MBB

Orientation Booklet

for

New Graduate Students

2018
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Introduction
Welcome to the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry (MBB). This guidebook is intended to help you become acquainted with how things work around here. Most of the information has been put together from various sources including graduate students, the SFU calendar, staff, etc. When in doubt, please ask someone for help.

Checklist
- Courses - Register for courses. You must always register for your graduate thesis project each semester. Check with the professor of your graduate courses about when the first class meetings will be held.
- Get your Library/ID Card
- Check for your MBB office mailbox (see office staff)
- Arrange for Medical Insurance if you are not already covered under the Provincial Plan
- Get a Social Insurance Number (SIN) (see section on SFU International in booklet)
- Attend a tour of departmental facilities when scheduled
- Attend the Laboratory Safety Training sessions when scheduled (these are obligatory)

See your supervisor about the following:
- Get permission to use code for MBB photocopier
- Science Stores Account
- Lab workstation and specialized equipment
- What Laboratory Safety Training courses you should take

See the MBB Manager, Academic & Administrative Services about the following:
- Payroll start-up forms - See Christine to make sure you are on payroll and to fill out your TD1 form and personal data form.
- Get keys (lab, mailroom, shared equipment rooms)

Important Phone Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MBB Safety Contact</th>
<th>Deidre de Jong-Wong</th>
<th>778-782-4318</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMERGENCIIES</td>
<td>778-782-4500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radiation Safety</td>
<td>Kate Scheel / Susan Yeung</td>
<td>778-782-3633 / 778-782-5728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFU Road Report</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sfu.ca/security/sfuroadconditions/">http://www.sfu.ca/security/sfuroadconditions/</a></td>
<td>604-444-4929</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administration
The following is a list of people that you may need to contact at some point during your graduate studies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simon Fraser University</th>
<th>Phone or email</th>
<th>Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Science: Paul Kench</td>
<td></td>
<td>TASC2-9900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Services</td>
<td>2-5530</td>
<td>TASC2-9900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Graduate Studies: Jeff Derksen</td>
<td></td>
<td>MBC 1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary to the Dean, Sheilagh MacDonald</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gsdale@sfu.ca">gsdale@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>MBC 1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager, Graduate Admissions, Records and Registration: Krista Gerlich-Fitzgerald</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mgargarr@sfu.ca">mgargarr@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>MBC 1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards Manager: Alexandra Gunn</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dgsawards@sfu.ca">dgsawards@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>MBC 1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theses Assistant</td>
<td><a href="mailto:theses@sfu.ca">theses@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>LIB 7039 Theses Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MBB</strong></td>
<td><strong>Phone or email</strong></td>
<td><strong>Room</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair: Nancy Hawkins</td>
<td>2-3541 / <a href="mailto:nhawkins@sfu.ca">nhawkins@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>SSB 8174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair, Graduate Studies Committee: Mark Paetzel</td>
<td>2-4230 / <a href="mailto:mpaetzel@sfu.ca">mpaetzel@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>SSB 6142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager, Academic and Administration Services: Christine Beauchamp</td>
<td>2-3991 / <a href="mailto:mbbmas@sfu.ca">mbbmas@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>SSB 8176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary to the Chair: Nagisa Inoue</td>
<td>2-7024 / <a href="mailto:mbbchair@sfu.ca">mbbchair@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>SSB 8166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Program Assistant: Mimi Fourie</td>
<td>2-5631 / <a href="mailto:mb@sfu.ca">mb@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>SSB 8166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Program Assistant: Nancy Suda</td>
<td>2-5630 / <a href="mailto:mbbugrad@sfu.ca">mbbugrad@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>SSB 8166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System &amp; Instrumentation Consultant: Duncan Napier</td>
<td>2-5569 / <a href="mailto:dgnapier@sfu.ca">dgnapier@sfu.ca</a></td>
<td>SSB 8106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Department Graduate Studies Committee**

The Departmental Graduate Studies Committee (DGSC) is an extremely important part of the Graduate Program. The DGSC is responsible for recommending the acceptance of new graduate students as well as setting and amending policies for the MBB graduate program with the approval of the department. The DGSC also oversees student progress, evaluations, student/advisory committee relations, transfer from MSc to PhD, and most other matters relevant to graduate students.

