

# Graduate (MSc, PhD) and Undergraduate Major Project/Thesis Students Letter of Understanding | McArthur, 3F Research Group | 2021

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## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

### Research Group

- Must attend and participate in all scheduled research group meetings
  - Participate in research group meetings by providing presentations as requested/needed, completing readings as requested prior to research group meetings (e.g., conceptual/theoretical/empirical articles), constructive feedback to other research group members (e.g., regarding conference posters) and on-going research projects
- Advise supervisor of times you will be away at least 2 weeks in advance
- Treat other research group members with respect, minimize noise disruptions in research group facilities
- Inform supervisor of participation as a member in other research groups at least 2 weeks in advance
- Inform the supervisor of all outside employment to prevent workload conflicts
- Appropriate use of research group computers and equipment, research group/thesis research is first priority for use
- Adhere to confidentiality requirements concerning data, protocols, and analyses
- Complete and maintain TCPS2 Core Certification (<https://tcps2core.ca/>) throughout the duration of studies
- Students are encouraged to provide a photo, cv, and a statement of research interests for the research group website; students may opt out of website inclusion (e.g., for confidentiality reasons)
- Students are encouraged to provide research support for thesis projects by other research group members to obtain additional research experience

### Research

- Apply for multiple appropriate fellowships and awards each year (e.g., CIHR; MSSU Student Awards, Killam, conference travel awards; local, provincial, federal, international awards)
- Seek out potential conferences and submit multiple conference poster applications each year, with each submission discussed with the supervisor (e.g., to determine appropriateness of analyses, co-authorship, submission strategy, etc.)
- Seek out and participate in additional training opportunities as appropriate (e.g., conference or training program, Summer Program in Aging)
- MSc students: participate in at least one first-authored or co-authored manuscript project per year (e.g., one's own set of analyses or thesis project); PhD students: complete at least one first-authored manuscript per year
- Seek out additional co-authorship and collaborative research opportunities with the supervisor, other lab members, or lab collaborators to gain additional research experience

- Students are required to collect and analyze data for their thesis research to obtain an optimal scope of research experience (e.g., ethics submission, recruitment of original data, or analysis of secondary data)
- students may not submit the same statistical analyses of a given poster at two separate conferences without the expressed written consent (or policy note) of the conference organizers indicating that duplicate submissions are permitted; if unclear, the student is required to confirm the acceptance policies of the conference prior to submitting
- Students are strongly encouraged to submit the same poster to multiple conferences, if the additional conferences permit duplicate submissions, in order to maximize publications and constructive feedback from conference participants
- Must attend regularly scheduled personal meetings with supervisor (approximately bi-weekly)
- Must provide a written summary of topics/decisions in each personal meeting with the supervisor within 2 days (e.g., via email)
- Clearly identify all relevant deadlines (e.g., program, conferences, awards, etc.) well in advance and inform the supervisor of such if needed
- Inform the supervisor, in a timely manner, of issues potentially impacting thesis/research timelines or program completion (e.g., living arrangements, financial need, mental health difficulties, supervisor availability, quality/timing of supervisor feedback)
- Allow a sufficient and reasonable amount of time for completion of requests, or assistance, as requested of the supervisor (e.g., avoid last-minute applications requiring substantial revisions)
- Reply to emails from the supervisor within 48 hours on weekdays
- Research activities and email correspondence are not expected on evenings (e.g., past 5 PM) or weekends unless otherwise agreed upon between the student and supervisor
- Maintain a recent and updated CV to be provided upon request to the supervisor to update lab resources/reports/website as needed
- Documentation in support of conducting assigned lab activities is required and must be made available to the supervisor upon request (e.g., search term syntax and tabulations, copies of reviewed articles, output of analyses in digital format)
- Comply with Policies and Regulations on Safety and on Ethical Conduct of Research, and understand what constitutes plagiarism, misconduct and cheating, and abide by policies and rules and regulations in effect at the University
- Communicate with the dissertation committee as needed (e.g., coordinate at least one meeting per year to review thesis objectives and goals in progress tracking report)

## **SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Mentorship**

- Provide hands-on mentorship for developing, reviewing, and submitting award/fellowship applications, conference submissions, and manuscripts for publication
- Provide in-person (or virtual) mentorship for theoretical/conceptual issues, as well as statistical analysis as per the expertise of the supervisor (e.g., regression)

- Mentorship concerning additional research activities (e.g., literature searches, research group organization, logistics concerning research exchanges, getting the most out of conferences)
- Supervisor concerns regarding unsatisfactory student research, thesis progress, or behaviour will be addressed in multiple personal meetings prior to changes in compensation or supervision
- The supervisor reserves the right to terminate research group participation/employment, or graduate supervision, if the student responsibilities are consistently not met (e.g., at least one progress report is indicated as unsatisfactory)
- Meet regularly with the student (e.g., bi-weekly personal and research group meetings) and be reachable via email within a 2-day period (unless on vacation)
- Advise on course selection when needed; assist in the preparation for comprehensive or oral examinations; determine, in agreement with the student, the composition of the comprehensive, thesis, and defence committees

### **Research**

- Provide opportunities, as are available, to coauthor with other students (e.g., of collaborators) on conference poster and manuscript submissions
- Provide opportunities for co-authorship on relevant posters and manuscripts prepared by the supervisor in accordance with the extent of student participation in the project
- Provide opportunities and logistical/financial support for international student exchanges, as available, in which the student participates in the research group/lab of a colleague of the supervisor and completes a research project commensurate with the duration of the stay

