Western

School of Biomedical Engineering

Handbook for Graduate Students in Thesis-Based Programs

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https://www.eng.uwo.ca/biomed/

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) website:

https://grad.uwo.ca/index.html

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Who We Are

Introduction

The School of Biomedical Engineering (BME) provides multidisciplinary training opportunities to graduate students that emphasize exposure to real-world clinical problems and the development of professional skills that are relevant to careers in industry, academia, and government. BME students and faculty carry out translational research that improves health-care delivery and patient outcomes at every step from prevention to diagnosis to treatment.

The policies and procedures described in this manual apply to the Master's and Doctoral students registered in the School of Biomedical Engineering graduate program.

Biomedical Engineering Graduate Chair

The Graduate Chair and the members of the School of Biomedical Engineering Graduate Program Committee guide the Biomedical Engineering graduate program. The Graduate Program Committee members include faculty members in the School of Biomedical Engineering as well as student representatives. Their role is to advise the Graduate Chair on matters of graduate policy, act as stand-ins for the Graduate Chair for a variety of graduate milestones and serve as points of contact for graduate students in Biomedical Engineering.

Contact information for the Graduate Program can be found here.

Academic Program Coordinator

The Academic Program Coordinator (bmeoffice@uwo.ca) supports students in all Biomedical Engineering graduate programs. They are the first point of contact by email, phone, or in person for inquiries on applications/recruitment, admissions, orientation, program requirements, eligibility, courses, milestones, graduate funding, teaching assistantships, thesis defenses, and graduation.

Learning Outcomes for Biomedical Engineering Graduates

The alignment of BME's program-level learning outcomes with the Ontario Graduate Degree Level Expectations (GDLEs) and the Western Doctoral Learning Outcomes (WDLOs) is summarized below. The learning outcomes are intended to emphasize the high priorities BME places upon **interdisciplinary knowledge and methods** and development of students' **oral and written communication skills**. We have adopted the approach that the Ph.D. program's learning outcomes include all the M.E.Sc. program's outcomes plus additional outcomes that reflect higher expectations for Ph.D. students with respect to scientific independence and ability to apply knowledge from outside the immediate specialty of the student's thesis. Therefore, there are 15 learning outcomes for the M.E.Sc. program and 22 learning outcomes for the Ph.D. program.

Biomedical Engineering M.E.Sc. Program

Ontario Graduate Degree Level Expectations	***Program-Level Learning Outcomes***	***How does the program support achievement of each GDLE?***	***How does the program evaluate the achievement of each GDLE?***
1. Depth & Breadth of Knowledge	a) Define the scope of biomedical engineering and its subfields and describe current BME research directions and challenges. b) Identify and explain key concepts from both the engineering and biomedical sciences that are directly relevant to the student's own research.	BME 9508 Two elective courses BME seminar series	BME 9508 Two elective courses Written thesis Thesis public lecture Thesis oral exam
2. Research & Scholarship	a) Identify the state of the art and critically review literature in the field of their thesis topic. b) Apply specialized analytic or experimental techniques to problems within the student's own research pillar. c) Theoretically, computationally, or experimentally address a healthcare problem to produce results that are of publication quality and/or have the potential to make an impact via clinical translation or commercialization.	Two elective courses Thesis research project Advisory committee meetings	Advisory committee meetings Written thesis including literature review Thesis oral exam
3. Level of Application of Knowledge	a) Integrate background scientific and engineering knowledge and knowledge of their research field into their own project. b) Systematically plan and perform computations or experiments to investigate mechanisms or improve the performance of biological, diagnostic, or therapeutic systems.	Two elective courses Thesis research project Advisory committee meetings	Advisory committee meetings Written thesis Thesis oral exam
4. Professional Capacity / Autonomy	a) Plan, manage, and execute a research project in collaboration with colleagues and mentors. b) Interpret professional expectations for scientific integrity and biomedical research ethics and act in a manner consistent with those principles.	Thesis research project Advisory committee meetings SGPS academic integrity module (online) Research ethics modules as required for project (usually online)	Advisory committee meetings Written thesis Thesis oral exam SGPS academic integrity module Research ethics modules as required for project
5. Level of Communication Skills	a) Create and deliver effective oral presentations to general audiences that	BME 9550 BME seminar series	BME 9550

Ontario Graduate Degree Level Expectations	***Program-Level Learning Outcomes***	***How does the program support achievement of each GDLE?***	***How does the program evaluate the achievement of each GDLE?***
	clearly communicate the motivation, significance, and impact of their research. b) Create and deliver effective oral presentations to specialist audiences that clearly communicate the key theoretical concepts and computational or experimental results of their research. c) Compose effective written reports of their research for specialist readers that meet the scholarly standards for peer-reviewed publication.	Advisory committee meetings	BME seminar presentation (informal feedback) Thesis public lecture Thesis oral exam Written thesis
6. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge	a) Evaluate theoretical and empirical results in a manner that satisfies the conventions and standards of evidence in both engineering and biomedical science research disciplines. b) Assess other investigators' research in an objective and evidence-based manner. c) Defend their own research in an objective and evidence-based manner.	BME 9508 BME 9550 Thesis research project Advisory committee meetings	BME 9508 BME 9550 BME seminar presentation (responses to questions) Written thesis Thesis public lecture Thesis oral exam

Titles of courses cited in table:

BME 9508: Foundations of Biomedical Engineering

BME 9550: Principles of Communication and Knowledge Translation for Biomedical Engineers

Biomedical Engineering Ph.D. Program

Ontario Graduate Degree Level Expectations	***Doctoral Learning Outcomes***	***How does the program support achievement of each WDLO?***	***How does the program evaluate the achievement of each WDLO?***
1. Depth & Breadth of Knowledge	a) Define the scope of biomedical engineering and its subfields and describe current BME research directions and challenges. b) Identify and explain key concepts from both the engineering and biomedical sciences that are directly relevant to the student's own research.	Two elective courses BME seminar series	Two elective courses Ph.D. research proposal Ph.D. comprehensive exam

