

## Faculty of Arts & Science

### Suggestions for Supervisors of Graduate Students

#### General tips and links:

1. Remind your students that the answers to many of their questions may have already been answered. Keep this list of handy websites at hand:
  - a. SGS COVID site: <https://www.queensu.ca/sgs/covid-19-sgs-updates>
  - b. FAS COVID site: <https://www.queensu.ca/artsci/covid-19>
  - c. Queen's COVID site: <https://www.queensu.ca/covidinfo/>
  - d. Queen's Library COVID site: <https://library.queensu.ca/help-services/covid-19-updates-library-services-operations>
  - e. International Centre: <https://quic.queensu.ca>
2. Be aware that updated support mechanisms from the Federal Government includes a new update to relief programs that will specifically apply to our graduate students who have outside jobs.
  - a. See [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IOJn7XS6ETIkBLRodYk681M\\_2dxkkQsc/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IOJn7XS6ETIkBLRodYk681M_2dxkkQsc/view) for up-to-date lists on government support
3. Know that there are a number of solutions that are being implemented by the University. An incomplete list includes:
  - a. Emergency bursaries through SGS
  - b. Enhanced support for international students
  - c. New TAs from Arts and Science online;
  - d. Emergency relief in the form of RAs and awards from individual departments
  - e. A working group is being launched to develop strategies for access to the library. A few scenarios, ranging from scanned materials to curbside pickup, are being considered. Timing is not yet clear but the library is working on this!
  - f. Similar work is being done to enable access to labs and field work
4. Extensions to graduate degree timelines can be considered; interested students should be in touch with SGS (see <https://www.queensu.ca/sgs/graduate-calendar/general-regulations>)

#### Student wellness and mentoring:

5. It's important to keep in mind that some students are very stressed, and their stresses might not be related to their research. Some are facing financial struggles, difficult family situations supporting their kids, spouses and/or extended family, feeling disconnected from their support networks, uncertainty about housing. The SGS COVID site has many of these details (<https://www.queensu.ca/sgs/covid-19-sgs-updates>)
  - a. Financial stresses? *Section 4: Financial Issues and Tuition*
  - b. Mental or physical health issues? *Section 7: Community and Wellness Supports*
  - c. Disconnected students?
    - i. consider developing regular check ins (example Teams meetings) with your research team to ensure they are feeling supported, and connected to you and their peers
    - ii. At the departmental level, consider setting up remote meetings for graduate students to connect to each other for casual discussions.

- iii. Consider remote seminar series or mini conferences or identify existing remote meetings in your field.
6. Due to stress, you might find that otherwise highly organized and productive students may find it difficult to stay focused. A student who needed little guidance in the past may have a higher need for your encouragement, insight, and help in prioritizing their research.
7. When mentoring your students, consider breaking down the priorities into smaller tasks, giving the student a faster sense of accomplishment
8. Stay in touch with your students. Set up regular meetings with your students on Microsoft Teams; bring your research group together on Teams for regular updates and a chance to share ideas and experiences. These meetings don't have to be focused on research; they can simply be a chance to touch base and build community!
9. Encourage students to try to make progress during this most difficult time, and emphasize that showing progress will increase their chances of a position by showing the ability to adjust and respond to immense stress.

**Research:**

10. With respect to research projects, let your students know that work can change from the original proposal, particularly if they are in early stages of their projects. All faculty at Queen's are prepared to be flexible in terms of altered work plans. Try to identify opportunities rather than focusing on barriers. For students that are closer to the end, there may not need to be any changes to research programs, but be aware that these students may also feel significant pressure!
11. For some students (depending on stage of completion), you might flag opportunities such as half-thesis formats or non-thesis Masters.
12. The summer is an excellent time to get many of the major milestones of the degree completed such as committee meetings, comprehensive exams, qualifying exams, since all of these can be carried out remotely.
13. Consider building a peer-to-peer resource-sharing network, to supply the resources (books, collections, data, etc) that students may need.

**Teaching:**

14. Consider offering more graduate courses over the summer so that students can focus on research once they return to campus. Remote courses are fairly easy to organize at the graduate level and do not need to be supported by Arts and Science Online.
15. Consider offering these summer graduate courses to your incoming students in the fall. Many of them are unable to work this summer and may be looking for something to do. It is possible to hold the course in the summer but have it appear on the books in the fall. For example, a seminar course could occur in the summer with a final essay/seminar/report being delivered in the early Fall. This would give our incoming students an opportunity to jumpstart their degree this summer and focus more on research when they do arrive.
16. Emphasize that supervisors are willing to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 in reference letters, and let students know that hiring committees around the world will be very conscious of the impact that COVID-19 has on their progress.