Department of Health, Aging & Society

Ph.D. Social Gerontology Handbook

2026-2027

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McMaster University
Department of Health, Aging & Society
Ph.D. in Social Gerontology

This Handbook covers the period from
September 2026 to August 2027

Disclaimer: *If there is a discrepancy between this Handbook and the School of Graduate Studies Calendar, the School of Graduate Studies Calendar prevails.*

The Department of Health, Aging & Society offers a Ph.D. degree program in Social Gerontology. The Ph.D. in Social Gerontology allows students to take a critical social science perspective and an interdisciplinary approach to the study of aging. Students who complete the Ph.D. in Social Gerontology will acquire theoretical and methodological expertise in social gerontology with a specific emphasis on an interdisciplinary social science perspective on aging and the condition of later age.

I. Admission Requirements

To be eligible for admission to the Ph.D. program, applicants are normally required to have:

a) a completed Master's degree with an average of at least B+ in a related aging and/or social sciences discipline;

b) demonstrated interest and experience in critical approaches to aging;

c) be available for full-time study.

Applicants will be assessed on the basis of their qualifications and how well their interests align with the research interests and availability of faculty.

II. Degree Requirements

Students will be required to complete five (5) one-term courses, which include:

a) HLTH AGE 716 Quantitative Research Methods in Studies of Health and Aging **AND** HLTH AGE 714 Qualitative and Historical Methods in Studies of Health and Aging.

b) HLTH AGE 713 Critical Perspectives on Aging

c) Two elective courses offered by Health, Aging & Society (HLTH AGE 701, 715, or any other 700-level HLTH AGE course) OR by another department/academic unit (provided that permission has been obtained from those departments or academic units).

Additional Information

1. Students entering the Ph.D. program who have already taken any of the following courses: HLTH AGE 714, 713, and 716, or their graduate level equivalent from another program/university, can apply for exemption through the Department of Health, Aging & Society.

2. Students who have been granted exemption for ALL THREE required courses stated above (or their graduate level equivalent) must complete a minimum of 3 half courses to fulfill the course requirements of the program. One of the three courses must be a HLTH AGE course. The other two courses may be HLTH AGE courses or courses from a department or academic unit other than Health, Aging & Society (provided that permission has been obtained from those departments or academic units). Course selection should be discussed with the supervisor.

3. Students who have been granted exemption for LESS THAN 3 required HLTH AGE courses (or their graduate level equivalent) must complete a minimum of 5 half courses to fulfill the course requirements of the program. One of the exempted courses must be replaced with a HLTH AGE course. Additional exempted courses may be replaced with other HLTH AGE courses or courses from a department or academic unit other than Health, Aging & Society

(provided that permission has been obtained from those departments or academic units). Course selection should be discussed with the supervisor.

4. All doctoral students will be required to participate in a non-credit research and professional development seminar over the course of two academic years. Participation in the seminar will normally take place in the first and second year of the program.

III. Graduate Committee

The graduate programs offered by the Department of Health, Aging & Society are administered by a Graduate Committee, which operates with powers delegated to it by the department and its exact role may vary over the years. The Graduate Committee will consist of five members, which include three faculty members and two graduate student representatives, at least one of whom should be at the doctoral level.

Note: Graduate student representatives of the Graduate Committee will not evaluate graduate admission applications and scholarship rankings. However, their input may be sought on individual cases by the Graduate Committee.

The Graduate Committee will meet at least once per term during the main academic terms (September-April) and as needed during the summer term. The Chair of the Graduate Committee will report on activities at the regular monthly meeting of the department.

IV. Supervisor/Supervisory Committee

Upon entry into the program each student will be assigned an academic supervisor based on their original statement of interest. In addition to taking primary responsibility for overseeing the student's dissertation research, the supervisor's role includes providing information about the program structure, course contents, comprehensive examination requirements and other topics relevant to the student's successful progress through the program.

Not later than six months following the student's arrival, a supervisory committee will be appointed by the Graduate Committee, on the recommendation of the student and the supervisor. This committee will consist of at least three members. Two, including the supervisor, must be full-time permanent faculty members of the Department of Health, Aging & Society. A third member, whose scholarly interests correspond with the student's main research interest, may be from outside the department. One member may be appointed from outside the University with the permission of the Vice-Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies.