Ontario Graduate Degree Level Expectations	***Doctoral Learning Outcomes***	***How does the program support achievement of each WDLO?***	***How does the program evaluate the achievement of each WDLO?***
	c) Identify and explain key concepts from both the engineering and biomedical sciences that are at the interface of the student's research and other related research areas.		Thesis oral exam
2. Research & Scholarship	a) Identify the state of the art and critically review literature in the field of their thesis topic. b) Apply specialized analytic or experimental techniques to problems within the student's own research pillar. c) Theoretically, computationally, or experimentally address a healthcare problem to produce results that are of publication quality and/or have the potential to make an impact via clinical translation or commercialization. d) Independently formulate objectives, scope, and/or hypotheses for their thesis project and develop a research plan to address those goals.	BME 9650 Two elective courses Thesis research project Advisory committee meetings	BME 9650 Advisory committee meetings Ph.D. research proposal Ph.D. comprehensive exam Written thesis including literature review Thesis oral exam
3. Level of Application of Knowledge	a) Integrate background scientific and engineering knowledge and knowledge of their research field into their own project. b) Systematically plan and perform computations or experiments to investigate mechanisms or improve the performance of biological, diagnostic, or therapeutic systems. c) Contribute to the development of novel biomedical engineering concepts, processes, or devices.	Two elective courses Thesis research project Advisory committee meetings	Advisory committee meetings Ph.D. research proposal Ph.D. comprehensive exam Written thesis Thesis oral exam
4. Professional Capacity / Autonomy	a) Independently and/or collaboratively plan, manage, and execute a research project. b) Interpret professional expectations for scientific integrity and biomedical research ethics and act in a manner consistent with those principles.	BME 9650 Thesis research project Advisory committee meetings SGPS academic integrity module (online) Research ethics modules as required	BME 9650 Advisory committee meetings Ph.D. research proposal Ph.D. comprehensive exam Written thesis Thesis oral exam

Ontario Graduate Degree Level Expectations	***Doctoral Learning Outcomes***	***How does the program support achievement of each WDLO?***	***How does the program evaluate the achievement of each WDLO?***
		for project (usually online)	SGPS academic integrity module Research ethics modules as required for project
5. Level of Communication Skills	a) Create and deliver effective oral presentations to general audiences that clearly communicate the motivation, significance, and impact of their research. b) Create and deliver effective oral presentations to specialist audiences that clearly communicate the key theoretical concepts and computational or experimental results of their research. c) Compose effective written reports of their research for specialist readers that meet the scholarly standards for peer-reviewed publication. d) Write research proposals for scholarships, fellowships, and grants that are competitive for external funding opportunities appropriate for the student's stage of career development.	BME 9550 BME 9650 BME seminar series Advisory committee meetings	BME 9550 BME 9650 BME seminar presentation (informal feedback) Ph.D. research proposal Thesis public lecture Thesis oral exam Written thesis
6. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge	a) Evaluate theoretical and empirical results in a manner that satisfies the conventions and standards of evidence in both engineering and biomedical science research disciplines. b) Assess other investigators' research in an objective and evidence-based manner. c) Defend their own research in an objective and evidence-based manner. d) Envision and substantively describe the future research needed to further develop their thesis contributions. e) Critically assess the route by which a technological solution may lead to tangible improvements to patient outcomes for specific applications.	BME 9650 Thesis research project Advisory committee meetings	BME 9650 BME seminar presentation (responses to questions) Ph.D. research proposal Ph.D. comprehensive exam Written thesis Thesis oral exam

Titles of courses cited in table:

BME 9550: Principles of Communication and Knowledge Translation for Biomedical Engineers

BME 9650: Advanced Research and Knowledge Translation for Biomedical Engineers

Arriving at Western

For All Incoming Students

Please ensure to complete the following orientation tasks:

1. Please ensure you have accepted your offer for admission on Student Center
2. Ensure any/all conditions are satisfied prior to the start date of your program.
3. Complete all required Health and Safety training documentation.
4. Order and pick up your Western ONE Student Card.
5. Review your Health Insurance Plans.
6. Review access to your Western email account.
7. Set up Direct Deposit.
8. Discuss your graduate student desk assignment with your supervisor. More details on the key ordering process can be found below.
9. Review of Western Graduate Student Supports in the Useful Links section of this document.

For International Students Arriving at Western

For students who are new to Canada, please reach out to Western International to discover more information about processes you should undertake in your first few months at Western.

Please consider the following important items:

1 Please ensure you have checked in to the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) in the International & Graduate Affairs Building (IGAB) with your study permit.
2 Ensure your VISA study permit is up-to-date at all times. If your permit expires, you will not be able to enroll or receive stipends, TAs, etc.
3 Please give yourself approximately four (4) months before the expiry date to renew.

UWO Email

You have all been assigned a Western University @uwo.ca email address. Please ensure that you have your email set up and you are monitoring this email daily. This is the only email address that important communications from the offices at Western will use. Emails may come from the Registrars Office, Payroll/Human Resources, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS), Faculty of Engineering, etc. ***It is your responsibility to monitor this email to ensure you do not miss important information and deadlines.*** Missed deadlines are very often missed opportunities.

At Western, we use a common login ID and password for most of our websites. If your email address is jsmith@uwo.ca, then you will log in to your uwo website using jsmith (your ID) with

your email password. This will also be used for the library website (www.lib.uwo.ca), SGPS' Grad Portal (https://grad.uwo.ca/student/), Student Center (student.uwo.ca), etc.

Graduate Student Desk Space

Graduate students are able to secure a desk for their duration of study. These desks are often, but not always, in a space that your supervisor may hold for their graduate students. The process for requesting a desk is as follows:

1. Discuss with your supervisor where they may have available space for you. If they are unsure, please contact bmeoffice@uwo.ca and we can assist with desk allocation.
2. Sign the Assigned Desk-Workspace Policy.
3. Complete Western University's SEVEN Required Health and Safety Training courses, **and** the Laboratory Safety & Hazardous Waste Management.
4. Email the signed Assigned Desk-Workspace Policy, and your eight certificates of completion for the health and safety modules, to bmeoffice@uwo.ca, along with your intended desk space if allocated by a supervisor. Key requests will not be approved until this is received.
5. To request your key:
    a. Using your Western username and password, please log in at https://www.uwo.ca/fm/client_services/keys.html
    b. You'll require the location, and your anticipated end date of your program.
    c. The Client Services Office will email you when your key is ready for pick-up. A key deposit will be required when you pick up your key.
6. When you are ready to defend your thesis at the end of your program, you must finalize your desk space by filling out the Kuali Desk Clearance Form.

