GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS FOR ACADEMIC UNITS ON GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING AND SUPERVISION

The general guidelines suggested below are meant to encourage units to examine their graduate programs and to specify their own policies and procedures. These guidelines are directed primarily towards thesis programs but will, in part, be appropriate for non-thesis programs as well.

Each academic unit should have explicitly stated policies and procedures regarding the advising and supervising of graduate students, as well as established means for informing students of procedures and deadlines (e.g., orientation sessions, handbooks) and mechanisms for addressing complaints. Academic units should ensure that their policies and procedures are consistent with the Charter of Students' Rights. For their part, graduate students are responsible for informing themselves of these policies and procedures.

1. Assignment of Advisors, Supervisors and Committees

i.   Each unit should designate a member (or members) of the academic staff (usually the graduate program director) to monitor the progress of students throughout the graduate program, to ensure that all conditions of admission and requirements are fulfilled, to provide students with information on their program, their progress through it, sources of and policies on financial support, and to advise them how to resolve problems which may arise during their program.

ii.   As soon as possible, students should have a supervisor who has competence in the student's proposed area of research, and a program or thesis committee. Although procedures and timetables for choosing supervisors and committees may vary across programs, they should be consistent within a particular program and should be made clear to incoming students.

iii.   Thesis supervisors must be chosen from academic staff in tenure track positions. Faculty Lecturers and Research Assistants may not act as supervisors but in exceptional cases, may be co-supervisors. Emeritus Professors may co-supervise. Professors (Special Category) may supervise or co-supervise students. In the case of supervision, the academic unit in question must ensure continuity of appropriate supervision of their graduate students.

2. Program

i.   Early in their program, students should be informed of the phases through which they must pass towards the achievement of the graduate degree, the approximate amount of time each phase should take, the criteria for its successful completion, and any deadlines relating to these phases.

ii.   It is important that students are made aware of whatever courses are required to complete their programs, that these courses are available, and that they relate to students' proposed areas of research or to the development of related areas of scholarship.

iii.   Where relevant, students should also be informed early in their program of language requirements or comprehensive examinations. The guidelines, criteria and procedures for comprehensive examinations must be explicit and consistently applied in each program. Academic

units should consider the rationale for language and comprehensive examinations and how they relate to the objectives of the graduate program.

iv.   Every effort should be taken to ensure that students choose, as soon as possible, realistic and appropriate areas of research commensurate with degree requirements.

v.   There must be clear procedures established in every unit by which students receive guidance and constructive criticism on their progress on a regular basis through the program (e.g., regular meetings and/or email communication with supervisors and committees, attendance at research seminars, semester or annual reviews of student progress). In addition to regular meetings between the student and supervisor or advisory/thesis committee, each unit must establish a procedure to provide feedback to thesis students regarding their research progress. At least annually, there must be a meeting between the student, supervisor and advisory/thesis committee or, in the case where there is no such advisory/thesis committee, there must be a meeting between the supervisor and a departmental representative, at which objectives for the upcoming year are established and the prior year's research progress recorded and evaluated. A written record of such meetings must include the signature of the student, supervisor, and the advisory/thesis committee member or a departmental representative, and this record must be retained in the student's departmental file. (The Graduate Student Research Objectives Report Form, the Graduate Student Research Progress Record, and the Graduate Student Research Progress Report Form are to be utilized to keep a record of these meetings.) In the case where the student does not make expected progress, the advisory or thesis committee or, in the case where there is no such advisory or thesis committee, the student, supervisor and a departmental representative must meet at least once per semester for the subsequent twelve months to review progress and if appropriate to set new objectives. On the occasion of a second unsatisfactory progress report, the student may be required to withdraw from the program of study.

vi.   Students should be made aware of the cost of living in Montreal and of sources of financial support (e.g., teaching or research assistantships, fellowships) and of the facilities available to them (e.g., study space, computers).

vii.   Students should receive guidance and encouragement in areas relating to their growth in scholarship, professional development and career planning. Examples may include, where appropriate, reporting research, writing abstracts, preparing papers for conference presentation or for publication, writing grant and fellowship applications, conducting a job search, and preparing for job interviews.

viii.   Units should be sensitive to special academic needs and concerns that may arise in the case of certain students, such as international students or students who undertake graduate studies after a long absence from university.