While the supervisor and student have a mutual obligation to meet on a regular basis, each Ph.D. supervisory committee will have a formal regular meeting at least once per academic year (September-August) to discuss the student's progress. Each Ph.D. supervisory committee must report annually on the student's progress and the Graduate Chair must forward such reports to the School of Graduate Studies. The report formally documents the supervisory committee's assessment of the progress of the student's program.

For the complete general regulations in regard to supervision pertaining to Ph.D. students, please see Graduate Studies Supervision Guidelines, and Sections 3.1 (General Regulations on Supervision) of the current edition of the School of Graduate Studies Calendar.

V. Non-Credit Research and Professional Development Seminar

Participation in the seminar will normally take place in the first and second year of the program. The seminar will act as a forum in which students can acquire and share practical skills and knowledge relevant to the research enterprise, such as scholarship, proposal, grant and report writing, research reviewing, the preparation of conference papers and articles for publication in scholarly journals, research networking, and the preparation of application letters and resumé/CV.

VI. Comprehensive Examination

The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to ensure that the student has a sufficient knowledge of the relevant scholarly literature in their area of research interest

and that they are able to synthesize and communicate the literature in a critically insightful way. The student will take a comprehensive examination in their area of concentration. This examination will be completed between 12 and 20 months after beginning the Ph.D. program. The required minimum course work must be completed before taking the Ph.D. comprehensive examination.

The examination will consist of:

- a written examination
- an oral examination
- a research proposal (which is also evaluated during the oral examination)

Comprehensive Examination Committee

The Chair of the Graduate Committee will appoint a Comprehensive Examination Committee, which will consist of four members, as follows:

- Chair (faculty member in the department)
- Supervisor
- Two members of the supervisory committee

Pre-examination meeting

Normally, at least three months but in no case less than 10 weeks in advance of the intended date of writing the examination, the Comprehensive Examination Committee will meet with the student to review a proposed reading list, and to schedule the various components of the examination. If the pre-exam meeting and the oral comprehensive exam are being held virtually, it is the responsibility of the Chair to set up the meetings.

The Comprehensive Examination Committee MUST complete the "Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam and Research Proposal Planner" (see Appendix B) and return the form to the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

Reading List

The reading list should be prepared in consultation with the supervisory committee. The student and the members of the Comprehensive Examination Committee should ensure the list covers broader understanding and knowledge of the subject. In the first meeting, the examination committee members will provide suggestions and feedback on the reading list. The reading list should include approximately 50-100 cited sources from journal articles, books and book-chapters. The final reading list will be circulated to the examination committee members for approval.

Written Examination

The written examination will consist of six questions of which the student will answer three. One of the three questions should address the particular research interest of the student. The questions are derived from a pool of 12-15 questions submitted by the Examination Committee. The written examination will be a two-week, open book take-home examination.

The answer to each question should be roughly 8-10 pages (double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, and 1-inch borders). Footnotes/endnotes are discouraged, but should be included in the 10-page limit, if used.

Clearly identify the question that is being answered at the beginning of each answer by typing in the question number. It is not necessary to retype the question as part of your answer or to attach a separate cover sheet. A copy of all of the exam questions is given to the Examination Committee with your returned answers.

Where you refer to specific works (e.g., World Health Report, 2013) or authors on your reading list (e.g., Andrews et al., 2011), there is no need to provide the full citations in a reference list. If you refer to a specific item that is not on the reading list, you must provide the full citation at the end of your answer.

Students are not allowed to use material that they have prepared prior to the exam, for example, by "cutting and pasting."

Students are discouraged from quoting at length the work of other researchers. The use of key terms or phrases is acceptable. Any quotation should be properly attributed.

For the duration of the examination, the student must not discuss (verbally, by e-mail, or in any other way) the content of the examination with any other person.

Research Proposal

The research proposal serves to identify a viable project of research, the topic and focus of which is situated effectively in the relevant scholarly literature.

Deadlines:

A first draft of the research proposal is due for submission to the department via the Graduate Administrative Assistant, one week prior to the first meeting with the Comprehensive Examination Committee.

A second draft of the fully developed proposal is due two weeks before the written comprehensive examination.

The student will incorporate the feedback/comments given by the Comprehensive Examination Committee members in the final proposal and submit it to the department via the Graduate Administrative Assistant two weeks after the written comprehensive examination.

