

**Cumming School of Medicine  
Graduate Science Education**

**Doctoral Candidacy Requirements**

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## Overview

Admission to Candidacy is governed by the University of Calgary (UCalgary) Doctoral Candidacy Regulations ([University of Calgary :G.K. Candidacy](#)) This document establishes requirements associated with the admission to candidacy in the following Cumming School of Medicine (CSM) Graduate Science Education (GSE) graduate programs, which comply with those regulations:

MDBC – Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
MDCV – Cardiovascular and Respiratory Sciences  
MDGI – Gastrointestinal Sciences  
MDIM – Immunology  
MDMI – Microbiology and Infectious Diseases  
MDNS – Neuroscience  
MDSC – Medical Sciences

NOTE: This document does not apply to MDCH – Community Health Sciences.

## Statement of Purpose

Admission into candidacy in the CSM GSE Thesis-based Programs requires that students have a solid foundation of knowledge, comprehension, and understanding of topics and concepts in their field of research. Students must demonstrate the ability to design a hypothesis-based research project that will contribute to their field and display a solid understanding of the necessary technical skills required to complete their research project. In determining a student's suitability for candidacy, the following attributes will be assessed: breadth and depth of knowledge in the research area, clarity of thinking, ability to communicate clearly, critical thinking (ability to judge their own work and the work of others), and adaptive thinking (ability to integrate new ideas).

## Requirements for Admission to Candidacy ([University of Calgary G.K.3 Program Candidacy Requirements](#))

All doctoral students in the CSM GSE Thesis-based Programs must successfully complete the following components to be admitted to Candidacy:

- Program-specific certifications (examples: safety certifications, animal handling, or ethics approvals)
- All program specified academic course requirements
- Research Integrity Day
- Sex & Gender in Biomedical Research Training Module(s)
- Thesis Proposal Evaluation (TPE) and approval
- Field of Study (FOS) examination (oral)

A flowchart is provided that describes the timeline for scheduling and completion of each component is provided at the end of this document.

## Program Specific Certifications

The CSM requires that students complete the necessary training requirements and certifications if they are working with chemicals, biohazards, radioactivity, and/or animals ([Animal Use Protocols](#)), prior to beginning their research project and/or working in the laboratory. Students working with human primary material or subjects will also need approval from the [Conjoint Health Research Ethics Board \(CHREB\)](#) and associated training ([TCPS2 Core](#) or [CITI Human Subjects Research Course](#)) prior to initiating their research.

### Program Specific Course Requirements

Graduate courses in the CSM promote the acquisition of both broad and deep knowledge within a specific area of study. PhD students must:

- Complete 9 units (3 half-course-equivalents) of specified graduate-level courses outlined by their programs and approved by their supervisory committees.
- Complete these courses before the Field of Study (FOS) exam can occur; however, the thesis proposal evaluation may still proceed even if the applicable program course work is still in-progress.
- Maintain an annual GPA of at least 3.0/4.0 calculated each year at the time of their registration anniversary.

If these criteria are not maintained, then the student may be required to withdraw from the program.

### Research Integrity Day

Students are required to attend a Research Integrity Day, focused on Academic Integrity and Responsible Conduct of Research (<https://cumming.ucalgary.ca/gse/current-students/research-integrity-day>) provided by the GSE office. Completion is expected within the 1st year of a student's program or prior to the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Meeting.

### Sex & Gender in Biomedical Research Training Module(s)

Students are required to complete one of the CIHR sex and gender online training modules found at [discoversexandgender.ca](https://discoversexandgender.ca) (<https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49347.html>). Students must take the module(s) most relevant to their research or program. Completion is expected within the 1st year of a student's program or prior to the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Meeting.

### Thesis Proposal Evaluation (TPE; [University of Calgary G.K.4 Oral Examination Process](#))

The proposal is an academic exercise testing the student's ability to write and defend a preliminary graduate-level research proposal. **Scheduling delays resulting from an intention to acquire more data related to the student's project are considered inappropriate for candidacy exam timing purposes and are strongly discouraged.**

Students are encouraged to submit a "preliminary/1st draft" research proposal to their supervisory committee within 12 months of their initial registration in the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The Supervisor and Supervisory Committee members will provide research guidance to the student in the development of the project proposal, but the student must write the final document.

