



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**College of Graduate Studies**

Self-Study  
of the  
College of Graduate Studies  
UBC Okanagan

October 8, 2024

Submitted by  
Dr. Peter Simpson,  
Dean, College of Graduate Studies

The College of Graduate Studies acknowledges that the land on which we are situated is the unceded ancestral territory of the Syilx (Okanagan) People.

# Self-Study of the College of Graduate Studies UBC Okanagan September 30, 2024

## Table of Contents

Land Acknowledgement .....	i
Table of Contents .....	ii
List of Figures .....	vi
List of Tables .....	vi
Abbreviations and Acronyms .....	vii
<b>Self-Study of the College of Graduate Studies .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Introduction to the College of Graduate Studies at UBC Okanagan.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Mission Statement .....	1
1.2 Mandate .....	2
1.3 History and Current Context .....	3
1.3.1 Changes in CoGS Leadership and Administration .....	4
1.3.2 Key Changes in Programs, Policy, and Process .....	5
1.3.3 Changes to Funding Models .....	5
1.3.4 Additional Space for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars .....	6
1.3.5 Development of New Communication Channels .....	6
1.4 Governance .....	7
1.4.1 Senate Policies: O-4.3; O-9.2 .....	7
1.4.2 Graduate Council .....	7
1.4.3 Standing Committee .....	7
1.4.4 Internal Committees .....	7
1.5 Profiles of People in CoGS .....	8
1.5.1 Leadership Team .....	8
1.5.2 Management Team .....	8
1.5.3 Administrative Staff .....	9
<b>2. Finances .....</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Administrative Budget Highlights .....	10
2.2 Funding for Graduate Students .....	10
2.2.1 Graduate Student Appointments .....	10
2.2.2 Internal Awards for Graduate Students .....	11
2.2.3 External Awards for Graduate Students .....	14

2.2.4	Notable Achievements in External Funding in 2023/24 .....	16
2.3	Guaranteed Minimum Funding for Doctoral Students .....	16
<b>3.</b>	<b>Graduate Degree Programs .....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1	Growth of Graduate Studies .....	17
3.2	Current Enrolments per Program .....	18
3.3	Continuing, New, and Proposed Graduate Programs .....	20
3.4	CoGS' Support for Graduate Program Development .....	20
3.4.1	Doctor of Education .....	20
3.4.2	Master of Design .....	20
3.4.3	Master of Biotechnology .....	21
3.4.4	Master of Data Science .....	21
3.4.5	Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies .....	21
<b>4.</b>	<b>Graduate Student Community .....</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1	Graduate Student Committees and Societies .....	22
4.2	Graduate Community Facilitators .....	22
4.3	Student Representation on CoGS Committees.....	22
4.4	Graduate Student Conferences at UBCO.....	22
4.5	Public Scholars Initiative .....	22
4.6	Graduate Student Spaces .....	23
4.6.1	Graduate Student Collegium.....	23
4.6.2	The Graduate Student Commons.....	23
4.7	Graduate Student Demographics.....	23
4.8	Graduate Student Completion Times.....	24
<b>5.</b>	<b>Postdoctoral Scholars .....</b>	<b>25</b>
5.1	Postdoctoral Statistics and Demographics .....	25
5.2	Postdoctoral Fellows Association .....	26
5.3	Postdoctoral Awards and Fellowships .....	27
5.4	Postdoctoral Events .....	27
5.5	Checklist of Expectations for Postdocs and their Supervisors .....	28
<b>6.</b>	<b>Professional Development .....</b>	<b>28</b>
6.1	Professional Development for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars .....	28
6.1.1	Workshops .....	28
6.1.2	Research Excellence Workshop Leader Initiative (REWLI) .....	28
6.1.3	Graduate Micro-credentials .....	29
6.1.4	Three Minute Thesis (3MT) .....	29
6.2	Professional Development Opportunities for UBCO Postdoctoral Scholars .....	30
6.3	Professional Development for CoGS Staff and Leadership .....	31

<b>7. Marketing and Recruitment</b> .....	31
7.1 Webinars: Applying to Graduate School .....	31
7.2 Engagement on Social Media .....	31
7.3 Master Grads .....	32
7.4 Program Marketing Campaigns .....	32
7.5 CoGS Publications .....	32
7.5.1 The Graduate Gazette .....	32
7.5.2 Workshops and Events Newsletter .....	32
7.5.3 Postdoc Bulletin .....	32
7.5.4 College of Graduate Studies Annual Reports .....	33
<b>8. Graduate Student Showcase Events</b> .....	33
8.1 UBC Okanagan 3MT Final .....	33
8.2 Western Canada Regional 3MT .....	33
8.3 Graduate Student Welcome and Orientation .....	33
<b>9. Engagement with UBC's Strategic Priorities</b> .....	34
9.1 Indigenous Strategic Plan .....	34
9.1.1 Indigenous Pathways to Graduate Studies .....	34
9.1.2 Awards for Indigenous Students .....	34
9.1.3 Indigenous Grad Advisor .....	35
9.1.4 Growth in Indigenous Applications and Admissions .....	35
9.1.5 EDI Book Club Conversations .....	35
9.2 Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Task Force and StEAR Framework..	35
9.3 UBC Okanagan: Outlook 2040 .....	36
9.4 Shaping UBC's Next Century: Strategic Plan 2018-2028 .....	37
<b>10. Self-Analysis</b> .....	37
10.1 Strengths and Achievements .....	37
10.1.1 The Team .....	37
10.1.2 Financial Support of Graduate Studies .....	37
10.1.3 UBCO Postdoctoral Fellowships .....	38
10.1.4 The Robson Award .....	38
10.2 Challenges: The Top Six Issues Facing CoGS .....	38
10.2.1 Student Funding .....	38
10.2.2 Insufficient Human Resources .....	38
10.2.3 Workday .....	39
10.2.4 Program-level Leadership .....	39
10.2.5 EDI .....	37
10.2.6 Postdoctoral Scholars .....	37

<b>11. CoGS's Relationship with G+PS</b> .....	39
11.1 Relationship with G+PS .....	39
11.2 Collaborations and Consultations .....	40
11.2.1 Student Affordability Task Force .....	40
11.2.2 Expense Calculators .....	40
<b>12. Plans and Aspirations</b> .....	41
12.1 Direction of Graduate Education in Canada .....	41
12.1.1 Impact of Changes to IRCC and BC Provincial Nominee Program .....	41
12.2 Develop Processes for Graduate Program Reviews .....	41
12.3 Future Directions for Graduate Education at UBC Okanagan: The Next Five ...	41
12.4 Labour Market Outcomes .....	42
<b>Appendices</b> .....	42

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Applications, Offers, and Registrations 2017 to 2023

Figure 2: Gender Distribution in Applications, Offers, and Registrations 2017-2023

Figure 3: Enrolments in Master's and Ph.D. Programs 2019/20 to 2023/24

Figure 4: Enrolments in Master's Degree Programs 2019/20 to 2023/24

Figure 5: Comparative Enrolment Increases 2019/20 to 2023/24

Figure 6: Distribution of Postdoctoral Scholars by Faculty

Figure 7: Applications and Admissions Offers for Indigenous Graduate Students

## **List of Tables**

Table 1: Graduate Student Completion Times

Table 2: Total Postdoctoral Scholars per Faculty

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

3MT	Three Minute Thesis Competition
ARIE	Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence Task Force
BCGEU	BC General Employees Union
CAGS	Canadian Association for Graduate Studies
CGS-D	Canada Graduate Scholarships - doctoral Program
CGS-M	Canada Graduate Scholarships - Master's Program
CIHR	Canadian Institutes of Health Research
CoGS	College of Graduate Studies, UBC Okanagan
CTL	Centre for Teaching and Learning
CSC	Centre for Scholarly Communication
DDS	UBC Okanagan Distinguished Doctoral Scholar Award
G+PS	Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies at UBC Vancouver
GAA	Graduate Academic Assistantship
GDTF	Graduate Dean's Thesis Fellowship
GRA	Graduate Research Assistantship
GTA	Graduate Teaching Assistantships
GSAC	Graduate Student Advisory Council
IDPT	International Four-Year Doctoral Partial Tuition Award
IGF	UBC Okanagan Indigenous Graduate Fellowship
IGS	Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies
IPS	Indigenous Programs and Services
ISA	UBC Okanagan Indigenous Scholars Award
ISP	Indigenous Strategic Plan
LFSM	Learner Financial Support Management
NSERC	Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council
OGRS	Okanagan Graduate Research Scholarships
PDA	UBC Okanagan's Postdoctoral Association
PSI	Public Scholars Initiative
REWLI	Research Excellence Workshop Leader Initiative
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
StEAR	Strategic Equity and Anti-Racism Framework
SVPRO	Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office
UBCO	UBC Okanagan
UBCSUO	UBC Students' Union Okanagan
UBCV	UBC Vancouver
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UR	University Relations, UBC Okanagan



# Self-Study of the College of Graduate Studies, September 30, 2024

## Executive Summary

The College of Graduate Studies on UBC's Okanagan Campus was established by the UBC Okanagan Senate and the UBC Board of Governors with the following mandate (from [Senate Policy O-4.3](https://scs-senate-2021.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/08/O-4.3_Governance-with-Appendix_Senate-Approved-20200528.pdf)) ([https://scs-senate-2021.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/08/O-4.3\\_Governance-with-Appendix\\_Senate-Approved-20200528.pdf](https://scs-senate-2021.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/08/O-4.3_Governance-with-Appendix_Senate-Approved-20200528.pdf)):

1. The *College of Graduate Studies* is responsible for the quality and administrative oversight of all graduate courses of study and other graduate educational matters on the UBC Okanagan campus.
2. The *College of Graduate Studies* and faculties will coordinate specific tasks and responsibilities associated with graduate students and graduate courses of study as summarized in the Appendix: Coordination of Responsibilities for Graduate Education Matters.
3. The *College of Graduate Studies* is responsible for postdoctoral support and advocacy on the UBC Okanagan campus.
4. The *College of Graduate Studies* is responsible for maintaining a central coordinating role in the Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies Program as articulated in the Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies Program guidelines approved by the Okanagan Senate.

The College supports, as of September 2024, 1,426 students in 56 graduate programs and 90 postdoctoral scholars. The College team consists of the Dean, two Associate Deans, and an administrative staff team with 13.5 positions led by a Director and an Associate Director. The College was founded in 2005, shortly after the creation of UBC's Okanagan campus. The growth in programs, students, and postdocs has been rapid since that time.

## 1. Introduction to the College of Graduate Studies at UBC Okanagan

### 1.1 Mission Statement

The College of Graduate Studies (CoGS) supports the education, mentorship, and intellectual growth of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars at UBC Okanagan (UBCO).

We encourage graduate students to learn, explore, and develop intellectually and professionally as they acquire the specialized, in-depth knowledge and expertise needed for their chosen fields of expertise. A graduate education can be transformative when it is well supported by student-centred governance structures that ensure students' academic, professional, and personal development and well-being. We seek to empower graduate students by ensuring they are given the opportunities needed to develop the intellectual, practical, and professional knowledge and abilities that will enable their success in their chosen personal journeys and career pathways.

Our mission has in recent years grown from our initial, central concern—the support of graduate students at UBCO—to embrace another important group of researchers-- postdoctoral scholars. We support graduate students and postdoctoral scholars through active collaborations with their graduate programs as well as with each disciplinary Faculty and School (hereinafter Faculty), and by providing effective, responsive administration of all centralized processes affecting graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. Our collaboration with all involved in graduate education and mentorship of postdoctoral research at this campus includes graduate and postdoctoral research supervisors, graduate program administrators, coordinators, and directors, and decanal level leadership of graduate studies and research in the various Faculties across this campus.

Our support of graduate students has a direct impact on research excellence at UBC, because graduate students have been key contributors to the remarkable growth of research at UBCO since the campus was established in 2005. More than 13% of the student body at UBCO is engaged in studies at the graduate level in research-based master's and doctoral programs as well as in professional graduate programs. Postdoctoral scholars on this campus, usually numbering in the 90 to 100 range at any one time, are increasingly impacting research productivity across a range of fields, including the applied and natural sciences, health and social sciences, and the humanities.

## 1.2 Mandate

CoGS is the coordinating body responsible for graduate education at UBCO. As indicated in UBCO's Senate Policy O-4.3, we are "responsible for the quality and administrative oversight of all graduate courses of study and other graduate educational matters on the Okanagan campus of UBC. CoGS collaborates with disciplinary Faculties to coordinate specific tasks and responsibilities associated with graduate students and graduate courses of study as summarized in O-4.3's appendix: *Coordination of Responsibilities for Graduate Education Matters*. In addition, CoGS is responsible for support of and advocacy for postdoctoral scholars conducting research on the UBC Okanagan campus.

