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(see also [Terms and conditions](#))

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## INTRODUCTION

Polytechnique Montréal recognizes the importance of providing graduate students with high-quality supervision. By its Supervision Policy for Graduate Students, Polytechnique signifies its desire for the continuing improvement of this pedagogical and professional activity. Polytechnique would like the quality of supervision provided to its graduate students to be recognized and for it to constitute an additional attraction in recruiting the best possible candidates.

The supervision of a graduate student is a demanding task carried out in a scientific and technical context. The scope, duration and forms that this supervision may take vary according to the program of studies: specialized graduate diploma (diplôme d'études supérieures spécialisées, or DESS), course-based master's degree, research-based master's degree, or doctorate. However, in all cases, it is crucial to offer candidates a rich, diversified and well-organized intellectual and scientific environment in a personalized context.

The creation of this environment requires the concerted efforts of several parties:

- Polytechnique Montréal;
- The department directors and graduate studies coordinators or officers;
- The academic or research supervisors; and
- The students in all the graduate studies programs.

This document first provides a general framework, followed by a series of commitments. These commitments define the conditions necessary to the quality supervision of graduate students at Polytechnique Montréal.

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## GENERAL FRAMEWORK

### Definition

The implementation of quality supervision for graduate students consists in creating all the scientific, interpersonal, technical, financial, administrative and institutional conditions favourable to successful studies and to the development of the intellectual, scientific and professional autonomy required by the program of study in question. The collective organization of such an environment lies in the hands of the academic or research supervisors, the students, the department directors, the graduate studies program officers, and Polytechnique Montréal.

### Individuals responsible for the policy

The Supervision Policy for Graduate Students comes under the responsibility of the Academic

Council. The Chief Academic and International Officer of École Polytechnique is responsible for the application of the policy to the various parties concerned, and for the implementation of the various terms and conditions.

### **Other official documents**

Other documents provide a complement to this policy, among them: the Graduate Studies Calendar, the bursary listing, the financial aid policy, the thesis presentation and defence guide, the dissertation presentation and defence guide, the internship or project report presentation guide, the policy on integrity, and the policy on technological intellectual property.

### **Financing**

Graduate students' financing must be seen as a collective effort by which École Polytechnique, the department director or the graduate studies program officer, the academic or research supervisor and the student work to provide the latter with financial conditions adequate to the pursuit of his or her studies.

### **Duration of studies**

The duration of studies in the various graduate programs is not easy to determine. Many factors may influence that duration. However, in the interest of all the parties involved, the parties come to an agreement to ensure that the studies are completed within a reasonable timeframe.

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## **ENGAGEMENTS**

The Supervision Policy for Graduate Students sets out commitments for the four following parties:

- The academic or research supervisor;
- The graduate student;
- The department director, or, as applicable, the graduate studies program officer;
- Polytechnique Montréal.

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### **1 Commitments of the academic or research supervisor ▲**

The policy recognizes that the supervisor/student relationship is the very essence of graduate student supervision. The policy also recognizes that there are many effective and beneficial forms of supervision. To ensure that the supervision relationship is as harmonious, transparent and effective as possible, each academic or research supervisor and each student must give of themselves and work to maintain the best organizational conditions and the best interpersonal relations possible. With this goal in mind, the academic or research supervisor undertakes the following commitments:

1.1 The academic or research supervisor commits to discussing, with each new student, as of the beginning of his or her studies, a certain number of subjects that will influence the future of their common work. He or she commits to re-discussing any of these subjects as needed. (For example, the reciprocal goals relative to graduate studies, the study plan, the work program and deadlines, the terms and conditions of supervision, the possibilities for recourse to department staff, the physical framework, intellectual property, financing, the eventual payment of various research costs, etc.)

1.2 The academic or research supervisor commits to considering, supporting and encouraging each of his or her students.

1.3 The academic or research supervisor commits to providing pertinent guidance to each of his or her students through each step of studies or research. (For example, course choices, research topic, work, methodological aspects, administrative aspects, writing, presentations, defence, etc.)

