

**Graduate Program, Department of Biochemistry
LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING**

Signing of this Letter attests to compliance with:

1. University regulations and guidelines governing graduate students and supervisors

- General University policies, procedures and guidelines (<http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies/>).
- Policies regarding all students (<http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies/students>).
- Policies defined by Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies in the *Graduate e-Calendar* (<http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students>)

2. University regulations on the ethical conduct of research (<http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/policies/research>)

3. University safety regulations, established by Environment Health and Safety (<http://www.mcgill.ca/ehs/>).

4. Policies and guidelines of the Biochemistry Graduate Program, documented on the Biochemistry Graduate Studies site (<http://www.mcgill.ca/biochemistry/graduate-studies-2>).

IDENTIFICATION

Student Name:	McGill Student ID #:
Program & Year (MSc1/PhD2):	Program Start Date:
Supervisor Name:	Supervisor Dept. (if outside Biochemistry):
Co-Supervisor Name (if any):	Co-Supervisor Dept. or Unit (if any):

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTATIONS

Research Project

Short description of research project.

Operational Expectations

Working hours, and necessity of work outside regular hours; group meetings; general lab duties; record keeping; assistance from and to other personnel/students; policies on authorship of publications, within the norms of the discipline and University policies on research ethics and intellectual property.

Supervisory Responsibilities*

Frequency of student-supervisor meetings; training role of the supervisor, including time-frame for review of the student's written work, extent of involvement with preparations for committee meetings and comprehensive examinations, and of grant/scholarship applications, manuscripts and theses; role of the co-supervisor (if any).

*A supervisor may not terminate supervision or payment of any stipend without just cause, documented due process, reasonable notice, and approval of the GPD, GAC or Chair.

Student Responsibilities

Limits to work* and activities off-hours; policies on TA positions; academic, technical or language training required; expected attendance at journal clubs, workshops and seminars, aside from official requirements of the Biochemistry Graduate Program.

* In order to maintain full-time status, a graduate student should not work more than 180 hours per term over 15 weeks with 12 hours per week. Graduate e-Calendar

Other Comments

Any other points important to the supervisor or student.

Signatures

I am aware of and understand the contents of this document including the appended timeline, policies and regulations regarding graduate students and supervisors, of the Biochemistry Graduate Program, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and McGill University.

Student:*Print Name***Signature:****Date:****Supervisor:***Print Name***Signature:****Date:****Co-Supervisor:***Print Name***Signature:****Date:****Unit Head:***Print Name***Signature:***(If Supervisor is not in the Biochemistry Dept.)***Date:**

The student and supervisor shall retain copies of the signed Letter of Understanding, and submit the original to the Student Affairs Officer of Biochemistry. A copy will be uploaded to the student's MyProgress site.

SUMMARY OF POLICIES

Financial Commitment

- All students receive a stipend paid from the supervisor's grant and/or student scholarships. The stipend supports full-time research towards the degree.
- The student is responsible for seeking alternate sources of funding through scholarships from the University and external granting agencies. Students must report all funding, external or internal, to the Student Affairs Officer.
- The supervisor is responsible for providing sufficient resources for the student's research project.
- Students may request an unpaid leave of absence for medical, parental, personal/family health or military service, on a term-by-term basis for up to one year, and requiring appropriate documentation.

Research Progress

- Regular reviews of student performance are mandatory (*Graduate e-Calendar*, Research Progress Tracking).
- The student's **Research Advisory Committee (RAC)** consists of the supervisor and two other faculty members, one from the Biochemistry Department and one from another department. The RAC should have appropriate expertise to evaluate progress, and is established within the first semester of study.
- The first RAC meeting must be held within the first year, and at least once each following year. Failure to hold annual RAC meetings will be **grounds for withdrawal**.
- The student is responsible to arrange RAC meetings, and submit the evaluation reports signed by the student, RAC members and GPD to the Student Affairs Officer of Biochemistry.
- If an evaluation is "unsatisfactory", the student must have another RAC meeting in 4 – 6 months to address concerns. A second "unsatisfactory" will be **grounds for withdrawal**.
- A failure in one required course and one RAC evaluation will be **grounds for withdrawal**.
- RAC approval is required to submit the M.Sc. thesis, Junior Seminar, Thesis Proposal and Senior Seminar.

Timeline and Comprehensive Examinations (Research Seminars, Thesis Proposal)

- Residency requirements, timing of Comprehensive Examinations, and expected times to completion are on the Biochemistry Graduate Studies site and the attached Timeline Chart.
- Degrees must be completed before the end of M.Sc. year 3, and Ph.D. year 7. Registration beyond time limitation will not be allowed.
- M.Sc. students may request to transfer (fast-track) to the Ph.D. program in the second semester of their second year, without completing the M.Sc. thesis.
 - Transfer requires permission of the supervisor, completion of required courses, and a "Pass" grade in the Research Seminar I (**Junior**) presented to and evaluated by the Department in the first semester of the second year. A "Fail" grade will require a second evaluation by the GAC.
 - Applicants must have a CGPA of 3.5 or higher and show ability to complete research at the Doctoral level.
 - After fast-track, students enter the doctoral program at the **Ph.D. year 2 level**.
- Ph.D. students must pass the **Ph.D. Thesis Proposal** oral examination in the second semester of the third year, evaluated by the GAC. The examination may be taken a second time if not passed, but a second "Fail" grade will be **grounds for withdrawal**, with the possibility of submitting a M.Sc. thesis instead.
- Ph.D. students must pass the Research Seminar II (**Senior**) presented to and evaluated by the Department, around 6 months before submission of the thesis.

Courses and Seminars

- Course requirements are described on the Biochemistry Graduate Studies site (Master's and Doctoral). Course selections must be approved by the supervisor and the GAC.
- It is recommended that courses should be completed within the first two semesters if possible.
- A passing grade is B– or 65%. A failure in two required courses will be **grounds for withdrawal**.
- All students are required to attend all seminars by visiting speakers in the **Unified Series** hosted by the Biochemistry Department and the Goodman Cancer Research Centre. Attendance at all Junior and Senior Seminars is also required. Attendance in the first year of study is required to pass course BIOC 696D1/D2.
- All new students are required to attend Research Integrity workshops.