After the initial submission of the draft proposal, the supervisor and supervisory committee will work with the student to develop a refined final version which is to then be prepared for Part 1 of the doctoral candidacy: the Thesis Proposal Evaluation (TPE) milestone.

### TPE Purpose

The purpose of the thesis proposal evaluation is to ensure that the student has sufficiently prepared to be successful with both drafting a cohesive written document and orally defending the content of their proposed thesis/research project. The expectation is that the student has a clearly defined, novel and high-quality research plan that they are capable of pursuing and defending.

### TPE Timeline

A thesis proposal evaluation committee meeting to evaluate the final draft of the thesis proposal will be scheduled before the end of the 24th month in program (for direct PhD entry students) or 32nd month (for MSc to PhD transfer students) from initial registration.

A form describing the composition of the evaluation committee and the anticipated meeting date to approve the proposal shall be submitted to the graduate program administrator (GPA) approximately four weeks in advance of the meeting.

Three weeks prior to the evaluation meeting the GPA will send instructions and additional forms to the committee and the supervisor, who acts as chair.

At least one week before this meeting, the student will submit their proposal to their supervisor, committee members and the additional faculty-level evaluator for review.

### Format of the Thesis Proposal

For the CSM GSE Graduate Programs, the research proposal must be between 13 and 17 single-spaced pages (excluding figures, tables and references, 2cm margins and 12-point font). A suggested (but not mandatory) format for the research proposal is:

- Introduction (approximately 4-6 pages – should contain an appropriate literature review of the field and the project)
- Relevant Preliminary Data, if available (approximately 3-4 pages)
- Hypothesis and Specific Aims (approximately 1/2 page)
- Experimental Plan (approximately 5-6 pages)
- Significance (1/2 pages)

### *Generative Artificial Intelligence in the Thesis Proposal*

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), and specifically foundational models that can create writing, computer code, and/or images using minimal human prompting includes not only GPT-4 (and its siblings ChatGPT and Bing), but many writing assistants that are built on this or similar AI technologies.

Students should discuss the use of artificial intelligence tools with their supervisor(s) and committee members at the beginning of their program, well in advance of beginning work on the Thesis Proposal. Students are ultimately accountable for the work they submit. If approved by the supervisor(s) and committee members, the use of generative AI tools must be documented in an appendix to the Thesis Proposal. The documentation should include a statement of approval, a description of which tool(s) were used, how they were used, and how the results were incorporated into the Thesis Proposal. Failure to cite the use of AI generated content in a Thesis Proposal, or use of such tools without approval, will be considered a breach of academic integrity and subject to Academic Misconduct procedures.

### TPE Committee Meeting

The Thesis Proposal Evaluation meeting is a closed meeting, with only the student, supervisor (and co-supervisor if applicable), and listed Thesis Proposal Evaluators in attendance. The meeting will be

coordinated and chaired by the supervisor, **but the supervisor does not vote** on the outcome of the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Meeting. Please note that the co-supervisor, if applicable, also **does not vote**.

The supervisor's responsibilities include:

- verifying the location for the meeting,
- confirming the modality of the meeting (virtual, in-person, or hybrid),
- contacting the Graduate Program Administrator four weeks prior to the scheduled examination date to initiate the required paperwork, and
- ensuring provision of all technology requirements for the meeting.

All evaluation committee members, including the supervisor and co-supervisor if applicable, will provide brief written feedback (evaluator's assessment of thesis proposal form) on the quality of the student's written proposal to the supervisor at the beginning of the Proposal Evaluation meeting. **While the supervisor(s) are non-voting members, they are expected to complete their own individual Evaluator's Assessment for the student as this report will serve as the supervisor(s) evaluation of the proposal.**

#### *Evaluation Committee Composition*

The thesis proposal evaluation committee will consist of:

- The supervisor (chair),
- The co-supervisor (if applicable),
- The student's supervisory committee members as established within 3 months of the start of the student's program, and
- One (1) additional, faculty-level, non-supervisory committee evaluator who has been previously approved by both the graduate program and FGS to hold supervisory privileges. This extra evaluator can be either internal or external to the student's graduate program (only in rare circumstances will an Evaluator from outside the University of Calgary be approved to sit on the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Committee).

