

THE OFFICIAL UNOFFICIAL GRAD HANDBOOK

Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
University of Toronto

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Introduction

This document was produced by a collaboration of many grad students in the department. It is foremost a collection of advice and opinions on our experiences here. The document contains suggested timelines for your degree and advice on most aspects of grad school life. However keep in mind that this document is not official, and there may be some errors in specific information (e.g. financials). If you have *any* questions, ask the appropriate departmental staff (usually Kitty Lam or Jenn English). With that in mind, welcome to the department, and we hope that this information helps you along your way in the great world of science!

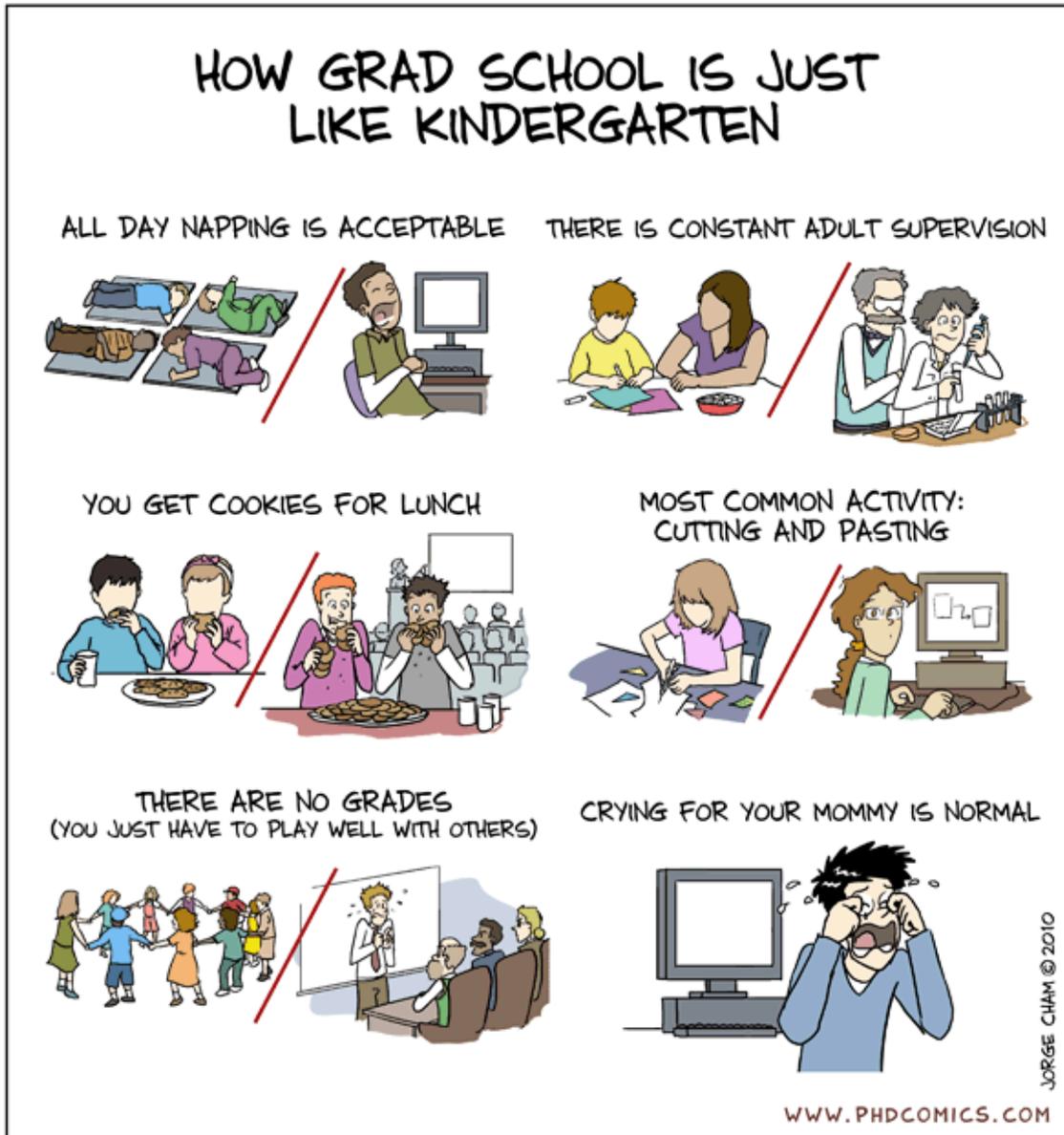
One more thing... a great way to use this handbook is to simply be aware of its contents so that when your appraisal or field season rolls around, for example, you can read the relevant sections.

10 Things I Wish I Had Known When I Started

1. Time management!
2. You should discuss expectations for all areas of your grad studies with your supervisor at the beginning and update annually (or more often) - if your supervisor does not initiate this, then you should! Here are some ideas from this document from UWO ([Creating a Letter of Understanding for Supervisors and Graduate Students](#))
3. Have regular meetings with your supervisor and don't be afraid to go to him for insight when you have worked hard on a particular aspect of your research and are at a dead-end.
4. Course requirements are flexible.
5. You can't pull an all-nighter anymore. There's too much to know, you won't be motivated to, and it isn't a sustainable or effective work habit.
6. You should practice your oral presentation skills regularly. Do dry runs of your talk to other students in the department or offer to give a student seminar – you will get great feedback and great friends!
7. Use literature cited (e.g. EndNotes) and paper organizer (e.g. Papers, Mendeley) programs from the get-go.
8. Undergrad lab assistants make mistakes. Sometimes big ones.
9. Tuition fees can be automatically deducted from your stipend.

10. Insist on doing some TA work even if not needed financially and even if supervisor does not recommend/support. Developing teaching skills and learning if you are cut out to teach are both important.

The Academic Year



September 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2	3 Labour Day	4	5 EEB Grad Social	6	7	8
9	10 Classes begin	11	12	13	14 Deadline to register for 2012/13	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Last day to add fall (F) or full-year (Y) courses	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

October 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 Thanksgiving	9	10	11	12 Exam timetable released	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Last day to drop fall (F) courses	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Fall break for undergrads	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4 Classes end	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Exams					
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	Exams					
23/30	24/31	25	26	27	28	29
	Winter Holiday					

January 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
Winter Holiday						
6	7 Classes begin	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Last day to add winter (S) courses	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

February 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Exam timetable released	16
17 Last day to drop full- year (Y) courses	18 Family Day	19	20	21	22	23
Reading week for undergrads						
24	25	26	27	28		

March 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Last day to drop winter (S) courses	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29 Good Friday	30

April 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 Classes end	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Exams						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Exams						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Exams						
28	29	30				
Exams						

May 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Victoria Day	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24	25	26	27	28	29

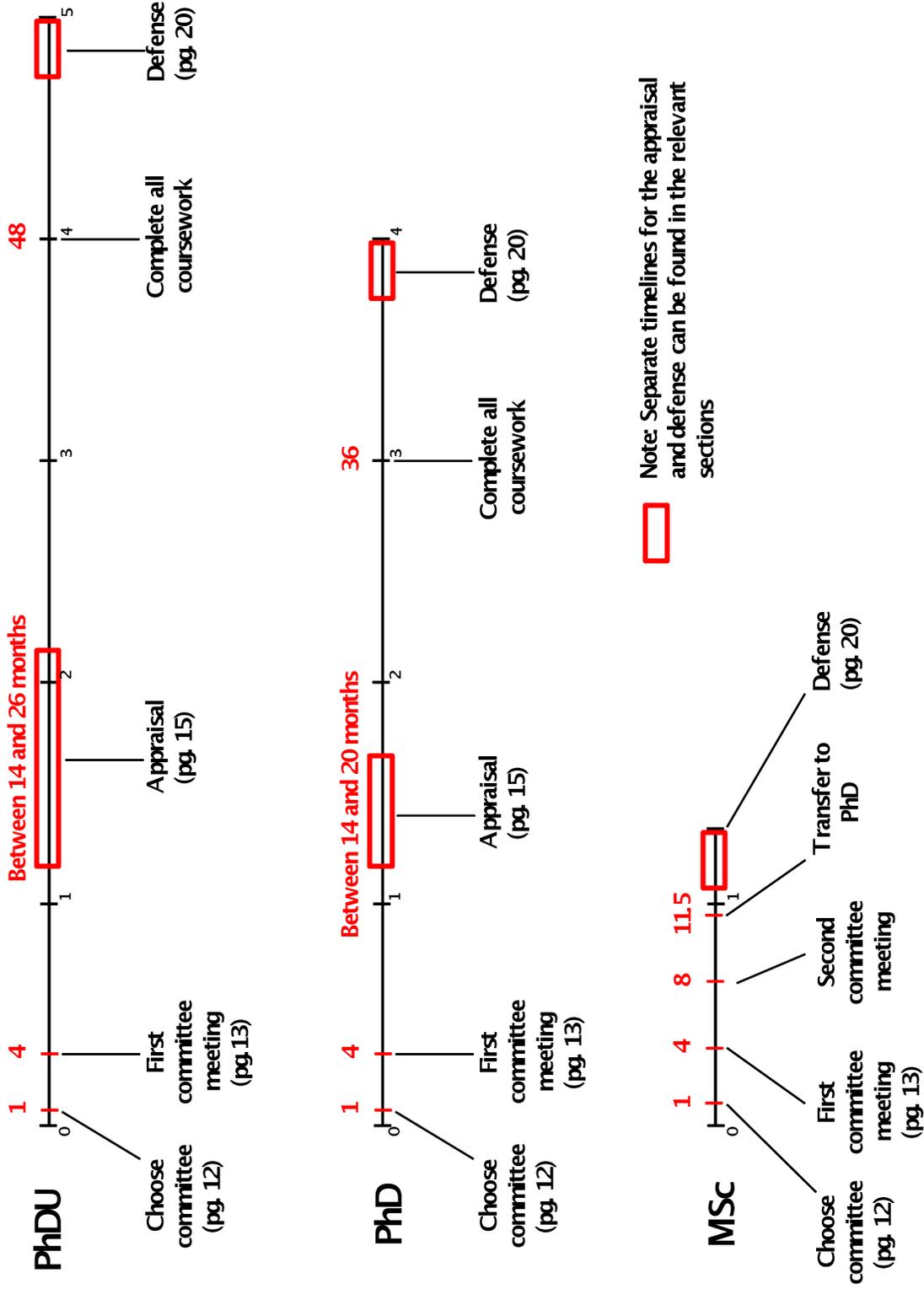
July 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Canada Day	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 NSERC Annual Progress Reports due			

August 2013

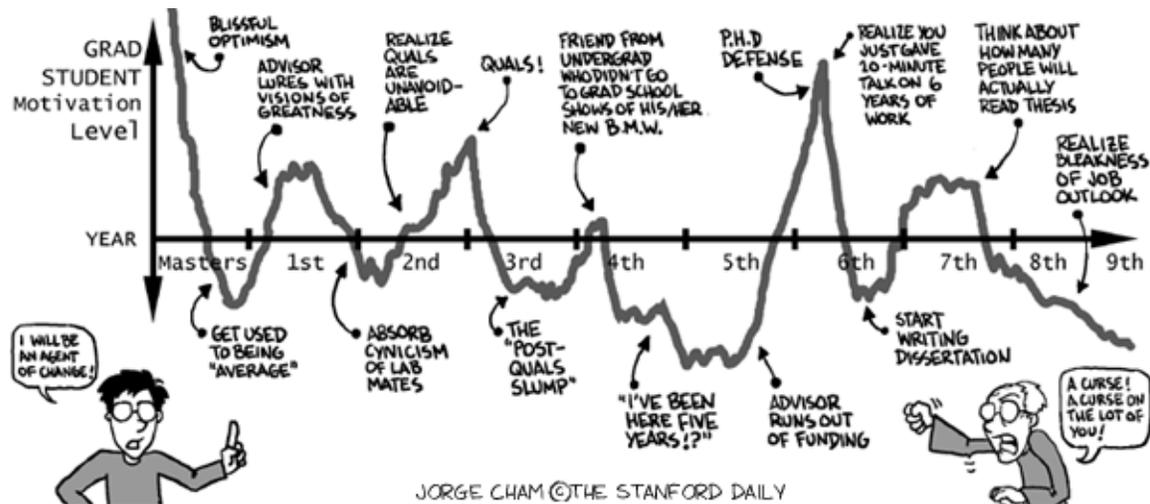
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Civic Holiday	6	7 Request courses for 2013/14	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Submit 2013/14 fees or fee deferral form

Degree Timelines



Research and Program Requirements

Both the PhD and MSc programs at U of T consist of two main parts, your research and courses you will take. Your research is monitored by your advisory committee through regular meetings and set checkpoints (your appraisal exam and defense).



The Supervisory Committee

Now that you have started your graduate degree, one of your major tasks is to choose the members of your supervisory committee. Officially, this has to be done within four weeks of registration, but the deadline is not strictly adhered to. The committee will consist of your supervisor(s) and at least two additional members of the faculty. This group will be there for the rest of your degree to help guide your research but also to challenge and critique it. Post-graduation, they will also be the people writing your letters of reference. Your supervisor will have some suggestions as to who may be most helpful and relevant to your research interests, but you should take time to do your own research and consider your options. Luckily, we have this helpful guide with advice from a number of graduate students.

First of all, you want to make sure that your committee will be helpful to your research. You should look to see whether your research interests align with that of your potential committee members. Going on to their websites and reading their profile and a few recent papers is often the easiest way to do this (accessed through here: <http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/people/d-faculty.htm>). You want people who will be excited about your research. The study system they use is generally not important for your choice. Having members who utilize different systems provides you with a diverse set of opinions and input on the subject and discussion will focus more on the larger conceptual questions.

It is great to have members who all have similar research interests but you should realize that each of the faculty have their own areas of expertise and weakness. You should try to pick committee members who have the skills and knowledge that your supervisor lack and whose strengths complement each other. For example, if your project is statistically intensive, but your advisor is not an expert in the statistics you need, consider adding another committee member who is an expert in those techniques. A great resource for this type of information will be the graduate students in the department. They will have a good idea of the different strength and weakness of their supervisors.

