

MINUTES

Meeting of the Graduate Academic Policy Committee

Monday, 10 April 2025, 2-3.30pm

Location: Zoom

Present: Adam Frank (Chair), Michael Hunt, Curtis Suttle, Jie Cheng, Dónal O'Donoghue, Jolanta Aleksejuniene, Max Read, Jenny Phelps, John Ries, Jennifer Fletcher (guest), Shannon Hagerman, Orkhon Gantogtokh

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

All	}	That the agenda be approved.
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Carried

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

All	}	That the minutes be approved.
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Carried

3. BUSINESS ITEMS

Senate Academic Policy Committee - Updates

- Adam provided a couple of updates on policy items resulting from the previous meetings:
 - G+PS was awaiting a response from Treasury regarding the sanctions list declaration requirement for the graduate applicants. The revised policy had not yet been returned. (The policy review typically follows this path: Academic Policy (AP) → Graduate Council → Senate Academic Policy Committee → Senate)
 - The Graduate Parental Leave Policy had raised some concerns, including whether students should be paid during the leave and whether there should be restrictions during the first term.

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Graduate Supervision Responsibilities

- Adam walked the group through the [Membership](#) page on UBC Calendar and provided a brief summary of developments from the last meeting, particularly the breakdown of *Supervision* category. He then asked the group: What content should be included in the formal policy, and what should be reserved for the Calendar website?
- Jie asked whether the supervisory committee membership meeting was supposed to be held between committee members only, or was the student also expected to be in attendance? Adam said the meeting was to be held among the committee members. However, there was a separate requirement for the principal supervisor to meet with the student at least once per year. Michael added that since there was no formal supervision policy, the current initiative was an opportunity to establish one for Senate approval.

- Curtis proposed adding more inclusive language - such as “could be” - to allow for diverse pedagogical and research methodologies.
- Donal remarked that the document seemed to be aiming at establishing a shared set of *understandings* between the supervision committee and the student. He then asked if using the term *agreement* also implied the need to define consequences for breaching it. Michael talked about the prescriptive tone of the policy and said that the goal was to set clear expectations in an area that previously lacked formal guidelines.
- For materials, John suggested replacing the word *ensure* with something less prescriptive, such as *facilitate*, since the usage of some materials/resources might be too expensive for students to access.
- Donal asked whether the policy should be more explicit about students’ access to material support, noting that it seemed to be already addressed elsewhere in the document.
- Jie said that both material and financial support for students were critical components of graduate programs. She noted that, in recent years, most of this support had come from Graduate Program administration, and wondered whether that could be reflected in the policy. Adam said that the policy could include a commitment to work with programs to facilitate enhanced access to material support.
- Jenny noted that the document did not talk about ethics and suggested that it could be included under the section on research integrity. She also suggested that something related to career guidance could be added to the document. Adam agreed and said that the *guidance* section could be expanded overall.
- Curtis stated that the section on degree requirements did not belong in the document, as students were generally already aware of deadlines and requirements. Adam then asked the group how involved supervisors should be in those processes. John felt most of these concerns were already addressed in the *guidance* section. Michael agreed with Curtis, suggesting that program-specific requirements could be omitted, but that UBC-wide requirements might be worth retaining.
- For co-supervisors, Michael said that expectations needed to be clarified, noting that co-supervisors operated at a higher level than regular committee members. Adam said that wording to that effect would be added to the policy document.

Postdoctoral Supervision

- Michael noted that several units had raised questions regarding the definition of a faculty member—specifically, who can and cannot supervise a postdoc. Such queries are typically referred to the department head or institute director. He asked if it might be worth considering for G+PS to have a broader role in providing clarity on this issue.
- Curtis emphasized that if a postdoc is being supported by a research grant, the supervisor should have the authority to manage the corresponding funds. If someone is not eligible to hold a cost center, they likely should not be responsible for overseeing a postdoctoral student's activities. John said he was fine with the current policy and that G+PS should not become involved in this area.
- Michael concluded by noting that he did not notice a significant push from the Committee members to implement major changes and that it might be useful to coordinate with the Postdoc Office to develop a basic set of guidelines outlining roles and expectations.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

Adam delivered the closing remarks and the meeting was adjourned at 3.15pm.