1.4 The academic or research supervisor commits to being available within a reasonable timeframe for each of his or her graduate students. In work meetings, he or she commits to listening actively.

1.5 The academic or research supervisor commits to reacting to the work handed in to him or her in a constructive manner and within a reasonable timeframe.

1.6 The academic or research supervisor commits to demonstrating a sense of realism in every aspect of the studies or research undertaken by the student. (For example, scope of the study plan, scope of the research topic, deadlines, number of research contracts, number of teaching assignments, etc.)

1.7 The academic or research supervisor commits to discussing with each student the financing possibilities for his or her studies, with a view to arriving at a consensual arrangement. (For example, bursaries, salaries, contracts, nature of the financing sources, duration of the financing, constraints, risks, etc.)

1.8 The academic or research supervisor commits to informing his or her students of any factor that may significantly interfere with or delay the progress of their work.

1.9 The academic or research supervisor commits, as much as possible, to offering his or her collaboration in the work of the Graduate Studies Committee (the Committee's mandate is described in Article 3.3).

1.10 The academic or research supervisor commits, in relevant cases, to encouraging his or her students to present the fruit of their work or research in colloquia, conferences and so forth, or to submit it to appropriate journals, and commits to facilitating that process within his or her means.

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## **2 Commitments of the graduate student ▲**

The life of a graduate student comes with numerous professional requirements. Among them are: learning the research process or the process for carrying out major works, respecting deadlines, organizing and continually revising work, regularly taking notes on work in writing, improving study skills, preparing and presenting science talks at various steps of the study or research, collaborating effectively and transparently with peers, demonstrating critical thinking skills, etc. To carry out all these tasks, the graduate student undertakes the following commitments:

2.1 The student commits to an attitude of taking charge, taking responsibility and taking initiative with regard to his or her studies, his or her work and the supervision relationship with his or her academic or research supervisor.

2.2 The student commits to devoting the work time necessary to reaching the objectives and respecting the set and discussed deadlines.

2.3 The student commits to being proactive with regard to meetings with his or her academic or research supervisor.

2.4 The student commits to communicating, as soon as possible, his or her needs and expectations to the academic or research supervisor or to the Graduate Studies Committee (the Committee's mandate is described in Article 3.3). He or she commits to discussing the means to take to meet those needs and expectations as closely as possible.

2.5 The student commits to informing the academic or research supervisor of any factor that may significantly interfere with or delay the progress of the studies or work.

2.6 The student commits to actively researching the various sources of financing that may be accessible. (For example, bursaries, etc.)

2.7 The student commits, as much as possible, to offering his or her collaboration with the work of the Graduate Studies Committee (the Committee's mandate is described in Article 3.3).

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## **3 Commitments of the department director or, as appropriate, of the graduate studies program officer ▲**

The policy considers that the department director or the graduate studies program officer is a major player in graduate studies supervision and education. Indeed, it is through the many activities and strategies of the department or graduate studies program (professional, academic and administrative

activities, and even social activities) that a rich and diversified intellectual and scientific environment fitting for graduate studies is created. With a view to the quality of this environment, the department director or graduate studies program officer undertakes the following commitments:

3.1 The department director or the graduate studies program officer commits to creating a permanent structure for welcoming, informing and advising new students to ease their integration.

3.2 The department director or the graduate studies program officer commits to instigating and supporting regular departmental science activities (and perhaps interdepartmental ones) aiming to inform attendees about the demands of the scientific milieu and the milieux in which results are disseminated. (For example, discussions, speakers, guests, colloquia, seminars, etc.)

3.3 The department director or the graduate studies program officer commits to creating a Graduate Studies Committee. The Committee's mandate will be: 1) to propose solutions to problem or conflict situations and to ensure those solutions are implemented, and 2) to propose improvements of the supervision procedures to the appropriate governing bodies.

3.4 The department director or the graduate studies program officer commits to conducting regular administrative monitoring of students' files, via the intermediary of the graduate studies coordinator, and to flag all issues to the student and to his or her academic or research supervisor.