Biomedical Engineering Thesis Programs

All Biomedical Engineering students take a number of graduate-level courses specifically selected to complement their background, research project, and future goals. You will obtain your research training under the direction of your supervisor and with the guidance of other researchers in our transdisciplinary community.

MESc in Biomedical Engineering

Our highly collaborative program is designed to encourage students to exceed their potential. Students will complete two required courses, two electives, participate in a graduate seminar series once per year, and attend all of their peers' seminars. The normal timeline for a MESc in Biomedical Engineering is six terms (two years).

PhD in Biomedical Engineering

The PhD program emphasizes depth of knowledge through research and courses. Course requirements vary depending on if students are direct-entry, transferred from MESc, or have a graduate degree in a related field. The normal timeline for a PhD in Biomedical Engineering is 12 terms (four years).

Biomedical Engineering Course Curriculum

MESc Course Requirements:

- Health and Safety Required Training
- Two (2) required courses
    1. BME 9508 - Foundations of Biomedical Engineering
    2. BME 9550 - Principles of Communication and Knowledge Translation for Biomedical Engineers
- Two (2) elective credits
- Seminar (Fall & Winter)
- Thesis

PhD Course Requirements:

As a PhD student, your course requirements depend on your stream as outlined below.

If you have a prior graduate degree in a related field, your course requirements are:

- Health and Safety Required Training
- Two (2) required courses
    1. BME 9550 - Principles of Communication and Knowledge Translation for Biomedical Engineers

2. BME 9650 - Research and Knowledge Translation for Biomedical Engineers

- Seminar (Fall & Winter)
- Two (2) elective credits
- Thesis

If you are a direct-entry PhD, or have re-classified from the MESc program, your course requirements are:

- Health and Safety Required Training
- Three (3) required courses
    1. BME 9508 - Foundations of Biomedical Engineering
    2. BME 9550 - Principles of Communication and Knowledge Translation for Biomedical Engineers
    3. BME 9650 - Research and Knowledge Translation for Biomedical Engineers
- Seminar (Fall & Winter)
- Four (4) elective credits
- Thesis

Course Enrollment

Course enrollment occurs generally five weeks before the start of each academic term. Detailed registration instructions will be sent to all students ahead of course registration. For more details, please see here.

Reclassification from MESc to PhD Status

The Biomedical Engineering graduate program allows students to reclassify their registration from Master's to Doctoral without completing the Master's degree. These transfers must occur before the sixth term of registration as a Master's student.

The Program requires all potential Doctoral candidates to complete the Request for Transfer from Master's to Doctoral Degree form (Form 103) and prepare and defend a Doctoral thesis proposal. The student's Supervisor and advisory committee act as the examining panel for the proposal defense. Once the committee recommends approval, the form must be completed/signed and submitted to the BME Office.

After reclassification has been approved by your advisory committee, you must also submit a transfer request to SGPS via the Grad Portal. Also see here for more information about SGPS's reclassification procedure. This form must be submitted no later than 5 weeks before the end of term, and the reclassification will be added to your record for the start of the next term.

PhD Comprehensive Exam

Every PhD candidate is required to successfully complete a PhD Comprehensive Exam within the first five terms of their PhD program. BME Comprehensive Exams must follow the specific format and procedures outlined by the program.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their Advisory Committee Members are aware of BME's Comprehensive Exam requirements.

Failure to complete the Comprehensive Exam in the first five terms may result in the student's academic record being frozen.

Steps for a PhD Comprehensive Exam:

1. Your third Advisory Committee Meeting should act as your Comprehensive Exam Prep Meeting.
2. Three weeks before your Comprehensive Exam, please submit this form to bmeoffice@uwo.ca
3. After your Comprehensive Exam, you must submit the PhD Comprehensive Committee Consensus Report as soon as possible to bmeoffice@uwo.ca

Note: If your Comprehensive Exam yields a "Conditional" or "Unsatisfactory" result, you must follow the steps described in the PhD Thesis Proposal and Comprehensive Exam Policies and Procedures.

SGPS Graduate Supervision Guidelines

The SGPS Graduate Supervision Handbook will help you develop the most out of the supervisor-graduate student relationship at Western. It provides in-depth advice on roles and responsibilities, communications, learning styles, time management, and many other issues. A comprehensive description is available in the SGPS Graduate Supervision Handbook.

Road Maps to Accomplish Milestones Along the Way Towards Degree Completion

The following road maps to successful degree completion will assist students with the many tasks of "staying on track" throughout their graduate studies to complete all degree requirements on time.

MESc Road Map for Successful Degree Completion

Over the two years (6 terms) permitted to complete an MESc degree, students must complete the following milestones within the specified time frames.

Milestone	Time Frame
Form your Advisory Committee (with the assistance of your supervisor)	Members of your advisory committee must be confirmed by the end of your first term of enrollment. Please submit Form 101 to bmeoffice@uwo.ca.
Health and Safety Required Training	To be completed by the end of the second month in your first term of study.
First Advisory Committee Meeting	Must be completed by the end of the sixth month of enrollment. Please update your Pathfinder profile and submit Form 104 to Pathfinder.
Subsequent Advisory Committee Meetings	Must be held every six months until the thesis defense is organized. Please update your Pathfinder profile and attach Form 104 to Pathfinder after each meeting and submit your profile for review.
Apply for external scholarships (e.g. NSERC, OGS, etc.)	On an ongoing basis, according to scholarship deadlines set by the graduate program and SGPS.
Completion of Seminar	Successful completion of seminar attendance each year that a candidate is registered as a full-time student. Seminar is scheduled in the Fall and Winter each academic year, with the schedule released in Fall. An attendance of 70% or higher is mandatory.
Optional reclassification to PhD program from current MESc registration:	This must be completed by the end of the fifth term of registration as an MESc student.
Completion of required courses: BME 9508, BME 9550, and two electives	Before thesis defense is scheduled.
If planning to complete an MSc degree, organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and thesis submission for publication MUST take place before/during the ninth academic term of registration at the latest.	See SGPS Deadlines to complete this process.

