

Supervisory Committees (Policy/Procedure)

During the M.Sc.F. and Ph.D. degree admission process, a graduate faculty member in Forestry is identified by the Faculty as the supervisor for each prospective graduate student. On admission, if not before, the supervisor and student meet to familiarize themselves with each other's interests, goals and expectations and to identify a potential research and thesis area of mutual interest.

A supervisory committee is then set up to guide the activities of the graduate student. Members are chosen in consultation with the student and invited to act. Committee membership is submitted to the Graduate Coordinator via regular progress reports.

For an M.Sc.F. candidate, the supervisory committee should include the supervisor and at least two other graduate faculty members.

For a Ph.D. candidate, the supervisory committee should consist of the supervisor and at least three other graduate faculty members. Normally, committees should include at least one member from a graduate department other than Forestry.

For both M.Sc.F. and Ph.D. programs, candidates in collaborative programs must include at least one committee member from the Centre for Environment, in the area of the program specialization.

Graduate Faculty members are individuals listed in the SGS calendar.

Supervisory committees should meet as soon as possible after a student registers and at least once within the first six months in the program. Thereafter, the supervisory committee is expected to meet with the student, as a committee, at least once a year through to degree completion. More frequent meetings should be held as required by the individual student's program and progress.

Supervisory committee meetings are not intended to take the place of meetings between the student and the supervisor; these should occur with much greater frequency than full supervisory committee meetings.

The functions of a student's supervisory committee are as follows:

- (a) to advise the student in choosing a suitable thesis topic and the necessary program of courses to meet the standards of the Faculty and the SGS for the appropriate degree;
- (b) to approve the student's program and any changes in the program;
- (c) to advise the student and provide constructive criticism throughout the period of graduate study (each member should be available for consultation by appointment);

(d) to meet as a committee to monitor and assess the student's progress within the first six months and at least once a year thereafter (or more frequently if necessary);

(e) to serve on the Examination Committee for the student's departmental oral examination.

In addition, for Ph.D. candidates, some of the supervisory committee members may be asked to take part in the Ph.D. qualifying examination and, to serve on the University final oral examination.

Once the membership of the supervisory committee has been established, it should be changed only under unusual circumstances, and with approval of the supervisor. Unusual circumstances include a major change in the research direction and illness of a committee member.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that the proper University of Toronto standards are maintained by all of that supervisor's students and that adequate supervision and communication are provided throughout the program. The Graduate Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all supervisors maintain similar standards and will bring cases of unsatisfactory performance to the notice of the Chair, if necessary.

It is the responsibility of all graduate faculty members to point out any weaknesses in a student's research that may come to a staff member's notice. Serious shortcomings should be brought to the attention of the student's supervisor and the Graduate Coordinator as soon as possible so that timely and necessary corrections may be made.

Students are responsible for booking a room and reserving equipment required for their committee meeting. A progress report should be completed at each committee meeting and submitted to the Graduate Administrator for input on ROSI. (Progress Report form entitled "Report on Supervisory Committee Meeting" is available from the Graduate Office).