



Handbook for EEB Graduate Students

(2024-2025)
(updated Sept. 1, 2024)



WELCOME to the new EEB Graduate Students

From Asher Cutter

Welcome to the Graduate Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) at the University of Toronto! We hope that your graduate studies will be scientifically challenging and exciting, that you will experience worthy mentors and collaborators, and that you will build lasting friendships among faculty and fellow students. We are very proud of our department, in large part due to our community of outstanding students like you. We urge you to become involved in the life of our EEB department to help to make it an even more lively and interesting place. We look forward to meeting and interacting with you soon!

Regards,

Asher Cutter, Professor and Associate Chair of Graduate Studies

On behalf of the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Graduate Student Association (EGSA):

Welcome to EEB at the University of Toronto!

As a graduate student in EEB at U of T, you are joining a community of scientists with diverse research interests and backgrounds. We aim to foster an environment ripe for the exchange of knowledge and ideas but also to support each other through times of hardship and stress. Being a graduate student will be an exciting and uniquely challenging experience for many of you, and the EGSA is here to address both these facets of grad life. As the needs of our community change over time, it is the EGSA's aim to serve as a pillar of support for our community, voicing any student concerns to the department faculty and acting as a conduit to other forms of assistance while the necessary changes are being pushed forward.

All graduate students in EEB are members of the EGSA. The EGSA represents students from all campuses (St. George, UTM, UTSC, and the ROM) and is a great resource for assistance with many aspects of graduate school. Throughout the year, the EGSA works with faculty to address matters such as departmental climate, interpersonal issues (with the EEB Allyship Network), graduate student mental health (with the Mental Health Committee), connects EEB students with the graduate community at large through the Graduate Students' Union and CUPE 3902 Unit 1 (the teaching assistants' workers' union), as well as facilitate equity, diversity, and inclusion across the department. We aim to inform our graduate students about departmental and university affairs through emails and EGSA meetings. The EGSA Social Representatives do a great job at hosting several events throughout the year, such as Halloween, winter holidays, and regular bi-weekly hangouts with a mix of low and high-energy activities. Additionally, the Mental Health Committee runs events and workshops aimed at helping grad students navigate resources to manage their mental health. The Student Journal Club/Seminar Series hosts weekly sessions where graduate students can share their research, get feedback from their peers, and engage in discussion about recent papers/current events in science. At the end of each school year, we support the amazing organizing chairs and dedicated volunteer graduate students in running the Atwood Colloquium in Ecology & Evolution. This event brings together all campuses to showcase research and feature three guest speakers. This includes two speakers selected by the faculty and the Atwood lecturer, an outstanding senior scientist selected by the graduate students (you!) through the help of the Atwood lecture chair.

We are excited to have you as a part of this community and look forward to your active involvement. **Be sure to attend the first EGSA meeting on September 6th (12-1pm)** to find

out what we are up to and all the exciting things we've got planned for the upcoming year! This year our meetings will be hybrid and across the three campuses to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate either virtually or in-person. These EGSA meetings and social gatherings are a great way to contribute to and get involved in the department. We hope that you will enjoy your time as a graduate student in EEB as you continue to meet friends, make professional contacts, and develop skills that you will take with you to the next stage of your career.

For more information on the EGSA, please see:

- The EGSA website <http://egsa.sa.utoronto.ca/>
- The EGSA section on the departmental website <http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/grad/egsa.htm>
- The EGSA anonymous feedback form <https://forms.gle/WLkunTvhZrqfAdK4A>
- For access to the EEB grad Slack channel email louisa.bartkovich@mail.utoronto.ca

Again, welcome to EEB! We look forward to getting to know you!

EGSA Co-presidents 2024-2025

Louisa Bartkovich (louisa.bartkovich@mail.utoronto.ca) and Jessie Wang (jae.wang@mail.utoronto.ca)

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NOTE: Every effort was made to ensure the information in this Handbook was accurate at press time (September 1, 2024). This handbook is available on the EEB Graduate Student Handbook webpage. Revised versions of the handbook will be posted as they become available.

GRADUATE CONTACTS

EEB Tri-Campus Graduate Chair

Prof. Joel Levine
Earth Sciences Centre, Room 3055E
Phone: 416-946-3340
Email: joel.levine@utoronto.ca

Associate Chair of EEB Graduate Studies

Prof. Asher Cutter
Earth Sciences Centre, Room 2052
Phone: 416-978-4602
Email: asher.cutter@utoronto.ca

EEB Graduate Program Administrator

Kitty Lam
Earth Sciences Centre, Room 3045-B
Phone: 416-978-7172
Email: gradadmin.eeb@utoronto.ca

EEB Communications & Graduate Coordinator (MSc defenses and PhD appraisal exams)

Fazia Khan
Earth Sciences Centre, Room 3045-A
Phone: 416-978-0004
Email: grad.eeb@utoronto.ca
Email for MSc defenses and PhD appraisal exams: grad.eeb@utoronto.ca

Ecology & Evolutionary Biology Graduate Student Association

Co-Presidents (2024-25): Jessie wang and Louisa Bartkovich
Website: <http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/grad/egsa.htm>

EEB Graduate Studies Website: <https://eeb.utoronto.ca/>

School of Graduate Studies (SGS), Student Services Office

Website: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current-students/>
63 St. George Street, Room 102
Phone: 416-978-6614

Note for almost all situations, you should contact Kitty Lam and she will deal with SGS for you. Kitty will let you know who to contact at SGS if you should contact them directly.

Graduate Student Union

Website: <https://www.utgsu.ca/>
16 Bancroft Avenue
Phone: 416-946-8699

*****For many other U of Toronto services available to EEB graduate students, please see the Campus Life section and the appendices at the end of this handbook *****

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all relevant deadlines.

2024

September 1: Deadline for payment of tuition fees if you are not deferring them.

September 3: Some graduate courses begin (check the EEB Grad Course webpage for Details on starting dates and times; courses at UTM and UTSC may begin before this).

September 11: Summer Session Grades available for viewing by students on the SWS (ACORN).
Please check your academic record and ensure all information is accurate

September 13: Last date to register without a late registration fee.

September 16: Final date to submit the final version of a Ph.D. thesis to SGS to avoid fee charges for 2024-2025 (note that after that date, the tuition fees are pro-rated monthly in the last year)

September 18: Final date to add full-year and Fall session courses.

September 30: Final date for receipt of degree recommendation and submission of MSc Thesis for November convocation and to avoid fee charges. (*Approval of Corrections to MSc Thesis form must be submitted to the Graduate Office by September 28*)

September 30: Final date to submit final Ph.D. thesis to SGS (ProQuest) for Fall Convocation.

October 28: Final date to drop September session full-year or half-courses without academic penalty.

November: Fall Convocation Information and Dates are posted at:
www.convocation.utoronto.ca

December 20: Recommended tuition fee payment deadline for all tuition fees billed for the 2024 tax year for students who want eligible 2024 tuition fee payments to be reported on the 2024 calendar T2202 tax certificate

December 24: University closed for winter break from Tuesday, December 24 to Friday, January 3 inclusive.

2025

January 6: University re-opens

- January 6:** Most formal graduate courses (check the EEB Grad Course webpage for details) and seminars begin this week or the following week.
- January 15:** Final date to submit Doctoral thesis without fee payment for January (fees are pro-rated monthly for the last year in the program – see details below)
- January 15:** September (Fall) Session Grades available for viewing by students on ACORN. *Please check your academic record and ensure all information is accurate.*
- January 17:** Final date to register for new January registrants.
- January 20:** Final date to add Winter session courses for half courses.
- January 24:** Final date to be recommended for March (in absentia) degree conferral. Final date for receipt of degree recommendations and thesis submission for March or June graduation for MSc students, without fees being charged for the Winter session. (*“Approval of Corrections to MSc Thesis” form must be submitted to the Graduate Office by January 22*).
- February 28:** Final date to drop full-year courses or January session courses without academic penalty. Final date to withdraw from a program without academic penalty.
- March:** March Graduation *in absentia* Information is posted at: www.convocation.utoronto.ca.
- April 11:** Final date to be recommended for June Convocation. Final date to submit Ph.D. theses and M.Sc theses for June Convocation.
- April 30:** Recommended tuition fee payment deadline for students registering or starting Their program in the Summer session to ensure payment is received by the registration deadline of May 2, and to avoid cancellation of registration and course enrolment.
- May 2:** Final date for registration for May (Summer) session.
- May 14:** Winter Session grades available for viewing by students on SWS (ACORN). *Please check your academic record and ensure all information is accurate.*

It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all relevant deadlines.

REGISTRATION, ENROLLMENT, UPDATING YOUR INFORMATION, AND PAYMENTS

Registration and fees

Students must register and, unless they defer their fees (details on how to defer payment this way are below), pay fees at the beginning of each academic year (i.e., in August-September). Registration must be completed before students attend classes or otherwise make use of university facilities. A student is considered to be registered as soon as he or she has either paid tuition and incidental fees, or has made a request to register without payment (see below). A student's registration is normally for the full year (i.e. from September 1st to August 31st). The deadline for registration is September 13, 2024 or, for students registering for the first time in the Winter session, January 17, 2025. After this date, a late registration fee will be levied. Student Accounts has revised the registration invoice process and they will no longer be mailing paper invoices to students. Students can view instructions on the Student Accounts website, view their account on the Student Web Service (see next page for details), and then make payment. Fee schedules are available at www.fees.utoronto.ca.

Fees must be paid by **September 1, 2024** so that the payment is processed by **September 13, the deadline to register for Fall/Winter 2024-2025; however, we recommend that, when possible, students defer their fees. If a request is made early enough, most students can defer paying some or all of their fees, interest-free, until April 30, 2025.** The fee deferral process differs for different groups of students. *Students who are in the EEB funded cohort*, that is they are (1) in the first 12 months of their MSc, (2) in the PhD program and in the first 5 years after entering with a BSc or transferring from a MSc to a PhD, or (3) in the PhD program and in the first 4 years after entering with an MSc, may submit a request to register without payment **online** at (www.acorn.utoronto.ca); students in months 13-16 of their MSc can defer their fees by submitting a register without payment form to Kitty Lam and she will defer your fees for you (you are not required to submit proof of funding). ***For students beyond the funded cohort and who are receiving a major award, RA from their supervisor and/or teaching assistantship that cover the minimum payment, may defer their fees by completing this Register without Payment form*** (<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/RegisterWithoutPaymentForm-all-sessions.pdf>) and by submitting it to Kitty Lam (gradadmin.eeb@utoronto.ca). The Register without Payment form must be submitted to Kitty by email before **Wednesday, September 11, 2024**, otherwise the fee deferral will not take place. If you don't defer your fees online on ACORN (SWS) or submit the Register without Payment form, it is assumed that you are registering by making the minimum payment. If you miss the registration deadline and wish to register and defer fees after the registration deadline, you will have to go to SGS to register and arrange for fee deferral. Students registering late like this will be charged a late registration fee.

