

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL
GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE (GSC)**

**Minutes of the Public Session of the February 25, 2025 Meeting
via Videoconference
9:01 a.m. - 9:33 a.m.**

PUBLIC SESSION

[Graduate Studies Committee Agendas, Materials and Minutes 2024-2025](#)

- Present:** P. Mirza-Babaei (Chair), J. Arcand, A. Azim, R. Bailey, D. Bonetta, C. Cesaroni, K. Clarke, A. Cooper, C. Davidson, F. Gaspari, L. Harkins, S. Jackson, A. Kiani, O. Marques, C. McGregor, D. Papke, A. Slane, J. Stokes, A. Tokuhiko, R. Van Oostveen, N. Wattie, K. Wilson
- Staff & Guests:** K. Ayotte (Secretary), J. Boswell, N. Crow, M. Heslip, A. Kassaris, H. MacPherson, K. McCartney, J. Pereira, B. Tranter
- Regrets:** J. Abbas Dick, L. Jacobs, L. Livingston, S. Marsh, F. Quereshi, L. VanVeen, A. Wingate

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

P. Mirza-Babaei called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. and R. Bailey highlighted the importance of integrating Indigenous knowledge into graduate research, sharing past work in the Yukon and a PhD project on the Saint Lawrence River. He emphasized building relationships with Indigenous Communities as essential to their discipline and followed with reading aloud the Land Acknowledgement.

2. Agenda (M)

Upon a motion duly made by O. Marques and seconded by A. Slane the February 25, 2025, Public Session Agenda and Consent Agenda, including its contents, were approved and received as presented.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair noted that nominations for the SGPS Graduate Excellence Awards are open until March 7, recognizing excellence in graduate supervision and postdoctoral research, and that nomination details were available online. SGPS is also enhancing postdoc support through engagement events, recently hosting a "Tea with Deans" event with 10 attendees. Additionally, scholarship processing is underway, and preparations continue for the 3MT competition, which will feature 25 participants this year, with

coaching sessions starting soon. The event is scheduled for March 19–20.

J. Stokes reported that the University received its Provincial Attestation Letter (PAL) allocation for Graduate Studies which was lower than expected as the allocation was based on 2023 numbers, not last year's numbers where there was increased enrollment by 100+%. Efforts are underway to meet targets by adjusting graduate intake by faculty and exploring options within the Ministry allocation framework to secure additional spots from other institutions if they don't meet their targets.

He also announced the recent restructure of graduate Admissions and Financial Aid teams from SGPS to the Registrar Office to streamline offer processing and enhance student Financial support. While the process remains unchanged, key contacts have shifted: Adam Wu is now the admissions manager contact, and Debra White will oversee financial aid matters.

4. Minor Program Adjustments (Approval)

4.1 Faculty of Science: PhD in Materials Science* (M)

F. Gaspari advised that the language for Ontario Tech's joint PhD program with Trent University is being updated for consistency. The revised wording simplifies course requirements, removing specific course listings to better align with Trent's approach and avoid unnecessary waiver procedures.

A question was asked about whether course waivers apply only to students transitioning from a Master's to a PhD at the same university. F. Gaspari clarified that they also apply to students from other universities with equivalent coursework, allowing them to replace required courses as needed.

Upon a motion duly made by N. Wattie and seconded by R. Bailey, the GSC hereby approves the Minor Program Adjustment to the Doctor of Philosophy in Materials Science program, to adjust degree requirements.

4.2 Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Meng, MASc and PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering* (M)

A. Azim advised that a new course, is being added to the graduate curriculum. Previously offered as a special topics course, it has seen strong enrollment and interest, prompting its proposal as a permanent course.

Upon a motion duly made by A. Kiani and seconded by A. Azim, the GSC hereby approves the Minor Program Adjustment to the MEng, MASc and PhD in Electrical and Computer Engineering program.

5. Academic Policy Instruments (Recommendation)

5.1 Revised Policy on Auditing an Undergraduate and Graduate Course* (M)

J. Boswell noted that the policy was last revised in June 2022 and is being updated in consultation with SGPS to expand section 7.2(d). Currently, research-based graduate students can audit one graduate course for free with approval. The proposed change would extend this to include undergraduate courses if deemed beneficial to their research.

