

Molecular Science Program Orientation 2025

Graduate Program Office (GPO) consists of:
Sarah Kovacs, Graduate Program Administrator (GPA)
Dr. Sarah Sabatinos, Graduate Program Director (GPD)

Molecular Science Graduate Program Office - KHN 208/212

Sarah Kovacs: The Molecular Science GPA will help you and your supervisor meet requirements as stated in [Senate Policy 170b: Graduate Status, Enrolment, and Evaluation](#). Contact your GPA with any questions related to the Molecular Science program

Stephanie Grouios: Chemistry and Biology Administrative Assistant works on (among other things) hiring Graduate Students for Academic Assistant positions and invigilation.

Dr. Sarah Sabatinos: The Molecular Science GPD is not in this room but is part of the conceptual GPO and can be found most reliably via email or in person during seminar and office hours. Her lab is located in MaRS and office in KHN 312

Program Requirements and Course Enrolment

New for Fall 2025 - MSc students are required to take only 1 elective course (it used to be 3)

Continuous Enrolment: The GPA will enrol you in GD1000 every term to satisfy this requirement. If there is a hold on your account preventing enrolment for that term you will be asked to resolve that before the deadline to enrol in courses for that term.

Directed Studies: Students and supervisors can develop a project that is separate from your research that a student can complete as credit towards their degree. The GPA will enrol students in this course upon request and pending the approval by the GPD.

[FORM: Directed Studies Course Approval](#). Due by the deadline to enrol, this term it's September 12, 2025

OVGS: Taking a course at another university can be organized via the Ontario Visiting Graduate Student (OVGS) plan.

Course substitutions: Students may use an appropriate non-program graduate level course to fulfil a program requirement or elective with authorization from the student's supervisor/advisor and GPD.

[FORM: Course Substitution Request](#) This form must be given to your GPA when requesting enrolment during the enrolment period. The GPA will coordinate enrolment with the department that offers the course.

Seminar Requirements

MSc Seminar Requirement:

- MS8201 in both Fall 2025 and Winter 2026 terms
- MS8202 in both Fall 2026 and Winter 2027 terms

PhD Seminar Requirement:

- MS9201 in both Fall and Winter terms for 4 full years.
- This is the same for students who transferred from the MSc program or were direct entry to the PhD program

Student Supervisor Relationship

[FORM: Student Supervisor Discussion Checklist: Due September 30 2025](#)

[GRADUATE SUPERVISION GUIDELINES](#) can be found on the [Forms and Guidelines page](#) of the MolSci website. The following slides highlight some aspects of this document and I encourage everyone to read it and refer to it often.

Graduate supervisors will:

- Provide guidance to allow for the graduate student's professional development and intellectual growth.
- Provide assistance and advice during a graduate student's program and as they plan the next stage in their career.

One of the key determinants of graduate student success is the quality of mentorship provided by the supervisor.

Role and Responsibilities of Graduate Supervisors

- Making reasonable arrangements to ensure that the research resources necessary for execution of the dissertation, thesis or major project, within the norms appropriate to the graduate program and within the limits of the material and human resources of the university, are planned for or budgeted for so the graduate student can complete the project without undue delay (this includes assisting the graduate student in gaining access to facilities or research materials).
- Clearly informing the graduate student about expectations, performance, and all issues relevant to the graduate student's academic progress, in a clear and timely way.
- Make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations to graduate students with disabilities in order for them to demonstrate and develop their academic, research, and scholarly potentials to the fullest.

It is the supervisor's responsibility, with the involvement and support of the graduate program, to provide an inclusive research experience for graduate students, other researchers or visitors. It also involves working to understand how to interact with and be inclusive of all individuals in that supportive environment. Finally, with the involvement and support of the graduate program, supervisors are responsible for creating an environment that is inclusive and promotes graduate student success. This includes reasonable accommodations and considerations for the variety of challenges that graduate students may inevitably face in research activities, events and spaces.

Role and responsibilities of Graduate Students

When a graduate student registers in a graduate program, they make a commitment to strive for the highest levels of academic achievement and contribute fully to the intellectual life of the university.

- to devote the time and energy required to complete all academic requirements including the SRC requirements within the expected time frame.
- to follow Molecular Science program, Yeates School of Graduate Studies and university policies, procedures and regulations.

By agreeing to work with a supervisor, graduate students enter a partnership that will succeed if it is built on mutual trust and respect. Graduate students should acknowledge the senior role that is played by their supervisors who are experienced researchers and academics. It is expected that students should seek their supervisor's advice and give it serious consideration. Graduate students should also seek advice and guidance from their supervisory committee members (if applicable) and from their GPD as needed.

Role and responsibilities of the Graduate Program Director (GPD)

The GPD plays a central role in creating a positive environment in which graduate students can pursue their scholarly work and intellectual growth.

- Providing guidance for resolving problems which may arise between graduate students, instructors, supervisors and/or members of the supervisory committee.
- Informing graduate students of resources and services available to them for assistance, consultation and advice on academic and non-academic matters.
- Being reasonably accessible to graduate students when called upon for discussion and consultation of their academic progress and research.

Creating a Plan of Study

[FORM: Plan of Study due September 30, 2025](#)

Student and Supervisor are responsible for defining a program of study which fits within the scope of the program and for which human, physical and financial resources exist. The purpose of this is to prepare a research plan and timeline as a basis for monitoring progress and completing all stages of the research.

Supervisory Committees for MSc and PhD students

[MSc FORM: Supervisory Committee Nomination due December 1, 2025](#)

[PhD FORM: Supervisory Committee Nomination due December 1, 2025](#)

The role of the supervisory committee is to assist supervisors in providing guidance, consultation and advice on a graduate student's research. The composition of the supervisory committee may vary by program; however, the members' areas of expertise generally complement that of the supervisor.