Guidelines of the research proposal:

The proposal should outline and explain the project's theoretical perspective and relevance, key research questions, hypotheses or argument, and the appropriate methodology. The research proposal should be between 15 and 25 pages (double spaced, including references, excluding figures and appendices) and should follow the guidelines for tri-council research grant submissions to either SSHRC or CIHR. The proposal should always be prepared in close and regular discussion with the supervisor and other members of the supervisory committee. Suggested guidelines for the proposal are as follows:

1. Introductory statement of the research problem (1-2 pages)
2. Literature review (4-6 pages)
3. Detailed statement of research problem including research questions to be addressed (2-4 pages)
4. Description of research methods and how they will be used (4-7 pages)
5. Tentative chapter outline (roughly 1 page)

6. Tentative timeline or schedule of work (maximum 1 page)
7. References (2-4 pages)
8. Appendices - figures, illustrations, instruments (optional & not part of 25-page limit)

Oral Examination

One week after the submission of the written examination, there will be an oral comprehensive examination. There are several purposes of the oral examination: to assess the student's understanding of the key concepts underpinning their work, and the scholarly context in which their work is situated; to assess the adequacy of the research described in the proposal (e.g., design, methods, ethics); and to offer feedback to strengthen the student's research going forward (conceptually, and in terms of the study design). The oral exam involves:

- Student presentation of the research proposal (open forum to which other members and associate members of the department, including graduate students, are invited). The presentation is typically about 10-15 minutes long and summarizes the major points of the research proposal. Students are encouraged to prepare PowerPoint slides for their presentation, but it is not required.

- Examination Committee will ask the student questions related to both the written examination questions (all six questions) and the research proposal. This portion of the oral examination is a closed session.

The role of the Chair is to facilitate the exam process, not to act as a voting member. Before the student joins the exam room, the Chair should decide on the order of questioning with the committee members, discuss the allocation of time between questions focusing on the written exam and the proposal, and address any questions about process. When the student joins the exam room, the Chair can explain the process to the student.

During the oral exam, the Chair will guide the process and keep time. There are typically two rounds of questions, sometimes three; in each round, each committee member has approximately 15 minutes to ask questions, and the supervisor usually goes last.

The amount of time that will be spent on questions related to the written examination questions and to the proposal is up to the discretion of the committee, but the student should prepare for approximately equal amounts of time spent on each. Committee members may ask questions about the written answers overall, or on each answer separately.

The questioning period normally lasts about two hours, but it may last for a MAXIMUM of three hours.

At the conclusion of the oral comprehensive examination, the student is asked to leave briefly while the committee members discuss and finalize their evaluations and feedback. The Committee will make one of the following three judgments by majority vote, taking into account the student's performance on the written and oral components separately:

- Pass with distinction
- Pass
- Fail

If the result of the Comprehensive Examination is "fail", the student must be given a second opportunity to take the examination, or those portions on which the failure occurred. This second opportunity is given in place of any 're-read' of a comprehensive exam, which is explicitly excluded from the Student Appeal Procedures, and in recognition of the fact that the failure may occur on the oral part of the examination. If a student chooses to withdraw from the program prior to that second opportunity, the result "fail" will remain on the student's record. A second failure will result in the student being withdrawn at the end of the month in which the decision is rendered.

VII. Thesis Preparation

A Guide for the Preparation of Theses may be obtained from the School of Graduate Studies website.

VIII. Thesis Defence

The candidate's theses must be defended in an oral examination. For the policies and procedures concerning thesis defence, see Section 3.4.4 (Thesis Defence) of the current edition of the School of Graduate Studies Calendar. Also see the Student Guide to the Thesis Defence Process from the School of Graduate Studies.

IX. Suggested Program Timeline

See *Appendix A.*

X. Appeal Procedure

Students have a right to fair and equitable procedure for lodging complaints arising out of University regulations, policies and actions that might affect them directly. See Section 5.3 (Appeal Procedures) of the current edition of the School of Graduate Studies Calendar.

XI. Normal Completion Time

The expected duration of the Ph.D. program is twelve terms (4 years). The suggested courses of study and normal financial support are based on this expectation.

XII. Scholarships And Funding

The majority of graduate students at McMaster receive competitive funding packages that may include financial support such as teaching assistantships, university graduate scholarships, as well as external scholarships and bursaries.

