Per SIAT GPC 2015 04 21
This document is adjunct to SIAT’s calendar entry and to SFU’s Graduate General Regulations. It describes SIAT’s normal practice with respect to the topic it addresses. It has been approved by SIAT’s Graduate Committee.

This document outlines:
1. expectations for graduate student progress, and recommendations for how you structure and proceed towards your degree in a timely fashion
2. the criteria we use to evaluate your progress; and
3. an overview of the formal progress evaluation and consequences of unsatisfactory performance reviews.

Important documents and websites referred to in this document are:
• SIAT Timeline of Milestones and Awards
• Dean of Graduate Studies, Current Students

1. General expectations

• Enroll into 6 credits of courses EVERY term, either in regular courses or the MA/MSc/PhD Thesis course
• Maintain a grade point average of 3.0 to remain in the program
• Maintain a grade point average of 3.5 to be eligible to apply for awards
• Follow an academic plan as outlined below
• Maintain an active relationship with your supervisor(s)
• Perform well in your duties as teaching or research assistants
• Submit complete progress reports by the posted deadline (typically end Spring Terms)
• Apply for scholarships, Teaching Assistant appointments and Research Assistant appointments for which you are eligible annually and/or each Term as appropriate and in consultation with your supervisor
• Check your SFU email daily; it is the primary means of communication between you, your supervisor and the school. Much official communication comes through email and you are expected to respond to email in a timely fashion.
1.1 Recommended study plans for Masters students, may complete earlier

Term 1: Complete 2 graduate courses (GPA 3.0 or higher) and IAT 805 Research Colloquium.
Term 1: Confirm a permanent supervisor.
Term 2: Complete 2 graduate courses (GPA 3.0 or higher) and IAT 805 Research Colloquium. The goal is for you to finish your course requirements by end of Term 2.
Term 2: Engage in research projects with your Senior Supervisor. Continue working on the research projects with your supervisor in the following Terms.
Term 2: Have a COMPLETE supervisory committee in place by the end of Term 2.
Term 3: Have a clear idea of research topic and begin research. Complete and submit a topic notification form signed by your committee.
Term 3: Finish course requirements if some are still outstanding.
Term 4: Focus on thesis research all the time
Term 5: Complete research and most of the writing
Term 5: Submit thesis to supervisory committee
Term 6: Defend, at the latest, during the middle of the Term to allow time for including the recommendations of your committee into your final draft for library submission

1.2 Recommended Study Plan for PhD students, may complete earlier

Term 1: Complete 2 graduate courses (GPA 3.0 or higher) and IAT 805 Research Colloquium.
Term 1: Start building your annotated bibliography by writing critical annotations for papers read in the courses.
Term 1: Confirm a permanent supervisor.
Term 2: Complete 2 graduate courses (GPA 3.0 or higher) and IAT 805 Research Colloquium. The goal is for you to finish your course requirements by end of Term 2.
Term 2: Engage in research projects with your Senior Supervisor. Continue working on the research projects with your supervisor in the following Terms.
Term 2: Continue working on your annotated bibliography, include annotations of papers read for your research.
Term 2: Have a COMPLETE supervisory committee in place by the end of Term 2.
Term 3: Complete course requirements if courses available,
Term 3: Have a clear idea of research topic and begin research.
Complete and submit a topic notification form signed by your committee.
Term 3: Start focusing your annotated bibliography into your research area.
Term 5: Complete and submit annotated bibliography by the end of Term 5.
Term 6: Sit comprehensive exam by the end of Term 6.
Term 6: Complete all remaining course requirements.
Term 7: Complete and present thesis proposal in the first Term of year 3 (Term 7) and do thesis research.
Term 12: Complete thesis research, write and defend the thesis.
2. Making satisfactory progress
Your progress is measured in four areas:

1. **Coursework.** You are expected to perform well in the courses you take. If you are a new Masters student it might surprise you that the requirements of the graduate courses are typically much higher than what you experienced as an undergraduate student. You have to be more self directed and autonomous. You have to dedicate enough time to your studies to succeed. Many graduate courses require extensive critical reading of research papers. If you are a slow reader, you will need to allow for more time. The same goes for writing. A typical course load for graduate students is two courses per term if you have other duties such as a teaching or research assistant positions. Do not plan to take more than three courses per term. You are required to maintain above 3.0 CGPA to remain in the program and you should balance it with your TA and RA work.

