



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 28, 2024

To: College of Graduate Studies faculty and staff

From: Rehan Sadiq, Provost and Vice-President, Academic *RS*

Re: **Update on the External Review of the College of Graduate Studies**

As you know, an earlier communication was sent to your unit regarding the College's impending external review, which is part of UBC's standard practice under the [Senate policy on Reviews of Administrative Units](#) and in alignment with the [Principles, Procedures and Guidelines for External Academic Unit Reviews](#). This follow-up memo provides an update on the progress of the review, including new dates for the site-visit.

The purposes of the upcoming review of the College are to:

- determine the effectiveness of the College in supporting high-quality graduate training;
- evaluate the College's leadership and administration;
- advise on the future development of the College; and
- prompt the development of reflective self-study documents and engage in a process to appraise, as appropriate, the College's scholarly, pedagogical and professional activities.

Our office has worked with the College's leadership to finalize the members of the External Review Committee (ERC). Further information about the ERC members and the [Terms of Reference](#) are available on [the Office of the Provost website](#).

Over the next few months, the College will continue to prepare a self-study report of its operations, including its facilities and resources, administrative structure, and the unit's internal and external linkages. The self-study process will include a broad consultation with students, faculty and staff, as well as external communities/organizations engaged with the College. I encourage you to participate.

The ERC will conduct an in-person site-visit on **October 21, 22 and 23**, which includes interviews with UBC Okanagan students, faculty, leadership, staff and other individuals and groups that may interact with the College. Following the site-visit, the ERC will provide a report outlining their learnings and recommendations.

Please visit [the Office of the Provost website](#) if you would like to learn more about the external review process. Additional questions can be directed to [Laura Prada](#).



Terms of Reference: CoGS Review

Purpose of the Review

The external review of the College of Graduate Studies is a mechanism for quality assurance and improvement and an opportunity for learning, sharing, and creating a collective vision for the College and the communities it serves. The review should recognize good practices, successful outcomes and strengths, as well as provide recommendations for innovation and improvements. The external review process allows for evaluation, planning and prioritization of short- and long-term goals for the College.

Background Materials

- The Okanagan ASPIRE document ([Aspire: Envisioning our Future](#))
- UBC Strategic Plan ([Shaping UBC's Next Century](#))
- [UBC Indigenous Strategic Plan](#)
- [UBC StEAR Framework](#)
- The College of Graduate Studies self-study document

Mandate

The review team will consider all relevant documents and materials and meet with the Dean and Associate Deans, faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows and students during a site visit. The review team will submit a report within 30 days of the site visit to the UBCO Provost office (ubco.provost@ubc.ca).

Without limiting its overall mandate, the External Review Committee should:

1. **Graduate Education:** Review and evaluate the College of Graduate Studies' responsibilities for leadership, oversight, and administration of graduate programs at UBC Okanagan, and compare the performance of the College to that of its national and international peers.
2. **Postdoctoral Training:** Review and evaluate the role of the College in supporting and fostering postdoctoral training opportunities by providing administrative support and advocacy for postdoctoral scholars.
3. **Student Academic Experience and Support:** Assess the satisfaction and quality of students' academic experience from first contact through graduation and beyond, considering student morale, retention and time-to-completion.



- a. How does the College, in collaboration with graduate programs, support the academic, professional, and personal success of graduate students at UBC Okanagan?
 - b. To what extent does the College support historically, persistently, or systemically marginalized students, including Indigenous students?
 - c. How does the College ensure that graduate students and postdoctoral scholars are well advised and supported by their supervisor(s) and graduate programs?
4. **Professional Development:** Review and evaluate how the College, in collaboration with campus partners, supports professional development and networking for graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.
5. **Leadership and administration:** Review and evaluate the governance, organizational structure, leadership, strategic planning, and administration of the College, including the promotion of diversity. Review relevant support systems both within the College and across campus. The reviewers should consider the degree to which governance is transparent, responsive, and accessible to the graduate and postdoctoral communities.
6. **People, environment and culture:** Assess the working and educational environment, morale, and institutional culture of the College, as reflected in the experiences of faculty, staff, postdoctoral scholars, and students. The review should consider support for career advancement, professional development, advising, and workloads of the College's administrative team, with special attention to the College's support of equity and inclusion.
7. **Community Engagement:** Assess the nature, scope, and effectiveness of the College's outreach activities and the communities' levels of satisfaction with them.
8. **Support for the University's and Campus Strategic Plans:** Determine the extent to which the College reinforces the key commitments of UBC and UBC Okanagan strategic plans through its policies and activities.
9. **Physical Infrastructure:** Assess the range and quality of facilities at UBC Okanagan to support graduate education and postdoctoral training and determine whether the College is appropriately housed and equipped to meet the needs of staff, students, and postdoctoral scholars.
10. **Financial Planning and Resources:** Evaluate the financial resources of the College, including its administrative and student support budgets, and assess if the College is sufficiently staffed to support its educational, administrative, and leadership mission.
11. **Future development:** Review the College's strategic plans for the next five years and identify its challenges and opportunities. Recommend possible directions for the future growth and development of graduate education at UBC Okanagan.



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 22, 2024

To: College of Graduate Studies faculty and staff

From: Rehan Sadiq, Provost and Vice-President, Academic *RS*

Re: **External Review of the College of Graduate Studies**

As part of UBC's standard practice under the [Senate policy on Reviews of Administrative Units](#) and in alignment with the [Principles, Procedures and Guidelines for External Academic Unit Reviews](#), the College of Graduate Studies will undergo an external review in August 2024.

The purposes of the upcoming review of the College are to:

- determine the effectiveness of the College in supporting high-quality graduate training;
- evaluate the College's leadership and administration;
- advise on the future development of the College; and
- prompt the development of reflective self-study documents and engage in a process to appraise, as appropriate, the College's scholarly, pedagogical and professional activities.

Over the next few months, the College will prepare a self-study report of its operations, including its facilities and resources, administrative structure, and the unit's and internal and external linkages. The self-study process will include a broad consultation with students, faculty and staff, as well as external communities/organizations engaged with the College. I encourage you to participate.

In August 2024, an external review committee will conduct an in-person site-visit, which includes interviews with UBC Okanagan students, faculty, leadership, staff and other individuals and groups that may interact with the College. Following the site-visit, the external review committee will provide a report outlining their learnings and recommendations. Information about the terms of reference, external reviewers and the site-visit will be made available in the coming months.

Unit members have the opportunity to suggest external review committee members. Recommendations, including contact information, academic rank, synopsis of academic qualifications, field(s) of expertise, and any perceived conflicts of interest, must be submitted via email to [Laura Prada](#), Senior Manager, Academic Programs, Teaching and Learning, by March 8, 2024. The final selection of external review committee members will be decided by the Provost, in consultation with the Dean.

Please visit [the Office of the Provost website](#) if you would like to learn more about the external review process. Additional questions can be directed to [Laura Prada](#).



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

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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):

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) 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 Odlum**
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/>):
 - 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/>):
 - 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.

