

Informal Discussion: “What is a McGill Science PhD in the 21st Century?”

Faculty of Science Council meeting

January 16, 2018

3 – 3:30 pm, Leacock 232

1. What is the goal of graduate education in the Faculty of Science?

Do we agree that a core goal is to train our students as independent scientists and critical thinkers?

To what extent are we also providing them with additional skills to prepare them for their future careers?

2. How does the structure of our graduate programs achieve these goals?

What constitutes a PhD? Can we identify specific criteria that define the level of scholarship and research productivity necessary for a PhD?

What is the role of coursework in a PhD program? What is the role of the qualifying exam?

3. How long should it take to earn a PhD?

What is a reasonable time to completion? Is it possible to define a Faculty-wide standard?

How do we manage the tension between achieving a reasonable time to completion and maximizing research output?