2. **Research progress.** SIAT program is a research program. This means that the substantial part of your studies is devoted to working on the research problem that culminates in the thesis. You are expected to steadily progress in your research, from identifying topic, distilling it into research question(s), selecting and applying research method(s), analyzing and interpreting results, and writing and defending the thesis. For PhD students the process has some strict milestones such as annotated bibliography, comprehensive exam, and research proposal.

3. **Research Assistantship.** If you undertake a position of a research assistant you are expected to perform your duties as a researcher. You will be evaluated based on the criteria common for research employees, which can include participating in the meetings with your RA supervisor, conducting research, following supervisor’s instructions, fulfilling your duties in timely fashion, writing papers, etc. Make sure you understand what your RA supervisor’s expectations are.

4. **Teaching Assistantship.** These positions are offered by the School and are governed by the collective agreement between the University and TSSU. The contract specifies the areas of evaluation so make sure you understand what is expected. Once you accept a TA position you are expected to fulfill those requirements.

It is important that you seek feedback on your performance from your supervisor(s). Early feedback makes it easier to correct your performance before the progress evaluation. Be proactive. Regularly meet with your supervisor and ask for the feedback monthly.
3. Progress evaluation

Your progress is formally evaluated twice a year; the complete evaluation takes place at the end of the Spring Term and the partial evaluation is early in the Fall Term. Progress milestones are detailed in the SIAT Term Timeline of Milestones and Awards and summarized below. It is essential that your progress be reviewed as satisfactory, as unsatisfactory progress has a negative impact on your access to awards, appointments, and resources. Students may be required to withdraw from the program after an unsatisfactory progress in accordance with the SFU policy on unsatisfactory progress\(^1\).

Your progress in completing the SIAT Milestones is evaluated with respect to two completion times:

1. the **recommended** completion time (see Section 1);
2. the **overdue** completion time (see below).

Satisfactory progress means achieving the recommended times.

When you exceed the recommended completion time, you will receive a warning in your review. If you go past the overdue time your progress will be rated unsatisfactory. Specifically, should any of the following conditions occur your progress will be deemed unsatisfactory.

**Masters students:**

- Senior supervisor not selected by beginning of Term 2\(^2\)
- Complete committee not selected by end of Term 2\(^3\)
- Topic not identified by the end of Term 3
- All the required courses not completed after student has been in the program for 4 regular teaching terms\(^4\).

**PhD students:**

- Senior supervisor not selected by beginning of Term 2\(^1\)
- Complete committee not selected by end of Term 2\(^2\)
- Topic not identified by the end of Term 3
- All the required courses not completed by the end of Term 6
- Annotated bibliography not approved by end of Term 8
- Comprehensive exam not passed by 2 Terms after Annotated Bibliography or by the end of Term 10, whichever is sooner
- PhD proposal not presented 3 Terms after comprehensive exam or by the end of Term 12, whichever is sooner

If there is a serious reason why you did not meet the criteria above you can ask your senior supervisor to provide a written statement to the Graduate Program Committee that would explain the reasons and state the binding time for correcting the situation. The Graduate Program Committee is the final body accepting or rejecting such appeals. A lack of planning or performing other duties such as a teaching assistant, research assistant, internships, or other forms of employment are not eligible reasons. You have to plan accordingly to meet the progress requirements in the program.

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1. SFU Graduate Regulation 1.8.2
2. SFU Graduate Regulation 1.6.3
3. SFU Graduate Regulation 1.6.4
4. For students starting in the Fall Term this would be Term 5 of their studies.
SIAT Satisfactory Progress Criteria

Each of the milestones above requires the correct forms to be filed with the Graduate Secretary. Lack of the form means we have no proof you have completed the milestone and this may generate an Unsatisfactory or Warning review because you are deemed overtime with respect to that milestone. When the form is submitted, your report will be amended to reflect the date of milestone completion and not of form submission.

Consequences of unsatisfactory progress

Students whose progress has been reviewed as unsatisfactory:

- Will not receive graduate fellowships or recommendation for the fellowships;
- Will not receive matching travel grants;
- Will be placed at the end of the priority list for allocating individual workspaces;
- Will not be considered for Sessional Instructor positions except as obligated by contractual seniority right;
- Will receive reduced priority for TA position appointments except as obligated by contractual requirements with TSSU.
- May be required to withdraw from the program.

Taking a leave

The forms and regulations governing on-leave Terms can be found at [http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/current/registration_status/leaves_withdrawals.html](http://www.sfu.ca/dean-gradstudies/current/registration_status/leaves_withdrawals.html). Term count for SIAT milestones follows the SFU On Leave practice in these guidelines.