In March, **you should check your ACORN (formerly ROSI) account to determine whether you have an unpaid balance for your tuition and other fees that you need to pay off before April 30.**

Updating your information (banking including direct deposit payments, address, etc.)

Using the Student Web Service on ACORN [Student Web Services | University of Toronto \(utoronto.ca\)](http://www.utoronto.ca), registered students can enter/update their banking information. **Students who fill this in will have their awards, scholarship, and tuition over-payment refunds deposited directly into their bank account, rather than receiving the payment as a cheque.** It is a simple process to add your bank

information on ACORN (see the link on the upper left of the U of T Home Page). After you log in, select Personal Information, then click on Direct Deposit, and follow the instructions.

Graduate students in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology can access the Student Web Service (SWS) through ACORN (formerly ROSI) [Student Web Services | University of Toronto \(utoronto.ca\)](http://utoronto.ca) Instructions are located there and also in the document called "SWS instructions" that is posted on the EEB Grad Student webpage under 'Courses' and 'Documents, Forms and Links'. These are the services available on the SWS:

- View/Change address, telephone numbers, email
- View final grades
- View academic history
- Order transcripts
- Add/request/drop/list courses or waitlist requests
- View personal timetable or My Calendar
- View your financial account information (invoices, account details, payments (e.g. under the green tab "\$ Finances" on ACORN you can see the following: Tuition and other expenses are in: Financial Account > Invoice & Net Cost and Award payments are in: Awards & Aid > "My Awards" tab)
- Update direct deposit details
- Defer payment of tuition (available to students in the funded cohort)
- Print Educational Credit tax forms (T2202A)
- Order convocation tickets
- View activity log
- Change your PIN
- Set your account up for reactivation of PIN

Payments including RA and TA

For students arriving in September, the first payments from Research Assistantships (RA) (funding from their supervisor(s)) and/or TA position(s) will be deposited at the end of September and monthly thereafter, in accordance with the agreements made in early September between students and their supervisor(s) (see the stipend form and letter that you will receive from Kitty by mid-Sept. for more details on the amounts and timing of payments). Some University of Toronto Fellowship (UTF) allocations in your stipend package will be automatically paid toward your tuition and other fees in September and January payments.

Tuition and other fees

Academic fees paid by doctoral students in the final year of their program are pro-rated monthly. The pro-rating is based on the date the completed thesis is submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, not the date of the thesis defense. For a table of monthly charges, refer to the appropriate 'Final Year Doctoral Students' link (domestic versus international, before or after the time limit (PhD: 6 years, PhDU

(entered EEB's PhD program as an undergraduate): 7 years) (if this is last year's schedule, don't worry, tuition and other fees do not increase much each year): https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/admissions/graduate-fees/#section_4

PhD students who submit their final thesis with all corrections and modifications by September 16, 2024 do not pay tuition for the Fall session but, after this date, the tuition fees increase slightly each month (the deadline is the 15th of each month). Incidental fees are pro-rated differently: students finishing between September 17, 2024 and January 15, 2025 will pay a one-session incidental fee and those finishing between January 16, 2025 and August 31, 2025 will pay a two-session incidental fee.

For MSc students, see emails from Kitty for deadlines in September, January and May to avoid paying fees for the next term.

Campus affiliation

Graduate students may apply for affiliation with one of the U of T Mississauga (UTM) or U of T Scarborough (UTSC) campuses, instead of with the St. George campus, if they meet specific criteria. Affiliation with UTM or UTSC gives them access to some benefits restricted to one of those campuses. Deadlines for requesting a change of campus affiliation are the same as the registration deadline at the beginning of each term. Retroactive changes are not allowed. Applications can be found here—scroll down to **Change of Campus Affiliation**: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/student-forms-letter-requests/>

EEB GRADUATE COURSES

Course Enrolment

Academic advisors, faculty and staff are available to assist and advise students about choosing courses, but it is the student's responsibility to actually enroll in courses, to keep personal and academic information up to date at all times, and to follow all University, SGS, departmental and program regulations, requirements and deadlines. Students are automatically enrolled for their research/thesis activity but must sign up for EEB graduate courses on ACORN via SWS: [Student Web Services | University of Toronto \(utoronto.ca\)](#). Graduate students in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology can use the Student Web Service (SWS) to view their current courses and to request or drop courses; the Department permits students to use the Student Web Service (SWS, ACORN: [Student Web Services | University of Toronto \(utoronto.ca\)](#)) to enroll in courses as long as they do so within the required deadlines. Not all departments will use ACORN for course sign up; if students wish to take a course offered by another department, see information on the EEB Graduate Student Courses webpage. Note: students need permission from their supervisor(s), their supervisory committee, and the EEB Graduate Office to take a course (for credit) from another department. See the EEB Graduate Courses webpage for further information on how to enroll for courses: <https://eeb.utoronto.ca/education/graduate/graduate-courses/>

Not all courses are offered every year and new courses (e.g. Special Topics courses on a specific theme) will be offered in future years. Those offered in 2024-2025 are asterisked in the list below. Please refer to the EEB Graduate Courses webpage for a list of current and future course offerings, along with descriptions of

their content and, for the current year, the term in which they are offered and, in some cases, the time and location of the classes: <https://eeb.utoronto.ca/education/graduate/graduate-courses/>

Some courses offered by other departments that might be of interest to EEB grad students are also listed near the end on the EEB graduate courses website.

The following is a list of the graduate courses offered in 2024-2025 at the time of the September update of this document. Please see the EEB Graduate Courses webpage for information on other courses that may be offered later this year.

Courses Offered at the Graduate Level Only

* Courses are offered in 2024-2025

EEB 1210H*	Advanced Statistics (1/4 course) [M-J. Fortin]
EEB 1230H*	Multivariate Statistics [D. Jackson]
EEB 1250H*	Spatial Statistics (1/4 course) [M-J. Fortin]
EEB 1310H*	Philosophy and Methods [H. Rodd and N. Rollinson]
EEB 1315H	Professional Skills Development (1/4 course)
EEB 1320H*	Ecology: Core Course in Ecology [M. Krkosek]
EEB 1350H	Evolution: Core Course in Evolution
EEB 1357H	Field Ecology and Evolution of Ontario Ecosystems
EEB 1450H	Special Topics in Ecology and Evolution
EEB 1450H	Special Topics in Ecology and Evolution
EEB 1452H*	Special Topics in Ecology and Evolution: Evolvability (1/4 course) [J. Sztepanacz]
EEB 1453H*	Special Topics in Evolution: Classic papers in E&E (1/4 course) [R. Murray]
EEB 1454H*	Special Topics in Evolution: Current topics in paleontology (1/4 course) [R. Reisz]

Graduate Courses with Significant Undergraduate Content**

Note: These courses will normally constitute only a minor component of the required credits

EEB 1420H*	Special Topics in Ecology: Models in Ecology, Epidemiology, and Conservation) [UTM, P. Molnar]
EEB 1421H*	Special Topics in Ecology (Plant-animal Interactions) [M. Frederickson]
EEB 1423H	Special Topics in Ecology (Marine Ecology)
EEB 1430H*	Modelling in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology [M. Osmond]
EEB 14xx	Computing Stochastic Models in Evolutionary Biology (Winter) [T. Parins- Fukuchi]
EEB 1443H*	Phylogenetic Principles [UTM, S. Stefanovic]
EEB 1459H*	Introduction to Theoretical Population Genetics [A. Agrawal]
EEB 1460H*	Molecular Evolution and Genomics [B. Chang]
EEB 1462H	Phylogenetic Systematics

Suggest a special topics course: Previous special topics courses include: Parasites in Communities, Natural Selection: Levels and Landscapes, Behavioural Genetics, Field Ecology and Evolution of Ontario Ecosystems. Find some grad students with common interests and convince one or two faculty members to put on a special topics course that is of mutual interest, then send a short description to the EEB Graduate office for approval.

Regarding EEB Core Ecology and Core Evolution Courses: *These courses will cover the basics in the field (ecology or evolution). These courses are meant to be useful preparation for PhD students for the Question Bank part of the Appraisal Exam. If you have taken two or more 3rd or 4th year undergrad courses in a field (ecology or evolution), you may have sufficient background knowledge of the field already and the course for that field may not be especially useful for you—discuss whether you should take either of these courses with your supervisor and supervisory committee. If you have no or very little background in the field, you may need to sit in on undergrad lectures or do outside reading before you take one of these courses; however, if you have taken other courses in E&E (e.g., you have no background in ecology but you have taken courses in evolution, math or biological theory), ask the EEB graduate office and your supervisor and committee whether you will be equipped to take one of these courses.*

In 2024-2025, graduate courses and seminars officially begin in the week of September 3rd or the following week for September session courses (F) and January 6th or the following week for January session courses (S). Note: Undergraduate courses may begin earlier than this, especially on the UTM and UTSC campuses. Also, instructors frequently modify starting dates; consult first with the EEB Grad Course website and, if information is not available there, consult the course instructor so that you know the start date and location for the first class of your course(s).

UPDATING YOUR ADDRESS, BANK, EMERGENCY CONTACT, ETC. INFORMATION

Students can change/update their contact information and view their academic record on the Student Web Service (SWS via ACORN: [Student Web Services | University of Toronto \(utoronto.ca\)](#)); see the link on the upper left corner of the U of T Home Page).

For students who would like to receive payments by direct deposit to their bank, see the Registration section in this handbook (above) for information on how to provide banking information through ACORN on the SWS.

GENERAL GRADUATE PROGRAMME REGULATIONS FOR MSc AND PhD DEGREES

The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) establishes procedures for the completion of MSc and PhD degrees at the University of Toronto. Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) follows these procedures and has

established additional or modified practices; these are detailed under MSc and PhD Program Regulations below. The SGS procedures are available in the online version of the SGS Calendar.

Graduate students in science at the University of Toronto, whether domestic or international, are provided financial support in the form of an annual stipend made up of, in 2024-2025, a base (minimum) amount of \$22,250 plus tuition and fees (including UHIP for international students) while they are in the EEB “funded cohort” (details below for each program). Departments may increase the stipend amount but cannot offer less than this minimum. The EEB Extended Minimum Funding Level for 2024-2025 for students in the funded cohort is \$34,000 plus tuition and fees for PhD students (4 years for PhD and 5 years for PhDU) and \$30,000 plus tuition and fees for students in the Master’s program (prorated for months 13-16).