PhD (with previous MEsc degree) Road Map for Successful Degree Completion

Over the four years (12 terms) permitted to complete a PhD degree, students must complete the following milestones within the specified time frames.

Milestone	Time Frame
Form your Advisory Committee (with the assistance of your supervisor)	Members of your advisory committee must be confirmed by the end of your first term of enrollment. Please submit Form 101 to bmeoffice@uwo.ca.
Health and Safety Required Training	To be completed by the end of the second month in your first term of study.
First Advisory Committee Meeting	Must be completed by the end of the sixth month of enrollment. Please update your Pathfinder profile attach Form 104 to Pathfinder and submit your profile for review.
Subsequent Advisory Committee Meetings	Must be held every six months until the thesis defense is organized. Please update your Pathfinder profile and attach Form 104 to Pathfinder after each meeting and submit your profile for review.
Apply for external scholarships (e.g. NSERC, OGS, etc.)	On an ongoing basis, according to scholarship deadlines set by the graduate program and SGPS.
Completion of Seminar	Successful completion of seminar attendance each year that a candidate is registered as a full-time student. Seminar is scheduled Fall and Winter of each academic year, with the schedule released in Fall term. An attendance of 70% or higher is mandatory.
Successful completion of Comprehensive Exam.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the fifth academic term of registration (normally at the time of the fourth committee meeting). See guidelines. Must submit Comprehensive Exam Forms to bmeoffice@uwo.ca.
Completion of required courses: BME 9550, BME 9650, and two electives	Before thesis defense is scheduled.
If planning to complete a PhD degree, organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and thesis submission for publication MUST take place before/during the eighteenth academic term of registration at the latest.	See SGPS Deadlines to complete this process.

Reclassification from MESc to PhD Road Map for Successful Degree Completion

Over the five years (15 terms) permitted to complete a PhD Degree when reclassified from an MESc degree (counting from the first term of registration as an MESc student), students must complete the following milestones within the specified time frames.

Milestones	Time Frame
Subsequent Advisory Committee Meetings	Must be held every six months until the thesis defense is organized. Please update your Pathfinder profile and attach Form 104 to Pathfinder after each meeting and submit your profile for review.
Health and Safety Required Training	To be completed by the end of the second month in your first term of study.
Apply for external scholarships (e.g. NSERC, OGS, etc.)	On an ongoing basis, according to scholarship deadlines set by the graduate program and SGPS.
Completion of Seminar	Successful completion of seminar attendance each year that a candidate is registered as a full-time student. Seminar is scheduled Fall and Winter of each academic year, with the schedule released in Fall term. An attendance of 70% or higher is mandatory.
Successful completion of Comprehensive Exam.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the fifth academic term of registration (normally at the time of the fourth committee meeting) or 6 months after reclassification, whichever is later. See guidelines. Must submit Comprehensive Exam Forms to bmeoffice@uwo.ca.
Completion of required courses: BME 9508, BME 9550, BME 9650, and four electives	Before thesis defense is scheduled.
If planning to complete a PhD degree, organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and thesis submission for publication MUST take place before/during the 21st academic term of registration at the latest.	See SGPS Deadlines to complete this process.

Direct-Entry PhD (without previous MESc degree) Road Map for Successful Degree Completion

Over the five years (15 terms) permitted to complete a PhD Degree, students must complete the following milestones within the specified time frames.

Milestone	Time Frame
Form your Advisory Committee (with the assistance of your supervisor)	Members of your advisory committee must be confirmed by the end of your first term of enrollment. Please submit Form 101 to bmeoffice@uwo.ca.
Health and Safety Required Training	To be completed by the end of the second month in your first term of study.
First Advisory Committee Meeting	Must be held every six months until the thesis defense is organized. Please update your Pathfinder profile and attach Form 104 to Pathfinder after each meeting and submit your profile for review.
Subsequent Advisory Committee Meetings	Must be held every six months until the thesis defense is organized. Please update your Pathfinder profile and submit Form 104 to Pathfinder after each meeting and submit your profile for review.
Apply for external scholarships (e.g. NSERC, OGS, etc.)	On an ongoing basis, according to scholarship deadlines set by the graduate program and SGPS.
Completion of Seminar	Successful completion of seminar attendance each year that a candidate is registered as a full-time student. Seminar is scheduled Fall and Winter of each academic year, with the schedule released in Fall term. An attendance of 70% or higher is mandatory.
Successful completion of Comprehensive Exam.	Must be successfully defended by the end of the fifth academic term of registration (normally at the time of the fourth committee meeting). See guidelines. Must submit Comprehensive Exam Forms to bmeoffice@uwo.ca.
Completion of required courses: BME 9508, BME 9550, BME 9650, and four electives	Before thesis defense is scheduled.
If planning to complete a PhD degree, organization of the Board of Examiners, thesis submission, oral defense, and thesis submission for publication MUST take place before/during the eighteenth academic term of registration at the latest.	See SGPS Deadlines to complete this process.

Our Expectations of You

Basic Criteria to Maintain Continuous Graduate Enrollment

Enrollment in the School of Biomedical Engineering Graduate Program implies compliance with a set of rules and criteria legislated by the Program and The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (referred to as SGPS from this point on). SGPS policies and regulations are found here. Students will implement and follow the Expectations and Requirements of Students in the Supervision Regulations.

This Handbook lists specific Biomedical Engineering graduate program requirements. Continued enrollment also requires a level of productivity that will enable completion of the Program in the time frames outlined by SGPS. While the level of productivity will differ from student to student, the minimum expected is generally 40 hours per week of academic work (which includes coursework, lab work, and other scholarly activities such as TAships, etc). Students should also be aware that the SGPS Policy on Registration allows two weeks (10 days) of vacation per annum. Vacation is to be taken during time(s) mutually agreed upon by the Supervisor and student. Students must contact their supervisor and other appropriate lab personnel when absent due to illness. If there are excessive absences from the laboratory or attendance in courses, the Supervisor or course coordinator should consult with the Graduate Chair.

