

SGS Guide: Roles and Responsibilities of the Graduate Chair

At U of T, there are many variations in how graduate departments allocate responsibilities across their graduate leadership teams. Two models for the graduate chair exist: the integrated chair model, where the Chair of a budgetary unit also serves as the Graduate Chair; and the separate chair model, where the Graduate Chair does not also serve as the Chair of a budgetary academic unit.¹ In both models, the Graduate Chair may delegate duties to others in the graduate leadership team. This is particularly evident in the integrated chair model, where it is common to delegate many responsibilities to an Associate Chair Graduate, Associate Director, Director of Graduate Studies, Graduate Coordinator, or similar role(s). In the separate chair model, the Graduate Chair may also choose to delegate some duties to a Graduate Coordinator or similar role, or may elect to fulfill both roles. The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Graduate Chair and identifies which duties can and cannot be delegated.

Graduate Chair

Roles and Responsibilities	Delegate
<p><u><i>Integrated Graduate Chair:</i></u> Responsible for the overall direction of the graduate unit, with authority over the graduate budget and graduate administrative staff resources.</p> <p><u><i>Separate Graduate Chair:</i></u> Responsible for the overall direction of the graduate unit, and for advocating on behalf of the graduate unit to ensure that the appropriate budgetary and administrative staff resources are in place to support graduate activities.</p>	No
Responsible for the implementation of University Policy.	No
In association with the graduate faculty, maintain and improve the quality of graduate education and research in the graduate unit.	No
Responsible for strategic academic planning for the graduate programs within the graduate unit. Such planning will include graduate enrolment planning, long-range program and curriculum development, and supporting graduate research priorities. This work will be done in collegial consultation with all members of the graduate unit.	No
Overall strategic responsibility for graduate recruitment and the management of the graduate student funding packages, awards, and financial aid for graduate students.	No

¹ The separate chair model is only available in tri-campus graduate units housed in multi-department faculties.

<p>Making all appointments to graduate faculty in the graduate unit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appoint existing or prospective members of faculty of the University, or affiliated institutions, of professorial rank, including members holding status-only appointments, to be full or associate members of the graduate faculty; • appoint other individuals from within or outside the University, whether holding professorial rank or not, to be associate members of the graduate faculty; and • appoint retiring full members of the graduate faculty who have received the title of Professor Emeritus from the University of Toronto to the category of member emeritus. 	No
<p>Representing the graduate unit on search committees; participate in all search processes for tenure-stream appointments in the graduate unit. In very specific cases, this could be delegated with express permission by the graduate chair and the delegated person will be chosen by the graduate chair.</p>	No
<p>Playing a key role in the evaluation and promotion of tenure-stream staff holding appointments in their graduate unit. In very specific and rare cases this can be delegated.</p>	No
<p>Provide advice to the academic unit chair in the promotions process.</p>	No
<p>Participate in the annual assessment of members of the graduate unit in relation to their duties as members of the graduate unit for the purpose of progress-through-the-ranks (PTR) evaluation.</p>	No
<p>Responsible for the University's Code of Student Conduct and the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters as they pertain to students registered in the graduate unit's programs.</p>	No
<p>Normally call a meeting at least once a year of the members of the graduate unit.</p>	Yes
<p>In accordance with SGS policy, ensure that every graduate student in the graduate unit has access to student advising.</p>	Yes
<p>Implement SGS guidelines on graduate supervision and assist in resolving student-supervisor disputes.</p>	Yes
<p>On behalf of the graduate unit, ensure that graduate courses to be included in the calendar are duly approved.</p>	Yes
<p>Coordinate graduate student recruitment and admissions processes.</p>	Yes
<p>Coordinate allocation of graduate student funding, awards, and financial aid; and participate in the coordination of TA assignments.</p>	Yes
<p>Responsible for graduate student and postdoctoral affairs within the graduate unit, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • liaising with relevant student, postdoctoral fellow, and alumni groups; • facilitating extra-curricular professional development activities for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows; • facilitating job placement for graduates and postdoctoral fellows. 	Yes

Addendum: For Tri-Campus Chairs of Tri-Campus Graduate Units

Tri-campus graduate units are graduate units that have significant faculty engagement in, and membership from, multiple budgetary academic units across more than one campus. Because graduate matters gain complexity in the tri-campus context, it is important for tri-campus chairs of tri-campus graduate units to consider and, where possible, assume, the following roles and responsibilities in addition to those outlined in the table above.

Lead an annual review of their graduate unit’s tri-campus identity (e.g., review the distribution of graduate faculty memberships within their graduate unit, the tri-campus distribution of teaching within their graduate unit, the location of graduate research, the campus affiliation of students, etc.) to ensure that it accurately reflects current activities and relationships within and across the three campuses.
With assistance from SGS, as needed, work with the leadership teams of their contributing academic units to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clarifies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the resources each academic unit will contribute to the graduate unit; • how the needs and interests of the graduate unit will be incorporated into decision-making within each academic unit; • the privileges and responsibilities of graduate faculty members in the graduate unit; and • the resources (e.g., space, materials) that the graduate unit will provide to all graduate faculty members and to all graduate students.
In collaboration with the leadership teams of their contributing academic units, periodically review the MOU described above to assess its relevance and continued benefits to graduate students, faculty, and staff.
Play a key role in hosting regular and collegial discussions with their contributing academic units about the location of course offerings, considering the impact such offerings might have on both the graduate and undergraduate student experience.
Encourage tri-campus membership on admissions committees and ensure admissions procedures enable faculty members to have equitable access to graduate students.
Work with the respective academic units to ensure graduate faculty on all campuses are included in the recruitment of graduate students, and provide opportunities for visits to these campuses, where appropriate.
Support the allocation of student work spaces on all three campuses that optimally reflects the needs of students and the time they spend on each campus, whether as students or as TAs/RAs.
Provide feedback and advice on appropriate methods of communication that encourage the sharing of information with faculty members and students across campuses (e.g., memos, regular newsletters).
Promote the development of schedules of curricular and extra-curricular activities that prioritize and allow for the participation of all members of their contributing academic units.