**Department Scholarship Committee**

The Departmental Scholarship Committee oversees, ranks, adjudicates, and recommends all awards competitions. The Committee receives an annual budget to be used for Graduate Fellowships (GFs), Special Graduate Entrance Scholarships (SGES), International Research Travel Award (GIRTA), President’s PhD Scholarships (PS), and Travel & Minor Research Awards (TMRAs) which they can allocate to their own discretion based on need.

**Tuition & other fees**

All students have to pay a deposit approx. 5 days prior to gaining access to the goSFU registration system. This deposit is applied towards your tuition fees (it is not an additional fee). Tuition and fees must be paid before the deadline announced each semester. Failure to pay your fees on time will result in interest being assessed. If you hold a TAship you can make arrangements to have your fees deducted from your pay. See [http://students.sfu.ca/fees/howtopay/methods/tssupayroll.html](http://students.sfu.ca/fees/howtopay/methods/tssupayroll.html) for more information.

**Courses**

All graduate students must register each semester. Registration information is distributed approximately 2 months prior to the next semester. The website and instructions on how to register are outlined in detail in the registration package. If you are having difficulty with registration, please see the Graduate Program Assistant.

Students **must register for their thesis or project each semester** (MSc = MBB 898 – G100, PhD = MBB 899 – G100). Failure to register will result in the student being withdrawn from their program. They will then be required to complete a new application for admission to graduate studies. You should consult with your supervisor to see what courses you should take each semester.

The Department normally announces courses to be offered one semester in advance. Students may also take Directed Reading courses or may be eligible for courses in other departments or at other universities. You can obtain a “Request for Registration in Directed Readings” form from the Graduate Program Assistant.

**Supervisory Committee**

All graduate students are required to have a supervisory committee by the end of their first month of study. The committee should be chosen in consultation with your senior supervisor and should consist of at least 2 other members. A well-balanced committee should have members that complement each other with respect to their experience and areas of expertise. Your committee is an invaluable resource and as such you should schedule regular meetings with
them to discuss your research plans and progress. Approval of Supervisory Committee forms are available online on the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Fellows website. If you need to change your Supervisory Committee after it is originally formed (add/remove members), you must complete a Change of Supervisory Committee form (found on the Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Fellows website). If your senior supervisor is an associate member in MBB you will need to have two full MBB faculty members on your supervisory committee.

Annual Progress Report

Progress reports must be submitted at least once a year starting in your first semester of study. The due date of your progress report is dependent on the semester in which you are first enrolled. Students will be given a random rotation date to hand in their report. For example, if you began in the 2015 Summer semester, your first progress report is due end July 2015. Next year’s report will be due on or around the same date. The initial meeting to fill out your first Progress Report is a chance for you to meet your supervisory committee and discuss your plans for your research and courses.

It is strongly recommended that you schedule your committee meeting using Doodle (http://doodle.com/?locale=en). This will prevent you from going back and forth in trying to find a date that suits everyone. Do not wait until the last minute to schedule your meeting as faculty have tight schedules.

The Graduate Program Assistant will provide you with an Annual Progress Report form approximately 2 months before the scheduled due date. The progress report consists of a self-evaluation summary of your progress over the past year, a list of courses taken and grades achieved, and an evaluation by each member of your committee that you have made satisfactory progress over the past year.

The progress report must attest that, in the opinion of your supervisory committee, you have made satisfactory progress in your degree program. Should your supervisor or supervisory committee feel that your progress has not been satisfactory, you may be asked to withdraw from your program.

Failure to submit a progress report will result in your registration for the following semester being blocked.