Policy O-4.3 mandates the creation of a University Graduate Council appointed by and responsible to CoGS. Membership in this Council includes representation from all Faculties at UBCO. This policy assigns responsibility to CoGS for the following:

- maintaining a central coordinating role in the Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies Program as articulated in the Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies Program guidelines approved by the Okanagan Senate;
- reviewing graduate-level courses of instruction and courses of study for academic quality and making recommendations to the appropriate committees of Senate;
- establishing and revising standards for master's thesis defence oral examinations;
- establishing and revising standards for doctoral dissertation defence oral examinations, comprehensive examinations, and advancement to candidacy;
- establishing and revising processes for determining admissibility to graduate courses of study;
- establishing and revising processes for determining eligibility to graduate from graduate courses of study;

- reviewing recommendations resulting from academic reviews of graduate courses of study and making recommendations thereon to the Dean of the College, the Faculties, Senate, or others as appropriate;
- recommending the standards, criteria and terms of graduate scholarships and awards to UBC's Board of Governors and the UBCO Senate;
- recommending procedures under this policy to the Responsible Committee; and,
- establishing necessary standing and ad-hoc committees of the Graduate Council, setting out their compositions and terms of reference, and delegating to such committees such powers of the Graduate Council as the Council sees fit, except for the power to further delegate (Senate Policy 0.43).

### 1.3 History and Current Context

The inaugural meeting of the Senate of the newly created UBC Okanagan was held December 5, 2005, and at this meeting, the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies was admitted as an ex-officio member of the UBCO Senate. During its first four years in operation, this campus saw rapid growth in graduate studies, with enrolled students numbering 493 by December 2009, and the first graduate student to complete their doctoral studies entirely at UBCO graduated in 2011.

A decade after the establishment of the Okanagan campus of UBC that number had increased to 687 graduate students (comprised of 252 doctoral students; 275 thesis-based master's students; and 160 non-thesis-based master's students) enrolled in 13 graduate programs that offered 24 degrees.

As of 2024, both our total enrolments and graduate degree programs offered have more than doubled since 2015, with current data showing a total of 1,399 students enrolled in UBCO graduate programs (comprised of 467 doctoral students, 427 thesis-based master's students, 241 master's students enrolled in thesis-optional programs, and 264 course-based, non-thesis master's students). Our graduate degree offerings have also increased exponentially and diversified; CoGS is now responsible for a total of 60 graduate degree program options (including themes and streams within degree programs) offered in a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields as shown in Appendix A.

As reported in our [2023/24 Annual Report](https://readymag.website/u458179369/4999098/) (<https://readymag.website/u458179369/4999098/>), 52% of our graduate student body were domestic students, and 48% were international. In addition, 5.3% of the graduate student body during that year were Indigenous. By the end of that academic year, UBCO had 3,612 graduate alumni who had earned one or more graduate degrees at this campus.

We have also experienced dramatic growth during the past eight years in the numbers of postdoctoral scholars conducting research at UBCO. In December of 2015, there were 16 postdoctoral researchers, and 2 postdoctoral teaching fellows (Self-Study Dec. 17, 2015). During the academic year 2023/24, 135 postdoctoral scholars held appointments, with 96 postdoctoral fellows active on the UBC Okanagan campus this past summer. (See section 5 below for more information on the statistical and demographic distribution of postdoctoral scholars at UBCO.)

This pattern of growth in numbers of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars has been supported by and has, no doubt, played a role in the remarkable 290% increase in research funding on this campus since 2015 (<https://ok.ubc.ca/about/facts-and-figures/>).

To support this pattern of accelerated growth following the last External Review of CoGS held in 2016, we have made a series of changes to enable us to keep up with the demands on our staff and to improve our ability to serve the graduate and postdoctoral constituencies at this campus, as follows:

### 1.3.1 Changes in CoGS Leadership and Administration

We have added a second associate dean position to provide more effective academic leadership, enhance our ability to support students facing complex challenges, and increase collaboration on graduate education across both campuses. Filling out our leadership team has enabled us to strengthen our advocacy for postdoctoral scholars.

In 2016, our administrative team consisted of a manager and eight staff members. A workflow analysis was conducted in 2016 to identify efficiencies and staffing needs. This resulted in the creation of a management team and portfolio structure to reflect and efficiently administer each of the core areas CoGS is responsible for (Admissions and Records, Analytics and Awards, Communication and Engagement, Indigenous Student Advising and Engagement, and Postdoctoral Affairs). We appointed a Director who oversees the entire administrative team. In addition, we developed a Business Analyst and Training Lead position to support the move to our new student system, identify efficiencies across business processes and systems, and create and train staff who support graduate students in CoGS and across the University. The Indigenous Graduate Student Advisor position is a joint role between CoGS and Indigenous Programs and Services, which creates a bridge and close collaboration between the two units to provide seamless and knowledgeable support to Indigenous prospective and current students. The Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator (half-time) provides support and advocacy of postdoctoral scholars, collaborates with the newly formed UBCO Postdoc Association in organizing events, and administers postdoctoral awards competitions.

Each of the four Admissions and Records Officers has a portfolio of graduate programs to administer. Rounding out our team is a Graduate Awards and Projects Officer who works on scholarships, awards, and special projects; a Graduate Academic Services Officer who administers over 300 thesis and dissertation defences a year, among other responsibilities; and a receptionist who provides administrative support to the Dean and Associate Deans. (See profiles of CoGS team members in section 1.5 below).

This administrative restructuring has enabled us thus far to meet the demands of rapid growth that has occurred since our last review in numbers of graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and graduate programs.

CoGS's management and operational processes are consultative. CoGS holds a weekly meeting of the entire team, including the Dean, Associate Deans, and Director, all Managers, and all administrative staff. In addition, there is a weekly managers' meeting,

a weekly Admissions and Records team meeting, and a weekly meeting of the Executive team.

### 1.3.2 Key Changes in Programs, Policy, and Process

- In 2019 a radical redesign of the original Interdisciplinary Graduate Program by CoGS resulted in the development of a collection of distinct themes operating under the IGS umbrella, offering both master's and doctoral level research-based degree programs in Interdisciplinary Studies.
- All graduate programs now have a program coordinator and a dedicated program assistant.
- CoGS developed an online Program Coordinators course to orient new coordinators, offers several workshops, and meets at the start of every term with Program Coordinators and Program Assistants to review expectations, answer questions, and introduce updates about changes in processes and resources.
- We have merged three separate Handbooks into one comprehensive [Graduate Policy and Procedure Manual](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/policies-procedures/) (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/policies-procedures/>) that is posted on our website. This website provides immediate access to all members of the graduate education community to policies passed by Senate and Grad Council, and provides full details on all related procedures, such as the composition of thesis defence committees and the procedures to be followed as students move through their degree programs. We have also created an historical [policy tracker](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/about/policytracker/) (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/about/policytracker/>) to enable tracing of policy changes over time.
- In addition, since 2018, we have published the [CoGS Annual Report](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/about/reports/) (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/about/reports/>) on our website to summarize key metrics and highlight how CoGS is contributing to UBC's academic mission.
- CoGS leadership has been working to better manage admissions at the program level to increase efficiency. For example, to streamline our admissions process, CoGS admissions and records officers now calculate GPAs only for those applicants to whom programs wish to extend an offer of admission. In addition, applicants who do not meet minimum admission criteria now require a rationale provided by the program, which is evaluated by CoGS. The focus in CoGS' evaluation of admissions recommendations is on asking how the program will support the student to a successful outcome.

### 1.3.3 Changes to Funding Models

- In 2019, CoGS introduced the International Four-Year Doctoral Partial Tuition Award (IDPT) to support an increase in international graduate student enrolment while staying competitive against other institutions that have international tuition awards. This program supported growth of our international cohorts and continues to support the current surge in international graduate student enrolment.
- CoGS introduced [minimum guaranteed funding for Ph.D. students](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/tuition-awards-and-finance/minimum-funding-policy-2/) (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/tuition-awards-and-finance/minimum-funding-policy-2/>) in September 2021 (initially set at \$20,000, and since increased to \$24,000 as of September 2024). However, the financial stress on students has also increased,

resulting in students needing to work off campus and thus being unable to dedicate full-time effort to their studies. Due to inflation, students' financial situation may be even worse than it was in 2016. As a result, the policy is reviewed annually by Graduate Council and the Council will decide on any increases in the amount of the minimum funding.

- Our approach to funding graduate programs has also been revised. The primary award funding allocated to graduate programs to commit to their students was previously based on a model that only considered a share of total enrolment. This model was revised to address the needs of a campus experiencing radical growth. In 2023, we implemented a funding model that requires CoGS to consult with each Faculty dean's office, in conjunction with the graduate program leadership, to determine enrolment targets and resources to support growth. This approach allows a fairer award distribution model across a campus that is experiencing radical growth in some areas that would otherwise negatively impact funding of smaller programs.

#### 1.3.4 Additional Space for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars

- In addition to the Graduate Student Collegium, which is a social space for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars, CoGS worked with campus partners to create the Graduate Student Commons, which provides study space for graduate students, including bookable workrooms and the Graduate Student Workshop room.

#### 1.3.5 Development of New Communication Channels

CoGS has created a suite of communication channels to ensure that essential information is distributed widely to our graduate and postdoctoral communities:

- The Graduate Gazette is distributed once a month to faculty and staff involved in graduate education. Gazette items include summaries of policy changes, key deadlines, and workshop and event opportunities for graduate students.
- Weekly workshop emails also communicate information directly to graduate students about UBCO and UBCV workshops and events that are of interest to them, and notify students about upcoming thesis and dissertation defences.
- Announcements of award opportunities are sent regularly to graduate students, graduate programs, and Faculties.
- Social media, primarily through Instagram, Facebook, and X, is another means through which we communicate information about workshops, events, and defences, and we also use social media to circulate student profiles, highlighting their current research and achievements.
- Grad Update Emails as needed are distributed directly to students as well as their programs to communicate important and timely information about deadlines, changes, etc. as needed.
- CoGS holds a new student orientation in September, which students who began in May and January are also invited to.
- CoGS created the online UBC 501 resource, which is an online orientation available to all incoming graduate students.

- The Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator creates a monthly Postdoc Newsletter with announcements of events, funding opportunities, workshops, and other issues of interest to members of our postdoctoral community.

## 1.4 Governance

### 1.4.1 Senate Policies O-4.3; O-9.2

[Senate Policy O-4.3](https://scs-senate-2021.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/08/O-4.3_Governance-with-Appendix_Senate-Approved-20200528.pdf) ([https://scs-senate-2021.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/08/O-4.3\\_Governance-with-Appendix\\_Senate-Approved-20200528.pdf](https://scs-senate-2021.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/08/O-4.3_Governance-with-Appendix_Senate-Approved-20200528.pdf)) states that the College is responsible for the quality and administrative oversight of all graduate academic degree programs, and provides support and advocacy for postdoctoral scholars conducting research on the UBC Okanagan campus, (with one exception: the Faculty of Management administers and resources the Masters of Management program). [Senate Policy 0.9-2](#) establishes regulations for membership in the College of Graduate Studies, and assigns responsibility to the College for "granting, review, renewal, limitation, and removal of supervisory privileges."

### 1.4.2 Graduate Council

Policy decisions are discussed and voted on by Graduate Council at its monthly meetings. Members of Graduate Council include 15 ex-officio members, 12 Faculty representatives and three student representatives.

### 1.4.3 Standing Committees

#### Scholarship and Awards Committee

As a standing committee of Graduate Council, this committee is responsible for the fair and equitable adjudication of various awards and scholarships administered by the College.

#### Graduate Student Advisory Council (GSAC)

GSAC serves as the student advisory group to the Dean and Director of CoGS. GSAC's function is to encourage involvement with the University and the advancement of graduate and professional studies. GSAC also serves as a conduit for information between CoGS, the CoGS Director, and graduate students, as well as assisting the Dean in advocating and supporting graduate education on campus.

#### Postdoctoral Awards and Fellowships Committee

This committee is responsible for adjudication of various postdoctoral awards and fellowships administered by the College.

### 1.4.4 Internal Committees

#### Graduate Studies Program and Curriculum Committee

A sub-committee of the College of Graduate Studies Council, the GPCC reviews program and curriculum changes and makes recommendations to the Senate Curriculum Committee on behalf of the College.