Biomedical Engineering Graduate Program Productivity Requirements

- The graduate supervisor and student must form an advisory committee by the end of the first term of enrollment.
- Students must have advisory committee meetings every six months. The committee must document these meetings on this form. The student must deliver the appropriate signatures and the completed form to the program, as the form becomes part of the student's graduate file at the program level.
- Following each advisory committee meeting, students will complete their Pathfinder portfolio and submit it along with their advisory committee forms using the platform whenever a committee meeting is held.
- Failure to hold an advisory committee meeting within this timeframe will result in a finding of “not meeting degree expectations”. Missing multiple scheduled committee meetings can result in withdrawal from the program.
- Students must complete all **Biomedical Engineering Milestones** at the expected times.
- Students must maintain a level of productivity that will enable completion of the Program in the time frames described in the relevant road map.

- Students must observe and follow all safety regulations and policies established by Western University.

Our Expectations of Ourselves

The Program

- The Program will implement and follow the policies of SGPS.
- The Program will provide sufficient information in the letters of offer of admission to new graduate students. This information would include, for example, details about means of support (e.g., scholarships, traineeships, supervisor funding, and tuition), amount of funding, length of funding, and any initial program expectations. Information will also be provided regarding supervision arrangements for the student, such as the name(s) of the sole Supervisor or joint Supervisors.
- The Program will provide orientation/information sessions for new and continuing graduate students. Information conveyed in these sessions might include: overviews of program policies and requirements, areas of expertise of faculty members for research supervision, expected performance and timelines for completion of degree requirements, intellectual property policies, scholarship and funding information, TA information (and for international students, information about visa requirements and employment regulations), information on policies regarding the proper conduct of research, sexual harassment and race relations, information about safety and workplace regulations, procedures for complaints and appeals, and information on helplines, advisory offices, and counselling services.
- The Program will ensure that each new graduate student has an identified supervisor. The Program will also ensure that the supervisory committee is in place at the appropriate point in time.
- The Program will ensure that arrangements are made for an alternate supervisor if the regular Supervisor either departs or is absent for an extended period.
- The Program will provide students with written guidelines of program policies and notification of any changes.
- The Program will identify paths/resources available to students for assistance and if they wish to raise concerns about their Program, Supervisor, etc.
- The Program encourages open communication and feedback between students and supervisors on all issues, including supervisory practices.
- The Program will strive to maintain an atmosphere conducive to scholarly work by graduate students and help enhance their creativity and productivity.
- The Program should provide mechanisms for monitoring/resolving problems that may arise between graduate students, supervisors, and supervisory committee members and do so promptly. The Program should ensure these mechanisms are congruent with established appeals policies and procedures.
- The Program should ensure a safe working environment for students and inform them of all relevant safety and work regulations.

- The Program will ensure that students know the evaluation criteria for all work before work commences.

The Supervisor

Students may be supervised either solely or jointly. These are defined as follows:

Sole Supervisor: A single faculty member is responsible for overseeing the student and takes sole responsibility for the student's financial and academic support.

Joint Supervisor: Two (or more) faculty members supervise a student, sharing joint responsibility for financial and academic support of the student.

- The Supervisor(s) will implement and follow the Expectations and Requirements of Supervisors in the Supervision Regulations of SGPS.
- The Supervisor must commit the time and energy required to engage in graduate student supervision successfully. As part of this commitment, the Supervisor should always display the highest ethical standards of behaviour.
- Potential supervisors should have sufficient familiarity with the field of research to provide appropriate guidance and supervision or indicate a willingness to gain that familiarity before agreeing to act as Supervisor.
- In the first term of study, the Supervisor will discuss with the student, very early on, any expectations and the relevant policies concerning authorship on publications and issues surrounding intellectual property ownership (this may include patents/licenses). This discussion may result in written agreements or contracts between the Supervisor and student covering these issues.
- In the first term of study, the Supervisor will make the student aware of program requirements and deadlines, various sources of funding, policies covering the conduct of research, and any relevant safety and workplace regulations. The nature of any financial support provided by the Supervisor should be communicated clearly to the student in writing, including details such as the amount of financial support, the length of time of such support, and any specific conditions of this financial support.
- In the first term of study, the Supervisor will discuss and formulate a plan of study with the student for completing degree requirements and thesis work, with clear milestones denoting progress. This plan would include, for example, assisting the student in selecting and planning a suitable and manageable research project, setting a viable schedule, and adhering to it for thesis progress and completion. The student must present this plan at the first advisory committee meeting.
- The Supervisor must be available for regular consultation with the student. The Supervisor and student must discuss and agree on an appropriate schedule for supervisory meetings, and the Supervisor must provide constructive and timely feedback to the

student. More generally, the Supervisor must maintain open communication and feedback with the student on all issues, including supervisory practices.

- The Supervisor must provide regular evaluations and assessments of the student's progress and academic performance. These evaluations would include a review with the student and supervisory committee, at least annually, of progress on thesis research and any other relevant degree requirements. The Supervisor must then provide input to the Program regarding the student's progress.
- The Supervisor must make reasonable arrangements to ensure adequate and appropriate research resources are available for the student's thesis project. The Supervisor must help ensure the research environment is safe, healthy, and free from harassment, discrimination, and conflict. To this end, the Supervisor must be aware of all pertinent regulations and policies covering these issues.
- The Supervisor must provide guidance, instruction, and encouragement regarding student research activities. The Supervisor must help ensure that the student has access to intellectual resources and research opportunities and encourage dissemination of research results through publications and conferences.
- The Supervisor must monitor any major discrepancies in the advice given to the student by members of the supervisory committee and/or Supervisor and attempt to achieve resolution and consensus involved.
- Supervisors must be familiar with all Program, SGPS, and University policies and procedures regarding graduate students and supervision, along with information on graduate student financial support.
- Supervisors must ensure that they take on only as many graduate students as they can adequately supervise.
- Supervisors must make satisfactory alternative supervisor arrangements if they are away for a prolonged period.
- Supervisors must promptly inform the Program (i.e., Graduate Chair or Department Chair) of any serious difficulties in supervision. These might include major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

The Advisory Committee

For MESc students, the advisory committee consists of your supervisor and at least two other members in applicable fields. One member in addition to your supervisor must be from Biomedical Engineering and can be a co-supervisor.

