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## Important graduate studies information for programs and units

### Happy Holidays!

On behalf of CGPS, we wish each of you a happy, relaxing, and safe holiday season. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the New Year! CGPS Offices will be closed from December 24<sup>th</sup> to January 3<sup>rd</sup>. We will reopen on January 4<sup>th</sup>.

### Vaccination Measures for Winter Term

Anyone planning on attending in-person learning or working at a USask location for the Winter Term must [provide proof](#) of full vaccination through the [Vaccine Status channel in PAWS](#) prior to Jan. 4, 2022. Further information on campus vaccination measures is available [here](#).

### Admissions blackouts

As a follow-up to recent conversations at both Grad Admin Forum and Grad Chair Forum, CGPS will be implementing a **pilot admissions blackout period beginning in the Spring 2022 term**. What this means is that for the 15 days leading up to the start of a term, we will only be processing admissions for students who are either current USask students or already located near Saskatoon and who have applied to begin in that term. For example, units must recommend all international students prior to April 15 for a spring term start, prior to August 15 for a fall term start and prior to December 10 for a winter term start. If a student

is recommended after those dates, we will work with the unit to determine a subsequent start term that is convenient for the program/supervisor and student.

Please note that even if we receive a recommendation to admit an international student before the blackout period unless the student is already in Canada, it is unlikely that they will have time to submit their study permit application and receive their permit prior to the start of term. You can check the Government of Canada study permit processing times [here](#). All study permit-related questions can be directed to [ISSAC](#).

### **External Examiners for PhD Defences**

We've been seeing an increase in the number of questions related to external examiners for PhD defences and wanted to share the following:

1. Supervisors are encouraged to identify possible external examiners prior to a meeting of the Advisory Committee.
2. The Advisory Committee will meet to discuss the suitability of the proposed external examiner(s), and all members are expected to affirm that the proposed external examiner(s) satisfy all selection criteria.
3. Following the committee reaching a decision on proposed external examiners, the unit will include their recommendation in the [Memo to Schedule Graduate Defence](#). The Associate Dean, CGPS, will review the recommendation (in alignment with [CGPS Policy 8.2.1](#)).
4. Once the external examiner is approved, the CGPS Program Advisor will forward a copy of the thesis to the individual as per the contact information provided by the unit in the memo.

### **CGPS Admissions Policy Updates to be Aware of:**

#### **Policy 1.1 – English Proficiency Requirements**

The acceptance of the Duolingo Test of English Language Proficiency (DET), initially introduced as a COVID-19 measure, has been regularized and formally added to the list of accepted tests. However, the minimum overall scores have changed. For students who submit an application on or after January 1, 2022, the minimum required overall **DET score that CGPS will accept is 115, with no less than 95 in each area**. Students who submit an application prior to January 1, 2022, must meet the previous requirements (110 overall, no minimum area scores). Note that units are not required to accept the DET as proof of English language proficiency; it is simply another option for those units and programs that wish to consider students with DET scores. Updates to admission requirements on centrally

managed web pages are being made. Please be sure to update your departmental pages if appropriate.

#### **Policy 2.4.1 – Conditional Admission**

This policy change enables us to allow students to register in the first term of their program prior to having their final, official copies of transcripts submitted to CGPS from issuing institutions. Students will now be able to have their final transcripts submitted after the start of the first term of their program but prior to the beginning of their second term (registration holds will now be applied to student accounts in the middle of the first term of a student's program rather than prior to the first term). Over the next few weeks, CGPS will be incorporating these changes into letters of admission going forward and will be updating our internal GS document holds process. These changes have no impact on any other admissions processes (i.e.: students are still required to submit unofficial, electronic copies as part of the required application documentation). **Admitted students will still be required to provide all other necessary admissions documents (including English language proficiency and other test scores) prior to being allowed to register.** All admitted students are still encouraged to arrange for their final documents to be sent to us as soon as possible and prior to the start of their programs, but we are hopeful that this change will help to reduce some of the start of term bottlenecks in units and CGPS, improving the overall experience of new students going forward. If students are unable to have their final, official transcript copies sent to our office prior to the beginning of their second term or if the official copies differ from the unofficial copies on which admission decisions were based, the student may be required to discontinue from their program. Further process and operational details will be shared at the upcoming Graduate Administrator Forum in February, but if you have any urgent questions, please feel free to reach out to your CGPS Program Advisor.

#### **Updates to Program Pages on [grad.usask.ca](http://grad.usask.ca)**

Working with our colleagues in TLSE, we have begun our annual review of [grad.usask.ca](http://grad.usask.ca). This review includes a chance for units to request updates to the content on individual program pages. Graduate Program Administrators and Chairs received an email from Marc Usunier last week with further details and timelines. The deadline to request updates is Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

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The CGPS Operational Bulletin is sent to Graduate Administrators and Graduate Chairs

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