ID/Library Card

During your first semester you will need to get your SFU ID. Photos are taken throughout the semester at the Student Services office in the Maggie Benston Centre (MBC). This card serves as your student ID card, library card and can also function as a debit card at various locations on campus, e.g. food services. Only one card is issued per student and is to be kept for the entire duration of study. There is a fee for lost or stolen cards.

U-Pass BC

All eligible SFU students are using their U-Pass BC on the COMPASS CARD! You will need to buy a Compass Card from one of the TransLink options listed on their website.

Once you have your Compass Card, you will need to follow a couple of simple steps before you can start using the U-Pass BC on your Compass Card:

1. Sign into the U-Pass BC website
2. Select "Simon Fraser University" from the drop down menu
3. Log in using your SFU computing ID (it’s the same as your SFU email log in)
4. Link your Compass Card by entering the 20-digits and CVN on the back of your Compass Card
5. Request your U-Pass BC

It can take up to 24 hours for the U-Pass BC to be loaded onto your Compass Card, so make sure to request it before the end of the month. Once the U-Pass BC is loaded onto your Compass Card, you can start to tap in and tap out on transit. The U-Pass BC on your Compass Card is only valid when you have your SFU student ID card with you.
Remember to hold onto your Compass Card as you will need to log into the U-Pass BC website each month to request your monthly U-Pass BC to be loaded onto your Compass Card. You will be able to request your next month's U-Pass BC starting on the 16 of the current month.

If you have questions about U-Pass BC program, including eligibility and fees, please contact the SFU U-Pass BC office at upass@sfu.ca or 778.782.6930. TransLink has an easy-to-follow graphic loading your U-Pass BC on your Compass Card. More information can be found on their website. Questions about the Compass Card should be directed to TransLink at AskCompass.ca or 604.398.2042.

Keys

See Christine for any key requisitions you may require for offices, labs, buildings, etc. Keys are available from The Access Control office located in Discovery 1, Room 1300. A base deposit of $20 is required. If you get locked out of your lab Christine has a copy for most of the keys. If Christine is unavailable, Campus Security can grant you access provided you have your student ID.

Christine also has keys for any cabinets in the labs. It is a good idea to secure your valuables at all times, as there has been a history of theft in the SSB.

** Please note: You must take a tour (and Laboratory Training) in order to get a PH key to the MBB common equipment rooms. This tour is scheduled at the beginning of each semester. **

Financial Support

The Department strives to offer full financial support for our graduate students. This can be done through fellowships, scholarships, teaching assistantships and/or research assistantships. Normally, full financial support is provided through a combination of mechanisms, generally requiring that the Senior Supervisor agree to provide a research assistantship for at least one semester. Within the first week of your graduate studies, please discuss things such as work time, holiday time, etc. with your Supervisor.

Money received from Graduate Research Assistantships (GRA), scholarships & fellowships is considered "Scholarship income" which is defined by Revenue Canada as follows:

Scholarships and bursaries are amounts paid or benefits given to students to enable them to pursue their education.

Fellowships are similar to scholarships and bursaries in that they are amounts paid or benefits given to persons to enable them to advance their education. The recipient is usually a graduate student and the payer is normally a university, charity, or similar body.

The full amount of scholarships, fellowships, or bursaries that are received by you as a student with respect to your enrollment in a program that entitles you to claim the education amount are not taxable and are not reported as income on your tax return.

Implications:
- Instead of a T4, you are issued a T4A
- You are not "employed", therefore the employment standards act does not apply, ie. holiday pay, weekly work hours and overtime, statutory holidays
- Their are no deductions on your pay cheque, ie, you don't have income tax, CPP or EI deducted. This in turn means you cannot claim EI
- No Record of Employment
- Cannot contribute to RRSP

Money received from Teaching Assistantship is employment income - Income tax, EI & CPP is deducted.
Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA)

Monies for Graduate Research Assistantships come from grants to faculty from various external granting agencies. GRAs are determined solely by your supervisor. The number of GRAs that a supervisor may have to support students can vary greatly. Normally, supervisors will agree to support their graduate students with at least one GRA per year.