XIII. External Scholarship Competitions

- Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS)
- The Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Doctoral (CGRS-D) - SSHRC
- The Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Doctoral (CGRS-D) - CIHR

XIV. Travel Grants

The Department has funds available to help offset costs (travel, etc.) for Health, Aging & Society graduate students who attend conferences/workshops related to their area of research. The maximum amount of the grant is typically $250 for 2-year MA student travel, $500 for PhD domestic travel, and $750 for PhD international travel. Requests for 1-year MA student travel will be left to the department's discretion. Because the department travel fund may vary each year, travel grant amounts are based on available department funds and discretion.

If you are interested in applying for a conference travel grant, please contact the Graduate Administrative Assistant.

The Graduate Students Association (GSA) also accepts applications for a number of GSA Travel Assistance Grants awarded each semester (Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer). In addition to the departmental travel grant, we expect students to apply for the GSA travel grant if they are eligible. For more information, visit the GSA Travel Grants web site.

XV. Graduate Teaching Fellowships

In order for the University to give Ph.D. students an opportunity to gain some teaching experience, a limited number of courses can be awarded to them as sessional instructors. This unique teaching position is referred to as a Graduate Teaching Fellowship (GTF) (see *McMaster-CUPE Local 3906 Unit 2 Collective Agreement, Article 12.12: Teaching Experience for Ph.D. Students* for background information).

The Department receives an allocation of GTFs each academic year. Typically, Ph.D. students who are eligible for GTFs are deemed to be those who have completed their

course work, their comprehensive examinations (or equivalent), and are close to completing their dissertation. The Department Chair, in consultation with members of the Graduate Committee, will select the successful Ph.D. students for GTFs using a transparent, documented process.

During the course of the GTF, successful Ph.D. students are encouraged to contact a member of the Department's Executive Committee (comprised of the Department Chair, Graduate Chair, and Undergraduate Chair) for guidance and mentorship, and if they are interested in obtaining an evaluation of their teaching.

XVI. Faculty of Social Sciences: Graduate Education GenAI Guidelines

In graduate school, your central goal is to cultivate critical thinking and develop original ideas and arguments based on rigorous research, sustained engagement with scholarship in your field, and active participation in academic and professional communities. This process relies on the values of intellectual independence, scholarly integrity, and a commitment to producing work that is your own.

The use of generative AI (GenAI) tools—such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Grammarly, Perplexity, DeepSeek, and others—raises important questions about authorship, understanding, and accountability in graduate education. We take these questions seriously, and we view the thoughtful exploration of these tools as part of the evolving landscape of scholarly practice.

Scholarly Accountability and Integrity

You are always responsible for the originality, accuracy, and defensibility of the work you submit—whether that work takes the form of coursework papers, comprehensive exams, conference abstracts, course descriptions, research or grant proposals, major research papers (MRPs), theses, or dissertations. You must be able to speak knowledgeably and confidently about the concepts, analysis, sources, and claims your work contains. If you cite a text, you are accountable to it—that is, you have read, understood, and can explain it.

Guidance on Generative AI Use and Encouraging Conversation

- **Undisclosed or unapproved use of GenAI tools to produce, revise, analyze, or interpret scholarly work is considered a breach of academic integrity.**
- We encourage students and supervisors to **engage in open, critical, and exploratory conversations about GenAI tools** and their implications for research, writing, and professional development. These conversations are especially vital as the tools and norms around them continue to evolve. If you are unsure whether a particular use of GenAI is appropriate, initiate a conversation. **Do not assume permission**.

Use of Generative AI in Instructional Roles

Graduate students may serve as teaching assistants (TAs) during their time in the program. In these roles, the use of generative AI tools is subject to stricter limitations. **Use of generative AI for grading, providing feedback, or evaluating student work is not permitted** unless explicitly authorized by the course instructor. This includes AI-assisted tools for drafting comments, summarizing student work, suggesting grades, or generating model answers. These tasks involve pedagogical judgment, confidentiality, and ethical responsibility that cannot be delegated to AI tools.

If you are unsure whether a specific tool or use is appropriate, you must consult with the course instructor or your supervisor before proceeding. Unauthorized use of AI tools in instructional contexts will be treated as a serious violation of your responsibilities as an educator and may have consequences for your teaching assignment and standing in the graduate program.

XVII. Working as a Teaching Assistant

The following section reproduces parts of the Graduate Handbook for the Gender and Social Justice Program at McMaster (permission granted from the Director, Dr. Catherine Anderson).

