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From: College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies <university.announcements@usask.ca>
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As the pandemic continues, **flexibility continues to be a key element in supporting our students**. We trust that consideration will be given for students awaiting their study permits and perhaps still waiting having already deferred for a year. Graduate students are permitted to register and start the term remotely. If you are aware of challenges where a supervisor is no longer willing to support a student who has not arrived please contact our office for advice.

Fall Exam and Defence Options

As we begin to see a slight increase in planned on-campus activities this fall, several supervisors, students, and committees have no doubt begun to wonder what this means for student oral exams and defences. Moving forward into this transitional period, although virtual/remote defences remain highly advisable given our current local context, blended or in-person exams and defences will once again be possible depending on the comfort level of committee members and students. Again, given the high case numbers in Saskatoon, we continue to encourage an abundance of caution for those considering blended or in-person activities.

Fall exam/defence options will include:

1. **Virtual** – all involved in the exam/defence continue to participate virtually as has become our norm over these last 17 months. A reminder that Zoom is now available to

all faculty, staff, and students through USask. Microsoft Teams and Webex (until Spring 2022) will continue to be available as well.

2. **Blended** – should a portion of the committee (ie: student and supervisor) wish to participate on campus while some members of the committee participate virtually, this is an option providing all committee members and the student is comfortable with their respective arrangements. Externals will still participate virtually. In addition to meeting rooms with the necessary video conferencing capabilities within your own academic unit or college, the following meeting rooms are also available centrally for booking and have the necessary equipment to support a blended defence:

- ARTS 1011
- HLTH 1A03
- HLTH 1A04
- HLTH B525
- HLTH GA20.26
- HLTH GD04
- CGPS Meeting Room 118 is also available for booking through your Program Advisor
- CGPS Meeting Room 108A may also be an option in situations where the student (or student and supervisor) wish to participate on campus with the remainder of the committee remote

A few things to keep in mind prior to the beginning of a **blended defence**:

- Ensure that those joining remotely have received the invitation to the defence well in advance of the scheduled date.
- Ensure that those joining remotely, those participating in-person, and the chair are comfortable and familiar with the hardware and software that will be used. IT staff will be available to support on-campus participants, but response times will vary depending on other demands. Depending on the familiarity with the chosen software, it may be beneficial to briefly test the setup at some point prior to the beginning of the defence.
- If the student is participating in person, be sure that those joining virtually are able to see slides/content being shared with those in the room via the appropriate screen sharing functionality.

An in-person defence (but with External Examiner remote for the time being):

- Should all committee members and the student feel comfortable with an entirely in-person exam or defence, this will return as an option going forward.

- Formal approval for on-campus activity is no longer required provided all [USask COVID-19 protocols](#) are followed. However, it is strongly encouraged that a larger room than usual be booked to ensure all participants can maintain a safe physical distance from fellow attendees.

As always the Committee Chair (for master's defences) or Dean's Designate (for PhD defences) has the option to discontinue a remote/blended defence if connection of one or more committee members is lost or interferes with the proper conduct of the examination. If the defence cannot be resumed with all participants after 30 minutes, or if the total amount of time lost exceeds 60 minutes, the Dean's Designated must suspend the defence and notify grad.studies@usask.ca as soon as possible so that CGPS can coordinate rescheduling of the defence. The [Memo to Schedule Graduate Defence form](#) on the CGPS Service Desk will be updated in the coming days to include a question regarding the format of the defence.

Continuing Student Tuition Offset

As noted in the USask Tuition Announcement from April 28th, 2021, a tuition offset will be applied to continuing international graduate students' tuition accounts to offset the increase to the international differential. **These offsets will be available to students who began their program in the 2020-2021 academic year or earlier.** Offsets will be provided for up to one year for Master's and up to three years for PhD students beginning in the Fall 2021 Term. An additional year of support for PhD students who began their programs in 2020-21 will also be provided as a bursary in their fifth year in program.

The Master of Public Health (MPH) and Master of Sustainability (MSEM/MSs) programs will offer offsets for continuing domestic and international graduate students. These offsets will also be in place for the 2021-2022 academic year only. **Please note that all other offsets listed below are available to continuing international graduate students only.**

Starting in the 2021 Fall Term, a tuition offset will be applied to the accounts of eligible continuing graduate students. The offset will be automatically applied to student accounts sometime after September 16th (the last day to make registration changes with 100% tuition credit), but before September 30th (the tuition payment deadline).

Offset amounts

International Student Offset (standard tuition programs)

Colleges with standard tuition programs include Agriculture and Bioresources, Arts and Science, Dentistry, Education, Engineering, Kinesiology, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Nutrition, and the Western School of Veterinary Medicine.

Program	Offset
Standard Course-Based Masters	\$166 per 3 credit units (\$55.33 per credit unit)
Standard Thesis/Project Masters	\$345 per term
Standard PhD	\$345 per term

International Student Offset (non-standard tuition programs)

Edwards School of Business

Program	Offset
Master of Professional Accounting (MPAcc)	\$181.58 per credit unit
Master of Business Administration (MBA)	\$154.90 per credit unit
Master of Science (MSC) in Finance	\$575 per term

School of Public Health

Program	Offset
Master of Public Health (MPH), international students	\$1,327.28 per term

SENS

Program	Offset
Master/PhD of Environment and Sustainability (MES)	\$375.59 per term
Master of Sustainability (MSEM/MSs), international students	\$24.74 per credit unit

Domestic Student Offset (non-standard tuition programs)

School of Public Health

Program	Offset
Master of Public Health (MPH)	\$314.15 per term

SENS

Program	Offset
Master/PhD of Environment and Sustainability (MES)	\$375.59 per term
Master of Sustainability (MSEM/MSs), domestic students	\$13.67 per credit unit

Further information about graduate tuition offsets is available [online](#).

It is anticipated that offsets will be applied to students' accounts by September 23/24. An email to all impacted students will go out confirming that their account has been adjusted once this is complete.

Important Awards and Scholarship Information

The deadlines for this year's Tri-Agency competitions are as follows. Additional details will be sent within the coming week.

[Vanier](#) – Monday, September 27, 2021 at 7:00pm CST

Apply through [ResearchNet](#)

[Canada Graduate Scholarship – Doctoral program](#) – Tuesday, October 12, 2021 at 7:00pm CST

CIHR – apply through [ResearchNet](#)

NSERC – apply through [NSERC Online Services](#)

SSHRC – apply through [SSHRC Web-based Forms](#)

[Canada Graduate Scholarships – Master's program](#) – Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 7:00pm CST

Apply through [ResearchPortal](#)

If you have any questions, please contact [Grad Awards](#).