Teaching Assistantship (TAship)

Graduate students are hired by the University to conduct undergraduate tutorials, mark exams and assist in course labs. TA applications are generally accepted approximately two months into the semester preceding the TAship, and notification that the application is available on our MBB website will be sent out by email. You are also eligible to apply to TA Biology and Chemistry courses in addition to Molecular Biology & Biochemistry courses.

You will be asked to rank according to preference which courses you want to TA. The ranked preference list for each course is then given to the course instructor to rank their preference for TAs. These ranked lists are then given to the Manager of Academic and Administration Services for assignment of TAs according to the guidelines of the TSSU (Teaching Support Staff Union) Collective Agreement. When you accept a TAship you automatically become a member of the TSSU and therefore are entitled to all the rights and benefits provided by the Union. Everyone in the bargaining unit pays Union dues.

At the beginning of the appointment you should meet with the instructor to determine the expectations for the TAship. The instructor is required to fill out and review with you a Time Use Guideline (TUG), which outlines the specific expectations and time commitment for the TA appointment. The TUG must be submitted by the course instructor to the Undergraduate Assistant by the end of the third week of classes.

Near the end of the TA appointment, your students and the professor you work for will evaluate your performance. This evaluation will be kept on file. You have the right to see this evaluation after the final course grades have been assigned. If you feel the evaluation is unfair, you can respond to it and have this response placed in the file as well.

All textbooks needed to TA a course can be borrowed from the Department. If the Department does not have the required text, see Nancy, the Undergraduate Assistant. You never have to pay for texts assigned in classes that you are TAing. However, any book borrowed from the Department belongs to the Department and must be returned when the course ends.

The SFU Co-op office hires graduate students to mark co-op work term reports. This usually occurs at the very beginning of each term and is a 2 week TSSU appointment. Contact the co-op office for further information.

Scholarships

Graduate students at SFU are fortunate in having a large number of scholarships available. The Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Fellows website lists all awards (http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/awards.html). Note that some scholarships preclude the possibility of concurrently holding a GRA, TAship or Graduate Fellowship.

Mail

Mail is delivered to the Department each morning and is distributed to the graduate student mailboxes by office staff.

Postage on outgoing research mail supported by your senior supervisor (letters dealing with research projects, reprint request, reprint mailing etc.) is paid for by the Department. If speed and security are important, courier services may be used. Courier services are charged to your supervisor’s grant.

Students may send personal mail through the university provided sufficient postage is attached. Interdepartmental mail and mail to UBC requires no postage.

To avoid excessive use of paper and copying, much of the communication within the Department is done via email and various bulletin boards.
**Courier Services**

See MBB Staff. In general, we need to have (1) the grant number that service will be charged to, (2) name, address and phone number of the recipient, (3) description of contents.

Sending something in dry ice? This is a big deal. Don’t just drop the box off and expect office staff to send it for you. You will need to see Bob in Science Receiving for instruction on proper packaging and training (2-4066). Once it is properly packaged, bring the box to the MBB office for shipment.

Last call for overnight courier parcels is 2:00pm. Most courier companies now require you to prepare documentation online. The parcel should be ready for pick-up at the time of the call.

Sending something by local courier for same day service? Get it to the MBB office before 12:00 or it will have to be sent on a rush and end up costing a small fortune. Remember we need the address as well as the name of a contact person and a phone number for that person.

**Photocopying**

The Department has 2 photocopiers that you may use, one in the MBB general office and the other in SSB 7115. Contact Duncan Napier by submitting a ticket online (http://www.sfu.ca/mbb/OnlineResources.html) for setting up a code to use the copiers after your supervisor has authorized you to make copies.

**Stationery**

Office supplies (letterhead, envelopes, overheads, etc.) are available from the General Office. Other supplies such as pens, overhead pens, large quantities of paper etc. are available from Science Stores. Supplies to TA a course or for scientific correspondence are charged to the Department. Taking items for personal use is strongly discouraged.

