

Policy History
Policy No. AC5
Approving Jurisdiction: Senate
Administrative Responsibility: Provost and Vice President Academic
Effective Date: September 1, 2024

Graduate Degree Studies Policy

A. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

This policy is inspired by teachings shared by Cyril Pierre, Elder of the q̓í c̓á ỳ̓ (Katzie) First Nation and his son, Spencer Pierre, as well as by Edward Hall, Knowledge and Language Keeper and member of the Legacy of Chiefs of the kwikw̓əł̓ə m (Kwkwetlem) First Nation. Master’s studies at KPU strive to reflect the Indigenous values of teaching and learning shared with the University, and principles reflected in the various equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and disability justice initiatives in order to serve the diverse needs of our community and industry.

As a special purpose teaching university under British Columbia’s University Act, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) (“the University”) is to provide, inter alia, academic programs leading to certificates, diplomas, baccalaureate, and master’s degrees that meet the needs of the region and beyond. KPU’s Faculty of Graduate Studies fosters an action-oriented intellectual community, further advances research and scholarship, and enhances the ability of disciplinary Faculties across the University to collaborate and adopt an interdisciplinary perspective in developing uniquely positioned graduate programs.

KPU is committed to weaving Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, being and becoming in education. The Faculty of Graduate Studies is a crucial site to recognize and include Indigenous and Black, People of Colour (BPOC) knowledges, epistemologies, and pedagogies in pursuit of decolonization, reconciliation, anti-racism, equity, and inclusion. Indigenous and BPOC teachings inform this Policy and guide the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies endeavors to provide a transparent organizational infrastructure and policy framework in order to: 1) inform and strengthen the development, operation, administration, and governance of master’s degree programs; 2) promote continued educational quality and learner fulfillment in master’s programming; 3) create an inclusive, equitable, nurturing, and supportive environment where learners and employees feel included, respected, and spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically safer.

The purpose of this Policy is to empower the Faculty of Graduate Studies to establish, via general regulations and by-laws, the criteria, standards, and processes to support master’s studies at KPU.

B. SCOPE AND LIMITS

This policy applies to matters related to master's studies and does not address matters related to undergraduate studies or graduate certificates and diplomas.

C. STATEMENT OF POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. Master's studies at KPU will be informed and anchored by the teachings shared with us by individuals from equity-denied communities.
2. In the pursuit of academic excellence, KPU master's studies will take as its starting point the creation of an environment where learners and employees feel included, respected, and spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically safer.¹
3. KPU master's studies will prioritize:²
 - a. Nurturing and supportive (rather than judgmental and institutional) graduate supervision. Graduate Supervision and Graduate Supervisors will, in keeping with this priority, be labelled in policy as Graduate Guidance and Graduate Guides, respectively.
 - b. The entire learner. KPU master's studies will be challenging for the entire learner – beyond being intellectually challenging.
 - c. Right relationships. KPU master's studies will not only build good relations between learners, and between learners and their faculty Guides, but will also support those learners in understanding how their work benefits from, and may benefit, their relations and communities.
 - d. Non-confrontational thesis and project defense. KPU master's studies will use a learner's project or thesis experience to engage in Dialogue, rather than examination or defense, that aims to increase understanding and enable the next steps in the learner's journey. These experiences will be labelled in policy as thesis or project Dialogues and may, where appropriate, include members of the learner's class and community.
4. Master's programming at KPU will be polytechnic, applied, and interdisciplinary.
5. Where appropriate, permitted, and culturally appropriate, Indigenous and BPOC, accessible, and inclusive practices, protocols, and customs can be adopted in milestone moments that mark and celebrate a learner's journey.³
6. Per the University Act, the Faculty of Graduate Studies will have a Dean and representation at Senate.
7. The Faculty of Graduate Studies is responsible for establishing a Graduate Studies Council and relevant standing committees on the development and implementation of appropriate general regulations, by-laws, and supporting operating procedures, in conjunction with existing policies and governance structure and on matters specifically pertaining to master's programming. The

¹ Teachings shared by Cyril Pierre, Elder of the Katzie First Nation, Spencer Pierre, member of the Katzie First Nation, and Edward Hall, Knowledge and Language Keeper and member of the Legacy of Chiefs of the Kwikwetlem Nation, with KPU; Adelle Blackett, Ananya Mukherjee Reed, Marie-Claude Rigaud, Barrington Walker, Scarborough Charter (Scarborough: National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities, 2021). Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges (2015).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Faculty will speak primarily to academic standards for master's studies and not to general academic and discipline-specific issues, which are the proper domain of the disciplinary Faculties.

8. The Graduate Studies Council of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, or appropriate standing committees as defined in the Faculty by-laws shall be responsible for the following matters:
 - a. For the purpose of academic standards, making recommendations to the Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies regarding admission to master's programs or other graduate programs designated by Senate as within the jurisdiction of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.
 - b. Making recommendations to the Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies regarding student leave of absence and withdrawal.
 - c. Making recommendations to the Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies regarding the assignment or reassignment of Graduate Guides.
 - d. Making recommendations to the Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies regarding the composition of, and appointments to, the panel that will engage in the concluding Dialogue for the thesis or project.
 - e. After receiving a full program proposal or program revision proposal from a disciplinary Faculty, making recommendations to Senate regarding that proposal.
 - f. Providing advice, if requested by the Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies, on minimum qualifications for faculty members who teach in a master's program in accordance to Policy AC13, after the Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies received recommendations from the disciplinary department(s) and consulted the Dean(s) of the disciplinary Faculty (Faculties).
 - g. Making recommendations to Senate regarding academic standards for master's programming.
 - h. Making recommendations to the Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies regarding the graduands of the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

D. RELATED POLICIES & LEGISLATION

E. RELATED DOCUMENTS

[The First Peoples Principles of Learning](#)

[KPU Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Commitments, Research and Resources](#)