



MA Students' Handbook

2025-2026

Department of Political Studies

Updated January 20, 2025

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. THE M.A. PROGRAM	2
3. COURSE SELECTION AND GRADING.....	2
4. THE MASTER'S RESEARCH PROJECT	4
5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT.....	6
6. FACILITIES.....	8
7. RESEARCH CENTRES	8
8. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	9
9. ADVISING AND OTHER RESOURCES.....	11
APPENDIX I: MA TIMELINE.....	12

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Doctoral program of the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University! The department's faculty and staff are committed to ensuring that your time as a graduate student at Queen's will be both challenging and rewarding. Our faculty are thrilled that you chose our department and look forward to working with you. This Handbook aims to provide a comprehensive guide to the MA Program offered by the department.

The Handbook is intended to supplement the general regulations of the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (SGSPA), which may be found in the [SGSPA Calendar](#).

We are here to assist you. Please reach out to Dr. Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant, Graduate Chair, for any questions about academics and funding (gradchair.pols@queensu.ca), and to Mikhaila Graf, Graduate Coordinator for everything else (gradpols@queensu.ca). My door, virtual or otherwise, is also always open (polshead@queensu.ca).

Once again, welcome to Political Studies at Queen's.

Jonathan Rose

OFFICERS OF THE DEPARTMENT:

Department Head:	Jonathan Rose
Departmental Manager:	Barbra Lalonde
Graduate Chair:	Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant
Graduate Coordinator:	Mikhaila Graf
Undergraduate Chair:	Rachel Laforest
Undergraduate Assistant:	Samantha Martin

Graduate Field Convenors:

Canadian Politics:	Elizabeth Baisley
Comparative Politics:	Boyoon Lee
International Relations:	Andrew Grant (fall 2025), Wayne Cox (winter, spring 2026)
Political Theory:	Colin Farrelly
Gender and Politics:	Margaret Little

Unit Research Ethics Board, Chair:	TBD
------------------------------------	-----

2. THE MA PROGRAM

We offer a twelve-month MA in Political Studies. We also offer an MA in Political and Legal Thought (PLT) in collaboration with the Department of Philosophy and the Faculty of Law. Requirements of our programs are outlined below.

MA Degree

The MA program in Political Studies at Queen's requires the completion of six three-unit courses and a Master's Research Project (MRP).

MA Concentration in Nationalism, Ethnicity, Peace, and Conflict (NEPC)

The concentration in Nationalism, Ethnicity, Peace, and Conflict allows students to specialize in this area by taking designated courses from the Political Studies offerings. This program builds on the department's recognized research and teaching strengths.

Students in the NEPC concentration take three of their six courses from a list of designated courses offered in Political Studies. NEPC students also complete an MRP on a topic relevant to the specialization.

MA Collaborative Program in Political and Legal Thought

The Collaborative Master's Program in Political and Legal Thought (PLT) builds on the strengths and expertise of the faculty members of the contributing academic units (the Department of Political Studies, the Department of Philosophy, and the Faculty of Law).

Students develop skills and knowledge in the analysis of basic normative concepts such as justice, equality, liberty, authority and legitimacy; the elaboration of these concepts in philosophies such as liberalism, libertarianism, Marxism and feminism; the historical development of these ideas in the relevant intellectual traditions; and the application of concepts and theories to current problems of law and policy such as trade, immigration, and religious accommodation.

For students in the PLT Program, four of their six courses must be from a list of designated PLT courses offered in Political Studies, Philosophy, and Law. PLT students also complete an MRP under the supervision of a member of one of the three units on a topic relevant to the specialization.

3. COURSE SELECTION AND GRADING

Course Selection

Students normally take three courses during the Fall term and three courses during the Winter term. Each incoming student will meet briefly with the Graduate Chair during the first couple of weeks of September to discuss course selection and any other matters relevant to the student's orientation to the program, department, and university. Students may take up to two courses outside the department, subject to approval by the Graduate Chair and with permission of the course instructor.

Check individual departments' websites for availability of courses. Some departments you may consider are: [School of Policy Studies](#), [Law](#), [Philosophy](#), [Global Development Studies](#), [Gender Studies](#), [Geography](#), and [History](#).