You should also consider how you will get along with the committee. It is imperative that you feel confident around your committee and be comfortable discussing science with them; you should feel that they will be receptive to questions and will provide you with constructive feedback. At the same time, you want to be sure that they will challenge and criticize your research. It is better to have been asked hard questions during your meetings with them than during your presentations at seminars and conferences. You also want to consider whether the members you have chosen will work well together; you don't need any additional stress during your meetings. The faculty that your supervisor suggests will be people he or she knows will work well together, but your choices may not be the same. Again, the graduate students in the department will be able to offer you some advice. They know the personalities of the faculty they have interacted with and can tell you about their experiences with them along with insights as to which of the faculty mesh well together.

Finally, remember that your committee is not set in stone; you can add or replace members if needed. If your research interests change or broaden throughout your degree, you may want to add another member to your committee whose expertise falls into those areas. There is also nothing stopping you from seeking advice from faculty outside of your committee. Don't feel like you need a committee that will cover everything you ever need to know. Many professors in the department are happy to talk about science with motivated grad students and provide unofficial mentorship and advice.

Now that you have chosen your top picks you can send them a polite email or ask them directly if they would like to be in your committee. Some of the faculty may already be heavily involved and may not have time to join your committee, so have some back-ups. You may also decide to meet with them first to determine their level of interest and how well you interact with them.

Your First Committee Meeting

Officially, you should hold your first committee meeting within the first four months of being registered, but it is flexible and can be discussed with your supervisor. You will need to first send your committee a report discussing some of your proposed research and follow that up with a meeting to discuss the

content of the report. It is good to email them a month or more ahead of time to schedule a meeting day and send your report at least three days ahead of the scheduled date (a week is even better, but not always possible).

Your first committee report

You should discuss in detail with your supervisor what and what not to include in the report. The document usually ranges from 5-15 pages long but keep the main section of the document relatively concise -- details can be left in the appendix. The report should be similar to writing a research proposal. You should start with an introduction to give an overview of your research area. This should be followed by your proposed research questions and your choice of study system for answering these questions. You are not expected to have your whole thesis planned out but you should try to show more than just a vague idea of your interests. It would be best to have one or two solid research questions and know why these are worth pursuing. This way, your committee can help you refine your area of interest and suggest possible future directions. Try not to include topics for which you haven't reviewed some of the literature. Also, including a few figures is always useful to illustrate your point and makes the document more interesting to read. Lastly, remember to cite your references, and place details such as experimental protocols in the appendix section.

Since this is your first committee meetings, it may be a good idea for them to know some of your strength and weaknesses. You can provide them with your research experience and any relevant courses you have taken (you can send them your CV along with the committee document). Also include what graduate courses you intend to take to see if they agree with your choices.

All the graduate students have gone through this process before and will likely be happy to help. Ask a few people you know to see if you can take a look at their committee reports -- it is a very useful way to get an idea of how it is written.

Normally, you should show the report to your supervisor at least two weeks ahead of the scheduled meeting to check it over and make any changes. Send the completed reported to the rest of the committee at least three days ahead of the scheduled date so they have time to read it.

At the first meeting

You should be prepared to give a 15-20 minute long PowerPoint presentation that goes over your committee report. You do not need to present all the details, as those are included in your report. Treat it as a jumping-off point for discussion. It may also be a good idea to practice giving the presentation either with your lab or other students in the department.

It is natural to feel nervous about your first committee meeting; for many students it is probably the first time they are faced with this type of situation. In general,

the meeting is not confrontational; it is more similar to a discussion than an exam. The main goal of this meeting is for you to show that you know what you are talking about and that you are on the right track. It is usually kept quite informal and your committee will likely have questions for you throughout your presentation. Most students felt that it was much more relaxed than they expected it to be and that the committee was encouraging even if their ideas were not fully developed yet.

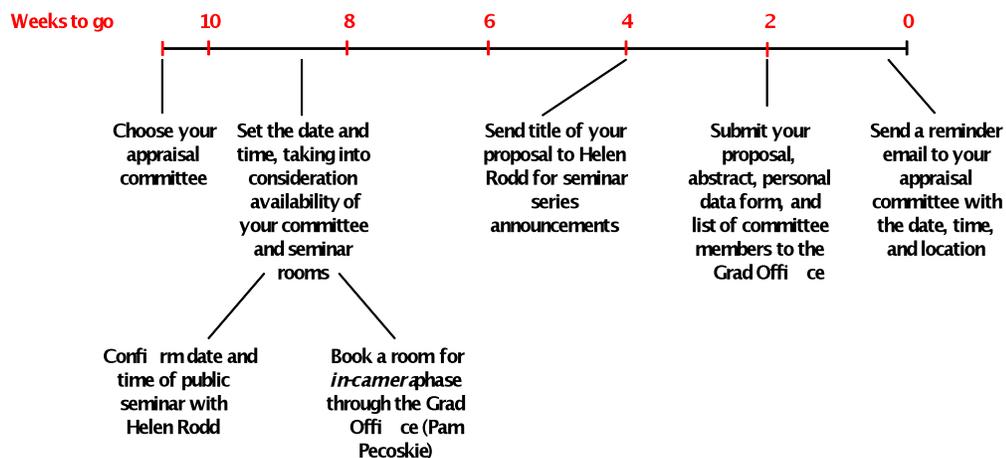
Overall, the meeting will provide you with a good learning experience. It helps clarify what topics are worth pursuing and what directions you should focus on. You should go in with an open mind and be receptive to the advice and criticism your committee provides. It is also your first chance to see how you and your committee interact as a group and how comfortable you are with all of them.

At the end of the meeting, your supervisor will need to fill in a committee meeting report form (<http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/grad/current/grad-forms.htm>). It will be signed by all the members of your committee and you will need to hand it into the graduate office within a week of the meeting.

Appraisal

Only PhD students need to have an appraisal exam. During this exam you present your full research plan to the department through a seminar, followed by an exam given by several faculty members that you and your advisor choose.

Appraisal



Setting a Date

- Ensure that you and your advisor(s) are on the same page when it comes to your appraisal, specifically the timeline for the exam and direction of your proposed research.
- Have a committee meeting to get the green light for the appraisal. Again, it is good to be on the same page with your committee members, so that

- there are no surprises on their end when they read your proposed research (and consequently, no surprises for you on the day of your appraisal).
- Once you have picked your externals (see below), you can use Doodle or Google calendar to set a date, which is often difficult when you have to accommodate at least 5+ people's schedules.
 - Email Helen Rodd to schedule your chosen seminar time.
 - Email Pam Pecoskie to schedule your exam with the department.

External Examiners

- For your appraisal, there are two externals (in addition to your committee), one of whom works outside the realm of your research, so take advantage of this!
- Picking appraisal committee members is a great opportunity to get advice about your research from an expert whose attention you get to monopolize for 2 to 3 hours. Think of faculty that you have always wanted to talk to and/or get their feedback on your research. Most of the time, they are in different fields but have overlapping research interests with you.
- Pick those who are most able to help you, and whose research you respect and admire.
- Discuss several potential choices with your advisor(s), and decide on two that make both parties happy.

Proposal

- Design a solid research plan, rather than trying to memorize everything about your area of research.
- Get creative with your hypotheses and think about what areas of research would keep you engaged.
- Read the scientific literature to identify what has already been done and gaps in our knowledge for future work (including yours) to address.
- It's 20 pages, double-spaced (including figures and literature cited), so you do not have a lot of room for a lengthy discussion on each chapter, especially if you have data to include. So, keep it clear, concise, and to the point.
- If there is a subject you want to describe in greater detail, create an appendix (e.g., manuscript).
- If possible, look at previous students' proposals to get an idea of format and the type of information to include.
- Minor things – include the date, time, and location on your title page, create a table of contents, create a timeline for your PhD, and include your CV (either as a stand-alone or in the appendix; this will be particularly useful for your externals).
- After revision(s) with your advisor, send your proposal (which requires an abstract) to the graduate student coordinator (Pam or Kitty).

Question bank (the student's perspective)

- Do not freak out about this; this is a minor component and only 30 minutes of the exam. Leave it to the end, and study the Q&A over a few days.
- For each question, make sure you can provide a short blurb (a few sentences).
- This section comes at the end of your exam, so your examiners should recognize how exhausted you are, and they will likely cut you some slack if you are not an “expert” on the topic.
- Remember any follow-up questions are permitted BUT do not count towards your knowledge of the Question Bank.

Question bank (the professor's perspective)

- Professors feel students have been doing poorly on the question bank and asked if they could contribute to this section of the handbook:
- Here are some myths that have been heard floating around the department:
 - *You can get away with memorizing one (or two) sentences for each question*
 - *Start cramming a week or two before the exam*
 - *You can look answers up on Wikipedia*
 - *It's a hoop (i.e. you are not really supposed to get anything useful out of the question bank part of the exam).*
 - *I don't need to know anything outside of my own specific area of study—not now, not ever.*
- Why the myths are wrong (and some tips for studying for the Question Bank Questions)
 - The EEB faculty debated long and hard about how to encourage (and ensure that) our students have a good, broad understanding of the fields of ecology and evolution. Some wanted students to write full-on comprehensive exams (many hours of written exams after many months of reading a large stack of books (no kidding)). Some felt that was overkill, so instead, we took what we thought would be the least torturous and most helpful approach—the question bank questions.
 - The questions were selected because they represent important ideas/themes in different areas of ecology and evolution. Therefore, students should know not only about the specific question, but also about the context in which the question is asked. For some questions, reading the section of the chapter in a textbook that is relevant to a question would be sufficient.
 - You will likely be pushed a bit on some of the questions—this is to see how deep and broad your knowledge is. You aren't expected to know everything about all topics (who does?), but if you are

doing a PhD, you should be a scholar and at least strive to have some breadth.

- You are expected to have a greater knowledge about the questions that are related to your field.
- Some students (who have done well) got together in study groups to talk about the answers to the questions.
- Go to seminars (you are supposed to anyway). It is a great way to efficiently (and usually, relatively painlessly) learn about areas outside your own expertise. Go to discussion groups (e.g. the one that Megan and Locke run).
- Ask about sitting in on a few lectures in undergrad course(s) in areas where you are weak (another relatively painless way to strengthen your background in areas outside your field).
- Why you need breadth (and not just because you are a scholar):
 - You won't fail your appraisal exam if you fail the question bank questions, but EEB faculty take the question bank questions seriously. If you don't pass this part, they can require you to take an extra course, write a review paper, etc.
 - Whatever your career path, you will always need to know about things outside your area of expertise. Whether you are lecturing in a course, acting as a consultant, working for the government, etc., breadth will be important.
 - Some of the most exciting scientific discoveries come from putting together ideas from very different fields.

Seminar

- It's a 20 minute seminar and you have to present several chapters, so again, make sure you keep it clear, concise, and to the point.
- Practice in front of your lab and fellow graduate students! It's better to make sure you are not losing your audience earlier (e.g., too detailed or too vague) rather than on the day of your seminar.

T-Minus 1 day

- Take the day off, or least, the afternoon and evening off.
- Practice your seminar, read your proposal, and skim through the key papers.
- Make sure you have thought of the "bigger picture" questions. For example:
 - What are the gaps in your field?
 - How are you going to contribute to your field?
 - Why is your research important?

- If you don't know it now, you won't know it. Remember, you are not expected to know everything and are not an "expert" yet. So, move on from these mini-panic attacks.
- If your advisor is kind enough, ask them if they are willing to take notes for you during the exam. You will be too nervous and busy to keep track of everything during the exam, and likely won't remember a lot of the feedback/criticism after the exam. These notes will be useful to look at several weeks down the road.

D-Day

- Before starting the day, remember to go in with an open mind – i.e., be receptive to constructive criticism and open to discussion .
- Focus your energy on the exam, so don't freak out about your seminar. The seminar will go by fairly quickly, so do a good job and get excited about your work! The rest of the department won't hear about it again until a couple years down the road.
- During the exam, if you need to take a break to use the washroom or catch your breath, just ask. Similarly, if you need to use the washroom while your committee is deliberating, go; there will almost certainly be several minutes of deliberation.
- Keep calm, and don't focus on not being able to answer questions, but instead on what a great project you are planning.
- If you don't know something, just say you don't know it. Remember, you are NOT expected to know everything... but you are expected to be informed, be able to discuss intelligently the pros and cons of your methods, and be able to understand the ecological or evolutionary theory behind the project. At this point, you are just starting in the field. It's at the end of your PhD when you are expected to be an expert.
- Finally, your examiners are NOT attacking you (even though it may feel like it during the exam), nor do they think you are stupid (which you clearly are not). They just want to make sure your PhD is not flawed (or doomed) before it is too late. It's better that they find the holes now than 4–5 years down the road, when you have already slaved away on your projects.

