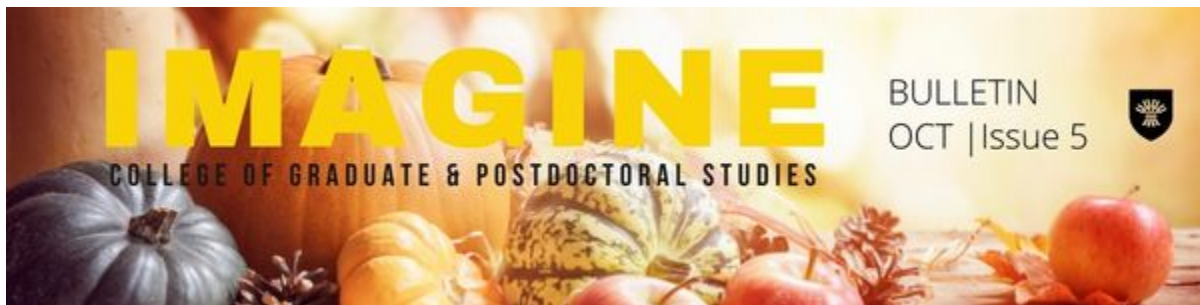


Lisitza, Lori

From: lal582@mail.usask.ca
Sent: Monday, October 4, 2021 8:02 AM
To: Lisitza, Lori
Subject: Announcement Test Email: CGPS Operational Bulletin - Issue 5



Important graduate studies information for programs and units

ETD Submission Process Update

Please remember that beginning October 1st, 2021, students submitting their final document to the ETD site will also be required to submit a completed copy of the [GPS 404 – Final Thesis Confirmation Form](#) as part of their submission.

Updated Graduate Student Checklist

We've updated the Graduate Student Checklist (attached). In addition to new information about the GPS 404, we've also updated the tuition refund section (thanks to Nadine Penner in Arts & Science and the CGPS's own Jordan Heise for their work on this!).

NSERC USRA Update

The College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies welcomes Research Acceleration and Strategic Initiatives (RASI) as the new USask institutional home for the 2022 NSERC USRA awards. This transition will take place over the fall of 2021 and RASI will lead the USask institutional call for NSERC USRAs for 2022. This move will facilitate greater integration of cross-institutional support for NSERC USRA students alongside undergraduate student researchers across campus via the SURE Student Undergraduate Research Experience program at RASI.

Student-Supervisor Agreement

As a reminder for graduate faculty, get off to a good start with your new graduate students by sitting down with them and talking through the completion of the [student-supervisor agreement](#). It is a program requirement and must be completed within the first 12 months of a student's program. It covers many areas, but most importantly it gets you talking about what you can expect from one another.

Issues with Application Fee Payments

We have been made aware that some applicants are experiencing issues paying their application fees online. If applicants applying to programs in your units are experiencing problems, a couple of quick solutions that seem to address the issue are:

- Confirm they have JavaScript enabled on their browser (they shouldn't be using Internet Explorer). The payment gateway requires JavaScript
- Confirm they have cleared their browser cache

Visiting Research Student Update

Updated IRCC guidance for international students pursuing short-term studies in Canada (including VRS)

In response to our engagement with senior departmental officials, IRCC has now updated their public guidance to permit fully-vaccinated foreign nationals to enter Canada to take a course or program **for 6 months or less** without applying for a study permit. This is an important step to support institutional planning for short-term exchange programs and will help reduce IRCC's inventory of study permit applications for processing.

It is important to note that students pursuing short-term studies who do not qualify as fully vaccinated travellers will still be required to apply for a study permit and that the border services officers will make the final decision about whether students will qualify as a fully-vaccinated traveler. There are also some advantages to applying for a study permit even if it's not required, including facilitating re-entry to Canada if a student travels during their studies.

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:

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.

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.

In-person (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 would normally be required to 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 the 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 a 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.

Communicating with your CGPS Program Advisors

To ensure we can continue to support units in as effective and efficient a manner as possible, please remember to use the [CGPS Service Desk](#) in Jira where appropriate. **Please do not send questions or requests to CGPS advisors through MS Teams.** Keeping all of your inquiries in Jira not only helps us to prioritize issues but helps to ensure your requests are answered in a timely fashion even if your assigned program advisor is away. While we make every attempt to respond to your inquiry as quickly as possible, responses may not be instantaneous. Your patience is greatly appreciated.

**sent to Graduate Chairs and Graduate Administrators*

Attachments:

[GraduateStudentChecklistSeptember2021.pdf](#)