

Principles for Transparency Agreement

for Thesis-based MSc and PhD Graduate Students and Supervisors

ELEFANT

Environment | Limits | Employment | Funding | Academics | Non-Academics | Thesis



STUDENT INFORMATION

STUDENT NAME: _____
STUDENT PHONE#: _____
PROGRAM START DATE: (yyyy/mm/dd): _____
ESTIMATED DATE OF COMPLETION: (yyyy/mm/dd): _____
MAXIMUM FUNDING DATE (As stated in the Terms of Appointment (yyyy/mm/dd)): _____

This document was adapted from the [School of Graduate Studies Supervision Guidelines for Students – Section 10: Appendix 2 – Checklist for Students](#) and [School of Graduate Studies Supervision Guidelines for Students – Section 10: Appendix 2 – Checklist for Supervisors](#) and envisioned by the graduate students in the Department of Pharmacology & Toxicology. This document was created to establish transparent expectations, facilitate the communication of goals and challenges, and assist in fostering positive and effective student-supervisor relationships.

ENVIRONMENT

Availability of space and resources:

The Student's desk will be located in/at _____.

Student's bench (if applicable) will be located in/at _____.

Bench space is single shared.

A working computer and necessary software will be provided by _____.

Necessary training (if applicable) required includes _____.

Training will be provided by _____.

Additional comments: _____

Frequency and style of meetings:

1-on-1 meetings will be held on a regular basis. Such meetings should have an allocated schedule (discussed upon the program start) or could be requested by either the Supervisor or Student beyond the schedule. The meetings will take place within working hours and can be requested at least one day in advance (in case of urgency of upcoming deadline or other circumstances).

Select one: We will meet weekly biweekly monthly

Additional comments: _____

Supervisory committee meetings:

The committee should be established within 6 months of the program start date by the Supervisor and Student. They should be composed of professors with expertise required for the successful academic progress of the Student and present no conflict of interest. Potential committee members could include (this is not a finalized nor exhaustive list): _____

Additional comments: _____

Methods of informal communication:

The Supervisor should familiarize the student with the lab culture and environment, and provide guidance on how to work effectively as a member of a team. The Supervisor can establish or provide access to semi-formal routes of communication with the team (e.g., Slack, centralized database of team phone numbers). The main method(s) of communication in the lab will be _____.

Messages by Supervisor and Student should be responded to within (work hours):

6 hours 12 hours 24 hours 2 days 1 week

Additional comments: _____

Integrity in Thesis Research:

Data Integrity: The University, funding agencies and academic journals have a zero-tolerance policy for data fabrication, manipulation or misrepresentation (including image manipulation, selected omission of data points etc.). All primary data generated by the Student should be made accessible to the Supervisor prior to submission of manuscripts and the thesis. **Prior to commencing research, the Student and Supervisor should establish a process to record and store primary data** (physical lab notebooks or data storage servers online). It is the responsibility of the student to perform accurate and up-to-date record keeping and storage of collected data. It is customary for data to be stored for a minimum period of 5 years following completion of any project (mandated by many scientific journals).

Lab notebooks serve as official scientific documents to record scientific observations, methodology, and to document new ideas or inventions. **The lab notebook is the property of the lab/University**, and not a personal document that can be removed from the lab or taken home. Each lab notebook should detail fully and concisely all the procedures/protocols (these can be included or referenced), observations, and data acquired by each Student. Sufficient detail should be included so that a trainee in the future can understand what you've done and replicate key experiments. **Lab notebooks can serve as legal documents** in court to support priority of an invention. In this case, the notebook should be stamped, dated, and signed by a witness (notary) on the day of the invention for official purposes.

Reagents and Samples: Students should ensure that reagents and experimental samples are handled properly and stored in an organized manner so that other lab members and the Supervisor can locate and track their use. **Reagents and samples are the property of the lab/University** and are not to be removed or distributed to other individuals without the permission of the Supervisor.

Plagiarism is the misrepresentation of someone else's ideas or statements as your own. This includes not only copying text or ideas from another source verbatim, but also the use of graphics or other digital media in your works without a proper license or permission from the author/creator. More information on plagiarism can be found here: <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/>

LIMITS - SIGNATURES FROM BOTH PARTIES REQUIRED

Safety:

All UofT staff, students, and employees have an obligation to create a positive learning environment free from [discrimination](#) and [harassment](#) (comments on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, family status, disability, receipt of public assistance, or record of offences).

You are entitled to stop work immediately if you feel unsafe, regardless of the Supervisor's direction. Examples of unsafe work environments can include handling dangerous reagents without training, extended hours with little sleep, working with an injury, or working with damaged equipment.

Student signature: _____ **Supervisor signature:** _____

Co-Supervisor (if applicable): _____

Expected hours of work:

The maximum number of hours workers and employees can be required to work in Ontario is 8 hours per day and 48 hours per week unless otherwise specified. The expected range of work hours in the lab will be _____

Length of degree:

The expected length of my MSc/PhD is _____.

The historical average length of an MSc/PhD in my lab is _____(range).

The historical average in the program is _____(range)

Holidays:

When it is necessary to work during weekends, holidays, or university closures, alternate time-off will be provided as chosen and agreed upon by the Student and Supervisor.