Normally, no committee members may be absent from the meeting. Any absences should be approved by the AD-GSE.

#### *TPE Evaluation Meeting Procedure*

The total duration of the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Meeting is approximately 120 minutes, chaired by the student's supervisor who is responsible for documenting anomalies and coordinating the structure of the meeting as follows:

- Collection of Evaluator Reports on Thesis Proposal including their own and that of the co-supervisor if applicable (the evaluation cannot proceed if all reports are not collected)
- Student Presentation: Outline of the research proposal (~15-minutes)
- Rounds of questions starting with the extra evaluator (2 rounds as time allows, no more than 90 minutes)
- Discussion and decision (student absent)

- Decision delivered to student (approval or adjournment)
- Submission of final documents to the graduate program administrator (which could include notes regarding procedural anomalies or challenges)

Official documentation and next steps will be provided by the GPA, GPD or AD-GSE depending on the result of the evaluation.

### *TPE Meeting Structure*

The TPE meeting should function similarly to a regular committee meeting, chaired by the Supervisor. Rounds of questions can be used to ensure all participants have time to ask questions and have a discussion focused on areas in the proposal. A discussion, without the student, will be used to determine outcome of the TPE.

#### Rounds of Questions

Questions should be used to aid in the critical evaluation of the proposal and focus on the hypothesis and experimental plan, including a demonstration by the student of an understanding of the background for the project, concepts and methods employed as well as experimental interpretation and potential pitfalls.

#### Committee Discussion & Decision

The Committee will discuss and vote on both the written document as well as the student's ability to understand and defend their proposal

### *Written Evaluation*

- The reviewers will decide if the written proposal can be accepted as submitted with no further changes to the content of the thesis (see below).
- The proposal will be evaluated based on:
  - Relevant background knowledge to support the rationale of the proposed research project.
  - Preliminary data (if present) that demonstrates experimental competency.
  - Clear Hypothesis and Specific Aims of a body of work appropriate for a PhD project.
  - Detailed experimental plan with expectations, pitfalls, and alternative approaches.
  - Significance of the proposed work within the research field.

Written Evaluation Result

During the discussion portion of the TPE process the committee should come to an agreement around the presented research proposal.

Decision	Result
<p>Committee agrees the document is acceptable as presented (Unanimous or with one dissenting vote). The document presented at the TPE will be used for the FOS examination.</p> <p>Example: <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> Written Acceptable (1/4 unacceptable) &amp; <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> Oral Acceptable (1/4 Unacceptable) = Acceptable TPE</p>	<p>Acceptable TPE – proceed to FOS</p>
<p>Committee considers the document inadequate due to major deficiencies or flaws in core elements such as content, research aims, experimental design, proposed methodology and data analysis, etc.</p> <p>Example: 2/4 Written acceptable (2/4 Unacceptable) &amp; <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> Oral Acceptable (1/4 unacceptable) = Unacceptable TPE</p>	<p>Unacceptable TPE – Follow Unacceptable process (only one retake is typically allowed before student will be required to withdraw from program)</p>

*Oral Evaluation*

- The reviewers will decide if the oral defense of the proposal is acceptable or unacceptable with the goal of reaching a unanimous decision. Unanimity is not required and each component, written and oral, can receive one dissenting vote and still be considered an acceptable Thesis Proposal Evaluation.
- Evaluators will consider the student’s ability to:
  - Understand the relevant background information.
  - Interpret and understand preliminary data, if presented.
  - Defend the hypothesis, specific aims and experimental plan.
- The Supervisor(s) may participate in this discussion session however, they will **not be permitted to cast a vote.**

*Results and Notifications ([University of Calgary G.K.2 Candidacy Examination Outcomes](#))*

- The Supervisor will record the votes and result of the meeting on the Final Thesis Proposal Evaluation report and submit it to the Graduate Program within 24 hours of the meeting date.
  - An acceptable Thesis Proposal Evaluation can either be unanimous or have one dissenting vote for each component, written and oral.

