



## **Statement of Purpose**

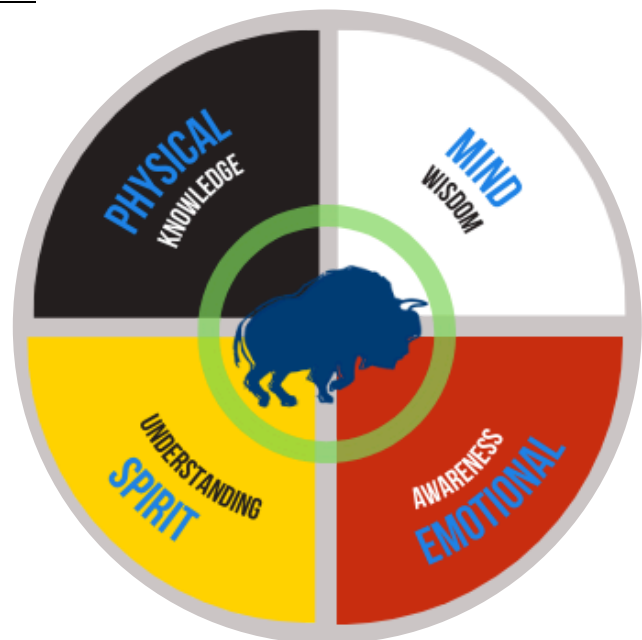
This document was created to provide a template for the graduate student-supervisor relationship. Graduate education is a pivotal time for the student, and the student-supervisor relationship builds the foundation of your graduate student journey. The School of Graduate Studies recognizes the complexities of graduate education, and how tension can arise when roles and expectations are not clearly defined and understood between both parties.

A letter of understanding is a way for both the student and the supervisor to develop a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities within your working relationship. We encourage you to think of this document as a way to build the foundations of the student-supervisor relationship. Reviewing this document together provides the opportunity to clarify expectations for both student and supervisor. We recommend that you check off each item as you discuss it, and that each retains a signed copy.

## **School of Graduate Studies' Medicine Wheel**

The School of Graduate Studies' Medicine Wheel was created in collaboration between a ULEthbridge graduate student and local Elders and Knowledge Holders. It recognizes the importance of balance and life cycles through the graduate student journey. Our medicine wheel consists of two circles: the larger circle that encompasses the four sections that represent the different aspects of a graduate student life; the center circle, which represents the student; and the buffalo, which pays homage to the Blackfoot people who care

for the land the graduate students reside and attend classes on, as well as the Elders and people who share their knowledge to create an environment of learning and wellness for all students of different walks of life, in different parts of their journey in our community.



The new student-supervisor letter of understanding draws on the SGS Medicine Wheel. Learn more about the SGS Medicine Wheel, including the story of its creation, [here](#)!

# Academic

PHYSICAL  
KNOWLEDGE

## **Academic Development and Program Completion**

### **As the Student, I acknowledge my responsibilities to**

- ☐ commit to learning the necessary knowledge, skills, and learning approaches necessary for a graduate degree
- ☐ exhibit academic rigour and intellectual honesty in all program work
- ☐ develop a working knowledge of the relevant policies and procedures set by School of Graduate Studies, the University of Lethbridge, and my academic unit
- ☐ dedicate enough time needed to complete my research, course work, and/or thesis within the recommended time for my program
- ☐ submit materials in a timely manner for review and assessment by my Supervisor(s)
- ☐ familiarize myself with the program milestones for my program (ex. Progress and Standing Reports), and work with my Supervisor to meet them

### **As the Supervisor, I acknowledge my responsibilities to**

- ☐ support the development of research interests and academic skills for the duration of the program
- ☐ ensure the thesis is appropriate and achievable for the level of study and duration of program
- ☐ monitor program progress, and provide guidance on achieving milestones (ex. selecting appropriate courses)
- ☐ ensure the completion and submission of Progress and Standing reports biannually
- ☐ provide guidance on the formation of the Supervisory committee
- ☐ develop a working knowledge of the relevant policies and procedures set by the School of Graduate Studies and the University of Lethbridge
- ☐ assist in providing the resources and facilities for my Student to participate in scholarly activities

## **Communication and Meetings**

The frequency and types of communication and meetings will vary depending on the needs of the student and the nature of each student-supervisor working relationship. Outlining clear expectations for both can prevent potential miscommunications.

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**For the duration of the program**, we agree to meet approximately \_\_\_\_\_ times each month. These meetings will be scheduled by \_\_\_\_\_.

Regarding Supervisory Committee meetings, **we will meet at least twice every academic year, as per the School of Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures**. We are equally responsible for ensuring these meetings occur. Once a rough timeline has been determined, \_\_\_\_\_ is the party responsible for scheduling these meetings.

