverables, productivity and excellence. Global understanding of the obligation to provide expertise and leadership beyond local, domestic and research contexts.

Medical Biophysics Thesis Programs

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All Medical Biophysics students take a limited number of graduate-level courses explicitly selected to complement their background, research project, and future career goals. You will obtain your research training as part of a medical research team under the direction of your Supervisor and with the guidance of other researchers in our community.

MSc in Medical Biophysics

Our MSc graduate program provides research-intensive training in biomedical sciences. You will be engaged and will develop a productive approach to basic and translational research in a project of limited scope. At the end of your MSc, you should be ready to perform high-quality research under the supervision of an expert in your field.

Our Program is committed to your success as a researcher, innovator, and communicator. MSc trainees in Medical Biophysics move on to take positions in corporations, small start-ups, large companies, hospitals, and universities, and many have combined academic and private sector experiences.

PhD in Medical Biophysics

Our PhD graduate program provides research-intensive training in biomedical sciences. You will be engaged and will develop an independent, productive approach to basic and translational research in a series of projects that will be thematically linked. At the end of your PhD, you should be a world-class expert in the area of your thesis research and be ready to perform independent research in medical biophysics.

Our Program is committed to your success as a leader, researcher, innovator, scholar, and communicator. With a PhD in Medical Biophysics, our trainees move on to take leadership positions in academia, corporations, small start-ups, large companies, hospitals, and universities, and many have combined academic and private sector experiences.

PhD – CAMPEP Stream

In the PhD – CAMPEP Stream Program, students will complete all of the requirements for a PhD in Medical Biophysics, as well as all of the CAMPEP courses. As with all PhD students, PhD – CAMPEP Stream students may also take a limited number of additional graduate-level courses explicitly selected to complement their background, research project, and future career goals. At the end of your degree, you should be ready to move on to a Medical Physics Residency position.

The addition of the CAMPEP certification does not change the usual number of terms that the student is expected to take to complete their PhD program.

This [webpage](#) describes the initial academic requirements for admission and academic requirements to maintain registration in the PhD – CAMPEP Stream.

Medical Biophysics Course Curriculum

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Mandatory Courses

The only compulsory course requirement in the graduate program is Biophysics 9513: Scientific Communications (full course/Fall and Winter terms). Graduate students usually complete this course by the end of the Winter term of initial enrollment in Medical Biophysics.

Optional Courses

Students are encouraged to take additional courses that enhance their existing skills, promote their professional development, or fill in gaps in knowledge needed to complete their thesis projects successfully. The Medical Biophysics course catalogue and course offerings for each term are available on this [MBP website](#).

CAMPEP Courses

Mandatory courses for the PhD – CAMPEP Stream are listed [here](#).

Medical Biophysics Milestones

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Students must achieve the following Milestones before they can complete their degree:

Academic Integrity Module

All incoming graduate students must complete the SGPS Academic Integrity Module to progress beyond the first term of their degree. Information on completing this Milestone can be found in the Academic Integrity section of the [SGPS Regulations](#).

Introduction to Biomedical Research Module

All incoming graduate students must complete the Schulich Introduction to Biomedical Research to progress beyond the first term of their degree. For further details, click [here](#).

Graduate Seminar (all students)

Students must attend and participate in the Graduate Seminar every year they are enrolled in the Program. The Graduate Seminar runs in the Fall and Winter terms. For further details, see [Graduate Seminars](#).

Low-Level Comprehensive Examination (all students)

All incoming graduate students must take and pass the Low-Level Comprehensive Examination to progress beyond the first year of their degree. The Department offers this exam annually on the last Monday in May. For further details, [see Low-Level Guidelines](#).

PhD Proposal Defense (PhD students and students reclassifying from MSc to PhD)

All PhD students must take and pass the PhD Proposal Defense to progress in their degree. The student must successfully complete the defense within three terms of commencing their PhD (PhD students with a prior MSc or MD/PhD students), within five terms of commencing their PhD (direct entry PhD students) or before transferring from the MSc to the PhD program (reclassification). For further details, [see Proposal Defense Guidelines](#).

Mid-Level Comprehensive Examination (PhD students)

All PhD students must take and pass the Mid-Level Comprehensive Examination by the deadline in the "Road Maps" below to progress in their PhD degree. For further details, [see Mid-level Guidelines](#).