For PhD students, the advisory committee consists of your supervisor and at least three other members in applicable fields. One member in addition to your supervisor must be from Biomedical Engineering and can be a co-supervisor.

Criteria for Choosing an Advisory Committee

- Organize your advisory committee within the first term of enrollment in the Program
- Choose Advisors (normally people with an academic appointment at Western) whose expertise provides insight into the research project
- The committee must consist of at least two advisors in addition to your Supervisor(s).
- Hold Advisory Committee Meetings every six months.
- Following committee meetings, completed Advisory Committee Forms MUST be submitted to Pathfinder, which becomes part of the student's file maintained by the School of Biomedical Engineering.
- In conjunction with the Supervisor, the supervisory committee must help the student develop a program of study and report on the progress of the student's work. Members of the supervisory committee thus serve to broaden and deepen the range of expertise and experience available for providing advice and for assessment of the student. As such, the Supervisor, student, and Program (e.g., Graduate Chair) must consult each other to determine membership on this committee.
- The supervisory committee may assist the Supervisor with the monitoring process. This monitoring will include bi-annual meetings between the student, Supervisor, and supervisory committee to review progress on degree requirements.
- Members of the supervisory committee may provide additional guidance and advice on the student's thesis research project, thus complementing the expertise of the Supervisor. The supervisory committee members must be available to provide other sources of information to the student, as well as constructive criticism and discussion of the student's ideas as they develop.
- Members of the supervisory committee must be reasonably accessible to the student when called upon for discussion of the student's academic progress, consultation on issues related to the thesis research project, and for general guidance. Supervisory committee members must be reasonably available to meet at the student's or Supervisor's request.

Your Pathfinder Portfolio

Following each of your advisory committee meetings, you will be required to update your Pathfinder profile, which allows you to document your scholarly activities, conference participation, publications, thesis progress, and next steps for your thesis work. Students actively registered in a doctoral degree program or multi-year research-based master's degree program can access Pathfinder by visiting the Graduate Student Web Services Portal.

Once you have updated your profile and completed your advisory committee meeting, you will submit your completed and signed Form 104 there and submit your Pathfinder profile for review. This will then go to all your committee members for their approval, and then to the Graduate Chair for final approval.

The more information you provide here, the better your advisory committee members will be able to understand your progress. This will also serve as a record of your progress for the department, so please be sure to enter all of your publication and conference activities here.

Once everything is updated and your Form 104 is attached, be sure to press ‘submit’ so that everything is forwarded for approval. You are required to complete and submit your pathfinder portfolio after every advisory committee meeting. If you fail to complete and submit your Pathfinder portfolio over a period of 12 months, you will be reminded to do so.

The Relationship Between Student, Supervisor, and Advisory Committee

- The student must make and maintain a strong commitment to devote the required time and energy needed to engage successfully in graduate work and research, write a thesis, and contribute fully to the scholarly and intellectual life of the University. The student must show dedicated efforts to gain the background knowledge and skills needed to pursue graduate work successfully and adhere to the highest standards of ethical behaviour to assure academic integrity and professionalism.
- In the first term of study, the student must discuss with the Supervisor any expectations concerning intellectual property ownership (this may include patents/licenses). This discussion may result in written agreements or contracts between the student and Supervisor covering these issues. In this regard, the student must become familiar with relevant policies in these domains.
- In the first term of study, the student must become aware of all program requirements and deadlines, information about various sources of funding, and university policies covering the proper conduct of research, race relations, sexual harassment, appeals, and any other relevant safety and workplace policies and regulations.
- In the first term of study, the student must discuss and formulate with their Supervisor a plan of study for completion of degree requirements and thesis work, with clear milestones denoting progress. These milestones would include, for example, setting a viable schedule and adhering to it for all graduate work, including thesis progress and completion. Any variations to this schedule, including prolonged absences by the student, must be discussed. More generally, the student must maintain open communication and feedback with the Supervisor on all issues, including supervisory practices.
- In the first term of study, the student and Supervisor must discuss and agree on an appropriate schedule for supervision meetings. This discussion must also include an agreement regarding appropriate time frames for submitting student materials to be reviewed by the Supervisor and the Supervisor providing feedback. The student must be reasonably available to meet with the Supervisor and supervisory committee when requested and be able to report fully and regularly on thesis progress and results.
- The student must seriously consider and respond to the Supervisor's and committee members' comments and advice.

- The student must maintain registration throughout the Program and ensure that visas and employment authorization documents are up to date where required. The student must be aware of and conform to program, SGPS, and University requirements relating to deadlines, thesis style, and award applications.
- The student must pay due attention to the need to maintain a safe, tidy, and healthy workplace. The student must respect the work and equipment of others and show tolerance and respect for others sharing the same facilities. This would include, for example, cleaning up the workspace when finished and complying with all safety and work regulations of the program/university.
- The student must be thoughtful and reasonably frugal in using resources and assist in obtaining resources for the research of other group members, when applicable.
- The student must comply with all ethical policies and procedures governing human or animal research where applicable.
- To the greatest extent possible, the student must meet the agreed performance standards and deadlines of funding organizations when financing has been provided under a contract or grant. This would include adherence to any contractual terms under which the thesis research is conducted.
- The student must meet the terms and conditions of any financial contractual agreements, such as a TA position.
- The student must promptly inform the Program (i.e., Graduate Chair or Department Chair) of any serious difficulties that may arise in supervision. These might include major professional academic disagreements, interpersonal conflicts, or potential conflict of interest situations.

Your Time in Biomedical Engineering at Western

Graduate Stipend Compensation Rates

The BME graduate program has set compensation rates for graduate student stipends which are more than or equal to the minimum rates set by SGPS. Compensation rates vary depending on external/internal funding. The current Graduate Stipend Compensation Rates are here. Please consult with your graduate supervisor or the Academic Programs Coordinator if you have any questions about your stipend. Your initial Welcome Letter indicates your compensation rate.

Current tuition amounts are in the UWO Graduate Tuition Fees & Schedule. Biomedical Engineering graduate stipends will be continually adjusted to cover additional increases in fees.