The supervisory committee may also be called upon to take a more active role in cases where supervisors are absent for an extended period of time or in cases of disputes between supervisors and graduate students.

Supervisory Committee Reports for MSc and PhD students

[FORM: MSc Thesis Proposal and Supervisory Committee Report Due April 30, 2026](#)

[FORM: PhD Supervisory Committee Report Due August 30, 2026](#)

Supervisory Committee Meeting Schedule for MSc Students

Supervisory committee meetings are required during the following terms of enrolment for MSc students starting Fall 2025:

- 2nd term of enrolment - Winter 2026. This meeting is to approve your thesis proposal.
- 4th term of enrolment - Fall 2026. This meeting is to ensure you are on track with your research goals.
- 5th term of enrolment - Winter 2027. This meeting is to ensure you've met your research goals and are ready to defend your thesis.

Supervisory Committee Meetings for PhD Students

PhD students are required to meet with their supervisory committees once each academic year. For students starting their PhD program in Fall 2025:

- 3rd term of enrolment - Spring/Summer 2026
- 6th term of enrolment - Spring/Summer 2027
- 9th term of enrolment - Spring/Summer 2028
- 12th term of enrolment - Spring/Summer 2029
- 15th, 18th terms as needed until you are ready to defend your dissertation

Deadlines for these reports will be August 30th of each year.

Progress Reports - due 3 times a year/ each term of enrolment

This report is used to maintain a record of student progress; to assign a term performance designation to the thesis; and in the awarding of teaching assistantships and research fellowships.

- Students and Supervisors must complete this report every term they are registered in their program.
- Reports are due at the start of the following term.

For example, Fall 2025 progress reports will be due on January 30th, 2026

FORM: There are “paper” progress report forms, they are different for MSc and PhD programs, on the [molsci forms page](#) but we’re rolling out an automated reporting process this term so I’m hoping you won’t need these anymore. More on that later.

Funding

[FORM: Graduate Stipend](#)

Submit stipend forms whenever they are complete, they will be entered into the eHR system as they are received.

Funding is disbursed to you in one of two ways:

- via your MSH account (Scholarships and Awards) once per term
- via your bank account (Stipend and AA wages) bi-weekly deferred

Detailed funding information can be found on the [MolSci website under Fees & Funding](#)

Scholarships and Awards (you have to apply for)

[YSGPS Scholarships, Funding and Awards website](#)

Of particular note:

[Canada Graduate Research Scholarships Master's \(CGRS-M\)](#) is a harmonization of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC graduate scholarships of \$27,000, apply via Research Portal by Dec. 1

[Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Doctoral \(CGRS D\)](#) is a harmonization of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC doctoral graduate scholarships of \$40,000, apply via their online Portal by Oct. 4, 11:59 p.m.

[Ontario Graduate Scholarship \(OGS\)](#) of \$15,000, apply via the MolSci program office, deadline is typically around March 1. Announcement of the OGS competition details will be sent to you via email from the program office sometime in January-February depending on when we get it.

Program timeline for PhD students

FORM: Supervisory Committee Report

- 1st supervisory committee meeting - Spring/Summer 2026
- Winter 2027 or in your 5th term of enrolment you will nominate a candidacy examination committee

FORM: Candidacy Examination Committee Approval Form

- Submit 7 weeks prior to the desired Candidacy Written Examination
- both oral and written components must be successfully completed within 3 months of receiving committee nomination approval from the Molecular Science Program.
- Review the Candidacy Examination Guidelines on the molsci website
- 2nd supervisory committee meeting- Spring/Summer 2027
- 9th term of enrolment - Spring/Summer 2028
- 12th term of enrolment - Spring/Summer 2029

Program Timeline for MSc students

1st Term: Complete your plan of study and nominate your supervisory committee

Be working on your thesis proposal

2nd term: Plan your first supervisory committee meeting towards the end of the term to approve your thesis proposal.

[FORM: MSc Thesis Proposal and Supervisory Committee Report](#)

Considering transferring to the PhD program? That process will happen at this point in your timeline, see the next slide for details

4th term: Plan your second supervisory committee meeting

5th term: Plan your last supervisory committee meeting to determine if you are ready to start planning your defence

[FORMS: MSc Supervisory Committee Report](#)

6th term: Plan your defence

[FORM: Defence Recommendation and Scheduling](#)

Transferring to the PhD program

During the 4th term Supervisory Committee meeting, the student's desire and readiness to transfer will be discussed.

If approved, prepare and submit a Transfer Application Package which includes:

1. An application form
2. a copy of current unofficial academic transcript or academic history
3. a completed 4th Term Supervisory Committee Report for MSc Students Intending to Transfer to PhD
4. Reference letters from all members of the supervisory committee (to be submitted directly to the program office)
5. a letter providing detailed reasons for the application.
6. an updated CV including relevant research publications, presentations and research or academic awards.
7. a short summary (2-4 pages) of research progress achieved during the Master's program to date h. a dissertation proposal title in abstract form (1-2 pages)

[FORM: MSc to PhD Transfer Application](#)

Please note there is a different supervisory committee report form for students applying to transfer to the PhD program.

[FORM: 4th Term Supervisory Committee Report for MSc Students Intending to Transfer to PhD](#)

Defences

Just kidding, this is too much information to pile on you right now.

But in case you're wondering, I will arrange an info session at the start of the Spring/Summer term to discuss scheduling defences, including:

- Defence Committee Nominations, note this is not the same group as your Supervisory Committee.
- Submitting a Defence Scheduling form for GPD approval
- Submitting your thesis for defence to be distributed to the defence committee members by the GPA
- Advertising your defence
- Scheduling a room for your defence
- Deadlines associated with these activities