Graduate Handbook 2019-20

Simon Fraser University
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1 THE BASICS

1.1 Graduate Chair’s Welcome

Dear Graduate Class of 2019-20:

Congratulations on your admission to the Master of Arts in International Studies (MAIS) at Simon Fraser University’s School for International Studies. You are about to embark on what past MAIS students have found to be a challenging and rewarding experience. While our program is a demanding one, we aim for it to be illuminating and enriching for your professional, academic and personal growth. Our goal is to deepen your understanding of the complex problems facing the contemporary world, to help you become more analytical in addressing them, and to enhance your appreciation for interdisciplinary approaches to international studies. In this process, we hope that the international diversity of our students will also help expand your personal horizons.

The MAIS is an intense program of study that will require you to commit a great deal of your time while you are enrolled. To succeed and get the most out of the program, it is important that you not only keep up with your coursework, but also maintain effective communication with one another, your instructors, your senior supervisor, and our administrative staff. We also expect you to be an active member of the School’s intellectual community and to participate in organized lectures, colloquia, and events at the School for International Studies and throughout the university. Such participation is what makes our community vibrant.

This handbook has been prepared to help guide and provide valuable information to you during all stages of your progress. As such, I ask that you please read and consult it often as you move through the program. Nevertheless, I also urge you to seek out advice and clarification from me, from the School’s Academic Advisor, and from your supervisor.

It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the School for International Studies and to the MAIS program!

Nicole Jackson
Graduate Chair
1.2 Contact Information

The School for International Studies is located at the Harbour Centre campus in downtown Vancouver. For more information on amenities and services offered at this campus, please consult [http://www.vancouver.sfu.ca/](http://www.vancouver.sfu.ca/)

Mailing address
Simon Fraser University
School for International Studies
515 West Hastings Street, Suite 7200
Vancouver, BC CANADA V6B 5K3

Website
[www.sfu.ca/internationalstudies](http://www.sfu.ca/internationalstudies)

Tel 778.782.7148 | E-mail intst@sfu.ca
### 1.3 Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Tamir Moustafa</td>
<td>HC7238</td>
<td>778.782.8426</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Chair</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:nicole_jackson@sfu.ca">nicole_jackson@sfu.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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### 1.4 Faculty

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Armijo</td>
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<td>HC 7140</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:larmijo@sfu.ca">larmijo@sfu.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research interests: international development, political economy, Latin America</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Cooper</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>HC 7170</td>
<td>778.782.3244</td>
<td><a href="mailto:eccooper@sfu.ca">eccooper@sfu.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research interests: orphanhood due to HIV and AIDS in western Kenya; poverty, forced migration, violence, child protection, and land rights in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Mozambique</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Christopher Gibson</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research interests: political sociology, sociology of development and inequality, political economy, public health, social movements, comparative-historical sociology, urban sociology, social policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research interests: humanitarian intervention, political resistance and protest, the ethics of war</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>Research Interests</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:jason_stearns@sfu.ca">jason_stearns@sfu.ca</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2 STARTING OUT

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) has an excellent guide for new graduate students. Be sure to check out the extensive information on their webpage: [http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/current.html](http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/current.html)

Familiarize yourself with Graduate General Regulations: [http://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/fees-and-regulations/grad-regulation.html](http://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/fees-and-regulations/grad-regulation.html)

#### 2.1 Meet and Greet

Mingle with fellow International Studies graduate students, faculty members and staff at this informal gathering on Monday, September 9 at 4:00pm at the Segal Graduate School of Business located at 500 Granville Street in Room 1200. **Attendance is mandatory and confirmation is required for catering purposes.** Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies holds their own orientation for all new graduate students at the Burnaby campus. Attendance at the Burnaby orientation is optional but recommended.

#### 2.2 International Students

The International Student Handbook is a comprehensive guide to life as an international student at SFU and in Canada. For more information, please consult [http://www.sfu.ca/students/isap/explore.html](http://www.sfu.ca/students/isap/explore.html)

As an international student, you must have health insurance for the entire duration of your studies at SFU. For more information, please consult [http://www.sfu.ca/students/isap/explore/medical/medical.html](http://www.sfu.ca/students/isap/explore/medical/medical.html)
3 ENROLLMENT AND ACADEMIC STANDING

3.1 Registration

Registration typically begins two months before the start of each term. Registration dates and deadlines for each term can be located at:
http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/current/important_dates.html

3.2 Continuous Enrollment

Students in per-term fee programs are required to enroll every term until all requirements for the degree have been fulfilled. A student who does not enroll each term will be automatically discontinued from the program.