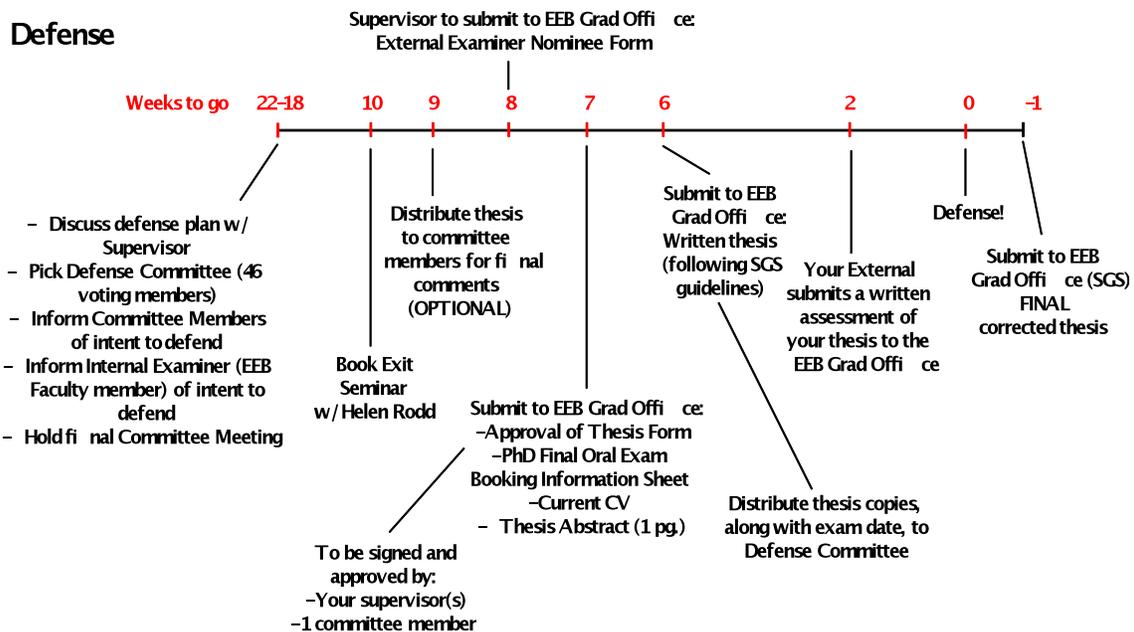
The Aftermath

- Many students (and faculty) say that this is the worst day of your life, so congrats on getting through it! Apparently, your defense won't be nearly as bad since you have already done the work and there won't be as many question marks/hypothetical results about your research then.
- For most of us, the appraisal is not a "feel good" process and definitely not a walk in the park, so don't be too hard on yourself if you didn't answer every question or answer every question correctly. You passed, and quite honestly, that's all that matters in the long run. I know it might not feel like that right now, but in due time, it will.

- When the post-appraisal stress has gone down, look at the notes that your advisor took on your behalf, if available. You will be surprised how many questions you answered correctly, and can now focus and work on the questions that you did not get/understand.
- Oh, do go and celebrate, AND take the next day off. You have passed (one of) the hardest days of your PhD, so congrats again!

Defense

Your defense happens when, you guessed it, you're done! Much of the advice about the appraisal holds here, but there are some minor differences discussed below. Here is a general timeline for all of the things you have to do for your defense:



Setting the Date

- Set a tentative date no less than three months (bare minimum) in advance to allow time for scheduling and last minute complications.
- When setting the tentative date for your thesis defense you should consider, if applicable, other factors such as admission/application cycles for graduate programs at other departments/schools, start dates for jobs and post-docs, vacation plans or anything else that might affect your immediate life following graduation.
- Have lots of back-up options for members of your defense committee as your preferred examiners may have other commitments.
- Once a date has been set, you need to send an email to Kitty with the date for your defense and the members of your defense committee.

Choosing your master's defense committee

In addition to one member of your supervisory committee, you will need to choose two other faculty members, one of whom will act as the chair. Try to choose faculty members whose input will be helpful, and who complement the expertise you already have on your committee. Ask other graduate students for advice. Given that the chair controls how the meeting moves along, you want to choose faculty who will stay on time and make sure the discussion stays on track.

Preparation

To prepare, here are some suggestions from both MSc and PhD students who have defended

- Read through your thesis and revisit some of the important papers you have cited.
- Review the reasons you used particular statistical or modeling approaches.
- Think about things you would do next, or do differently, if you were continuing or repeating the research.
- Prepare responses to the external reviewer's written comments (you get these before-hand for a PhD defense).
- In your talk, emphasize the motivations for and main results of your research, and list what you thought were your most important contributions to your field.
- However, keep in mind: *"it was far more focused on the Big Picture than my preparations had been (or than my appraisal was). There were big general questions about where I thought my field was going, or whether I thought a particular much-cited work had really been an important contribution; as well as questions about whether my results were likely to apply in different ecological settings. So a broad perspective on the field is at least as important as a detailed knowledge of your own work: you are being asked to prove that you have the wisdom to have earned a PhD, not only the specific expertise."* - Jessica Forrest
- One piece of logistical advice: never underestimate the ability of professors to forget about important dates such as defenses. Send many reminders!



Thesis Survival Tips

- Once you have a tentative defense date, work back and construct a timeline of everything you have to get done.
- Look over past theses to see what is expected. You can ask your supervisor for those from the lab. There are also many available in the library, and all previously accepted U of T theses can be found online.
- Read the requirements carefully. For example, there is a word maximum for the abstract.
- Make sure you give your supervisor and any other editors enough turnaround time during the review process.
- If all or part of your thesis has been published, you will need to get permission from the journal(s) to include it.
- Practice in the room you will be presenting in, this way you can make sure there are no projector problems and it will make you feel better to go over it in the actual room.
- Writing can be a long, miserable process. If you find yourself stalling try mixing up your routine. Go to a library or café (try cutting yourself off from internet for a few hours every day to write). Take exercise breaks and make sure you are still eating well. If you hit a roadblock, switch to another section, make a figure or start in on your acknowledgements section. You will still be making progress and you will come back to where you were stuck with a fresh perspective.
- Be sure to cite as you go -- forgetting where you read something is no fun.
- Make sure everything is ready to go the night before your defense: you don't want to get in a panic in the morning looking for your power cable or adjusting one last slide.
- Try your best to eat a good breakfast the morning of, you don't want to be hungry through the whole thing. Bring water and a snack just in case.
- Answer questions as best you can, but remember that it is not the end of the world if you don't know.
- Your defense committee is not out to get you. Try not to think of it as an adversarial exam situation, but more of a scientific discussion (if you succeed in doing this, please share how!).
- Take a break when you finish – you deserve it!

Courses

How to Use ROSI

ROSI is the student web service, found here: <http://sws.rosi.utoronto.ca>. You should familiarize yourself with its layout and functions because you will be using it every year to deal with finances and courses, among other things. To log in, you'll need your student number. For your initial session, your PIN is based on your date of birth and is in the format YYMMDD. For example, if your birth date is April 17, 1982, your initial PIN would be 820417. Upon logging in, you will be required to create a new PIN number.

Once logged in, you should see your current mailing address (make sure it is a utoronto.ca or mail.utoronto.ca address if you want to ensure you get all important emails about your financial and academic standing) as well as your current registration status as well as your financial standing. Take a look at the navigation bar on the side of the page to find the most useful pages: Course Enrolment, Transcripts/Academic History, Financial Accounts, and Tax Forms.

On the Course Enrolment page, click "Manage courses" and type the code for the course you are interested in enrolling in. The section code corresponds to which semester the course runs during: you will either type "F" for a fall session course (Sept. – Dec.), or "S" for a spring session course (Jan. – April).

Check your grades after completing a course using the Transcripts page. You can also order official and unofficial copies of your transcript for applying to grants, etc. from there. Note: Order your transcripts well ahead of time.

The Financial Accounts page is where you go to determine how much your tuition is for the year, and to defer payment, provided you have a funding package which allows it. The Tax Forms page is exactly what it sounds like. Use it to print your T2202A and T4A forms when it comes time to do your taxes. Ask Kitty Lam to walk you through your financial account if you are having trouble understanding it.

Requirements are Flexible (To Some Extent)

The required course numbers for MSc, PhD, and PhDU students are 1, 3, and 4, respectively. While there are recommendations (i.e. MSc and 1st year PhD students should take Philosophy and Methods), speak with your committee members to see what they think is best for you. They might want you to take one of the core subject courses (Ecology, Evolution, or Behaviour) as an MSc student, or might suggest you avoid taking it as a PhD. Also, ask other students about their experience with certain courses and check the grad anti-calendar for course evaluations (forthcoming).

How to Work Them Into Your Timeline

As a PhD student, there are many ways you could go about completing your courses, and what it really comes down to is a matter of personal preference. A few strategies you could take:

- Early completion: Do a course each semester (or even two in one -- not really recommended because if you do that on top of TAing, you won't be spending much time on your research) in the first two years, and get them out of the way so your next two or three years can be solely focused on research.
- Long stretch: Do one course a year, preferably during a semester in which you aren't TAing (if you have the luxury of only TAing one semester).
- Balanced approach: Take two courses in your first year, one per semester, while you're still in the early stages of your degree and have less on the go. Then take your core course as appraisal prep in second year (provided it is offered then), and finish the last course the year after your appraisal.
- Remember that PhD and PhDU students must complete their coursework by the end of year 3 and 4, respectively.

There's Such a Limited Selection – What Gives?

The department is supposedly aware of this problem, having conducted a survey of the graduate students and discovering widespread discontent with the state of course offerings. They are in the process of updating the curriculum and maybe one day there will be more course offerings, but until then, see the next section.

Potentially Relevant Courses Offered by Other Departments

There are a number of courses which EEB students have taken which are not offered within the department. Try asking other students about these to figure out whether they might be suitable for you. A list currently curated by Susana Wadgyamar can be found on [Google docs here](#).

Student-Run Workshops

Occasionally other grad students offer short workshops on specific topics, lab techniques, or skills. These workshops are not for credit. This year the department has started a pilot program to officially support these workshops. Expect more of these as time goes on.

Academic Advice

Advice for Graduate Students

The Internet is full of “advice how to succeed in grad school”. Most of the advice boils down to common sense: “do cool stuff, publish in good journals and be nice to colleagues”.

There are, however, exceptions. The by far most entertaining of all these guides is Steven Stearns’s “Some modest advice to graduate students”, which is based on a talk he gave to graduate students when he was postdoc.

Stearns, S. & R. Huey. 1987. Some modest advice to graduate students. Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America . 68: 145-153.

The original title was intended to be "Cynical aids towards getting a graduate degree, or psychological and practical tools to use in acquiring and maintaining control over your own life". When Stearns first showed the outline for his talk to his then colleague Raymond Hue, Hue’s response was to say, "Steve, this is really cynical, even by your standards! You can't possibly present such a negative view of graduate education." Huey then went on to present an alternative perspective, which is included in the paper.

Time Management

EVERYTHING TAKES LONGER THAN YOU THINK!

A keystone of success for many people in grad school is proper time management. Taking the time to prioritize your commitments and scheduling appropriate amounts of time for completion of things can be useful. Remember, most things will probably take twice as long as you think they will, and nothing takes “no time.” Don’t be afraid to work late or on the weekends when you need to complete something, but remember to take time for yourself, as well; you’ll be more productive in the long run.

How long your Prof. thinks it should take to do something

How long it'll actually take you to do it



“Trivial”

= There goes your week.

“Easy enough”

= Pull your hair out for a month.

“About a week”

= Actually, this is pretty easy. He/she doesn't know there's technology that will do this for you now. Take the week off!

“Should keep you occupied for the rest of the term”

= He/she will forget they asked you to do this by the end of the term. Don't even bother.

“This might make a good thesis topic”

= Say hello to your thesis topic.

“Hmmm...”

= Uh oh.

Quick Grad's Guide to Life

EGSA

The Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Graduate Student Association (EGSA) (<http://egsa.sa.utoronto.ca/>) represents the EEB graduate students across all three University of Toronto campuses and the Royal Ontario Museum.

The EGSA encourages graduate students to get involved in the life of the department and university. We inform students about the services and benefits available to them through the department, Graduate Student Union (<http://www.gsu.utoronto.ca/>) CUPE (<http://cupe3902.org/>) and other university-affiliated organizations. The EGSA maintains regular ties with the EEB Undergraduate Student Union (<http://eebu.sa.utoronto.ca/>) and Cell & Systems Biology Graduate Union.

The EGSA actively contributes to the professional and social life of the department. Each year, through the generosity of the Atwood family, the graduate student body selects and invites a distinguished scientist to deliver the concluding lecture of the departmental colloquium. The EGSA also helps organize a number of departmental socials, including the HallowEEB, Holiday party, graduate student winter retreat to Hart House/KSR, and Darwin Day celebrations with Darwin lecture. The EGSA has spawned several graduate student initiatives as well, including the EEB graduate student seminar series and journal club, Good Food Box program (<http://www.foodshare.net/goodfoodbox01.htm>), and University of Toronto Biology Environmental Action Team (<http://utbeat.biology.utoronto.ca/>).

Finally, the EGSA has been able to support the local and larger community, including Pathways to Education (<http://pathwaystoeducation.ca/home>) and Ontario Nature (<http://www.ontarionature.org/>), through our annual fundraising efforts. Within the department, we contribute to a number of scholarships, conferences, and partially offset the costs of thesis binding for both masters and doctoral graduate students.

During the fall and winter terms, we have monthly meetings where we discuss important issues affecting the EEB graduate students. The EGSA executive team consists of two co-presidents (elected), a treasurer (elected), and a number of dedicated volunteers. Please visit our website (<http://egsa.sa.utoronto.ca/>) and join our Facebook group (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology Graduate Students Association (U of T)) for additional information! Graduate students are integral to the life of every academic department, so please consider participating in and supporting your EGSA!

Getting Started On All Three Campuses

ST. GEORGE

What to do when you're new to St. George

Read this handbook, for one thing.

What can EEB reception help me with?

Among other things...

- Keys: Your supervisor should email reception to say which keys you need. You'll be asked to leave a deposit for each key (they're not cheap, so don't lose them or your receipts -- you need both to get your deposit back).
- Copier/fax codes: Each supervisor has a code for the copier and a code for the fax machine, and you should make a note of these. You can also scan to email if you want to get fancy.
- Room booking: Reserve a conference room for meetings.
- Vehicle booking: Arrange to borrow a departmental vehicle.
- Basic office supplies: Ask if you need things like binders, folders and such. Used, but useful.

Is there technical support?

You bet. Check out www.eeb.utoronto.ca/people/staff.htm. Email Ryan MacDonald with issues ranging from "My internet's not working" to "Seriously, my internet's not working."

What's this I hear about a "Listserv"?

A listserv is just a big email list. There are several lists you should be on automatically, but it's important to check, to make sure you're getting important emails. For example, a grad student in the Earth Science building should be on the following lists: EEB-ALL-L, EEB-ALLESC-L, EEB-ALLGRADS-L, and probably more. You can send email to a list you're on, but try not to spam everyone. To get on or off a list, see:

www.eeb.utoronto.ca/resources/eeblistserv.htm.

Someone told me to go to "Stores" or "Shops". WTF?

