

Strategic Planning, UBC Graduate and Postdoctoral Education – 2017-18

Parallel to the university's broader strategic planning process, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (G+PS) has been leading the development of a five-year strategic plan for graduate education and postdoctoral studies at UBC, which we see as complementing and aligning with the broader university plan. This document is intended as a discussion aid for consultations with students. In the first section, we frame the work UBC as a whole does to support graduate and postdoctoral studies as areas of action (in pink), with each activity founded on guiding principles (blue).

The next section outlines the current roles and activities of the G+PS office, as well as recent and planned new initiatives or activities.

Lastly, we list some of the questions we hope to hear feedback on through this consultation process. We invite and encourage your input, either through the scheduled consultation sessions, or through individual communication at any time.

UBC – Guiding principles and activities to support graduate education

	Recruiting the best students & PDFs	Supporting students & PDFs to succeed	Promoting excellence in and supporting faculty & programs	Advancing effective innovation in graduate education
Excellence				
Culture of integrity & high standards				
Relevance to the 21 st C				
Local & global engagement				
Equity & diversity				
Wellbeing				

G+PS – Current Mandate and Major Activities

Hub for graduate and postdoctoral studies

- Enable and promote a common academic culture of excellence across the university
- Allow economies of scope and scale with concentration of expertise and activities
- Facilitate and communicate the sharing of best practices and knowledge with and among units/faculties
- Lead the development and implementation of strategic vision in graduate and postdoctoral education for the university
- Advocate for graduate and postdoctoral resources and focus

Recruitment

- Design, manage, and advocate for graduate student funding programs to attract top scholars
- Provide consultation on recruitment to programs
- Connect with external recruitment agencies/databases
- Implement comprehensive web recruitment strategies, e.g.

Approximately 200 selected incoming and 2nd year doctoral students annually are offered 4 years of funding through the \$15M/yr Four Year Fellowship program.

Student administration and program administrative support

- Administer and oversee records, admissions (with delegated authority), registration, progress tracking, thesis receipt, doctoral exams,
- Administer and oversee all merit-based awards, including Tri-Council awards
- Provide advice and training to program staff and graduate advisors
- Facilitate joint degree arrangements and international agreements

Student and postdoc support

- Provide information, tools, resources, and orientation events (with GSS, Postdoc Association)
- Provide advice and mediation for complex problems
- Offer comprehensive professional development programming for students and postdocs (Graduate Pathways to Success, Postdoctoral Fellows Office)
- Offer community-building opportunities (e.g. annual 3-Minute Thesis competitions, PhD Connections lunches)
- Support applicants for external competitions (esp. Banting, Vanier, Trudeau)

The collaborative [Graduate Pathways to Success](#) student professional development program provides over 70 offerings per year on professional, academic, career, and personal growth.

Program and faculty support

- Provide advice and professional development for program advisors and supervisors on student/program management, program excellence, and supervision
- Assist with difficult situations; provide information and resources
- Provide data on, e.g., demographics, funding, completion times and rates, career outcomes

The multiple-award-winning [Public Scholars Initiative](#) supports doctoral students to engage in partnered dissertation research to advance the public good and to enhance their preparation for diverse careers.

Advance effective innovation in graduate education and postdoctoral studies

- Facilitate, support, and/or lead innovations in graduate education and postdoctoral studies to enhance relevance to broader society and individual learners' futures

G+PS - Current Strategic Priorities

Recruiting the best students and PDFs

Expand web, social media, and traditional recruitment approaches

Assess linkages to external databases, establish strategic partnerships, increase yield through organized activities, etc.

Enhance support for program-level recruitment

Provide consultation, workshops, strategic resources

Redesign new \$8M PhD funding programs to better support recruitment

Lead university-wide task force on recruitment

Create strategic plan for more effective university-wide grad student recruitment

Supporting students and PDFs to succeed

Oversee recently approved minimum PhD funding guarantee

Complete, implement grad student, PDF wellbeing strategies – with VP-Students, HR

Formalize PDF career support

Facilitate experiential opportunities, information, mentorship, and advice

Enhance student professional development coordination and support

Create central focus for grad student professional development offerings and related program and student support

Assess current Aboriginal-related processes, resources

Review funding programs and other support; enhance as needed

Promoting excellence in and supporting faculty & programs

Expand activities directed at supporting, valuing, and assessing graduate supervision

Working with supervision community of practice and others: complete and disseminate resources on supervision; draft guidelines and advocate for improved evaluation processes for promotion & tenure; expand efforts at recognizing supervision; implement mandatory workshops for incoming faculty

Enhance support to assure excellence in graduate programs

Increase resources, sharing of best practices, and support of programs' efforts, and improve program review processes

Review funding programs and policies

Aim to increase flexibility in student funding programs to help ensure programs can best support their own students

Advancing effective innovation in graduate education

Encourage exploration of innovations to reduce times to completion, increase relevance

Facilitate conversations on program requirements, alternative models of progression (e.g. fast-tracking to PhD), funding issues, alternative Master's degrees

Expand work on reimagining the PhD and facilitating intersectoral research & engagement

Assure sustainability of the Public Scholars Initiative, Killam Connection course; expand efforts to masters, PDFs

Expand resources on supporting and evaluating non-traditional forms of scholarship

Explore increased opportunities for intersectoral research and the development of related capabilities

Consultation questions to help shape the strategic plan

- Do you agree with the UBC-wide principles and focuses articulated above?
- Thinking about the cross-cutting principles, are there specific areas in relation to any of the actions, to which we should pay more attention or do something more or differently, to better embody these principles?
- Do you agree with the current G+PS priorities, above? Are there others that should be included?

Supporting students and PDFs to succeed

- Are there ways we can **support students better**?
- Are you aware of **gaps in services** relevant to graduate students?
- Should we view **funding** differently (e.g. length of doctoral funding, Masters funding, other policies)?
- How might graduate **supervision** be better supported and evaluated?

Advancing effective innovation in graduate education

- What are the **desired qualities of graduates** (in addition to academic excellence) wrt global outlook, interdisciplinarity, attributes in communication/ethics/creativity, etc, and how can we better support these?
- Are there ways we can enhance student **preparation for their futures**? Are we meeting the needs of the 21st C? (e.g. curriculum, programs, possibilities for education partners)

Relationship with UBC-O

UBC is seeking to create more synergies, mutual support and efficiencies between its two campuses.

- How could you or program benefit from a closer or more effective relationship with UBC-O?