3.3 Leave of Absence

All graduate students are required to maintain continuous enrolment. This means when a student finds it necessary to interrupt their studies, they must apply for a leave of absence before the term begins as per Graduate General Regulation 1.8.4.

- Policies regarding withdrawal from courses and/or the University are found in Graduate General Regulation 1.8.3.
- Please see the Forms page for all leave/withdrawal forms.

Before applying for a leave, international graduate students should consult with SFU International Student Advising and Programs to ensure that they comply with the conditions of their study permits.

During a leave of absence graduate students are not enrolled and normally should not use any of the University’s facilities or resources, or undertake academic or research work related to the program from which they have taken a leave of absence. Typically a leave of absence begins on the first day of an academic term and approval for the leave is obtained before the term begins. Students in their first term should apply for an admission deferral rather than a leave of absence. A retroactive request for a leave of absence will not be allowed unless there are documented extenuating circumstances (see 1.8.3).

Awards for which the terms and conditions are established by SFU will be interrupted at the onset of the leave of absence and will resume at the termination of the leave period, provided the student returns to full-time study at that time. The duration of the award will not be changed from the time the award was initiated. Awards for which the terms and conditions are not established by SFU will be paid according to the terms and conditions established by the donor or granting agency.

There are four types of leave:
1. Personal Leave
2. Parental Leave*
3. Medical/Compassionate Leave*
4. Academic Break

See Graduate General Regulation 1.8.4 for more detailed information on the different types of leaves.

* Supporting documentation is required for a parental leave and a medical/compassionate (including family care) leave. Examples of supporting documentation are: Health Care Provider form (filled out by the health care provider), birth certificate, adoption papers, letter, any information that provides support for your request.

The Leave of Absence Request form is available here: https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/dean-gradstudies/currentstudents/Leave%20of%20Absence.pdf

3.4 Limits of Repeated Courses

As per Graduate General Regulation 1.5.5, a graduate student may apply to the graduate program committee to retake a course to improve a grade. At most two courses may be repeated with no course being repeated more than once.

The grades for each instance of a retaken course are recorded on the student’s transcript with notation that the course was retaken to improve the grade. The better grade is used in calculating the CGPA. Units for a retaken course are counted only once toward the total units required for the degree.

3.5 Withdrawal from Courses

Graduate students can withdraw from courses for any reason up to the ninth week of the term (exact dates vary from year to year). There is no academic penalty for this but departmental permission is required (see graduate regulation 1.8.3). No tuition refunds will be made if a student withdraws from a course, except as mandated by tuition fee rules. The notation ‘WD’ will be entered on the student’s transcript.

Graduate students who withdraw from their courses for medical or family reasons may provide documentation of extenuating circumstances up to the twelfth week of the term. With suitable documentation, the student will be permitted to withdraw from one or more courses. Upon petition and documentation from the student, GPS may grant a full or partial tuition fee refund. The notation WE will be entered on the student’s transcript.

3.6 Tuition Fees
• Your tuition and student fees are due near the end of the second week of the first month of the term (see dates and deadlines calendar for specific dates).

• For information on graduate tuition and other fees, please consult: https://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/fees-and-regulations/tuition-fees/graduate.html

• Please note that the International Studies graduate program is a per-term fee program.

• How to pay your fees: http://students.sfu.ca/fees/howtopay.html#tuition

• Important information on tuition, other fees and opting out of the health and dental plan: http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/current/fees-funding.html

• All students are enrolled in the Graduate Student Society (GSS) Health and Dental Plan and the plan fee is automatically included in your tuition fees. For more information, please consult: http://sfugradsociety.ca

3.7 Opt-outs

To avoid any late penalty charges, it is important to pay all outstanding fees while waiting to be opted out of an item (ie. Health, Dental, U-Pass BC). If your opt-out request is approved, the amount of the item will be returned to your account. You can keep the amount on your account to pay for future fees or you can request a refund.

• Opting out of some student fees: Please see the Graduate Student Society page on "Dedicated Fee Groups"

3.8 Refunds

As per https://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/fees-and-regulations/tuition-fees/graduate.html#refunds, a refund of 75% of the tuition fee will be assessed within the first calendar month of the term. A refund of 50% of the tuition fee will be assessed within the second calendar month of the term. No other refund will be made. Students in per term fee programs are not eligible for a refund if they are still enrolled in any other course.