- Student will be advised of the preliminary result of the Thesis Proposal Evaluation meeting
- Official results, next steps and copies of the reports will be provided by the Graduate Program, or AD-GSE, to the student and supervisor, depending on the result of the evaluation meeting.

#### *Approved TPE*

Once approved, the student may move forward with the FOS exam even if the project might evolve and change after the proposal has been approved. It is understood that the proposal is an academic activity, and that research work may need to be adjusted as new data are presented or obtained which could shift the direction of the research work. This does not require a reassessment of the Thesis Proposal. Any suggested modifications of the research proposal provided in reports by the Evaluation Committee that occur coincident with successful pass of the TPE can be made at the discretion of the student.

An extended abstract (up to one page) of the student's accepted Thesis Proposal and approved topics/reading list must be circulated to all members of the examination committee at least two (2) weeks before the FOS.

#### *Unacceptable Result*

Should more than one dissenting vote be cast on either component of the TPE, the TPE will be considered Unacceptable and the student will be referred to the GPD for discussion. The student will have the opportunity to submit a revised proposal no earlier than 2 months and no later than 6 months, from the time of the decision, and then schedule a second thesis proposal evaluation committee meeting. Committee members will decide the nature of the revision during the post-evaluation discussion. Required changes will be summarized and communicated in writing to the student by the supervisor within one week. A copy of the requested revisions should be filed with the Graduate Program (with a copy to the GPD).

The second TPE meeting following the same format will be held within 2-6 months, normally with the same committee composition. Should the second proposal evaluation meeting attempt result in another unacceptable decision (either the written document or the student's ability to understand and defend their proposal), then the student may be asked to either withdraw from the PhD Program or transfer to the MSc Program.

The timing of the subsequent Field of Study Examination may be adjusted to reflect any delayed approval of the proposal. Should the adjusted time exceed the deadline to complete the Candidacy Process, an extension request form must be submitted to the GPA for approval by the GPD and FGS.

#### *Appeal of an Unacceptable Proposal Evaluation ([University of Calgary G.K.5 Appeals of Decisions Regarding Candidacy Components](#))*

In the case of an unacceptable proposal evaluation, a student has the right to appeal. Students must appeal directly to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.



### Field of Study (FOS) Examination ([University of Calgary G.K.4 Oral Examination Process](#))

The FOS will be a formal and closed oral exam, lasting no more than 2-hours, where only the student, their examination committee members, and a GSE-assigned Neutral Chair are permitted to be in attendance. The exam will be comprehensive, covering a broad range of topics in the student's core field of research, based on the provided topic areas and reading list. The student is expected to have an in-depth understanding of the topics related to their core field of research, as well as a strong foundational knowledge in areas related to their research. These areas, as well as a detailed reading list, will be provided to the student prior to the examination. The student is allowed to bring their approved research proposal to the exam, but no extra notes or other resources are permitted.

**Students will not be re-evaluated on their full written thesis proposal at this examination, as it has already been evaluated and accepted.** In contrast with the previous Thesis Proposal Evaluation, the FOS exam is based primarily on the broad field of knowledge required to rationalize and carry out the research proposal (and eventual preparation of the final thesis document) as specified on the FOS topics form.

To successfully advance to doctoral candidacy, the examined student must be considered competent in their area of research. Competence is demonstrated by the ability to conceptually integrate their thesis research into broader scholarly contexts, answer questions and engage in discussion around their topic areas with committee members, and demonstrate understanding of the importance and relevance of their research project and how it may impact and advance existing knowledge in their field.

### FOS Timeline

At least three (3) months before the FOS examination (this can be before the thesis proposal evaluation), the committee members will work together with the student to define a list of topics for study and a reading list for the FOS exam (GSE FOS examination preparation form) which is formally approved by the GPA. This reading list is unique for each student and should include 4-5 topic areas and between 25-30 resources (papers, texts etc) upon which the questioning will be based.