It's technically a CSB thing, but EEB has access, too. Terry Hill runs the Stores in the basement of Ramsay Wright. There's a bunch of useful equipment and supplies down there, which you can charge to a lab account. Jim Dix and Trung Luu in Shops (the workshop) can build and repair a remarkable array of equipment (not for free), and can often provide useful advice (for free).

Departmental events

Sound exciting? For sure. Events sponsored by the department or EGSA include a welcome social, Halloween and holiday parties, Darwin Day celebrations, weekend retreats, the Atwood Colloquium, and more. All are well-worth attending, and many benefit from the contributions of volunteers (like you?).

EGSA meetings

The EEB Graduate Students Association (EGSA) represents EEB students on all campuses. You are automatically a member. The two co-presidents and the treasurer are elected each year, and there a number of volunteer positions.

Useful information can be found on the EGSA website:

egsa.sa.utoronto.ca/index.html. Also see the EGSA section of this handbook.

What's in it for me? It's important to attend EGSA meetings. It's only an hour a month, but some very important decisions are made that affect grad students in the department. Attending meetings and taking on a position is also a great way to get experience with departmental service that will look great on your CV. EGSA positions are determined at the first meeting of the year, so be sure to attend this meeting!

Journal clubs and student seminars

There are usually several journal clubs running during the school year, geared towards evolutionary genetics (organized by Stephen Wright), or EEB in general (organized by Megan Frederickson). The latter runs in alternate weeks with the EEB student seminar series. Contact Stephen to get on the email list for his group. Papers for the EEB group are posted online.

Why should I go? Discussing papers, both within and outside of your research area, can be very educational. This is also a good way to meet others in the department and find out what they do.

What if I have nothing to say? Come anyway. You can always just watch others duke it out (Prof Fight!).

What if the paper looks exceptionally boring? Fine, don't come then. Seriously, don't feel bad if you go some weeks and not others, that's normal. Everyone is busy.

Student seminars? The student seminar series runs in alternating weeks with the EEB journal club. The idea is that students give short presentations to other students (no profs allowed). This is a non-judgemental environment for trying out new ideas, or practicing for a conference talk. Come out to support your fellow students, drink coffee and eat cookies.

Friday beers

Every Friday at 4:30 EEBers head to the nearby GSU pub. In some cases there may be a visiting speaker (giving the External Seminar from 3:00-4:00, try playing [seminar bingo!](#)) who will be at the pub, but Friday beers are a regular event even when there is no seminar. The upstairs section of the GSU is reserved for EEB on some Fridays.

Why should I come to the pub on Friday? To drink beer, or a non-alcoholic beverage, if you prefer. Also to meet and chat with others in the department, including faculty members, post-docs, and students from all campuses.

What if I don't drink? Come anyway. This is your opportunity to meet with your friends, make new ones, find out what's going on in the department, and maybe even strike up a collaboration. Buy some chips, or something.

What if I drink but I have no money? Come anyway. The department may buy a few pitchers early on.



ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM (ROM)

Resources on campus

Though we are a bit isolated from the campus proper, remember that although our offices may be at the ROM, we are St. George Campus students. Except for the building-specific resources, all of the resources available to St. George students are available to us (see St. George section above), and attendance is encouraged at seminars, journal clubs, and other campus events.

Resources at the ROM

That being said, within the ROM, resources are very lab-specific, so you will want to discuss closely with your supervisor and/or lab mates to find out how your lab specifically accesses resources. Your supervisor should give you the necessary forms for your access badge and keys. They should also provide you information on office space, computer access, photocopying and printing, your mailbox, and adding your name to the internal directory and (if applicable) the telephone extension directory. Handing in the form for your keys, and things involving the Department of Natural History at the ROM are handled through the Department of Natural History Administrative Assistant, Cathy Dutton (cathya@rom.on.ca, Room 331D).

ROM access badge

Photos for your ROM access badge are taken Monday and Wednesday, via walk-in, any time after 10 am at the ROM Security office across from the ROM Security desk. You will need to bring the completed and signed paperwork. The badges are available about a week after your photo is taken, and temporary badges can be issued at the Security desk in the interim. Usually, your badge will allow access to the ROM from 7 am until 10 pm, 7 days a week. Once received, your access badge will remain active for one year, at which point you will have to return to the ROM Security office to have it re-activated.

Grad students at the ROM

EEB grad students and Department of Natural History post-docs at the ROM have an informal gathering once a month from September through April. Events usually consist of a practice talk from one of the various labs here at the ROM, followed by socializing, food, and drinks at a nearby eating establishment. They are a great way to get to know people in the ROM and what everyone outside of your lab is working on. Please contact Derek Larson (derek.larson@mail.utoronto.ca) or Lorna O'Brien (lornao@rom.on.ca) to get added to the email list for event notification.

UTSC

If someone reading this has something to add about UTSC, please do so!

UTM

Welcome to Mississauga! While UTM may not have the exciting city and bright lights like the St. George Campus, there are a lot of great things about this little suburban campus.

Contacts in the department

As a graduate student at UTM you will be a part of the Biology Department (<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/biology/>), though you are registered as an EEB student. For anything related to your degree, still contact the downtown EEB Department. When it comes to anything UTM specific, such as TAing, contact UTM Biology.

The administrative staff for the UTM Biology Department are a huge help when you are first starting out. Your main contact will be Carolyn Moon (carolyn.moon@utoronto.ca, Room DV A3032), the Department Manager. You should contact her as soon as you arrive to arrange for things such as direct-deposit of paychecks, setting up your mailbox, ordering keys and whatnot. Also, if you have any questions she is a good person to contact, as she usually knows the answer or knows who to direct you to. Another contact person to know is Yen Du (yen.du@utoronto.ca, DV 3057), who is the Undergraduate Advisor and takes care of all things TA related.

UTM-specific LISTSERVS

In addition to the EEB listservs you should sign up for, there are several UTM specific listservs you should look into as well. They include:

- GRAD-UTM-L@listserv.utoronto.ca (UTM Graduate Students)
- ALLBIOLOGY-UTM-L@listserv.utoronto.ca (UTM Biology Dept. Members)
- UTMAGS-L@listserv.utoronto.ca (The UTM Graduate Student Association)
- BIO_GRADS-UTM-L@listserv.utoronto.ca (UTM Biology Graduate Students)

U-Pass, shuttle bus, and campus affiliation form

Now that you are a graduate student at UTM, you will need to sign a form declaring to the university that you are officially based at UTM. This will ensure that you will gain access to perks such as the free shuttle bus to the downtown campus and the free U-Pass, a transit pass for Mississauga Transit. The form can be found at: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/vice-dean-grad/sites/files/vice-dean-grad/public/shared/pdfs/Change%20of%20Campus%20Affiliation.pdf>. Once you fill it out, drop it off at the front desk in the Office of the Vice-Dean Graduate at UTM (DV 3200).

After your form is processed, your U of T ID card (T-Card) will automatically give you free access to the shuttle bus that runs between the UTM and St. George campuses. The schedule for this bus can be found at: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/shuttle/>, and the stop is located behind the Instructional Building (IB) across from the heating plant.

Also after your form is processed, you can again stop by the Office of the Vice-Dean Graduate to pick up your U-Pass. This card will provide you with free access to all Mississauga Transit buses, which has routes all over the city and includes connections to the TTC Islington subway station, Square One Shopping Centre and Pearson International Airport. Info about the U-Pass can be found at: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/sas/node/13>, while bus schedules can be found at <http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/miway>.

Departmental and graduate events

At the beginning of every academic year the UTM Biology Department hold its own Welcome Reception/Party. It is usually held sometime in September, and will be announced over the ALLBIOLOGY-UTM listserv. There's usually good (free!) food, and almost the entire department attends. Other departmental parties include a Holiday party just before winter break, and a summer picnic held in Erindale Park (beside campus) sometime in June.

The UTM Association of Graduate Students (UTMAGS) also holds a start-of-year orientation and dinner. Again, this is usually held in September and includes presentations by various student services on campus, plus dinner (mmm...free!). Usually the time and date for this event is announced via the UTMAGS listserv, and via posters throughout the Research Wing of the Davis Building.

Departmental seminars and journal club

UTM Biology holds its own seminar series every Friday at noon during the normal academic year. Speakers are usually divided between the EEB and CSB departments, and it is a great (and much closer) alternative to the seminar series downtown. The speaker schedule is usually announced over the ALLBIOLOGY-UTM listserv, and at the UTM Biology website. Oh, and there are cookies and coffee!

Another weekly event worth attending is the Biology Department Journal Club. This journal club is pretty low-key (and usually has an EEB focus). More information is usually sent out over the ALLBIOLOGY-UTM listserv at the beginning of the academic year.

UTMAGS

As we've mentioned a couple times, UTM has its own graduate student association called UTMAGS (<http://utmags.sa.utoronto.ca/>). They hold events throughout the year, and help provide services such as the transit U-Pass. It's a good idea to sign up for their listserv (listed above), and if you have any questions email them at utmags@utoronto.ca.

In addition to holding events, UTMAGS helps provide and maintain a graduate student lounge in the Davis Building (DV 1100). It is accessible by key-code, which you can obtain from Anna Reale in the Office of the Vice-Dean, Graduate at UTM (DV 3200). Just ask the front desk for a grad lounge code, and they will know what you are talking about.

Friday grad socials

Grad students at UTM usually get together on Fridays at 5pm in the Graduate Lounge (DV 1100) to hang out, grab dinner, and de-stress. Stop by! If you don't have a key code yet, 1) get one ASAP and 2) just knock on the door, someone will probably let you in.

Student services on campus

For being a "satellite" campus, UTM still provides lots of student services. There is the food court for one, which this fall (Fall 2012) is under construction but will be much improved once it's finished. It's located in the "Meeting Place" (follow the signs) in the Davis Building. There is also a Starbucks located across from the library in the CCT Building, and a Second Cup/sandwich place located in the IB building by the shuttle bus stop.

UTM has an awesome gym and athletics program (<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/iframe/rawc-iframe>) located in an addition on the Davis Building. The gym facilities are large and rather new, and they offer lots of free drop-in fitness classes such as yoga and spinning. You just need your U of T ID card to swipe in. In addition to the gym, UTM also has a really nice pool that has lap and fun-swim times throughout the day. It can be accessed through the locker rooms at the gym.

If you are feeling sick or sore, visit UTM's Health and Counseling Centre (<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/health/>), which has several nurses and primary care doctors on staff. They provide services such as annual check-ups, birth control, mental health services and flu vaccinations and are covered by OHIP and UHIP. The HCC also has ties to a Sports Clinic (<http://www.sportsclinic.ca/>), located beside the gym's front desk. The Sport Clinic provides services such as physiotherapy, massage therapy and chiropractic.

International students at UTM

One downside of being based at UTM is the lack of services for international graduate students. There is an international student office at UTM, but it only serves undergraduate students and students in professional Masters programs (Biotechnology, Management and Professional Accounting, etc.). For any services such as picking up your UHIP (international student health insurance) card, you will have to go to the Center for International Experiences (CIE) at the St. George Campus.

Life in the City of Mississauga

One of the huge benefits to living in Mississauga is the variety of easily accessible natural areas. Surrounding the UTM campus is the UTM Nature Trail, which circles the campus in the woods from the Principal's Residence to Erindale Park. Erindale Park is a large public park that circles the campus on three sides, and includes a large section of the Credit River (open to fishing, and floating if you are brave), several large fields and some forested areas. The park also is a part of Mississauga's large cycling/walking trail system (<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/trails>) that runs throughout the city from Port Credit and Lake Ontario, all the way up to Etobicoke, Brampton and Caledon. It's definitely worth checking out.

Even though Mississauga could be a poster-child for suburban sprawl, the MiWay Transit system combined with your free U-Pass makes the city relatively easy to get around. If you are into small, walkable neighborhoods check out the Port Credit (on Lake Ontario) and Streetsville (just north of campus) neighborhoods. There are a ton of restaurants and shops in both areas (and many in the Streetsville neighborhood offer student discounts!). Another interesting area is Square One, home of the largest mall in Eastern Canada, the MiWay transit hub and a plethora of condos and restaurants.

For services and food near the campus, your options are very limited. The closest shopping area is the South Common Centre, which includes a NoFrills grocery store, a Walmart, BMO and TD Canada Trust banking branches, and a variety of fast-food restaurants (though there is a Five Guys...mmm tasty burgers!). If you are looking for more variety your best options are either Streetsville (take the 44N bus) or Square One (take the 110N bus).

Finances

Information is available on the EEB website regarding various aspects of grad student finances. Some of the language can be confusing, but there are office staff whose job it is to help you understand these issues. See www.eeb.utoronto.ca/resources/resstud/staff.htm for finance office contacts. Details may change from year to year, so pay attention to reminder and update emails from Kitty Lam. Below are a few tips on financial matters that might be useful.

Watch for emails from Kitty Lam about deferring payment of tuition fees, for students receiving OSAP or external funding. See www.eeb.utoronto.ca/grad/current/graddates.htm for this deadline and others.

You will be paid three times a year, at least for the part of your stipend that does not come from TAing. Note that your tuition fees will be automatically deducted from the payment made in January, so you may prefer to pay some of your tuition in September, and the rest in January, to spread out the payment.

You can set up direct deposit, so that your stipend goes directly into your bank account. You can set this up, check your balance, etc. on ROSI (personal information > direct deposit). Stipends are paid out according to a specified schedule, so a credit may appear in your account without the funds necessarily being mailed/deposited at that time. However, you can request payment once the funds are available via email. Kitty Lam will send out details about how to do this.

If you make a purchase on behalf of the lab, or the department, submit an expense reimbursement form to the financial officer (see www.eeb.utoronto.ca/grad/current/grad-forms.htm). Remember that you will need receipts, signed by your supervisor, or whoever is authorizing the payment.

If you are submitting an expense reimbursement form for a conference and have presented a talk/poster, you are eligible for the Graduate Student Travel Grant (commonly known as the Harold H. Harvey Travel Award). To apply for this, follow the instructions below.