If students withdraw from their graduate program, refunds will be calculated from the date of the official written notification of withdraw submitted to the associate director of graduate admissions and records.

Withdrawal application form:
https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/dean-gradstudies/Forms/GraduateWithdrawal.pdf

4 GRADING AND ACADEMIC HONESTY

4.1 Good Academic Standing

All students are required to maintain a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of at least 3.0. Failure to meet the minimum CGPA is evidence of unsatisfactory progress, and the
matter will be considered by the graduate program committee, as required under the Procedure for the Review of Unsatisfactory Progress in graduate student regulation 1.8.2.

Unsatisfactory progress in two consecutive terms will require the student to withdraw from the program.

Under no circumstances will a student, whose CGPA is below 3.0, be awarded a graduate degree.

4.2 Grade Point Average Scale

SFU uses the following GPA scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>FD(^1)</td>
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4.3 Grade Marking, Appeals and Extension

Students may appeal any grade they receive if they feel it is unwarranted. The first appeal should be to the instructor who assigned the grade. If the student is not satisfied with the result of this appeal, they should send a written explanation of their concerns to the Graduate Chair of the School, along with any assignments returned and marked by the instructor. Should a student have extenuating circumstances that prevented them from completing their coursework, they must contact the course instructor at the earliest opportunity.

In exceptional circumstances, the grade for a course may be deferred for a specified period determined by the course instructor. This shall be entered as DE in the student’s record. If the grade is not received by the Director of Graduate Records & Admissions by the last day of the first month of the next term, the DE grade will automatically be converted to an F. When the grade for a course is not deferred and no grade is received by the director, the

\(^1\) An academic dishonesty report will be filed with the Office of Senate and Academic Services. Repeated offences may result in further disciplinary action.
notation N will be placed in the student’s record. For the purposes of calculating the CGPA, N counts as 0 points.

4.4 Progress Reports

Graduate Progress Reports (GPR) are to be completed annually by all active graduate students in a research-based program at SFU. This falls in line with Graduate General Regulation (GGR) 1.8.1. The purpose of the GPR is to capture information relevant to students’ research and to ensure that the student is achieving a satisfactory status, or greater, from the viewpoint of their assigned senior supervisor.

The intention of this process is to replace the paper based Annual Progress Reviews. Graduate Progress Reports digitize, standardize and allow for the report to be completed anywhere, whether it is individually, or as a group during a supervisory committee meeting.

Once a Graduate Progress Report is generated for a student, it is expected that the report be fully completed within six weeks.

4.5 Academic Honesty

All members of the university community share responsibility for academic standards and the reputation of the university. Academic honesty is a cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge. Academic honesty is a condition of continued membership in the university community.

Academic dishonesty, like other forms of dishonesty, is misrepresentation with intent to deceive or without regard to the source and/or the accuracy of statements/findings. Academic dishonesty, in whatever form, is ultimately destructive of the values of the university; it is, furthermore, unfair and discouraging to the majority of students who pursue their studies honestly. Scholarly integrity is required of all members of the University.

The following examples are representative but not exhaustive of activities constituting academic dishonesty: plagiarism (presenting the work of another person as your own); submitting the same work more than once without prior approval; cheating; impersonation; submitting false records or information; stealing or destroying the work of another student; removing, mutilating, misplacing or destroying books or other library material; unauthorized or inappropriate use of computers, calculators and other forms of technology in course work, assignments or examinations.

As per Graduate General Regulation 1.5.6, the letter grade FD (fail, academic discipline) is given by the chair of the department when a student has committed academic dishonesty. The grade will convert to an F two years following graduation if the student did not commit further acts of academic dishonesty following the imposition of the FD grade.
The University code of academic honesty is contained in Policy S10.01 Appendix 3. Procedures to be followed by the University in imposing a penalty for acts of academic dishonesty are detailed in the policy establishing the university board on student discipline and the senate committee on disciplinary appeals.

Please familiarize yourself with what constitutes academic dishonesty: [http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/academic-integrity/plagiarism](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/academic-integrity/plagiarism)

**Penalties for Acts of Academic Dishonesty**

Penalties imposed by the University for academic dishonesty may include but are not limited to one or more of the following: a warning, a verbal or written reprimand, reassessment of work, failure on a particular assignment, failure in a course, denial of admission or readmission to the university, deregistration, forfeiture of university awards or financial assistance, suspension or permanent suspension from the University or revocation of a degree.