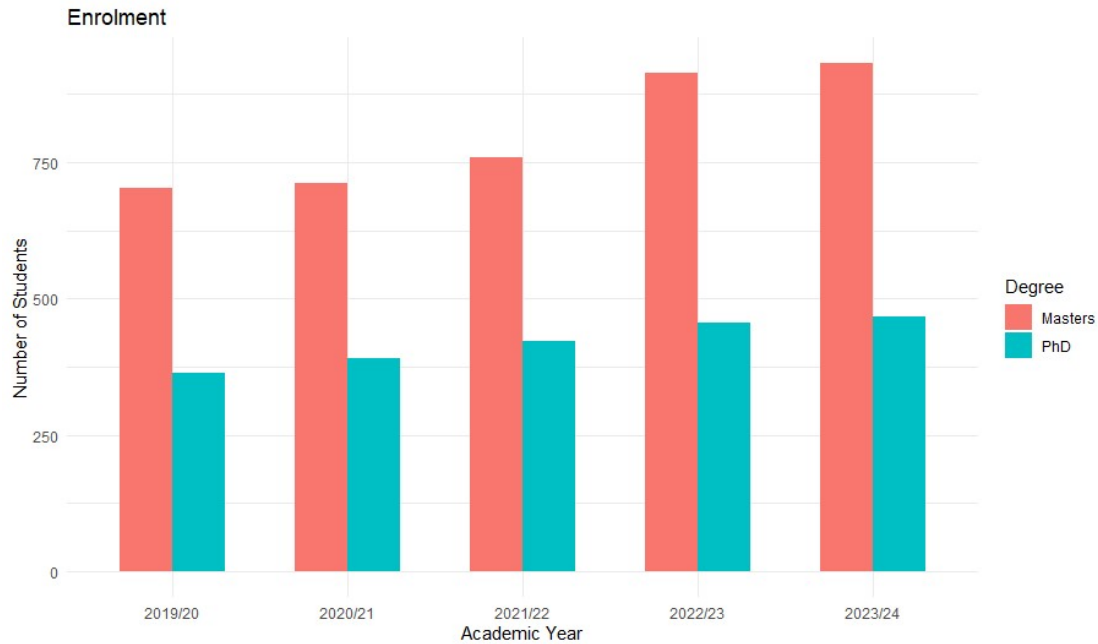


Figure 3: Enrolments in Master's and Ph.D. Programs 2019/20 to 2023/24

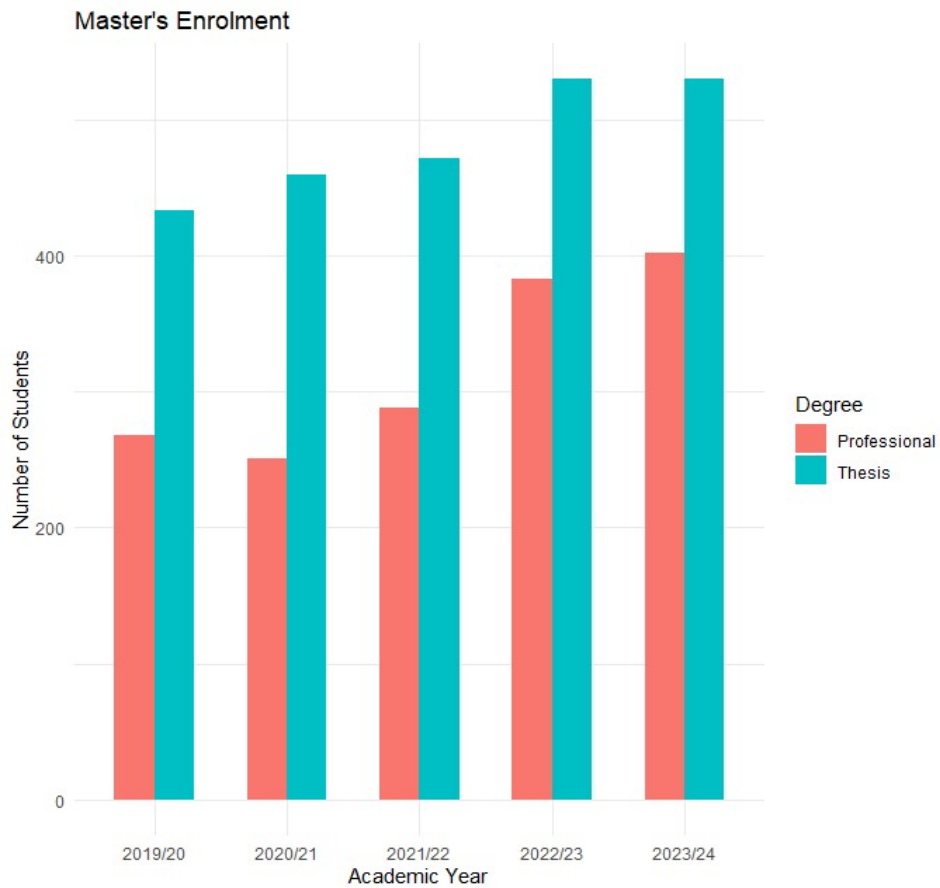


Figure 4: Enrolments in Master's Degree Programs 2019/20 to 2023/24

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.

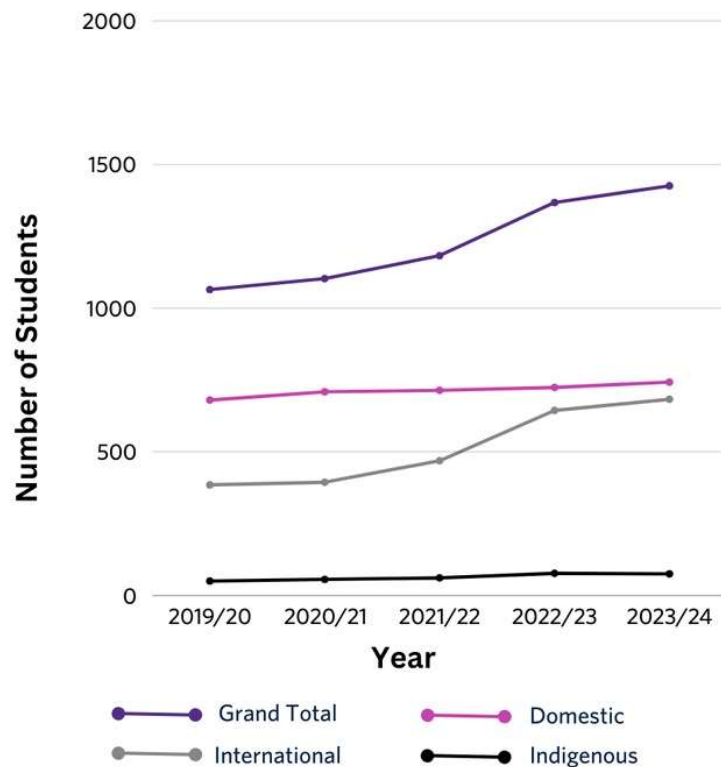


Figure 5: Comparative Enrolment Increases 2019/20 to 2023/24

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).

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.

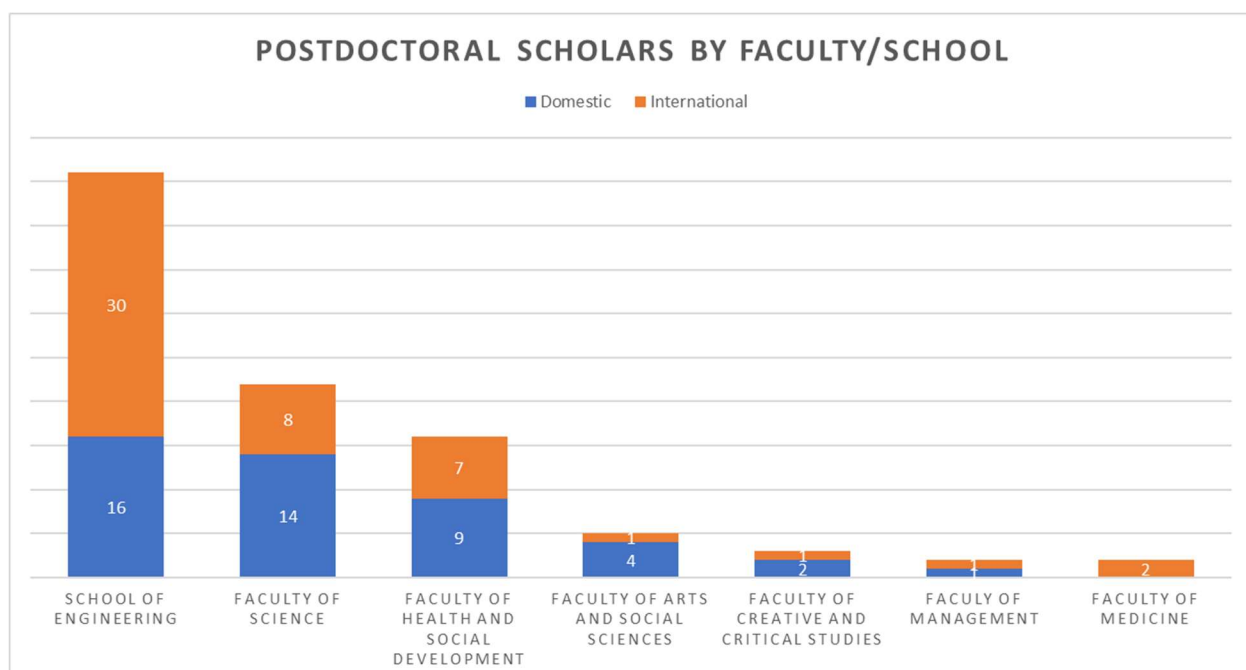


Figure 6: Distribution of Postdoctoral Scholars by Faculty

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) 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.

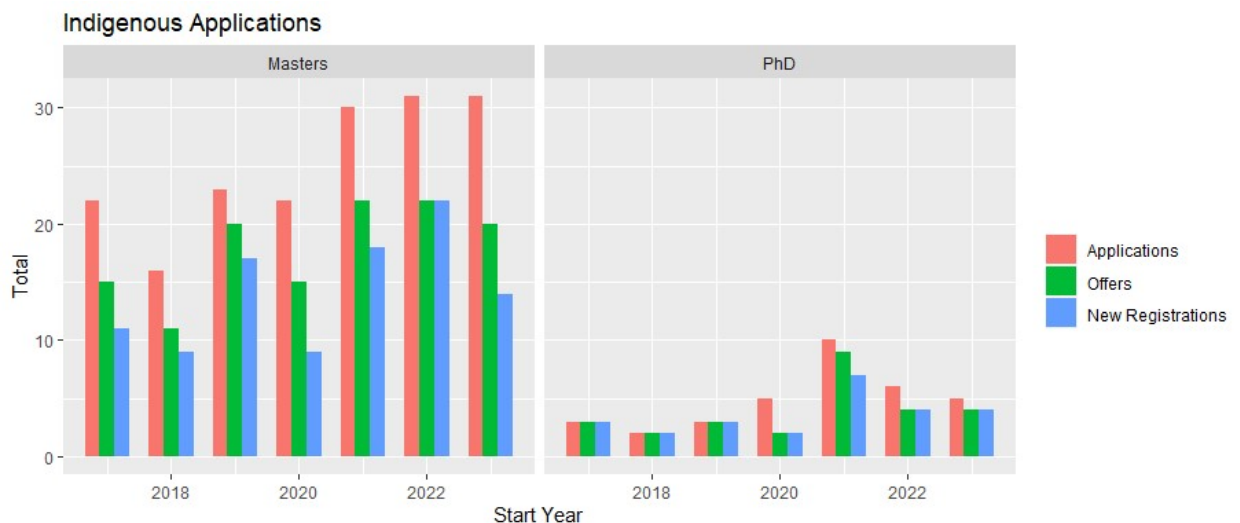


Figure 7: Applications and Admissions Offers for Indigenous Graduate Students

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)

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 5th 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



College of Graduate Studies: Response to the External Reviewers' Report

May 1, 2025

Executive Summary

1. Key Findings

The College of Graduate Studies underwent an external review in the Fall of 2024. Key findings by the external reviewers addressed a range of areas where strong leadership will be needed to ensure that previous improvements to graduate education at UBCO are sustained and that the reviewers' recommendations are achievable. The reviewers indicate that “while CoGS has made impressive strides under strong leadership, future success depends on strategic planning, operational reforms, and strengthened advocacy for resources and funding.” The report is generous in its praise of the achievements and motivations of the College’s leadership team and administrative staff, richly detailed in its analysis of operations, especially those related to admissions and records, and ambitious in its recommendations for increases in the financial and institutional resources necessary for enhancing graduate education at UBC Okanagan.

2. Key Recommendations

The review document recommends: revisions to and development of operations to refine the admissions process and improve the quality of student outcomes; expansion of training available to Graduate Program Coordinators and graduate student supervisors; increases to the funding of graduate education at UBC Okanagan to improve student well being, professionalization, and outcomes; increased support for the growing community of postdoctoral scholars at UBC Okanagan; and more equitable sharing of resources for graduate education between both campuses of UBC.

3. Response and Action Plan

We agree with and are energized by many of the recommendations made by the reviewers, although our response occasionally clarifies some misconceptions based on imprecise understandings of information provided by those interviewed. For the most part, our response indicates the work that we have undertaken since last Fall in light of these recommendations, and identifies what tasks lie ahead of us in implementing those recommendations that fall within the scope and responsibility of the College.