Before you start work

McMaster's Human Resources department needs certain documents from you to complete your hiring as a TA, and to make sure you get paid for your work. The Academic Department Manager will be in touch with the documents for you to complete.

Your rights as a TA

In your role as a TA, you are an employee of the university, which is a distinct role from your position as a McMaster student.

As a Teaching Assistant, you are a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPE 3906. Your employment is governed by the Collective Agreement that your union negotiated for you. If you have any concerns about your experience as an employee, you can contact your union and they will advise you.

Through CUPE you are also entitled to certain benefits including a health spending account, dental benefits, and parental leave, among others.

Your responsibilities as a TA

As a TA you will be assigned to a particular course, and will be part of the teaching team led by the instructor of that course. The instructor might be a professor, a sessional instructor, or a senior grad student. For employment purposes, the course instructor is your Supervisor.

Hours of Work

At the beginning of each semester, your supervisor will fill out an Hours of Work form describing the tasks that are expected of you during the semester. The total number of hours projected in this form should not exceed the hours of your contract (usually 130 hours)! Not every course includes the same responsibilities. You might be asked to do any of the tasks described below.

Your TA pay is distributed evenly across the semester, but you might work different hours each week. For example, in Week 1 you might only work a couple of hours attending the lectures, but in a week when students submit an assignment you might have 20 hours of grading to do. You should keep track of how many hours you work

each week. If you find that you are regularly exceeding the hours that are described in your Hours of Work form, let your Supervisor know right away so they can help you work more efficiently or reassign some of your work to other TAs.

Attending Lectures

If your Supervisor wants you to attend lectures, this counts within your assigned Hours of Work. If you do attend lectures, make sure to arrive on time and to behave appropriately: the students will probably recognize you as a TA and will take their cues from you. Ask your Supervisor whether they want you to participate in classroom activities or just observe quietly.

Grading

Most TAs are responsible for grading student work and giving feedback. Your Supervisor will provide a rubric or marking guide, and may even do some practice grading with the team to ensure consistency across TAs.

If you are grading student work, you'll also be responsible for entering and tracking their grades in Avenue.

Ask your Supervisor whether they want you to handle grade inquiries or complaints, or whether students should direct questions about grading to the instructor.

Chapter 7 of McMaster's TA Guide contain more advice about giving feedback.

Communicating with Students

You might be expected to answer students' questions by email or on the course discussion board. If you're emailing with students, both they and you must use your @mcmaster.ca email account. Do not reply to any student emails that come from their personal addresses.

Sometimes students ask long or complex questions by email. Ask your Supervisor how to handle these cases. It might be more effective to ask them to come to office hours (in person or virtually) rather than trying to hold a complicated discussion over email. And for some questions, it's best to forward them to the instructor.

Your Supervisor might also ask you to hold Office Hours, either every week or maybe only in the weeks when assignments are due. Office Hours are the chance for students

to drop in and consult you one-on-one or in small groups, outside of the classroom. If holding office hours is part of your job, it is your responsibility to communicate the time and location to your students, and to be present at the scheduled time!

For your safety, it's a good idea to make sure at least one other fellow TA is present in your office during your scheduled office hours. If it's not possible to have someone else present, you might choose to hold your office hours virtually, for example, in Teams or Zoom. If you choose virtual office hours, make sure your students know how to find you.

Leading Tutorials

Many undergraduate courses are structured with lectures and tutorials. Typically, a class has two hours of lecture per week plus one hour of tutorial. For the lecture hours, the instructor meets with the entire class, which may be as small as 60 students or as large as 600. The large class list is divided into smaller tutorial sections, each led by a TA.

Each tutorial section usually includes about 25 students and meets in a smaller room on campus. Your tutorial may be scheduled at any time during the week: it might not be on the same day as the lectures, and it will probably not be in the same room or even the same building. The instructor does not normally attend tutorials.

Your job as a tutorial leader is to help students learn and understand the course material from that week's lectures and assigned texts, and to help them prepare to complete their assignments. This means you'll need to have read or watched the material to be thoroughly prepared. The instructor will probably provide you with suggestions for tutorial activities and discussion prompts, and you get to use your judgment to choose how to implement these activities within your tutorial.

Because the tutorial is a smaller group than the lecture, you may find that students come to you with their questions or concerns, rather than raising them in front of the entire large class. Part of your responsibility is communicating student concerns, questions, points of confusion, etc. back to the instructor.