5 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, AIMS AND POLICIES

5.1 Overview

The Master of Arts in International Studies is a twelve-month program to be completed over three semesters. For those choosing the thesis option, completion of the program typically requires a minimum of four terms of study. In addition, students can earn an optional regional concentration by completing two courses and writing their thesis or extended essays on their region of expertise. The available concentrations are Latin American Studies and Middle Eastern Studies.

5.2 Degree Requirements

All students are required to take a total of 7 courses: 6 classes, and either the thesis or essay track, under supervision. Throughout the coursework, students will be expected to read widely and, in addition to writing papers, to undertake some exercises working together in small teams.

In order to satisfy degree requirements, students are required to complete 30 units. Students are strongly encouraged to complete their degree study in no more than 4 terms. There are 4 required and 2 elective courses (for the Extended Essays track), or 5 required and 1 elective courses (for the Thesis track). Elective courses can be taken within International Studies, or another discipline, as approved by the Graduate Chair. Students choosing to pursue a regional concentration should use appropriate elective course(s) to fulfill these requirements. All students will also need to complete the two extended essays or MA thesis.

All courses are graded and included in students’ cumulative GPA with the exception of the thesis and WDA/transfer courses.
Sample course timetables

Thesis Track

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>IS 800-4</td>
<td>co-op placement</td>
<td>IS 898-8 MA Thesis</td>
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<tr>
<td>IS 801-4</td>
<td>IS 806-4</td>
<td>OR research and IS 898-8 MA Thesis</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>elective course</td>
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Extended Essays Track

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<th>Fall 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IS 830-4</td>
<td>IS 800-4</td>
<td>co-op placement</td>
<td>IS 880-6 MA Extended Essays (if not completed in Summer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS 801-4</td>
<td>IS 806-4</td>
<td>OR IS 880-6 MA Extended Essays</td>
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To view the program curriculum and IS course descriptions, go to http://www.sfu.ca/students/calendar/programs/international-studies/master-of-arts.html

5.3 Transfer Credits

Students may apply to take one or more courses at another university for credit towards their MA in International Studies under the following conditions:

a) Such applications shall be made at least one month before the course(s) start and shall be approved by the student’s supervisory committee and GPC and be sent to GPS for final approval.
b) While taking course(s) at another university under these provisions, the student shall maintain normal enrollment at this University, not enrollment on-leave.

A graduate student may apply to have credit for graduate courses taken prior to admission applied to the requirements for the degree, under the following conditions:

a) Courses must have been taken within two years of starting the MAIS program.
b) Courses may not have been used to earn another credential and may not have been taken as part of a qualifying year.
c) Application for advance credit must be made at the time of application for admission, and must be approved by the GPC and GPS.
See graduate regulation 1.7.6.

5.4 Western Dean’s Agreement

Western Canadian Dean’s Agreement allows graduate students to take graduate courses at participating universities in Western Canada.

Participating universities under the Western Canadian Deans’ Agreement are: Athabasca University, University of Alberta, Brandon University, University of British Columbia, British Columbia Institute of Technology, University of Calgary, Concordia University of Edmonton, University of Lethbridge, University of Manitoba, University of Northern British Columbia, University of Regina, Royal Roads University, University of Saskatchewan, Simon Fraser University, Thompson Rivers University, Trinity Western University, University of Victoria, and University of Winnipeg.

WDA Process
1. Complete the Western Deans’ Agreement: Authorization and Course Registration Form available on GPS’ website.
   https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/ex/wcdgs/Western-Deans-Agreement.pdf
2. Scan and email the complete and signed form in PDF to inst@sfu.ca, before the WDA application deadline. The form will be forwarded to GPS for the student after Grad Chair signs.
3. The form is then mailed from GPS to the host institution’s Graduate Studies office.
4. The Graduate Studies office at the host institution then approves the form and has the host department approve as well.
5. Once the host institution has processed the form the student will be admitted and enrolled in the requested course. The student will then receive a letter of notification about admission and enrollment.
6. The host institution also sends GPS a copy of the letter. Once GPS has received confirmation that the student is enrolled at the host institution they will enroll the student in the appropriate WDA course here.
7. Once the student completes the course at the host institution, it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that an official transcript is sent to GPS.
8. Upon receipt of the transcript, GPS will enter the transfer credit to the student record and enter a grade of ‘CO’ against the WDA course in which they were enrolled.

Please note that:

- The application deadline for courses to be taken through the WDA is generally 4–6 weeks before the beginning of the term, so early submission is strongly recommended (See our Dates and Deadlines page for the actual deadline for this term).
- Some institutions may have deadlines for receipt of the WDA application form.
- WDA students must pay the applicable fees to their home institution. As such, if you are an SFU student participating in the WDA through another institution, your fees will
have to be paid through SFU. In addition, if you are a visiting WDA student, you will need to pay your fees to your home university.