The Response and Action Plan put forward in the table below indicates our responses, action plans, and timelines for each recommendation, organized under the following eight subheadings:

- A: Admissions & Records Processes (pp. 2-13)
- B: Student Outcomes (pp. 14-17)
- C: Student Experience (pp. 18-19)
- D: Graduate Programs, Coordinators, & Supervisors (pp. 20-22)
- E: Students’ Professional & Skills Development (pp. 23-24)
- F: Funding & Finances (pp. 25-29)
- G: Postdoctoral Scholars (pp. 30-34)
- H: Infrastructure and Resources (pp. 35-36)

		CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
<p>A) ADMISSIONS & RECORDS PROCESSES</p> <p>The application process can be greatly improved:</p> <p>Item 1: Supervisors' Role in Admissions</p> <p>Several programs process applications outside the system; students formally apply only when they are informed by individual supervisor that they would support the application, leading to inefficiencies and lack of proper data.</p>	<p>Process</p>	<p>These observations address distinct aspects of admissions and processes, so we address them separately here:</p> <p>Item 1:</p> <p>Most programs require research-based students to find a supervisor before they apply, creating an effective initial screening step outside of e:Vision. Given this requirement, many applicants will elect not to submit an application and pay the application fee if they have been unable to secure a commitment from a faculty member to supervise their research. This process ensures equity in the system, so that applicants are not paying an application fee when there is no one available or suitable to supervise the applicant's chosen research. However, although supervisors can indicate their consent to supervise based on their interviews with applicants, they are not authorized to offer admission to an applicant. It is important to note that prospective supervisors do not have access to the applicant's full information until after a complete application is submitted, so are making decisions based on incomplete information. Until the student's complete application--including all transcripts and referees' letters--can be scrutinized, a fully informed</p>	<p>/Spring & Summer 2025</p> <p>Item 1:</p> <p>CoGS is exploring these aspects of the application process during the spring and summer of 2025 by working with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies at UBC Vancouver (G+PS) on the Graduate Ecosystem Renewal Project, part of which includes a new Graduate Prospect Management / CRM recommendation to manage the first interaction with an applicant through to the time the applicant applies. This collaboration is already underway and will continue indefinitely, as needed.</p>

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
		<p>decision cannot be made. Although there are some potential weaknesses in a system that supports such pre-screening of applicants to research-based degree programs, there are advantages from an equity perspective, in that applicants with research objectives not suited to the program are not encouraged to apply. Our process involves recommendations for admission being submitted to CoGS by Program Coordinators in consultation with their program's graduate admissions committee. The reviewers' suggestion that applicants submit their applications prior to having secured a supervision commitment would require considerable changes to both policy and practice with graduate programs to one where cohorts are first admitted and then subsequently sorted into research groups, as happens in some U.S. universities.</p> <p>However, this approach would require a considerable change to the highly active research culture currently prevalent in our graduate programs. The reviewer's recommendation would be workable in programs where multiple faculty members perform similar research, or in small, distinctly designed graduate programs. An example of this practice is in effect in our Medical Physics program, which draws on the support of adjunct faculty to co-supervise students. However, applying this practice more widely would make it difficult for individual supervisors to gauge</p>	

		CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
		<p>funding commitments for their students' GRAs on a rotating basis without having the option of choosing which students, and at which level (master's or doctoral), can be admitted and funded through the supervisor's research grant.</p> <p>It would also inhibit supervisors from managing capacity within their groups based on available funding, and make it difficult for supervisors to provide a rationally designed, scaffolded mentoring system within the larger research groups at UBCO that include postdoctoral scholars, doctoral students, master's students, and undergraduates. Moreover, the link between supervisors' grants' timelines and funding capacity are managed by individual faculty members and can vary depending on available funding, grant timelines, and the availability of industry partnerships, such as that provided through individually negotiated agreements with Mitacs.</p>	
<p>Item 2: Admissions Criteria</p> <p>CoGS is also rather strict by applying uniform criteria that perhaps can be adjusted for particular programs.</p>		<p>Item 2:</p> <p>a) Grad Council has approved a pilot program to streamline approval of applicants with degrees from yellow-listed institutions.</p>	<p>/Spring 2025</p> <p>Item 2:</p> <p>a) For applicants from yellow-listed institutions, the Graduate Program Coordinator (PC) will evaluate and provide a supporting rationale with experience-based evidence (e.g. success rates of students from that institution;</p>

		CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
<p>Item 3: Admissions Processes</p> <p>a) CoGS is duplicating efforts by verifying files twice in the process, wasting thus resources and time.</p>		<p>b) CoGS will customize admissions processes into two streams, one for research programs and one for a select group of professional degrees, since the admissions requirements and processes are different for some of our professional, course-based degrees.</p> <p>Item 3:</p> <p>a) We are reviewing all admissions processes to identify duplication, and will streamline processes to reduce or remove unnecessary steps. We continue to examine key processes in admissions to see where redundant work can be eliminated or streamlined.</p>	<p>rating in world university database). A motion implementing this change effective for the next admissions cycle was approved by Grad Council in April 2025.</p> <p>b) CoGS is bringing forward a proposal to Grad Council and Senate in April and May 2025 respectively to address requests from four professional programs (M.Eng., M.Biotech, MDes, and MDS) for adjustment to the current requirement for 2 reference letters for all applicants.</p> <p>Item 3:</p> <p>a) CoGS's leadership team has initiated a series of brainstorming exercises with the Admissions & Records team in CoGS to review processes with the aim of reducing the number of steps involved in handling applications, and to eliminate unnecessary duplication between CoGS staff and program assistants.</p>

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
<p>b) Graduate admissions and record officers are very stressed and worried about the amount of work but do not realize that they are spending time on the wrong things. These positions can be completely reworked by eliminating most of the outdated processes and focusing on higher value activities. For example, they should not be checking on other units' work: If a program has decided that a particular student should be admitted or given a scholarship then that decision should not be revisited. Rather CoGS should review an application for admissibility before sending it to the program and then accept the programs' recommendations without question.</p>		<p>b) The review document recommends that CoGS undertake substantial additional work in its proposal that CoGS not merely identify when an application is complete (with all required documents submitted and verified), but also asks that CoGS's staff review applications to determine if the applicant is admissible before forwarding the application to programs.</p> <p>Pre-vetting of applications is not feasible for an applicant pool of this size (c. 3,000 applications per year). Doing so would substantially increase the workload of the CoGS staff; and secondly, it would prevent programs from having the opportunity to examine complete applications from applicants who might not meet all of the published admissions criteria, but who might merit admission based on extenuating circumstances, and then be admitted with a rationale. Such an approach would make it difficult for CoGS to adhere to its own equity-based policies and practices.</p> <p>Moreover, it is more efficient for all parties for CoGS to send completed applications to programs, and allow their admissions committees to select and recommend their best possible applicants based on their available supervisory and funding capacity. Scholarship funding decisions in relation to the assignment of OGRS are already made by the programs, not by CoGS.</p>	<p>b) Three key initiatives to remove redundant work and streamline the admissions process have already begun. First, as noted above, we have worked to create a proposal to streamline the processes of approving applicants from yellow-listed institutions in the International Evaluation Manual (IEM).</p> <p>In addition, we have initiated a second proposal to streamline interim progress reports for students conditionally admitted to course-based master's programs, replacing this requirement for a full report to just a grades report.</p> <p>Third, we have been running a pilot program in which the verification of applicants' documents, usually done by CoGS A & R team prior to submission of a complete application to the programs, is now being done by the PA in the MDS program. Once the current application cycle is finished, we will meet with the program to assess</p>

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
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<p>c) Additionally, the manual calculation of GPAs for admission committees must stop; this is a waste of time that has no relevance to the decisions made by committees.</p> <p>d) The grad admissions and record officers should be encouraged to trust their colleagues and to view their role as providing expertise and support rather than checking for/catching mistakes.</p>		<p>c) The global statement that GPAs have no relevance to admissions committees' decisions is not borne out by information communicated to us by programs; GPAs and transcripts are key determinants in decisions made by several of our course-based, professional programs, and make it possible for admissions committees in all programs to provide equitable assessments of international applicants, given the significant variation in systems of evaluation by institutions in the 64 countries from which our students apply.</p> <p>d) It is necessary to distinguish between the <i>preliminary calculations</i> of GPAs conducted by PAs and the <i>verification</i> of select GPAs provided by CoGS's A & R Officers. Verification by CoGS ensures equitable and fair treatment of students from international institutions as well as those with GPAs close to or below UBCO's minimum requirements, in order to ensure that supports are in place for such students. For more complex calculations, as explained below, verification ensures accurate reporting of the level of GPAs of incoming students as needed to support e:Vision's Evaluation Management system for tracking and reporting on the qualifications of those admitted to UBCO graduate programs. CoGS' A & R Officers do, however, provide support to PAs doing GPA calculations when asked. Such support</p>	<p>the advantages and disadvantages of that process.</p> <p>c) Although in the past, CoGS staff used to calculate the GPAs of all applicants, now this work is performed by PAs.</p> <p>d) We are working towards a more efficient process for calculating admissions GPAs to reduce redundancy. In the meantime, CoGS staff will verify GPAs in only two types of situations: where an admission offer includes a GPA result that is inconsistent with the available data on the transcripts, CoGS staff conduct an independent full calculation to ensure fair process is followed; secondly, GPAs will be spot-checked in cases where the program's offer requires a rationale because an applicant's GPA falls</p>

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
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		<p>is needed by programs because there are significant variations in PAs' workload capacity as well as unevenness in their experiences with GPA calculations. Key factors here include personnel changes in PA positions, the seasonal nature of admissions cycles, and complex cases, where multiple transcripts require combining data from transcripts. (Where programs have only one intake, more than half a year will have passed before a PA returns to the task of GPA calculations.) CoGS's staff maintain that knowledge year-round as an integral part of their roles. Specialist expertise is necessary because of the significant variations in the types of transcripts and evaluation processes in place among the more than 64 countries worldwide that submit transcripts in support of applications to UBCO graduate programs. Rather than there being one simple formula, conversion processes can accommodate the diversity in these global evaluation systems. In order to ensure applicants from around the world are accorded fair and equitable process in the evaluation of their files, CoGS staff provide support for programs when asked in conducting these conversions and assessing the more complex GPAs.</p>	<p>below the UBCO minimum. Such applicants--admitted on the basis of rationales--are deemed exceptional admissions, and are required to submit interim reports to ensure they are succeeding in their programs. We also require that programs identify what supports will be available to ensure those deemed exceptional will be given whatever support and guidance is needed to ensure their success. It is thus necessary that we verify the GPA when tasking such students and programs with additional requirements and supports.</p>

