

# **Implementation Factsheet**

## **Extending Registration with Tuition Fee Exemption**

*(For students in research-stream and professional programs)*

June 2020

### **Introduction and Rationale**

#### **I) Students in research-stream programs & professional programs with a major research component**

Some students—either because of the nature/stage of their research or because of their personal circumstances—are likely to be more profoundly impacted by this pandemic than others. Supervisors and graduate unit administrators are encouraged to consider potential mitigation strategies to address research disruptions and impeded academic progress by graduate students.

Where possible, students in research-stream programs should be encouraged to transition their research to other learning activities until they are able to safely resume research activities or pivot their research plans. However, in some cases this will not be possible, and students may consequently require additional time to complete their program requirements. In these cases, graduate students may be permitted to register with a tuition fee exemption pending the approval of the graduate unit.

#### **II) Students in professional programs**

Similarly, students in coursework-only programs, including those with internship or practicum requirements, may have experienced an impact on their pathway towards completion for COVID-19 related reasons. Those in coursework-only programs should be advised on options for modifying their program-related activities that will allow them to complete degree requirements within conventional timelines. In cases where completion of outstanding academic activities will require additional time beyond the program length of the degree program due to COVID-19 related disruptions, students may be permitted to register with a tuition fee exemption pending the approval of the graduate unit.

### **Context**

Registration is the process by which a person has established an active association with a program of study for an academic period. A student is considered to be registered once any conditions of admission have been satisfied and academic, incidental, and ancillary fees are paid, or a fees arrangement has been made.

Graduate students who demonstrate that their academic progress was significantly impeded due to COVID-19 related disruptions will be exempt from tuition for up to one academic session. This duration may be re-assessed as the situation evolves. Students still will be charged non-tuition ancillary, incidental fees and system access fees that are associated with the registration session.

## Criteria for Providing a Tuition Fee Exemption

### Students in programs with a required research and thesis/major research paper component:

1. Students were making good progress with their thesis/dissertation prior to COVID-19 and data collection or access to necessary sources has been significantly impeded due to pandemic-related impacts (e.g., labs closed, fieldwork cancelled, access to materials, archives or library sources has been impeded, personal circumstances). This disruption will have been documented using the COVID-19 mentoring record distributed in 2020.
2. Additional work is needed before the thesis/dissertation can be defended (e.g., insufficient data or material) or the major research paper is completed.
3. The revised research plan will require an additional session of registration.
4. All feasible alternative academic activities (e.g., writing sections of dissertation or publications, coursework, professional development) have been completed.
5. The student will be outside the funded cohort and will receive little or no other funding towards tuition charged in the session for which they are applying for an exemption.
6. Supervisory committee agrees that conditions (1) through (5) have been met.
7. Departmental approval.

### Students in coursework-only programs (including those with internship or practicum requirements):

1. Students were making good progress prior to COVID-19 and academic activities or access to necessary resources has been significantly impeded due to pandemic-related impacts (e.g., required courses or experiential learning activities have been cancelled or deferred, personal circumstances). This disruption will have been documented by the graduate unit.
2. Completion of outstanding academic activities will require additional time beyond the program length of their degree program.
3. The Program Director and the Graduate Chair/Coordinator of the student's home graduate unit agrees that conditions (1) and (2) have been met and provides departmental approval.

## Implementation

- Registration with tuition exemption is available for students who meet the criteria identified above. Students should submit their request in the academic session for which they are seeking tuition fee exemption. Applications must be received by the SGS registration deadline (as published in the SGS sessional dates).
- Students will initiate a request to register with a fee exemption by completing the [\*“SGS Register with Tuition Fee Exemption on Basis of Progress Delays due to COVID-19”\*](#) form. For students in research stream programs or professional programs with a major research component, completion of the form requires approvals from the supervisory committee and the graduate chair or

coordinator of the home graduate unit. For students in professional programs, completion of the form requires approvals from the program director and graduate chair/coordinator of the home graduate unit.

- Departments/divisions will need to have processes in place to assess whether the student meets the required criteria and to communicate this process to students. SGS recommends using the Committee on Academic Progress for this purpose. Students whose requests are not approved by the department/division will be able to appeal this decision to the Graduate Department Academic Appeals Committee, and if necessary, to SGS, as per the normal academic appeals process.
- Graduate unit will forward approved requests to their SGS Student Services Advisor for SGS processing.
- At the time of registration, the SGS Student Services Advisor will register the student in one session with a registration fee category of EX (exempt).
- Students will be charged mandatory non-tuition fees, such as incidental, ancillary, and system access fees, and will be subject to services charges on unpaid fees as per the University's regulations