## 1.5 Profiles of People in CoGS

### 1.5.1 Leadership Team

➤ Dean: Dr. Peter Simpson

Dr. Simpson began his five-year term as Dean on July 1, 2020. The Dean provides leadership and strategic direction of the College. In July 2023, Dr. Simpson took on the additional role of Associate Provost, Academic Affairs and Strategy, shifting additional CoGS leadership workload to the Associate Deans.

➤ Associate Deans: Dr. Paul Shipley and Dr. Margaret Reeves

Dr. Shipley began a three-year term July 1, 2019, which was then renewed for an additional three years July 1, 2022. Dr. Margaret Reeves began a three-year term September 1, 2022.

The Associate Deans collaborate with other members of the leadership team in the administrative and academic management of the College. We support graduate students and postdoctoral scholars by overseeing governance of the College; develop policy and participate in strategic planning as well as curriculum and program development; and provide oversight and management of student and postdoctoral awards, admissions, and exceptional cases.

➤ Director: Deanna Roberts

The Director provides leadership to all units within CoGS, including Admissions and Records, Communication and Engagement, Analytics and Awards, Indigenous Graduate Student Advising, and support of Postdoctoral Scholars. This position is responsible for strategic leadership and resource management within the College and for hiring and performance management of staff.

➤ Associate Director, Admissions and Records: Laura Bissell

The Associate Director directs the strategic priorities and functions of the Admissions and Records team, and provides high-level advising on complex admissions, enrolment, and student issues. This position is responsible for directing administration of the student life cycle from point of application through to graduation.

### 1.5.2 Management Team

➤ Manager, Analytics and Awards: Nathan Sletten

Develops and implements initiatives and improvements pertaining to graduate student awards, funding, data policies, and practices.

➤ Manager, Communications and Engagement: Alicia Meehan

Provides strategic input and leadership; plans, researches, oversees, and implements plans and operations that advance communications goals and mandates of CoGS at UBCs Okanagan campus.



- **Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator: Janie Bandringa**  
Oversees the day-to-day operations of postdoctoral initiatives at UBCO. The role focuses on professional development activities, mentorship strategies, awards and fellowships, and working with hiring units on onboarding best practices.
- **Indigenous Graduate Student Advisor: Eli Kelly**  
With a particular focus on First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, the Indigenous Graduate Student Advisor develops, provides, evaluates, and assesses student advising services, programs, and projects with the aim of supporting students' academic success, personal development, and retention. This Advisor provides guidance to Indigenous graduate students through the admission application cycle and on internal and external award funding applications, and contributes directly to the development of policy and priorities of both CoGS and Indigenous Programs and Services (IPS).
- **Business Analyst and Training Lead: Damien Bell**  
In 2021, to accommodate increasingly complex systems needs and the upcoming launch of Workday Student, CoGS created the position of Business Analyst and Training Lead who gathers and analyzes business systems needs for the College as well as the wider Okanagan graduate administrative community. This position is the College's subject matter expert on graduate administrative processes as well as on all systems used by the College of Graduate Studies, and provides operational project management, business process analysis, systems support coordination, and application lifecycle management. This position is also responsible for training CoGS staff and faculty on graduate administrative systems; for training Okanagan graduate administrative staff and faculty on e:Vision and Workday Student, and for providing e:Vision support for the Okanagan campus, which includes managing system access and providing basic technical support.

### 1.5.3 Administrative Staff

- **Graduate Awards and Projects Officer: Caitlin Voth**  
Processes award applications, organizes adjudication committees, and advises students, faculty, and staff on graduate award procedures for internal and external scholarship funding. Coordinates, compiles, and implements special projects on behalf of the College. Provides backup support for the Admissions and Records team during peak times.
- **Graduate Admissions and Records Officers: Amanda Hancock, Michelle Colvey, Lena Dombrosky, and Natalie Kirkwood**  
Each A & R officer manages a portfolio of students and graduate programs which involves advising on and processing of admissions, registration, and graduation administration.
- **Graduate Academic Services Officer: Stephanie Odium**  
Advises faculty, staff, and students on thesis defence and doctoral dissertation oral examination processes and the requirements for submission to cIRcle (UBC's institutional repository); coordinates and schedules thesis and dissertation oral

examinations; and ensures that students meet the academic requirements to proceed to their defence. The position also manages a portfolio of students, which involves advising on and processing of admissions, registration, and graduation administration in the College. During peak times, this position provides back-up to the Awards portfolio.

- Reception and Assistant to the Deans: Daniela Pratt  
Provides front-line, student-focused support to CoGS, which involves responding to a wide range of general and complex queries at the front counter, and by telephone, web systems, and email. In addition, this position provides a broad range of confidential administrative assistance to the Dean, Associate Deans, and Director of the College of Graduate Studies, and the Associate Director of Admissions and Records.

## 2. Finances

### 2.1 Administrative Budget Highlights

- Just over \$1.7 million in annual recurring funding covers salaries, benefits, and administrative expenses.
- CoGS has no revenue sources: our annual funding is provided by the central administration of UBCO.
- CoGS incurred a 4% reduction of our 2024 budget as required of all administrative units across UBC.
- This reduction leaves no funding for necessary IT software or to support strategic student initiatives, such as the Public Scholars Initiative.

### 2.2 Funding for Graduate Students

There are several primary sources of funding to support graduate students, and these fall generally into three general categories: 1. graduate student appointments; 2. internal awards; and 3. external awards.

#### 2.2.1 Graduate Student Appointments

Graduate student appointments help to fund student research and/or help them to support the cost of their studies through paid employment. The three types of student appointments are Graduate Research Assistantships, Graduate Academic Assistantships, and Graduate Teaching Assistantships.

- Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA)  
Students receiving GRA funding are supported via their supervisor's grant funding to pursue their thesis and dissertation research. GRAs are considered scholarship funding, not employment income.
- Graduate Academic Assistantship (GAA)

Students hired as GAAs are paid by UBCO researchers to work on research that is not part of the graduate student's thesis or dissertation. GAA stipends are considered employment income, not scholarship funding.

➤ Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA)

Graduate students can work as GTAs up to 12 hours per week, with rates of pay and employment guidelines set by the [Collective Agreement between UBC and the BCGEU](https://hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/collective-agreements-and-terms-conditions-employment) (<https://hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/collective-agreements-and-terms-conditions-employment>).

## 2.2.2 Internal Graduate Student Awards

For historical reasons, the Okanagan campus of UBC receives provincial grant funding for only a small fraction of our graduate students. The funding that CoGS distributes to support students comes entirely from internal UBC sources. The total amount of award funding for UBCO graduate students was increased from \$2.08 million in 2021 to \$6.6 million, a funding level that has remained in effect but has not changed since 2021; this funding is not connected to graduate student enrolment; increases in enrolment do not in themselves generate additional revenue.

This ~\$6.6 million in funding supports graduate scholarship programs. We allocate \$4 million of this funding to graduate programs who distribute Okanagan Graduate Research Scholarships (OGRS) to incoming and continuing students. With the remaining ~\$1.6 million, we support graduate students through various other scholarship programs (such as the Indigenous Graduate Fellowship, Distinguished Doctoral Scholars Award, as well as thesis and dissertations awards, among others, as indicated below).

CoGS funding supports only research-based students; we do not have funding to support course-based programs. Some needs-based funding is available through Enrolment Services, but this resource is not coordinated with graduate programs or with CoGS, which could lead to inequities. Static funding has presented challenges over the years, given the rate of unprecedented enrolment growth in graduate education at UBCO.

➤ UBC Okanagan Graduate Research Scholarships (OGRS)

The primary means through which COGS assists graduate programs to support their incoming and continuing students is through Okanagan Graduate Research Scholarships (OGRS: <https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/resources/award-opportunities/ogrs/>). The OGRS program is designed to give Faculties the flexibility to provide their students with scholarships that make up a portion of a student's total funding package.

COGS distributes an annual allocation of OGRS funding to disciplinary Faculties who, in turn, allocate that funding to their graduate programs to spend as scholarships. In recent years, OGRS funding has been distributed on the basis of eligible enrolment, at a rate of \$8,000 per doctoral student and \$4,000 per master's student. The period of eligibility as defined by the province (that is, the years of study the province would provide grant funding for, if grant funding were provided for

Okanagan graduate students) would normally be 4 years for doctoral and 2 years for master's students.

Although these provincial guidelines inform our distribution of OGRS funding, we adjusted the OGRS eligibility period to 5 years for doctoral and 3 years for master's students as a COVID-19 measure. In September 2024, we changed the eligibility period for master's students from 3 back to 2 years, while the doctoral eligibility currently remains at 5 years.

As enrolment growth has outpaced growth in available funding, it is time for UBCO to manage graduate enrolments. Disciplinary faculties are responsible for allocating their OGRS funding amongst their graduate programs. Faculties may choose to use the formula described above (of \$8,000 for doctoral and \$4,000 for master's students), or they may allocate the OGRS funds according to other priorities. Faculties and graduate programs are encouraged to establish and publish criteria by which the OGRS funding will be distributed amongst their graduate students. With the recent increases in value of Tri-Agency scholarships, the need for programs to create equitable funding plans has become more pressing, and CoGS will be mandating that program funding plans be created.

- UBC Okanagan Indigenous Graduate Fellowship (IGF)  
Indigenous graduate students are eligible for 2 additional awards besides OGRS and all other forms of graduate funding. The UBC Okanagan Indigenous Graduate Fellowship (IGF) is a competitive, merit-based fellowship awarded to full-time Indigenous students entering or continuing in a research-based graduate program. The Fellowship is for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people of Canada, in accordance with section 35(2) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. The Fellowship will also consider Indigenous people of a transborder Indigenous nation (American Indian or Alaska Native). The Fellowship provides funding for up to two years for master's students and up to five years for doctoral students, valued at \$20,000 plus tuition each year.
  
- UBC Okanagan Indigenous Scholars Award (ISA)  
The UBC Okanagan Indigenous Scholar's Award (ISA) provides funding for up to two years for master's students and up to five years for doctoral students, valued at \$10,000 each year.
  
- UBC Okanagan Distinguished Doctoral Scholar Award (DDS)  
In 2023, we launched UBC Okanagan's most prestigious award, the UBC Okanagan Distinguished Doctoral Scholar award. This program ensures that UBC Okanagan's best Ph.D. students are provided with financial support of at least \$35,000 plus tuition for up to four years of their doctoral studies. We have attracted outstanding domestic and international doctoral scholars, and provide those students with stable, base-level funding for their doctoral studies and research.

- International Four-Year Doctoral Partial Tuition Award (IDPT)  
In 2019, CoGS introduced the International Doctoral Partial Tuition Award (IDPT) to attract and support international graduate students by providing funding equal to the difference between domestic and international tuition. In 2021, we expanded this award by offering it to all international Ph.D. students, whereas in years prior it was available only to students admitted with a first-class GPA. This initiative helped increase our international graduate student enrolment from 315 in 2018/19 to 683 in 2023/24.

CoGS does not offer a master's-level equivalent to the IDPT. Funding has been sought for this award, but not received. The UBC Vancouver campus offers an award to cover tuition differential for both master's and doctoral research graduate students.

- Graduate Dean's Thesis Fellowship (GDTF)  
The Graduate Dean's Thesis Fellowship (GDTF) is a merit-based fellowship that is awarded to full-time, research-based graduate students who are approaching their final term and are focusing on the completion of their thesis or dissertation. This fellowship is intended to provide financial support while students are engaged in the final writing stages of their graduate program. Students may receive a GDTF only once per degree program.
- UBC Okanagan Thesis Award  
CoGS awards three prizes of \$500 each to students whose master's theses are of exceptional quality, originality, and make a significant contribution to their academic field. We offer an annual prize in each of the following three areas: 1) fine arts, humanities, and social sciences; 2) natural sciences and engineering; and 3) health sciences.
- UBC Okanagan Dissertation Award  
CoGS offers three prizes of \$1,000 each to students whose doctoral dissertations are of exceptional quality, originality, and make a significant contribution to their academic field. One prize is offered annually in each of the following three areas: 1. fine arts, humanities, and social sciences; 2. natural sciences and engineering; and 3. health sciences. Recipients are chosen from those nominated to the CAGS/Proquest Distinguished Dissertation Awards competition.
- UBC Okanagan Graduate Dean's Student Leadership Award  
This Leadership Award recognizes graduate students who have made outstanding contributions to the graduate student experience at UBCO; the award can be received by a graduate student only once per degree program.
- UBC Okanagan Clifford Alexander Robson and Else Loella Robson Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship is awarded to graduate students who are registered with the Disability Resource Centre with specific accommodation for additional time to completion at UBC Okanagan.

