Graduate Program Handbooks

Please note, this list is not a template but does include a number of items that program should strongly consider including in their program handbooks. The handbooks should contain a condensed supplementary body of information, that cannot be found in graduate calendar, that covers program specific policies and procedures.

<u>**Introduction**</u>
- ☐ Date of approval/review
- ☐ Disclaimer regarding grad calendar prevails
- ☐ Purpose of handbook section – students, faculty/program offices
- ☐ Welcome from the Program Lead including program overview/vision and educational philosophy (if appropriate)
- ☐ Roles and Responsibilities with Contact Details and Who's Who (academic leaders, staff that support the program, faculty). This section should indicate that the Associate Chair/Graduate Program Director is the first point of contact for an issue
- ☐ Program Committees
- ☐ Graduate Student Association
- ☐ Program Specific Associations/events

<u>**Main Body**</u>
This program should include program-specific rules and regulations and can be organized as the program sees fit provided the pertinent information is included.

- ☐ General Information
- ☐ General "How to" guidance, Mosaic, MAC ID, Validation Card, Graduate Student E-Mail, Workspace, Avenue to Learn, SWAT escort service, scanning/printing/copying, parking, emergency services
- ☐ What to do Prior to your Arrival (contact or meet with supervisor in person or remotely, Activate Web Services, Training, OHIP, UHIP, Review Policies)
- ☐ When you Arrive
- ☐ Dedicated sections for *each* degree offered by department/program
  - Subheadings within these sections relevant to particular degrees (i.e., admission requirements, comprehensive exam and its format and requirements, committee structures, general program requirements)
  - Program Registration
  - Course Enrollment
  - Degree Specific Dates/Milestones
  - Descriptions of Streams/Specialization and how to change streams/specializations (if relevant)
  - Procedure for transferring into Ph.D. (transfer examination, if relevant)
- ☐ Course Offerings/Outlines/Relevant guidelines for graduate courses in the program
- ☐ Reference to any documents that are appendices of the Program Handbook
- ☐ Supervision Information/Program Advisor
  - For course-based programs, this should include information about who functions as a supervisor of a student with difficulties.
  - Issues around changing supervisors/advisors as appropriate

- Link to section 2.7 (Supervision) of the Graduate Calendar: http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=4667#2.7_Supervision
☐ Financial Matters
- Reference to SGS Scholarships and awards and program specific scholarships and awards
- Payroll Information
- Health & Dental Plans
- Teaching Assistantships or Research Assistantship in lieu
- Travel/Conference Funding (should note that some are competitive, e.g., not all students are entitled to receive a GSA Travel Award)
- If relevant, provide brief information about the program's TA allocations and expectations for TA duties, with reference to the TA/RA collective agreement for details: http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/med/document/CUPE-Unit-1-(TA)-CBA---FINAL-24FEB2017-1-42.pdf
☐ Important Dates and Deadlines specific to the program
- Sessional Dates, Withdrawal, Transfer Examination, Thesis, Comprehensive Examination
☐ Mandatory Training (Health and Safety, Animal Care, AODA etc.)
☐ Other Department/Unit-Specific Requirements (e.g., participation in departmental seminars, space assigned in graduate room, field-work/off-campus activities, etc.)
☐ Expectations on Record Keeping
☐ Link to Program Tools and Forms
☐ Progress and Degree Completion

Central Resources and Services
☐ Thesis Completion
- Guidelines for Preparation http://graduate.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/guide_for_the_preparation_of_masters_and_doctoral_theses-_december_2016.pdf
- Format
- Thesis Examining Committee (structure)
- Thesis Evaluation
- Submission
☐ Progressing to Degree Completion
- http://graduate.mcmaster.ca/academic-services/degree-completion
- Guide to Accessing Academic Advisement reports
  o https://gs.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/academic_advisement_-_accessing_advisement_reports.pdf
☐ Policies and Regulations
- Academic Integrity Policy
  ▪ https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf
- Accommodation of Graduate Students with Disabilities
- Collective Agreement for TA/RA in lieu of TA:
  ▪ http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/med/document/CUPE-Unit-1-(TA)-CBA---FINAL-24FEB2017-1-42.pdf

- Leaves of Absence:
  - http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=3572#2-5-7_leaves_of_absence
- Petition for Special Consideration
  - http://graduate.mcmaster.ca/sites/default/files/resources/petition_july2016.pdf
- Incomplete/Failing Grade:
  - http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=3572#2.6.4_Failing_Grades_and_Incomplete_Grades
- Student Code of Conduct:
  - http://studentconduct.mcmaster.ca/student_code_of_conduct.html
- Student Appeals Process:
  - http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/StudentAppeal.pdf
- Copyright Policy:
  - https://milo.mcmaster.ca/faqs/copyright_mac
- Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response Policy:
  - http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/General/HR/Discrimination_Harassment_Sexual_Harassment-Prevention&Response.pdf
- Research Integrity Policy
  - http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/faculty/Research/Research%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf
- Additional Program-specific polices and regulations (ie. Vulnerable sector screening, industry placement)

☐ Information for International Students
- Visa, Employment Authorization, Immigration Information, University Health Insurance Plan, Social Insurance Number, International Student Services

☐ Professional Skills Development for Graduate Students

☐ Advising and Counselling Services
- Student Wellness Centre, Student Success Centre, Student Accessibility Services, Ombuds Office, Chaplaincy Centre

☐ Where to go for help

☐ Other Services and General Resources

Appendix
Term of reference for program committees
Typical Course Schedule, if applicable
Copy of Ph.D. supervisory committee report

Process Checklist for Handbook Review, Approvals and Updates
Program should conduct an annual review of handbooks in the spring to identify items that need to be changed or updated. The engagement of faculty and student reviewers is encouraged.
Each Faculty's Associate Dean of Graduate Studies is to set the deadlines for submitting Handbooks for first and subsequent annual review.

The University is encouraging all graduate programs to ensure that their handbook is formally approved by May 2018.

Approved handbooks should be publicly posted on websites

Assistant Graduate Secretary updates the checklist annual, based on any changes to section numbers in the Graduate Calendar

Minor changes to an approved handbook can be approved by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies (and ideally, all relevant Associate Deans should approve the handbooks for interdisciplinary programs).

The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies may recommend that major changes to an approved handbook be reviewed by GCPC or GPCC.