1. Fill out the expense reimbursement form, and ensure your supervisor's signature and grant number are present. Remember to sign the form yourself too. (<http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/grad/current/grad-forms.htm>)
2. Fill out the graduate student travel grant application (if eligible, the financial officer will take up to a maximum of \$400 off the expense form, so DON'T deduct this from the total yourself) (<http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/grad/current/grad-forms.htm>)
3. Include the conference receipt, accommodations receipt, transportation receipts (i.e., boarding passes/ticket stubs for planes, buses, and trains; km's claimed on a Goggle map printout for cars), name tag, photocopy of

- the program where your poster/talk appears, and any additional expenses, if applicable (e.g., society memberships, meals, etc.)
4. Submit all the above to Kitty Lam (she needs to sign it)

In addition to external scholarships such as NSERC and OGS, there are several scholarships from the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) for which you may be eligible. Be sure to check at www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/money/support.htm. There are also scholarships specific to EEB, see www.eeb.utoronto.ca/grad/current/Scholarships.htm.

At the start of each year you will receive a stipend sheet that outlines the composition of your stipend. You will be asked to review this sheet with your supervisor. Note that you may not be notified if you receive an internal award from EEB, but this will appear on your stipend sheet. These awards are merit-based, and a good addition to your CV.

Health & Dental Insurance

The Graduate Student Union (GSU) provides health and dental coverage for all full-time grad students, and dental for part-time grad students. The GSU website is also home to just about all of the information you could want on this, and if you have questions, you can contact the GSU Health & Dental Insurance office in the following ways:

Phone: 416-978-8465

Email: health@utgsu.ca

Web: <http://utgsu.ca/insurance/>

What is Covered

All coverage details are available through the Greenshield website:

<http://www.greenshield.ca/sites/corporate/en/Pages/default.aspx>

The GSU has a page on dental coverage, but it may be out of date:

<http://www.gsu.utoronto.ca/insurance/dental.html>

If the cost of any proposed treatment is expected to exceed \$300, submit to GreenShield a “pre-determination” form from your provider before the treatment begins. There is also a travel benefit for the first 60 days away, which can be topped up if required for longer stays. See the GSU website for more details.

Making a Claim

To make a claim is very simple. It takes time for Greenshield to process registration and opt-outs, so submit a claim form to Green Shield only after November 15th to be reimbursed. For students starting in January, please wait till after March 15th. Print off the claim form and fill it out. Put all your original receipts in an envelope with it, and mail it off to the address listed on the form.

Your policy # is the following:

UTG (insert your 9-digit student number here) – 00. If you have dependents, their number is the same as yours but ends with a different number i.e. -01, -02, etc.

Claim form (also available through the website):

<http://www.gsu.utoronto.ca/insurance/Claim%20Form08-09.pdf>

Make sure you keep photocopies of all your original receipts and the claim form you submitted for your records.

Dental claims

Dental claims are slightly different. In addition to the Greenshield claim form, you must also submit a Standard Dental Claim form like the one here:

http://www.cda-adc.ca/files/dental_profession/practising/resources/manual_claim_form.pdf. Fill

that out and attach to your claims. If that link is broken, just google "Standard Dental Claim Form" and download one, or pick one up from your dentist's office.

Opting-Out of Your Coverage

You can opt-out of your coverage if you have another type of insurance coverage (i.e. something beyond simple OHIP). You must do so during the fall opt-out period every year you wish to opt out. If you miss the deadline, you can't opt-out again until the following year. Once you opt-out, you cannot rejoin until the following year. Opting out can be done online: <https://studentplans.ca/UTG>

CUPE Health Care Spending Account

If you are a Teaching Assistant and work at least 50 hours, you can take advantage of the CUPE health care spending account, worth up to \$800 each year. You can only make claims against it once you have worked at least 50 hours (i.e. no claiming before then) and it covers health and dental related claims which aren't covered by your GSU Greenshield insurance premium. You can also offset the cost of your GSU insurance premiums, which are automatically included in your fees.

The deadline to make claims using your CUPE health care spending account is generally in late October of the following year.

To make any claim, use the form located here: <http://cupe3902.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Spending-Account-Enrollment-Claim-Form.pdf>

This can also be found through the CUPE website, under Unit 1 > Benefits in the top menu: <http://cupe3902.org/unit-1/unit-1-benefits/healthcare-spending-account-unit-1/>

How to Claim Your GSU premiums (about \$380), which you will have already paid along with your student fees at the beginning of the year:

1. Go to <https://www.rosi.utoronto.ca> and Login.
2. Under 'Financial Accounts,' find your 'Invoice' and 'Detailed Report' - and print both. (You need both because one lists your premiums, and the other lists your student number).
3. The amounts you want to claim are listed in your Detailed Report, under both Fall and Winter sessions (make sure you add up both!) as in the following example:

Incidental Fees-Societies	2012	Fall	
GSU-Health Coverage			110.87
GSU-Dental Plan-FT			77.82
Incidental Fees-Societies	2013	Winter	
GSU-Health Coverage			110.87

Submit: $(\$1110.87 \times 2) + (\$77.82 \times 2) = \$377.38$

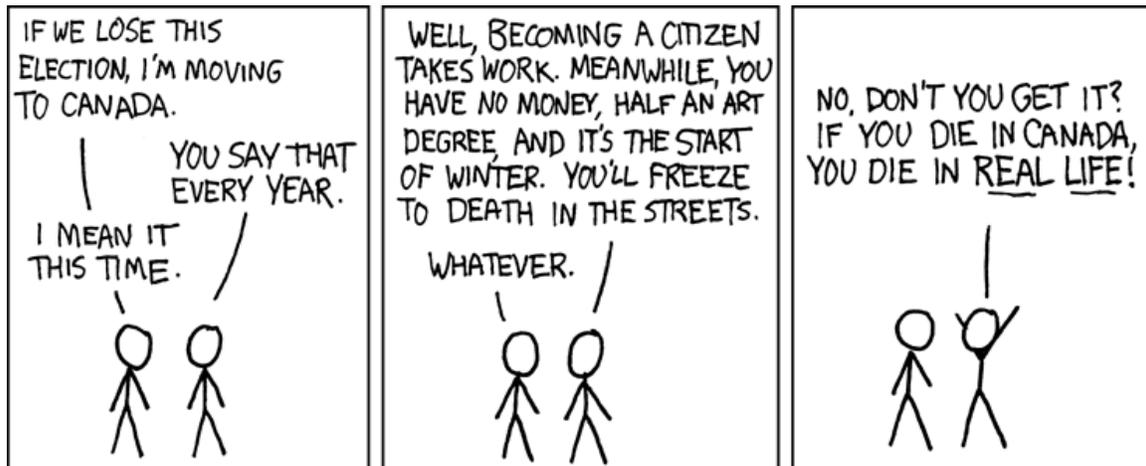
4. Mail both print-outs, along with the Unit 1 'Spending Account and Enrolment Claim Form', linked to above (and available via the CUPE website) to the address on the form.

For more information, see 'Coordinating your GSU/CUPE Benefits', on the CUPE website: <http://cupe3902.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/cupe-3902-unit-1-health-benefits-reference-1.pdf>

You can claim this for whatever plan you pay a premium for (UHIP if it's not covered, other private plans, etc) *Wherever it says 'GSU plan' above, you can feel free to insert the name of your private health or dental insurance provider. The CUPE HCSA can still be used to cover the premiums you pay for insurance outside of the GSU.

NOTE: You cannot opt-out of your CUPE HCSA. It is available if you want to claim it, but is not mandatory to do so, and you will not get \$800 if you try and tell CUPE you don't want to use it.

International Students



EEB is a very cosmopolitan department. Some labs even have more international than Canadian members! This also holds true for Toronto as a city -- some 20,000 international students study at one of Toronto's universities or colleges. Canada in general and Toronto in particular is a great place to live in as a non-Canadian. That being said, there are a few things you should be aware of.

Funding

As an international student you are entitled to the same funding package as Canadian citizens or permanent residents (i.e. you have the same disposable income after tuition). Since your fees are roughly \$8,500 higher, your total support package, without any external scholarship, will be \$33,654. Of this, \$16,500 is your net income per year.

If you are an international PhD student, you should be aware that once you leave the funded cohort (your fifth or sixth year) you are responsible for paying this tuition. In order to avoid this, talk to your advisor early about finishing on time, and if not, what they can contribute to your tuition payments and living expenses.

Scholarships

Most Canadian scholarships are not open to international students. This means fewer opportunities to support yourself (boo!), and many fewer applications to write (yay!). The exceptions are the NSERC Vanier and the Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS). Both of these are VERY competitive (for the OGS, 90 scholarships are awarded to visa students while 3000 are awarded to Canadians).

Visas and Traveling

If you need to travel to do fieldwork and need a visa to do so, be diligent about figuring out which visa to get and make sure you follow the guidelines given to you. You don't want to mess with immigration, because once you've done something wrong you'll be on a list for life.

Immigration

If you love Canada and/or want to start paying domestic tuition, you can take steps to become a permanent resident. Canadian Immigration just opened a new stream of applications in the Skilled Worker program for those of us that are working on our PhDs. You need to have been here and in good standing with the University for at least two years. The application process is super complicated and takes years to complete.

Apparently, you can also register as a domestic student if you have a Canadian spouse or common law partner. We don't know the details about this but at least you know you can.

Living in Canada

The Centre for International Experience (<http://cie.utoronto.ca/>) located at Cumberland House and Koffler Student Centre on St George Street is the go-to place to information concerning making the transition to Canadian life. They also put out a handbook, which is very helpful. There are way too many details to cover here, but here are a few basics:

Sales Taxes

Prices, be at the pub, coffee shop, or the bookstore are given without the value added tax. In Ontario, 13% will be added to your bill compared to the price on the tag for many items (this is the so called Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), which is a combination of a federal goods and services tax (GST) and Provincial Sales Tax (PST)).

Bank Accounts

It is a good idea to open a bank account soon after you have arrived in Toronto. If nothing else, this makes receiving your payments from the department much easier. Opening a bank account at a Canadian bank is pretty straightforward. You can often get a debit card straight away. Remember to bring your passport and study permit (if you want to open a student account). Below is a list of banks with branches on or near the St George campus.

- Bank of Montreal (BMO)
- Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC)

- HSBC Bank of Canada
- National Bank of Canada
- Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)
- Scotiabank
- TD Canada Trust
- Alterna Savings Credit Union

Taxes

As a foreign citizen living in Canada, you are responsible for doing your taxes in both your home country and in Canada. Yes, this is a horrible experience. H&R Block will do both Canadian and International taxes (American, at least, and probably others) but they charge a LOT more for the international taxes. The good news is, you probably won't owe money to either country.

Center for International Experience

Check out their website for additional information on the above topics and topics not covered: <http://www.cie.utoronto.ca/Coming/Coming-to-U-of-T-Portal/welcome.htm>

TA-ing

In all likelihood at some point in your grad-career part of your funding will depend on being a teaching assistant (TA). Some people dread TAing, and others look forward to it. The latter group of people are correct, the former are just being silly. TAing is a great opportunity for you to see how courses are run from the back end, and even develop your own teaching style and philosophy with very low risk. Below are some details about what kinds of TAing you could do and some tips and tricks.

CUPE

TAing contracts are negotiated by the University of Toronto education workers union (<http://cupe3902.org/> TAs are in unit 1). You do not have to be a member to get the benefits of the collective agreement that governs our contracts, but to vote in the union you must become a member. Most large courses will have a CUPE representative to talk to you at your first training session, or you can talk to the departmental representative (elected at the first EGSA meeting of the year) for more information.

But... I Can't Teach!

You may be thinking, "I'm not qualified to teach anyone anything!", and you'd be wrong. Many people get nervous about TAing in general, but there is no reason to. If you are in grad school, you are prepared to teach someone something. In any course you TA in you will most likely be the most knowledgeable person in the room; it's okay to admit ignorance on some subjects to students and ask instructors for clarifications on topics you don't fully comprehend. You can always look something up and answer students later, too!

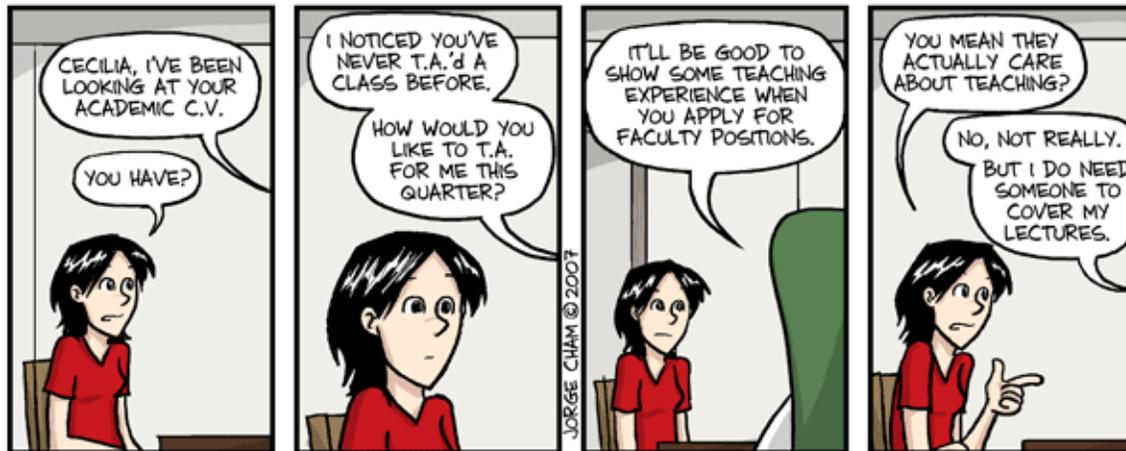
You've also had an enormous amount of experience with teaching, even if you don't know it. Usually you were on the other end, though, as the student. Think back to your previous teachers, what worked and what didn't? Try to channel your favorite teachers.

How to Pick a Course to TA

Generally people start their TAing career in the basic biology course labs. If you don't know what else to TA go for these, they are very fun courses and you get a lot of interaction with students. (At St. George these courses are BIO120 and BIO220.)

Before the semester starts you will receive an e-mail with all the available course offerings for the next term. You just need to pick your top choices and send it back. You can e-mail course instructors for information about what TAing the

course will entail and what kind of background you will need. This is by far the best way to get that information. Just ask. Do it. Now. Go.