3. Responsibilities

Each unit should clearly identify the student's supervisory needs at each phase and the means by which these needs will be met. Some functions will be fulfilled by the Chair, some by the graduate program director, some by the supervisor and some by the committee. Each unit should clearly identify the specific responsibilities of each of these, as well as the responsibilities of students themselves.

i.   Each unit should consider the availability of student support, research facilities, space and availability of potential supervisors in determining the number of students admitted into the program.

ii.   Some examples of the responsibilities of the graduate program director are to be knowledgeable about program requirements, the composition of committees, the procedures for comprehensive and oral defence examinations, and other policies relating to graduate studies; to maintain a dossier on each student's progress; and to be sensitive to graduation deadlines and students' career plans.

iii.   Some examples of the responsibilities of a supervisor are to uphold and transmit to students the highest professional standards of research and/or scholarship; to provide guidance in all phases of the student's research; to meet with their students regularly; to provide prompt feedback when work is submitted including drafts of the thesis; to clarify expectations regarding collaborative work, authorship, publication and conference presentations.

iv.   Some examples of the responsibilities of the students are to inform themselves of program requirements and deadlines; to work within these deadlines; to communicate regularly with the supervisor and committee; and to submit progress reports to the supervisor and committee.

v.   The Chair of the unit should ensure that procedures are in place to address serious disagreements that may arise, for example, between a student and a supervisor or between a supervisor and committee members. Such procedures should involve a neutral mediator who will ensure that all sides of a dispute are heard before any decision is made.

4. Quality of Supervision and Teaching

i.   Academic units and the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office should consider ways to assess and improve the quality of supervision and to help new supervisors, e.g., through workshops or mentoring models. Procedures for monitoring the quality of graduate student supervision and for providing constructive feedback for supervisors should be developed.

ii.   Graduate supervision should be recognized as an integral part of the academic responsibility of an academic unit and should be considered in the allocation of workload, as should the teaching of graduate courses.

iii.   Academic units should establish criteria of excellence in supervision and graduate teaching appropriate to their disciplines and should suitably reward those who meet these criteria, e.g., in decisions concerning tenure and promotion, or merit pay awards.

iv.   The maximum number of students under the direction of a single supervisor should be consistent with the ability of the supervisor to provide quality supervision, taking into account the workload of the supervisor and norms of the discipline.

v.   Procedures should be established for ensuring continuity in supervision which a student is separated from a supervisor - for example, when the supervisor takes a sabbatical leave, retires from McGill or changes universities or when the student leaves to complete field work or takes a job before submitting a thesis.

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH OBJECTIVES REPORT FORM

☐   This is an ANNUAL report.
☐   This is an INTERIM report (following an unsatisfactory progress report).

Name: _____   **Supervisor:** _____

Degree & Year: _____   **Dates of Applicable Time Period:**

Department: _____   **From:**_____ **To :**_____

Objectives and timelines for the applicable time period:

By signing below, all parties acknowledge that the objectives and timelines described above are acceptable. **Please note that failure to meet objectives on two successive progress reports may be cited as grounds for requiring that a student withdraw from the program of study.**

Supervisor: _____   Date: _____

Student: _____   Date: _____

Chair or Director of Graduate Studies (or delegate): _____   Date: _____
or advisory/thesis committee member(s)

☐   Student did not sign form and does not agree with the objectives (explanation attached)

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PROGRESS RECORD
To be completed by the student
Part I

☐   This is an ANNUAL record.
☐   This is an INTERIM record (following an unsatisfactory report).

Name: _____   **Supervisor:** _____

Degree & Year: _____   **Dates of Applicable Time Period:**

Department: _____   **From:** _____ **To :** _____

Progress towards research objectives, to be completed by student in reference to previously stated objectives (including publications and presentations)

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PROGRESS RECORD
Part II

Other Activities and Accomplishments (including funding, prizes and awards, committee service, research assistantships, teaching, and other, as appropriate)

Number of meetings with supervisor since the last progress report: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT FORM

To be completed by the supervisor and/or supervisory committee

☐   Indicate if this is an INTERIM report (following an unsatisfactory report)

Name: _____   Supervisor: _____

Degree & Year: _____   Dates of Applicable Time Period:

Department: _____   From: _____ To : _____

Evaluation of Research Progress							
	Comprehensives	Research Plan	Requisite Knowledge	Research Skills	Motivation	Research Accomplishments	Other
Meets Objectives							
Fails to Meet Objectives							
NA							

Explanation of above ratings

By signing below, all parties acknowledge that the evaluation and progress described above are acceptable. **Please note that failure to meet objectives on two successive progress reports may be cited as grounds for requiring that a student withdraw from the program of study.**

Overall research proposal: satisfactory_____;   NOT satisfactory_____;

Supervisor: _____   Date: _____

Student: _____   Date: _____

Chair or Director of Graduate Studies (or delegate): _____ Date: _____
or advisory/ thesis committee member(s)

☐   Student did not sign form and does not agree with evaluation (explanation attached)