

## **Role of supervisory committee members**

High-quality mentorship is fundamental to the success of graduate students. Supervisory committees play an essential role in this success, providing support and advice for the student and the supervisor, and aiding in communication. Beyond evaluating the students' work, they provide assistance with research project development and progress, as well as the student's professional development.

Supervisory committees in the Department of Ocean Sciences will normally consist of the Supervisor and at least two other qualified members drawn from within and/or beyond Memorial University. They will meet at least annually to evaluate the student's progress and to provide guidance and constructive feedback.

## **Committee member roles and responsibilities**

- Participate in annual progress meetings.
- Participate in additional meetings as requested by the student, supervisor, or any member of the supervisory committee.
- Assist in evaluating academic progress and advise on upcoming research plans.
- Help define courses and other program requirements (e.g. comprehensive exam requirements).
- Assist in providing guidance, consultation, and advice on the student's research and professional development.
- Provide expertise that complements and expands on that of the supervisor.
- Provide mentoring/mediation to the student if the relationship with the supervisor is strained, and requested by the student or other thesis committee members.
- Evaluate the research proposal in a timely fashion, and attend the student's proposal seminar.
- For PhD students, approve the composition of the comprehensive exam committee.
- Provide timely feedback on the draft thesis dissertation only after the student has completed at least one round of revision based on feedback from the supervisor.
- For MSc students, attend their exit seminar.
- With the rest of the committee, approve when the thesis is ready for examination and following examination, when the thesis is ready for final submission to the School of Graduate Studies and awarding of the degree.

## **Student Wellness**

Being a committee member also places one in a position to help students manage their wellbeing. It has been found that graduate students are at least twice as likely to experience mental health challenges, such as anxiety and depression, compared to the general educated population (Levecque et al. 2017. Res. Policy 46: 868-879). Memorial has several resources that can support students, such as the Student Wellness and Counselling Centre (<https://www.mun.ca/studentwellness/>). As a committee member, you are not expected to have professional skills needed to directly resolve such issues nor to become personally involved, but one can help students access the resources they may need.