A graduate student’s primary academic mentor is the research supervisor (or, in some cases, students have co-supervisors). In addition, a **Supervisory Committee** comprising the research supervisor (and co-supervisor if relevant) and other faculty members from EEB help guide students through their program of research and study. **Students must meet with their supervisory committee at least once or twice a year (see below for details) to maintain good academic standing** (see box below).

MSc students must complete one half-course and successfully defend their thesis in an oral exam. The nominal (“EEB funded cohort”) MSc program is 16 months in length. [If MSc students win external scholarship support or, by agreement with their supervisor, they may extend the MSc program to 24 months.]

PhD students are in the funded cohort for 4 years (for students entering with an MSc) or 5 years (for students entering without an MSc). After leaving the ‘funded’ cohort, some funding may be available, but income levels may drop; students and supervisor(s) should discuss this.

PhD students are examined on a research proposal and their general knowledge of ecology and evolutionary biology in a mid-program Appraisal Examination. This examination also involves a departmental seminar about their proposal. **The appraisal exam must be held 14 to 20 months after registration for students with a MSc degree and 14 to 26 months after first registration in the EEB MSc program for students who entered their PhD directly from an undergraduate degree.** Please see the PhD Program regulations below and the relevant documents on this webpage:

<https://eeb.utoronto.ca/education/graduate/graduate-handbook/> for advice and more details about the appraisal exam.

Course work should be completed by the end of the third year for students with a MSc, and by the end of the 4th year for students without a MSc (direct entry students). Finally, to complete their degree, PhD students must deliver a departmental ‘exit’ seminar on their research program and orally defend their thesis.

EEB will alert students when deadlines have been missed, but it is the responsibility of the student and supervisor to ensure that each milestone is completed on time, and that appropriate documentation is submitted to the Graduate Office before and/or after committee meetings and examinations, as required. Students who do not meet the deadlines for committee meetings and the appraisal exam have not maintained good academic standing.

Failure to maintain good academic standing may result in ineligibility for external and internal fellowships, lower priority for bursaries, assistantships and travel awards, and may lead to program termination. To maintain good academic standing, courses, the appraisal exam (for PhD students) and committee meetings must be done as required (see below for details).

Taking a Leave of Absence

Students may take a leave of absence for one of several different reasons including health challenges, employment opportunity, parental leave, etc. There is an overview of the guidelines here:

<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/policies-guidelines/leave-of-absence-policy/>

But please also see the EEB Mental Health Committee's Handbook about taking a leave of absence available here: [Resources – Mental Health Committee \(utoronto.ca\)](#) and/or talk to the EEB Associate Graduate Chair for the full details (some details including other reasons to take a leave are not included on the SGS webpage).

For international students: (i) As of 2022, The U of T does not inform IRCC of any student's status; it is up to students to maintain the proper permits. However, taking even an approved leave of absence of more than 150 days can impact the ability for an international student to qualify for a post graduate work permit. The EEB grad office recommends that you discuss this with a CIE advisor. (ii) Regarding UHIP while on leave: to maintain UHIP for one term during a leave, you must apply to the UHIP office a month before you begin the leave. You can apply to them using the leave application form after it has been approved by EEB. In Summer 2023, international students would not be eligible for UHIP while on leave after more than one term on leave (we recommend checking with the UHIP office about this). Also, if you are taking a retroactive leave, the UHIP office said that UHIP would likely remain valid when taking retroactive leave; in that case, students will receive a UHIP coverage card for the school year at the beginning of the term and can ask the UHIP office to keep the coverage while they are on leave for the rest of the term. (iii) In summer 2023, an international student contacted UTGSU about UTGSU Health and Dental Insurance Plan ([Health and Dental – University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union \(utgsu.ca\)](#)) while on leave for Fall 2023. Their answer was as follows: "Please be advised that students on approved leave of absence are eligible to enroll in the UTGSU Health & Dental Plan for the Fall 2023 semester. Your leave must be approved by the university and you must provide a letter from the university confirming your approved leave of absence. You need to fill out the enrollment form and send it to us by mail along with a cheque and your approved leave of absence confirmation letter. Please contact us during the first week of September 2023 so we can send you the form and instructions to enroll."

Personal Time Off Policy

In 2022, SGS created a [Personal Time Off Policy](#) that enables graduate students to take personal time off each academic year. Under this policy, graduate students can take up to 15 business days per academic year (September to August) in personal time off, in addition to statutory holidays and days designated as University closures or holidays, to support their wellbeing and mental and physical health. The timing of personal time off can be flexible, as long as it does not interfere with their coursework or their

grant/scholarship application deadlines. If a student is TAing and is considering taking some personal time off, they must follow the requirements with respect to TAing listed on the SGS webpage.

You can visit SGS's webpage to learn more about the specific details of the policy:

[Understanding Personal Time Off – School of Graduate Studies \(utoronto.ca\)](http://utoronto.ca)

SGS and EEB encourage students to use the new policy to support their wellbeing.

MSc PROGRAM REGULATIONS

In general, MSc students must demonstrate competence in independent research and would normally plan to author or co-author a paper on their research results for primary publication.

Duration and Registration

Students in the EEB MSc program are funded for 16 months. Students will normally register September 1, but may register May 1 or Jan. 1. Students whose thesis research will involve a substantial amount of fieldwork should consider starting a pilot project before they register in the program (this must be discussed with the potential supervisor). Students are expected to defend their thesis 12-16 months after registration (students may extend their time in the program, with funding, if they receive a major scholarship or the supervisor has additional funding available (this must be discussed with the potential supervisor before the student applies to the program)).

Financial Support

EEB MSc students are guaranteed financial support for 16 months in the form of a graduate stipend. For students without external scholarship support (e.g. NSERC, OGS, CIHR, Connaught), this stipend is comprised of: (1) a twelve-month stipend at the Departmental guaranteed income level, comprised of a Research Assistantship (RA), a 140-hr Teaching Assistantship (TA), a University of Toronto Fellowship (UTF), and, in some cases, an award from EEB's endowment fund; and (2) an additional four months of a Research Assistantship amounting to one-third of the Departmental base income, usually paid in the last four months of the program (when the first registration is Sept. 1 (or for those who started in May, in the first four months of the program)) and 70 hours of TAing during the last four months (usually Sept-Dec) if they occur during the academic year. For students with external scholarships, the Teaching Assistantship during the first year is reduced to 70 hours and a "top-up" may be awarded in addition to the guaranteed minimum. If a student would like to TA for more than the normal number of hours (140 hours without a scholarship and 70 hours with a scholarship), they must get permission from the supervisor. Further details on financial support are available on the stipend form and stipend letter distributed to students and supervisors by the EEB graduate office in late August/September. Students who do not complete their thesis within 16 months of registration continue to be eligible for TA positions (depending on availability), but are not eligible for any further financial support from the University of Toronto (e.g., no UTF).

Coursework

MSc students must complete a single one-semester graduate course chosen from available courses or two 0.25 courses (6-week modules) (see **Graduate Courses** in this document and on the EEB web page). The Philosophy and Methods course (EEB1310H; helen.rodd@utoronto.ca) is specifically designed for new students but other courses also provide important, relevant background. We recommend that new students consult the full course descriptions on the EEB website and talk to their supervisor(s), and other graduate students about which course is most appropriate for them.

MSc Supervisory Committee

The student's research supervisor(s) will consult with the student about which faculty members will be useful and appropriate members of her/his Supervisory Committee. The Supervisory Committee comprises the research supervisor (and co-supervisor if any) plus two other professors from EEB. **It must meet at least twice during the 16-month program.** During the first committee meeting, which should be held **no later than 3.5 months after registration**, the student's academic background is reviewed and the proposed thesis research discussed. A second meeting of the supervisory committee should be held by the **end of the eighth month** of the MSc program in order to assess the student's academic and research progress, and to make any recommendations for completion of the degree.

Before September, 2023, for students making outstanding progress, at a third, rigorous committee meeting, that is held by Aug. 15, the student and committee may discuss whether the student could switch from an MSc to a PhD program (see the section "TRANSFER FROM MSc to PhD PROGRAM"). Starting September 2023, the procedure for transferring to a PhD will change. If the supervisor asks the student if they would like to consider transferring to a PhD, then the student/supervisor will need to notify the EEB Graduate Office by the deadline (approx. March 1). The student may transfer if, after a "Transfer Assessment Interview" (TAI), they are granted a transfer spot and they are also approved for transfer by their thesis committee at a rigorous committee meeting.

For all committee meetings, the student must prepare a brief, written, progress report on research plans and, if there has been any, research progress, and send it to committee members **at least three full business days** in advance of the meeting. Students must ask their supervisors how far in advance of the meeting they will want to see the report and talk, so that they can provide feedback. Students must schedule the members of their committee, including their supervisor, for at least 2 hours for the meeting; meetings are usually 1.5 hours long but it useful to have the additional time in case it is needed. For all committee meetings, the student is responsible for downloading the committee meeting form, filling in the top section and emailing it to their supervisor and their other supervisory committee members at least a day before the meeting (available on the Current EEB Graduate Student webpage):

<https://eeb.utoronto.ca/education/graduate/graduate-handbook/>

Committee meetings can be held in person, remotely on Zoom or Teams, or in a hybrid format. If agreed upon by the participants, participating individuals have the choice of how they would like to attend. The EEB Graduate Affairs Committee recommends that meetings are held in person or hybrid because these meetings are less formal and the discussions flow more easily.

The student and supervisor(s) are responsible for completing their sections of form, ensuring that each

committee member signs it (or emails Kitty with their approval of the form). We recommend that the supervisor or student makes copies of the committee meeting report for both the student and the supervisor(s) before the student adds any comments at the end of the form. The student may then add their own comments to the form, must sign it, and submit it along with a copy of his/her progress report to the graduate office **within one week of the meeting**.

See Appendix A for advice on preparing for supervisory committee meetings.

Departmental Seminars

The academic culture of the department includes a vibrant set of discussion groups and seminar series. MSc students are expected to attend all seminars in the EEB or Biology departmental seminar series on their campus and to take advantage of discussion groups.