The FOS exam is to be completed no later than:

- The student's 28<sup>th</sup> month in-program for direct entry PhD admits; or
- The student's 36<sup>th</sup> month in-program for successful MSc transfer students

At least four (4) weeks before the exam, the supervisor should notify the GPA of the date, time and place of the exam, and composition of the examination committee using the GSE FOS Set up Form. A Neutral Chair will be assigned by GSE. Either an extended abstract (up to one page) of the student's accepted Thesis Proposal or the Introduction/Background components of the accepted Thesis Proposal, and approved topics/reading list must be circulated to all members of the examination committee at least two (2) weeks before the exam.

### FOS Examination Process

The FOS Examination is initiated by the Supervisor sending the GSE FOS Set-Up Form to the GPA 4 weeks prior to the examination date. The GPA will confirm if the GSE Boardroom is available and provide an

electronic link for a Zoom or Teams-based remote meeting should a hybrid or virtual examination format be indicated. The Supervisor will be responsible for room booking and any technology equipment needed outside of the GSE Boardroom.

A Neutral Chair will be appointed by the GSE Office and is responsible for chairing the FOS Examination. The Neutral Chair is responsible for ensuring that all members of the student's examination committee adhere to the CSM GSE's established FOS guidelines and will provide the final documentation indicating the results of the examination, including procedural notes, to the Graduate Program within 24 hours of the conclusion of the FOS examination.

The FOS examination will not exceed 2 hours, not including committee discussion and deliberation.

#### *FOS Examination Committee Composition*

The FOS examining committee consists of:

- A Neutral Chair, assigned by GSE;
- The Supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable) are non-voting members who must refrain from asking questions during the examination (i.e., they attend as observers);
- At least two (2), but not necessarily all, of the student's supervisory committee members; and
- Two (2) additional, non-supervisory committee, UCalgary faculty members (who hold either verified supervisory or committee/examiner privileges) as extra examiners:
  - One (1) of the extra examiners must be internal to the student's graduate program, while the other one (1) must be external to the student's program.
    - If an appropriate external (to the student's program) examiner cannot be found in a timely manner, then a second internal examiner can be recruited in lieu, if there are no perceived or anticipated conflicts of interest between the proposed individual and the rest of the examination committee; said second internal examiner must receive GPD approval prior to their formal enlistment.
    - Requests for examiners external to the University of Calgary require rationale including why they are being selected and an indication that there is no available internal UCalgary faculty member with the same expertise. These will be reviewed by the GPD and FGS for approval and can delay the processing for the FOS examination. Use of an individual external to UCalgary can impact the eligibility of that individual to serve as an external examiner for future Thesis Defenses.
- At least one voting member of the examination committee must hold a PhD degree.
- A post-doctoral scholar whose supervisor is either on the supervisory committee (when it is part of the examination committee) or is the supervisor of the student, is not eligible to serve as a member of the FOS examination committee.

#### *FOS Examination Procedure*

The FOS examination format will normally consist of two (2) rounds of questions for all examiners, and further follow up questions if time permits. The Neutral Chair is responsible for ensuring that examiners ask clear and succinct questions to the student, who will be encouraged to take their time when

answering or seek clarification where necessary. Examiners should only direct their questions to the student and not engage in discussions with other examiners while the exam is in-progress. If the student has understood a question but cannot provide an immediate answer, then the examiner should pass to another question and not attempt to extract an answer from the student via prolonged interrogation or by leading the candidate.

If an examiner leaves the room, the exam must be temporarily paused until they return.

### *Neutral Chair Responsibilities*

The Neutral Chair will:

- Welcome all participants, perform the land acknowledgement, and set expectations for the FOS Examination
- Direct rounds (2) of questions which will begin with the External Examiner, Internal examiner and then committee members (Supervisor & Co-Supervisor do not ask questions)
- Record minutes of the questioning period, documenting any anomalies or challenges during the questioning process
- Conclude the rounds of questioning after 2 hours and ask the Supervisor, Co-Supervisor, and Student to leave the room
- Conduct a straw poll to determine a starting point for the committee's discussion of the student's performance
- Collect final decisions from the committee members on the FOS Final Results Form
- Share the final decision of the examination committee with the Student, Supervisor and Co-Supervisor, along with any feedback provided by the committee (members of the committee can be present if they wish to be)
- Provide the results of the FOS Examination to the Graduate Program within 24 hours of the conclusion of the examination, including any summary notes related to anomalies or challenges during the examination or discussion process.