Training

Most courses will have some training associated with them, the larger courses will have group training, while training for courses in which you are the only TA will probably be one-on-one discussions with the instructors. Additionally the university offers training programs, for free, for grad students and postdocs. This training is primarily provided by the Teaching Assistants Training Program (TATP). They offer a large group training session at the beginning of each term for general TAing techniques, and individual workshops focused on specific topics. Their website also has a fantastic list of short articles and how-to guides for teaching (<http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta/training/ta-toolkit.htm>). Topics range from how to introduce yourself on the first day to ethics guidelines. Looking through these documents will give you a great footing for beginning TAing.

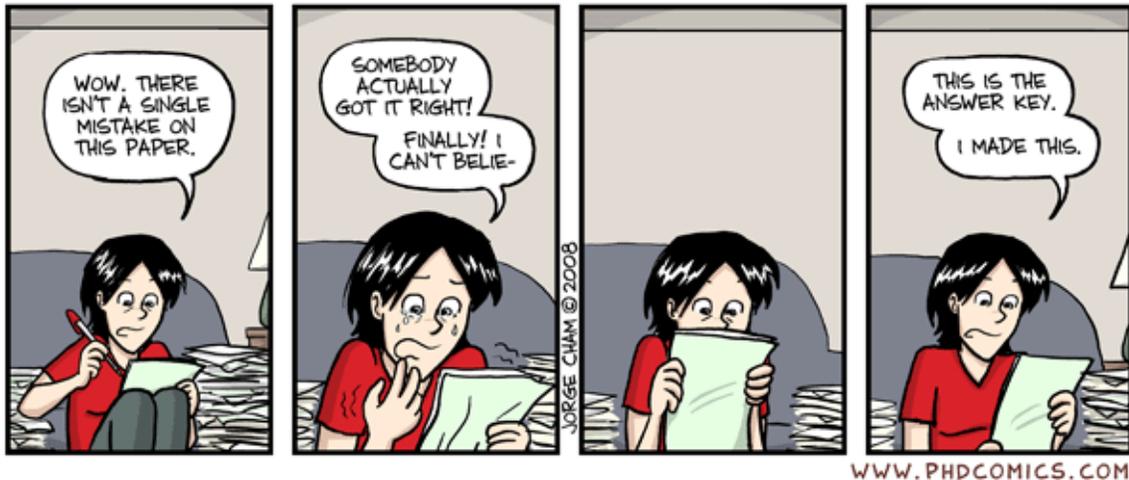
The TATP also offers two certificates for university education (<http://www.teaching.utoronto.ca/gsta/training/tatp-certificates.htm>). The main requirements for these certificates are taking workshops (of your choice) from the TATP. So if you're going to be doing any of the workshops you may as well sign up! The program will also help you prepare a teaching dossier for applications by explaining the contents, and they will even look over your dossier before you send it in with a job application. Definitely take advantage of these opportunities!

On the Diversity of Courses (i.e., the kinds of TA positions available)

There are several types of TA positions, the main ones are listed below with a bit of information about what each kind entails.

Lab courses

In lab courses you will be the primary instructor for the (usually) bi-weekly labs. Most labs will start with a brief presentation by you, where you will describe the day's lab, followed by helping the students as they perform the lab, and a post lab wrap up/discussion section. Lab courses will have training for each lab, where you and the other TAs will actually work through the lab. If you have any questions about how to use equipment or other techniques this is the time to clear them up. These courses often have a bit of marking, usually short lab quizzes or assignments. Some lab courses also have a final project that can require much of your time to mark (BIO120, for example, involves each student writing an experimental proposal that you assess... twice).



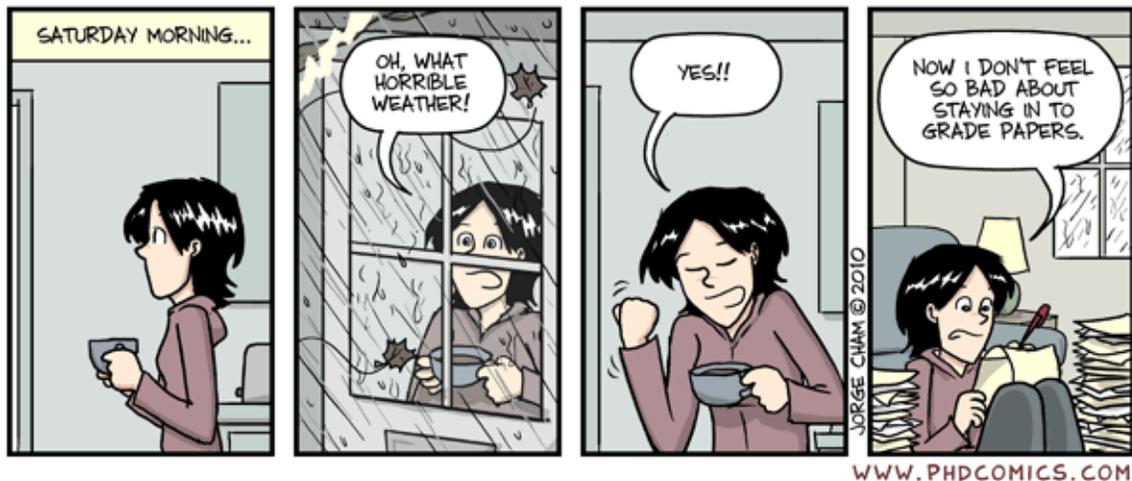
Lecture TAs

Some TA position involve actually going to the lecture for a course taught by a faculty member and doing some behind the scenes work. For example the lecture TA position for BIO220 has several components, including attending lectures, answering students' questions via email and on the course Discussion Board, and writing around half of the midterm and exam questions. The purpose of attending the lectures was to ensure that the material being taught was clear, and to let the teaching faculty know if a particular topic required additional explanation. It is a useful course to TA because you learn how to explain concepts in a clear and concise manner, or how to explain them from multiple perspectives. Furthermore, writing the multiple-choice test questions is also a beneficial skill to learn, both doing it independently, and then collaborating with the teaching faculty for the final version. However, other than those two skills, there is not much to gain, especially for advanced or senior grad students. In addition, although most of position requires very few hours per week (2 hours for lecture, 30-60 minutes for questions), the test questions must be

written over a fairly short period of time (1-2 weeks), and therefore requires you to focus almost exclusively on this task when the time arises.

Tutorial and grading TAs

Being a TA in these types of courses means that most of your hours would be spent marking tests and assignments. You should go over carefully with the professor on how the tests and assignments should be marked; they may ask you to be more or less lenient depending on the difficulty of the course. Depending on the course, you may also be the first resource for students who have questions about the course material. This may be done through email, your own office hours or even a few short Q&A sessions throughout the term. You have limited interactions with the students and so it is important that you understand the course material well. Any mistakes you make when answering their questions may be misleading and it is not always easy to correct those mistakes (especially if you don't remember the student's names). Ultimately, it will depend on you to balance your time between marking and answering questions.



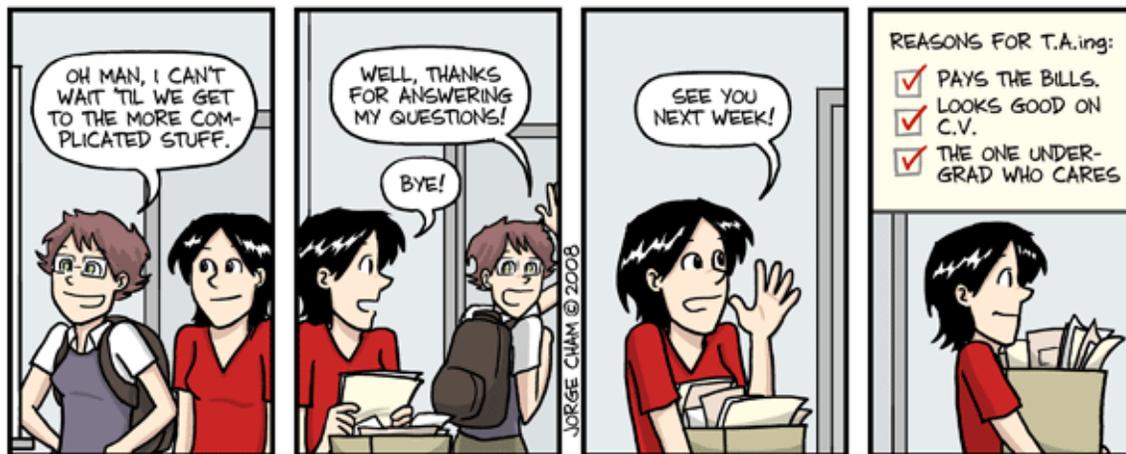
Reference Letters

In some courses you will be the face of the course for the student. Even if you only see them every other week they will probably only talk to you, never to the course instructor. Therefore, you may get asked to write recommendations for applications to a lab or summer position. Make sure they understand what you are willing to write, and that you know as much as possible about what they are applying for and why. I also encourage them to think about why they have asked me to write a recommendation, and not someone else. Doing this can help them come up with someone else to write it (yay!). There is more advice from another author about recommendations in the "Undergrads" section, look there too!

Other Notes

Here are just a few random thoughts that seem relevant:

- Don't add your students on Facebook (really, no good can come of this).
- Don't ever re-mark anything in front of the student, either tell them to talk to the instructor or take the paper back and tell them you will look over it later and they can talk to you in your office later.
- You will have several people come argue with you about grades, especially on big projects. You can be a hard-ass, I believe in you.
- Depending on the course you may not be required to give your students your e-mail, but do it anyway because you won't get that many questions. Those that e-mail you are often the really excited students you want to talk to more anyway.
- Feel free to rework slides/lectures that you are given. You can really teach any way you like as long as you get the information across. (Of course, if you're going to try something really off the wall, talk to the instructor first.)
- If you need to hire an undergrad (or someone you know does) recruit from the students you TA, they'll get excited about science more and you'll have firsthand knowledge of their work ethic before you hire them.
- If you express enthusiasm students will roll with you, even if you make mistakes.



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

Undergrads (how to use and not abuse them)

Undergraduate students play an important role in most, if not all, labs in EEB. The tasks assigned to undergrads will obviously depend on the nature of the research, but also on the type of position filled by the student, as follows.

Volunteer Lab Assistant

Many students are willing to volunteer their time in return for research experience and a reference letter. Some volunteers become very engaged with research and eventually take on more responsibility. Others do not have any desire to continue in the field and are primarily interested in adding to their resume or obtaining a reference. Exercise caution when relying on volunteers for critical tasks; it is not uncommon to have a volunteer cancel their scheduled lab time with little or no advance notice, particularly during midterms, exams, etc. Even the most reliable and dedicated volunteers may prioritize coursework over lab work, and this also applies to students in other types of positions.

Volunteers will generally be asked to do tasks that require little training and background knowledge, such as media prep, plant watering, some kinds of data collection, etc. Depending on what you need them to do, it may be better to have a few dedicated volunteers who will become intimately familiar with a project and study system, or better to have a larger number of people working fewer hours each, doing simple tasks.

Work-Study Student

These students are paid to work in the lab (formerly by the government, and now by the university and faculty). Labs must apply for work study positions, and several may be available. Ask your supervisor whether your lab will have work-study students. These students may be more reliable than volunteers because they are getting paid, and commit to working a minimum number of hours a week. The work-study program is time-limited, so try to use all of the available hours in the designated time period, in order to make the most out of these positions.

Course-Based Project Student (e.g. EEB299, EEB498)

These students are not paid, but complete a specific project in the lab for course credit. Your advisor may supervise these students directly, or ask that you assist in their supervision if the student is helping with your project. Project students should be prepared to commit more time to this course than a typical lecture-based course.

Scholarship-Based Project Student

These students are paid to do research in the lab over the summer as part of a scholarship, such as the NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Award (USRA), or the University of Toronto Excellence Award in Natural Sciences and Engineering (UTEA).

Employee

Your supervisor may decide to hire undergrads to work in the lab. An undergrad working less than some minimum number of hours a week and for a limited time period does not need to be paid at the same level as a research technician, and so hiring dedicated undergrads can be an affordable way for a lab to have a lab manager. Undergraduate lab managers can be particularly useful in hiring and supervising volunteers, ordering lab supplies, and organizing general lab maintenance.

Field Assistants

Like lab assistants, field assistants can be volunteer, work-study, course based, scholarship-based, or employee. Unlike lab assistants, we usually need field assistants to make a larger time commitment – usually full days, at least, and potentially long term. Work-study students will usually not have time to provide much help in the field, since they only work 10-12 hours a week and are taking classes on campus at the same time. Field assistants in general are very helpful, especially for large projects which require lots of manpower. U of T undergrads are generally very city-oriented, so introducing them to fieldwork can be a challenge. Make sure they know what equipment they will need (hiking boots, rain jacket, etc.) and what is expected of them (working in the heat, rain, long hours, etc.). If your field project involves living off-campus, remember that many students have not lived away from home yet... they may not know how to cook at all. Moreover, most undergraduates will not be able to drive U of T vehicles, since a G license is required.

General Considerations

In most cases, it is easy to get a number of applicants for volunteer/work-study positions by simply posting ads near large lecture halls, or on websites such as BIOME. Bear in mind, however, that the keenest students will often end up working in the lab that advertises positions first, or with the most interesting study system. You might consider informing students that you TA about opportunities in the lab.

During the interview process, it is a good idea to be up-front with just what kind of work a student can expect to do in the lab, so they know what they are agreeing

to do. Many undergrads are enthusiastic in the interview but quickly lose patience when asked to do repetitive tasks.

Many potential lab assistants will be anticipating a letter of reference in exchange for their time. Unfortunately, many are unfamiliar with the protocol and etiquette of asking for a letter. At the interview stage, make sure they know (a) references from a professor carry more weight than those from a grad student, but profs ask their grad students for comments on undergrads (b) a minimal letter will simply confirm that a student worked in the lab, was punctual, etc.; students who go above and beyond can expect a stronger recommendation, (c) you (and your supervisor) require sufficient notice to prepare a letter, e.g. 2 weeks, (d) you need to know the purpose of the letter and whether it is to be “sealed” or “unsealed”.