**Booking Seminar Rooms**

Access the MBB Online Resources web page (http://www.sfu.ca/mbb/OnlineResources.html) to book the Dean of Science rooms, SSB 7109 and SSB 7172 and MBB room SSB 8114. Should the room be locked during your scheduled time, a key is available from the MBB office. There is also a small meeting room available within the MBB office (SSB 8178) that is booked through the MBB office.

**Graduate Studies Handbook**

The handbook provides comprehensive information about Graduate Studies opportunities, policies, procedures and regulations at SFU. See http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/current/new_graduate_students.html.

**Research Support**

*Departmental Seminar Series*

The department hosts a seminar series in which outside speakers discuss topics that are of interest to MBB Faculty and students. The seminars are typically held on Fridays at 3:30pm in the Fall and Spring semesters. All graduate students are expected to attend this research seminar series. Seminar announcements are posted on various notice boards and are also sent out via email.

*Facilities*

There is usually a tour of the facilities at the beginning of each semester. If a formal tour is not offered, please ask a fellow lab member to show you around. There will be an announcement via email and flyers. You must take a tour (and Laboratory Training) in order to get a key to the MBB common equipment rooms.

Neil Dobson (SSB 7124, 778-231-6610) is the person in charge of common use facilities. Tim Heslip (SSB 7145B, 2-6807) provides assistance (and training) with the confocal microscope.
**Science Stores**

Technical and scientific supplies (tubing, pumps, valves, vials etc.) are available in Science Stores ([http://www.sfu.ca/science-stores/](http://www.sfu.ca/science-stores/)) located at B6208 which is 2 levels below the Biology General Office.

Materials picked up/ordered from Science Stores are charged directly to your supervisor's account. Have your supervisor or someone in your lab with signing authority okay the order. There is usually someone on hand during working hours (8:30am-4:30pm) to help you.

If the order is over $1500 you will need to generate a purchase requisition using the on-line purchase requisition system ([http://www.sfu.ca/science-stores/](http://www.sfu.ca/science-stores/)) and get approval by your supervisor, someone with signing authority in your lab or Christine (there should be at least one person in every lab who is trained with the on-line purchase requisition system).

* Please note: SFU ID cards are required in order to make purchases through Science Stores *

**Library**

The library ([http://www.lib.sfu.ca/](http://www.lib.sfu.ca/)) is located across the convocation mall from the Maggie Benston Centre. Requests for new journal subscriptions should be directed to the department’s library representative, Dr. Frederic Pio ([fpio@sfu.ca](mailto:fpio@sfu.ca)). Suggestions for books may be sent directly to the Liaison Librarian for MBB, Melissa Smith ([mnsmith@sfu.ca](mailto:mnsmith@sfu.ca)).

Being a graduate student at SFU also entitles you to borrow material from UBC. If our library does not carry a journal or have a book that you need, you can request them through Interlibrary Loans (ILL). This accesses libraries across Canada. Any book received through ILL can be kept for 2 weeks. Journal articles are copied and sent to you. There is no charge and no limit to this service.

Access to article indexes and databases as well as many electronic journals may be found on the library’s website. Most databases allow you to save searches and email search results or download to bibliographic software (Citation Manager, RefWorks, etc.)

Any questions or concerns regarding the library may be directed to Elyse Neufeld ([eneufeld@sfu.ca](mailto:eneufeld@sfu.ca)).

Related links:

- Services for graduate students: [https://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/rc](https://www.lib.sfu.ca/about/branches-depts/rc)
- SFU library databases: [http://cufts2.lib.sfu.ca/CRDB/BVAS/](http://cufts2.lib.sfu.ca/CRDB/BVAS/)
- Interlibrary loan: [https://www.lib.sfu.ca/borrow/request-materials/ill/request-form](https://www.lib.sfu.ca/borrow/request-materials/ill/request-form)

**LCD Projectors and laptop computers**

Equipment for seminar presentations and thesis defences can be checked out online on the MBB website ([http://www.sfu.ca/mbb/OnlineResources.html](http://www.sfu.ca/mbb/OnlineResources.html)). You login into the system using your computing ID. It is a good idea to reserve these items in advance. For recurring bookings such as lab meetings every week please ask the MBB office staff to enter this type of booking.

**Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC)**

The Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) main office is located in the Education Building (room 7560). Classroom Technology Assistance is located in P9301 and WMC 2262. See [http://www.sfu.ca/tlc/about.html](http://www.sfu.ca/tlc/about.html) for services the TLC provides.

Email inquiries to: [tlcentre@sfu.ca](mailto:tlcentre@sfu.ca) or phone: 2-3910
Molecular Biology and Biochemistry Graduate Caucus

The MBB Graduate Caucus represents MBB graduate students with the objective of improving the quality of student life in the Department. The caucus is involved in organizing student hosted seminar speakers, social events, electing representatives to various committees etc. See http://www.sfu.ca/mbbgradcaucus.html for more information

Amenities

Maggie Benston Centre (MBC)
Most student services are located in the MBC across from the library. These include a pub, coffee shop, SFU Bookstore, Student Services (Registrar and Financial Aid), dining choices, Centre for Student with Disabilities, SFU International, First Nations Student Centre, Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), SFSS Copy Centre, Health & Counselling Centre, SFU Co-op, Work Integrated Learning, Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Fellows office, SFU Archives, Document Solutions and Parking Services.

Recreational Services
All registered students are automatically entitled to a vast array of recreational services (http://students.sfu.ca/recreation.html & http://athletics.sfu.ca/) including gym membership. Facilities include fitness centre, pools, weight rooms, courts, track, jogging trails and saunas. Intramural sports ranging from softball to floor hockey to badminton are available to all members of the campus community.

Postal Services
Mailboxes are located by the bus loop and at the Maggie Benston Centre entrance. A postal outlet is available inside Nesters Market in the Cornerstone Building at the east end of campus.

Transportation
Buses run regularly to SFU from about 7:00am to 1:00am. This is an economical, environmentally-conscious and fairly reliable method of getting to and from campus.

Parking on campus is very limited and semester parking is by permit only. When you apply for parking the first time they require you to present your car registration papers and proof that you are registered in graduate courses (a copy of your unofficial transcript will suffice). Any traffic fines must be paid before you can renew your parking permit. After 3 unpaid violations, your car can be towed.

Graduate Student Society
The SFU Graduate Society provides a number of resources. Their office is in the Maggie Benston Centre 2205, (http://www.sfugradsociety.ca/) Tel: 2-3899.

Food
There are many places on campus for food. Consult the calendar under Dining Services for a full listing of food services available on campus and their operating hours. (http://www.sfu.ca/foodforthought.html)

Housing
Housing on campus is difficult to come by. The types of accommodation on campus are single rooms in a dormitory style setting, 4 person townhomes, studio suites (for graduate students only) and family housing. Admittance to residence officially works on a point system (points are awarded depending on where you come from etc.). A non-refundable deposit is required to apply for residence. Further information about on-campus and other housing can be found in the calendar or on their website (http://www.sfu.ca/students/residences.html).
**Childcare**
The Children's Centre ([http://www.sfuchildcare.ca/](http://www.sfuchildcare.ca/)) provides full and part-time care for children of students, staff, faculty and community families.

**Health Services**
SFU Health Services ([http://www.sfu.ca/students/health/](http://www.sfu.ca/students/health/)) is located on the bottom floor of the MBC and offers quality health care to all SFU students. There are a number of physicians, physiotherapists and a psychiatrist on staff. Any student with current medical insurance is eligible for medical services. Please note that the Board of Governors requires students to have valid medical insurance as a condition of registration.