- Students whose home institution is outside of Metro Vancouver will be required to pay the graduate student activity fee and the U-pass fee.
- Transfer credit is awarded for the course taken, but the grade obtained is not transferred to the student record and not included in the student's GPA calculation.
- Students may not take a course through the WDA agreement under Audit status.

5.5 Co-operative Education

Students may pursue one or more co-op terms during their studies at SFU in order to gain work experience. For more information on co-operation education, please contact the Arts and Social Sciences Co-operative Education Advisors: http://www.sfu.ca/coop/programs/arts/contact.html

6 SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE

While completing the MA thesis/extended essays, students will work directly with a senior supervisor, who will be their main point of contact. In addition, students will have a second supervisor for their MA thesis/extended essays.

Incoming students are under the supervision of the Graduate Chair until assigned to a senior supervisor. The Graduate Chair normally makes supervisory assignments within the first term once the student’s research interest has been identified. The Graduate Chair will try to match the student to a faculty member with a similar research interest but this may not always be possible.

The senior supervisor is responsible for providing guidance, oversight and feedback during the student’s execution of the MA thesis/extended essays.

Only faculty and associate members of the School may supervise graduate students.

Students may not change supervisory committee members without permission from the Graduate Committee. Changes in the composition of the supervisory committee will rarely be allowed and will only occur in exceptional circumstances.

Prior to a student’s thesis defence, after consultation with the second supervisor, the senior supervisor will suggest an external examiner, who may or may not be a faculty member of SFU. The Examining Committee is thus comprised of the Chair (usually the Graduate Chair), Senior Supervisor, Second Supervisor, and External Examiner.

Role of the Supervisors
Supervisors help students to define and develop topics for their MA Thesis/Essays. Supervisors will expect students working at the postgraduate level to originate topics and ideas themselves through reading and participation in classes.

To get the best out of a supervisor when preparing the MA Thesis/Essays, students should: plan the year’s work carefully; set personal deadlines well ahead of the official submission dates; budget substantial time after completing a full first draft of each assignment; and, following consultation with the senior supervisor for further research; revise, edit, and copy-edit their manuscripts. This is a counsel of perfection. The key point is that the final product is the result of continuous improvement to an original draft. Students must learn to be critical of their own work and to develop ideas independently and in discussion with others.

7 MA THESIS AND EXTENDED ESSAYS

7.1 Overview

The final component of the MAIS program is either two extended essays (IS 880-6) or one MA Thesis (IS 898-8). IS 880 requires the writing of two extended essays of up to 8,000 words (plus bibliography) each, based on coursework. IS 898 requires a thesis of 12,500-16,000 words. This is equivalent to 50-64 pages, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font, plus bibliography. A research proposal for the thesis or essay outlines for the two extended essays are due early in the spring semester, i.e., by noon on March 9, 2020.

Both essays and thesis constitute an exercise in independent study in which students pursue a topic of interest in greater depth than is possible in a standard essay. It allows students to further develop skills of literature search and bibliography construction, synthesis of theoretical and other arguments, appraisal of empirical evidence and judgment. It is an excellent preparation for tasks that students might encounter in future employment such as writing reports in a government or international organization, as well as for further academic research. Please note that IS 898 students are required to formally defend their theses. Follow the instructions at: http://www.sfu.ca/internationalstudies/graduate/thesis-defence-guidelines.html

7.2 Extended Essays Option

Students doing the extended essays component are not required to defend their essays. Library submission of extended essays is non-mandatory.

Extended essays will normally be graduate course term papers, extended in a quality dimension. The extended essay is not a smaller version of a major thesis.

The chosen topic should be one of direct relevance to international studies, and it is advised that the topic is related to issues touched upon in the MAIS core courses, which will
ensure their relevance. The student is required to establish the content of the main body of literature on the chosen problem area, to identify the principal themes, approaches and arguments that have been developed in the literature, and to evaluate these scholarly contributions. The extended essays should demonstrate capability in scholarly research as well as independent critical thought and will be examined by the student’s supervisory committee.

If completing two extended essays, topics and outlines for the essays will need to be submitted to the senior supervisor for approval. These outlines should do three things: explain what is the research problem to be addressed, clearly state why it is an interesting or worthwhile essay, and provide a preliminary bibliography. The brief outline should not exceed 500 words, while the bibliography should be representative of the scholarly work on the chosen topic area. After submission of the final essays, the supervisory committee will assign an overall mark for IS880-6.