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
e) Time could then be freed for CoGS A & R Officers to act as advisors for students who are having difficulties and provide onboarding for new graduate supervisors and coordinators among many other higher value tasks.		<p>e) Adding general academic advising to the CoGS's A & R Officers' job description would introduce considerable duplication, given that advising is already conducted within the individual graduate programs, and provided to students by the Program Coordinators as well as Program Assistants, depending on the nature and complexity of the support needed. Moreover, CoGS staff already provide high value advice and support to PAs, PCs, and CoGS Associate Deans on an ongoing basis. In addition, PC's consult frequently with CoGS's Associate Deans who provide high-level support to graduate programs as needed.</p> <p>With respect to difficult cases, those requiring academic advising, especially those pertaining to student-supervisor relations or concerns around violations of university policies are referred to the Associate Deans of CoGS who draw on the expertise of CoGS's Admissions and Records staff. Complex cases pertaining to admissions and records are dealt with by the Associate Director of Admissions & Records in consultation with CoGS Associate Deans as needed.</p> <p>Immigration advising is provided by the Global Engagement Office who are authorized to provide such advice; in addition, CoGS has an Indigenous Advisor who works directly with Indigenous graduate students and potential applicants.</p>	<p>e) We agree that onboarding and mentoring of new graduate supervisors is an important task and could be improved, and we are working with Faculties to ensure that it is being done.</p> <p>For example, "Re-envisioning Graduate Supervision at UBC Okanagan" is a research project designed by CoGS's Associate Deans and currently underway. The project's aim is to design a training model for faculty members working with graduate students in order to foster and enhance excellence in graduate supervision. This research will identify which aspects of current practices can be targeted by the training model to enhance graduate supervision. This project has significant potential to strengthen the quality of graduate supervision, and enhance the graduate education of students at UBCO, and enrich the quality of graduate programming at this institution.</p>

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
<p>Item 4: Thesis Formatting CoGS appears to be intervening on theses after successful defense and approval on matters other than mere formatting, leading to delays unnecessary tuition charges. A review of the thesis submission and defence process is due.</p>		<p>New Graduate Program Coordinators already receive onboarding opportunities and support from CoGS; although not every PC takes advantage of the training we provide, our support is nevertheless available on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Item 4: This is not factual. The formatting requirements are determined by cIRcle. Our final check on thesis and dissertation formats supports students by enabling their compliance with cIRcle's requirements.</p>	<p>Data collection on this project is underway, and design and implementation of training programs will begin in the summer and Fall of 2025.</p> <p>/Spring & Summer 2025 Item 4: We are updating the language in our website to increase clarity around the thesis submission requirements prior to and after the defence, including those explaining cIRcle's requirements. Second, we are revising the Neutral Chair's instructions to enhance their communications to examiners regarding expectations during the Q&A portion of the defence.</p>

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
<p>Item 5: Workday's Impact on Admissions & Records</p> <p>a) Workday appeared to be a major source of frustration for many stakeholders with CoGS at the forefront. Although it is understandable that major changes of this type can cause frustration and resistance, two issues were identified as “steps backwards” in the change and not process improvements. Firstly, Workday has converted electronic processes into manual entries leading to work inefficiencies and inability to get proper analytics. Secondly, several capabilities are taken away from CoGS (potentially due to misunderstanding the idiosyncrasies of a graduate student’s pathway). Examples of removed access are: (i) Grade change and email addresses access. Not</p>		<p>Item 5: Workday's Impact</p> <p>a) Given that Workday was not designed for the administration of students, and that Workday Student is targeted at undergraduate students, identifying and integrating design features that could accommodate the different systems needed for graduate students has been challenging.</p> <p>One positive outcome of the process has been a strengthening of the relationships between members of our leadership team and their counterparts in G+PS and Erin Shannon, Associate Registrar and Director of Business Solutions and Support at UBCO. We have developed a productive working relationship with our Vancouver colleagues in creating solutions to address the admissions and records needs of graduate education at UBC. We have also been successful in gaining access to the Workday features needed by our Admissions and Records team.</p>	<p>/Ongoing</p> <p>Item 5: Workday's Impact</p> <p>a) CoGS and G+PS need the ongoing support of senior administration to ensure that essential graduate-level functions are implemented and not re-labelled as “future enhancements” in Workday. Rather than waiting for these future developments to be implemented in Workday, we are collaborating actively with G+PS and IT on the Graduate Ecosystem Renewal Project (GERP). This project will ensure automated workflows and tracking of students from the outset—when they first apply—to completion, when they graduate. These administrative processes are being developed in four specific areas: Student Academic Management; Graduate Prospect Management /CRM; Graduate Applications /Admissions Management; and Data Warehousing/Reporting.</p>

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Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
<p>leveraging data for CoGS moving forward will be debilitating in properly supporting graduate programs (i.e. declaring supervision).</p> <p>Item 6: Workday, Enrolment Services, and CoGS</p> <p>There appears to be a large disconnect between Enrolment Services and CoGS which is obvious to the faculty deans and perhaps others. Enrolment Services does not understand why certain procedures are different for graduate students and CoGS does not recognize the extent to which their own processes result in manual work in Enrolment Services. This gulf is exacerbated by the lack of a Registrar on campus. We strongly encourage filling the Deputy Registrar Position and that the Dean of Graduate Studies begin meeting regularly with them and the</p>		<p>Item 6:</p> <p>A new position has been created in Enrolment Services, the Associate Registrar and Director of Business Solutions and Support. This role has already made a noticeable difference in the communication between the Registrar's Office and the College, and the efficiency of implementing solutions to common problems. Many of the issues that have come to light in the past year have been a result of the change to Workday. As this system matures, we will be able to collaborate productively with Enrolment Services to develop solutions to reduce or eliminate many of these inefficiencies.</p>	<p>Development of these processes is required for graduate education to function in a secure, effective, future-ready way.</p> <p>Item 6:</p> <p>As features develop in Workday, we will continue to lobby for the needs of graduate records administration to ensure continuity of service to our students and programs. In addition, we continue to participate in the bi-campus Graduate Studies Working Group. This group meets monthly with key individuals from Business Solutions and Support and the Student Completion team to prioritize tickets submitted to the Integrated Service Centre and to support the development of Workday and its associated ecosystem.</p>

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
Registrar. We note that this gulf is likely resulting in slowed implementation of graduate studies functionalities in Workday among other operational difficulties at both ES and CoGS.			

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
<p>B) STUDENT OUTCOMES</p> <p>Item 1: Annual Progress Reports Progress Reports are structured in a way that they do not allow graduate students to flag any issues (everything is seen by the supervisor). This does not allow the disclosure of problematic situations that can lead to delayed time to completion among other things. The student portion of the report should not be visible to the supervisor.</p> <p>Item 2: Access to APRs Moreover, annual progress reports are not accessible by program coordinators retroactively (proper archiving may be an issue). Graduate program coordinators should be able to access progress reports retroactively.</p>	Academic	<p>Item 1: Supervisors and PCs need to view the student's summary and of their achievements during the past year in order to verify and provide a rating on the student's progress. However, we agree that the Annual Progress Report should include an option for students to identify confidentially issues related to problems in supervisor-student relations, and that the Annual Progress Report is an appropriate vehicle through which graduate students can describe poor supervisory environments confidentially to Program Coordinators and to the College.</p> <p>Item 2: This is factually incorrect. Annual Progress Reports, both current and archived, are accessible to Graduate Program Coordinators. After the APRs have been completed and submitted to CoGS, they are (and have been routinely) distributed automatically by the system to the students, relevant program assistants, and the College of Graduate Studies. Program Assistants then distribute completed APRs to the relevant supervisors. APRs are readily accessible to</p>	<p>/Spring 2025</p> <p>Item 1: We have redesigned the 2025 Annual Progress Report using the new "jotform" platform, which enables a more automated workflow, and we have added an option whereby students can communicate concerns confidentially to CoGS's Associate Director, Admissions and Records. The AD/A&R will then triage any issues relating to poor supervision and connect the student with a CoGS Associate Dean for follow up.</p> <p>Item 2: We routinely communicate this information to Graduate Program Coordinators.</p>

		CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
<p>Item 3: Monitoring APRs Membership rules (about who can supervise) can be further improved through modification and monitoring of progress reports. The graduate program coordinators should be empowered to follow up on problems identified in the reports and support should be provided by the Associate Deans at CoGS.</p>		<p>both Program Coordinators and supervisors via the Program Assistant and/or the program's own archives.</p> <p>Item 3: It is within the mandate of Graduate Program Coordinators to identify and follow up on the problems that they see reported in the APRs. The Graduate Program Coordinator is the first step when the student/supervisor relationship is not oriented towards successful outcomes. The PC works with both the student and the supervisor to develop plans and expectations that will lead to the student's successful completion. CoGS Associate Deans are often consulted during these processes for advice and support. If intervention with the student and supervisor does not result in a return to a supportive and successful relationship, the PC has the discretion to engage the appropriate department head, or to escalate the issue to the College.</p>	<p>/Ongoing Item 3: We communicate information about their mandate when onboarding new Graduate Program Coordinators.</p>
<p>Item 4: Completion Times in Master's Programs Time to completion should be considered carefully, especially around Masters Programs that last much</p>	<p>Provost's Office, CoGS, & Graduate Programs</p>	<p>Item 4: We are collaborating with G+PS to reduce the maximum completion time for full-time master's students to four years.</p>	<p>/Spring & Summer 2025 /Ongoing</p>