Thesis and MSc Examination

The MSc Examination Committee, jointly recommended by the supervisor(s) and student, consists of the supervisor(s), one member of the supervisory committee (the other member of the supervisory committee is welcome to attend the defense but may not ask questions and may not vote), and two other EEB faculty members who are not on the supervisory committee. The EEB grad office will invite one of the two members who are not on the supervisory committee to chair the exam—he/she will also act as a regular member of the exam committee. These names must be sent to the graduate office (EEB Graduate Assistant <grad.eeb@utoronto.ca>) for approval including their status (supervisor, on supervisory committee, etc.), after which the student and supervisor will set a date for the exam. A written thesis following SGS guidelines must be approved for examination by the supervisor who should **complete the “Approval of MSc Thesis” form (available on the EEB grad student ‘forms and links’ webpage)** and send it to the Graduate Office **before scheduling the defense or circulating the thesis**. The MSc thesis must also be approved by the EEB Graduate Office; please send a draft of the thesis (it does not need to be the final version of the thesis) to Fazia Khan as EEB Comms & Grad Coordinator <grad.eeb@utoronto.ca>, as pdf and word documents, **at least 3 weeks** before the proposed examination date. If, in your thesis, you use “we” rather than “I”, at the start of that chapter(s), you should indicate the co-authors of the chapter and describe the contributions of all of the co-authors to the chapter. The deadline for defending and submitting your thesis to SGS to avoid paying Winter tuition is in January and to avoid paying Fall tuition, it is in September- please check to see if you have an email from Kitty Lam about the deadlines for this year and, if you don't have one, email her for the specific dates this year.

The date for the exam should be sent to the graduate office **at least two weeks** ahead of the exam date and, for those defending on the St. G. campus, the Graduate Assistant (Fazia Khan as EEB Comms & Grad Coordinator grad.eeb@utoronto.ca) will book the exam room (feel free to make a recommendation if there is a room that you like) and for those defending at UTM and UTSC please speak to your supervisor about who can book a room for you.

MSc defenses can be held in any of the following formats: in person, remotely, and hybrid. Participating individuals have the choice of how they would like to attend.

The Graduate Assistant will circulate the formal announcement to participants. Students will ask Fazia if there is AV equipment in the exam room. Once the thesis is approved for examination, the student should send it to examiners **at least two weekends** before the exam. The *in camera* examination will consist of a 20-minute oral summary of the thesis research by the student, approximately 1.5 – 2 hrs of questioning by the committee, and then, after the student has left the room, a discussion by the committee of the student's thesis and performance. The exam chair is responsible for **completing the "MSc Exam Form"** detailing any required minor or major revisions, and returning it to the Graduate Office (Kitty Lam (EEB Graduate Administrator) gradadmin.eeb@utoronto.ca) immediately after the exam. The student must complete any required revisions **within four weeks** of the exam, and the person designated to approve these revisions (typically the supervisor) should complete the "Approval of Corrections" form and return send it promptly to the EEB graduate office. If the student does not pass the thesis exam, one retake is possible **within 2 – 6 months**; if the student fails to pass the second attempt at the exam, they have failed to meet the required academic standards of the graduate program and may be advised by the Associate Graduate Chair that they may no longer be eligible to proceed in the program.

For more EEB details about the MSc defense, on the EEB webpage with the EEB Grad Handbook, scroll down farther on that webpage to the section called MSc Defenses.

See the steps for completing your degree here, including where to get the thesis template:

<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/program-completion/>

Note that the main text of the thesis (i.e. the Introduction) starts on page "1".

Post defense: Congratulations on your successful defense. These are the approximate dates for those defending in December/January and finishing up in January and wanting to avoid paying tuition for the next term. Please check with Kitty for the appropriate dates for future years. Please submit the Approval of [Corrections to MSc Thesis form](#) to Kitty Lam by **January 18, 2023**. The deadline to submit your final thesis to SGS without fees being charged for the Winter 2023 session is **Friday, January 20, 2023 at midnight**. If you are defending at another time of year, please ask Kitty for the deadline for that term. Please use this link for instructions on how to do this and about other aspects of finishing up: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current-students/program-completion/producing-your-thesis/>

Here is the specific link for submitting your thesis to SGS:

<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current-students/program-completion/electronic-thesis-submission/>

When you submit your thesis to SGS, it will ask for your degree date; this is the month (Nov., March (in absentia) or June) and year when you will convocated.

You do not need to send a copy of the final version of your thesis to the EEB Grad Office and a hard-copy is

not required but you do need to submit an electronic copy of the final version to the SGS website (see link above).

Students who finish their MSc degree by the January deadline (see above) can choose to graduate in March (in absentia) or June (convocation). Please let Kitty know your preference when you submit your approval of thesis corrections form.

Students account will adjust your fees after you have submitted your thesis. Do check your account on ACORN few weeks after you submit your thesis to SGS to be sure that you have paid for all of your tuition and other fees.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Kitty. Congratulations again!

PHD PROGRAM REGULATIONS

EEB PhD students are expected to complete original, independent research programs that make substantial and innovative contributions to their field of research. Normally, it is expected that PhD candidates will produce at least three research chapters (or equivalent, to be determined in consultation with the supervisor and supervisory committee members), based on their research, that are worthy of publication as scientific papers. When possible, EEB (and former EEB PhD students) recommends that papers are written and submitted as soon as projects are completed. Many students have published at least one of their chapters before they defend, but this is not a requirement for graduation. Students must get their supervisor(s)'s approval before submitting a manuscript for publication and, supervisory committee members should be asked if they would be able to provide feedback on manuscripts that will be included in the thesis in a timely fashion (either before, or when, the manuscript is submitted). See below for further details on the minimum requirements for the thesis.

Duration and Registration

The duration of the Ph.D. program (for the "funded cohort") is four years for those entering with an MSc degree, or five years for those entering directly from a bachelor's degree or transferring from an MSc in EEB. Requests for extensions will be considered. First registration is normally in September, although registration in January or May is also possible.

Financial Support

PhD students in the "funded cohort" will receive a base, annual stipend for four years for those entering with a Master's degree or five years for those entering from a Bachelor's (or transferring from the EEB MSc program). For students without external scholarship support (e.g. NSERC, OGS, CIHR, Connaught), this stipend is comprised of some or all of the following: a Research Assistantship (RA) (i.e. funding provided by the supervisor(s)), a 140-hr Teaching Assistantship (TA), a University of Toronto Fellowship (UTF), and funding from EEB's endowment funds. For students with external scholarships the Teaching Assistantship is reduced to 70 hours and a "top-up" may be given in addition to the guaranteed minimum. If a student would

like to TA for more than the normal number of hours (140 hours without a scholarship and 70 hours with a scholarship), they must get permission from the supervisor. Details on each student's funding package are described on the stipend form and stipend letter distributed to students and supervisors by the graduate office in late August or in September.

PhD Students who do not complete their thesis and graduate while they are in the "funded cohort", but are within the time-limit for their degree are eligible for limited support for up to two academic years through the Doctoral Completion Award (DCA) program funded by SGS. Students must apply for DCA awards on an annual basis (Spring-early Summer), and all eligible applicants who are making good progress and are in good academic standing with their program will receive some support. The awards are paid to students in the Fall and Winter terms only. A typical award value is \$2,000 - \$3,000 per term for up to two terms a year. Students holding academic awards with an annual value of \$25,000 or more will receive a nominal DCA amount (\$250 per term), and students holding academic awards with a value lower than \$25,000 will receive half of the typical DCA amount per term (\$1,000 - \$1,500).

The recommended support packages for students out of the funded cohort includes the DCA component (from the U. of T.), a substantial TA component (usually 210 hours), and may include a Research Assistantship (RA) component (RA support from the supervisor(s) may be recommended but is not required; before PhD students leave the funded cohort, there is a prompt on the supervisory committee meeting report that will prompt discussion with their supervisor about whether they will contribute any RA towards their tuition and living expenses once they leave the funded cohort).

Coursework

Students entering directly from a Bachelor's program must take four one-semester (i.e. with a course weight of 0.5) graduate courses (or a mixture of 0.5 and 0.25 courses) and are expected to finish their course requirements by the end of their fourth year (see **Graduate Courses** in this document and on the EEB grad course web page). Students entering with an MSc degree must take three one-semester (0.5) courses (or a mixture of 0.5 and 0.25 courses) and are expected to complete their course requirements by the end of their third year. Students transferring from an EEB MSc to an EEB PhD program should take the same credits as those entering from a bachelor's program, minus the credit completed during the MSc.

The details of which combinations of courses will meet the degree requirements are currently under discussion. In the meantime, course selection should be made in consultation with the supervisor and advisory committee.

PhD Supervisory Committee

The student's research supervisor(s) will consult with the student about which faculty members will be useful and appropriate members of his/her Supervisory Committee. This committee comprises the research supervisor (and co-supervisor if any) plus two other professors from EEB (or with permission from the EEB Graduate Office, one non-EEB faculty member at U of T). **In the first year, the committee must meet during the Fall term and at least once in the Winter term.** During their 4th term, PhD students must meet with their supervisory committee and determine the timing of their appraisal exam; if a tentative date is

not set then, the student must meet every six months with the supervisory committee until the date has been set. Thereafter the committee must meet at least once per academic year. During the first committee meeting, the student's academic background is reviewed and the thesis research discussed. The student should circulate a resume/CV and a transcript or list of previous coursework to committee members before the meeting. For all committee meetings, the student must prepare a brief, written report of scholarly activities, research progress, and plans, and send it to committee members **at least four full business days** in advance of the meeting. For all committee meetings after the student has done the appraisal exam, the student should include a timeline in their written report.

Committee meetings can be held in person, remotely on Zoom or Teams, or in a hybrid format. If agreed upon by the participants, participating individuals have the choice for how they would like to attend. The EEB Graduate Affairs Committee recommends that meetings are held in person or hybrid because these meetings are less formal, the discussions flow more easily, and it is an opportunity for the student to give their presentation and have a discussion in person, which SGS may require for PhD defenses in the future.

Students must ask their supervisors how far in advance of the meeting they will want to see the report and talk, so that they can provide feedback. Students must schedule the members of their committee, including their supervisor, for at least 2 hours; meetings are usually 1.5 hours long but it useful to have the additional time in case it is needed. For all committee meetings, the student is responsible for downloading the committee meeting form, filling in the top section and emailing it to their supervisor and their other supervisory committee members at least a day before the meeting; the form is available on the EEB Current Students Forms webpage:

<https://eeb.utoronto.ca/education/graduate/graduate-handbook/>

The supervisor is responsible for completing the committee meeting report and ensuring that each committee member signs it. We recommend that the supervisor or student makes copies of the committee meeting report for both the student and the supervisor(s). The student may then add their own confidential comments to the committee meeting report, must sign it, and submit it along with a copy of his/her progress report to the graduate office gradadmin.eeb@utoronto.ca **within one week of the meeting**.

A final supervisory committee meeting should be held approximately three-four months before the final oral exam to ensure that the student is adequately prepared, that the thesis is nearing completion and to discuss potential external examiners.

See Appendix A for advice on preparing for supervisory committee meetings.

The EEB Graduate Office should be informed of any changes in the composition of a supervisory committee (no forms are required to do this).