Graduate students cannot register themselves in their courses through the student system (SOLUS); all course requests must go through the POLS Graduate Coordinator. Registration in courses from other departments may require an academic change request through the online system. For more information, please contact the Graduate Coordinator, Mikhaila Graf.

The non-credit Course of Research Ethics (CORE) is mandatory for all graduate students who will engage in research involving human subjects. It is a web-based tutorial providing familiarity with and practical application of Canada's national standard of ethics for research (as outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2). For more information and to access the course please check [here](#).

Course Marks

Final course marks are given in letter grades. Where instructors enter percentage grades:

F : < 70 %
B- : 70-72 %
B : 73-76 %
B+ : 77-79 %
A- : 80-84 %
A : 85-89 %
A+ : 90+ %

Minimum Performance

To proceed to the MRP, students must pass (i.e. obtain a B- or above) each of their six courses. Students who fail to meet this requirement may be required to withdraw from the program. Students who fail one course may be allowed, if the School of Graduate Studies agrees, to substitute another course for the failed course. Students who fail two courses must withdraw from the program.

Late Assignments and "Incomplete" Grade (IN)

The department expects all students to submit assignments by the declared deadline. Without prior agreement, instructors are not required to accept late papers and will submit a grade at the end of term based on work received. If unforeseen circumstances prevent submission of work, students should notify their instructor immediately and request academic consideration for extenuating circumstances. Normally, such arrangements will be worked out on a case-by-case basis with the instructor, following the [guidelines established by SGSPA](#). If consideration is granted, the student will be assigned an IN (for incomplete) in the course(s).

When an IN is assigned in a course, missing work must be submitted no later than 15 May for Fall Term courses, or 15 August for Winter Term courses. If the missing work has not been submitted by these deadlines, a partial mark will become the final mark. University regulations are that a grade of IN will automatically lapse to an F (Fail) at the end of the term following the term in which the course was taken, if no change of grade has been submitted by then. The period for which an IN may remain on the record can sometimes be extended, in exceptional cases and with the agreement of SGSPA.

Appeals of Grades

If a student wishes to appeal a grade on an assessment in a graduate course, there is a process to follow. Department-level appeals can be made on individual course assessments, but not on final course grades because students have options for informal and formal appeals on individual assessments which together comprise the course grade.

If a student wishes to appeal a grade on an assessment in a graduate course, there is a process to follow. Department-level appeals can be made on individual course assessments, but not on final course grades because students have options for informal and formal appeals on individual assessments which together comprise the course grade.

Appealing a grade on an assessment in a graduate course must follow this procedure:

1. The student will submit a Letter of Appeal to the Instructor outlining the substantive reasons for the appeal, grounded in reasons related to the quality of the work. The Letter of Appeal to the instructor must be submitted within 14 calendar days of the date the grade was made available to the student.

Appeals after 14 days will not be permitted. *Note: missing the deadline for an instructor-level review is not valid grounds to proceed to higher levels of appeal.*

2. The instructor will review the work in question. The instructor must provide a written decision to the student within 14 calendar days of receiving the student's Letter of Appeal. An instructor may decide to increase the grade, decrease the grade, or leave the grade unchanged. Once appeal is initiated, the original grade is negated, and any new grade can be assigned.
3. If a student wishes to appeal the instructor's decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Graduate Chair, which is the second level of appeal, stating the grounds on which the grade should be changed and these grounds must be related to the substance and quality of the work that was assessed or some procedural issue with the first-level appeal to the instructor. Appeal to the Grad Chair must be done within 7 calendar days of receiving the instructor's decision. After 7 days, appeal to the Graduate Chair will not be possible.
4. The Graduate Chair will initiate a review of the grade. The review process at this stage is as follows: the assignment will be assessed by two faculty members in the field, one of whom is the original instructor. These two grades plus any comments or supporting materials then go to the Head of department or Graduate Chair, who decides what the final grade will be. This grade could be higher, lower, or the same as the original grade. The Graduate Chair or Head will inform all parties of the result of the review in writing.
5. The third level of appeal is the SGSPA, following the policies on ["Appeal of an Assigned Grade in a Graduate Course"](#) (for passing grades in a course) or ["Appeal Against an Academic Decision"](#) (for failing grades in a graduate course). At this level, students are allowed to appeal final course grades and would be given all documentation and communications around any appeals of assignments in the course. These would be provided to the SGSPA by the course instructor and Graduate Chair. In the case of passing course grades, appeals can be made only on the basis of a specific procedural error(s) made in the grade review procedures of the department. Such an appeal would be lodged with the Academic Appeal Board of SGSPA as outlined in the Graduate Calendar.