It is possible, with your supervisor’s permission, for an undergrad to get keys to the lab and other research facilities, but note that building administrators are often wary of giving access to multiple undergrads.

It is a good idea to keep a record of who worked in the lab, and when. Your supervisor may need this information when their research program is reviewed (and may therefore ask his/her students for a list of lab assistants), or the student may ask you or your supervisor for a reference letter, in some cases long after leaving the lab, when you have forgotten who they are.

Conferences

Conferences are in many ways the highlight of the academic year, perhaps especially for those of us without a field season. Grad students at the department attend a variety of meetings. Examples include:

- The Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution (CSEE). Annual meeting, usually in May.
- The Society for the Study of Evolution (SSE). Annual meeting, typically organized jointly with the American Society of Naturalists (ASN) and the Society of Systematic Biologists (SSB) in June. Commonly referred to as the “Evolution meeting”.
- The European Society for Evolutionary Biology (ESEB). Bi-annual meeting in August.
- The Ecological Society of America (ESA). Annual meeting in August.
- The Ontario Ecology, Ethology, and Evolution Colloquium (OE3C). Annual meeting in May.

In addition there are a variety of more specialized meetings (e.g. subfield or study system specific meetings) that people attend.

Costs and Reimbursements

Most supervisors will cover the cost for their students to attend at least one meeting per year. There is, however, some variation among supervisors in how much of the expenses they cover. For example, some supervisors cover food, some do not. It is worth checking with your advisor what his or her policy is. Some supervisors will fund your trip only if you are presenting a talk or poster.

Reimbursements

Typically you have to cover the costs yourself and then get reimbursed by the department after the meeting. The procedure is pretty straightforward: keep your receipts (there is a special form if you happen to lose them) and then fill in the Expense Receipt Form, which can be downloaded from the departmental website (<http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/resources/resstud/erstudent.htm>). You will need to get your supervisor to sign it. Remember also to put on the form what funding source the money should come from (e.g. NSERC). Finally, hand in the form and the receipts to Jenn English (EEB’s pay roll officer); her office is by the reception on the third floor in the Earth Sciences Building. See the Finances Section above (pp. whatever) for more details.

The Harold H. Harvey Travel Award

The award is up to a maximum of \$400 and meant to contribute to the cost of attending one major conference each year. (This is not a competition; generally all applications are accepted). Note, the award is restricted to St. George and

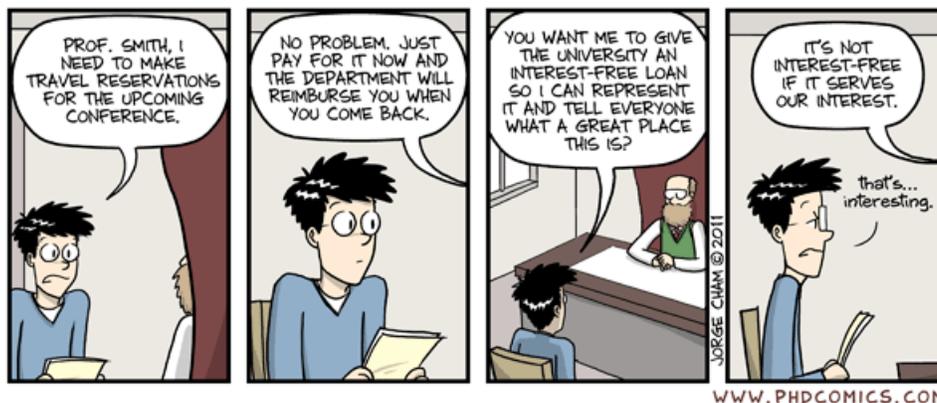
ROM graduate students. You submit the application for this award when you submit your reimbursement to Jenn English. The application form can be found here: <http://www.eeb.utoronto.ca/grad/current/grad-forms.htm>

Other Funding Sources

In addition to the funding from your supervisor and the department there also other funding sources.

- Societies. Many of the above societies offer travel grants to grad students, which are often awarded by a lottery process. Check the website of the relevant meeting for updates and deadlines.
- The School of Graduate Studies. The SGS offers financial support to present at conferences. The grants are awarded twice a year and involve a minimal effort in the application process. The only information required is the dates of the meeting and the title of your presentation. More information here:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/informationfor/students/money/support/internal.htm>



Planning for a Conference

For most conferences there will be several people from your lab or other labs in the department going. It is a good idea to coordinate travel and accommodations as a group beforehand. Each conference will have a list of recommended travel options and accommodations that are often discounted. Many conferences also set up dorms at universities near the conference for very cheap housing. There has also been interest in the department for large groups of people to organize “party buses” or the like for cheap group travel. If a conference is within driving distance consider sending an e-mail to the entire department well in advance of the conference to arrange this.

Conference programs are often released a week or two before the actual conference begins. It is advisable that you look over the program and pick talks or posters you want to see. This also gives you an opportunity to see who in your field is attending the conference. You can use this information to e-mail

researchers you are interested in talking to, be they big names in your field or other grad students. These conversations often lead to good ideas for your current projects and open up collaborations you otherwise would not have been involved in. A major point of conferences is networking, if you start doing that early on you'll be in great shape when you apply for a postdoc or a faculty position!

One more note, CSEE meetings end in a pretty epic dance party, so if you go there bring your dancing shoes. Seeing your advisor start dancing to "Friday" by Rebecca Black, or Miley Cyrus's "Party in the USA" is priceless. These are great opportunities to acquire pictures to use in talks.

KSR

Property

The Koffler Scientific Reserve at Jokers Hill is located on the Oak Ridges Moraine in King Township, about 40 minutes driving north of Toronto. It is a research and education facility for biodiversity, ecology and evolution. It also supports conservation efforts. It was donated to the University of Toronto by Drs. Murray and Marvelle Koffler, and was originally a 350-hectare equestrian estate.

Jokers Hill is composed of multiple land-use history types, primarily wetlands and forests, including Ontario's largest remaining stand of old-growth hardwood. The old hayfield and pastures represent an ecological laboratory for manipulative experiments.

KSR is a relatively new field station, and the lab is only a few years old, so it is modern and really useful for field experiments. The research community is small but growing, and often there will be opportunities to talk over your research with others at the station. KSR is especially good for manipulative experiments and the requirements are more flexible than other field stations (in my experience). Contact Art Weis for more information on what you can and can't do. Art is especially interested in attracting new labs to research at KSR, so he would be a good person to talk to if you are considering doing research there for the first time.

Who Can Use KSR

Any students from EEB who require field space for their experiments can apply to work at KSR. Each year a call for applications for field work occurring in the next year is put out, and students must fill out an application consisting of their project idea, space and resource requirements, and a lay abstract which can be used to promote the research going on at the reserve and educate the public. Projects must be approved, clearly marked with flagging and a project number, and fully taken down upon completion. GPS marking of plots must also be submitted to the reserve for their GIS database.

Many grad students and PIs will bring undergraduate students with them to help with field research. Undergrads can stay at KSR, drive up on their own, or take public transportation. Undergrads are usually students in an ROP course, volunteer, paid by the PI, or NSERC.

To gain access to the Information for Researchers section of the web site, contact ksr.info@utoronto.ca. All researchers will be provided with an introduction document going over additional details of safety,

Living at KSR

There are a number of houses for use by researchers. If you're planning on living at KSR, email Jenn English to make sure there is a spot for you. Usually there is one house reserved for grad students. Housing is \$9 a night.

2012 Housing Assignments:

- Harkaway House – grad students, located on Dufferin across from the main entrance.
- Brown House (aka “the Cottage”) – undergrads, located on Dufferin across from the main entrance
- Hilltop – overflow grad and undergrad and field courses, located at the intersection of 19th sideroad and Dufferin.
- Echo Valley – located off of 19th sideroad
- Willow Ridge – Art's house, located off of 19th sideroad

Bring your own linens, toiletries, and food. There are usually general supplies available (dishwashing detergent, tp, etc), though residents are responsible for keeping these things in stock. If you're a short term resident, remember to chip in some money to long-term residents, since they provide some general supplies for the house throughout the season.

Facilities

Kitchen. Shared by all users. You can leave stuff in the fridge as long as you clean it out regularly. All users are free to use the coffee maker, microwave, toaster, etc.

Common lab space. The common lab, located just to the right as you go through the main door, and two classrooms, one at the top of the stairs and the other in the back of the building by the bathrooms. These areas are shared by all users. Usually each lab will claim an area where they usually sit and store stuff, and label that area with label tape. Check with Art Weis about You can claiming a few drawers in the common space, if there are some available.

Stables. You can usually store larger items in the stables. Check with Art Weis for availability. Usually each lab will occupy one stable, which you should label with the lab name.

Weis lab. There is one lab space labeled “Director's lab”. This lab is for the Weis lab only, so don't use it or remove materials without permission.

Molecular lab. KSR is set up for molecular work as well. If you use the molecular lab, you must bring up all of your own supplies - pipettes, chemicals, consumables, etc.

Other storage. You can claim a locker for yourself, either in the kitchen or in the back classroom.

The lab and kitchen are cleaned weekly, though researchers are responsible for general cleaning and keeping bench tops clear and clean. Cleaning supplies in the lab closet are for general use (do not use cleaning supplies in the kitchen closet).

Greenhouse. There is a greenhouse located near the gazebo on the old tennis courts. Researchers can use this greenhouse and the surrounding area for growing plants; water is delivered there every week or so. Check with Art to see if space is available.

Getting There

There are two main ways to get to KSR: by driving or by bus.

Driving directions:

There are multiple routes to get to KSR, and the most efficient depends on the time of day, location you are departing from, and current construction. Provided you can find your way from the highways to the reserve (see map below), you can take your preferred route. One suggested route which is often used to get from St. George campus to KSR is described here:

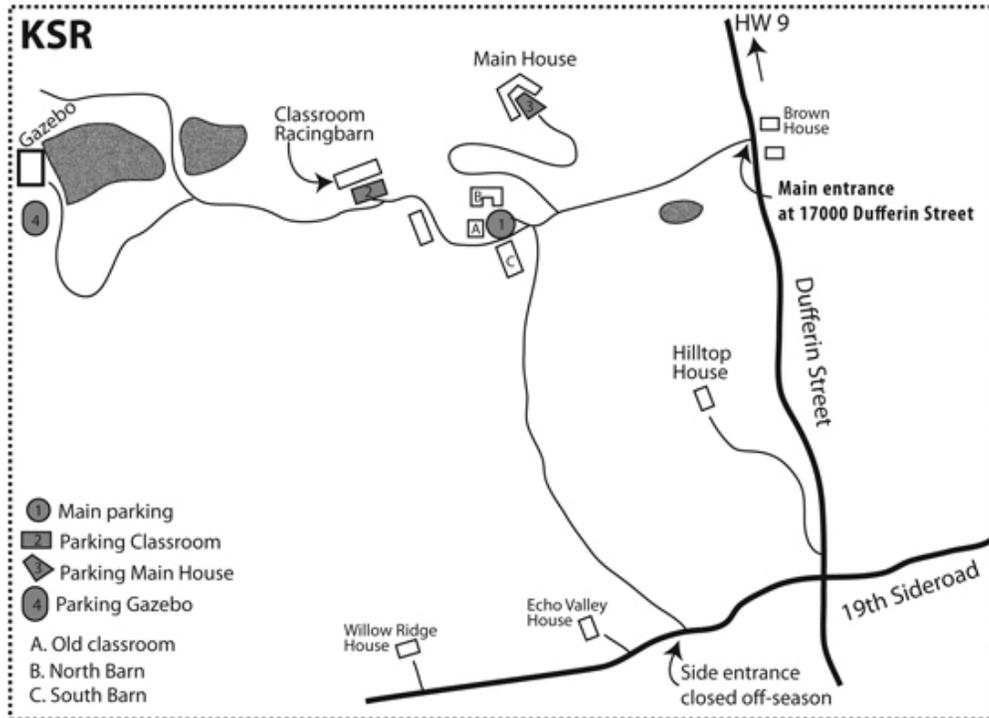
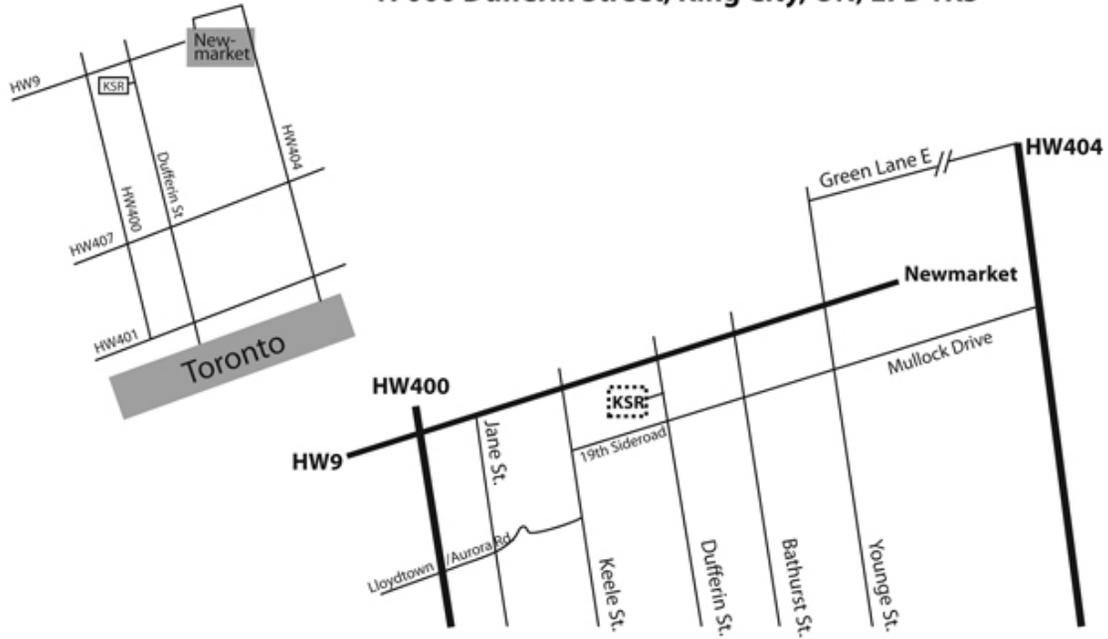
Drive north on Bathurst St. until you hit Eglinton Ave. West. Turn left and go west a few blocks until you see the Eglinton West subway station and the on-ramp to Allen Road. Go North on Allen Road and take the ON-401 W exit. Follow signs for Keele Street/Collector lanes and merge onto the 401 W. Take exit 359 and merge onto ON-400 N toward Barrie. Take the exit toward Newmarket about 35 kilometres later, and merge onto ON-9 E. Turn right onto Dufferin street and drive until you reach the reserve main gates (turn right through them).

