



Guidelines or Expectations for Graduate Students

Aanii! Boozhoo! I am pleased to meet you, and I'm very happy that you are considering or pursuing graduate studies. Relationships are the foundation of my research approach, including my work with graduate students. To create a respectful and productive supervisory relationship, we need to establish a few guidelines, expectations, and wise practices for our work going forward. I hope you will see the value in reviewing this document to ensure we have a clear understanding of our mutual expectations for this journey, to ensure consistent progress along the way.

Communication

Regular communication is necessary to remain accountable and to move your project along. We can discuss your responses, but I have shared some wise practices. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. How structured/formal should communication be?
 - I have found that students who keep regular meeting minutes/notes with next steps or actionable items help to keep everyone accountable and moving forward.
2. What are the preferred forms or modes of communication?
 - My preference is MS email or Teams as I work remotely throughout the year. If you happen to be on campus and require a visit, reach out, and I'll try to accommodate.
3. How frequently should we meet?
 - This depends on both our schedules, but it has been a wise practice to meet regularly to keep progress moving.
 - Some students choose to meet every two weeks to stay accountable. Others have opted to meet once per month. This will depend on your workflow and the stage of research.
4. Who is primarily responsible for organizing meetings? Should meetings have an agenda?
 - Once we have decided on a timeline, I will set Teams or Zoom meetings at times of our mutual availability.
 - An agenda with specific topics or questions is helpful. I have found that it is beneficial for students to create a short agenda and then keep meeting minutes, or at least take notes during meetings. This ensures that our next steps and actions are outlined and followed to keep this journey moving.

5. Are there any other meetings that graduate students are expected to attend?

- It is beneficial for graduate students to attend additional workshops or seminars that apply to their graduate work. Nipissing University School of Graduate Studies holds regular workshops that students should attend.
- Students may also wish to subscribe to graduate student support networks to learn about new grants or funding opportunities.

Feedback

As your supervisor, I will be your primary academic mentor, providing support throughout your research journey. I will provide timely feedback on any documents you submit, but I expect you to remain accountable for your weekly independent research and to respond promptly.

1. What work will my supervisor provide feedback on?

- I will share feedback on your research question development, finding support to create an effective search strategy for your literature review, and the development of your overall research proposal.
- I will assist you in completing the NUREB (Nipissing University Research Ethics Board) and ICEP (Indigenous Community Engagement Plan) submissions.
- I will review and provide comments on your comprehensive examination (comps) outlines and will help to create a reading list for your comps.
- I will read and share feedback on your thesis/dissertation versions as we go along.

2. How often should I submit work to my supervisor?

- This will depend on the stage and version of your thesis that you are working on. Some students will submit the full version of their thesis; others will submit a chapter or section they are currently working on.

3. What is the expected turnaround time for written feedback?

- I will typically share feedback within a two-week period. Full versions of doctoral dissertations take a bit longer to read and to provide commentary, typically one month.
- This, of course, will depend on my schedule, and I aim to share feedback within a reasonable time, but I will be open about when feedback may be delayed for whatever reason.

Program Progression

You are in the best position to decide your timeline for the completion of your degree. You may have another position or may be a working professional. In either case, it will be important to outline your expectations and reasonable timelines.

1. What strategies will be used to ensure that I will meet program milestones on time?

- Nipissing University School of Graduate Studies requires that you meet with your academic advisor, who is not necessarily your supervisor, to discuss your annual progress. An annual progress report is also required.
- We will review your progress monthly and annually.

2. What will happen if the supervisor identifies that a graduate student is not making adequate progress towards degree milestones?

- I will reach out to you to have a visit about your progress. If you decide you need additional help, I will try to share more information and resources. I will also reach out to the School of Graduate Studies if further action is needed.
- Remember that paid work through Teaching Assistantships or Research Assistantships is limited to 10 hours per week. Your primary responsibility is to your studies.
- You may be a working professional, but consistent progress will be required to complete your master's or doctoral work.

3. Who is responsible for determining the focus of research?

- I will support you in narrowing your research topic, but ultimately it is your responsibility to share your research interests and to do some background reading.

4. What degree of independence should I have while conducting research?

- I am here to assist you along this path, but you will be required to conduct research on your own (i.e., reviewing literature, collecting data, analyzing data, or writing drafts of your research).
- I will provide feedback and suggestions along the way.

Forming a Supervisory Committee

1. When is a supervisory committee assembled?

- This usually occurs after your coursework or comps are completed and when you have an established research topic or question.

2. How will members of the supervisory committee be selected?

- We will work together to establish your supervisory committee based on the required expertise and the interests of committee members.
- Indigenous students are encouraged to reach out to community advisors, Elders, or mentors for additional support.

3. How frequently will supervisory committee meetings occur?

- This will depend on the preferences of committee members. Some committee members will only request to read the thesis/dissertation when it is ready for review. Others may wish to become more involved in the research process.

- We will work together to create a reasonable timeline for review and feedback from committee members.

Research Funding and Scholarships

Graduate students are encouraged to apply for research funding and/or scholarships to support their studies. Please visit the Nipissing University School of Graduate Studies website for further information.

1. How will my supervisor support me in completing applications?

- With some discussion and enough notice, I will prepare letters of recommendation for any funding or scholarship applications that you are interested in pursuing.

Authorship, Publication and Conferences

1. Am I expected to publish independently or with the supervisor?

- This is your work, and you are encouraged to disseminate your research in a variety of ways.
- For Indigenous students, it may be important to include or consider the community (or representatives) you are working with for authorship.
- If I work with students to publish research, the student is the first author, as this is their research project.

There are many other areas not covered in this set of initial guidelines/expectations. I am open to discussing other areas of the research process, options for vacations or planned leave, cultural support, plans for conflict resolution, or any other general questions about the graduate school journey.

This resource was adapted from:

Queen's University Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, *Setting Expectations: A Resource Guidebook for Graduate Students and Supervisors*, https://www.queensu.ca/grad-postdoc/sites/sgswww/files/uploaded_files/Setting%20Expectations%20Guide%20Workbook%20rev2.pdf