**Medical Insurance**

**STUDENTS REGISTERED AT SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY MUST BE COVERED BY HEALTH INSURANCE (MSP) AT ALL TIMES.**

*International Students* will have to wait 3 months before they can be covered under the provincial medical services plan. In the meantime they must purchase a short-term medical plan for the first three months in BC. Check [www.sfu.ca/medical-insurance/graduate-students.html](http://www.sfu.ca/medical-insurance/graduate-students.html) for more information.

All graduate students are part of the Grad Benefit Plan (Extended Health).

You are still responsible for MSP (basic Medical Services Plan of BC). Please see below.

**Where do I get more information?**

- GSS Office & Help Desk  
  MBC 2201 / MBC 2205  
  Phone: (778) 782-3899  
  Fax: (778) 782-6594  
  Email: info@sfugradsociety.ca  
  Web: [http://www.studentcare.ca/](http://www.studentcare.ca/)

- For Graduate Benefit Plan help and claims, please contact the provider:  
  Studentcare.net/works  
  Phone: 1-866-369-8795  
  Email: service@studentcare.net  
  Web: [http://www.studentcare.ca/](http://www.studentcare.ca/)

**How do I enroll for coverage?**
You are automatically enrolled provided you meet the eligibility enrolment criteria:
1. You are a graduate student (in a grad career)
2. You are taking at least one course at SFU, and
3. You are residing in Canada

**How do I pay the fee?**
The fees for the health and dental plans will be assessed automatically by the institution at registration if you meet the eligibility criteria previously listed.

**When does my coverage begin and end?**
You will be assessed on a per semester basis. Your coverage will begin either September 1st, January 1st or May 1st.

International students are encouraged to visit the office at MBC 2201 to confirm their eligibility and if they are registered.
**When you are supported by a TAship:**
As a new TA, the university pays 100% of the Medical Services Plan (MSP). You can fill out the online application form at [http://www.tssu.ca/form-benefits-faq/](http://www.tssu.ca/form-benefits-faq/).

If you are Canadian, but not from BC, you also need to bring proof of Canadian Citizenship. If you are an international student you should bring your visa with an employment or student authorization. Coverage is not automatic. You must re-apply each semester.

**When you are supported by a scholarship:**
It is your responsibility to apply for and pay for your own medical premiums. Information and application forms are available online at [http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp). Most students are eligible for reduced premiums (premium assistance) as the premiums are based on your income.

Please check each semester to ensure you are covered by one of the abovementioned methods.

**Outside Advising and Counseling**
SFU has a Human Rights office located in AQ 3045 where students can turn for legal advice, counseling, and assistance if they experience professional, sexual, racial or other discriminatory harassment. Contact the Human Rights office for an appointment at 2-4446. There is also an ombudsman office for legal advice mediation in the event of any case of academic or non-academic dispute. To book an appointment with the ombudsman email ombudsoffice@sfu.ca or call 2-4563.

**SFU International**
SFU International ([http://www.sfu.ca/students/iss.html](http://www.sfu.ca/students/iss.html)) provides support to international graduate and undergraduate students and their families. It is located in MBC 1200 and is open from 9:00am-4:30pm. The Graduate Studies office also has an International Graduate Student Programs coordinator. If you wish to make contact submit a Help ticket at [http://help.deangrad.sfu.ca/](http://help.deangrad.sfu.ca/).

They can help you with the following:

- **Canada Immigration** to clarify regulations and procedures
- Skills for cultural differences
- Information on appropriate medical coverage
- **Housing** options, tenant rights and group sharing
- Temporary mail facilities for new students
- Liaison with academic departments and units in support of international student issues
- Orientation - full and mini-orientations prior to the start of the semester, to familiarize students with the University followed by reunions approximately six weeks later
- **Social Insurance Number** – A SIN is a number unique to you that the Canadian Government requires you to have for taxation purposes if you are a worker. Without a SIN, you cannot get paid.
- Also visit [http://www.sfu.ca/students/isap.html](http://www.sfu.ca/students/isap.html) for more information.