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<p>longer than advertised while funding does not get extended. The attempt by CoGS to reduce the time limit to 3 years should be supported and implemented. Students complained about the misalignment between the funded terms and time to completion, and what they actually requested is to graduate on time and move on with their careers -a very legitimate ask.</p> <p>Item 5: Timelines, Milestones, and Curriculum Students mentioned that they would like to complete within their funding window but do not feel supported in doing that. The following will help here: (1) curriculum review to ensure it is not too heavy, (2) making clear timelines and milestones available for students so they are prepared for each step in the program,</p>	<p>Provost's Office, CoGS, & Graduate Programs</p>	<p>It is also important that the Provost's office implements reviews of individual graduate programs when it conducts Faculty/School reviews to see where students have unusually long times to completion. The current practice of "unit reviews" neglects the graduate programs within those units. CoGS will be recommending to graduate program leadership that they follow-up on students who are over time, to implement support of timely completion by identifying barriers or other factors causing delays, and by discouraging supervisors from designing projects which cannot reasonably be completed within the normal degree duration</p> <p>Item 5: Graduate program curricular review is under the purview of Faculties and Schools and occurs as a required element of periodic external review. However, graduate curriculum is under-represented in the templates for the Self Study document produced by Faculties for the external reviews. These issues need to be foregrounded in such reviews, and include such aspects as times to completion, funding, and student outcomes post-graduation.</p>	<p>/Ongoing Item 5: The College could develop a sample template for milestones for Master's students to be distributed to program coordinators to support better tracking of graduate students' timelines.</p>

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<p>(3) oversight of supervisory practices by graduate program coordinators and decanal team at CoGS, (4) identification of a clear place that students can go when struggling with progressing.</p> <p>Item 6: Graduate Courses The instructors of cross-listed courses need clear guidance from CoGS about how to differentiate between graduate and undergraduate learning so that they can be a positive experience for graduate students.</p>		<p>Programs are encouraged to provide their graduate students with clear pathways to successful completion including coursework and progression requirements and timelines. Several programs achieve this through their student handbooks. In addition, all doctoral programs indicate timelines for completion of specific milestones required for advancement to candidacy. These timelines and milestones are specified in the comprehensive examination guidelines written by each program and distributed to the students when they begin their comprehensive processes. CoGS requires that all comprehensive examination guidelines be submitted to us for approval and archiving.</p> <p>Item 6: It is a real struggle on a smaller campus to provide a diverse array of graduate-level courses. One of the ways that programs achieve this is through cross-listing advanced undergraduate courses to graduate course numbers. While this solution is less than optimal, cross-listed courses are not approved unless the objectives and deliverables are clearly differentiated between the graduate and undergraduate versions of the course syllabi.</p>	<p>/Ongoing Item 6: We continue to support programs in the development of dedicated graduate courses, as we recognize the need for coursework in which graduate students are together with just their peers. The CoGS Associate Deans who chairs the Graduate Program and Curriculum Committee routinely provides advice on the design of graduate courses.</p>

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<p>C: STUDENT EXPERIENCE</p> <p>Item 1: Indigenous Graduate Advisor The Indigenous graduate student advisor staff member has contributed significantly to the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students, but the position is not permanent. Given potential upcoming budget cuts, this position should be protected.</p> <p>Item 2: Black Graduate Student / Students of Colour Moreover, there seems to be no support within CoGS for black students or students of colour.</p>	Academic	<p>Item 1: Our campus has been highly successful in expanding Indigenous graduate enrolment. The one-on-one support provided by the Indigenous Graduate Student Advisor has played a key role in that success. This is a shared position with Indigenous Programs and Services (IPS). We value this partnership with IPS and acknowledge the role that this relationship plays in the success of the position.</p> <p>Item 2: Damien Bell, our training lead, chairs the College's EDI committee where such issues are discussed, and has also been providing on a volunteer basis critical support for Black graduate students when approached by them, although this support work is outside of his job requirements. We have sought approval of funding for a position within CoGS for the support of Black graduate students and graduate students of colour to provide the quality of support in recruitment and for enrolled students similar to that provided by the Indigenous Graduate Student</p>	<p>/ Spring 2025</p> <p>Item 1: We continue to advocate for the regularization of the Indigenous Graduate Student Advisor position.</p> <p>/Spring 2025</p> <p>Item 2: We continue to advocate for support appropriate for the graduate level for Black graduate students and students of colour. There is a concerted and promising effort underway to make this position permanent, and with that, the opportunity to include more specific support for graduate students in the updated job description.</p>

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<p>Item 3: **NO GRAD UNION** Graduate students do not have a voice on campus. They feel underrepresented within the larger student union. Their numbers are no longer marginal and they should therefore have an official seat to speak from.</p>		<p>Advisor's position. Currently, the Student Services office employs undergraduate students to support Black students and students of colour, and a pilot program employing one full-time staff member in their Black Student Success program has been in place recently to provide support for undergraduate and graduate students.</p> <p>Item 3: We are in regular contact with a group of graduate students who are working to form a graduate student society on our campus. They are currently in negotiation with the Student Union Okanagan, a primarily undergraduate student union. CoGS's leadership meets monthly with the Graduate Student Advisory Committee to share and collect information and ideas from graduate students. These meetings are chaired by a CoGS Associate Dean and attended by the Director of CoGS</p>	<p>/Ongoing</p>

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<p>D: GRADUATE PROGRAMS, COORDINATORS, AND SUPERVISORS</p> <p>Item 1: Training for Graduate Program Coordinators</p> <p>There is no training / onboarding for Graduate Programs Coordinators on rights and responsibilities as well as on conflict resolution, an issue graduate program coordinators are often called upon to resolve.</p>	Academic	<p>Item 1:</p> <p>This is incorrect. There are multiple training opportunities available to Program Coordinators. We created a training module and posted it on Canvas several years ago, and we update it regularly. We routinely communicate this information to remind Program Coordinators how to access the module. The PCs' mandate is defined in the College's online Policy Manual.</p> <p>There is a section in CoGS' PC training module on the resolution of conflict between students and supervisors. As well as the Canvas module, we also provide individual training and advice on the systems and policies involved in graduate education to PCs whenever needed.</p> <p>In addition, we conflict resolution training is available through a cross-campus program at UBC--the Academic Leadership Development Program (ALDP)--and current PCs as well as a CoGS Associate Dean have participated in that program. We will disseminate that information to PCs when plans for the next session are announced.</p>	<p>/Ongoing Item 1:</p> <p>The CoGS Associate Deans meet with new Graduate Program Coordinators to advise them of the resources available to them. We will add information on conflict resolution training to our onboarding meetings with Program Coordinators.</p> <p>The College is working towards developing additional resources for graduate program coordinators to support them in conflict resolution.</p>

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<p>Item 2: Onboarding of Supervisors</p> <p>There is a need for proper onboarding of new supervisors, supervisory guidelines, and a student-supervisor agreement template.</p>		<p>However, graduate program coordinators do not, for various reasons, always undertake all of the training opportunities that are offered.</p> <p>In 2022 we created a policy that Graduate Program Coordinators must be tenured faculty members; this policy ensures that very junior assistant professors are not required to take on that role, as it would be unrealistic to expect them to provide guidance on supervisory practices to more senior colleagues.</p> <p>Item 2:</p> <p>Onboarding of new supervisors is done primarily by graduate programs, and in addition, the CoGS Dean and Associate Deans are also given opportunities to communicate with new faculty at their orientation to discuss graduate supervision. A more systematic approach to onboarding of new supervisors is an issue we are currently exploring. The challenge for supervisory training is that the faculty members who most need it are least likely to participate, when their participation is voluntary and not required by their department or graduate program as a prerequisite for supervision of graduate students in the program. The student-supervisor agreement exists already and is regularly updated. Several graduate programs require it to be completed, and the rest at least recommend it be completed. We routinely</p>	<p>/Spring to Fall 2025 & Ongoing</p> <p>Item 2:</p> <p>A more systematic approach to onboarding of new supervisors is an issue we are currently exploring. As noted above, we are pursuing an ALT2040 funded study which seeks student input to informing the creation of a supervisory workshop for new and experienced supervisors.</p> <p>In addition, we also circulate announcements of opportunities for supervision workshops and webinars made available through CAGS and the national graduate community.</p>

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<p>Item 3: Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies</p> <p>Although the interdisciplinary program is very popular and the decentralization was well received by students and supervisors (as already argued under Strengths) it is challenging to monitor and address student progress by the program coordinators, as it is scattered across the various units. Students can fall off the rails not knowing where they belong or who can support them and follow up with the successful progression through their milestones.</p>		<p>recommend completion of this agreement to students, supervisors, and PCs.</p> <p>Item 3:</p> <p>The IGS program has recently been coordinated by centralized staff who have implemented procedures to better track the progression of graduate students. Although students within each IGS Theme benefit from having a distinctive, themed cohort, one clear route for improvement would be to include "individualized" (i.e. non-theme) IGS students in this central organization.</p>	<p>/ Spring & Summer 2025</p> <p>Item 3:</p> <p>The College will work with IGS program leadership to ensure they take responsibility for tracking <i>individualized</i> IGS students.</p>

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E: STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT Item 1: Career Services Challenges with local employment for graduate students after graduation seem to be common and career services do not address the graduate student population differently. Failure to place graduate students post degree can create long-term reputational issues on the value of the degrees.	PROF. DEVELOPMENT / PROVOST, AVPS, CoGS	Item 1: This is a valid concern. We do not have strong, institutional, post-graduation career support for the full spectrum of graduate students applying to non-academic positions. The most frequent graduate student users of career services offered by the AVPS office are students in the professional master's programs. However, these students represent only a portion of the larger graduate student population of master's and doctoral students, and the majority of these students in research degree programs will likely be pursuing non-academic careers. Graduate student-specific career workshops are, however, offered regularly throughout the Fall and Winter terms. The CoGS Communications and Engagement Manager works with Career Services to schedule grad-specific workshops. Grad-specific offerings are also available online through G+PS. Professional development of students aiming for academic careers is handled by graduate programs, given that faculty members have the experience and expertise to advise students who are pursuing academic career paths.	Item 1: Tracking alumni would give us the data we need to develop career services for the full spectrum of master's and doctoral students. Assessing post-graduation student outcomes should become an integral part of the process of individual graduate program reviews. CoGS should engage with Career Services in the AVPS office for additional support to create more professional development opportunities and market them for research-based masters and doctoral students interested in non-academic careers.