A question was asked about whether graduate students can audit multiple courses for free or if the policy limits the total number of audited courses. J. Boswell clarified that students could audit as many courses as they want but only one at no cost. The proposed change simply expands the free option to include undergraduate courses.

Responding to a question as to whether course-based master's students could audit a course for free, given that they do not have a supervisor to approve it, J. Stokes explained that the original policy was intended for research-based students, as auditing additional courses could support their research portfolio. Since course-based master's students do not have the same research focus, the policy was not initially designed for them. However, he noted that if a course-based student expressed interest, they would be considered on a case-by-case basis, provided the Graduate Program Director (GPD) supported the request.

Upon a motion duly made by J. Arcand and seconded by O. Marques, the GSC hereby recommends to Academic Council the approval of the amended Policy on Auditing an Undergraduate and Graduate Course.

5.2 Registration and Course Selection Amendment* (M)

J. Boswell noted that the amendment updates the time status rules for graduate students by removing the 10-hour limit on diversionary employment. This change aligns the policy with the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies' (OCGS) endorsement and the latest Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) agreement.

J. Stokes noted that the University is the last in the OCGS to remove the 10-hour rule, which previously restricted graduate students from taking on additional work. The change allows students to accept research-related jobs within the University, keeping academic expertise in-house. He clarified that decisions on workload are made between students and their supervisors, with the only restrictions being those set by the Canadian Labour Board. He also acknowledged a suggestion to revise the use of the word "enshrined" in the policy wording.

Upon a motion duly made by L. Harkins and seconded by A. Slane, the GSC hereby recommends to Academic Council the approval of the amended Registration and Course Selection Policy.

6. Cyclical Program Review

6.1 Master of Health Sciences – 18 Month Follow-Up* (M)

D. Papke reported the tracking progress on action items from the program's Cyclical Review 18 months after its conclusion. He advised that it has been reviewed by the Provost through the Academic Resource Committee and showed strong progress with no concerns. He noted that the report will be posted online and shared with Academic Council for information.

Upon a motion duly made by J. Arcand and seconded by F. Gaspari, the GSC hereby approves the 18-Month Follow-Up Report from the Master of Health Sciences Cyclical Program Review, as presented.

7. Consent Agenda* (M)

7.1 Public Minutes of the January 28, 2025, Meeting* (M)

7.2 Minor Curricular Changes

- **Course Changes:**

- [PSYC 6940G](#)

- **New Courses:**

- [INFR 6010G](#)

7.3 Faculty Reports* (I)

- a) Faculty Reports
- b) Graduate Student Report
- c) Library Report

7.4 2025-2026 Graduate Academic Schedule* (I)

7.5 Associate Graduate Faculty

- Health Sciences, Agnes Grudniewicz, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Health Sciences, Carolina Cancelliere, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Health Sciences, Michael Jeffrey, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Health Sciences, Ellen Vogel, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Health Sciences, Andrew Hogue, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Forensic Psychology, Christopher O'Connor, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities
- Forensic Psychology, Shannon Vettor, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities
- Forensic Psychology, Andrea Slane, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities
- Forensic Psychology, Angela Eke, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities
- Mechanical Engineering, Marianna Braza, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Mechanical Engineering, Farrokh Janabi-Sharifi, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science

- Mechanical Engineering, Marwan Hassan, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Mechanical Engineering, Ali Khalvati, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Mechanical Engineering and Mechatronics Engineering, Yunhua Luo, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Mechanical Engineering, Hassan Peerhossaini, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science
- Computer Science, Miriam Sturdee, Faculty of Science
- Computer Science, Theresa Stotesbury, Faculty of Science
- Computer Science, Ruth Stock-Homburg, Faculty of Business and Information Technology

The Chair confirmed that the Consent Agenda and the items in the Consent Agenda were approved and received at the start of the meeting.

8. Volunteer for March Land Acknowledgement

The Chair requested a volunteer for the March Land Acknowledgement. With no immediate response, they noted that interested individuals could contact the University Secretariat.

9. Adjournment (M)

Upon a motion duly made by N. Wattie, the Public session adjourned at 9:33 a.m.

Kirstie Ayotte, Assistant University Secretary