Please note that it is not possible to appeal grades for presentations, oral exams, group work, class participation, or grades assigned by peer review. Practically speaking, such assessments cannot be objectively reviewed after the fact by a third party.

Please note these procedures described above do not apply when a failing grade (F) has been received on courses numbered 899 (Master's Thesis) or 999 (Doctoral Thesis). To appeal a failing grade (F) of a graduate thesis, the student must follow the Appeal of Thesis Examination Committee Decision, set out in the Regulation titled ["Appeals Against Academic Decisions"](#).

4. THE MASTER'S RESEARCH PROJECT

Students complete a Master's Research Project (MRP) by the end of the summer term. MRPs are typically due at the end of the first week of August.

The MRP is ideally based on a term paper written for a course, though it may also be written on a topic not covered by a term paper, providing the department has faculty expertise to supervise the project. The MRP topic should be identified and agreement reached with a supervisor by mid-March. The Head then formally appoints the supervisor.

It is the student's responsibility to seek and secure the agreement of a supervisor. There are various ways a student can go about doing this and the timing can vary as well. On timing, sooner is better than later. The deadline tends to be mid-March, but many students will have secured a supervisor before this, perhaps even in the fall semester. If there is a supervisor you have your heart set on working with, ask

them very early, because each faculty member has limited capacity to take on supervisions. In order to find a supervisor, you can email faculty you have interest in working with to ask about their capacity for new supervisions and topics they can supervise; sometimes, students end up wanting to have one of their course instructors as MRP supervisor, so this can be another route; and you can also ask the Grad Chair or field convenor for recommendations on potential supervisors.

The MRP should be 8,000-10,000 words (approx. 30-40 pages, double-spaced), including footnotes and bibliography. In exceptional circumstances, the MRP can be up to 12,000 words (approx. 50 pages) to accommodate topics that require an extensive historical element, for example, or where the supervisor judges a longer MRP is necessary for the research questions / topic.

While a table of contents should be included, it is not necessary to include an abstract, vita, or acknowledgements. The style rules followed for a regular term paper also apply to the MRP. When it is ready to be graded, one electronic version of the project should be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator. Binding is not required for MRPs.

In accordance with the [SGSPA regulations \(under “Research”\)](#), “the research must be of high scholarly standard” and the project “should demonstrate that the candidate is capable of original and independent work”. This demonstration can take different forms in different fields. A project using primary sources clearly satisfies this requirement. One based on secondary sources only may do so if an original argument or approach is developed. A project that simply reviews and systematizes existing literature will not satisfy requirements. The project should, however, include a literature review in one of the preliminary chapters. Students should bear these requirements in mind when planning their term papers, since in some graduate courses the purpose of the papers is to review the literature in the field. At the same time, students should be careful to make their projects of manageable scope, choosing a suitably limited research question.

The MRP is marked by two readers: the Supervisor and another member of faculty who has general knowledge of the subject. The Graduate Coordinator confirms the second reader once the project has been submitted. Each reader arrives at a mark independently and submits it to the Graduate Coordinator. If there is a discrepancy of 5 marks or less, the average of the two marks constitutes the final grade. If the discrepancy is greater than 5 marks, the readers communicate to attempt to reach an agreed final grade; if they cannot agree, the Head will appoint a third reader to decide on the final grade within the range of the two readers’ marks.

Because the final grade must be submitted to the School of Graduate Studies no later than the end of the calendar month following that in which the project was submitted, the Graduate Coordinator may in exceptional circumstances appoint another reader to take the place of a supervisor who is on leave, vacation, or authorized absence in order to ensure compliance with this deadline.