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<p>Item 2: Skills Development Many graduate workshops are offered by the Library and Teaching and Learning instead of CoGS. As a result, services to graduate students may be cut during financially challenging times, without the oversight of CoGS.</p>	CTL, Library, CoGS	<p>Item 2: CoGS does not have the resources (in funding to hire staff) to replace the workshops offered by our campus partners. We value the contributions to graduate education by the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the Library, which includes the Centre for Scholarly Communication, yet acknowledge the vulnerability of relying on other units for student services. No viable alternatives exist at present. Moreover, the CTL and Library recognize the value of supporting graduate students. In addition, workshops and other professional development activities are offered by departments across both UBC campuses. Although the range and diversity of such offerings is a boon to our graduate students, it is difficult to track comprehensively how many and how often students take advantage of the full slate of professional development opportunities available to them.</p>	<p>Item 2: A priority for CoGS is to promote higher rates of participation in professional development. It is important for students' careers post-graduation, <i>and</i> for their success as students, to develop broader skill sets beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries. Obtaining buy-in from supervisors and graduate programs will be key to achieving this.</p>
<p>Item 3: Ethics Approval Workshops and instructional material for graduate students on applying for ethics approval should be developed. Delays in that process can mean that a masters' student will not finish within 2 years.</p>	ORS	<p>Item 3: We will continue to coordinate with the Office of Research Services (ORS) on providing workshops for graduate students involved in scholarly activity requiring ethics approval. The IGS program also includes this workshop as part of their required proseminar course—a model that could be extended to other programs.</p>	

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F: FUNDING & FINANCES Item 1: Enrolment Planning Perhaps the biggest weakness is the lack of a Strategic Enrolment Management Plan for Graduate Studies which has resulted in uncontrolled, unplanned and uneven growth (with some exceptions in Course-based Professional Programs). Another risk associated with lack of SEM is random and potentially unsuccessful recruitment tactics. Also new programs are created without space and funding provisions. It is imperative for future success that resources match the growth of student population.	Funding / CoGS, Provost's Office	Item 1: We have piloted a new enrolment management program that links allocation of student support funding to programs from CoGS to a strategic enrolment plan for their program. Plans should take into account resources of supervisory capacity, space, and funding. We would like to be more effectively integrated into the creation of new programs. Although the flowchart for new program approvals includes consultation with COGS, sometimes this consultation has not happened, resulting in program proposals failing committee review, when early intervention and support from the College could have smoothed the path. The Office of the Provost is supporting development and resourcing of new recruitment approaches, and creating international partnerships to aid in the expansion of professional master's programs.	Item 1: To foster growth in professional programs, we have embarked on a pathway for revising the process for admissions to select programs, given that enrolment in these programs does not need to exactly mirror that in place for research-based graduate programs.
Item 2: Gaps in Knowledge of Student Funding Although the annual funding report generated (already discussed under Strengths) is very useful, CoGS is unable to	/ CoGS, G+PS, and IT/IRP	Item 2: Although we are able to generate reports indicating total award and bursary funding per student as well as per program, the missing pieces of the picture include students' income derived from Graduate	Item 2: To address this gap, we are collaborating with G+PS in the design of tools that will round out

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monitor live funding throughout the year and make sure that the minimum funding is respected. It can only identify after the fact (a year later), if a student received funding below the minimum guaranteed.		<p>Research Assistantships and Graduate Teaching Assistantships.</p> <p>We became aware of this need during the implementation of Workday, which is not capable of generating the level of detailed reporting on student income that we had hoped would be possible.</p> <p>Program Coordinators need to have better access to funding information because monitoring student funding is within their mandate. After the transition to Workday Student, CoGS lobbied for access to enable Program Coordinators and Program Assistants to view individual student scholarships and other awards.</p> <p>Two key sources of income create gaps in our knowledge of student funding:</p> <p>a) Enrolment Services provides needs-based, emergency funding to graduate students without informing COGS or the student's program, and without consideration of the program's funding plans for the student, or the student's remaining time in the program.</p> <p>b) Students occasionally receive external funding from sources other than Tri-Agency scholarships (the latter are managed through CoGS's systems).</p>	<p>our views of the total funding packages for graduate students.</p> <p>Funding commitments are communicated to incoming students along with offers of admission, and we design template funding letters for programs to use in compiling their offer letters as agreed upon each year based on the individual needs of each graduate program.</p> <p>When the Deputy Registrar for the Okanagan is appointed, the CoGS Dean will work with ES to develop communications around the distribution of emergency funding.</p>
Item 3: Funding Oversight Clawing back research assistantships by supervisors from student funding	/ COGS & Graduate Programs	Item 3: We are developing a set of funding guidelines for supervisors and programs that will mitigate this issue.	Item 3: The Faculty of Science has recently implemented minimum guaranteed funding policies for both master's

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packages when other funding is secured is a very dangerous practice, as it is not controlled, and it jeopardizes the supervisory relationship. Taking funding back should only be done by CoGS on centrally allocated funds in a controlled and fair manner that does not remove the students' incentive to apply for external funding.		Programs, not individual supervisors, should establish funding levels specifically for students with and students without external funding. Students who win external awards should receive a reasonable amount of additional funding, increasing with the amount and prestige of their award. Identifying these levels is especially critical now that Tri-Agency award amounts have been increased to \$40,000 per annum for doctoral and \$27,000 for master's students. COGS has been communicating this need to programs for some time, but the idea that programs, not supervisors, determine funding levels is a substantial change in culture and practice, so it is moving slowly.	and doctoral students. We work with PCs to ensure that students are receiving their guaranteed minimum funding.
Item 4: Impact of Part-time Option Also, part-time registration may become a back door to avoid minimum funding, student status should therefore be monitored by CoGS.		Item 4: We have put a policy in place to keep this from being easy to do. This information is a part of the Minimum Guaranteed Funding Handbook	/Ongoing Item 4: The ability to see comprehensive, real-time funding sources and information for individual students is still on the table for future Workday updates, and something we continue to push for in the appropriate Workday working groups.
Item 5: Tuition Information flow towards graduate students has not been very smooth, in	Finance / V-P Students & COGS	Item 5: Tuition information is made available to incoming students through the admissions offer letters sent to	/Ongoing Item 5: Tuition fees for students in master's programs as well as in doctoral

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<p>particular around tuition fee changes. Students were surprised with significant tuition hikes post-arrival. Tuition fees by cohort (even if they include a pre-determined annual changes) are a transparent way of preparing students for the true cost of their education.</p> <p>Item 6: Transparency Many people mentioned a lack of transparency with respect to financial matters. This is likely due to the way in which financial information is presented to the community (Finance believes they are very transparent but then mentions people not understanding accounting practices). The translation of the information into something the community can grasp will be very much appreciated. This is likely to be even more important soon.</p>		<p>them, and current tuition rates are listed in the Academic Calendar. CoGS provides a cost-of-living calculator that helps students budget for the cost of living in the Okanagan. Projected expenses are updated annually based on actual costs for tuition, housing, and subsistence.</p> <p>Item 6: Concerns with the university's financial systems are beyond the purview of CoGS. With respect to the issue of how graduate students are funded, the graduate community—including graduate students, graduate programs, and the College —have neither sufficient knowledge nor adequate tools to arrive at a complete picture of how students are funded. As mentioned above, Workday does not allow for easy collection of financial information for internal funding, external funding, and assistantships. This is a priority item for development in the Workday environment and we will continue to advocate for it remaining so.</p>	<p>programs are published in the Academic Calendar. The Student Affordability Task Force is developing proposals for a tuition framework that will enable students to estimate in advance the full cost of their degree over time.</p> <p>/Ongoing Item 6: We have just advocated for and received access for programs to be able to run reports in Workday and see all awards paid to a student via the College. This includes internal awards funding and tri-agency scholarships. Support for programs in terms of training on Workday to run these reports is currently available to Program Assistants.</p>

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<p>Item 7: Provincial Funding The BC funding formula for UBCO does not support grad students separately. This likely means the institution is underfunded for its operations. We understand that the provincial government is not open to the idea of funding more graduate student seats at UBC. Perhaps then, a discussion needs to take place about transferring some of the funded seats from the Vancouver campus. A transfer that would have little impact on the Vancouver campus could be game-changing for UBCO. We expect that there is resistance to this kind of idea left over from how UBCO was created but it needs to be considered for the health of the entire institution.</p>	<p>V-P Finance & V-P External Relations</p>	<p>Item 7: We strongly agree, but this recommendation is out of the scope of COGS. We will continue to advocate to have this formula changed with those who advocate to the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills.</p>	<p>/Ongoing Item 7: The Dean of CoGS met with the new VP External in January 2025, to discuss priorities including provincial grant funding for Okanagan graduate students.</p>

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<p>G: POSTDOCTORAL SCHOLARS</p> <p>Item 1: Access to Benefits and Services: Postdoctoral fellows should be able to access the same supports and services as PhD students. Whether they are classified as employees or not, the postdoctoral fellowship is universally viewed as “training or development” as evidenced by the low salaries. Implementing this will require dedicated discussions with service units as well as a clear agreement about the level of service.</p>	Postdocs	<p>Item 1:</p> <p>We agree that postdoctoral scholars at UBC Okanagan would benefit from being given access to additional supports and services, some of which are available to graduate students but not Postdocs, and others available only to some UBCO employee groups (such as staff and faculty) through contract negotiations. We address some examples here:</p> <p>a) Benefits: For the majority of postdoctoral scholars whose appointment is funded by their supervisor's grant funding, section 5.1.6 of Policy AP10 determines that the "University will provide maternity / parental / adoptive leave and sick leave" because these postdocs are considered eligible "in accordance with the Contract Employees Fund Policy. A small minority of postdoctoral scholars at UBCO are awardees, and are thus given an honorary appointment because they are funded directly by a tri-agency or other external funding organization. Nevertheless, when such awardees meet the eligibility requirements applied to all postdocs, they also receive benefits as indicated by UBC's Human Resources:</p>	<p>/ Ongoing</p> <p>a) CoGS's Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator is currently working with the disciplinary Faculty administrators to refine onboarding processes for postdocs. One aspect of these processes will be greater clarity in communications to postdocs about the benefits and facilities to which they currently have access. We expect that an Onboarding Processes document should be available to Faculty administrators by the end of June.</p>