You can find more advice on leading tutorials in Chapters 3 through 6 of McMaster's TA Guide.

Maintaining Professional Boundaries

As a TA, you are probably closer in age to the students than the instructor, so students might perceive you as more approachable. This does not mean, however that you are their friend. You are in a position of power relative to your students because you have a role in determining their grades. For this reason, it is important to keep professional boundaries between yourself and your students. Here are some ways to protect your professionalism and students' trust in you:

- Always use McMaster tools for any written correspondence, such as your @mcmaster.ca email, the Avenue message tool, or messages in Teams.
- Don't ever give students your phone number, WhatsApp, social media handles, or other personal information.
- If students try to friend you on social media, do not accept their request.
- Don't socialize with students outside of class. Chatting for a few minutes while you walk across campus is fine, but don't go to the pub or the coffee shop with them. If you find they're lingering after class or trying to follow you, walk to the student centre or somewhere with lots of people around.

Sometimes it happens that one of your students is someone that you know from outside of class — for example, they might be a relative, a friend of a friend, someone from your neighbourhood or an association you belong to. If you discover this, inform the instructor right away. It might be fine for the student to stay in your tutorial, but it might also be a good idea for someone else to mark their work, to avoid any conflict of interest. The instructor will advise you on the best course of action.

Safety in the Classroom

Emergencies on campus are very rare, but it is wise to be prepared.

In case of emergency, contact Campus Security:

Use the McMaster SafetyApp.
Phone 905-522-4135.
Dial 88 on a university phone.

Before the Semester Begins

In your first couple of tutorials, considering using this slide or handout to familiarize students with procedures in case of any emergency during your class.

McMaster has a campus safety app that you should download and install on your phone. This app is an easy way to summon Campus Security in case of an emergency. It also sends emergency notifications to your device. For those who like to be thoroughly prepared, you might want to read portions of the Campus Emergency Guidebook.

Illness

The likeliest risk you will encounter in your classes is exposure to Covid or other contagious illness. Masks are not required on campus but you and your students are encouraged to mask, especially if you or they are feeling unwell. If you have a fever or a cough, do not come to campus. Instead, notify the instructor and arrange for one of your fellow TAs to lead your tutorial.

Fire

The first time you go to the classroom where your tutorial is located, make sure you know where the nearest exits are. If the fire alarm sounds, leave the building by the nearest safe exit, and advise your students to do the same. Wait outside the building until the fire crew gives the all clear. If there's still time in the hour, you may resume your tutorial. Either way, notify your supervisor so they can make up any missed material with the students.

Medical Emergency

If one of your students has a medical emergency, summon Campus Security using the Safety App or one of the phone numbers listed above. Ask if anyone in the class knows First Aid and if they do, allow them to treat the student. For privacy, you may want to ask the other students to step out of the classroom. Once the student in distress is in the care of security or paramedics, you may resume tutorial if the students can handle it. Either way, notify the instructor so they can make up any missed material with the students and follow up with the student who had the emergency.

Harassment or Aggressive Behaviour

If a student is acting aggressive or confrontational, you might be able to de-escalate the situation. We will practice some de-escalation techniques in our training workshop.

You might be hoping to use various tech tools in your tutorial to gather responses from students, such as Mentimeter or Kahoot. Discuss these tools with your instructor before planning to use them in class. Any tool that allows anonymous users poses a risk that someone might use it to display hateful messages. Your supervisor might ask you to use only tools that require a MacID login.

If a student's behaviour makes you uncomfortable, bring it to the instructor's attention, even if you feel like it might not be a big deal. It's very possible that other students were uncomfortable as well. You are the leader in your tutorial. If someone is being abusive towards you or your students, you have the right to ask them to leave. And if you feel unsafe, you have the right to end class and dismiss all students. If someone seems to be lingering more than warranted, or trying to follow you, walk to the student centre or somewhere else that is well lit and has lots of people around. Of course you'll notify the instructor right away in any of these situations.

Physical Violence

In the event of gunshots, firearms, or other violent attack, get out of the building as quickly as you can and urge your students to do the same. Notify Campus Security by using the Safety App or calling 911 once you're safely away from the danger.

If it's not possible to get away from the violence, try to hide. Lock or barricade the door, turn off the lights and shut the blinds, and silence all devices. Summon Campus Security with the app or with 911. Stay in place until emergency personnel tell you that it's safe to leave.