Ethics Approval

If an MRP involves living human participants, a submission to the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) is required. Students can always consult with their faculty supervisor and / or the Chair of the Unit Research Ethics Board (UREB) for assistance. Ethics guidelines and the forms for the submission are available [here](#). All student projects go through two layers of ethics review: first at the department level Unit Research Ethics Board (UREB), which will typically have a round or two of revisions before forwarding the application to the university-level GREB for review. GREB has its own process. The whole process from UREB to GREB, start to finish typically takes several months (perhaps 3-4 months), but can be longer in busy periods. Students should plan accordingly and ensure they allot sufficient time for ethics clearance.

Students who will be engaged in research involving human subjects must take the web-based course of [Research Ethics \(CORE\)](#). This is a requirement by GREB/UREB as part of grad students’ ethics applications.

Field Work Safety

Research involving field work will require a Field Research Safety Planning Record. Students should not embark on fieldwork without first acquainting themselves with the Off-Campus Activity Safety Policy (OCASP) and completing the necessary forms. Guidelines and forms are available [here](#).

The Role of the MRP Supervisor

The Supervisor oversees the preparation of the MRP, providing guidance on the scope and content of the project, as well as monitoring the student's progress. The timeframe for completing various tasks should be a frequent topic of conversation between Supervisor and student. Although the student has the right to decide when the project is ready for submission, normally the Supervisor will play a major role in this decision; students should expect the work to go through several revisions. The turnaround for drafts of the MRP submitted to the Supervisor will be based on a timeline agreed upon between the student and Supervisor. Student and Supervisor should agree on a realistic timeframe for submitting and commenting on drafts so that the early-August deadline for submission can be achieved. While supervisors are committed to facilitating student progress, responsibility for meeting deadlines rests with the student.

For more information on the respective roles and responsibilities of supervisors, supervisory committees, students, graduate chairs/coordinators and departments please refer to the 'Guide to Graduate Supervision' on the School of Graduate Studies website: <https://www.queensu.ca/grad-postdoc/grad-studies/supervision/overview> .

Appealing MRP Grade

A student who wishes to appeal a grade on an MRP must advise the Graduate Chair (or the Head, in the event the Graduate Chair is one of the markers) within two weeks of receiving the grade. The appealing student must provide a written explanation for why the reassessment is justified. A meeting will then be convened for the student to discuss the grade with the two markers. The Graduate Chair will attend this meeting (or an alternate, in the event the Graduate Chair is one of the markers).

After the meeting, each marker will reassess the MRP and decide, within one week, the appropriate grade. The normal process for resolving disagreements between two markers remains in place. The grade awarded at this stage is final (subject to appeal by the SGS appeal process; see <https://www.queensu.ca/academic-calendar/graduate-studies/> under "Appeals Against Academic Decisions."

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Funding Packages

Offers of admission to the Master's program in Political Studies at Queen's University may include a guaranteed minimum level of financial support which comes from a variety of different sources, including Teaching Assistantships, GRFs, Research Assistantships, Queen's Graduate Awards or Fellowships, and/or external scholarships or awards.

Receipt of an internal or external award will be considered part of your funding package, [per SGSPA policy](#), which can often result in an adjustment of funding sources. In some cases, the increase in funds from an internal or external award will mean funding from other sources is reduced, per the SGSPA's policy. For example, if a student wins a SSHRC award and already has a McLaughlin award (an internal award), the latter will be reallocated to another student, per SGSPA rules. Another example is that students cannot hold both an OGS and SSHRC awards.

In all instances, however, the student's total funding package, if one has been offered at admissions, will be at least as high as their guaranteed minimum in their funding letter.

SGSPA rules and practices that prohibit or discourage the "stacking" of some awards is a common practice across universities. This is consistent with principles of equity in resource distribution and helps

avoid or diminish situations in which a small handful of students take up a very large portion of available funding. See the SGSPA website under [Funding Packages](#) for more details.

Any funding guarantee applies only as long as the Master's student is registered full-time, active, and making satisfactory progress in their program. In accordance with the regulations of the School of Graduate Studies, any Master's students with funding may be required to make themselves available for Queen's employment as specified in their offer of admission (normally a TAsip or RAsip). Please note that if a student declines an offer of employment from the University or any other component of a funding package, the student forfeits that component of their funding package for that year and their funding will be adjusted accordingly.