Minimum requirements of the PhD thesis

Normally, it is expected that PhD candidates will produce at least three research chapters (or equivalent, to be determined in consultation with the supervisor and supervisory committee members), based on their research, that are worthy of publication as scientific papers.

For the Introduction chapter of the PhD thesis: Most faculty no longer require an extensive literature survey as the first chapter in the thesis; however, the students must provide the readers with sufficient background to put their work in the context of the field. Students should discuss the length of the Introduction chapter with their supervisor and supervisory committee; in EEB, they are at least 10-15 double-spaced pages long (not including references, figures, tables). If the student wishes and the supervisor(s) agrees, the student may write part of the Introduction chapter as a popular science article, as an opinion piece, or as a review article, with the intention of publishing it.

The Conclusion chapter should include a series of concluding statements that link the findings in the research chapters. This chapter, double spaced, is typically 5-25 pages in length.

PhD Appraisal Examination

EEB PhD students with a MSc will take an Appraisal Examination **14 to 20 months** after registration; PhD students who enter the PhD program directly from an undergraduate degree will take the Appraisal exam 14 to 26 months after their first registration as an EEB MSc student. The appraisal is designed to:

- 1) Determine whether the student can think, conduct research, and communicate at a level sufficient to produce a quality thesis;
- 2) Ensure that the proposed research is sound and can be completed within the remaining years of the PhD program. If completion of all of the proposed components of the thesis in a reasonable amount of time may not be possible, the components should be prioritized so that it is clear which of them could be dropped without compromising the ability of the student to satisfactorily complete the degree;
- 3) Ensure that the student has sufficiently broad knowledge in ecology and evolutionary biology to recognize and effectively pursue opportunities for research and collaboration in these fields;
- 4) Provide feedback on the proposed research (e.g., provide suggestions on approach, methodology, statistics, etc.)

The exam will be 2-2.5 hours long with additional time required for the seminar, break(s), and discussions of the committee before and after the exam. Please book the examiners for 4 hours to ensure there is enough time for all components of the seminar and exam.

Appraisal exams can be held in any of the following formats: in person, remotely on Zoom or Teams, and hybrid. If agreed upon by the participants, participating individuals will have the choice for how they would like to attend.

****Note: for full details on the Appraisal Exam, to see advice and guidelines on the appraisal proposal and exam, see the documents about the appraisal exam that are posted on the EEB Graduate Student Grad Handbook webpage (scroll down to Appraisal Exam):**

<https://eeb.utoronto.ca/education/graduate/graduate-handbook/>

Or you can just google EEB Grad handbook Toronto to find the webpage for the current version of the handbook.

Also see the EGSA unofficial handbook for advice (on the EGSA website).

The Graduate Office will circulate a formal announcement to the examining committee and the StG seminar coordinator(s) will circulate the announcement about the seminar—please send her/him a title for your appraisal exam seminar. Students should check with the person who booked the seminar and/or exam room for them to be sure that it has a data projector.

PhD Exit Seminar

All PhD students are required to give a formal 'exit' seminar on their thesis research at the end of their program. Students have two options for the exit seminar. First, the student can give a 40-50 min. departmental seminar on their PhD research no more than two months before their defense and a brief (max. of 20 minutes) seminar to their examination committee at the start of their defense. Or, as a second option, the student will give just one 40-50 min. departmental seminar on the day of the final exam or the day before that; to take this option, the entire examination committee, including the external examiner, must attend the exit seminar. The Final Oral Exam (FOE) booking form allows students to indicate that they will be taking this option, and requests the date and time of the exit seminar, so that SGS can notify the chair of the final exam about the arrangement and give them the option of attending the seminar (The chair's attendance at the oral presentation is not a requirement). Students should ask former graduate students and supervisor(s) for their thoughts on the pros and cons of the two options (one advantage of doing the exit seminar more than a day before the final oral exam is the extra time to consider answers to the questions posed asked during the exit seminar. Also some people find it too tiring to have both the exit seminar and the defense on the same day). For the departmental exit seminar, the student should contact the seminar coordinator on their campus well in advance so that a date, time and place for the seminar can be arranged and announcements distributed; the EEB Graduate Office and StG seminar co-ordinator (H. Rodd in 2024-25) should also be notified of the time and place of the exit seminar.

Thesis and Final Oral Examination

The Final Oral Exam (FOE) is conducted by the School of Graduate Studies (SGS). A checklist of the steps in setting up and completing a final oral exam and some other useful documents are listed on this EEB graduate program webpage (scroll down to the section of PhD Defenses):

<https://eeb.utoronto.ca/education/graduate/graduate-handbook/>

Please also read all the information provided below.

Information about completing your program is available here including information about how much tuition is charged in the final year of your program, etc.:

<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/program-completion/>

For formatting advice and the PhD thesis template are available on one of the links mentioned above webpage. To go directly to the information about formatting and how to submit the final version of your thesis to SGS, go to this webpage and scroll down:

<https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/current-students/program-completion/producing-your-thesis/>

Note that the main text of the thesis (i.e., the Introduction) starts on page “1”.

If, for any of your thesis chapters, you use “we” rather than “I”, at the start of that chapter(s), please indicate the co-authors of the chapter and describe the contributions of all of the co-authors to the chapter.

A written thesis, following SGS guidelines, must be approved for examination by any two of: the supervisor (and co-supervisor if any (if there are co-supervisors, normally, they would both approve the thesis)) and one member of the advisory committee. Note: if you don't have co-supervisors, we recommend that you ask the member of your committee who will sit on your exam (see below) to approve your thesis. Both of these individuals must sign the “PhD Assessment of Thesis” form (available on the EEB graduate program Documents and Forms webpage).

As of August 1, 2017, please note the recommended changes and new option for membership on the PhD Final Oral Exam committee. Note: the Final Oral Exam (FOE) committee must have at least 5 members and no more than 6 members. The supervisor(s) and student should discuss potential external examiners and other exam committee members between/amongst themselves and with the student's supervisory committee. The student must not contact the external examiner about their defense before the defense.

Model 1 (updated version of the 'Traditional' Model):

- The examining committee is comprised of an external examiner; the supervisor/co-supervisor(s); one or two members of the supervisory committee; and one other professor from EEB or a related department
- Note: if either the external or the 'internal external' (i.e. the member of the exam committee who was not on the supervisory committee) is unable to attend the defense, SGS will cancel defense. Therefore, we recommend that you find a second EEB faculty member, who is not on the supervisory committee, who will fill in if either the external or the 'internal external' is unable to participate in the defense (phoning in counts as participating). Please ask the backup person to reserve the evening before your defense and, on the day of your defense, the time before and during your exit seminar (if you are having it the same day as your defense) and your defense to read your thesis and attend your exit seminar and defense. Do not list this 'backup' person on your exam Booking form. *If you need to use this backup person on your defense, contact the EEB Associate Graduate Chair and Angelique Plata (sgs.vdeanea@utoronto.ca) immediately and ask for permission to make this replacement.*

Model 2:

- The examining committee is comprised of an external examiner; the supervisor/co-supervisor(s); one member of the supervisory committee; and two other professors from EEB or a related department
- Note: this means that, normally, the student and supervisor will select only one of the two supervisory committee members to sit on the final exam. If two members of the supervisory committee (not including the supervisor/co-supervisor(s)) wish to sit on the exam and vote, that is fine as long as the number of members of the exam committee does not exceed six. Supervisory committee members who are not formally on the exam committee may be invited to attend the exam but they may not vote and they may well decline the invitation to attend.

The exam chair is a faculty member, chosen from outside the A&S faculty by SGS; this person is not an examiner.

The supervisor nominates a potential external examiner using the "Choosing & Nominating an External Examiner for a Final PhD Exam" form in the folder on this web page:

[Graduate Resources - Ecology & Evolutionary Biology \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

Scroll down past the EEB Handbook and click on the folder called PhD Defenses to find the form and other documents about setting up the defense.

The Graduate Office and SGS must approve the external examiner and the other exam committee members. Note: **it is possible to get pre-approval of an external examiner up to several months before the defense is scheduled.** Normally, external examiners will have supervised at least one PhD student who has completed their degree and be an Associate or Full Professor.

The name of the external nominee, the Approval of Thesis form, suggestions for exam committee members, the date of the exam, a current CV for the student including publications and presentations, and a one-page, double-spaced abstract with thesis title should be submitted to gradadmin.eeb@utoronto.ca **at least seven weeks** prior to the intended exam date. To provide the date, etc. of the exam to Kitty Lam, please use the "PhD Final Oral Exam Booking Sheet", available on this webpage [Graduate Resources - Ecology & Evolutionary Biology \(utoronto.ca\)](#), along with other documents about the PhD defense. We recommend that you propose the timing of the exit seminar and the exam to the Helen Rodd (seminar co-organizer) before you submit the booking form in case there are any potential problems with the timing (also see the PhD checklist doc on the same webpage). If the exam will be in person or in the hybrid format, the EEB Graduate Office (Kitty Lam) will book a room for the examination and must be informed of any special requirements for equipment or venue. As of Aug., 2022, the candidate and any or all members of the examining committee, including the Chair, may join the exit seminar and/or final exam remotely on Zoom or on Teams. Note that, as of Aug. 2022, all PhD defenses must be hybrid so that the Chair can join remotely – the student is responsible for scheduling the zoom meeting for the defense and, if the exit seminar will occur

on the same day, both will be done during one zoom meeting; schedule it to start 30 min. before the seminar or defense, whichever comes first, and schedule the meeting to last at least 4 hours after the start of the defense. See this webpage for the details and any updates: [Final Oral Examinations – School of Graduate Studies Faculty & Staff \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

The student must provide the EEB Graduate Office (Kitty) with a Word document and a pdf of the one paper copy of the thesis for the external examiner **at least six weeks before** the exam date. The supervisor should ask the external if they would like a paper copy of the thesis and, if they would like one, get the copy to Kitty and she will courier it to the external. At this time, the student should give the remaining exam committee members a copy of the thesis (the student should ask if they would prefer a hardcopy and/or a PDF and/or a file in another format). The exam can be held on any campus but, if it is held at the St. George campus, the exam committee chair can complete paperwork at SGS immediately following the examination.

At the final oral exam, if a student did not give an exit seminar on the day of their defense (before their final exam), he/she will begin the exam with an oral presentation about their thesis; in this talk they will summarize the research and conclusions of the thesis orally, in no more than twenty minutes. Then students answer questions about their research and related general knowledge for approximately two hours. The student will have seen the external examiner's written assessment of the thesis two weeks before the examination so that they can prepare responses to it.