SGPS Graduate Supervision Guidelines

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The SGPS Graduate Supervision Handbook will help you develop the most out of the supervisor-graduate student relationship at Western. It provides in-depth advice on roles and responsibilities, communications, learning styles, time management, and many other issues. A comprehensive description is available in the SGPS [Graduate Supervision Handbook](#).

In particular, please refer to the [Letter of Understanding between Supervisor and Student](#). All Medical Biophysics supervisors and students are strongly encouraged to write their own letters of understanding using the information on the link above as a template.

Road Maps To Accomplish Milestones Along the Way Towards Degree Completion

The following three charts and three graphs will assist students with the many tasks of "staying on track" throughout their graduate studies to complete all degree requirements on time. For more specific information, refer to the personalized milestone document you received in your graduate orientation package.

MSc Road Map For Successful Degree Completion

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Over the two years allowed to complete an MSc degree, students must complete the following milestones within specified time frames.

Milestone	Time Frame
With the assistance of your Supervisor, form your advisory committee	Members of your advisory committee must be confirmed by the end of the second month of enrollment.
First advisory committee meeting	Must be completed by the end of the sixth month of enrollment.
Subsequent advisory committee meetings	Must be held every 6 months until the thesis defense is organized.
Apply for external scholarships (e.g. NSERC, CIHR, OGS, etc.)	On an ongoing basis, according to scholarship deadlines set by the graduate program and SGPS.
Completion of Biophysics 9513: Scientific Communications (two-term compulsory course).	Successful completion by the end of the first Winter term of enrollment (students whose first term of enrollment is a Winter term must complete by the end of their second Winter term).
Completion of Graduate Seminars (two-term compulsory Milestone), including regular attendance and presentation of an annual seminar.	Successful completion each year a candidate is a regular registered student. Scheduled during the Fall and Winter Terms of each academic year. Speakers' schedule will be posted at the start of each Fall Term.
Successful completion of the low-level comprehensive examination	Scheduled on the last Monday in May of each year. See Guidelines.
Optional reclassification to PhD status from current MSc registration:	This MUST be completed by the end of the fifth term of registration as an MSc student.
If planning to complete an MSc degree, organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and thesis submission for publication MUST take place before/during the sixth academic term of registration at the latest.	See SGPS Deadlines to complete this process.

PhD (with previous MSc degree) Road Map For Successful Degree Completion

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Over the four years allowed to complete a PhD degree, students must complete the following milestones within specified time frames.

Milestone	Time Frame
With the assistance of your Supervisor, form your advisory committee	Members of your advisory committee must be confirmed by the end of the second month of enrollment.
First advisory committee meeting	Must be completed by the end of the sixth month of enrollment
Subsequent advisory committee meetings	Must be held every 6 months until the thesis defense is organized.
Apply for external scholarships (e.g. NSERC, CIHR, OGS, etc.)	On an ongoing basis, according to scholarship deadlines set by the graduate program and SGPS.
<p>Completion of Biophysics 9513: Scientific Communications (two-term compulsory course).</p> <p>This applies to students who do not have a previous MSc degree from Western's Medical Biophysics graduate program.</p>	Successful completion by the end of the first Winter term of enrollment (students whose first term of enrollment is a Winter term must complete by the end of their second Winter term).
Completion of Graduate Seminars (two-term compulsory Milestone), including regular attendance and presentation of an annual seminar.	Successful completion each year a candidate is a regular registered student. Scheduled during the Fall and Winter Terms of each academic year. Speakers' schedule will be posted at the start of each Fall Term.
<p>Successful completion of the low-level comprehensive examination.</p> <p>This applies to students who do not have a previous MSc degree from Western's Medical Biophysics graduate program.</p>	Scheduled on the last Monday in May of each year. See Guidelines.
Successful defense of PhD research proposal.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the first academic year of registration (normally at the time of the second committee meeting). See Guidelines.
Successful completion of the mid-level comprehensive examination.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the ninth academic term of registration (normally at the time of the sixth committee meeting). See Guidelines.
Organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and thesis submission for publication MUST take place before/during the twelfth academic term of registration at the latest.	See SGPS Deadlines to complete this process.