**As the Student, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ communicate with my Supervisor if circumstances occur that affect my ability to make program progress
- ☐ communicate with my Supervisor about any time off I require
- ☐ participate in departmental meetings, seminars, and training when recommended by my Supervisor
- ☐ strive to work respectfully with everyone at the University, including my Supervisor, Supervisory Committee, other students and University staff

**As the Supervisor, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ provide timely feedback on drafts, applications, or research presentations
- ☐ regularly assess my Student's program progress, and clearly communicate if program expectations are not being met
- ☐ assess the validity, integrity, and accuracy of my Student's scholarly work
- ☐ ensure that my Student is aware of expectations regarding communication with the Supervisor, Supervisory Committee and, if appropriate, other members of a research team
- ☐ ensure my Student receives appropriate research training
- ☐ communicate about any leaves of absence and ensure my Student has proper supervision during these absences

**Funding**

**As the Student, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ seek out appropriate GA positions for either teaching or research experience in consultation with my Supervisor
- ☐ seek other funding opportunities through both internal and external grant and scholarship opportunities when applicable

**As the Supervisor, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ recommend funding opportunities that are appropriate for my Student
- ☐ review and support funding applications at the request of my Student to increase chances of success

# Professional Development

## Professional Development

### **As the Student, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ consider completing an [Individualized Development Plan \(IDP\)](#) to make informed decisions about what events, workshops, symposiums, or conferences I will attend
- ☐ seek out both academic and non-academic opportunities that align with my IDP
- ☐ seek funding opportunities to cover conference and travel fees

### **As the Supervisor, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ provide appropriate advice and mentorship regarding Professional Development, and refer my Student to additional supports when needed (i.e. SGS Professional Development, Career Bridge, etc.)
- ☐ encourage my Student to participate in opportunities beyond their program work, such as effective writing courses, career literacy workshops, research grant workshops, or other opportunities that encourage the development of professional, academic, and research skills
- ☐ support my Student's professional development goals

## Dissemination of Knowledge

### **It is both the Supervisor and the Student's responsibility to:**

- ☐ develop a working understanding of the University of Lethbridge and their academic unit's policies and procedures regarding both publications and [Intellectual Property](#)
- ☐ if appropriate, review and complete the [Intellectual Property Guidelines](#) for Supervisors and Students
- ☐ present research results that are publishable in reputable journals, to meet the goal of creating new, viable knowledge and disseminating it appropriately
- ☐ make mutual agreements about deadlines for manuscripts and/or presentations
- ☐ maintain appropriate confidentiality about research activities, as it is understood in disciplinary and Institutional practice

In our research field, the convention is that authors are listed in the following order: \_\_\_\_\_ . We agree that this convention will be normally applied to our joint work except by mutual agreement.

# Community

UNDERSTANDING  
SPIRIT

## **Professional Conduct**

### **As the Student, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ interact with all other students (both undergraduate and graduate), staff, and faculty members in a professional manner
- ☐ familiarize myself with the University's [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- ☐ be receptive to advice provided by staff or faculty members during my education
- ☐ familiarize myself with the University of Lethbridge's [Territorial Acknowledgement](#), and include a Territorial Acknowledgement when appropriate
- ☐ treat all University and laboratory equipment and spaces with respect by following appropriate safety protocols and keeping working spaces clean and tidy

### **As the Supervisor, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ model professional behaviour in my interactions with all students, staff, and faculty members
- ☐ provide advice constructively for the betterment of my Student
- ☐ assist my Student in familiarizing themselves with relevant University policies and procedures related to student conduct
- ☐ guide my Student in learning to work as a scholar in their field

## **Academic Integrity and Ethics**

### **As the Student, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ approach all my graduate program work [ethically and with integrity](#)
- ☐ uphold the standards of academic rigour in my courses, research, and writing
- ☐ develop a working knowledge of the [relevant disciplinary and institutional ethical standards](#), and apply them in my work
- ☐ abide by the [Canadian Copyright Act](#) in all learning and research activities

### **As the Supervisor, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ model both academic integrity and ethical research practices in all that I do
- ☐ assist my Student in gaining a working knowledge of integrity and ethics as they are understood at the University of Lethbridge, including directing them to the relevant policies
- ☐ assist my Student in the completion of the relevant human and/or animal ethical applications their research requires

# Social, Health & Wellness

## **Student Wellbeing and Safety**

### **As the Student, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ communicate with my Supervisor if circumstances related to physical or mental wellbeing arise that affect my ability to progress in my program
- ☐ work with my Supervisor to create an adjusted timeline for my program, and seek a Leave of Absence or a Program Extension from the School of Graduate Studies if necessary
- ☐ complete all safety training deemed necessary for my research to be conducted safely (ex: WHMIS, etc.)
- ☐ adhere to institutional, department, and laboratory policies regarding safety procedures

### **As the Supervisor, I acknowledge my responsibilities to:**

- ☐ work with my Student to create an appropriate plan for program completion should such circumstances arise
- ☐ refer my Student to appropriate support resources when necessary
- ☐ make every reasonable effort to ensure my Student's learning and working environment is safe and adequately supported
- ☐ ensure that my Student has received appropriate safety training prior to commencing work.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

### **As the Student, I acknowledge my responsibility to:**

- ☐ maintain confidentiality of all research activities as determined by my relevant Board of Ethics
- ☐ if confidential information is provided to me during my program, I will not disclose the confidential information to any third party, except as required by law or as permitted by the agreement pursuant to which the confidential information was shared
- ☐ recognize that my program is subject to [the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FOIP\)](#)

### **As the Supervisor, I acknowledge my responsibility to:**

- ☐ direct my Student to relevant confidentiality or privacy policies
- ☐ assist my Student in learning to maintain confidentiality and privacy within the context of their work