



Biology Graduate Academic Unit

Supervisory Committee

Composition

The **Supervisor** is expected to act as a mentor for the graduate student. Supervisors and students are encouraged to establish an agreement on topics such as mutual expectations, responsibilities, equipment access, funding, etc.

The **Supervisory Committee** is established by the graduate student's supervisor, in consultation with the graduate student and the proposed committee members. The committee consists of a minimum of three members, including the supervisor (two co-supervisors jointly count as one member), all of whom must be full faculty members, Adjunct faculty members, or Honorary Research Associates (HRAs) at UNB. The majority of the members on any committee must be full faculty members of the Biology Graduate Academic Unit.

In order to provide protection for Biology graduate students, the Graduate Studies Committee of the Biology GAU (Saint John) requires that Adjunct professors, Honorary Research Associates, and Professors Emeriti may act only as **co-supervisors**, in partnership with a full faculty member of the GAU.

Any proposed co-supervisor who is a Professor Emeritus, adjunct, or an HRA in good standing will provide a written commitment of funding, including (a) a student stipend for a minimum of two (MSc) or three (Ph.D.) years, and (b) sufficient funds for expected expenses, including materials and supplies, travel, equipment, field expenses, and conferences as appropriate. This commitment must be signed by the originator of the funds (if possible; if not possible, this must be noted), and the faculty member must guarantee that the funds will be dedicated to the student.

Change of Supervisor Status (on retirement, end of contract, etc.)

The Biology GAU (Saint John) further recommends that all faculty members whose status will change (due to retirement, end of contract) within two years (for M.Sc. students) or three years (Ph.D. students) meet the following conditions before a prospective student's application is approved.

- The supervisory committee will be constructed such that the change in status will not affect its validity. For example, there will be sufficient full UNB faculty members (who are members of the GAU) that the required majority will be conserved should the primary supervisor leave or become an Honorary Research Associate or Adjunct.
- Should a supervisor who is a regular professor leave UNB before the student's program is completed, a **co-supervisor** who is a UNB faculty member and member of the GAU will be appointed (as "secondary supervisor") to provide continuity beyond the date of change of status. This secondary supervisor will document in writing his/her commitment to the student. This will include academic responsibilities, access to resources (e.g. lab and carrel space, equipment), and financial assistance should it be required.

The prospective student will receive copies of the commitments from primary and secondary supervisors, and will provide the Director of Graduate Studies with written confirmation that he/she understands the ramifications for his/her program. Originals of all written commitments and acceptance of responsibilities will be held in the student's files by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Committee Meetings

The student must meet with the Supervisory Committee (1) within one month of beginning the programme, to establish a Program of Study, and (2) at least twice a year to discuss research and academic progress. A Progress Report Form must be completed during at least one of these regular meetings; more frequent reports are highly recommended. The original form should be forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies, copies being kept by the student and the supervisor. Additional meetings may be requested by the graduate student or any member of the Supervisory Committee.

Committee's Role in GAU thesis approval

Prior to thesis submission for examination, the Supervisory Committee will review the thesis for scientific content as well as proper form and grammar. On the first draft, a committee member should return the thesis to the student within one month of receiving the complete thesis. Revisions should be processed within two weeks of receiving the complete revised versions. A thesis must receive final approval by the Supervisory Committee before it is submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies. Approval should be conferred via the approval form and must not be contingent upon any modifications which have not been examined by the committee. If the Supervisory Committee is not unanimous in its approval of the thesis, the Biology GAU Committee will review the situation and establish a Departmental examination before the thesis goes to the Examining Committee.

For details regarding thesis submission, examination and defence, please visit the Thesis submission and Examination and defence pages.

Before a PhD thesis is submitted, the Supervisory Committee will submit the names of four potential external examiners to the Director of Graduate Studies. These names will be taken under advisement by the Biology GAU Committee who will select the external examiner for recommendation to the School of Graduate Studies (PhD Thesis Examination and Defence below).

Other Duties

The Supervisory Committee acts on behalf of the student in requesting a transfer from a MSc program to a PhD program and in requesting the extension of a graduate program. In both cases, the committee should meet with the student and then present any written recommendations to the Director of Graduate Studies.