Reclassification from MSc to PhD Road Map For Successful Degree Completion

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Over the five years allowed to complete a PhD degree (counting from the first term of registration as an MSc student), students must complete the following milestones within specified time frames.

Milestones to Complete Post MSc to PhD Reclassification	Time Frame
Scheduled advisory committee meetings	Must be held every 6 months until the thesis defense is organized.
Apply for external scholarships (e.g. NSERC, CIHR, OGS, etc.)	On an ongoing basis, according to scholarship deadlines set by the graduate program and SGPS.
Completion of Graduate Seminars (two-term compulsory Milestone), including regular attendance and presentation of an annual seminar.	Successful completion each year a candidate is a regular registered student. Scheduled during the Fall and Winter Terms of each academic year. Speakers' schedule will be posted at the start of each Fall Term.
Successful completion of the mid-level comprehensive examination.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the twelfth academic term of registration (normally at the time of the eighth committee meeting). See Guidelines.
Organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and thesis submission for publication MUST take place before/during the fifteenth academic term of registration at the latest.	See SGPS Deadlines to complete this process.

MD/PhD Road Map For Successful Degree Completion

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Over the five years allowed to complete a PhD degree, students must complete the following milestones within specified time frames.

Milestone	Time Frame
With the assistance of your Supervisor, form your advisory committee	Members of your advisory committee must be confirmed by the end of the second month of enrollment.
First advisory committee meeting	Must be completed by the end of the sixth month of enrollment
Subsequent advisory committee meetings	Must be held every 6 months until the thesis defense is organized.
Apply for external scholarships (e.g. NSERC, CIHR, OGS, etc.)	On an ongoing basis, according to scholarship deadlines set by the graduate program and SGPS.
Completion of Biophysics 9513: Scientific Communications (two-term compulsory course).	Successful completion by the end of the second term of enrollment.
Completion of Graduate Seminars (two-term compulsory Milestone), including regular attendance and presentation of an annual seminar.	Successful completion each year a candidate is a regular registered student. Scheduled during the Fall and Winter Terms of each academic year. Speakers' schedule will be posted at the start of each Fall Term.
Successful completion of the low-level comprehensive examination.	Scheduled on the last Monday in May of each year. See Guidelines.
Successful defense of PhD research proposal.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the third term of registration (normally at the time of the second committee meeting). See Guidelines.
Successful completion of the mid-level comprehensive examination.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the sixth academic term of registration (normally at the time of the fourth committee meeting). See Guidelines.
Organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and thesis submission for publication MUST take place before/during the ninth academic term of PhD registration at the latest.	See SGPS Deadlines to complete this process.

PhD (without previous MSc degree) Road Map For Successful Degree Completion ([return to Table of Contents](#))

Over the five years allowed to complete a PhD degree, students must complete the following milestones within specified time frames.

Milestone	Time Frame
With the assistance of your Supervisor, form your advisory committee	Members of your advisory committee must be confirmed by the end of the second month of enrollment.
First advisory committee meeting	Must be completed by the end of the sixth month of enrollment
Subsequent advisory committee meetings	Must be held every 6 months until the thesis defense is organized.
Apply for external scholarships (e.g. NSERC, CIHR, OGS, etc.)	On an ongoing basis, according to scholarship deadlines set by the graduate program and SGPS.
Completion of Biophysics 9513: Scientific Communications (two-term compulsory course).	Successful completion by the end of the second term of enrollment.
Completion of Graduate Seminars (two-term compulsory Milestone), including regular attendance and presentation of an annual seminar.	Successful completion each year a candidate is a regular registered student. Scheduled (every Monday at 9:30 am) during the Fall and Winter Terms of each academic year. Speakers' schedule will be posted at the start of each Fall Term.
Successful completion of the low-level comprehensive examination.	Scheduled on the last Monday in May of each year. See Guidelines.
Successful defense of PhD research proposal.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the fifth term of registration (normally at the time of the third committee meeting). See Guidelines.
Successful completion of the mid-level comprehensive examination.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the twelfth academic term of registration (normally at the time of the eighth committee meeting). See Guidelines.
Organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and thesis submission for publication MUST take place before/during the fifteenth academic term of registration at the latest.	See SGPS Deadlines to complete this process.