Useful Resources for TAs

For your teaching

McMaster's Teaching Assistant Guide
MacPherson Institute's TA Resources
MacPherson's Inclusive Teaching and Learning Guide
Classroom Directory

For your employment and benefits

CUPE 3906

For your students

Sexual Violence Prevention & Response
Pride Community Centre
Women & Gender Equity Network
Student Wellness Centre
Miscellaneous Links for Student Needs

XVIII. Other Policies and Procedures

For a complete listing of the policies and procedures pertaining to the Ph.D. degree programs, students are advised to consult the current edition of the School of Graduate Studies Calendar.

XIX. Office Facilities

Graduate student offices are located in Kenneth Taylor Hall (KTH) on the 2nd floor. All offices are shared between multiple occupants. Each office has 5-6 workstations and is equipped with one desktop computer plus a printer. For PhD students: Designated PhD offices are KTH 201, 202, 203, and 204. Offices will be assigned during the Orientation Session in September. Office keys may be obtained at the Orientation Session or afterwards in the Department of Health, Aging & Society office (KTH 226). A deposit of $15.00 for keys is required (money will be refunded when key is returned).

Graduate Student Mailboxes and Photocopier Codes

Mailboxes for graduate students are located on the 2nd floor of Kenneth Taylor Hall (KTH), in the Department lounge, Room 215. The access code to the lounge will be given to all graduate students in September.

XX. Accessibility, Health and Wellness

The following section reproduces parts of the Graduate Handbook for the Gender and Social Justice Program at McMaster (permission granted from the Director, Dr. Catherine Anderson).

Student Accessibility Services

If you have accessibility or disability needs (mental or physical) that affect your academic functioning, consult with SAS to arrange the accommodations that you need. Once your accommodations are documented by SAS, your instructors are required to honour them!

Student Wellness

You have access to medical care and mental health counselling through the Student Wellness Centre.

Athletics and Recreation

Students can take advantage of the university's extensive fitness facilities and recreation programs. Learn more at the Athletics and Recreation site.

XXI. Departmental Contacts

Graduate Committee:

- Dr. Tara Marshall
- Dr. Chris Sinding
- Dr. Yukiko Asada

Academic Department Manager:

- Kristine Espiritu

Graduate Administrative Assistant:

- Aysha Akhtar
  Kenneth Taylor Hall Room 226
  Telephone: 905-525-9140 ext. 27961
  E-mail: akhtaa1@mcmaster.ca

Department of Health, Aging & Society

Appendix A: Suggested Program Timeline

Ph.D. in Social Gerontology – Model Timetable

4-year Schedule: September Admission (Full Time)

Schedule	Fall Term (September - December)	Winter Term (January - April)	Spring/Summer Term (May - August)
Year I	▪ 2 courses ▪ SGS 101 & SGS 201 ▪ Non-credit Research & Professional Development Seminar (Program Milestone)	▪ 3 courses ▪ Non-credit Research & Professional Development Seminar (Program Milestone) ▪ **March:** Supervisory Committee established ▪ Supervisory Committee meeting & formal annual report **(before August 31)**	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ Discuss/submit brief research proposal to supervisor ▪ Prepare draft Reading List in consultation with supervisor

Ph.D. in Health & Society - 5 one-term courses required:

- HLTH AGE 714
- HLTH AGE 716
- HLTH AGE 713
- Two elective courses from HLTH AGE OR another department/academic unit *(obtaining permission for courses in another department/academic unit is the student's responsibility)**

**Course selections MUST be discussed with the student's supervisor*

Schedule	Fall Term (September - December)	Winter Term (January - April)	Spring/Summer Term (May - August)
Year II	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ Non-credit Research & Professional Development Seminar (Program Milestone)	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ Non-credit Research & Professional Development Seminar (Program Milestone) ▪ Supervisory Committee meeting & formal annual report **(before August 31)** ▪	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ Dissertation research preparation/work

Year II: Comprehensive Exam and Research Proposal: <u>Completed by the end of Winter Term</u>