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		<p>https://hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/faculty-resources/faculty-titles-ranks-and-descriptions/postdoctoral-fellows. Typically, the costs of such benefits are borne by the postdoc's supervisor, but allocation of such costs vary.</p> <p>b) Professional Development Funds: A key gap in support expressed consistently by postdoctoral scholars is the absence of institutionally supported travel funding to enable research dissemination and networking at conferences. Participation in scholarly gatherings of this kind are especially important for those who aim to pursue a career within academia. Access to professional development funds (which are made available to both faculty and staff as a result of their contract negotiations) could play a role in subsidizing travel for research dissemination.</p> <p>c) Professional and Career Development: During the past couple of years, we have worked with campus partners to ensure that postdocs are included in relevant workshops offered by the CTL and CSC. Postdoctoral scholars along with doctoral student would benefit from enhanced career services designed for highly qualified personnel pursuing both academic and non-academic career pathways.</p>	<p>b) As the Board of Governors' policy AP10 does not include any provision for financial support of postdoctoral travel, it is left up to individual supervisors and their disciplinary Faculties and Schools to provide such support will be made available. CoGS should survey Faculties and Schools within UBCO to assess current practices.</p> <p>/Spring 2025</p> <p>c) We met with the Associate Vice-President, Students who oversees career development advising for students at UBCO. As graduate students, especially those in the professional streams, are active users of these services, we have requested that postdoctoral</p>

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		<p>Another option that could be addressed is to develop a template for an Individual Development Plan to be discussed between incoming postdoctoral scholars and their supervisors. The IDP could be an addendum to the Checklist of Expectations currently offered to incoming postdocs.</p> <p>d) Campus Recreational Facilities: Everyone using recreational facilities on campus must pay a fee, although student fees are slightly lower than for other members of the community. Postdoctoral scholars pay the same fee as students, although it recently became known to us that postdocs were not aware they had student-level access to these facilities.</p> <p>e) Tuition Waivers: International postdocs have expressed interest in courses related to language acquisition. Other UBCO employee groups (such as staff and faculty) have negotiated tuition waivers through collective bargaining. To enable postdocs to access such</p>	<p>scholars be included in any career development workshops. In addition, we have recently introduced members of our Postdoctoral Scholars Association to the entrepreneurship@ubco team and invited one of the e@ubco mentors to participate in a panel discussion on non-academic careers at the April 2025 Postdoc Research Day.</p> <p>d) We will add information about recreational facilities to our Onboarding Processes document currently being developed for incoming postdocs.</p>

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<p>Item 2: Building Community There is also a need for more community building for the postdocs.</p> <p>Item 3: International postdocs should be hired into longer contracts</p>		<p>benefits as tuition waivers would require dedicated funding.</p> <p>f) Salaries: Discussions with G+PS are underway regarding the possibility of introducing a salary floor for postdoctoral scholars.</p> <p>Item 2: Since the review, we have renamed the Graduate Student Collegium in ASC 460 to communicate to Postdoctoral Scholars that this space is open to them for their regular use. It is now called the Graduate and Postdoctoral Collegium. We also host the annual Postdoctoral Appreciation Day in September, and work collaboratively with the Postdoc Association in organizing and hosting the annual Postdoc Research Day.</p> <p>Item 3: The duration of postdoc contracts is addressed within AP10, but is out of scope for CoGS.</p>	<p>/Spring 2025 f) A recommendation will be submitted shortly to the President of UBC proposing a salary floor of \$50,000 for both UBC-V and UBCO postdoctoral scholars along with an estimate of the cost required should funding be made available by the university during a transition period.</p> <p>Item 2: A recent addition to postdoc events at UBCO is a monthly coffee get together for postdocs proposed by the Postdoc Association. The event is held in the Collegium and has been facilitated by our Postdoc Coordinator.</p>

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whenever possible due to complexities and costs of the work visa process.			
<p>Item 4: Postdoctoral fellows can and would like to teach but it is very unclear how they can identify and pursue such opportunities.</p> <p>Item 5: The Postdoc staff within CoGS is part-time, although she is very much appreciated and needed.</p>		<p>Item 4: Teaching, while not a requirement for postdoctoral scholars, can often provide them with stronger CVs and additional funding. Disciplinary departments advertise sessional positions and select successful candidates from among the applicant pool. It is not clear what action CoGS can take on this subject.</p> <p>Item 5: The Postdoctoral Affairs Coordinator is a fairly recent position, having been in place as a half-time administrator for the last few years. Her work has enriched the experiences of postdoctoral scholars at UBCO, and she is the key resource for postdocs who are having difficulties navigating any administrative or institutional hurdles they are facing. During the past year, the Postdoc Coordinator has also worked with one of the CoGS Associate Deans in managing postdoctoral awards competitions. In addition to the Postdoc Coordinator, postdocs are supported by the leadership team in CoGS, who collaborate with postdocs during monthly meetings with the UBCO Postdoctoral Association as well as in the planning and funding of postdoc events.</p>	<p>Item 5: It is quite true that the work required of our postdoctoral coordinator exceeds the time that she is hired for. We will continue to advocate for funding to increase the hours of the position and to better support the postdoc community. As the numbers of postdoctoral scholars grow at UBCO, such an increase will likely become necessary.</p>

CoGS RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN			
Reviewers' Comments and Recommendations	Category / Who	Response / Plan	Actions / Time Frame
H: INFRASTRUCTURE & RESOURCES Item 1: Space Lack of space is a problem identified by pretty much every stakeholder we met with. Among the types of deficiency, classroom shortage (90% capacity during working hours) was identified as a major one, student housing was another and the latter is potentially hampering student enrolment. The main driver behind the shortage appears to be budgetary, but given the enrolment implications this may have, a serious discussion with CoGS at the table should be taking place.	UBC LEADER-SHIP	Item 1: We will continue to advocate for more and better graduate student space and housing. It should be noted that the new campus master plan includes plans for a senior and graduate student housing building, and that the <i>ḡal sic snpaḡnwix^wtn</i> (XSS) building currently under construction contains considerable space for graduate student desks, collaboration space, and a new room for thesis defences.	
Item 2: UBC Vancouver Challenges with Vancouver Campus were frequently mentioned by many groups: The gist of it is that competition prevails to cooperation not only for		Item 2: There is in some cases (for example, with the Master of Data Science programs) competition for students between UBCO and UBCV programs. We have addressed this competition between the respective MDS programs at Okanagan and Vancouver by proposing that for applicants who apply to both	

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<p>students but also for resources. Some resources/offerings are available only in Vancouver and when resources are shared, they are designed to fit Vancouver needs. Lack of transparency on provincial student funding vis-à-vis money allocated to UBCV leads to the presumption of unfairness. Even though communications around this subject are already in place, they can perhaps be intensified.</p>		<p>campuses, if an applicant accepts an offer to attend the UBCO program, their deposit will not be refunded unless their place can be filled by another applicant. Counter-balancing this issue of competition between individual graduate programs is the strong relationships that CoGS has developed with the G+PS team in Vancouver; CoGS is grateful for the work by G+PS in sharing advocacy for the development of software systems that address the gaps in Workday for graduate student administration.</p> <p>Nevertheless, there are substantial differences in funding between the two campuses that exacerbate potential competition between programs, and this issue should be addressed: for example, Vancouver provides funding to cover the differential between international and domestic tuition, for international research-based graduate students at both the master's and doctoral levels. The Okanagan campus can offer such funding only to International PhD students.</p> <p>In matters of policy, CoGS harmonizes with G+PS where appropriate. We note that harmonization is not always desirable due to (i) significant differences between the two campuses, and (ii) obsolescence of some older G+PS policies. Sharing of application files between campuses would be beneficial, but is not possible with our current software system.</p>	

External Review Report on the College of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Student Experience at UBC Okanagan

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Site Visit: October 21, 22, 23, 2024
Report Submitted: November 2024.

Executive Summary

The College of Graduate Studies (CoGS) at UBCO has flourished under the exceptional leadership of Dean Peter Simpson, who is universally praised for his collaborative, student-centered, and forward-thinking approach. He has successfully fostered a strong sense of community through initiatives such as the Postdoc Appreciation Day, which recognizes the contributions of postdoctoral fellows, and by implementing the minimum funding guarantee for PhD students, a key factor in attracting students. CoGS has also been a driving force behind innovative programs like the decentralized Interdisciplinary Program and the recently launched Doctorate in Education. Additionally, its involvement in graduate program approvals and curriculum development has aligned the institution with national trends while addressing gaps in graduate education.

Despite these strengths, CoGS faces significant challenges. A critical issue is the lack of a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan for graduate studies, which has resulted in uncontrolled growth and resource strain. Space limitations—whether for classrooms, student housing, or offices—pose further barriers to accommodating this growth. Administrative inefficiencies, particularly those tied to WorkDay and the application process, hinder productivity and frustrate staff. Students also face challenges such as unclear pathways through their programs, and insufficient career services tailored to graduate students. The absence of a graduate student union has left this group underrepresented in campus governance.

Opportunities for improvement include streamlining processes to reduce administrative burden and shifting staff focus to higher-value activities, such as student advising and onboarding for supervisors and program coordinators. Strengthening the effectiveness of oversight mechanisms, such as improving progress report structures and enhancing supervisor onboarding, could address delays in student completion. Clearer communication about program milestones, better training for ethics approval processes, and differentiated support for graduate students in cross-listed courses would enhance the academic experience. Extending postdoc access to PhD-level resources and creating more robust community-building initiatives could further bolster their experience.

UBCO's provincial funding formula, which does not separately account for graduate students, has created financial constraints that impact operations and growth. A perceived lack of transparency around funding allocation exacerbates tensions, as does lower resources as compared to the Vancouver campus. Misalignment between Enrollment Services and CoGS has slowed implementation of essential systems, creating operational bottlenecks. If these systemic issues are not addressed, risks of reputational damage due to inefficiencies, subpar graduate outcomes, and the erosion of student confidence will persist.

In summary, while CoGS has made impressive strides under strong leadership, future success depends on strategic planning, operational reforms, and strengthened advocacy for resources and funding. Addressing these challenges will be essential for sustaining its positive impact on UBCO's graduate community.