- Faculty and Program Awards  
On behalf of Faculties and graduate programs, COGS also administers Faculty and program awards, including the Faculty of Science Graduate Entrance Award, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Syilx-Okanagan Graduate Teaching Fellowship, professional program awards like the Master of Data Science Scholarships, and one-time special awards. COGS assists with award creation for Senate approval, award set-up in the Learner Financial Support Management (LFSM) system, and award assignment creation and commitment to students.
  
- Scholarship Support for Black Graduate Students  
UBC's recently developed Strategic Equity and Anti-Racism (StEAR) Framework acknowledges that racialized students face unique barriers to post-secondary education, and that BIPOC students are disproportionately affected by poverty and student debt. Many find it difficult to afford tuition, student fees, and the cost of living in Kelowna. The StEAR Framework document recommends instituting financial support, including scholarships and needs-based funding, for students from historically marginalized and underrepresented groups to encourage them to pursue graduate education and to improve retention among this graduate student population. Although a funding request for a BIPOC award drafted by CoGS in 2022/23 was put on hold while awaiting a campus-wide strategy, we do not currently have funding to support these StEAR initiatives at the graduate level.

### 2.2.3 External Graduate Student Awards

Canada has three major research granting agencies (the Tri-Agencies) that promote research and training through graduate scholarship support for master's and doctoral students: the Natural Sciences & Engineering Research Council (NSERC); the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC); and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

Graduate students are expected to apply annually to the Tri-Agency Scholarship competitions where eligible. The most distinctive awards in this category of external funding are listed here:

- Canada Graduate Scholarships – Master's Program (CGS-M)
  - \$27,000 for 12 months
  - Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada
  - Must be either registered in, or planning on applying to, a thesis-based graduate program (in Canada)
  - Can't be too far into your degree (generally up to 12 months into master's degree)
  - Can't already hold the award you are applying for

- Can't apply to multiple agencies in the same year
  - First-Class GPA recommended
- Indigenous Scholars Awards and Supplements
    - \$27,000 for Indigenous Scholars Award
    - \$5,000 for Indigenous Scholars Supplement
    - Must self-identify as Indigenous
    - Must be eligible to apply for the CGS-M
    - SSHRC and NSERC applicants only, CIHR applicants are not eligible
    - Applicants apply through the CGS-M application
- Canada Graduate Scholarships – Doctoral Program (CGS-D)
    - \$40,000 per year, for up to 36 months
    - Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada
    - Must be either registered in, or planning on applying to, a thesis-based graduate program (in Canada)
    - Can't be too far into your degree (generally up to 24 months into doctoral degree)
    - Can't already hold the award you are applying for
    - Can't apply to multiple agencies in the same year
    - First-Class GPA recommended
    - There are agency-specific doctoral awards that have different award values and eligibility criteria. Refer to the appropriate literature for CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC for further details
- Killam Doctoral Scholarships
    - \$40,000 per year for up to 2 years
    - Canadian citizen, permanent resident of Canada, and International students are eligible to apply
    - CGS-D applicants applying through UBC Okanagan do not need to submit a separate Killam application. For students who would like to be considered for the Killam Doctoral Scholarships are not eligible for the CGS-D, they must submit the Killam Doctoral Scholarship Application to the CoGS.
    - Note that students who are eligible for the CGS-D must apply to the CGS-D, and will not be considered for the Killam without doing so.
- Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships
    - \$50,000 per year for up to 36 months
    - Much more competitive than the CGS-D
    - Canadian citizen, permanent resident of Canada, and International students are eligible to apply
    - Exclusively for Ph.D. students
    - First-Class GPA required

CoGS has seen an increased demand for scholarship support. Enrolment has surged and we have invested in scholarship programming, including creating and offering resource

pages, workshops, modules, and Q&A sessions. These initiatives have resulted in a large increase in the number of applications submitted and awardees.

#### 2.2.4 Notable Achievements in External Funding in 2023/24

- [Five Killam Doctoral Scholarships](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/2023/07/04/five-outstanding-doctoral-students-win-prestigious-scholarship/) (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/2023/07/04/five-outstanding-doctoral-students-win-prestigious-scholarship/>):
  - Emily Comeau, Ph.D. student, IGS: Community Engagement, Social Change, and Equity
  - Alexander MacGillivray, Ph.D. student, Electrical Engineering
  - Rubaiya Rumman, Ph.D. student, Civil Engineering
  - Jayne Stewart, Ph.D. student, Clinical Psychology
  - Kishoare Tamanna, Ph.D. student in Civil Engineering
  
- [Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/2024/06/20/biochemistry-molecular-biology-student-wins-prestigious-vanier-award/) (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/2024/06/20/biochemistry-molecular-biology-student-wins-prestigious-vanier-award/>):
  - Pawanjit Kaur Sandu, Ph.D. student, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
  
- Canada Graduate Scholarships at UBCO:
  - CGS-D: 69 awardees
  - CGS-M: 44 awardees
  - (See Appendix B for statistics on Tri-Agency scholarship holders at UBCO.)

#### 2.3 Guaranteed Minimum Funding for Doctoral Students

In June 2021, UBC Okanagan Senate passed the Minimum Funding Policy for Ph.D. students, which took effect in September 2021. The goal of the policy is to enable Ph.D. students to be full-time scholars and to aid in graduate recruitment and retention by having a guaranteed minimum funding level applicable across campus for full-time Ph.D. students.

- Effective September 2024, all full-time current and incoming UBC students (domestic and international) in Ph.D. programs at UBC Okanagan will be provided with a minimum funding package of at least \$24,000 per year for up to the first four years of a Ph.D.
- In many cases, Ph.D. students will receive more than the Minimum Funding Package (Ph.D. students at UBC-O currently receive an average of \$31,681 per year).
- Graduate programs may set their own policies to require a funding level that is higher than the campus-wide minimum.
- The Minimum Funding Policy is reviewed annually by Graduate Council. Any annual increases will apply to both new and current eligible Ph.D. students.
- For complete details, view the Minimum Funding Policy [webpage and handbook here: https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/tuition-awards-and-finance/minimum-funding-policy-2/](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/tuition-awards-and-finance/minimum-funding-policy-2/)



### 3. Graduate Degree Programs

#### 3.1 Growth of Graduate Studies

As a relatively new institution, UBCO experienced steady growth in the number of applications, offers, and new registrations from the start of graduate studies on this campus in 2005 to around 2021, when all three categories appear to have plateaued at around 3,000 applications per year, typically presenting just under 800 offers, and resulting in about 500 new registrations each year (See Figure 1 below.)



Figure 1: Applications, Offers, and Registrations 2017 to 2023

Within these coarse metrics are some interesting trends. Our international applications have increased steadily, both in numbers and in percentage of the total. This trend is reflected in the distribution of new registrations, which has increased from about a third of new registrations being for international students to approximately half in the past two years. Since the pandemic, there has been a steady but slow decrease in the number of domestic applications, offers, and new registrations.

When applications, offers, and new registrations across campus are segregated by gender there is little difference noted between those reporting as male and those reporting as female (see Figure 2 below). It was not until the 2023 admission cycle that there was an option to select “other.” With the implementation of Workday Student, more granular gender data will become available. Overall, we receive slightly more applications from those who report male than female, send offers to approximately equal numbers of each, and have slightly more students who report as female than male register in their first term. While the overall gender balance is roughly equal across campus, individual programs vary dramatically.



Figure 2: Gender Distribution in Applications, Offers, and Registrations 2017-2023

### 3.2 Current Enrolments per Program

Across all programs, enrolment has consistently increased each year, both for master’s and doctoral students, as indicated in Figure 3 below. Given our number of new registrations, it is expected that these enrolments too will plateau.

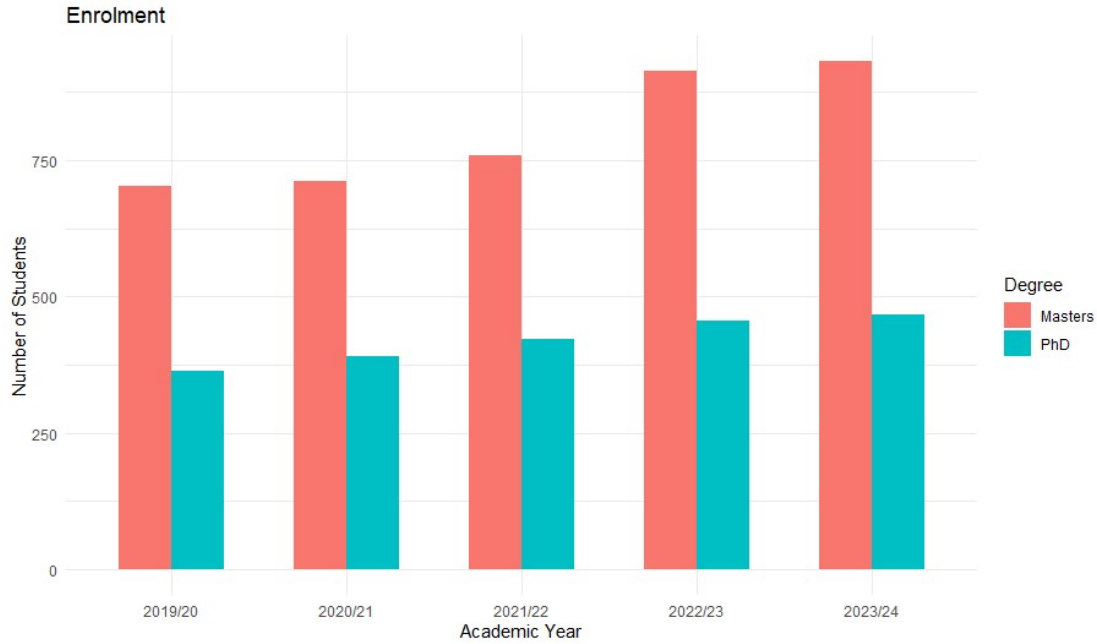


Figure 3: Enrolments in Master’s and Ph.D. Programs 2019/20 to 2023/24

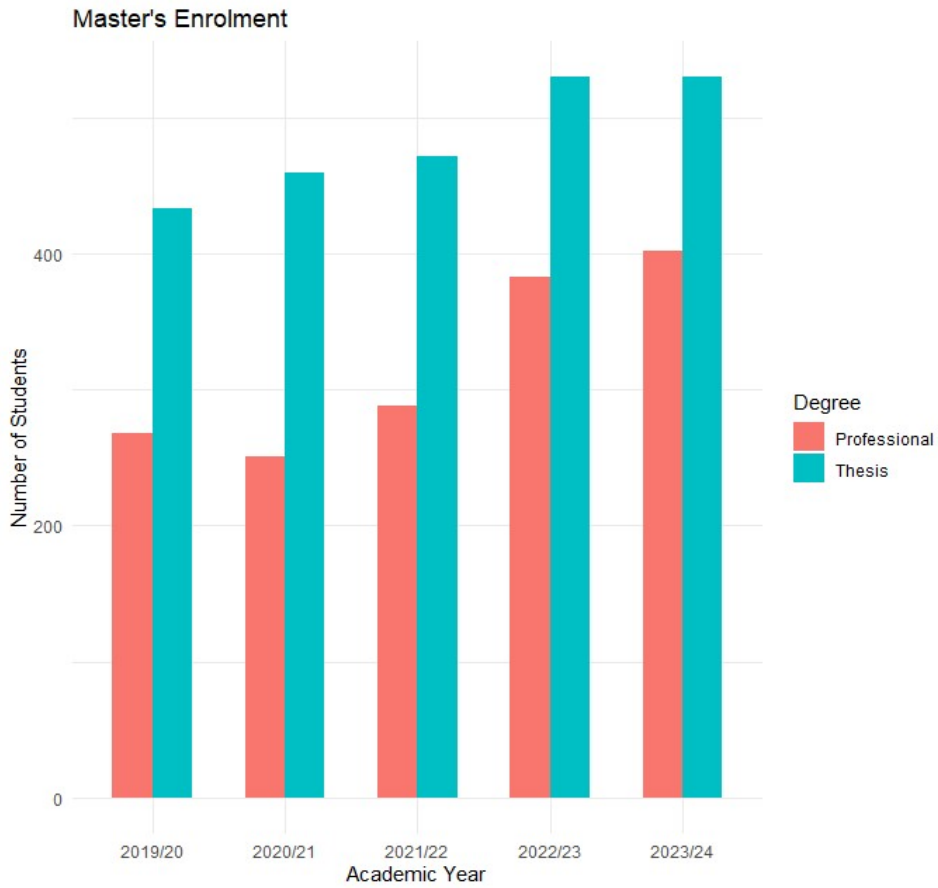


Figure 4: Enrolments in Master’s Degree Programs 2019/20 to 2023/24

As indicated in Figure 4 above, an increasing demand for professional master's degrees in recent years has driven much of the recent increase in the numbers of master's students enrolled on our campus.