Our Expectations of You

Domestic Students - Basic Criteria to Maintain Continuous Graduate Enrollment

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Enrollment in the Department of Medical Biophysics Graduate Program implies compliance with a set of rules and criteria legislated by the Program and [The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) (referred to as SGPS from this point on). SGPS policies and regulations are found [here](#). Students will implement and follow the Expectations and Requirements of Students in the [Supervision Regulations](#).

This Handbook lists specific Medical Biophysics graduate program requirements. Continued enrollment also requires a level of productivity that will enable completion of the Program in the time frames outlined by SGPS. While the level of productivity will differ from student to student, the minimum expected is 40 hours per week of lab or lab-related work. Students should also be aware that the [SGPS Policy on Registration](#) allows two weeks (10 days) of vacation per annum. Vacation is to be taken during time(s) mutually agreed upon by the Supervisor and student. Students must contact their Supervisor and other appropriate lab personnel when absent due to illness. If there are excessive absences from the laboratory or attendance in courses, the Supervisor or course coordinator should consult with the [Graduate Chair](#).

The Medical Biophysics Graduate Program Productivity Requirements

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- The graduate supervisor and student must form an advisory committee by the end of the student's second month of enrollment.
- Students must have advisory committee meetings every six months. The committee must document these meetings on this [form](#). The student must deliver the appropriate signatures and the completed form to the Academic Programs Coordinator. The form becomes part of the student's graduate file at the program level.
 - Failure to hold an advisory committee meeting within this timeframe will result in a finding of "not meeting degree expectations." Missing multiple scheduled committee meetings can result in withdrawal from the program.
- Students must complete all [Medical Biophysics Milestones](#) at the expected time.
- Students must maintain a level of productivity that will enable completion of the Program in the time frames described in the relevant [Road Map](#).
- Students must observe and follow all safety regulations and policies established by Western University.

Our Expectations of Ourselves

The Program

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- The Program will implement and follow the policies of [SGPS](#).
- The Program will provide sufficient information in the letters of offer of admission to new graduate students. This information would include, for example, details about means of support (e.g., scholarships, traineeships, supervisor funding, and tuition), amount of funding, length of funding, and any initial program expectations. Information should also be provided regarding supervision arrangements for the student, such as the name(s) of the sole Supervisor or joint Supervisors.
- The Program will provide orientation/information sessions for new and continuing graduate students. Information conveyed in these sessions might include: overviews of program policies and requirements, areas of expertise of faculty members for research supervision, expected performance and timelines for completion of degree requirements, intellectual property policies, publication and authorship issues, scholarship and funding information, TA information (and for international students, information about visa requirements and employment regulations), information on policies regarding the proper conduct of research, sexual harassment and race relations, AIDS policies, information about safety and workplace regulations, procedures for complaints and appeals, and information on helplines, advisory offices, and counselling services.
- The Program will ensure that each new graduate student has an identified supervisor. The Program should also ensure that the supervisory committee is in place at the appropriate point in time.
- The Program will ensure that arrangements are made for an alternate supervisor if the regular Supervisor either departs or is absent for an extended period.
- The Program will provide students with written guidelines of program policies and notification of any changes.
- The Program will bi-annually assess and review each student's academic and research progress. This review would include such factors as performance on coursework and PhD comprehensive examinations, as well as thesis progress. The Program should provide feedback, which may include specific goals and timelines for completion of various components of degree requirements. Feedback may also take the form of a written contract of expectations. Areas of concern and lack of progress must be clearly identified for the student.
- The Program will identify paths/resources available to students for assistance and if they wish to raise concerns about their Program, Supervisor, etc.
- The Program encourages open communication and feedback between students and supervisors on all issues, including supervisory practices.
- The Program will strive to maintain an atmosphere conducive to scholarly work by graduate students and help enhance their creativity and productivity.
- The Program should provide mechanisms for monitoring/resolving problems that may arise between graduate students, supervisors, and supervisory committee members and do so promptly. The Program should ensure these mechanisms are congruent with established appeals policies and procedures.
- The Program should ensure a safe working environment for students and inform them of all relevant safety and work regulations.
- The Program will ensure that students know the evaluation criteria for all work before work commences.