Students are required to submit their final thesis, after their defense and any revisions in their thesis, in digital format. Note: your degree will not be completed until SGS receives an email from your supervisor(s) saying that all revisions have been completed. See all of the steps in completing your degree here: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/academic-progress/program-completion/>

Letter confirming completion of degree requirements: If you will require a letter confirming that you have completed your degree quickly (i.e., less than 2-3 weeks), you must request this letter after you submit the final version of your thesis to SGS and before your convocation. The form to request this letter is here: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/253/2019/06/Letter-Confirming-Degree.pdf> After your convocation, you must request the letter through the Convocation Office but it can take 15-20 (or more) business days to provide it and, apparently, it has the date the degree was conferred but not the date of the completion of program requirements. For international students, please contact an expert at IRCC or CIE: <https://internationalexperience.utoronto.ca/international-student-services/immigration/> to make sure the letter that you get from SGS is the appropriate paperwork for the position/permit for which you are applying (e.g., check IRCC's requirements for the post-graduate work permit application).

Post defense: Congratulations on your successful defense.

You do not need to send a copy of the final version of your thesis to the EEB Grad Office and a hard-copy is not required by either EEB or SGS. You do need to submit an electronic version to the SGS website (see link above) to complete your degree requirements.

U of T's Student Accounts will adjust your fees after you have submitted your thesis (this may take several weeks). The tuition in the final year will be pro-rated on a monthly basis (see link above). Do check your account on ACORN in a few weeks to be sure that you have paid for all of your tuition and other fees.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Kitty. Congratulations again!

Departmental Seminars

The academic culture of the department includes a vibrant set of discussion groups and seminar series. PhD students are expected to attend all seminars in the EEB or Biology departmental seminar series on their campus and to take advantage of discussion groups.

TRANSFER FROM MSc to PhD PROGRAM

With their supervisor'(s) permission, exceptional students may transfer from the MSc to the PhD program by demonstrating research excellence. In 2023, the procedure to transfer will include an interview with members of an EEB committee in the March before the transfer. The thesis supervisor and the student should discuss the pros and cons of transferring before the interview. If the supervisor or the student would like to be considered for a transfer, please contact the EEB Grad Office in early Feb. 2023 for information about the process. If the interview step is successful, transfers should be discussed during the second MSc supervisory committee meeting held eight months after registration, or at another meeting held **no later than 11 months** after registration. In either case, a candidate recommended for transfer would register as a PhD student on the one-year anniversary date of their first registration. The supervisor will indicate to the student in advance of the committee meeting that the committee members will consider the merits of transfer to the PhD, and discussion at the meeting should consider both the student's wishes and academic potential. No special procedures are required at the transfer-consideration committee meeting other than a thorough, rigorous assessment of the student based on the written research report (which should include a summary of progress-to-date and some possible directions for research projects), past performance, and the potential to complete an excellent PhD project.

If the student is in favor of transferring and the transfer is approved by the committee(s), the thesis supervisor should ensure that an explicit recommendation for transfer, along with a brief rationale, is contained in the committee meeting report that should be submitted to the graduate office **no later than one week** after the committee meeting. The deadline for submitting the committee meeting report to Kitty Lam is August 15. The EEB Graduate Office (Kitty) will assist the student in the final stages of transferring their registration from MSc to PhD; to do this, the student has to fill out the relevant parts of the SGS Program Transfer form: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/253/2019/06/ProgramTransfer.pdf>

CONFERENCE SUPPORT

Students should apply to as many of these sources of funding as possible. Supervisors are expected to provide some funds to cover registration, travel and/or accommodation, although students should not expect to attend a conference every year.

SGS: students can apply to SGS for funding to cover some of the expenses to travel to a conference during a student's time in their graduate program. Emails about applying for this travel award are sent out twice annually (timing of the application submission is determined by the timing of the conference)

Departmental support:

- **St. George** students (including **ROM** students) presenting their results at a conference can request funding, once a year, as a Harold Harvey Travel Award. It covers up to \$400. The application should be submitted along with the reimbursement form, receipts, confirmation that they gave a talk or poster to the EEB Graduate Office in ESC. See the form on this webpage after you log in using your UTORid: <https://eeb.utoronto.ca/resources/payroll-expenses-2/how-to-make-expense-reimbursement-claims/>

The form is located in the resources section, under payroll & expenses, submitting expense claims
- Also see the information about how fill in the reimbursement paperwork and the relevant forms here: <https://eeb.utoronto.ca/resources/>
- **UTM:** [UTM Conference Travel Grants | Graduate Students \(utoronto.ca\)](#) and, in addition, every year in March, Mihai Baetu, the Biology Dept. Manager, will send out an email to all graduate students and supervisors about the fund application. There are two funds: one for conferences (\$1,000), and another one for workshops (\$500). The conference and the workshop have to be between May 1 of current year to April 30 of next year.
- **UTSC** (\$500): <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/grad-edu/u-t-scarborough-graduate-student-travel-grant>

Societies—many of the societies hosting conferences provide some funding towards travel. Check the conference information and/or the society's webpage.

Appendix A: Advice preparing for supervisory committee meetings

1) Ask your supervisor(s) and committee members for their thoughts on the purpose of the document, and what they want to gain from reading it

2) Here is some general advice:

For supervisory committee meeting talks and reports, your supervisor and committee members are the best source of advice; if you would like additional advice, here is a description of the typical EEB supervisory committee meeting report and talk.

The goals of the report and meeting are to help your committee assess your goals and proposal and, for later meetings, your progress so that they can provide feedback to you. In the first 1-2 paragraphs of your report, describe the big picture, your question(s) and/or hypotheses. Then describe methods (proposed or utilized) and, when available, results. Include a concluding paragraph on possible

conclusions/implications/contributions to the field.

A regular committee report should be 5-10 double-spaced pages (max. 10 pages of text, but a few additional pages for figures and tables can be included if needed). Extra material can be included as a supplement but students should assume that committee members may not read the supplement. The report provided for the first committee meeting will typically be shorter (e.g., 2-5 pages and not more than 10) than subsequent reports.

Include a timeline with every committee meeting report, even if very tentative/rough (e.g., a Gantt chart, youtube instructions: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_jm1211D4_). Another type of timeline is provided below. Also send a copy of your CV and your previous committee meeting report form to your supervisory committee. Include the time and location of your committee meeting at the top of your report and in the subject line of your email to your committee.

You should assume that your committee members will have little memory of previous committee meetings and reports; your report should help them to recall your project and previous discussions. The report should be well written and students can expect to do several rounds of revisions with their supervisor before sending it to committee members. You should give your supervisor sufficient time to provide feedback: at least 10 days, before it has to be distributed to the committee. You must give your supervisory committee members at least 3 (MSc) / 4 (PhD) full business days to read your report.

Prepare a 15 minute talk (20-30 if desired, for later meetings), but expect to be interrupted for discussions throughout your presentation. The talk should reflect the material in your report. We recommend that students get feedback on their talk from their supervisor(s) and/or in a lab meeting and/or with graduate students and/or postdocs in the department before they meet with their committee.

You should book a 2-hour slot for the meeting, but some meetings will take less time than this. When you are scheduling your meeting, it can be useful to ask committee members their general availability in specific weeks and then to ask them to fill in a doodle poll for specific times; if a committee member has not answered within 3-4 days, ask your supervisor if you may send them a reminder email with the link.

Discussions during the committee meetings can include recommendations for courses to take or audit, suggestions about how to get statistical advice, etc. Take advantage of the expertise of the members of your committee!

Sample timeline. We recommend that you also include conferences, etc. as well.

	2021		2022	
	Fall	Winter	Summer	Fall
QH1: Are cities a refuge for non-native bee diversity?				
Data compilation				
Data analysis				
Writing				
QH2: The application of 3-D urbanization metrics to ecological gradient analysis				
Data compilation				
Data analysis				
Writing				
QH3: Impact of urbanization on bee diversity and pollination service in community gardens				
Process samples				
Data analysis				
Writing				
QH4: Automated mapping of native wildflower abundance and phenology using drone imagery				
Data collection				
Data analysis				
Writing				
Administrative				
Thesis defence				

Appendix B: For EEB Graduate Students: Need Help?

Hierarchy of Help

If you have personal, academic, supervisory, or financial problems, here are some of the people who can (and want to) help. Here's a breakdown of who to talk to and when. Thanks to members of the EGSA for the original version of this document.

First Layer: Depending on the nature of your problem

Financial

- Ask your supervisor
- Ask Kitty Lam (who may refer you to someone else in EEB who can help, depending on the issue)

Deadline Extensions/Accommodations/other questions about EEB and SGS rules/regulations

- See Appendix C in this Grad Handbook for examples of accommodations that have been granted
- Depending on the issue, first, discuss the issue with your supervisor and/or the EEB Associate Graduate Chair (gac.eeb@utoronto.ca)—EEB/SGS may not require a diagnosis/medical note. Depending on their advice, you may want to register with Accessibility Services—until recently, they have not had a lot of experience with graduate students but they can offer suggestions about the kinds of accommodations that might be useful (e.g. for appraisal and final exams, course assignments) and you can discuss those with the Associate Graduate Chair. The EEB Mental Health Committee has put together an excellent summary about what they can offer—see Appendix C in this Handbook
- TAs requiring accommodations would need to connect with Health and Wellbeing at <https://people.utoronto.ca/wellness-organizer/health-and-well-being-programs-and-services/>

Advice about academic or interpersonal issues (e.g. about an issue with your supervisor (e.g., whether what you have done on a project is sufficient for the thesis and/or a manuscript)) or general advice about graduate school (note: you are not required to use resources in the order listed)

- (i) Member(s) of your supervisory committee. Before you begin the conversation, you may ask them if they are willing to keep the conversation confidential.
- (ii) For guidelines on responsibilities of supervisors and students, see these SGS webpages: [Supervision Support – School of Graduate Studies \(utoronto.ca\)](https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/policies-guidelines/supervision-support)
- (iii) On intellectual property, co-authorship - see the previous item and this webpage: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/policies-guidelines/ip-for-graduate-students-supervisors/>

- (iv) Advice from a new SGS office specifically about grad student-supervisor interactions. The director at this office: **SGS Centre for Graduate Mentorship and Supervision (CGMS)**—Centre for Graduate Mentorship & Supervision – University of Toronto (utoronto.ca) said: If the student feels comfortable connecting with their department first, they can do so. If they don't feel comfortable and want to ensure confidentiality, they can come to us first. In the event they come to us first and we feel we require a departmental perspective or involvement, we will recommend this to the student. At times we are perfectly positioned to provide the student with pathways/options, and other times we will be transparent and let them know when their question falls outside of our scope, and we require departmental involvement. This can include research specific questions, department specific questions (i.e., not related to general SGS guidelines), etc. Short answer about who to see first: it's up to the student! Our preference is for the student to pursue what is most comfortable. Worst case scenario—if they land with us first but they should be consulting with their department, we will tell them that their department is the more appropriate pathway.