### *FOS Committee Discussion & Decision*

After the examination is complete, both the student and supervisor(s) will leave the room. The Neutral Chair will then explain the evaluation procedure to the examination committee. There will first be an anonymous straw vote that provides a framework to initiate discussion.

The goal of the discussion is to reach a consensus recommendation; however, a unanimous decision is not required. One vote of failure will still allow the student to be recommended for admission to doctoral candidacy. Two or more votes of failure will result in a Fail for the FOS. The committee will then complete the Examination report form, which will be delivered by the Neutral Chair to the GSE office. The Neutral Chair will provide committee feedback to the student and supervisor.

### *Results and Notifications*

The Neutral Chair will collect the initials of the examination committee members (or email authorization to sign on an examiner's behalf) and record the official result of the FOS examination on the GSE Final

Report for FOS Examination form. This form is submitted within 24 hours of the examination, along with the summary notes and any email authorizations from the examination to the Graduate Program.

#### *Passed FOS*

A “pass” for the FOS can be either unanimous or have one dissenting vote. A “pass” result will be recorded in PeopleSoft with a Recommendation for Admission to Candidacy being created by the Graduate Program and sent to the Student and Supervisor for acknowledgement of the milestone. This document is then filed with FGS, and the student is then considered a PhD Candidate.

#### *Failed FOS*

A “fail” result is recorded if 2 or more fail votes are cast by the FOS Examining Committee.

In the event of a failed FOS examination (first attempt), all voting members of the examination committee and the Neutral Chair must submit a written report within five (5) business days to the Associate Dean – GSE, CSM which outlines the reasons for the negative assessment. The AD-GSE, CSM will provide the final assessment to the student and supervisor via the GPD. Any student who fails a FOS examination will be given an opportunity to reschedule and retake the oral examination no sooner than two (2) months but no later than six (6) months following the date of the first attempt. The examination committee for the retake will normally consist of the same member roster as the original first attempt. A student will be given the option to transfer to the MSc-level stream of their program, but only after their first FOS exam failure. Should a second “fail” result be recorded and the AD-GSE upholds the recommendation of “fail”, the student will be required to withdraw from the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

#### *Right to Appeal ([University of Calgary G.K.5 Appeals of Decisions Regarding Candidacy Components](#))*

In the case of any failed examination, regardless of attempt number, students have the right to appeal their examining committee’s decision which must be presented directly to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for review (see the Graduate Calendar – [section G.K.5 Appeals of Decisions Regarding Candidacy Components](#)).

### Extensions to Candidacy Process Deadline

PhD students can request an extension to their candidacy deadline if they have not completed their candidacy requirements by:

- Their 28th month in-program for direct entry PhD admits; or
- Their 36th month in-program for successful MSc transfers

Failure to request an extension may result in the student being required to withdraw.