The Supervisor

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Students may be supervised either solely or jointly. These are defined as follows:

Sole Supervisor: A single faculty member is responsible for overseeing the student and takes sole responsibility for the student's financial and academic support.

Joint Supervisor: Two (or more) faculty members supervise a student, sharing joint responsibility for financial and academic support of the student.

- The Supervisor(s) will implement and follow the Expectations and Requirements of Supervisors in the [Supervision Regulations](#) of SGPS.
- The Supervisor must commit the time and energy required to engage in graduate student supervision successfully. As part of this commitment, the Supervisor should always display the highest ethical standards of behaviour.
- Potential supervisors should have sufficient familiarity with the field of research to provide appropriate guidance and supervision or indicate a willingness to gain that familiarity before agreeing to act as Supervisor.
- In the first term of study, the Supervisor will discuss with the student, very early on, any expectations and the relevant policies concerning authorship on publications and issues surrounding intellectual property ownership (this may include patents/licenses). This discussion may result in written agreements or contracts between the Supervisor and student covering these issues.
- In the first term of study, the Supervisor will make the student aware of program requirements and deadlines, various sources of funding, policies covering the conduct of research, and any relevant safety and workplace regulations. The nature of any financial support provided by the Supervisor should be communicated clearly to the student in writing, including details such as the amount of financial support, the length of time of such support, and any specific conditions of this financial support.
- In the first term of study, the Supervisor will discuss and formulate a plan of study with the student for completing degree requirements and thesis work, with clear milestones denoting progress. This plan would include, for example, assisting the student in selecting and planning a suitable and manageable research project, setting a viable schedule, and adhering to it for thesis progress and completion. The student must present this plan at the first advisory committee meeting.
- The Supervisor must be available for regular consultation with the student. The Supervisor and student must discuss and agree on an appropriate schedule for supervision meetings, and the Supervisor must provide constructive and timely feedback to the student. More generally, the Supervisor must maintain open communication and feedback with the student on all issues, including supervisory practices.
- The Supervisor must provide regular evaluations and assessments of the student's progress and academic performance. These evaluations would include a review with the student and supervisory committee, at least annually, of progress on thesis research and any other relevant degree requirements. The Supervisor must then provide input to the Program regarding the student's progress.
- The Supervisor must make reasonable arrangements to ensure adequate and appropriate research resources are available for the student's thesis project. The Supervisor must help ensure the research environment is safe, healthy, and free from harassment, discrimination, and conflict. To this end, the Supervisor must be aware of all pertinent regulations and policies covering these issues.
- The Supervisor must provide guidance, instruction, and encouragement regarding student research activities. The Supervisor must help ensure that the student has access to intellectual resources and research opportunities and encourage dissemination of research results through publications and conferences.
- The Supervisor must monitor any major discrepancies in the advice given to the student by members of the supervisory committee and/or Supervisor and attempt to achieve resolution and consensus

on the issue(s) involved.

- Supervisors must be familiar with all Program, SGPS, and University policies and procedures regarding graduate students and supervision, along with information on graduate student financial support.
- Supervisors must ensure that they take on only as many graduate students as they can adequately supervise.
- Supervisors must make satisfactory alternative supervisor arrangements if they are away for a prolonged period.
- Supervisors must promptly inform the Program (i.e., Graduate Chair or Department Chair) of any serious difficulties in supervision. These might include major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

The Advisory Committee

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Criteria for Choosing an Advisory Committee

- Organize your advisory committee within the first two months of initial enrollment in the Program
- Choose Advisors (normally people with an academic appointment at Western) whose expertise provides insight into the research project
- The committee must consist of at least two advisors in addition to your Supervisor(s). At least one of these advisors must have their primary academic appointment in Medical Biophysics.
- Hold Advisory Committee Meetings every six months.
- Following committee meetings, completed Advisory Committee Forms MUST be emailed to the Academic Programs Coordinator and Graduate Chair
- Becomes part of the student's file maintained by the Department of Medical Biophysics
- In conjunction with the Supervisor, the supervisory committee must help the student develop a program of study and report on the progress of the student's work. Members of the supervisory committee thus serve to broaden and deepen the range of expertise and experience available for providing advice and for assessment of the student. As such, the Supervisor, student, and Program (e.g., [Graduate Chair](#)) must consult each other to determine membership on this committee.
- The supervisory committee may assist the Supervisor with the monitoring process. This monitoring will include bi-annual meetings between the student, Supervisor, and supervisory committee to review progress on degree requirements.
- Members of the supervisory committee may provide additional guidance and advice on the student's thesis research project, thus complementing the expertise of the Supervisor. The supervisory committee members must be available to provide other sources of information to the student, as well as constructive criticism and discussion of the student's ideas as they develop.
- Members of the supervisory committee must be reasonably accessible to the student when called upon for discussion of the student's academic progress, consultation on issues related to the thesis research project, and for general guidance. Supervisory committee members must be reasonably available to meet at the student's or Supervisor's request.