1. Grad Committee appoints Comprehensive Exam Committee – 4 members:
    - Chair (faculty member in the Department)
    - Supervisor
    - Two (2) members of the supervisory committee
2. Student prepares Reading List AND 1st Draft of Research Proposal in consultation with Supervisory Committee.
3. Student submits proposed Reading List and 1st Draft of Research Proposal to Grad Administrative Assistant **minimum ONE WEEK <u>BEFORE</u> Pre-Examination Meeting** for distribution to Comprehensive Exam Committee.
4. **PRE-EXAMINATION MEETING:**
    - **Must take place 3 TO 2 ½ MONTHS BEFORE the Written Comprehensive Exam**
    - Comprehensive Exam Committee meets with the student to review proposed Reading List and to schedule various components of the examination
5. **ONE (1) WEEK AFTER Pre-Examination Meeting:**
    - Submit Final Reading List to Grad Administrative Assistant for the approval of Comprehensive Exam Committee
6. **TWO (2) WEEKS BEFORE Written Comprehensive Exam:**
    - Submit 2nd Draft of Research Proposal to Grad Administrative Assistant for circulation to Comprehensive Exam Committee
7. **WRITTEN COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**
    - Open book, take-home examination

- Duration: two weeks
- 6 questions: Student answers 3

8. **ORAL COMPREHENSIVE EXAM**

    - **Occurs ONE WEEK <u>AFTER</u> the Written Comprehensive Exam**
    - Student presents Research Proposal in an open forum
    - Comprehensive Exam Committee will ask the student questions related to both the written examination questions (all 6 questions) and the research proposal in the closed session of the oral examination

9. **Final Research Proposal**

    - Student incorporates feedback/comments given by Comprehensive Exam Committee
    - **Must be submitted to the Grad Administrative Assistant ONE WEEK <u>AFTER</u> the Oral Comprehensive Exam**

Schedule	**Fall Term (September - December)**	**Winter Term (January - April)**	**Spring/Summer Term (May - August)**
Year III	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ Dissertation research & preliminary data analysis ▪ Drafts (i.e., literature review; methodology) submitted to supervisor	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ Supervisory Committee meeting & formal annual report **(before August 31)** ▪ Dissertation research & preliminary data analysis ▪ Drafts (i.e., literature review; methodology) submitted to supervisor	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ Dissertation research & preliminary data analysis ▪ Drafts (i.e., literature review; methodology) submitted to supervisor

Schedule	Fall Term (September - December)	Winter Term (January - April)	Spring/Summer Term (May - August)
Year IV	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ Completion of data analysis ▪ Revised drafts of most of dissertation, with chapters submitted for review to supervisor	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ Supervisory Committee meeting & formal annual report ▪ **January-February:** Revised drafts of remainder of dissertation, with chapters submitted for review to supervisor ▪ **End February:** Submission of complete draft of dissertation to Supervisory Committee ▪ **Early March:** With approval of Supervisory Committee, student initiates Ph.D. defence process electronically and submits final draft of dissertation to Graduate Studies *(Check School of Graduate Studies web site for Oral Thesis Examination procedure for Doctoral Students)*	▪ SGS 700 (placeholder course) ▪ **May:** Oral Examination of Dissertation *(Check School of Graduate Studies web site for Oral Thesis Examination procedure for Doctoral Students)*

Appendix B: Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam and Research Proposal Planner

PLEASE SUBMIT TO GRADUATE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT WHEN COMPLETE

McMaster University Department of Health, Aging & Society

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam and Research Proposal Planner

Student Name:		**Program:**	
Comps Exam Chair: *(Dept Faculty Member)*		**Supervisor:**	
Committee Member 1:		**Committee Member 2:**	

ACTION	DATE
Proposed Reading List AND First Draft of Research Proposal Submitted to Grad Admin Assistant *(minimum 1 week BEFORE Pre-Examination Meeting)*	
Pre-Examination Meeting *(3 to 2 ½ months BEFORE Written Comprehensive Exam)*	
Final Reading List Submitted to Grad Admin Assistant *(1 week AFTER Pre-Examination Meeting)*	
Second Draft of Research Proposal Submitted to Grad Admin Assistant *(2 weeks BEFORE Written Comprehensive Exam)*	
Comprehensive Exam Planning Meeting *(Committee **WITHOUT** student)* - Set comprehensive exam questions	
Written Comprehensive Exam Begins - Take-home examination *(Duration: 2 weeks)*	
Written Comprehensive Exam Due - Submit to Comprehensive Exam Committee and Grad Admin Assistant	
Oral Comprehensive Exam *(1 week AFTER Written Comprehensive Exam)*	
Final Research Proposal Submitted to Grad Admin Assistant *(1 week AFTER Oral Comprehensive Exam)*	