Bus directions:

Most people that live downtown take the GO bus from Union Station to Newmarket Bus Terminal. During rush hour, the train runs instead (for example, heading north to Newmarket during the evening rush hour, or south to Toronto during morning rush hour). There are two different stations, so make sure the person picking you up knows if you're headed to the Newmarket Bus Terminal or the Newmarket Train Station. You can also take VIVA transit if you are coming from a suburban area – these buses will arrive at Newmarket Bus Terminal as well.

If you take the bus, you'll need to be picked up at the bus station, so you'll need to be in touch with another researcher to pick you up (or it's almost an hour walking). If there are other grad students living at KSR they will probably be willing to pick you up at the station using the Jokermobile.

**Koffler Scientific Reserve KSR at Jokers Hill
17000 Dufferin Street, King City, ON, L7B 1K5**



Field Vehicle

KSR owns one vehicle for researchers to share (the Jokermobile). You must have an Ontario G license to drive it. Email Jenn English (jenn.english@utoronto.ca) to get signed up on the insurance – you'll need to give her a copy of your license, or take a photo and send it to her via email. Generally only 4 or 5 people are able to drive it, so it's easy to get the time you need. Once you're signed up to drive, Jenn will send you a link to the google calendar, which you can use to reserve the car and sign it out when you need it. When you drive the Jokermobile, you should sign it out using the clipboard in the car – write down the starting and ending mileage and who to charge it to. It costs about \$0.47 per km, so make sure you charge it to the right person. If you are living at KSR, you can use the car for groceries for free (about one trip per week).



Materials

You must gather all the supplies you need on your own. Bring what you need from downtown, or you can run to the nearby Home Depot, Staples, Canadian Tire, Dollarama, etc. There is some common equipment available in the lab. Insect nets, soil corer, shovels, wheelbarrows, etc are located in the tack room in the stables off of the lab. There is a tool shed in the North Barn - tools can be signed out for temporary use. One fridge is for common use (the one with the sliding door, currently located in the Director's lab) and one freezer. If there is

something else you desperately need, ask around to see if you can borrow it from another lab. Never take anything without permission.

Contact and Help

KSR has a fairly substantial staff that you can go to for help with various things. Much more information is also available on the official website for KSR: <http://ksr.utoronto.ca/>.

Director: Arthur E. Weis
(Contact re: research and administration)

email: arthur.weis@utoronto.ca
tel: 416-476-4684 (Campus)
fax: 905-727-2406

Associate Director for Outreach & Education: Robin Marushia
(Contact re: KSR public events, website & lab/classroom use)

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Business Officer: Jenn English
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email: jenn.english@utoronto.ca
tel: 416-946-0025 (Campus)
fax: 905-978-5878 (Campus)

Reserve Manager: John Jensen
(Contact re: maintenance, experiment set-up, water delivery to plots. Billed at \$20/hour)

tel: 905-751-0290
cell: 905-717-9143
fax: 905-751-0291

Fun

There is a fire pit available for use by the ponds on the road leading to the greenhouse and gazebo. Users are responsible for attending to the fire, keeping it under control, having a bucket of water available, and extinguishing the fire before leaving.

People often swim in the main pond by the gazebo. There is a grill and lounge chairs, etc, often used by researchers.

Need Help?



Hierarchy of Help

If you have personal, academic, supervisory, or financial problems, there are lots of people who can (and want to!) help. Here's a breakdown of who to talk to and when.

First Layer

(depending on the nature of your problem)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● EGSA Ombudspeople They are a great starting point – they can recommend who you should talk to next and what approach to take	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Graduate Coordinator (Kitty Lam) Kitty can find out if there are ways around your academic or financial woes. However, she is often bound by the rule book so for potential exceptions, you will need to proceed to the next layer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● SGS website Examples of useful guides: –on intellectual property (e.g. coauthorship), see the pdf for the U of T guidelines on this page: http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/governance/policies/intellectualprop.htm –on responsibilities of supervisors and students, see the pdf called Graduate Supervision Guidelines for Students, Faculty, and Administrators on this page: http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/adminsupport/gradadmin/supervision.htm
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● CAPS (Counselling and Psychological Services) http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Committee Members They are there to help if there are issues with your project or supervisor and to give advice in general.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● EEB Dept. Harassment Representative (Helen Rodd)		

Second Layer

(proceed here if you haven't had success with any of the resources/people in the First Layer and/or are uncomfortable with using them)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Graduate Chair (Nick Collins and/or Maydianne Andrade at UTM) Nick Collins is the Graduate Chair. He is also nice and supportive and may be particularly able to help with academic or financial problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Other Faculty Members (Helen Rodd, Rowan Sage, Don Jackson) These faculty members have experience helping and supporting students. Note: Many students feel comfortable approaching them about supervisory issues because they keep everything confidential and can look at the problem from a supervisor's perspective.
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Third layer

(proceed here if you haven't had success with any of the resources/people in the previous layers and/or are uncomfortable with using them)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Department Chair (Locke Rowe) Locke is a great guy with a big heart but also really busy so make your problem clear.

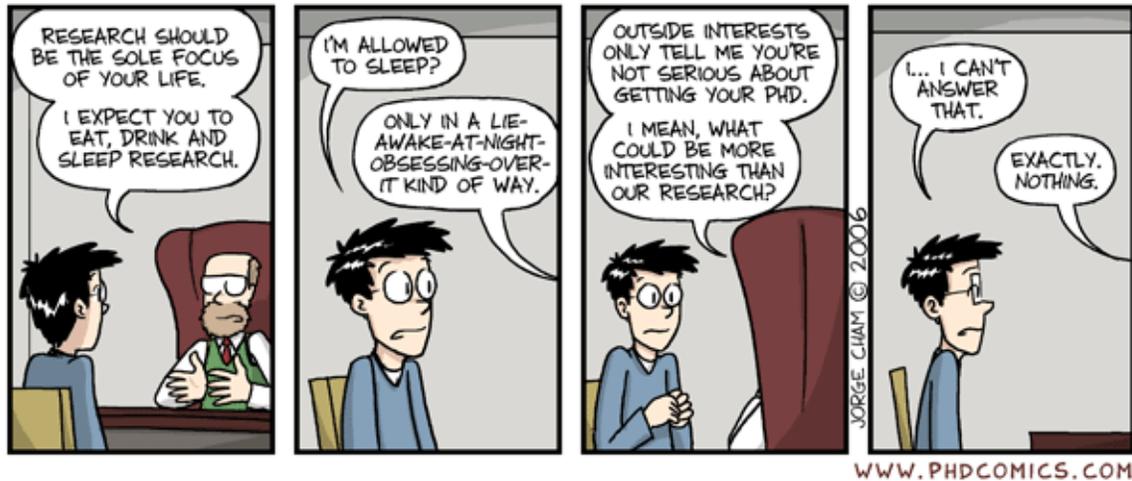
Fourth layer

(you must have talked to either the Department Chair or the Graduate Chair before contacting someone at SGS, or you must have a very good explanation for them about why you can't talk to either of them about the problem)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● SGS Vice-Dean of Students (Luc De Nil)

Toronto Life

Now that you know all the ins and outs of settling into your academic life, here are a few tips for settling into life in Toronto (aka T-dot, Hogtown, the 416).



Where to Live?

On campus

U of T has several Graduate Residences. The U of T Housing Services website (see below) has detailed information about these residences as well as information on the application process.

Off campus

If you decide to live off campus, you might want to first familiarize yourself with the various neighborhoods in town - <http://www.blogto.com/neighbourhoods/>.

Once you have some idea of where you might like to live, there are a bunch of resources (see below) available that should make finding your 'dream apartment' that much easier.

In addition to the various web resources, you can also flip through the classified section of local newspapers (e.g. Toronto Star, Toronto SUN), or simply walk around town on the lookout for 'FOR RENT' signs.

Resource	Type of Housing	Website
U of T Housing Services	Residence, Campus Co-op, Off Campus	http://www.housing.utoronto.ca/
EEB listserv	Off Campus	EEB-ALLGRADS-L@listserv.utoronto.ca
Viewit.ca	Off Campus	http://www.viewit.ca/

Craigslist	Off Campus	http://toronto.en.craigslist.ca/hhh/
Myhood.ca	Off Campus	http://www.myhood.ca/
PadMapper	Off Campus	https://www.padmapper.com/search/apartments/Ontario/Toronto/

Questions to Ask Your Landlord

Aside from the obvious question of cost, you might also want to inquire about:

- utilities: included vs. not
- laundry: onsite vs. not (if not, where the closest laundromat is)
- lease: year vs. monthly
- subletting procedure
- cable and internet
- tenant rights
- maintenance and pest issues

Beware of bad landlords. The Toronto rental market is competitive on the renters' side, so some landlords take advantage of high turnover and don't treat their tenants well. Be sure to ask previous tenants what the building/landlord was like. Google "Toronto's Worst Landlords" and avoid renting from any of them. Don't worry, there are plenty of good, reasonable landlords out there too, and you aren't generally stuck in one place if you don't want to be. If you need to seek legal action against a landlord, U of T runs a legal clinic just up the street which gives free legal advice and representation to students. See Downtown Legal Services at: <http://dls.sa.utoronto.ca/>

Fun in Toronto

When you aren't busy trucking along towards your eventual defense, you should get out and explore the city! Toronto can be extremely fun and lively if you know where to go and what to do.

@ U of T

If you are looking to get involved on campus, you'll definitely want to visit the Student Life Programs and Services website. <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/>

The Graduate Students Union also offers their own repertoire of activities, i.e. Grad Escapes, GSU committees, GSU gym. <http://www.gsu.utoronto.ca/>

Finally, Hart House is the university's living laboratory of arts, culture and recreation. They have extensive gym facilities, various clubs, and play host to numerous plays and music recitals throughout the year. <http://harthouse.ca/>

In the city

The websites below have extensive event listings, as well as news/reviews about Toronto music, arts, people, food & drink, and places:

- blogTO - <http://www.blogto.com/>
- NOW Magazine - <http://www.nowtoronto.com/>
- The Grid - <http://www.thegridto.com/>
- Torontoist - <http://torontoist.com/>
- Toronto.com - <http://www.toronto.com/>

If you want to visit major tourist attractions in the city, visit the City of Toronto website. http://www.toronto.ca/attractions/attraction_highlights.htm. Many of the museums have "Pay What You Can" or Discounted Admissions days, so make sure you check their websites!

There are also various festivals in the city throughout the year, some major ones being:

- Wintercity (January)
- Hotdocs Film Festival (May)
- Contact Photography Festival (May)
- Luminato (June)
- NXNE Music Festival (June)
- Pride Toronto (June/July)
- Canadian National Exhibition (August)
- Toronto International Film Festival (September)
- Nuit Blanche (September)

Again, you'll want to check out the websites for more information regarding festival details.

The City of Toronto website also has a full listing of events:
<http://wx.toronto.ca/festevents.nsf/>

Outdoorsy stuff around the city

If you hike:

<http://www.ontariotrails.on.ca/trail-regions/greater-toronto-area/>

If you bike:

<http://www.toronto.ca/cycling/map/index.htm#tcm>

If you ski or snowboard:

Blue Mountain - <http://www.bluemountain.ca/>

Hockley Valley- <http://www.hockley.com/>

Horseshoe Resort - <http://www.horseshoeresort.com/>

Mount St Louis - <http://www.mountstlouis.com/>

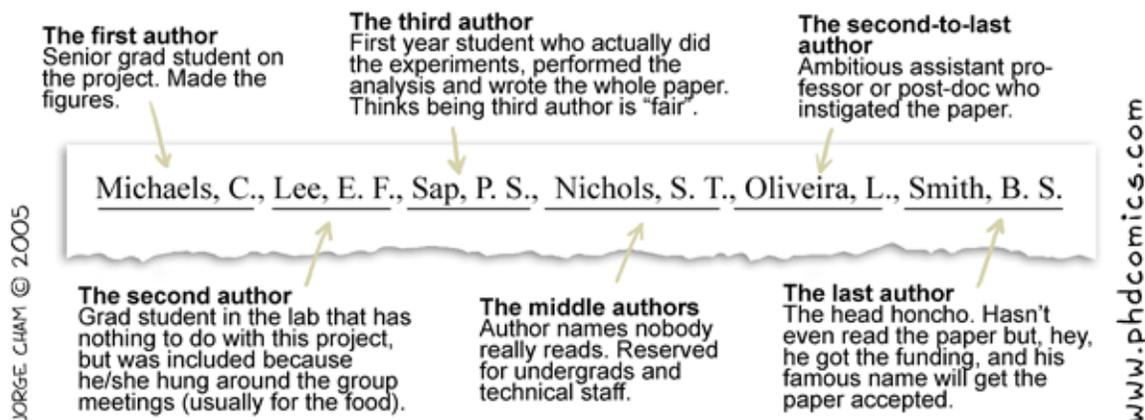
If you rock-climb outdoors:

<http://www.climbers.org/rock-climbing-and-around-southern-ontario>

Credits

This document was a collaboration of many grad students. Here is a list of those who contributed, if you found anything here helpful give someone from this list a hug the next time you see them. A special thank to Helen Rodd for suggestions on the *Appraisal* and *Need Help?* sections. Also, all comic credits go to [PhD comics](#) and [XKCD](#).

THE AUTHOR LIST: GIVING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE



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