Enrollment Options for Graduate Students in S20 - CSAHS

1) Full-time Registration

Full-time registration would be appropriate for students who expect to be able to make meaningful progress towards their thesis objectives in S20. This may include conducting originally planned research or scholarly activities that can be done remotely and/or with a COVID-19 research exemption approval, or through alternative activities that have been identified in consultation with your advisor and/or advisory committee.

Impact on Program Duration and Period of Support: The guaranteed period of support (6 semesters for Masters, 12 semesters for PhD) will not be extended for students who register in S20 but find they are not able to make progress as expected. Students in this situation will have the opportunity to apply for delay financial assistance through CSAHS. Information about the COVID-19 Delay Assistance Program will be available in July/August 2020. If you are already beyond your program duration period in S20, you may be eligible to apply for the CSAHS COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Program (see CSAHS S20 COVID-19 Emergency Program Application Form for eligibility details).

Tuition and Fees: Students who remain full-time will continue to pay normal tuition and fees.

Financial Assistance: If a student remains full-time but does not make as much progress as expected in S20, and ends up not being able to complete their program when they expected to as a result, they may be eligible to apply for an “extra” semester of support from the CSAHS. Details about this additional support from the CSAHS will be communicated in July/August 2020.

2) Part-time Registration

Part-time registration may be an appropriate option for students who do not feel they are able to work at their normal capacity in S20, but feel they may be able to make some progress.

Impact on Program Duration and Period of Support: A part-time semester is generally counted as 0.3 of a semester towards your program duration. For details on maximum duration policies at the University of Guelph, please review the graduate calendar.

Impact on Scholarships: Switching to part-time may affect your eligibility to hold certain scholarships. For example, OGS, QEII, IDTS or GTS award holders are not permitted to switch to part-time (even temporarily) and continue to maintain their award. At this time, only the Tri-Agencies (NSERC, CIHR) have formally announced flexibility around enrolment status due to the COVID-19 disruption. Students with SSHRC, NSERC, and CIHR awards can switch to part-time and will be paid at the full amount; the amount will not be prorated, and the end date of the award will remain unchanged. The impact of a switch to part-time on other awards should be confirmed with sponsor and/or verified in the terms and conditions of the award in question. For example, at the...
time of this communication (May 22nd, 2020), the University’s Dean’s Tri-Council Top-Up still requires students to remain registered full-time.

Tuition and Fees: Part-time students are still required to pay tuition and fees. Part-time tuition (including all fees) is approximately $1800 for domestic graduate students, and approximately $4800-5080 for international students (exact fees can be found on the Student Financial Services website).

How to Apply: Office of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies has instructions and an application form for students wishing to transfer part-time for S20. Departmental approval and supporting documentation are required, and you will be issued a new funding form.

Financial Assistance: University of Guelph's financial need program is not available to students who switch to part-time status. In addition, GRA support for part-time students may be reduced.

3) Leave of Absence

For students who do not expect to make meaningful progress towards their thesis objectives in S20 (due to restrictions around research activities or for personal reasons), a leave of absence (LOA) may be appropriate.

Impact on Program Duration and Period of Support: A LOA will “pause” your graduate clock and not count toward your program completion time. It also does not count towards your minimum period of guaranteed GRA support.

Impact on Scholarships: OGS, QEII and GTS awards can be paused for students taking a COVID-19 related LOA (be sure to indicate you hold this funding in the LOA request form). SSRHC, NSERC, and CIHR award holders can also request an unpaid COVID-related interruption of up to four months. The impact of a LOA on other awards should be confirmed with the sponsor and/or verified in the terms and conditions of the award in question.

Tuition and Fees: During a LOA, a student is not required to pay any fees or tuition (provided withdrawal occurs before May 29, otherwise, only a partial refund of tuition paid may occur). The full graduate refund schedule is here.

How to Apply: Please see instructions and an application form for a LOA on the OGPS website for more details. Departmental approval is required.

Other Considerations: Note that the University has very specific guidelines around activities that a student can and cannot undertake while on a LOA. A student will retain access to their U of G email but as per the Graduate Calendar: “During an approved LOA, graduate students shall not engage in activities related to their academic program; i.e. the student shall not engage in academic courses or activities including completion of incomplete courses from previous semesters, or research/ writing activities related to their academic program; the student shall not engage in
communications or request feedback from their advisor or advisory committee related to their academic program; the student shall not use university research facilities related to their academic program.”

4) Federal Financial Assistance (Canadian Emergency Student Benefit; CESB)

On May 15th, the federal Government opened applications for the CESB, supporting post-secondary students in the summer months in response to COVID-19. In order to be eligible to receive these funds you must:

a. Not have applied or be receiving funds from CERB
b. Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, registered Indian, or protect person
c. You are studying in Canada or abroad
d. Fit one of the below circumstances:
   i. Unable to find work due to COVID-19
   ii. You are looking for, but cannot find work due to COVID-19
   iii. You are currently working but are making less than $1000 during the 4-week application period

Representatives at the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) have expressed that in order to remain eligible for the CESB, it is a requirement that students must be actively seeking employment. In addition, the CRA may also request, at any time, that you provide documentation that you are/ have been actively searching for work. Possible documentation could range from job applications submitted online to email correspondence etc. It has been communicated that the CESB was intended to financially support post-secondary students who typically work during the summer months. Unfortunately, Graduate students are faced with a more complicated situation. Below are a few examples that Graduate students may be faced with when deciding eligibility for CESB.

**Situation 1:** I am a graduate student who is registered in full-time studies, and during the summer months, have typically secured a part-time job outside of my academic responsibilities. I have proof of my employment for previous summers worked (i.e. T4). Due to COVID-19 I am no longer able to find work and am/ have been actively searching for work. If I find a part-time job, I will take the job. Should I apply to the CESB?

Recommendation: **Yes.** If you have typically worked during the summer months at a part-time or full-time job, have documentation to support this but cannot find work due to COVID-19 OR need financial support this summer and have been **actively** searching for work but cannot find work due to COVID-19 and would take a job if one was offered to you, you are eligible and should apply to the CESB.

**Situation 2:** I am a graduate student registered in full-time studies, and during the summer months do not typically search or are employed in a part-time or full-time position. Should I apply for the CESB?

Recommendation: **No.** If you do not or have not typically secured part-time employment during the summer months outside of your academic responsibilities, you should **not apply** to the CESB. If you apply, and are later asked by the CRA to provide documentation that 1) you have
worked during the summer months before to financially support yourself, or 2) have been actively searching for employment but cannot find any, but cannot provide sufficient documentation, you may be required to pay back all CESB disbursements.

**These examples help provide some recommendations based on our preliminary research, but we strongly encourage you to inquire with CESB directly to determine eligibility. As this is a static document, we cannot guarantee all details are up-to-date or accurate given the rapidly evolving situation.**

Questions? Please contact one of the following:
- Your departmental Graduate Program Assistant
- Your departmental Graduate Program Coordinator
- Sarah Cahill, CSAHS Manager of Graduate Programs (cahills@uoguelph.ca)
- Francesco Leri, ADRGS (csahsadr@uoguelph.ca)

While the situation continues to evolve and we may not have an immediate answer to all your questions, we will do our best to find out and get back to you as needed.