### **Funding**

- Regularly apply for external grant funding to attempt to provide continuous financial support for students (e.g., RA payments, conference attendance, open access fees)
- Provide research assistantship stipends or hourly funding to students, contingent on external grant funding (e.g., CIHR)
- Funding amounts and timing will be calibrated according to student status (e.g., MSc vs. PhD rates; international vs. Canadian) and other funding awarded to the student (e.g., smaller stipends being awarded for students receiving external doctoral fellowships or substantial departmental funding); these calibrations will be stipulated in writing (e.g., via email, in letters of admission) and will not contravene funding otherwise promised to the student (e.g., in letters of admission, prior to being awarded an external fellowship)
- Specific research activities and deadlines corresponding to RA payments/stipends will be specified in writing (e.g., via email, in progress reports)
- Student failure to satisfy agreed upon research activities may result in delay or termination of RA funding (amounts promised in letters of admission notwithstanding)
- Provide financial support for students to attend at least one conference per year to present work completed in collaboration with the supervisor, contingent on external grant funding (e.g., CIHR).
- Conference funding amounts may be calibrated according to number/location of conference and number of papers to be presented by a given student, as well as the amount of external grant funding available to the supervisor

- Funding for student research activities as provided by the supervisor are only for a duration specified in the letter of admission, or otherwise directly stated in email correspondence (save for your records), with additional years of funding not guaranteed and to be agreed upon with the supervisor (e.g., after thesis submission)

## **ADDITIONAL RESEARCH POLICIES**

### **Data**

- Although data collected for a master's thesis or dissertation research is typically considered the intellectual property of the student, data ownership must be agreed upon with the supervisor prior to data collection given potential sharing requirements due to external funding (e.g., that data be made public due to public funding)
- Data from research protocols (e.g., recruitment, analysis, online survey system) that were completed exclusively without financial support from the supervisor is not required to be shared except for verification of data integrity and analyses by the supervisor
- Data collected with financial support from the supervisor must be made available to the supervisor upon completion of data cleaning to enable possible re-analysis and dissemination upon graduation, unless alternate arrangements are agreed upon with the supervisor
- Students are strongly encouraged to utilize online data storage (e.g., survey administration) tools available only to themselves to ensure privacy of thesis data
- All publications must acknowledge relevant funding sources obtained by the student or supervisor (e.g., grants that funded initial data collection, fellowships, etc.)
- Data collected as part of research group activities is to be treated as highly confidential given its often sensitive nature, and not disseminated without written consent of the supervisor
- Individual participants in studies conducted for thesis or research group research may be contacted only for purposes outlined in the original ethical approval documents

### **Authorship**

- Although text included in an master's or doctoral thesis is protected by copyright, this does not always indicate that it is solely the intellectual property of the student; given that analyses are typically conducted collaboratively with the supervisor, and dissertation writing is often manuscript-based thus including text written by co-authors, the nuances of intellectual property with respect to thesis writing should be explicitly discussed with the supervisor to prevent misunderstandings when submitting thesis-based manuscripts for publication
- The supervisor reserves the right to submit findings for publication based on unpublished analyses reported in a student thesis -- when the research was supported by grant funds (e.g., participant payments) -- after one year following the student's graduation; in this case the student must be provided co-authorship (unless the student opts out), but not necessarily first-authorship, and must be informed of the manuscript submission by the supervisor
- Authorship on all conference submissions and manuscripts should be decided before the majority of the work in preparing this submission has been completed

- The process of assigning co-authorship should follow the ICJME guidelines (<http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>)
- First authorship on a conference poster or manuscript submission is determined based on the proportion of the manuscript writing completed by the individual (e.g., an entire first draft written independently) as well as the statistical analyses completed; completion of statistical analyses and data collection alone does not warrant first authorship
- Participation in data collection, or the initial design of study protocols or materials, does not necessarily warrant co-authorship; acknowledgements in a footnote may be more appropriate
- The supervisor must participate as a coauthor on all empirical conference papers and manuscript submissions completed by students based on data collected by the supervisor or supported by funding from the supervisor, unless otherwise indicated by the supervisor
- It is not required to include co-authors on a manuscript based on a student's comprehensive exam unless the supervisor was involved in extensive revisions or writing
- It is not required to include non-supervisor thesis committee members as coauthors on a publication arising from thesis research, unless otherwise decided by the student in consultation with the supervisor
- It is recommended to include other research group members, as warranted by their participation, on conference submissions to increase research participation and recognition (e.g., in recognition of assistance with literature reviews, analyses, writing, or presenting the conference paper)
- Co-authorship on conference submissions does not necessarily warrant co-authorship on the eventual manuscript submitted for publication; manuscript co-authorship requires a higher threshold of participation for consideration (e.g., substantial data collection assistance, assistance with analyses reported in final manuscript, manuscript writing)
- Students may be first author on manuscript projects in which they conducted the substantial majority of the writing and statistical analyses; this typically involves the student writing the entire first draft of the manuscript (e.g., introduction, methods, results, discussion)
- On all manuscript projects based on research group data, co-authorship will be determined by the first author -- in coordination with the supervisor -- to ensure adequate recognition for the participation of other individuals (e.g., international collaborators) or research group members (e.g., other RAs who assisted in data collection)
- Co-authorship on multi-study papers prepared by the supervisor, in which an individual student's thesis is included as a single or multiple studies, will be determined prior to manuscript preparation by the supervisor in consultation with all participating co-authors, and decided upon based on the relative contributions of those involved in each section
- Manuscript and conference submissions on which the supervisor is included as a coauthor (see above) must be approved by the supervisor prior to submission, with the final physical poster (or paper content) to be presented also approved by the supervisor

## **Signatures**

The student and supervisor indicated below agree to participate in an advisory relationship in accordance with the aforementioned guidelines.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_