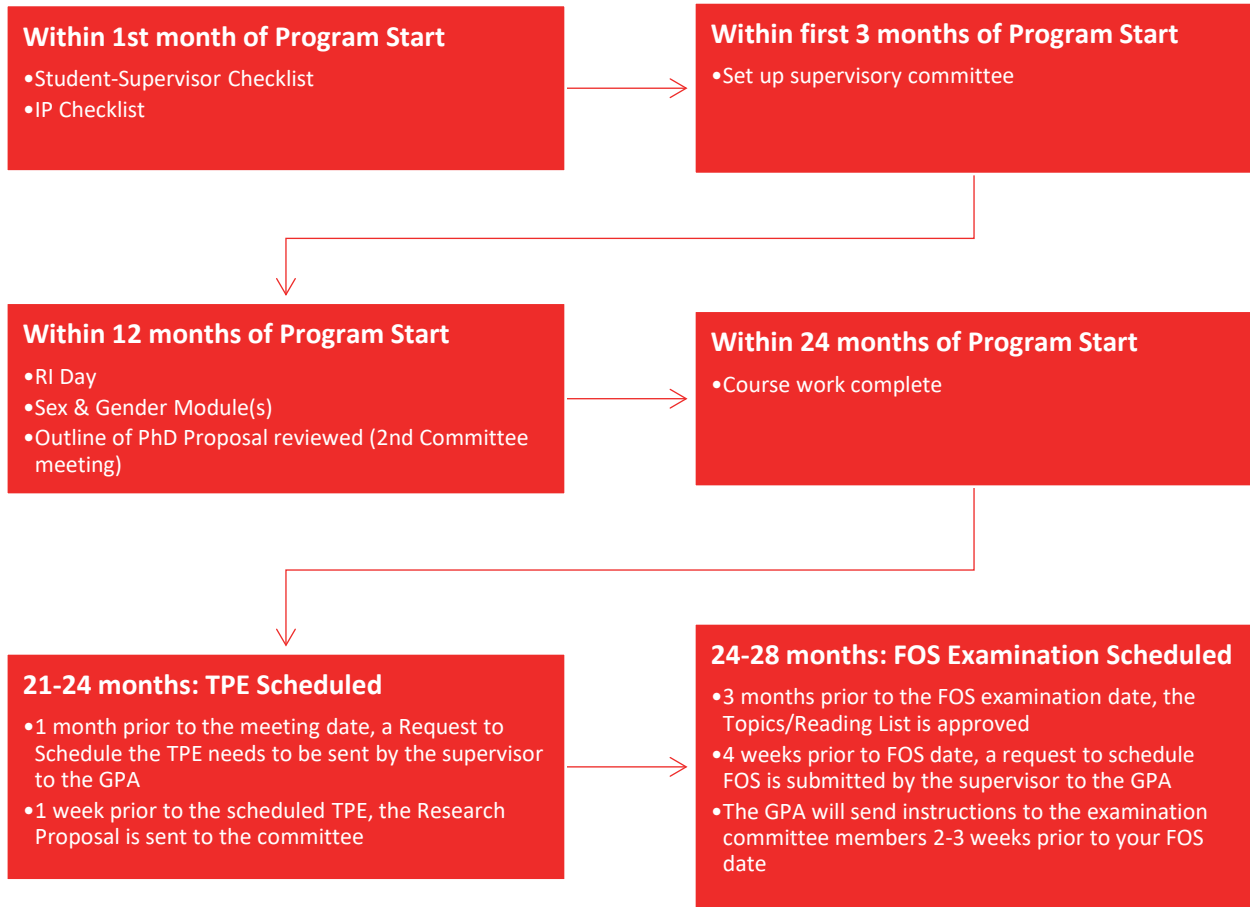
The appropriate extension request form (as obtained from the GPA) should be completed with both an explanation of the reasons for the delay along with an anticipated timeline for completing both the Thesis Proposal Evaluation and FOS milestones, enclosed. The extension request package must be approved by the Supervisor and subsequently submitted to the GPA for GPD, Associate Dean – GSE, CSM and FGS approval.

### Health and Wellness

Oral exams can be very stressful for our students. If there are concerns about a student's well-being during the preparation period for an oral exam, the student should contact the student wellness center (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>). Students should also be encouraged to attend workshops that will help them prepare for an oral exam. Supervisors will also be required to provide oral practice/mock examinations, in a format similar to the FOS examination at least one (1) month prior to the formal anticipated examination date as a way to help the student alleviate stress. International students are also encouraged to attend workshops that will help them improve their English-language communication skills. Students are also encouraged to practice their presentations with their peers.

MyGradSkills (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/mygradskills/>) is a great resource for help preparing for this oral exam.