7.3 **Thesis Prospectus and Thesis Defence**

**a) Thesis Prospectus Approval**

A thesis prospectus should present an intellectually and empirically manageable thesis topic and place such a topic within the framework of existing work in this area. The thesis prospectus will consist of a written statement (8-12 pages double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, [i.e., 2,000-3,000 words, exclusive of abstract, notes, appendices, and bibliography]).

It should contain:

1. A precise definition of the topic;
2. A demonstration of critical awareness of pertinent literature;
3. Argumentation concerning the perceived significance of the topic in relation to existing knowledge and/or theory in the area;
4. A statement and defence of the research methods and general methodology to be employed.

Students are expected to secure approval of their thesis proposal from their supervisory committee before embarking on field research.

**b) Thesis Preparation and Thesis Defence**

The MA thesis should allow the student to experience a significant engagement with the existing literature on a relevant topic of their choice. Preferably, this topic will be drawn from the MAIS core courses, while adding an empirical focus of the student’s preference. It is encouraged but not mandatory that the thesis be written on the basis of fieldwork, which may extend completion by one term or longer. The experience of fieldwork, however, will be highly appreciated in professional practice or further scholarly work.
Before beginning the first draft of the thesis the student should refer to ’Writing and Submitting Your Thesis: Information Resources’, which can be located at http://www.lib.sfu.ca/help/publish/thesis

Theses assistants in Bennett Library are available for consultation by appointment.

When the first draft of the thesis is nearing completion, the student should consult with the Senior Supervisor and members of the Supervisory Committee about the scheduling of the oral defence. The final version should be ready at least three weeks prior to the defence date, so it can be sent to the external examiner.

The prospectus is assessed according to the following criteria:

- Clarity of the central theme of the thesis, and formulation of a relevant research question.
- Discussion of the types of evidence to be used in support of the argument, and its sources.
- The proposed organization of the thesis, including chapter list and outline of its contents.
- Quality/relevance of the supportive bibliography (bearing in mind that the thesis is still at planning stage).

**c) Procedure for Oral Examination (Defence) of Thesis**

The general format for chairing oral examinations in the School for International Studies is as follows:

1. Self-introduction of the chair, generally the graduate chair, followed by an introduction of candidate, external examiner, and members of the committee.
2. Brief outline of the defence procedure.
4. Questioning begins with the external examiner, proceeds to the second supervisor and, lastly, to the senior supervisor.
5. Second round of questions if required.
6. Open to questions from the floor.
7. Request all but the examining committee to leave while the committee deliberates on the quality of the defence and the thesis.
8. Possible outcomes are: (a) pass, (b) pass with minor revisions to be approved by senior supervisor, (c) major revisions required to be approved by entire committee, (d) fail.


**7.4 Guidelines for Successful Theses and Extended Essays**

*Researching and Writing the Thesis or Extended Essays*
This thesis is intended to develop and test students’ independent study skills and therefore it is an activity that will be undertaken largely on one’s own, but with guidance from the senior supervisor.

The Argument

Each essay or thesis must be clearly organised around a recognisable argument, represented by a clear and concise title. The argument should demonstrate analytical skills, not just descriptive ones. As a graduate student, it is necessary to do more than simply present a body of factual information. Through the argument, students present a way of understanding the subject, which should be linked to issues and debates in the literature reviewed in courses and independent research.

If students are unfamiliar with writing at a graduate level, it would be useful to consult a text on how to write graduate-level essays and papers. For example, chapters 3-5 of Patrick Dunleavy, Studying for a Degree in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1986), which deal with conceptual analysis and the composition of essays and papers.

The Evidence

Students are expected to take the initiative in locating research resources, and each essay or paper is expected to include a substantial proportion of independent research. Essays and papers at graduate level are based on a variety of materials, including official publications, the daily and specialised press, statistical data, online sources, and secondary literature. Course reading lists provide a starting point for research, but students are also expected to explore independently.

There is a distinction between primary and secondary sources. Primary sources provide background material for empirical analysis, and may be the principal source for theoretical and conceptual work. Secondary literature includes monographs by academic writers, articles in scholarly journals, and edited collections.

Primary sources may be required for complex empirical analysis, particularly in the case of a major paper. Primary sources may include scholarly editions of seminal theoretical works (e.g. Adam Smith’s The Wealth of Nations, or Karl Marx’s Capital), but largely refer to archival sources, official publications, statistical tables, and factual materials from the press. Such evidence can also often be found on World Wide Web sites for a range of subjects.