The Relationship Between Student, Supervisor, and Advisory Committee

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- The student must make and maintain a strong commitment to devote the required time and energy needed to engage successfully in graduate work and research, write a thesis, and contribute fully to the scholarly and intellectual life of the University. The student must show dedicated efforts to gain the background knowledge and skills needed to pursue graduate work successfully and adhere to the highest standards of ethical behaviour to assure academic integrity and professionalism.
- In the first term of study, the student must discuss with the Supervisor any expectations concerning

authorship on publications and issues surrounding intellectual property ownership (this may include patents/licenses). This discussion may result in written agreements or contracts between the student and Supervisor covering these issues. In this regard, the student must become familiar with relevant policies in these domains.

- In the first term of study, the student must become aware of all program requirements and deadlines, information about various sources of funding, and university policies covering the proper conduct of research, race relations, sexual harassment, AIDs, appeals, and any other relevant safety and workplace policies and regulations.
- In the first term of study, the student must discuss and formulate with their Supervisor a plan of study for completion of degree requirements and thesis work, with clear milestones denoting progress. These milestones would include, for example, setting a viable schedule and adhering to it for all graduate work, including thesis progress and completion. Any variations to this schedule, including prolonged absences by the student, must be discussed. More generally, the student must maintain open communication and feedback with the Supervisor on all issues, including supervisory practices.
- In the first term of study, the student and Supervisor must discuss and agree on an appropriate schedule for supervision meetings. This discussion must also include an agreement regarding appropriate time frames for submitting student materials to be reviewed by the Supervisor and the Supervisor providing feedback. The student must be reasonably available to meet with the Supervisor and supervisory committee when requested and be able to report fully and regularly on thesis progress and results.
- The student must seriously consider and respond to the Supervisor's and committee members' comments and advice.
- The student must maintain registration throughout the Program and ensure that visas and employment authorization documents are up to date where required. The student must be aware of and conform to program, SGPS, and University requirements relating to deadlines, thesis style, and award applications.
- The student must pay due attention to the need to maintain a safe, tidy, and healthy workplace. The student must respect the work and equipment of others and show tolerance and respect for others sharing the same facilities. This would include, for example, cleaning up the workspace when finished and complying with all safety and work regulations of the program/university.
- The student must be thoughtful and reasonably frugal in using resources and assist in obtaining resources for the research of other group members, when applicable.
- The student must comply with all ethical policies and procedures governing human or animal research where applicable.
- To the greatest extent possible, the student must meet the agreed performance standards and deadlines of funding organizations when financing has been provided under a contract or grant. This would include adherence to any contractual terms under which the thesis research is conducted.
- The student must meet the terms and conditions of any financial contractual agreements, such as a TA position.
- The student must promptly inform the Program (i.e., Graduate Chair or Department Chair) of any serious difficulties that may arise in supervision. These might include major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

Your Time in Medical Biophysics at Western

Graduate Stipend Compensation Rates

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The Medical Biophysics Graduate program has set compensation rates for graduate student stipends – more than or equal to the minimum rates set by SGPS. Compensation rates vary depending on external/internal funding. The current Graduate Stipend Compensation Rates are [here](#). Please consult with your graduate supervisor or the Academic Programs Coordinator if you have any questions about your stipend. Your initial Welcome Letter indicates your compensation rate.

Current tuition amounts are in the [UWO Graduate Tuition Fees & Schedule](#). Medical Biophysics graduate stipends will be adjusted to cover additional increases in fees.