### 3.3 New, and Proposed Graduate Programs

During this upcoming application season, the College will collaborate with 20 graduate program units in offering 35 graduate degrees within a total of 60 distinct graduate degree options, given that some programs, such as Engineering, Fine Arts, IGS, Psychology, and Social Work offer a range of streams or, distinct themes within their graduate programs. (See Appendix A, which indicates in bold those programs and degrees that are new since the last external review in 2016.)

### 3.4 CoGS' Support for Graduate Program Development

CoGS considers supporting the development of new and innovative graduate programs to be an essential part of its mandate. We have had the opportunity to work closely with Faculties to bring forward robust proposals for new graduate programs, and major rewriting of existing programs. Some key highlights include:

#### 3.4.1 Doctor of Education

The Doctor of Education program's first cohort of 27 students commenced their studies in July 2024. This is the first professional doctorate offered at UBC Okanagan. The Okanagan School of Education intended that this three-year program be "designed from within a stance of deep professional inquiry as a necessary capacity for leaders to be able to effectively work within the rapid changes, uncertainty, volatility, and complexity of our contemporary systems." The College of Graduate Studies worked closely with the Okanagan School of Education to propose this novel degree program, and support it through the Senate review process.

#### 3.4.2 Master of Design

The Master of Design is a new program, and will be accepting its first students in 2025. It was developed as a collaboration between the School of Engineering and the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies. Its curriculum "offers critical design thinking, creative practice, and engineering principles, within a culture of innovation, sustainability, and social entrepreneurship. The program at UBCO will bring together a holistic design culture that uses human-centred, creative practices to solve real world problems, preparing students for a wide range of professional career settings."

### 3.4.3 Master of Biotechnology

The Master of Biotechnology is a new professional master's degree proposed by the Faculty of Science. It has been approved by Senate and has recently received Ministry of Education approval.

### 3.4.4 Master of Data Science

The Master of Data Science program was launched in 2018. Limited to 30 seats for its first five years, it has seen a dramatic increase in number of applications during that time period. During its first year, the program received 149 applications, and in recent years, it has been receiving about 600 applications annually. The number of seats increased to 40 last year and has been increased to 60 seats for the upcoming admission cycle.

### 3.4.5 Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies

An outcome of the last external review of CoGS was a re-evaluation and redesign of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies program (IGS). After a two-year process of consultation, envisioning, and approval, the new theme-based structure for IGS was launched. At the launch there were five themes. In the past year, one theme has been sun-setted and a sixth theme (Indigenous Knowledges) launched. Enrolment has been strong in the IGS master's and doctoral degree programs, and the key recommendation of developing strong cohorts has been fully realized. Enrolment has grown to around 80 doctoral and 80 master's students in total.

In addition to our support for new and proposed programs, our Admissions and Records team provide ongoing support for graduate programs within the College's mandate, including online (through Teams and email) consultations on admissions requirements and processes, student advising, and student records. We have also created Canvas training modules for Graduate Program Coordinators and Program Assistants, and hold annual lunch meetings with each of these groups.

We offer workshops for graduate students on working with supervisors, and also offer workshops designed for faculty members interested in learning about or improving their graduate supervision skills. In relation to the issue of graduate supervision, we are currently conducting a study of graduate student experiences of supervision, funded by the ALT 2040 fund, with the ultimate aim of designing a training model for new and continuing faculty members who supervise graduate students at UBCO. We have also collaborated with the Office of Research Services and the School of Engineering in promoting conversations with NSERC about the composition of research groups and the promotion of excellence in mentoring and EDI within large lab-based research groups. Finally, the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS) at UBCV has for the past couple of years offered a training program, the Graduate Leaders Deeper Dive Series, which is open to Graduate Program Coordinators and Assistants on the Okanagan campus, and in which members of CoGS leadership team have participated.

## 4. Graduate Student Community

### 4.1 Graduate Student Committees and Societies

- As noted above in section 1.4.3, GSAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Dean and Director of the College on behalf of graduate students on this campus.
- The Graduate Committee of the UBC Students' Union Okanagan (UBCSUO) is the newest standing committee for the UBCSUO. This committee advocates for graduate students in all graduate programs, with representatives from each Faculty.
- Many individual programs have graduate student societies; while some of these are affiliated with, and supported by, the UBCSUO, many are independent. Examples include the Engineering Graduate Student Society, the Chemistry Graduate Student Society, and the Biology Graduate Student Society.

### 4.2 Graduate Community Facilitators

UBCO's Student Services employs three Graduate Student Facilitators. Under the guidance of CoGS, these facilitators, who are upper year graduate students, are responsible for programming to increase student engagement and build community amongst graduate students. Activities have included weekly office hours, pub nights, movie nights and ski trips.

### 4.3 Student Representation on CoGS Committees

- Grad Council student reps: 3
- CoGS Programs and Curriculum Committee student reps: 2

### 4.4 UBCO Graduate Student Conferences

CoGS operates a small Graduate Student Academic Fund to provide support for conferences, symposia, and research days organized by and held for graduate students at UBCO. Groups that have been frequently sponsored include graduate students from IGS, Engineering, Faculty of Science, Health and Exercise Sciences, and the Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies.

### 4.5 Public Scholars Initiative

UBC's Public Scholars Initiative (PSI) was launched on the UBC Vancouver campus in 2015 to support UBC doctoral students whose research extended beyond the academy, and beyond traditional disciplinary approaches, to have a tangible impact for the public good through collaborative, action-oriented, and/or creative forms of scholarship in their dissertation work. In 2022, the Public Scholars Initiative expanded to the UBC Okanagan campus with a cohort of seven doctoral students joining the UBC Public Scholars network. In 2023, seven more scholars were welcomed into the program. Representing many faculties and disciplines, Public Scholars are united under the PSI umbrella with a passion for contributing to the public good.

## 4.6 Graduate Student Spaces

Although space is at a premium on the Okanagan campus, we have been able to secure a couple of spaces for graduate students, and the increase in postdoctoral researchers at this campus has meant that we open these spaces to postdoctoral scholars as well. We will also have a dedicated thesis and dissertation defence room in the newest building on campus, still under construction.

### 4.6.1 Graduate Student Collegium

The Graduate Student Collegium provides a social place for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to hang out, eat lunch, and spend time with peers. Graduate students and postdocs can also book this space for events. The Collegium is set up in a relaxing lounge-style atmosphere, outfitted with comfortable furniture, a television, individual and group work spaces, and kitchen facilities.

### 4.6.2 The Graduate Student Commons

The Graduate Student Commons is a space uniquely designed to foster graduate student collaboration and support the overall academic wellbeing of graduate students on UBCO's campus. Located on the top floor of the Commons, these dedicated graduate study spaces help to strengthen a sense of community for graduate students at UBC Okanagan. Filled with natural light and student-centric design, the Graduate Student Commons is an ideal space for individual or group study.

The allocation of office space for Graduate Teaching Assistants is managed by individual Faculties. In general, space constraints have a significant impact on the ability of individual units to provide office space for graduate students.

## 4.7 Graduate Student Demographics

Students from around the world choose to study at UBC Okanagan. As shown in Figure 5 below, increases in the International Student population at this campus has increased steadily since 2019. At present, 48% of our graduate students are international, and 52% are domestic. Indigenous students currently represent just over 5% of our graduate student population, with their numbers increasing only slightly during the past five years. Figure 5 shows that international student enrolment has driven the steady increases in graduate student enrolment on our campus during the past five years.

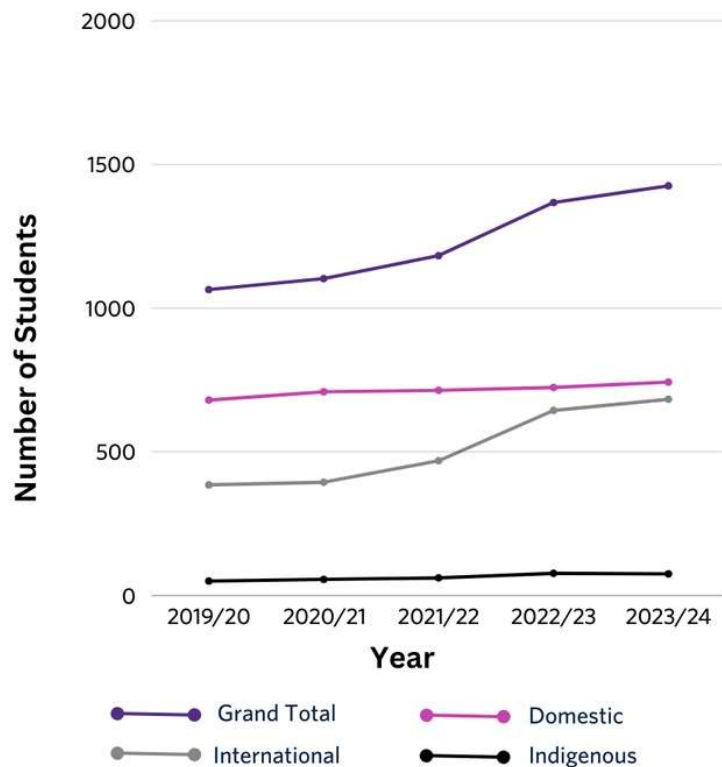


Figure 5: Comparative Enrolment Increases 2019/20 to 2023/24

#### 4.8 Graduate Student Completion Times

As can be seen from the table below, completion times for students who finished their degrees from 2020-2023 are within normal values for Canadian institutions of higher learning, particularly considering delays due to the pandemic during this period. Completion times are averaging about two and a half years for thesis-based master's programs and five years for Ph.D. programs. Professional programs such as the Master of Data Science and Master of Engineering are close to their one-year expected completion times. Our Master of Social Work has two streams, one for those with a Bachelor of Social Work, where the expected completion time is one year, and a second stream, for students with a bachelor's degree in related fields, in which the expected completion is two years.



Degree	Average completion time	Expected time	U15 Averages
Master of Arts	2.6	2	2.1
Master of Applied Science	2.4	2	2.3
Master of Data Science	1.0	1	na
Master of Education	2.1	2	2.4
Master of Engineering	1.4	1	1.3
Master of Fine Arts	2.5	2	NA
Master of Science	2.8	2	2.4
Master of Science in Nursing	2.7	2	2.3
Master of Social Work	1.6	1 to 2	NA
Ph.D.	5.0	4	5.2

Table 1: Graduate Student Completion Times

## 5. Postdoctoral Scholars at UBCO

A significant contributor to the remarkable expansion of research during the past several years at UBC Okanagan (as noted here: <https://ok.ubc.ca/research/>) is the increase in the number and distribution of postdoctoral scholars conducting research at this campus. CoGS provides advocacy, support, and a sense of community for UBCO postdocs in accordance with UBC's [Postdoctoral Fellows Policy AP10](https://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2022/05/Postdoctoral-Fellows-Policy_AP10.pdf) ([https://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2022/05/Postdoctoral-Fellows-Policy\\_AP10.pdf](https://universitycounsel.ubc.ca/files/2022/05/Postdoctoral-Fellows-Policy_AP10.pdf)).

### 5.1 Postdoctoral Statistics and Demographics

Given the relatively short duration of postdoctoral appointments (typically about two years), the total number of postdoctoral scholars conducting research at UBC Okanagan fluctuates, with the total number postdocs conducting research here at any given time typically ranging between 90 to 100. As mentioned in section 1.3 above, there were a total of 135 postdoctoral scholars holding appointments at UBCO during the 2023/24 academic year.

Of the 96 postdocs holding appointments in August 2024, 50 were international, and 46 were domestic, with the distribution across campus illustrated in Figure 6 below.