Do not expect books to be available on every topic. Journal articles in many cases have advantages over monographs. They are more specialised, shorter, generally more concise and more easily located using various searchable databases or by browsing in the library. They often provide commentary on contemporary theoretical debates and policy issues more promptly than books. Students should be familiar with the major social science journals by browsing in the current periodicals section on the first floor of the library very
early on in the research. Explore International Political Science Abstracts and other search aids on the dedicated CD-ROM terminals in the library. Most of the journals consulted during the course of study are available in full text form electronically from the library's website. If you enter Google Scholar from within SFU’s library site, you will be asked for your SFU login and password, which will give you automatic authorization to download articles in your search that are available at the library—most are. Most importantly, be innovative in the search.

7.5 Resources

The MA Extended Essays/Thesis is not just something that comes at the end of your course of study; it is an integral and key part of it. Students should be preparing for the MA essays/thesis from the day of arrival. To help prepare for this final component, students are encouraged to participate in these workshops organized by different SFU units:

- Any of the workshops run by the Research Commons through the SFU Library:
  [http://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/rc/services/workshops](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/rc/services/workshops)
- A workshop with the Theses Assistant to help with formatting and submission of your MA Project. The Theses Assistant’s office within the SFU Bennett Library offers a wide range of online resources relating to the preparation and submission of the extended essays or thesis. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves early on with the policies and procedures surrounding library submission rather than waiting until the summer term:

We recommend visiting the Graduate Writing Resources page available from the Research Commons at [https://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/rc/writing/graduate-writing-resources](https://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/rc/writing/graduate-writing-resources).

Also refer to “Important Information and Resources for Degree Completion” on International Studies Program Requirements webpage (at the bottom of the page):
[http://www.sfu.ca/internationalstudies/graduate/programrequirements.html](http://www.sfu.ca/internationalstudies/graduate/programrequirements.html)

7.6 Ethics

In general, all research involving human participants requires ethics approval.

Research involving living human subjects occurs when data are derived from:
- Information that is collected through intervention or interaction with a living individual (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, observations taken that are noticeable by the individual);
- Secondary sources/non-public sources (e.g. interviews about a living individual, company personnel records, student records collected by an educational institution);
Identifiable private information about a living individual.

Research in the public domain about a living individual, based exclusively on publicly available information, documents, records, works, performances, actuarial materials, or third party interviews, is not required to undergo research ethics review. However, such research requires ethics review if the individual is approached directly for interviews or for access to private papers. The ‘public domain’ includes all information that is available under FOI (Freedom of Information) legislation in British Columbia and Canada, whether or not the information has been exposed to the public.

For more information, please consult http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/research/r20-01.html

To apply for ethics approval, please go to http://www.sfu.ca/ore/RegistrationtoORESite.html

Contact your senior supervisor if you are unsure if you need ethics approval or not. If you require Ethics Review Board approval, give yourself at least three weeks of lead time prior to starting fieldwork.

7.7 Deadlines

During the summer term, most students will register in IS 880-6 Extended Essays or IS 898-6 MA Thesis. Once defended and approved, the thesis will be placed in the library. The deadline to submit MA thesis to the library is strict. In order to meet this deadline, it is necessary to meet all other published deadlines, including submissions of first and final drafts to your supervisor. Failure to meet the final submission deadline to your supervisory committee will delay graduation and require the payment of additional tuition fees.

Extended essays’ deadlines will be posted by the beginning of the fall term under http://www.sfu.ca/internationalstudies/graduate/programrequirements.html. Please note that no feedback will be provided in the final submission deadline to your supervisory committee. Although library submission of extended essays is non-mandatory, deadlines are strict to ensure all paperwork will be submitted to GPS in time for graduation approval.

8 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

8.1 Merit Based Awards

Scholarships and fellowships recognize outstanding academic achievements; awards generally acknowledge outstanding achievements or community contributions.

Scholarships Workshops: Every fall, GPS sponsors an information session on different scholarships available to graduate students. Representatives from the federal and
provincial granting agencies describe their award programs and answer questions about the preparation of an application.
http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/events/scholarships-workshops.html

8.2 Financial Needs Based Awards

Bursaries

Needs-based awards from external and internal sources are administered primarily by Student Services, Financial Aid. Information on bursaries can be found on
http://www.sfu.ca/students/financialaid/grad/bursaries.html

Work-Study

The Work-Study program provides part-time jobs for full-time undergraduate and graduate students. The purpose is to provide financial assistance and career-related employment experience to students in high financial need. The value of the Work-Study varies according to the applicant’s need and funding availability. Students must meet the following criteria to qualify for the Work-Study program:
• have been assessed to be in high financial need.
• be registered as a full-time student.
• maintain satisfactory academic standing.