Be aware that your compensation rate may vary from year to year. Changes in circumstances, such as receiving scholarships, traineeships, GTAships, etc., may increase your annual income. However, other circumstances, such as the termination of scholarships, traineeships, GTAships, etc., may decrease your annual income. At the start of each academic year, students are encouraged to plan ahead financially in order to provide for their living expenses and tuition costs. If you require financial planning assistance, you are encouraged to confidentially discuss your circumstances with one of Western's [Student Financial Aid Councillors](#).

Western Graduate Research Scholarships (WGRS) – Partial Tuition Support

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As part of their Graduate Stipend, all full-time Medical Biophysics graduate students in good standing with the Program will receive a WGRS to assist with the cost of tuition each term.

Be advised that part-time graduate students are not eligible for WGRS support.

An MSc student will receive WGRS support for a total of six academic terms (equivalent to two years) of enrollment from their initial term of registration.

An MSc student who reclassifies to PhD status by the end of their fifth academic term will receive WGRS support for a total of 15 academic terms (the equivalent of 5 years) of enrollment from their initial term of registration as an MSc student.

A PhD student with a previous MSc degree will receive WGRS support for a total of 12 academic terms (equivalent to 4 years) of enrollment from their initial term of registration.

A direct-entry PhD student will receive WGRS support for a total of 15 academic terms (equivalent to 5 years) of enrollment from their initial term of registration.

A graduate student who receives unsatisfactory advisory committee meeting reports on an ongoing basis or is otherwise not meeting degree expectations with the Program may no longer be eligible for WGRS support until the student satisfactorily addresses these issues.

Year X Status – Financial Support Implications

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All Medical Biophysics graduate students are expected to complete their degree requirements (including thesis defense and publication) within the time frames described in the WGRS Support section. A student becomes *Year X* when they exceed those time frames. At that point, graduate supervisors are not obliged to provide a stipend for living expenses or additional tuition support. However, graduate supervisors may consider a stipend to assist with living expenses and tuition costs in exceptional circumstances.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

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A limited number of graduate teaching assistantships (TAs) may be available to some Medical Biophysics students depending on their background training and the availability of TAs in the Department. Students

will be compensated for their services at rates negotiated by [PSAC 610 - Teaching Assistants' and Postdoctoral Associates' Union at Western University](#). The Department will communicate TA application timelines and details to students via email. Allocations will conclude in August for the upcoming academic year.

Graduate Students with Disabilities

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Western accommodates students with disabilities, provided that the academic integrity of the course or Program is not compromised. Information on Support Services for Students with Disabilities is [here](#).

Health and Wellness

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As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to prioritize their health and wellness. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre as part of their registration. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found [here](#).

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding, such as their faculty supervisor, program director (Graduate Chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources are found [here](#).

Part-Time Status in a Full-Time Program

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Part-time registration in full-time programs may be granted in exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of the Graduate Program and the Vice-Provost, SGPS. 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 to reduce or avoid tuition fees. Being beyond the funding eligibility period will not 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.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

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The Vice-Provost, SGPS, may grant a leave of absence for pregnancy/parental, medical or compassionate grounds, normally to a maximum of three terms or 12 months, on the recommendation of the Medical Biophysics Graduate Chair.

While on leave, students are expected to refrain from normal activities as graduate students (e.g. attending classes or conducting research). However, students and supervisors may negotiate ongoing communication during this period.

Students are advised to consult with the Graduate Chair and/or Academic Programs Coordinator to discuss the calendar details for arranging an LOA as well as other special arrangements, such as dealing with course enrollment during this period.

The date for degree completion and WGRS support will be extended by the duration of the time taken during the LOA.

More information on an LOA and a link to the LOA application is [here](#).

Medical Accommodation

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We understand there may be times when you are unable to complete your academic responsibilities. Information on Medical Accommodation is [here](#).

Withdrawal and Readmission after Withdrawal

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

Students who voluntarily withdraw from the Program will receive the notation "voluntarily withdrawal from the program" on their transcripts. Students who are involuntarily withdrawn from the Program will receive the notation "required to withdraw" on their transcripts.

Students who have voluntarily withdrawn or who have been required to withdraw and wish to complete their Program must formally re-apply for admission. The Program and SGPS must approve credit for previous work completed.