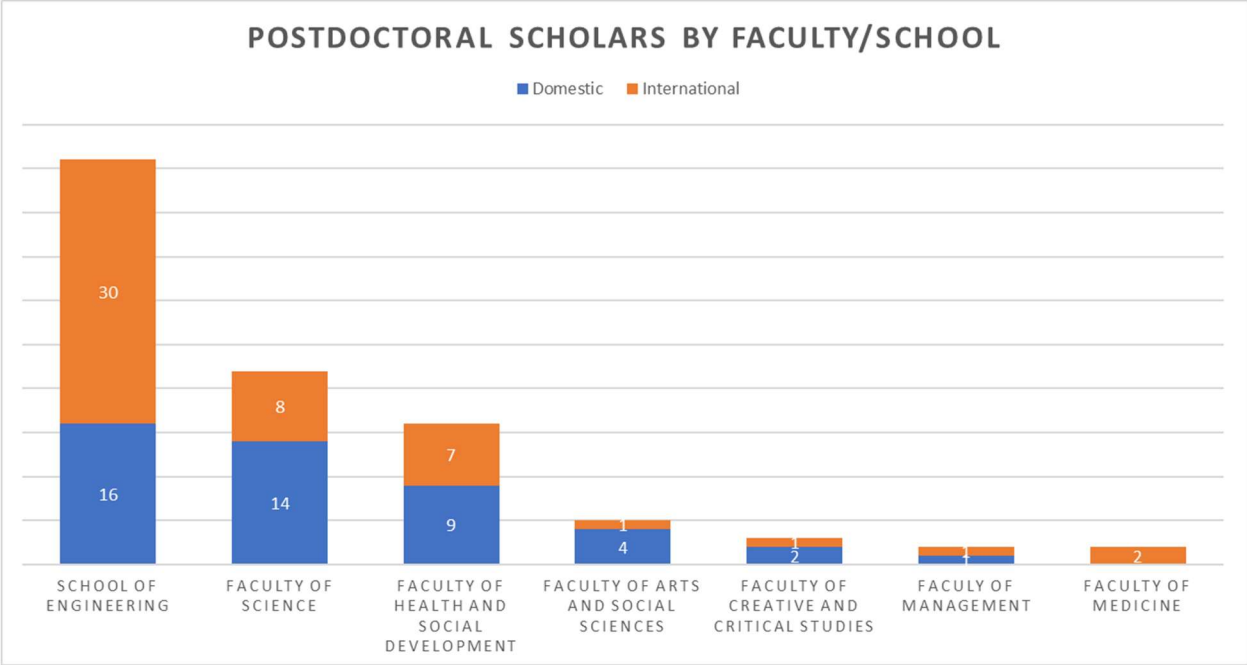


Figure 6: Distribution of Postdoctoral Scholars by Faculty

**TOTAL POSTOCS PER FACULTY AS OF AUGUST 2024**

School of Engineering	46
Faculty of Science	22
Faculty of Health and Social Development	16
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	5
Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies	3
Faculty of Management	2
Faculty of Medicine	2

Table 2: Total Postdoctoral Scholars per Faculty

5.2 Postdoctoral Fellows Association

Founded in 2020, UBC Okanagan’s Postdoctoral Association (PDA UBCO) “focuses on enhancing postdoctoral fellows’ experiences by generating support and resources, organizing events and workshops, and building a community” for postdoctoral researchers at UBC Okanagan (<https://postdocs.ok.ubc.ca/>). The PDA’s executive team consists of an interdisciplinary group of postdoctoral scholars from a variety of Faculties across UBC Okanagan.

The PDA works closely with the College's leadership and Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator. Monthly meetings between CoGS and the PDA facilitate open dialogue and foster a relationship based on mutual respect and support. CoGS also provides financial and logistical support for events organized by and in collaboration with the PDA.

### 5.3 Postdoctoral Awards and Fellowships

#### UBC Okanagan Postdoctoral Fellowship

The UBC Okanagan Postdoctoral Fellowships were established in 2023 to attract and retain top-tier talent to UBC Okanagan. Initially funding a salary of \$50,000 per year (plus \$10,000 per year in benefits), the Fellowships are now valued at \$60,000. The appointment duration is up to two years, and the UBCOPFs are awarded to two successful candidates each year: one is awarded to an applicant from STEM disciplines, and a second UBCOPF is awarded to an applicant conducting research in the Arts, Humanities, or Social Sciences. The first competition year yielded two winners: for the STEM disciplines, [Dr. Jelena Komanchuk](#), (<https://nursing.ok.ubc.ca/research/postdoctoral-fellows/>) and for the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, [Dr. Susan Reid](#) (<https://thefeeledlab.ca/about/meet-the-lab/>).

In addition to the UBCOPF, we attract postdoctoral scholars through two prestigious competitions: the Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships and the UBC Killam Postdoctoral Research Fellowships.

There are currently three Banting Postdoctoral Fellows conducting research at UBC Okanagan:

- [Dr. Alex Kent](#): awarded 2022; Faculty of Health and Social Development (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/2022/12/01/alex-kent-awarded-the-distinguished-banting-postdoctoral-fellowship/>)
- Dr. Christina Prokopenko: awarded 2024; Faculty of Science
- Dr. April Martinig: awarded 2024; Faculty of Science

For our small campus to win two Bantings (out of 70 total awarded in Canada) in 2024 is a remarkable success.

In addition to the UBCO, Killam, and Banting fellowships, we also administer and adjudicate applications by UBCO postdocs to the Killam Postdoctoral Research Prize. Our most recent recipient of the Killam Postdoctoral Research Prize is Dr. Corliss Bean (announced in 2020) in the Faculty of Health and Social Development.

### 5.4 Postdoctoral Events

We collaborate with the PDA UBCOs in hosting two annual events: in September, we host Postdoc Appreciation Day, which serves as an opportunity for us to bring in campus partners to introduce new and continuing postdoctoral scholars to the various services around campus. The 2024 Postdoc Appreciation Day was well attended, with more than a third of the

postdocs currently at UBCO in attendance. In the early spring, we again collaborate with the PDA in hosting Postdoc Research Day, which offers postdocs on this campus an opportunity to gather together as a community, and share their research with their peers.

### 5.5 Checklist of Expectations for Postdocs and their Supervisors

We collaborated with the UBCO Postdoc Association in creating a checklist of expectations (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/resources/forms/checklist-of-expectations-for-postdoctoral-fellows-and-supervisors/>) to promote and guide conversations between new postdocs and their supervisors. This checklist is a variation upon the checklist of expectations already in place to promote discussions between graduate students and their supervisors: (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/academics/student-supervisor-expectations/>)

## 6. Professional Development

### 6.1 Professional Development for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars

#### 6.1.1 Workshops

The College schedules and hosts workshops, gathers information about relevant partner events, and cross-promotes those events through weekly newsletters and more regularly through social media. CoGS offers annual award and funding workshops, and collaborates on many other workshops with partners across both UBC campuses. Key partners include the Centre for Scholarly Communication (CSC), the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO), Indigenous Programs and Services (IPS), Academic and Career Development, and Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS) at UBCV.

From September 2023 through April 2024, an average of 29.7 workshops or events were held every week. Fewer opportunities are available throughout the summer; however, in May and June 2024, an average of 19 workshops and events per week were available to UBCO graduate students, with some of these workshops also of interest and open to postdoctoral scholars.

There is opportunity for the College to offer more workshops in the areas of defence preparation, post-candidacy connection, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and other topics desired by students should additional university resources be allocated.

#### 6.1.2 Research Excellence Workshop Leader Initiative (REWLI)

The Research Excellence Workshop Leader Initiative (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/professional-development/research-excellence-workshop-leader-initiative/>) was created by the CSC in partnership with CoGS in 2023. The program provides the opportunity for ten graduate students or postdoctoral researchers to showcase their unique skills and participate in formal teaching activities through leading

workshops to the wider UBC community. Successful applicants receive \$1,050 in funding.

The 2023/2024 REWLI workshops included the following:

- From Overwhelmed to Empowered: Practical Tools for Graduate Student Stress Management
- Reading and Presenting for Live Audiences
- Mixed Methods Research Using NVivo
- Exploring Tactical Urbanism: Strategies for Transforming Cities
- Reading Math for the Social Sciences
- The Process to Establish Recommendations and Clinical Practice Guidelines: Systematic Reviews, Meta-Analyses, Quality of the Evidence
- Strategies for Interdisciplinary Collaborations
- Navigating Code-Switching and Language Biases in Academic Settings
- ReAnimating Research Through Puppet Creation and Performance
- Introduction to Program Evaluation: Developing Skills for Systematic and Useful Evaluations

### 6.1.3 Graduate Micro-credentials

The College offers three non-credit micro-credentials together with partners across campus. Those completing these micro-credentials receive Letters of Completion, as outlined in Senate [Policy 0-129.2](https://scs-senate-2021.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/O-129.2-Non-Credit-Credentials-20240516.pdf) (<https://scs-senate-2021.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/O-129.2-Non-Credit-Credentials-20240516.pdf>):

- The Cultural and Social Awareness credential consists of eight workshops over three themes: Interculturalism, Equity and Inclusion, and Mental Health and Wellbeing. These workshops focus on building awareness around social and cultural difference, diversity, inclusion, and equity, and are offered in partnership with relevant organizations on campus.
- The Scholarly Research, Writing, and Publishing credential consists of six workshops over four themes: Scholarly Research, Research Data, Writing, and Publishing. These workshops focus on building awareness of effective scholarly research, writing and publishing practices, and is offered in partnership with relevant organizations on campus.
- The Career and Professional Development credential consists of seven workshops over four themes: Career Exploration, Job Search Strategies, Preparing Your Application, and Skill Set Diversification. These workshops focus on building a strategy for personal career management, help students reflect on their experiences, create a future vision of their career, and learn strategies and skills to develop and grow professionally.

### 6.1.4 Three Minute Thesis (3MT)

The Three Minute Thesis competition is now held in universities worldwide. The competition challenges thesis-based graduate students to present their research in three

minutes in lay language. The competition is an excellent opportunity for students to develop their presentation and communication skills. For more information about the Three Minute Thesis competition at UBCO, see section 8.1 below.

## 6.2 Professional Development Opportunities for UBCO Postdoctoral Scholars

### Postdoc Research Day:

As noted in section 5.4 above, Postdoc Research Day, which takes place each Spring, is an opportunity for postdoctoral scholars to hone their presentation skills by presenting their research to a non-specialist audience, and receive valuable feedback from a multidisciplinary panel comprised of faculty members from across campus who select the best paper from each session and award a small prize.

The Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator works with campus partners such as the CSC and CTL to identify and expand on existing career and professional development opportunities for postdoctoral scholars. Career and professional development opportunities are marketed directly to postdoctoral scholars by the College's Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator via a monthly newsletter.

#### ➤ CTL: Instructional Skills Workshop

The Instructional Skills Workshop, which is open to postdocs, focuses on developing teaching skills and enhancing teaching effectiveness. It provides opportunities for postdoctoral scholars alongside new faculty members to create “mini lessons” and receive feedback and support from peers. There are several Instructional Skills Workshops offered every year. The most recent ISW included a distributed format, with shorter days to better accommodate postdoctoral scholars' schedules.

#### ➤ CSC Workshops

The Centre for Scholarly Communications organizes many workshops throughout the year that are open to and relevant for postdoctoral scholars. Examples of these workshops include:

- Writing the Academic Cover Letter
- Accessing Statistics Canada Data for your Research
- Introduction to Program Evaluation: Developing Skills for Systematic and Useful Evaluations
- The Process to Establish Recommendations and Clinical Practice Guidelines: Systematic Reviews, Meta-Analyses, Quality of the Evidence
- Strategies for Interdisciplinary Collaborations
- Inclusive Teaching: Universal Design for Learning
- Weekly drop-in sessions

There could be opportunities for the creation of postdoc-specific career and professional development through the College of Graduate Studies if additional resources were made available to support these initiatives.

### 6.3 Professional Development for CoGS Staff and Leadership

The College and University provides support for the educational and professional development of CoGS staff. For example, Deanna Roberts, Alicia Meehan, and Laura Bissell have all completed the UBC Developing Leaders Program (formally known as *Managing@UBC*), and Margaret Reeves completed the Academic Leadership Development Program.

CoGS has also organized team training for all CoGS staff to participate in facilitated sessions, including:

- University's Relationship with the Host Nation
- SVPRO's response and prevention workshop
- Facilitated annual retreat, professional development sessions on communication, team dynamics, health and wellness

## 7. Marketing and Recruitment

### 7.1 Webinars: Applying to Graduate School

Our “Applying to Graduate School at UBC Okanagan” webinar, launched in November 2021, is a successful initiative designed to enhance potential students’ experience with the application process by introducing them to the application itself and providing opportunities for them to pose questions directly to CoGS personnel during the online event. In future, we will expand the webinar by including graduate program personnel who can participate in breakout rooms and have direct conversations with prospective applicants to their programs. In November 2021, 84 prospective applicants attended. The webinar held in November 2022 numbered 205 in attendance, and has had a total of 1,830 views by prospective applicants; the November 2023 webinar numbered 125 in attendance and has since had a total of 580 views.