From [Faculty of Medicine Guidelines on Graduate Student Personal Time-Off](#):

As a general rule, students might reasonably expect up to three weeks (15 working days) per year in personal time off, plus statutory holidays.

Sick leaves:

The University promotes health-related time-off to be included in any thesis-based program. Students can prioritize their own health and the health of those around them. *To learn more*, please visit [Leave of Absence Policy](#) and the [Leave of Absence Stipendiary Fund](#). If you need help navigating disability-related barriers to your academic success at U of T for your on-going or temporary disability, you can register with [Accessibility Services](#).

EMPLOYMENT

There are many beneficial steps the Student can take during their degree to explore their career options to better prepare them for their next steps leading up to and after graduation. An [Individual Development Plan \(IDP\)](#) monitored yearly with the Supervisor can help Students reach the Student's goals. [myIDP](#) can be an excellent resource to discover and explore career paths. Keep in mind that the Student's development plan is not a fixed action plan, but rather is an avenue for the Student to assess where they are and where they wish to go in your graduate career and beyond. Below, the Student can begin/continue their career development journey by describing 3 career paths they would like to pursue following their graduate program and describing the skills they can begin/continue developing this year.

Career path(s)	Skills and experience required	Potential contacts in network	Goal(s) for the year
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Additional comments:

FUNDING

The GEMS agreement must be completed to ensure the Student receives the **total base funding** as outlined in the [Faculty of Medicine Harmonized Base Funding Agreement](#). In 2025-2026, the Student is guaranteed the following:

	Domestic			International	
	MSc (Pre-Fall 2025 starts)	MSc (Fall 2025 starts)	PhD	MSc	PhD
Living Allowance	29,819.88	29,819.88	32,910.48	29,819.88	32,910.48
Tuition & Fees	9,438.48	9,608.48	8,448.48	34,108.48	8,448.48
UHIP	n/a	n/a	n/a	792.00	792.00
TOTAL	39,258.36	39,428.36	41,358.96	64,720.36	42,150.96

Applying for scholarships and awards:

The Student is responsible for completing the award application in time and consulting with the Supervisor to complete the scholarship. Top-up practices for the different award amount levels are as follows:

Cumulative award(s) amount(s)	Top-up
\$0 to \$2,000	There will be no top-up but the student gets to keep the full award(s), up to a combined maximum of \$2,000. The amount of the award will not be deducted from the base funding.
\$2,001 to \$9,999	Award goes towards the base funding and the student receives a \$2,000 top-up over their base funding.
\$10,000 to \$15,000	Award goes towards the base funding and the student receives a \$3,000 top-up over their base funding.
\$15,001 to \$39,000	Award goes towards the base funding and the student receives a \$4,000 top-up over their base funding.
Between \$40,000 and \$45,000	Award goes towards the base funding and the student receives a \$5,000 top-up over their base funding. The maximum total a student can receive from all sources (cumulative awards and top-up) can be no more than \$50,000.
\$45,001 and \$50,000	No top up, but students can hold the award(s) up to \$50,000

Teaching assistantships:

The rate of pay for CUPE3902-unit 1 is **\$52.97/hour** for 2025 and **\$53.92/hour** for 2026. These are extra funds that do not affect the student’s base stipend agreement. In order to be eligible for the [CUPE 3902 Health Benefits Top Up Plan](#), the Student **MUST** be a member of CUPE 3902 Unit 1 (this happens automatically as a TA) and have been employed for **15 hours of work** during the plan year (September 1st to August 31st). The Student cannot have opted-out of the UTGSU Health and Dental Plan. The Supervisor must be aware of TA hours, as many TA hours occur during work hours.

Select one of the following:

I plan to TA 0 hrs <30 hrs <60 hrs <100 hrs over 100 hrs during this academic year

ACADEMICS

Required courses:

All students are required to take PCL3000H & PCL3001H in the first year of their graduate program in the Department of Pharmacology & Toxicology. MSc students are required to complete an additional 0.25 Full-Course Equivalent elective. PhD students are required to attend 50 hours of seminars (PCL1003Y), complete PCL3002H and an additional 1.25 graduate Full-Course Equivalent courses.

Additional courses and interdepartmental programs:

PhD students must further develop their skills by taking any additional course related to their studies (as permitted by Supervisor and the Graduate Coordinator). Subject areas that interest the Student include:

NON-ACADEMICS

Extracurricular professional development courses and networking opportunities:

The supervisor can help greatly in network-building for the Student by introducing them to other colleagues on different career levels both in and out of academia (e.g., industry, public sector). In addition, students are encouraged to build their own network beyond the lab and focus on their well-rounded development by:

- Attending career development sessions and career-oriented informational interviews
- Participating in hobby or interest groups
- Participating in student associations and committees
- Maintaining their social life outside of the lab

THESIS

Timelines and major milestones, including anticipated program completion time, should be continually discussed. In addition, intellectual property (IP) issues (e.g. ownership of data, authorship on publications, conference presentations, industry involvement, thesis publication embargoes, patents, etc.) should be discussed. Lastly, transfer exam requirements and Ethics review of research (if applicable) should be clearly communicated.

My thesis title is/My research interests are:

Goals for the thesis include:

A specific plan was discussed: Yes No

Extra Comments:

DECLARATION

I have read the entire document and I am aware of my role and expectations.

STUDENT

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

SUPERVISOR

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

CO-SUPERVISOR (if applicable)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____