3.5 The department director or the graduate studies program officer commits to providing each student with the appropriate physical work conditions within their means.

3.6 The department director or the graduate studies program officer commits, as much as possible, to publicizing the various teaching assignment contracts that could be filled by graduate students. (For example, teaching assignments, exam invigilation, course assignments, correction, supervision of practicums, etc.)

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## 4 Commitments of Polytechnique Montréal ▲

To demonstrate its determination with regard to the continuing improvement of the quality of graduate studies supervision, Polytechnique Montréal undertakes the following commitments:

4.1 Polytechnique Montréal commits to explicitly defining, in collaboration with the various players, the general competencies expected of a student who is completing a DESS, a course-based master's degree, a research-based master's degree or a doctorate.

4.2 Polytechnique Montréal commits to organizing regular welcome and information activities for new graduate students.

4.3 Polytechnique Montréal values the pedagogical and academic function fulfilled by its professorial corps with regard to the supervision of graduate students, and it commits to recognizing this task in its full value within the professors' workloads.

4.4 Polytechnique Montréal commits to organizing professional development and refresher activities for the professorial corps on subjects relating to supervision skills, as well as activities that may inspire reflection about the practice of supervision.

4.5 Polytechnique Montréal commits to providing graduate students with professional development activities every year on various subjects relating to the pursuit of their studies or their research. (For example, workshops on writing science articles, on preparing presentations or bursary applications, etc.)

4.6 Polytechnique Montréal commits to providing students, academic or research supervisors, department directors and graduate studies program officers with efficient administrative services.

4.7 Polytechnique Montréal commits to studying, with the involved parties, the implementation of means to temporarily relieve students who find themselves in unpredictable, dramatic or urgent financial situations.

4.8 With a view to training, Polytechnique Montréal commits, via the Teaching Support Centre, to

soliciting students' opinions on the quality of the supervision they have received and to submit these results confidentially to the academic or research supervisors. The students' opinions will be gathered a few months after they complete their studies.

4.9 Polytechnique Montréal commits to providing a periodic assessment of the general quality of graduate supervision.

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## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Supervision Policy for Graduate Students is constituted of guiding principles. In this context, the terms and conditions for the application of this policy are left to the concerned parties, and their specific details will be dealt with in future endeavours.

The commitments set out in the Policy require individual and collective efforts on the part of all the concerned parties, and they aim to continuously improve the quality of graduate students' supervision.

Following the comments received from the various parties consulted or concerned and the discussions that took place within the committee, it was agreed to propose certain recommendations as a complement to the commitments set out in the Policy. These recommendations (which are neither exclusive nor exhaustive) may be further discussed in the future, and may potentially serve as a guide for the definition of certain terms and conditions related to the Policy. The recommendations are as follows:

- The general terms and conditions for the application of this Policy should be written by an ad hoc committee under the responsibility of the individual in charge of the application of the Policy, i.e. the Chief Academic and International Officer, who would in turn report to the Academic Council. These terms and conditions should be approved by the Academic Council. The committee would also be tasked with identifying the elements of the terms and conditions that should be left to certain concerned parties (for example, the department directors or graduate studies program officers) in order to respect their specific cultures or specific operational structures.

- The Graduate Studies Committee of each department or program should be formed by a majority of professors, including the Graduate studies coordinator and at least one graduate student representative. Should a committee member find themselves in a potential conflict of interest situation with regard to the subjects under discussion, that member should withdraw temporarily from the committee's work.

- Problem or conflict situations reported to the Graduate Studies Committee should be presented in writing.

- In a concerted manner and within their means, Polytechnique Montréal, the department director or the graduate studies program officer and the academic or research supervisor should provide their graduate students with resources and technical staff in a sufficient number to meet the needs of their work.

- Polytechnique Montréal should distribute to the concerned parties a copy of the laws and regulations in effect with regard to workplace health and safety standards such that those standards may be respected, particularly in the context of experimental studies carried out by graduate students.