### 7.2 Engagement on Social Media

As noted in section 1.3.5 above, CoGS currently engages with social media on three platforms: X, Facebook, and Instagram. As of July 2, 2024, we have 1,114 followers on X, 1,288 on Facebook, and 1,616 on Instagram. CoGS uses social media to inform the graduate community about policy changes, promote workshops and events, celebrate student activities and achievements through narrative profiles and videos, and share graduate student- as well as postdoc-related stories. Social media keeps current students, graduate programs, and other departments and units at UBCO engaged with and informed about what is happening in the College and in graduate education at UBCO. Social media also provides recruitment opportunities by offering prospective students a lens into graduate student life at UBCO.

Social media analytics from July 1, 2023 to July 1, 2024:

- Audience number across all channels = 4,003
- Total impressions (total number of times content has been shown regardless of clicks) = 361,635

- Total engagement (total number of actions taken with or in response to content such as comments, clicks, likes, and shares) = 5,119

### 7.3 Master Grads

Master Grads (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/master-grads/>) was an alumni speaker series hosted by the College of Graduate Studies in partnership with alumniUBC in 2020 and 2021 which offered a chance for current students, other alumni, staff, and faculty to explore the possibilities of a graduate degree and hear from master's and doctoral alumni who were pursuing their careers. This series was offered while CoGS had a co-op student communication position, but cannot continue without additional resources.

### 7.4 Program Marketing Campaigns

In the past, University Relations (UR: <https://ur.ok.ubc.ca/>) partnered with the College to fund a general graduate school social media marketing campaign. CoGS and UR each contributed \$5,000 annually to this effort. Due to required budget cuts, CoGS had to stop funding this campaign in 2023, and UR agreed to fund the entire campaign. Individual Faculties select specific programs annually to partner with UR on social media marketing. However, without CoGS involvement, such marketing may or may not include graduate programs, based on where Faculties choose to focus their strategic recruitment.

### 7.5 CoGS's Publications

#### 7.5.1 The Graduate Gazette

The Graduate Gazette was originally launched in 2019 as “Behind the Door,” as an opportunity to keep graduate program staff and faculty regularly informed of policy and procedural changes, and other important graduate education information. “Behind the Door” was rebranded to “The Graduate Gazette” in 2020. The Gazette goes out monthly following that month’s Graduate Council meeting.

#### 7.5.2 Workshops and Events Newsletter

The Graduate Student Workshops & Events Newsletter launched as a monthly newsletter in January 2020 and includes workshops and events from across both UBC campuses (and beyond) that are of interest to graduate students. Due to the high number of events and workshops now offered, the newsletter moved to weekly distribution in September 2023. The target audience is graduate students, but the newsletter also goes to graduate program coordinators, program staff, and additional subscribers.

#### 7.5.3 Postdoc Bulletin

The Postdoc Bulletin is a monthly newsletter distributed to all postdoctoral scholars on campus, and includes important information about postdoc-specific events, funding opportunities, housing opportunities, and workshops. It is the primary means of communication between the College and postdoctoral scholars across campus.



#### 7.5.4 College of Graduate Studies [Annual Reports](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/about/reports/) (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/about/reports/>)

Every year, we produce an Annual Report that reflects on our experiences, achievements, and challenges faced during the previous academic year, from September through August. Our reports track application, awards, and graduation data; provide student stories; and highlight key policy, procedural, and administrative changes. These reports offer opportunities to reflect on how the previous year's goals have been met, articulate our goals and aspirations for the upcoming year, and showcase through visual representations the activities and achievements of the many students and postdoctoral scholars who are the focus of our work here in CoGS. These reports are available on the CoGS website dating back to the 2018/19 academic year.

## 8. Graduate Student Showcase Events

### 8.1 UBC Okanagan [3MT Final](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/3mt/) (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/3mt/>)

The College of Graduate Studies has hosted the UBC Okanagan Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Final since 2014 in which graduate students compete for \$6,000 in prizes. To reach the 3MT Final, students first compete in 3MT Heats within their disciplinary Faculties, with the winner of each Heat invited to the Final. Originally held on campus, the competition moved into the community, first at the Innovation Centre in downtown Kelowna in 2019, and then into Kelowna's Rotary Centre for the Arts in 2023 due to the increased demand for tickets. We collaborate with Global TV in presenting this event. The 3MT Final is an excellent opportunity for graduate students to share their research with the larger community in the Okanagan valley.

### 8.2 [Western Canada Regional 3MT](https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/3mt/2024-western-regional-3mt-competition/) (<https://gradstudies.ok.ubc.ca/3mt/2024-western-regional-3mt-competition/>)

The College of Graduate Studies has now hosted the Western Canada Regional 3MT Competition twice – in 2015 and in 2024. The Western Canada Regional Competition includes participants from the universities and institutions who participate in the Western Canadian Deans' Agreement, from Vancouver Island to Manitoba. This event has proven an excellent opportunity to showcase the Okanagan campus and the surrounding area.

### 8.3 Graduate Student Welcome and Orientation

The Incoming Graduate Student Orientation is an all-day event that includes welcome information, sessions from campus partners, a resource fair and lunch, and normally includes a social activity. Over the years, Orientation has expanded to include sessions leading up to Orientation Day, and sessions happening throughout September. While the College does not normally offer a formal Orientation program in January, welcome week sessions are offered that target new students, but are open to all students. These sessions typically include funding

and awards sessions, professional development opportunities, key information for international students, and social activities led by the Graduate Community Facilitators.

## 9. Engagement with UBC's Strategic Priorities

### 9.1 Indigenous Strategic Plan

UBC's [Indigenous Strategic Plan 2020](https://aboriginal-2018.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/06/UBC.ISP_StrategicPlan2020-SPREAD-Borderless-REDUCED.pdf) (ISP: [https://aboriginal-2018.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/06/UBC.ISP\\_StrategicPlan2020-SPREAD-Borderless-REDUCED.pdf](https://aboriginal-2018.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2021/06/UBC.ISP_StrategicPlan2020-SPREAD-Borderless-REDUCED.pdf)) provides core guidance to the University on Indigenous engagement and makes explicit commitments to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The ISP outlines eight goals to implement Indigenous Human Rights at the University (ISP pp. 24-25). In 2021 and 2022, CoGS completed the UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan (ISP) Self-Assessment and Intent-to-Action Workshops. Completion of this self-assessment was the first step to help situate CoGS in relation to Indigenous engagement and the goals of the ISP. CoGS staff reviewed the ISP goals and identified those that a) fall within areas where we can have the most impact, and b) are within our sphere of control and influence.

Although the team agreed that all eight ISP goals connect with the CoGS mandate in one of these two ways, we then ranked each goal to identify those located within areas where CoGS could have the most impact, control, and influence. Ranking the goals in this way enables us to identify which ISP goals to prioritize. We determined that the ISP goals where CoGS has the *most* impact, control, and influence include Goal 6 (recruiting Indigenous people), Goal 7 (providing tools for success) and Goal 8 (creating a holistic system of support). From information collected during three planning workshops, CoGS created our ISP Intent to Action Plan, which outlines steps we are actively taking towards these prioritized goals.

The key actions we have taken and/or supported thus far include the following:

#### 9.1.1 [Indigenous Pathways to Graduate Studies](https://students.ok.ubc.ca/indigenous-students/experiential-learning-and-career-advising/pathways-to-graduate-studies/) (<https://students.ok.ubc.ca/indigenous-students/experiential-learning-and-career-advising/pathways-to-graduate-studies/>)

This program, led by IPS and supported by CoGS, offers Indigenous undergraduate students a window into the world of graduate research. The program provides support through the application process, combining one-on-one guidance with opportunities for students to network and attend workshops, social gatherings, and cultural activities to support them in their path to studies at the graduate level.

#### 9.1.2 Awards for Indigenous Students

- Indigenous Scholars Award
  - Valued at \$10,000 per year, with durations of 2 years for master's students and 5 years for doctoral students. All eligible Indigenous graduate students engaged in research can hold this award.

- **Indigenous Graduate Fellowship**  
Valued at \$20,000 plus tuition for 2 years for master’s students and 5 years for doctoral students. This is a competitive fellowship for Indigenous students, launched in 2023/24.

### 9.1.3 Indigenous Grad Advisor

This position is funded 25% by CoGS and 75% by Indigenous Programs and Services, since August 2021. The Indigenous Graduate Advisor is the central coordinator of implementation strategies for our ISP Intent to Action plan.

### 9.1.4 Growth in Indigenous Applications and Admissions

The pattern of growth in applications from Indigenous applicants and subsequent admissions is steady, albeit gradual. See Figure 7 below.

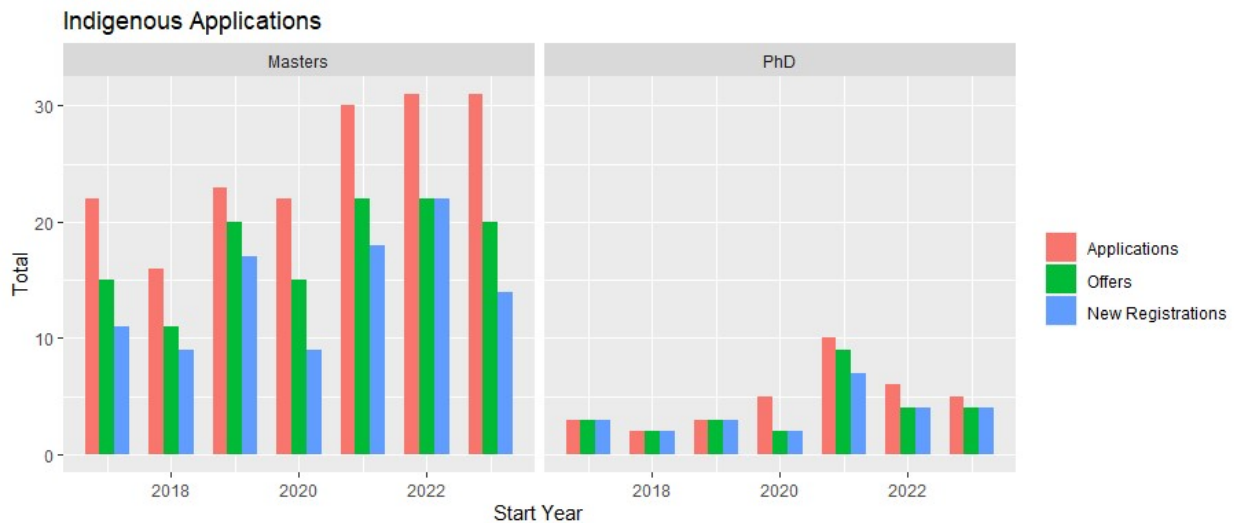


Figure 7: Applications and Admissions Offers for Indigenous Graduate Students

### 9.1.5 EDI Book Club Conversations

Our EDI book club includes readings that speak to the issues and experiences that are relevant to Indigenous students’ lives. Our discussions of books over lunch provide rich opportunities for members of the CoGS team to explore and reflect on these issues.

## 9.2 Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence Task Force & StEAR Framework

UBC’s [Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence \(ARIE\)](https://antiracism.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2022/07/00-UBC-Complete-Report-UBC.0847-ARIE-TF-Digital-11-complete.pdf) Task Force (<https://antiracism.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2022/07/00-UBC-Complete-Report-UBC.0847-ARIE-TF-Digital-11-complete.pdf>) was convened in the spring of 2021 to develop recommendations to address racism, including institutional racism, against IBPOC students, staff, and faculty across both campuses at UBC. Subsequently, the [StEAR Framework](#),

mentioned above, was developed to translate the findings of the ARIE Task Force into concrete recommendations.

In CoGS, we have formed an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) committee. This committee provides advice and makes recommendations to the Dean of the College to create and maintain an inclusive and safe environment in graduate education and administration for underrepresented groups (including women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, Black peoples, racialized minorities, and individuals from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community). Using the shared expertise and lived experiences of its members, the committee identifies EDI-related issues and proposes initiatives and policies.

The EDI committee raises awareness of equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice within the College, graduate programs, and postdoctoral studies at UBC Okanagan. CoGS's EDI committee provides guidance on how to support UBC's recognition of Indigenous rights and its commitments to decolonization and reconciliation as articulated in the Indigenous Strategic Plan; the EDI committee also provides guidance on how to achieve changes within the four thematic areas (structural, curricular, compositional, interactional) identified in the StEAR Framework and meeting the goals identified in the [StEAR Roadmap for Change \(https://equity.ubc.ca/stear-framework-and-roadmap-for-change/developing-stear-roadmap-objectives-and-action/\)](https://equity.ubc.ca/stear-framework-and-roadmap-for-change/developing-stear-roadmap-objectives-and-action/).