**MBB Graduate Studies Policies FAQ**

1. **I’ve just started grad school and within two months I have to meet my committee and file my first progress report! What am I expected to prepare in such a short time?**

   The first committee meeting for incoming students is intended to allow new graduate students to meet with their committee members. There are no formal requirements for a presentation, however this is a good opportunity to discuss your future research plans and project, or courses that you plan on taking during your first year.
2. My project is interdisciplinary and collaborative so I'd like to ask two non-MBB researchers to form my supervisory committee. Will this be ok with MBB?

Your Graduate supervisory committee must have a minimum of two tenure-track faculty who are full members in the MBB Department. This means Full/Associate/Assistant Professors and not Lecturer/Associate/Adjunct faculty. In addition to the two full members, you are free to include any number of MBB Lecturer/Associate/Adjunct members or non-MBB faculty.

3. My senior supervisor is an associate/adjunct member of MBB. Do I have to find a full MBB member to serve on my supervisory committee?

Yes, you need two full MBB members. See question 2.

4. I just finished my first committee meeting and progress report. When will my next meeting be? What will I be required to prepare before each one?

**Meeting deadlines:** A due date of approximately one year later will be assigned. You will be notified of your due date by the Graduate Program Assistant. Failure to submit a report on the date specified without good reason will result in 2 successive warning letters. If a report is still outstanding, the student will be unregistered from classes until this requirement is met.

**Meeting content:** At each subsequent committee meeting you should give an oral presentation explaining your progress and outlining your plans for the coming year. After the meeting has taken place, you will fill out an official progress report form with signatures of committee members and you also sign the form.

Defending your thesis? Note, it is not necessary to submit a progress report if you are defending your thesis the same semester the report is due. It is, however, recommended you have a final committee meeting to review readiness for defence. If you fall into this category, please inform the Graduate Program Assistant.

5. One of my committee members can't attend my meeting. Can my meeting be cancelled?

The absence of one committee member is not acceptable as a reason to cancel your Supervisory Committee Meeting. In such a case, your committee meeting needs to go ahead. Send the absent committee member a copy of the report (via email) and then that committee member will email their recommendation and comments to you and you then print it and attach to your progress report form and give to the Graduate Program Assistant.

6. Is MBB 806 the same as a committee meeting? If I don't pass it, can I try again later?

No, MBB 806 is not the same as a committee meeting. Contact the grad program assistant to determine when you should have your next meeting. MBB 806 is a requirement for all PhD students and should be taken by the 5th semester. If MBB 806 is unsuccessfully completed, the student may be allowed to enrol again.

7. I'm in the PhD program but my career plans have changed. Can I still earn a MSc degree?

The following needs to be submitted to apply for a transfer to the MSc program from the PhD program: a letter from the student to the Dean of Graduate Studies stating why they are requesting this transfer, a letter from the Senior Supervisor to the Dean of Graduate Studies stating that your Supervisory committee agrees with this transfer and why (they should also state what the plan and timeline are for finishing up your MSc degree), and lastly a copy of your unofficial transcript.
8. **I'm in the MBB MSc program and would like to transfer into the PhD program. What should I prepare in order to apply for transfer and what is the deadline?**

Transfer to the PhD program requires successful completion of MBB 806. Enrolment in MBB 806 requires permission of the student's supervisory committee based on suitable academic and research performance; after this permission is granted, MBB 806 must be completed within the following two semesters and no later than the 5th semester of enrolment in the MSc program. Visit [http://www.sfu.ca/mbb/graduate-program/grad-courses/course-descriptions.html](http://www.sfu.ca/mbb/graduate-program/grad-courses/course-descriptions.html) to get the MBB 806 application form.

There must be a meeting of the student's supervisory committee, and they must approve of the transfer. A progress report HAS to be submitted at this time. You can get progress report documents from the grad program assistant if you don't already have it.

Also ask the grad program assistant to send you the checklist to put the application package together for your request to transfer to PhD.