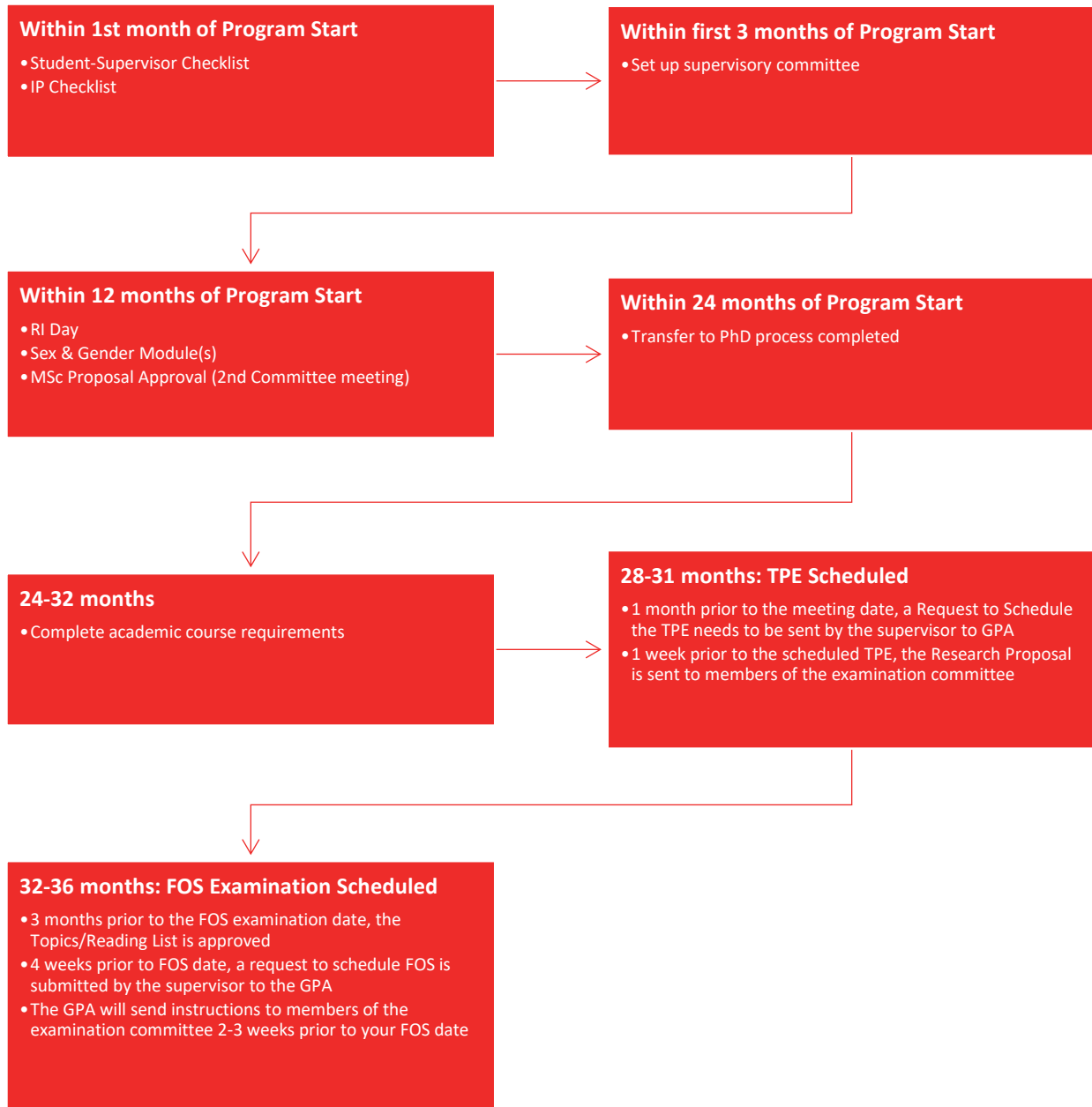
Appendix A: Suggested Timeline for Candidacy Process Direct Entry PhD Students



**Notes**

1. Failures or Unacceptable results: students are allowed one re-take only for both the TPE or Field of Study, usually within 2-6 months from the initial attempt. If the second attempt is also unsuccessful, the student will be required to withdraw from the program.

## Appendix B: Suggested Timeline for Candidacy Process MSc to PhD Transfer Students



### Notes

Failures or Unacceptable results: students are allowed one re-take only of both the TPE or Field of Study exam, usually within 2-6 months from the initial attempt. If the second attempt is also unsuccessful, the student will be required to withdraw from the program.