Students should take care to budget their finances to last twelve months. This is especially important in relation to stipends for teaching assistantships, which are paid in equal monthly installments for the duration of the TAsip. The department does not have the funds to assist students who encounter financial emergencies during the summer months.

Teaching Assistantships

Offers of financial support typically include TAsips. A semester-long TAsip is typically 120 hours. TAsips involve duties such as running tutorials, advising undergrads on their assignments and exam prep, and grading. TA training is paid as well.

Teaching assistants are typically assigned to courses in August for the academic year, in accordance with the posting provisions of the PSAC 901 Collective Agreement. The department's instructional needs are the primary determinant of assignments and are usually based on enrolments in first- and second-year undergraduate courses as well as the prospective TA's ability to assist in different courses.

In its decisions on hiring teaching assistants, the department adheres to the Collective Agreement (CA) between the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) on behalf of graduate teaching assistants and teaching fellows and Queen's University, which can be found on the [Human Resources website](#). Please ensure you become familiar with all aspects of your Collective Agreement.

If a student opts for TA or RA employment opportunities above and beyond of what's listed in their funding letter, the income from that additional opportunity would be on top of what's listed in funding letter and not result in "clawback" of funds from other sources. Eg, a student has an opportunity for a 3rd TAsip, and the funding package they were offered outlined two TAsips as part of the funding. In this case, the additional TA pay would not result in a "clawback" of funds from other sources such as QGA.

External Components of Financial Support

University and Departmental regulations encourage all students thinking of going on to graduate studies (master's and doctoral levels) to apply for external funding, particularly Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS). The deadlines for these two usually fall in October/November; information and assistance are provided by the department, but students are responsible for meeting the deadlines.

International Master's students are not eligible for SSHRC funding. However, international students are eligible for a separately established OGS competition which takes place in May/June of each year. Visa students are also urged to approach their home governments, Canadian non-governmental organizations, and international organizations and foundations.

Students should consult the awards section of the Calendar of the School of Graduate Studies: <https://www.queensu.ca/academic-calendar/graduate-studies/awards-financial-assistance/>.

Travel Awards

Full-time graduate students are eligible to apply for the student conference travel award of each academic year (September 1 to August 31). Awards may be used to provide partial support for travel, accommodation, meal, and registration fees associated with a recognized conference at which the

student is presenting an authored or co-authored paper or poster. The student must be registered full time and within their funding eligible years (MA year 1) in a graduate degree program at the time of the conference to qualify. The [application form is available](#) on our forms webpage and must be submitted and approved prior to the conference..

Limit on Employment

Students should consult with their supervisor and the Graduate Chair before accepting any employment that will or might bring their hours of paid employment, including any teaching or research assistantship, to a total greater than ten per week (averaging the hours worked over an academic year). Moreover, SGSPA policy states that “under no circumstances will a student be permitted to register as a full-time student while maintaining full-time employment (more than 30 hours a week) elsewhere.” If employment is deemed incompatible with full-time study, the student must apply for part-time status. For more information about employment while a full-time student, please see the SGSPA calendar under [“Study Status/Full-Time”](#).

6. FACILITIES

Student Space

The department provides office space for graduate students. Assigned office space will typically be shared with other graduate students, depending on availability of space. Offices are intended primarily for work and study; the department has a lounge for faculty and graduate students to use for socializing.

Mailboxes

Each graduate student on campus has a mailbox in the General Office.

7. RESEARCH CENTRES

The department is affiliated with a number of research centres, which focus on some of our main strengths. These centres bring in guest speakers, hold seminars, and more broadly, provide an opportunity for established scholars and students to engage in intellectual activity around shared interests. Sometimes, additional Research Assistantship opportunities become available through the centres.

The Centre for International and Defence Policy ([CIDP](#))

The CIDP was established in 1975 as an interdisciplinary research centre within the School of Policy Studies. The Centre's research interests focus on defence policy, homeland security policy, and Canada's international policy. The Centre offers no courses but welcomes the active involvement of graduate students who have complementary research interests.