### 9.3 UBC Okanagan: Outlook 2040

*Outlook 2040* (written in 2018: <https://okmain.cms.ok.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/2019/02/UBCO-Outlook-2040.pdf>) expresses UBC Okanagan's long-term aspirations. Its vision for the Okanagan campus in 2040 states:

UBCO's student body is a diverse community of ~18,000 students, comprising 12,000 undergraduates (25% international); 3,000 graduate students; and 3,000 students in full cost recovery, post baccalaureate and graduate professional degree programs, and non-degree and flexible programs.

We are on a trajectory to meet these enrolment goals. It is not clear, however, that we can continue on that path—further growth in research graduate student enrolment will be contingent on increases in available funding, space, and supervisory capacity. Space is a critical issue on our campus, which will be partially alleviated by the completion of two new buildings currently under construction. We note that the impacts of covid, and of recent changes in IRCC rules for study permits, were not anticipated in 2018.

*Outlook 2040* also includes an ambitious list of possible new graduate programs, which vary widely in their likelihood of being launched.

9.4 [Shaping UBC's Next Century: Strategic Plan 2018-2028](https://strategicplan.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2018_UBC_Strategic_Plan_Full-20180425.pdf) ([https://strategicplan.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2018\\_UBC\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_Full-20180425.pdf](https://strategicplan.ubc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/2018_UBC_Strategic_Plan_Full-20180425.pdf))

UBC's Strategic Plan is currently undergoing a "refresh" led by new (November 2023) UBC President Dr Benoit-Antoine Bacon. Stated goals of the refresh include elevating teaching and research as priorities of the university.

## 10. Self-Analysis

### 10.1 Strengths and Achievements

#### 10.1.1 The Team

- Creation of a management team and portfolio structure that spotlights the core areas for which CoGS is responsible has thus far enabled us to manage the remarkable pattern of growth in graduate studies at UBC Okanagan.
- Expansion of Leadership Roles: The CoGS Dean's additional role as Associate Provost represents an expansion of the role since the last external review. The addition of two Associate Dean's positions within CoGS has strengthened our ability to provide leadership in graduate education.
- CoGS' Team-building Activities: The College has actioned several initiatives to support the professional and personal development of the CoGS team.
- The Guild is an initiative created by a group of staff members dedicated to creating wellness and bonding activities for the CoGS team to sustain morale.
- CoGS's Annual Retreat, attended by all CoGS staff and leadership, offers an opportunity for us to support and build strength within our team. Our last retreat focused on resilience and included a team-building exercise at the Rotary Centre for the Arts in downtown Kelowna.
- The EDI Book Club, reads selections chosen by participating staff and leadership. Members of the book club take turns leading discussions about each book we read.
- Health & Wellness Funding is used to provide support for our staff through low-key, informal activities.

Many of our team building activities have the underlying benefit of relieving stress. Addressing the issue of stress on our staff is essential, given that almost all of their work is deadline driven and time sensitive, and they are often tasked with helping others in the UBCO graduate community to solve problems or navigate graduate studies procedures. As a result, we support and encourage participation in stress relieving activities such as community puzzles, our kudos bulletin board, and the annual "CoGSies" awards. Many of our community building activities are food based, nourishing both the spirit and the body, including international food lunches, chips days, and frequent sharing of snacks.

#### 10.1.2 Financial Support for Doctoral Students

- Guaranteed Minimum Funding for Doctoral Students (see section 2.3 above)

- The extension of two key awards to 5<sup>th</sup> year doctoral students since 2020: the International Doctoral Partial Tuition award (to cover the differential rates between domestic and international tuition) and the Okanagan Graduate Research Scholarship.

### 10.1.3 UBCO Postdoctoral Fellowships

The first two fellowships, initially valued at \$50,000 per year, and now valued at \$60,000 annually plus benefits, have been awarded (see section 5.3 above).

### 10.1.4 The Robson Award

We have developed this pilot funding program to support students with disabilities who need additional time to complete their degree, to provide financial aid that supports program completion.

## 10.2 Challenges: The Top Six Issues Facing CoGS

### 10.2.1 Student Funding

Graduate student stipends, scholarships, and assistantships have not kept pace with inflation. This situation impacts access to graduate education for all those who lack independent means. Many students work off-campus as an economic necessity, which impacts their academic success and ultimately decreases UBC's research productivity. Uncompetitive funding packages make it difficult for graduate programs to compete for the best students who are offered better opportunities elsewhere. This circumstance is partly an outcome of rapid enrolment growth.

However, two additional factors are specific to graduate students at the Okanagan campus: the lack of an international partial tuition award for master's students (currently in place at UBCV), and the lack of provincial grant funding for graduate students on this campus.

### 10.2.2 Insufficient Human Resources

We do not have sufficient human resources to fulfill our current and future administrative responsibilities at the level of excellence that we expect of our staff. Short-staffing leads to delays in processing applications, with the attendant risk of losing competitive applicants, and in the case of postdoctoral scholars, being unable to offer sufficient advocacy and support to this growing community of researchers on this campus. In addition, recognizing the need to support black prospective and current students, and the lack of resources in the graduate space to drive forward EDI initiatives, CoGS drafted the Inclusive Initiatives Advisor position in 2022. CoGS has not been successful in securing funding for this position.

### **10.2.3 Workday**

Significant staff and leadership time has been and continues to be consumed by Workday planning, implementation, and resolution of problems. The recent launch of Workday Student, the new system of student records at UBC, with its increased complexity, means that routine functions now take more time for staff to complete. Compounding this reduction in efficiency is that Workday lacks many graduate-level functions, resulting in the need for us to develop new systems, in collaboration with our counterparts at UBCV, to perform functions lost in the transition. As a result, we anticipate staff will be unable to maintain current levels of service.

### **10.2.4 Program-level Leadership**

Some of our graduate programs provide a suboptimal experience for some students, due to a lack of responsibility taken at the program level to track and manage student progress, mediate supervisor-student relationship issues, and manage funding.

### **10.2.5 EDI**

It is challenging to make progress toward equity and inclusion when admissions are controlled at the level of the program, and usually, by the individual supervisor. A lack of targeted funding for historically marginalized and underrepresented students, and particularly black students, makes it difficult for CoGS to intervene in more tangible ways.

### **10.2.6 Postdoctoral Scholars**

In collaboration with Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at UBCV, we have held financial Town Halls with postdoctoral scholars and (separately) with their supervisors at UBCO. Postdocs' concerns include equitable financial support and access to professional development opportunities, including travel funding (unlike their counterparts at UBCV, postdoctoral scholars at UBCO do not have access to travel awards). We are working to improve administrative processes such as onboarding, and to secure more support for their professional development, but our resources are constrained given that the Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator's position is half-time; in addition, campus-wide financial support for this constituency is limited. Although support and advocacy for postdocs is in CoGS' mandate, that is obscured by the lack of recognition of that responsibility in the College's name.

## **11. CoGS's Relationship with G+PS in Vancouver**

### **11.1 Relationship with G+PS**

CoGS maintains a close working relationship with our colleagues in the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at UBCV, especially in our joint efforts to find solutions to the

extensive gaps in Workday. CoGS and G+PS consult regularly on issues of policy, with the philosophy that the campuses will be harmonized where it makes sense to do so, and will be distinct where needed. The governance and financial structures of the two campuses are significantly different.

## 11.2 Collaborations and Consultations

### 11.2.1 Student Affordability Task Force

In 2022, UBC launched a Student Affordability Task Force. Recommendations were undergraduate-centric, and so a Graduate Student Affordability Task Force was created, co-chaired by CoGS Dean Peter Simpson and G+PS Associate Dean Julian Dierkes. Recommendations are under development. The key question outstanding is what funding will be made available to support the recommendations. The need for many students to work off campus (to supplement their stipends in the era of the \$8 head of lettuce) has impacts on student mental health, program completion times, and research productivity.

Upcoming recommendations from the Task Force can be grouped into 3 categories:

- (i) Need for additional funding – for example, to cover the tuition differential for international master’s students;
- (ii) Need for better organization – for example, rationalization of the distribution of teaching assistantships, improved timing of funding distribution so that students receive roughly equal amounts each semester, and clearer communication to students about their funding packages.
- (iii) Issues over which we have little or no control—for example, housing costs are high, availability is poor, and public transportation in Kelowna is limited, but we are unlikely to be able to address these issues in the near future.

### 11.2.2 Expense Calculators

A recommendation from the affordability task force was to expand UBC ‘s expense calculators to provide students with an estimate of their tuition, housing costs, food, book costs, and other costs for all the years of their degree to support better financial planning by prospective and current students.

CoGS has developed an interactive Expense Calculator which allows applicants and current students to estimate costs associated with living in Kelowna. To have more intentional alignment with institution-wide calculators, CoGS is engaging with Enrolment Services and G+PS to ensure that all interactive expense calculators use common resources and give students a common experience with these tools.



## 12. Plans and Aspirations

### 12.1 Direction of Graduate Education in Canada

Graduate education is evolving away from an apprenticeship model and from training our replacements as professors. As educators with an eye on relevance, we need to prepare our students with a broad set of skills applicable in the academic world and transferrable to non-academic roles. Canada has the catch-22 challenge of graduating fewer Ph.D.'s per capita than other first-world countries, while struggling with the perception that we graduate too many. It appears that Canadian industry (broadly defined) is not research-motivated enough to envision a future that thrives on the skills of educated young people. We need to do better at advocating for the value of Ph.D. graduates as holders of essential, transferrable skills to counteract public perceptions that they are merely holders of (impractical) knowledge.

#### 12.1.1 Impact of Changes to IRCC and B.C. Provincial Nominee Program

It is not clear at this time what the impact of changes will be in IRCC's rules for study permits and the projected caps on Provincial Attestation Letters, but it appears possible that graduate enrolments will decrease. Given that 48% of our graduate student body is international, we will have to navigate these uncertain waters carefully. In addition, what we stand to lose is more than an issue of economics, given the intellectual and cultural benefits of bringing a diverse range of international students into our graduate programs. Nevertheless, considering UBCO's current challenges of space, funding, and supervisory capacity, a temporary decrease in enrolment may provide a positive opportunity to focus on quality over quantity.

### 12.2 Develop Processes for Graduate Program Reviews

At UBCO, external reviews focus not on programs, but on "units," and the graduate programs tend to receive shallow treatment in those reviews. To achieve program improvement, we need reviews that incorporate assessment of graduate programs within these units. Finding resources to make this happen will be a challenge.

### 12.3 Future Directions for Graduate Education at UBC Okanagan: The Next Five Years

Priorities for the next 5-year period include:

- Rationalizing funding at the program level by encouraging programs to create transparent funding systems;
- Improving funding to be more competitive and to attract excellent students;
- Promoting professional development as an integral part of graduate education;
- Improving supervision by offering training;
- Supporting the development of new professional master's programs;
- Improving times to completion;
- Broadening access to graduate education for those currently excluded due to circumstances of geography, family, health, finance etc.;

- Providing a more welcoming environment for students as more space becomes available on campus;
- Supporting opportunities for students to broaden their experience, like the Public Scholars Initiative;
- Enhancing our support for postdoctoral scholars at UBCO.

Obstacles to progress include budget constraints, labour-intensive software systems that are not designed to support graduate education, and general institutional inertia. To achieve the enrolment goals of the Outlook 2040 plan (3,000 research graduate students, 3,000 professional master's students) the campus will need more research faculty, more graduate student funding, and more space. CoGS will need more staff, and the development of adequate software systems.

#### 12.4 Labour Market Outcomes

Appendix C offers a report on Labour Market Outcomes for graduates of master's and doctoral programs at UBC Okanagan as well as postdoctoral fellowships for which UBCO Ph.D. graduates have applied. The report is based to an extent on self-reported data, given that its source data is derived in part from LinkedIn profiles as captured by LiveAlumni.

Its key findings indicate that a majority of the Ph.D. graduates (64%) captured in this dataset are employed in government, non-profit, or education sectors, and that 18.% per cent have secured postdoctoral fellowships. The report also shows that those graduating with a Master's degree tend to rise more quickly in their careers than those graduating with a Bachelor's degree.

#### **Appendices**

Appendix A: Graduate Programs and Degrees at UBCO

Appendix B: Tri-Agency Scholarship Holders

Appendix C: COGS\_LaborMarketOutcomes

Appendix D: Dean's Response to the External Review of CoGS Nov 18, 2016