Work-Study applications are accepted each term and can be completed on the Student Information System (sis.sfu.ca) following the links under “My Finances”. Only one application is required for both bursaries and the Work-Study program.

For more information, please consult
http://www.sfu.ca/students/financialaid/grad/work-study.html

Deadlines for bursary and Work-Study applications are posted on
http://www.sfu.ca/students/financialaid/grad/deadlines.html

8.3 Government student loans

Government student loans provide funding to eligible Canadian and US students based on demonstrated financial need. Funds will be disbursed through a combination of the Canada Student Loan (CSL) program and the appropriate provincial student loan program. One application will qualify students for both programs. However, the application must be directed to students’ province of residence. If students are unsure as to where their province of residence is, please phone 778.782.4356 for assistance.
http://www.sfu.ca/students/financialaid/grad/loans/home.html

All student loans take a minimum of 6-8 weeks to process, so apply early.
8.4 Teaching Assistantships

All enrolled graduate students are eligible to apply for teaching assistantships. Positions are posted at least six weeks prior to the start of the term on our website, and on GPS’ website. An e-mail of the posting will also go out to graduate students currently enrolled in the program. Application for TA positions outside of the School for International Studies should be made directly to the relevant department(s). TA opportunities may involve working at the Burnaby, Vancouver or Surrey campuses.

http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/job-postings.html

As a Teaching Assistant (TA), employment is governed by a collective agreement between the University and the Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU). Generally, TAs work with a faculty member who is teaching the course. TAs are hired on a term-by-term basis. MA students in the School for International Studies have priority over other graduate students in the university for TA appointments for International Studies undergraduate courses.

8.5 Research Assistantships

Research Assistant (RA) positions are available periodically through faculty members, subject to funding availability. Priority for positions will usually be to students currently enrolled in the program, and will be sent to the student mailing list when positions arise. Although RAs will be paid through the university payroll system, RAs are employees of the faculty member, not the university. Employee rights and obligations are the same as other employees in British Columbia.

8.6 Travel and Research Awards and Graduate International Research Travel Award

The Travel and Minor Research Awards provide financial support to graduate students for the travel component of the scholarly activity related to their research. Only travel to conferences and travel to conduct research are eligible for support. Students interested in the Travel and Minor Research Awards program must ensure they meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in the Terms of Reference

http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/awards/travel-and-research-awards/travelminor.html

Eligible students should contact their graduate program to confirm the application process and deadline dates. Departments may request students to apply using the Graduate Award, Application, and Adjudication System (GA3).

The Graduate International Research Travel Award (GIRTA) provides support to masters and PhD students who must travel in order to undertake research for their degree requirements. The award is valued to a maximum of $6,250 and is tenable only in the term for which the travel is occurring. Interested applicants should read the Terms of Reference to ensure they are eligible. Eligible students should apply using the "Graduate
(International) Research Travel Award form and submit all required documentation to the School.

9 ACCOMMODATION

9.1 University Residence

The SFU Residence at the Charles Chang Innovation Centre is steps away from the historic Gastown and Downtown Vancouver and right in the heart of the SFU Vancouver Campus. With both single and double suites to choose from, our Vancouver residence is home to 68 students, primarily made up of graduate students. If you are looking for a place to live, learn, and be surrounded by a vibrant city, the Charles Chang Innovation Centre is the community for you. The majority of IS grad classes are held at SFU Vancouver. To apply, or for information on SFU Residence and Housing at SFU Burnaby, please consult http://students.sfu.ca/residences/

9.2 Non-University Accommodation

Other accommodation options closer to SFU Vancouver include living in downtown Vancouver or within the Metro Vancouver area. Travel to Waterfront Station (a two-minute walk to SFU Vancouver) from most of the Skytrain stations is 30 minutes or less.


To find out more about Vancouver’s neighbourhoods, please consult http://vancouver.ca/news-calendar/areas-of-the-city.aspx

Useful links for house/apartment hunting:
• Craigslist http://vancouver.en.craigslist.ca/apa/
• Padmapper https://www.padmapper.com/
• Off-Campus Housing 101 https://offcampushousing101.com/