Counselling and Psychological Services

- (i) Graduate Wellness Services at SGS – School of Graduate Studies (utoronto.ca) (this includes mental health services)
- (ii) Some students prefer to access resources that are off-campus if they are uncomfortable about talking to U of T people if there are implications for their graduate program (there are not, unless you tell them that you are planning to harm yourself or others) (see the list below for some off-campus options).
- (iii) UofT Telus Health Student Support (available in 146 languages) (they may not ask if you are a U of T student):
<https://studentsupport.telushealth.com/ca/home> or 24/7 call 1-844-541-9700
- (iv) Other resources:
- Good2Talk: 1 (866) 925-5454 (for 24/7 access to a counsellor)
 - Gerstein Centre: (416) 929-5200 (for 24/7 access to a counsellor)
 - Distress Centre: (416) 408-HELP (4357) (for 24/7 access to a counsellor)
 - Assaulted Women's Helpline: (416) 863-0511
 - Central Intake Shelter (Housing): (416) 338-4766
 - CAMH ER – Open 24/7 for urgent concerns related to mental health/addictions and located at 1051 Queen St West.
- (v) See the EEB Mental Health Committee (MHC)'s Mental Health Handbook with advice and places to get help. It is posted here: Resources – Mental Health Committee (utoronto.ca) and it is updated annually.
- (vi) Ask members of EEB's MHC (they send regular emails about events they are hosting) if they have any other suggestions.
- (vii) Note that there is some coverage for counselling/therapy through OHIP/UHIP, CUPE and UTSGU benefits. See the EEB Mental Health Committee (MHC)'s Mental Health Handbook (above) for information about coverage, submitting claims, etc.
- **(viii) The Sexual Violence Prevention and Support Centre: helps and supports students, staff and faculty at the University of Toronto who have been affected by sexual violence or**

sexual harassment. The Centre offers confidential, non-judgmental, client-centred services. They are here to help you understand, access and navigate supports such as counselling, medical services, academic or workplace accommodations, financial aid and legal aid. The Centre also works to end sexual violence on campus through training and education. See their website for details: <https://www.svpscentre.utoronto.ca/> Call 911 if you or someone else is in immediate danger. To contact them: they operate 9-4 July and Aug and 9-5 the rest of the year.

- **Email:** svpscentre@utoronto.ca **Phone:** 416-978-2266

(ix) EEB Allyship. This is an informal avenue for support that can provide advice about resources: The Allyship Network is an inclusive, vetted, and trained support network that is dedicated to listening and providing resources. We stand beside community members that have experienced unwanted or unwelcome behaviour: [EEB Allyship Network - Ecology & Evolutionary Biology \(utoronto.ca\)](https://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/allyship)

Second Layer: Proceed here if you haven't had success with any of the resources/people in the First Layer and/or you are uncomfortable with talking to them

- (i) EEB's Associate Graduate Chair (Asher Cutter) (gac.eeb@utoronto.ca)**

- May be able to help with academic, financial and/or other problems
- Ask them to keep comments/questions confidential.

- (ii) Other faculty members who have been the EEB Associate Chair**

(e.g. Helen Rodd)

- These faculty members have experience helping and supporting students. Note: Students should feel comfortable approaching them about supervisory issues because they, like the EEB Associate Chair, can keep the discussion confidential and can help thinking about a problem from a supervisor's perspective.

Third Layer: Proceed here if you haven't had success with any of the resources /people in the previous layers and/or are uncomfortable with asking them for advice

- (i) EEB Tri-campus Chair of all EEB graduate students (currently Joel Levine, joel.levine@utoronto.ca) or for students at UTM or UTSC: the Biology Chair at UTM (July 2024: Steven Short (or check this webpage: [Our People | Biology \(utoronto.ca\)](https://www.utoronto.ca/people/biology)) or UTSC (UTSC Biological Sciences Chair biochair.utsc@utoronto.ca)**

- These are all great guys with big hearts but they can be pretty busy so you might want to try to get advice from at least one of the levels above this first. If you would like the conversation to be confidential, let them know when you begin the conversation.

- (ii) If you are not satisfied with the assistance you have received from support provided in this layer or earlier layers, you can contact the **EEB Graduate Student Departmental Academic Appeals Committee** about appeals for appraisals, defenses, and other things. The members of**

the committee are listed on the EEB website: [Graduate Resources - Ecology & Evolutionary Biology \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

Fourth Layer: Resources offered by SGS

(i) SGS Student-Supervisor Conflict Resolution Office:

[My Supervisory Relationships – School of Graduate Studies \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

(ii) SGS Vice-Dean of Graduate Students: Usually, you would talk to either an EEB or Biology Department Chair or the EEB Associated Graduate Chair before contacting this SGS Vice-Dean, or you will need to have explanation for why you haven't talked to one of them yet about the problem. To make an appointment - sgs.vicedeanassistant@utoronto.ca

(iii) If you are not satisfied with the assistance you have received from this or earlier layers, you can contact the SGS Academic Appeals Committee. Graduate students registered in the School of Graduate Studies (SGS), may appeal substantive or procedural academic matters, including grades, evaluation of comprehensive examinations and other program requirements; decisions about the student's continuation in any program; or concerning any other decision with respect to the application of academic regulations and requirements to a student. For details, see this webpage: [Graduate Academic Appeals – School of Graduate Studies Faculty & Staff \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

Fifth Layer: For rare, specific situations for graduate students

U of T's Ombudsperson e.g. for academic misconduct by your supervisor (see previous layers for other resources for support (e.g., with respect to you and your supervisor) <https://ombudsperson.utoronto.ca/>

Appendix C: Notes on Accessing Accommodations through Accessibility Services, compiled by the EEB 2023-2024 Mental Health Committee including Jenny Carpenter (July 2024)

Overview

In this section, we hope to illuminate the process of gaining accommodations in graduate school, including how to register with Accessibility Services. This section also aims to provide general information about what kinds of accommodations are available, some of which may be requested even without registration with Accessibility Services.

Accessibility Service can work with students with any kind of impairment or disability including but not limited to:

- **Chronic Health Conditions:** Any conditions that last for more than three months e.g. bowel diseases, epilepsy, migraines,
- **Mental Health Conditions:** Either permanent or temporary e.g. anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, eating disorders,
- **Sensory Disabilities:** Relate to vision and hearing e.g. low vision/legally blind and D/deaf/deafened or hard of hearing,
- **Physical Disabilities:** Either permanent or temporary e.g. mobility/functional challenges, broken limb, and
- **Neurocognitive and Learning Disabilities, Acquired Brain Injury or Concussion, Temporary Physical Injury.**

Terminology

Accessibility Services: A University of Toronto service made up of a variety of different teams designed to help students with disability-related barriers to school.

Accessibility Advisor (sometimes called Disability Counsellor): This person works as a case manager for individuals registered with Accessibility Services. A well-informed advisor should be able to provide you with all the necessary steps from obtaining a diagnosis, identifying what accommodations are helpful and obtaining those accommodations, including steps on how to get external funding for each of these steps. Please note that, until recently, Accessibility Services was targeted mostly to undergraduate students but, if your Accessibility Advisor isn't sure what is involved with helping graduate students, let the EEB Associate Graduate Chair/Grad Coordinator know. In some cases, EEB can provide accommodations without involving Accessibility Services.

Learning Strategist: This person (affiliated with Accessibility Services (AS) but open to people who are not registered with AS) is trained to help people develop good studying and learning skills such as time management, effective note taking and exam preparation. They are available for

individual appointments as well as group learning sessions. This service is often most helpful for undergraduates or people adapting to recent impairment, while many graduate students report limited benefit as many have developed or attained these skills as an undergraduate.

Learning Technologist: This person works with students registered with Accessibility Services to connect them to technologies that would help them with their disability. The kinds of technologies that are available often depend on what your assessment, doctor or diagnosis say that you need. They should also help get grants to pay for these technologies. For example, they may connect you with speech-to-text software provided by the university or tell you which grant you can use to apply for noise cancelling headphones (and which brands may provide sufficient noise cancelling).

Letter of Accommodation: This is a formal letter provided by Accessibility Services, which details the areas where students have requested accommodations. This can be sent to course instructors, committee members, supervisors, the Associate Graduate Chair, Grad Coordinator, or anyone in a position to grant such accommodations. The letter does not state the disability of the student but, in most cases, the name of the student requesting assistance is not anonymous.

Test and Exam Services: This arm of Accessibility Services is responsible for providing accommodations during test or exam periods, such as private rooms, increased time, specialized reading equipment and more. For accommodations during EEB appraisal exams and defences, see the EEB Grad Handbook; these can include breaks between each round of questions and memory aids.

The Process of Accommodation

Step One: Diagnosis

It should be noted that most Accessibility Services programs require individuals to obtain a diagnosis, whether this is for a temporary or permanent impairment. However, for many learning and neurocognitive (such as ADHD, autism, etc.) disabilities, Accessibility Advisors are generally trained to refer people to the appropriate place to obtain a diagnosis. In general, the purpose of the assessment is to provide a Certificate of Disability that states the student is officially impaired. The impairment can range from physical injuries to mental illness to a learning disability.

You can contact Accessibility Services to make an appointment with an Accessibility Advisor and describe to them your area of struggle. Depending on your issues, they can then refer you to several services that can provide sufficient assessment. Many of these recommended services may be very expensive, but there are a variety of grants that cover these fees. Students should request information from the Accessibility Advisors and peers about which grants will cover the testing. Generally, the more expensive tests are recommended for their thoroughness, but less expensive options are adequate to gain a Certificate of Disability. For example, you can obtain a diagnosis at the ADHD clinic (which may cost up to approximately CAD\$2000), or by your General

Practitioner (GP) (which is free). Indeed, often a letter by a GP is sufficient proof of disability, however, GPs may not be thorough in their listing of potential accommodations that may benefit students, unless that student knows enough to ask the GP what to write about ahead of time. For example, “the student struggles to focus and is distracted by loud noises, they may benefit from a quieter study environment”, or “the student has difficulty with visual tracking while reading.”