Be aware that your compensation rate may vary from year to year. Changes in circumstances, such as receiving scholarships, traineeships, GTAships, etc., may increase your annual income. However, other circumstances, such as the termination of scholarships, traineeships, GTAships, etc., may decrease your annual income. At the start of each academic year, students are

encouraged to plan ahead financially in order to provide for their living expenses and tuition costs. If you require financial planning assistance, you are encouraged to confidentially discuss your circumstances with one of Western's Student Financial Aid Counsellors.

Western Graduate Research Scholarships (WGRS) – Partial Tuition Support

As part of their Graduate Stipend, all full-time Biomedical Engineering graduate students in good standing with the Program will receive a WGRS to assist with the cost of tuition each term.

Be advised that part-time graduate students are not eligible for WGRS support.

An MESc student will receive WGRS support for a total of six academic terms (equivalent to two years) of enrollment from their initial term of registration.

An MESc student who reclassifies to PhD status by the end of their fifth academic term will receive WGRS support for a total of 15 academic terms (the equivalent of 5 years) of enrollment from their initial term of registration as an MESc student.

A PhD student with a previous MESc degree will receive WGRS support for a total of 12 academic terms (equivalent to 4 years) of enrollment from their initial term of registration.

A direct-entry PhD student will receive WGRS support for a total of 15 academic terms (equivalent to 5 years) of enrollment from their initial term of registration.

A graduate student who receives unsatisfactory advisory committee meeting reports on an ongoing basis or is otherwise not meeting degree expectations with the Program may no longer be eligible for WGRS support until the student satisfactorily addresses these issues.

Scholarships

Graduate students are encouraged to research and apply for scholarships during their program. The major scholarships can be found on the Engineering Graduate Scholarships site; however, if you wish to apply for any others (e.g., from disease-specific foundations), please feel free to do so. Be sure to read the funding agency's instructions. Watch for scholarship information sessions organized by SGPS and the Faculty of Engineering during the first few weeks of the Fall term.

Students who hold a competitive external scholarship will receive a $2,500 per year stipend top-up from the BME program for the duration of the scholarship.

Please review our funding table here for information on how a scholarship may influence your funding package.

Year X Status – Financial Support Implications

SGPS expects graduate students to complete and defend a Master's thesis within two years, and to complete and defend a PhD thesis within four years. For a direct-entry PhD student, or a student who has reclassified from the MESc program to the PhD program, SGPS expects the thesis to be completed within 5 years.

Students who exceed these timelines are classified as "overtime" or Year X. They are no longer eligible for WGRS, or TA assignments. Continued financial support is at the supervisor's discretion, and, if provided, is paid solely from the supervisor's research funds. If you realize you are likely to become a Year X student, you should discuss financial support with your supervisor.

Students who are overtime must, in consultation with their supervisor, complete a Progress Report Form at the beginning of each term and submit the form to the BME office. This form is a mechanism to ensure that overtime students are receiving appropriate guidance from their supervisor to help the student complete his or her thesis.

Graduate Teaching Assistantships

BME students have the opportunity to serve as teaching assistants (TAs) for courses on which they are academically qualified. Most of the TA placements are in undergraduate courses in the Faculty of Engineering, but you do not necessarily need an engineering degree to obtain a TA placement. For example, some BME students are placed into ES1036A/B, Programming Fundamentals for Engineers, which requires only a knowledge of introductory level Java programming and good oral communication skills.

Each year in June, a TA preference survey will be sent to all active students. In this survey, you can rank your top 5 preferred courses to TA in. However, this is not a guarantee that you will be placed in these classes. If you are joining the program in Fall or Winter, we will strive to obtain a TA position related to your background, however receiving a TA in your first term of enrollment is not typical. You will then be able to fill out the preference survey for the next summer term.

All BME graduate students are guaranteed one 70-hour TA position within their first academic year of enrollment, or equivalent funding if one is not available. Should a student choose to decline a TA offer, they also decline that portion of their funding package. Students will be compensated for their services at rates negotiated by PSAC 610 - Teaching Assistants' and Postdoctoral Associates' Union at Western University. The Department will communicate TA application timelines and details to students via email. Allocations will be made one month prior to each academic term.

Graduate Students with Disabilities

Western accommodates students with disabilities, provided that the academic integrity of the course or Program is not compromised. Information on Support Services for Students with Disabilities is here.

Travel Bursary

BME students attending a research conference or a training workshop outside London are eligible for a travel bursary of $500. Each student can receive one travel bursary each year he or she is a WGRS-fundable (i.e., not overtime) student.

To apply for a travel bursary, complete and submit the request form, immediately after you return from your conference or workshop. Your supervisor must sign the form to verify that the trip was relevant to your thesis research. The bursary, once approved, will be paid to your supervisor to offset a portion of your travel expense reimbursement for the trip.

Travel expense reimbursement claims (regardless of whether or not a BME travel bursary is requested) are submitted online to Western's Financial Services office. See here for additional information about filing a travel expense claim.

Health and Wellness

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to prioritize their health and wellness. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre as part of their registration. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found here.

Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, program director (Graduate Chair), or other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources are found here.

Part-Time Status in a Full-Time Program

Part-time registration in full-time programs may be granted in exceptional circumstances and only with the approval of the Graduate Program and the Vice-Provost, SGPS. Examples of such circumstances are admission to another full-time university program or medical or compassionate circumstances that make it impossible for the student to continue to devote full-time attention to their program of study. Supporting documentation must be submitted with the request for part-time status.

Part-time status is not to be used to reduce or avoid tuition fees. Being beyond the funding eligibility period will not constitute grounds for a change from full-time to part-time status. Part-time status may be granted for up to a cumulative total of three terms. Students registered part-time may take no more than two courses in a term. Undergraduate courses taken as extra courses or as degree requirements are to be included in the totals above.

Leave of Absence (LOA)

The Vice-Provost, SGPS, may grant a leave of absence for pregnancy/parental, medical or compassionate grounds, normally to a maximum of three terms or 12 months, on the recommendation of the BME Graduate Chair.

While on leave, students are expected to refrain from normal activities as graduate students (e.g. attending classes or conducting research). However, students and supervisors may negotiate ongoing communication during this period.

Students are advised to consult with the Graduate Chair and/or Academic Programs Coordinator to discuss the calendar details for arranging an LOA as well as other special arrangements, such as dealing with course enrollment during this period.