The Centre for the Study of Democracy and Diversity ([CSDD](#))

The CSDD is an interdisciplinary Centre aimed at advancing research and teaching about democracy and diversity, broadly conceived, including diversity of philosophy, religion, race, gender, ethnicity and nationality.

The Institute of Intergovernmental Relations ([IIGR](#))

This IIGR was established to provide a centre for research into the problems of intergovernmental relations in Canada and elsewhere. The Institute does not offer courses or grant degrees but is pleased to support the work of graduate students with an interest in federalism.

Canadian Opinion Research Archive ([CORA](#))

CORA makes available commercial and independent surveys to the academic, research and journalistic communities. Founded in 1992, CORA contains hundreds of surveys including thousands of discrete items collected by major commercial Canadian firms dating back to the 1970s. The CORA website includes readily accessible results from these surveys, tracking Canadian opinion over time on frequently asked survey questions, as well as tabular results from recent Canadian surveys, and more general information on polling. Individuals conducting research for non-commercial purposes can obtain access to the CORA electronic holdings and conduct searches of the database. Researchers can conduct the full range of bivariate and multivariate analysis on data through the Odesi interface.

8. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Student Code of Conduct

Graduate students are subject to the [Student Code of Conduct](#). The Preamble to the Code states that

“students are expected to adhere to and promote the University’s core values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and personal responsibility in all aspects of University life, academic and non-academic. It is these core values that are intended to inform and guide Student conduct as they foster mutual respect for the dignity, property, rights and well-being of others” (sec. i).

The Code is a behavioural contract (sec. ii). By registering at Queen's, students accept the right of the university to set standards of conduct, and to impose sanctions for conduct found to have violated those standards. The Code sets out these standards and procedures. The Code applies to non-academic misconduct both on university property and off university property, where students are taking place in sanctioned events, or students' conduct has a substantial connection to legitimate interests of the university, or a student represents, or would reasonably be perceived as representing, the university. The Code also applies to communication via electronic media, where there is a clear connection to the university community.

Sexual Violence and Harassment

Queen's is committed to protecting its members against sexual violence, and all forms of harassment, both as a matter of principle and as an element of academic freedom. Such protection is also a legal duty under Ontario and Federal law.

Queen's has a [Policy on Sexual Violence](#), which defines consent and lays out procedures for handling complaints under the Student Code of Conduct.

According to Queen's Senate [Harassment/Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure](#):

“Queen's University recognizes that all members of the University Community have the right to be free from harassment and discrimination. This includes sexual harassment, harassment based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, creed and sexual orientation or analogous grounds. Such harassment and discrimination has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's or a group's work or academic performance, or of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working, living or academic environment.”

Sexual harassment involves the attempt by one person to assert power over another by "engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct of a sexual nature that is known or ought to be known to be unwelcome" ([Ontario Human Rights Code](#)). Sexual harassment can include but is not limited to:

- asking for sex in exchange for improving a test score
- repeatedly asking for dates and not taking "no" for an answer
- making comments about a person's physical attractiveness
- sharing pornography or sexual pictures (including online)

Human Rights and the Human Rights Office

As Teaching Assistants, or Research Assistants, many graduate students will also be employees of the university. As such, they are covered by [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), as well as the province's Occupational Health and Safety Act, and the university's (interim) [Workplace Harassment & Discrimination Policy](#).

The Queen's [Human Rights Office](#) offers a confidential service that assists individuals or groups at Queen's who wish to pursue informal or formal routes of complaint resolution following an incident of sexual violence, harassment or discrimination. If you have questions or would like to discuss a concern about violence, harassment, or discrimination, you can contact the Queens' Human Rights Office (613-533-6886; hrights@queensu.ca).

The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Service (SVPRS)

[SVPRS](#) provides confidential, trauma informed and non-judgmental support for any student who has experienced sexual violence or intimate partner violence (IPV) at any time in their life.

Sexual Violence means any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality, gender identity or gender expression, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person's consent, and includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism, and sexual exploitation.

Students do not need to file a complaint with either the University or with the police in order to access services.