The goal of the diagnosis process is to have a written statement by a doctor (or similar professional) that can both certify the student is disabled and provide a list of areas or accommodations where the student needs help. You can learn more about the diagnosis requirements for learning disability and ADHD on the Student Life website: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/Documentation-Requirements-Learning-Disabilities.pdf>

Step Two: Registration

To register for Accessibility Services, you must fill out the student in-take form on their website. The in-take form requires a written statement of disability from a professional that should also speak to what accommodations may be helpful (see above). You will then be assigned an Accessibility Advisor (if you have not been already) and scheduled to have an in-take appointment. All steps are also outlined on their website here: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/register-with-accessibility-services/>

Step Three: In-take and Applying for OSAP (if domestic)

After you have registered with Accessibility Services you will be scheduled for an in-take appointment that can range from 45-60 minutes. The Accessibility Advisor will first note a) the problems and difficulties you have experienced, b) the requirements of your degree, and c) where you foresee that there will be challenges for you in completing your work. This is the stage where you and the advisor will work out what the next steps are and often include establishing what accommodations you plan on requesting, what funding you should apply for to acquire these accommodations (if applicable), and drafting the letter of accommodation.

The most likely next step that an advisor will take, is to have you apply for funding. If you are a domestic student, this will most likely be to apply for OSAP. This is because eligibility for many grants depends on OSAP eligibility, including some that are only available if you are *not* OSAP eligible, therefore it is important for them to have a record of this. NB: You do have to accept any loans at this point and there is a \$2000 federal grant for students with permanent disabilities available through OSAP. If you are an international student (who is therefore ineligible for OSAP) they may suggest applying for other grants such as the SGS Accessibility Grant (which is open to both domestic and international students according to their website).

Next, your advisor may propose several potential accommodations and refer you to a Learning Technologist. While the advisor writes a list of accommodations that the university and course

administration should provide, the Learning Technologist's job is to assist you in acquiring technology that you need to complete your degree.

Some advisors may suggest checking in with a Learning Strategist. Learning Strategists hold both group sessions (composed almost entirely of undergraduates), but are also available for one-on-one sessions. If you feel that you do not have good study habits or time management practices, one-on-one sessions may be helpful. However, if you feel this would be a waste of time for you, it is prudent (and within your right) to let your Accessibility Advisor know.

By the end of this appointment, your advisor should book another follow-up appointment to check in about a number of things: The progress they have made with the draft of the letter of accommodation, including who to send it to and whether you wish to send it yourself, your progress with respect to acquiring funding for any accommodations you require, and a final list of accommodations you feel comfortable requesting and from whom.

Additional Notes on Funding

If you are OSAP eligible there is often a \$1600 (per term) grant (Bursary for Students with Disabilities) that you may be able to claim to fund accommodations in addition to a \$2000 (per year) federal grant for disability that can be used for anything. If not eligible for OSAP, funding is more likely to come from the SGS Accessibility Grant, which is intended to provide a short-term grant only. An Accessibility Advisor should be able to tell you which grants you need to apply for, and grants can be filled out by the advisor and simply signed by you.

Final: The Letter of Accommodation

The letter of accommodation is the key feature (outside of funding for assistive technologies) that Accessibility Services provides at the graduate level. Test and Exam services can help with the few tests given during graduate courses, and an Accessibility Advisor can be brought on to support you through other assignments, such as, requesting formal extensions. Mainly the accommodations required by graduate students are often interpersonal or technology based, and so the letter serves as a formalized proof to request those. The letter can be emailed to your supervisor, your committee, and/or course instructors. You should be provided a copy of this letter (even if you prefer Accessibility Services to send it on your behalf) as an official stamp of approval for requesting any accommodations you require.

Many of these accommodations may be things that you can informally ask of your supervisor or Associate Graduate Chair/Grad Coordinator, however, the letter serves as an official and expansive document to ease this process.

Examples of Accommodations

But what accommodations are available? Is there something that can help once you are beyond tests and assignments and into the research phase of your graduate studies? There are a variety of situations where accommodations can be provided, including on assessments, such as committee

meetings, appraisal exams and defences, around interactions with your supervisor, and for your daily life, including additional technologies. A non-exhaustive list of common accommodations is provided:

Appraisal Exam, MSc Defense, and Committee Meetings

- extra time to answer questions
- a request that questions be written down in addition to verbally stated
- the ability to have blank paper to write out thoughts during question time (this is always allowed during defenses)
- a formal request to take a break between questions so that they do not become overwhelming
- a chair (or the ability to sit while giving the presentation aspect of the public facing seminars)
- the use of an aid sheet or dictionary during oral examinations.
- for accommodations during a PhD defense, ask the EEB Associate Graduate Chair/Grad Coordinator

Supervisor-Student

Note: In general, if there is something your supervisor could be doing that would help you understand what they are saying or asking you to do, there is a good chance some version of this can be formalized in a letter of accommodation. If you feel comfortable, you can also simply ask your supervisor for these things. Most supervisors will comply with informal requests, but the authority of an official letter can be helpful if conflict arises and/or if it would help you reflect on requests that would be truly helpful. Examples of helpful requests include:

- You can request weekly meetings that are not about reporting new results, but instead focus on frequent check-ins or accountability that provide a better environment for student learning.
- The ability to take notes during meetings (this may seem obvious, but this is a formalized recognition that students may pause conversations and meetings to write notes no matter the speed at which they write. Recognising how notetaking impacts the notetaker can remove pressure to keep conversations going as one falls behind with notetaking).
- Livescribe pen, a smart pen that records parts of conversation as you write and can play back the recordings matched to the section of notes you took.
- Any formal request for preferred means of interaction including: Needing instructions to be provided more explicitly, preferring instructions be written out, or provided in email after meetings, setting clear and unambiguous deadlines during meeting etc.

- Making explicit there may be days lost due to illness

Daily Life

Purchasing technology: Many of these technologies listed below can be purchased by the student alone, but they need not be. There is funding available both through Accessibility Services, and, potentially, through EEB department grants (such as the technology grant). While the Associate Graduate Chair/Graduate Coordinator may not know much about “funding accommodations”, if you specify what the accommodation is (ex. noise cancelling headphones) they may be able to direct you to which grants would be appropriate.

- Noise Cancelling Headphones (if you struggle with focus)
- Speech to Text software Kurzweil 3000: Which has additional annotation features and is suitable for academic texts
- MindView 8: Mind mapping software for written expression
- Dragon Natural Reading: Speech recognition software for writing
- A private carousel in Robarts library for quiet study
- More ergonomic office furniture
- Professional personal coaching for soft skills. While student-directed, these one-on-one sessions can include skills such as email writing, organization, practicing effective communication, presentation critique, how to answer questions effectively and more.
- Training in using OneNote for effective recording and annotation.

Support Groups and Peer Support

Accessibility Services also provides peer support and accountability groups:

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/program/peer-connections/>

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/program/adhd-group/>

<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/program/accessibility-services-study-hubs/>

Other links

Additional information on Accessibility Services can be provided here:

[AS Demystifying Academic Accommodations Booklet \[https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/AS-Demystifying-Academic-Accommodations-Booklet_July_2017_AODA-1.pdf\]\(https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/AS-Demystifying-Academic-Accommodations-Booklet_July_2017_AODA-1.pdf\)](https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/AS-Demystifying-Academic-Accommodations-Booklet_July_2017_AODA-1.pdf)

[Chronic health, mental health, sensory disabilities and physical disabilities](https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/chronic-health-mental-health-sensory-disabilities-and-physical-disabilities/) booklet:
<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/chronic-health-mental-health-sensory-disabilities-and-physical-disabilities/>

AS Graduate and Professional Program Student Handbook: <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/article/new-accessibility-services-graduate-and-professional-program-student-handbook/>

CAMPUS LIFE

St. George Campus Services (most serving all graduate students based on all campuses)

Academic Success Centre: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc>

Accessibility Services: <https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

Athletics and Recreation: <https://kpe.utoronto.ca/sports-and-rec>

Career Centre: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/cc>

Centre for Community Partnerships: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/ccp/>

Centre for International Experience: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/cie>

Health and Wellness (includes the former Counselling & Psychological Services, and access to medical appointments):

<https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>

Graduate Wellness Portal: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/wellness-portal.aspx>

Mental health resources in EEB and at the U of T put together by EEBers (note: you have to Log in and then you will be able to click on the Mental Health and Wellbeing page):

[Resources - Ecology & Evolutionary Biology \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

U of T Payroll information, how to do expense reimbursements, etc. (note: you have to Log in and then you will be taken to pages for the various resources):

<http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/resources/forstudents.htm>

Student Life with information about Health and Wellness including appointments with physicians, Programs for students on coping skills, etc., Services like Navi (for navigating mental health supports), etc. <http://caps.utoronto.ca/main.htm>

Graduate Student Initiative Fund: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/program/student-initiative-fund/>

Hart House: <http://harthouse.ca> <http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca/>

Office of Convocation: www.convocation.utoronto.ca

Diversity and Equity: <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>

Family Care Office: www.familycare.utoronto.ca (including childcare and lots of advice about maternity leave, etc.)

First Nations House: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/fnh>

Student Accounts: www.fees.utoronto.ca

Student Housing: <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hs>

Student Resources – Graduate Student Programs: www.studentlife.utoronto.ca

Ulife: a one-stop website listing a large and diverse directory of student clubs, organizations, activities and opportunities: <https://www.ulife.utoronto.ca>

University of Toronto Students' Union: www.utsu.ca

Scarborough Campus Services

Research and Graduate Studies: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/research/>

Graduate Student Administrative Support: Lucy Pickering (lucy@utsc.utoronto.ca)

Graduate Students' Association at Scarborough: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/groups/gsas/>

Housing: www.utsc.utoronto.ca/residences/

Child Care: childcare.utsc.utoronto.ca/

Centre for Teaching and Learning: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ctl/welcome-centre-teaching-and-learning>

UTSC International Student Centre: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/utscinternational/your-student-experience-starts-here-build-your-co-curricular-record-us>

Athletics and Recreation: www.utsc.utoronto.ca/athletics/

Parking Services: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/parking/>

Academic Advising and Career Centre: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/aacc/academic-advising-career-centre>

Mississauga Campus Services

Graduate Student Administrative Support: Mihai Baetu (mihai.baetu@utoronto.ca).

UTM Association of Graduate Students: <http://utmags.sa.utoronto.ca/>

Physical Education, Athletics, and Recreation: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/athletics/about-us>

Academic Skills Centre: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/>

Graduate Housing On-Campus: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/housing/welcome-student-housing-residence-life>

Off-Campus Housing:

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/housing/residence-services/campus-housing>

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/housing/residence-services/campus-housing/housing-search>

International Centre: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/international/>

Transit passes: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/sas/upass>

Shuttle bus to St. George campus: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/shuttle/>

Child Care: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/links/child-care-resources>

Parking: <https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/parking/>

UTM Career Centre: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers/>

Please see the the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Graduate Student Association (EGSA) handbook for lots of other contacts, advice, etc.:

<http://utegsa.wordpress.com/resources/grad-handbook/>