UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE
Report to Academic Council
at its meeting of November 15th, 2016

FOR ACTION

1. Graduate Studies Regulations – Amendments

The Graduate Studies Committee recommends:

That Academic Council approve the changes to the Graduate Academic Calendar as proposed in the attached documentation.

a. Appointment of supervisory committee

Rationale: The proposed change will specifically emphasize that the supervisory committee needs to be formed and meet with the student in year 1. Many of the difficult cases that the Office of Graduate Studies has been involved in were related to students for which no supervisory committee had been formed. The lack of supervisory committee often makes things more difficult in resolving student/supervisor conflict.

b. Repeating courses

Rationale: The Office of Graduate Studies had dealt with students who receive an unsatisfactory performance in their project/thesis work during their probation status. The regulation states that they should maintain good standing and satisfactory performance in all project/thesis work undertaken during the probationary period. It did not provide information on what would happen to those students who did not receive a satisfactory performance while they held probationary status. This regulation has been amended to provide clarity.

c. English language proficiency

Rationale: The proposed changes will help to ensure we are accepting high quality graduate students with the English language proficiency required for success. The university has seen graduate students entering a program through these channels for English language proficiency struggle academically and professionally as teaching assistants. The proposed changes are also due in part to an inability to validate whether someone's mother-tongue is English, and the cancellation of the contract with CultureWorks.

FOR INFORMATION

1. Faculty of Science

a. Master of Science in Modelling and Computational Science – Minor Program Adjustment

A new core course is being created in the program (Modeling and Simulating Systems using Discrete Units - MCSC 6040G) as techniques and strategies related to modelling with discrete units, particles under stochastic forcing, networks and cellular automata were underrepresented in the program. As a result of this new course the overall program requirements will also change such that all students must now complete at least three of the four courses. Three of the four courses will normally be offered in each academic year such that all students would have the opportunity to take all four. This will provide greater flexibility for students in the courses they take for credit.

b. PhD in Modelling and Computational Science – Minor Program Adjustment

Since the inception of the PhD. program in Modelling and Computational Science, the degree requirements have included the stipulation that the students complete eight courses, including three core courses. This number is unusually high as compared to somewhat similar programs in physics, applied mathematics and computational science at other Ontario universities, for which the number of required courses varies from two to four. For students coming into the program their transcripts were examined to give them credit for courses already taken at the Master's level. Recently, the Office of Graduate Studies at UOIT has implemented the policy that no credit can be given for a course that counted towards another degree. As a consequence, PhD. students in the MCSC program must, according to the current rules, take the full eight courses and not be given credit for prior learning. This takes away too much of the time needed to complete the thesis, puts the program at a competitive disadvantage and creates logistic problems since only two elective courses are usually offered in the program per academic year. This will be remedied by bringing back the number of required courses to three. In addition, an explicit breadth requirement will be included.

2. QE Scholarships for Graduate research exchanges internal guidelines

The QES program is a joint initiative of the UOIT International Office and the Office of Graduate Studies. Within that program, there is an outbound research exchange opportunity for graduate students to Commonwealth countries. Last year, exchange opportunities were identified by a research supervisor. This year, we are inviting graduate students to submit an application, with endorsement from a home UOIT researcher and a host researcher.

3. Ontario Graduate Fellowship Fund (OGFF) internal guidelines

The Ontario Graduate Fellowship Fund is an endowment fund provided by the Ministry before 2009. Historically, these funds have been used to offset some scholarship recipients under the Dean's Graduate Scholarship. Going-forward, the university will be providing the interest from the endowed funds as another scholarship opportunity for graduate students, called the Ontario Graduate Fellowship. The internal guidelines will use the existing process for Ontario Graduate Scholarships to determine eligibility and selection. Applicants to the OGS program will be ranked by the University Selection Committee and waitlisted candidates will automatically be considered for the OGF, valued at $12,000 per year.