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 admitted.
- Payment of all fees owed 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 and made payable to the Western University via the Registrar's Office.

Reclassification from MSc to PhD Status

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The Medical Biophysics graduate program allows students to reclassify their registration from Master's to Doctoral without completing the Master's degree.

Transfers from the Master's to the doctoral Program must occur before the sixth term of registration as a Master's student.

The Program requires all potential Doctoral candidates to prepare and defend a Doctoral thesis proposal. The student's Supervisor, advisory committee and a member of the Graduate Executive act as the examining panel for the proposal defense.

To effectively prepare for this Milestone, please refer to the [program procedures](#).

SGPS Requirements for Continuous Graduate Enrollment

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The following information is from the SGPS [Registration Regulations webpage](#), which will have the most up-to-date information:

- 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%.
- Students may be absent from the University while visiting libraries, attending a graduate course at another institute, doing fieldwork, etc. If such periods exceed four weeks in any term, then formal approval is required from both the program Graduate Chair and the Vice-Provost of SGPS.
- To be registered, graduate students must pay or make arrangements to pay all fees by the established deadline each term.

See the Office of the Registrar's [fee schedules webpage](#) for exact deadlines.

Failure to pay fees will result in deregistration.

- Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in SGPS in each successive term from initial registration, until the end of the term in which they complete all degree requirements.

SGPS Overview For Thesis Submission, Defense, and Publication

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For the most up-to-date information guide, please see the SGPS [thesis webpage](#).

Critical Supplementary Thesis Defense Notes For Medical Biophysics MSc Students

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At the program level, please refer to the Medical Biophysics [MSc Thesis Defense webpage](#) URL for information on organizing the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and submission of the corrected/examined thesis for publication.

Critical Supplementary Thesis Defense Notes For Medical Biophysics PhD Students

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At the program level, please refer to this Medical Biophysics [PhD Thesis Defense webpage](#) for the organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense and submission of corrected/examined thesis for publication.

Thesis Defense Only (TDO) Status

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If you have completed all degree requirements (including thesis submission by the appropriate deadline) but have not defended your thesis before the end of the current term, you are eligible to continue your registration into the next term in Thesis Defense Only (TDO) status. This additional term makes completing your thesis possible while not requiring you to pay full tuition fees (ancillary fees still apply, and UHIP where applicable). This status may apply for a maximum of one term. Instructions and forms for applying for TDO are [here](#).

In order to be considered for TDO, Doctoral and Masters students must submit their thesis for examination by the deadline set on the SGPS [Thesis Timelines webpage](#). The specific deadline date used by SGPS is "Final Date for Candidate to Submit Thesis for Examination to SGPS." TDO will be granted to those students whose supervisors have not been able to secure an examination board and/or examination before the end of the term.

Students who have applied for TDO by the deadline and meet all TDO criteria do not need to apply for a change of status. SGPS will contact these students and the graduate program individually.

Convocation

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Students receive official notification via email from SGPS when their theses have been accepted for publication within the Scholarship@Western Thesis Repository. At this point, students have completed all degree requirements in order to graduate at the next convocation.

In order to graduate, students must apply to graduate via their [Student Center](#). This process enables them to confirm the degrees they are receiving and how their names will appear on their diplomas. Instructions are found [here](#).

Visit the [convocation website](#) for more details.

Appendices

Medical Biophysics Graduate Program Guidelines and Forms

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All SGPS and Medical Biophysics graduate program-specific forms are available [here](#).

Western University Graduate Student Supports

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- [Learning Development & Success](#)
- [Welcome to Academic Support & Engagement](#)
 - [Accessible Education](#)
- [Wellness & Wellbeing](#)
 - [Mental Health Support](#)
 - [Disclosures of Gender-Based and Sexual Violence](#)
 - [Student Support & Case Management](#)
- [Office of the Ombudsperson](#)
- [Society of Graduate Students](#)
- [School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies \(SGPS\)](#)
 - [SGPS Career Development](#)
 - [Own Your Future](#)
- [Western International](#)
- [International and Exchange Student Centre](#)
- [Centre for Teaching & Learning – TA Programs](#)
- [Indigenous Student Centre](#)