The Student-Instructor Relationship

These guidelines and policies apply to course instructors and TAs, who are part of a course's instructional team. The university vests considerable power in instructors, who have a professional responsibility to act in the best pedagogical interest of their students. When instructors become involved in intimate relationships with their students, it creates risks of favouritism and bias, both actual and perceived, and can undermine the trust upon which the student-instructor relationship depends. Sexual and romantic relationships between instructors and students are generally incompatible with educators' professional responsibilities. For this reason, the department strongly discourages intimate friendships as well as romantic or sexual relationships between instructors and students, which includes TAs and students.

Intimate relationships between instructors/TAs and students over whom the instructor/TA exercises pedagogical, supervisory, financial, or administrative authority constitute a conflict of interest and should be avoided. Where they occur, such relationships should be disclosed to Head of Department.

Professional Standards

It is an instructor's/TA's responsibility to maintain professional standards in their relationships with students.

It is always inappropriate to:

- comment on a student or colleague's physical appearance or attractiveness
- use language, gestures, humour or innuendo which could be interpreted to suggest that bias, discrimination, preferential treatment, sexual practices, or other non-academic criteria will be used in evaluating academic work

- use humour which, regardless of intent, could be interpreted to be offensive; issues such as ethnic or religious practices, sexual activities or preferences, or academic bias should not be subject to jest or sarcasm
- act in an unprofessional manner, including any of the above, at events organized by and/or for members of the department; this includes social events on or off campus.

It is advisable to:

- maintain a high level of professionalism and set a positive example of inclusive, respectful conduct at all times, especially at university or departmental events
- remember that in addition to high-quality research and teaching, there is an expectation of collegiality; the latter demands professionalism, a cooperative and inclusive attitude, as well as fairness and the appearance of fairness.
- take seriously any suggestions or complaints from colleagues or students about your behaviour or comments.

Labour Relations

Labour relations are governed by the Collective Agreement (CA) between the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) on behalf of Graduate Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows and Queen's University. The procedure for grievances is governed by Article 11 of the [Collective Agreement](#). In general, concerns should first be brought to the attention of the employment supervisor for informal resolution, prior to filing a formal grievance according to the procedures laid out in 11.05.

Privacy of Student Files

Student files are held in the Main Office. In accordance with the Ontario Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), a student's file is accessible only to the student herself/himself, the Graduate Coordinator, the Head, the Graduate Chair, and faculty members who sit on committees requiring examination of the files (normally the Graduate Studies Committee).

In accordance with FIPPA, students have access to all the contents of their file except documents written in confidence about them, such as letters of reference. Faculty members other than those mentioned above must have the student's written permission to consult his/her file.

9. ADVISING AND OTHER RESOURCES

The Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS) maintains a Peer Academic Advisor program. This service provides free and confidential advice, strategies for self-advocacy and referrals to graduate students at Queen's University. For more information, see <https://sgps.ca/paa/>.

Queen's University International Centre (QUIC) provides non-academic advising to international students. Students may contact an International Student Adviser at isa@queensu.ca. For more information about QUIC's services, see <http://quic.queensu.ca>.

The University Ombudsman provides independent, impartial and confidential advice to all members of the university, in the goal of facilitating the informal resolution of concerns and complaints. Students may contact the Ombudsman at ombuds@queensu.ca. For more information, see <https://www.queensu.ca/ombuds/>.

APPENDIX 1: MA Timeline

Prior to Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider possible research topics for MRP
September (Term 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss courses and possible supervisors with Graduate Chair Register in 3 courses for Fall term
October - November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider whether seminar work could lead to MRP topic Submit doctoral scholarship / fellowship applications, if applicable Attend MRP workshop held by department
December Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give serious thought to MRP topic
January (Term 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register in 3 courses in Term 2
February - March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on research topic for MRP Discuss topic with potential Supervisor and secure their agreement Submit MRP form with Supervisor's signature and to Graduate Coordinator. Student and Supervisor agree on a date for submission of draft of MRP, normally in July. Head of department formally appoints Supervisor at end of March
April – June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete all research for MRP and begin writing
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete writing Submit first draft of MRP to Supervisor by date agreed upon date. Make revisions based on Supervisor's comments
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit final draft of MRP (one electronic) by MRP deadline in early August. MRP graded by two faculty members
Early September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRP grade submitted by Department to SGS.