Strengths

- The Dean of Graduate Studies, Peter, is unanimously acknowledged as the best leader of the college for as long as those we met could remember. Peter has made a real difference for graduate studies, post-doctoral fellows and UBCO as a whole. He is student centered, forward looking and collaborative. The various groups, post-doctoral fellows, students, faculty members, other senior leaders feel very heard, understood, supported and served by the College of

Graduate Studies. Regular communication channels between the Dean and CoGS such as recurring meetings with various groups facilitate the flow of information and the identification of potential silos or issues that need to be addressed.

- Instituting minimum funding for PhD students has been a very successful initiative in recruiting and retaining students. The annual funding report generated By CoGS is particularly useful in monitoring funding levels across the graduate student population. Besides verifying that the minimum levels are respected, interesting insights can be drawn over different average levels across different sectors, or funding inequities and disparities.
- Postdoctoral fellows felt recognized and truly appreciated. Post doctoral fellows typically are scattered around campus and tend to go unnoticed without a voice to represent them. The appreciation day created a focal moment for the group.
- The TA Training program offered by the center of Teaching and Learning is very much appreciated by graduate student groups. Same welcoming and appreciative comments were expressed over the writing support provided by the Library. Although it is not CoGS that offers thesis support services, they have been advocating for them and coordinating the offerings with the students.
- The Interdisciplinary Program is very appreciated by students, staff and faculty who stated that it is functioning much better now that it's decentralized, although this comes with caveats as articulated in later sections.
- CoGS has been supportive of interdisciplinarity and innovative programming and a perfect example is the newly launched Doctorate in Education.
- Last but not least CoGS has recently been involved in graduate program approval. The involvement of CoGS in curriculum is a welcoming change as CoGS can lead and support units in the development and implementation of new and valuable graduate programs. CoGS is in a position to follow national trends as well as identify potential challenges that curriculum can pose.

Weaknesses

- Lack of space is a problem identified by pretty much every stakeholder we met with. Among the types of deficiency, classroom shortage (90% capacity during working hours) was identified as a major one, student housing was another and the latter is potentially hampering student enrolment. The main driver behind the shortage appears to be budgetary, but given the enrolment implications this may have, a serious discussion with CoGS at the table should be taking place.
- Although the annual funding report generated (already discussed under Strengths) is very useful, CoGS is unable to monitor live funding throughout the year and make sure that the minimum funding is respected. It can only identify after the fact (a year later), if a student received funding below the minimum guaranteed.
- Also, part-time registration may become a back door to avoid minimum funding, student status should therefore be monitored by CoGS.
- Workday appeared to be a major source of frustration for many stakeholders with CoGS at the forefront. Although it is understandable that major changes of this type can cause frustration and resistance, two issues were identified as "steps backwards" in the change and not process improvements. Firstly, workday has converted electronic processes into manual entries leading to work inefficiencies and inability to get proper analytics. Secondly, several capabilities are taken away from CoGS (potentially due misunderstanding the idiosyncrasies of a graduate student's pathway). Examples of removed access are: (i) Grade change and email addresses access. Not leveraging data for CoGS moving forward will be debilitating in properly supporting graduate programs (i.e. declaring supervision).
- The application process can be greatly improved: (i) several programs process applications outside the system - students formally apply only when they are informally accepted leading to inefficiencies and lack of proper data. (ii) CoGS is also duplicating efforts by verifying files twice in the process, wasting thus resources and time. It is also rather strict by applying uniform criteria that perhaps can be adjusted for particular programs.

- Although the interdisciplinary program is very popular and the decentralization was well received by students and supervisors (as already argued under Strengths) it is challenging to monitor and address student progress by the program coordinators, as it is scattered across the various units. Students can fall off the rails not knowing where they belong or who can support them and follow up with the successful progression through their milestones.
- Perhaps the biggest weakness is the lack of a Strategic Enrolment Management Plan for Graduate Studies which has resulted in uncontrolled, unplanned and uneven growth (with some exceptions in Course-based Professional Programs). Another risk associated with lack of SEM is random and potentially unsuccessful recruitment tactics. Also new programs are created without space and funding provisions. It is imperative for future success that resources match the growth of student population.
- Challenges with Vancouver Campus were frequently mentioned by many groups: The gist of it is that competition prevails to cooperation not only for students but also for resources. Some resources/offers are available only in Vancouver and when resources are shared, they are designed to fit Vancouver needs. Lack of transparency on provincial student funding vis-à-vis money allocated to UBCV leads to the presumption of unfairness. Even though communications around this subject are already in place, they can perhaps be intensified.
- *****NO GRAD UNION***** Graduate students do not have a voice on campus. They feel underrepresented within the larger student union. Their numbers are no longer marginal and they should therefore have an official seat to speak from.
- Challenges with local employment for graduate students after graduation seem to be common and career services do not address the graduate student population differently. Failure to place graduate students post degree can create long-term reputational issues on the value of the degrees.
- Information flow towards graduate students has not been very smooth, in particular around tuition fee changes. Students were surprised with significant tuition hikes post-arrival. Tuition fees by cohort (even if they include a pre-determined annual changes) are a transparent way of preparing students for the true cost of their education.
- Clawing back research assistantships by supervisors from student funding packages when other funding is secured is a very dangerous practice, as it is not controlled, and it jeopardizes the supervisory relationship. Taking funding back should only be done by CoGS on centrally allocated funds in a controlled and fair manner that does not remove the students' incentive to apply for external funding.
- Postdoctoral fellows can and would like to teach but it is very unclear how they can identify and pursue such opportunities. The Postdoc staff within CoGS is part-time, although she is very much appreciated and needed.
- Time to completion should be considered carefully, especially around Masters Programs that last much longer than advertised while funding does not get extended. The attempt by CoGS to reduce the time limit to 3 years should be supported and implemented. Students complained about the misalignment between the funded terms and time to completion, and what they actually requested is to graduate on time and move on with their careers -a very legitimate ask.
- Progress Reports are structured in a way that they do not allow graduate students to flag any issues (everything is seen by the supervisor). This does not allow the disclosure of problematic situations that can lead to delayed time to completion among other things. Moreover, annual progress reports are not accessible by program coordinators retroactively (proper archiving may be an issue).
- There is no training/onboarding for Graduate Programs Coordinators on rights and responsibilities as well as on conflict resolution, an issue graduate program coordinators are often called upon to resolve.
- Indigenous graduate student advisor staff member has contributed significantly to the recruitment and retention of indigenous students, but the position is not permanent. Given potential upcoming budget cuts, this position should be protected. Moreover, there seems to be no support within CoGS for black students or students of color.

- CoGS appears to be intervening on theses after successful defense and approval on matters other than mere formatting, leading to delays unnecessary tuition charges. A review of the thesis submission and defence process is due.

Opportunities

- Membership rules (about who can supervise) can be further improved through modification and monitoring of progress reports. The student portion of the report should not be visible to the supervisor and graduate program coordinators should be able to access progress reports retroactively. The graduate program coordinators should be empowered to follow up on problems identified in the reports and support should be provided by the associate deans at CoGs. There is a need for proper onboarding of new supervisors, supervisory guidelines and a student-supervisor agreement template.
- Students mentioned that they would like to complete within their funding window but do not feel supported in doing that. The following will help here: (1) curriculum review to ensure it is not too heavy, (2) making clear timelines and milestones available for students so they are prepared for each step in the program, (3) oversight of supervisory practices by graduate program coordinators and decanal team at CoGs, (4) identification of a clear place that students can go when struggling with progressing.
- Workshops and instructional material for graduate students on applying for ethics approval should be developed. Delays in that process can mean that a masters' student will not finish within 2 years.
- The instructors of cross-listed courses need clear guidance from CoGS about how to differentiate between graduate and undergraduate learning so that they can be a positive experience for graduate students.
- Graduate admissions and record officers are very stressed and worried about the amount of work but do not realize that they are spending time on the wrong things. These positions can be completely reworked by eliminating most of the outdated processes and focusing on higher value activities. For example, they should not be checking on other units' work: If a program has decided that a particular student should be admitted or given a scholarship then that decision should not be revisited. Rather CoGs should review an application for admissibility before sending it to the program and then accept the programs' recommendations without question. Additionally, the manual calculation of GPAs for admission committees must stop; this is a waste of time that has no relevance to the decisions made by committees. The grad admissions and record officers should be encouraged to trust their colleagues and to view their role as providing expertise and support rather than checking for/catching mistakes. Time could then be freed for them to act as advisors for students who are having difficulties and provide onboarding for new graduate supervisors and coordinators among many other higher value tasks.
- Postdoctoral fellows should be able to access the same supports and services as PhD students. Whether they are classified as employees or not, the postdoctoral fellowship is universally viewed as "training or development" as evidenced by the low salaries. Implementing this will require dedicated discussions with service units as well as a clear agreement about the level of service. There is also a need for more community building for the postdocs. International postdocs should be hired into longer contracts whenever possible due to complexities and costs of the work visa process.

Threats

- The BC funding formula for UBCO does not support grad students separately. This likely means the institution is underfunded for its operations. We understand that the provincial government is not open to the idea of funding more graduate student seats at UBC. Perhaps then, a discussion needs to take place about transferring some of the funded seats from the Vancouver campus. A transfer that would have little impact on the Vancouver campus could be game-changing for UBCO. We expect that there is resistance to this kind of idea left over from how UBCO was created but it needs to be considered for the health of the entire institution.

- Many people mentioned a lack of transparency with respect to financial matters. This is likely due to the way in which financial information is presented to the community (Finance believes they are very transparent but then mentions people not understanding accounting practices). The translation of the information into something the community can grasp will be very much appreciated. This is likely to be even more important soon.
- Many graduate workshops are offered by the Library and Teaching and Learning instead of CoGS. As a result, services to graduate students may be cut during financially challenging times, without the oversight of CoGS.
- There appears to be a large disconnect between Enrollment Services and CoGs which is obvious to the faculty deans and perhaps others. Enrollment Services does not understand why certain procedures are different for graduate students and CoGs does not recognize the extent to which their own processes result in manual work in Enrollment Services. This gulf is exacerbated by the lack of a Registrar on campus. We strongly encourage filling the Deputy Registrar Position and that the Dean of Graduate Studies begin meeting regularly with them and the Registrar. We note that this gulf is likely resulting in slowed implementation of graduate studies functionalities in WorkDay among other operational difficulties at both ES and CoGs.