The date for degree completion and WGRS support will be extended by the duration of the time taken during the LOA.

More information on an LOA and a link to the LOA application is here.

Medical Accommodation

We understand there may be times when you are unable to complete your academic responsibilities. Information on Medical Accommodation is here.

Withdrawal and Readmission after Withdrawal

Withdrawal from a program can occur in two ways. A student may voluntarily withdraw following formal notification to the Program. Alternatively, the Program or SGPS can withdraw a student for failure to meet admission conditions, progression requirements, specified deadlines for completion, or failure to pay fees. Once officially withdrawn from the Program, the person withdrawn is no longer a student and may not attend classes, receive supervision, or have access to any University resources.

Students who voluntarily withdraw from the Program will receive the notation "voluntarily withdrawal from the program" on their transcripts. Students who are involuntarily withdrawn from the Program will receive the notation "required to withdraw" on their transcripts.

Students who have voluntarily withdrawn or who have been required to withdraw and wish to complete their Program must formally re-apply for admission. The Program and SGPS must approve credit for previous work completed.

Students who are withdrawn for non-payment of fees will be considered for admission under the following payment conditions:

- Any student who has withdrawn or has been withdrawn may be required to pay fees for the terms in which registration has lapsed if admitted.
- Payment of all fees owed at the time of withdrawal, including all penalty fees incurred as a result of the default.
- Prepayment of full fees for the term in which admission is sought.
- These payments must be money order, cash, direct debit, or certified cheque and made payable to the Western University via the Registrar's Office.

SGPS Requirements for Continuous Graduate Enrollment

The following information is from the SGPS Registration Regulations webpage, which will have the most up-to-date information:

- Students must maintain a cumulative average of at least 70% calculated each term over all courses taken for credit, with no grade less than 60%.
- Students may be absent from the University while visiting libraries, attending a graduate course at another institute, doing fieldwork, etc. If such periods exceed four weeks in any term, then formal approval is required from both the program's Graduate Chair and the Vice-Provost of SGPS.
- Graduate students must maintain continuous registration in SGPS in each successive term from initial registration, until the end of the term in which they complete all degree requirements.

SGPS Overview for Thesis Submission, Defense, and Publication

For the most up-to-date information guide, please see the SGPS thesis webpage.

MESc Thesis

Please read the SGPS regulations and information thoroughly before submitting.

http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/index.html

http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/8.html#81

Once you know when your exam will be held, please complete the Proposed Masters Thesis Examination Board form and Masters Thesis Supervisor Approval form at http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/forms.html and submit to the BME Office at least five (5) weeks prior to the exam date.

Your MESc Examination Committee must consist of two (2) Biomedical Engineering faculty members and one (1) Western faculty member who is not a member of BME. The University (non-BME) Examiner cannot be a member of your advisory committee. Consult with the BME Office as soon as possible if you are uncertain whether a specific faculty member is eligible to serve as your University examiner.

Your forms will be approved by the BME Office and forwarded to SGPS. Three (3) weeks prior to the defense, the preliminary submission of your thesis will be due to be uploaded to SGPS' website. http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/preliminary.html+

PhD Thesis

Please read the SGPS regulations and information thoroughly before submitting.

http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/index.html

http://www.grad.uwo.ca/current_students/regulations/8.html#81

Once you know when your exam will be held, please complete the Proposed Masters Thesis Examination Board form and Masters Thesis Supervisor Approval form at http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/forms.html and submit to the BME Office at least seven (7) weeks prior to the exam date.

Your PhD Examination Committee must consist of two (2) Biomedical Engineering faculty members, one (1) Western faculty member who is not a member of BME, and one (1) external examiner who supervises PhD students at another university but does not hold a faculty appointment at Western. The University (non-BME) Examiner cannot be a member of your advisory committee. The External Examiner must be arm's length from both you and your supervisor. Consult with the BME Office as soon as possible if you are uncertain whether a specific faculty member is eligible to serve as your University or External examiner.

Your forms will be approved by the BME Office and forwarded to SGPS. Five (5) weeks prior to the defense, the preliminary submission of your thesis will be due to be uploaded to SGPS' website. http://grad.uwo.ca/current_students/thesis/preliminary.html

Thesis Defense Only (TDO) Status

If you have completed all degree requirements (including thesis submission by the appropriate deadline) but have not defended your thesis before the end of the current term, you are eligible to continue your registration into the next term in Thesis Defense Only (TDO) status. This additional term makes completing your thesis possible while not requiring you to pay full tuition fees (ancillary fees still apply, and UHIP where applicable). This status may apply for a maximum of one term. Instructions and forms for applying for TDO are here.

In order to be considered for TDO, Doctoral and Master's students must submit their thesis for examination by the deadline set on the SGPS Thesis Timelines webpage. The specific deadline

date used by SGPS is "**Final Date for Candidate to Submit Thesis for Examination to SGPS."** TDO will be granted to those students whose supervisors have not been able to secure an examination board and/or examination before the end of the term.

Students who have applied for TDO by the deadline and meet all TDO criteria do not need to apply for a change of status. SGPS will contact these students and the graduate program individually.

Convocation

Students receive official notification via email from SGPS when their theses have been accepted for publication within the Scholarship@Western Thesis Repository. At this point, students have completed all degree requirements in order to graduate at the next convocation.

In order to graduate, students must apply to graduate via their Student Center. This process enables them to confirm the degrees they are receiving and how their names will appear on their diplomas. Instructions are found here.

Visit the convocation website for more details.

Useful Links

School of Biomedical Engineering Graduate Program Guidelines and Forms

All SGPS and School of Biomedical Engineering graduate program-specific forms are available here.

Western University Graduate Student Supports

- Learning Development & Success
- Welcome to Academic Support & Engagement
- Accessible Education
- Wellness & Wellbeing
    - Mental Health Support
    - Disclosures of Gender-Based and Sexual Violence
    - Student Support & Case Management
- Office of the Ombudsperson
- Society of Graduate Students
- School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS)https://grad.uwo.ca/
    - SGPS Career Development
    - Own Your Future
- Western International
- International and Exchange Student Centre
- Centre for Teaching and Learning – TA Programs
- Indigenous Student Center
- BME Specific Forms