



University of Victoria Faculty of Graduate Studies

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Special Arrangement Program Instructions and Worksheet

Introduction

When a student wishes to pursue research in an area that has not been formally approved as a graduate degree program by the University of Victoria Senate, it is sometimes possible to get a unique proposal approved by “Special Arrangement”.

Degree programs by Special Arrangement are subject to all of the usual Faculty of Graduate Studies regulations. Applicants are advised to review the University of Victoria Calendar for details on admission, academic requirements, fees, and other regulations before beginning the process of applying for a degree by Special Arrangement.

This document is meant to serve as a framework for applicants proposing Special Arrangement programs. The topics covered will assist in developing a course of studies and the mutual expectations of both the student and the supervisory committee. Both you and your supervisor should keep a copy of the worksheet for future reference.

Once you and your committee have established your program requirements, a copy of the “Special Arrangement Program for Approval Form” should be made by the student and supervisor, and the signed original submitted as part of the application for admission.

Students are advised to refer to the **Special Arrangement Guidelines** including **Frequently Asked Questions** on the Graduate Admissions and Records web site at www.uvic.ca/grar. These guidelines may answer some of your questions and perhaps raise some that you hadn't considered.

Faculty members may have limited experience in setting up Special Arrangement proposals, and the department may be able to offer little or no infrastructure support such as graduate advisors or secretaries.

Quick list of steps in arranging a Program by Special Arrangement

- 1 Determine that you are admissible to Graduate Studies at the University of Victoria by reviewing the admission requirements in the calendar.
- 2 Determine that your program could not be undertaken in any established graduate program at the University of Victoria by reviewing the calendar and speaking with graduate advisors in the departments.
- 3 Prepare as detailed a draft of your research proposal as possible to give potential supervisors.
- 4 Identify potential supervisors using the faculty listings in the University Calendar or the Departmental websites. Arrange meetings or contact suitable potential supervisors by phone or email. (Do not send inquiries to every faculty member in a department. Choose the appropriate contacts.)
- 5 Once you have found an interested supervisor, submit your completed Application for Admission to Graduate Admissions and Records. Arrange for transcripts and references to be sent directly to Graduate Admissions and Records.
- 6 Work with the supervisor to choose potential committee members. Keep the Faculty of Graduate Studies' in mind.
- 7 Contact the potential committee members with your proposal.
- 8 Once you have a committee established, meet or consult with your supervisor and members to indicate their approvals.
- 9 Prepare the Special Arrangement proposal form and have it signed by your committee members to indicate their approvals.
- 10 Interdisciplinary students will also need to identify a "home" department (typically your supervisor's department), indicated on the form by the graduate advisor's or chair's signature.
- 11 Submit your Special Arrangement proposal form, your proposal rationale and a letter of support from your supervisor to Graduate Admissions and Records. If courses are listed which are in departments other than those of the supervisory committee, include written permission from the department to enrol in these courses.

Admission

Exceptionally able students who wish to undertake a Master's or Doctoral degree between or outside of existing programs at the University of Victoria may propose a program by Special Arrangement. **Special Arrangement programs may be either departmental (building on one existing degree program) or interdisciplinary (crossing the boundaries between two or more disciplines).** Applications for programs by Special Arrangements should be submitted at least four to six months prior to the proposed entry point.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies may limit the number of degrees by Special Arrangement offered.

Students who undertake programs by Special Arrangement may be required to handle additional administrative detail as support services (such as graduate advisors and/or secretaries) may not be available.

Admission Requirements: Applicants for degree programs by Special Arrangement must follow the admission procedures and meet the entrance criteria set out in the Faculty of Graduate Studies Regulations in the University of Victoria Calendar. This includes completion of a recognized undergraduate degree, normally with a minimum Grade Point Average of 5.0 (B). (However, students who meet only the minimum requirements are seldom offered admission to a Special Arrangement program.) Students may be considered under the provisions for Mature Students.

The Supervisory Committee

Academic Supervisor

A member of the Supervisory Committee from the department offering the program must be designated as Academic Supervisor. This person must be a **tenure or tenure-track** (ie, not adjunct) member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. A co-supervisor may be designated.

The Role of the Supervisor

The supervisor of a program by Special Arrangement is the primary faculty contact for the student. In addition, the supervisor must perform the functions that are normally provided by the graduate advisor in established programs.

The first responsibility of the supervisor is to assist the student in selecting other appropriate members for the committee.

The supervisor should ensure that the proposed committee meets the faculty of Graduate Studies' requirements. The supervisor may take an active or passive role in the recruitment of the other committee members.

The supervisor will then work with the student and committee members to determine an appropriate list of courses for the student's program. These courses will normally be from the departments of the committee members (and generally will be taught by them).

The supervisor plays a key administrative as well as academic role in the student's program. He/She will be the person contacted if the student runs afoul of the Faculty of Graduate Studies' regulations. It is the supervisors' responsibility to ensure that Graduate Admissions and Records is notified of any proposed changes to the approved program so that he changes may be considered by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Changes are not official until approved by the Dean.

Supervisory Committee

Master's Programs - the committee shall consist of at least three members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies including the Academic Supervisor. At least one member must be from a department with an active regular master's program, one member must have supervised successful candidates for graduate degrees.

Doctoral Programs - the committee shall consist of at least four members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies including the Academic Supervisor. One member must be from a department with an active regular PhD program. Two members must have successful PhD supervisory experience.

Degree Program

In a Special Arrangement degree program, the courses and other requirements are established by the members of the Supervisory Committee in consultation with the student. The program must conform to all regulations of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. The proposal consists of a completed Special Arrangement Program Proposal form (including signatures of the proposed Supervisory Committee) and rationale for the program. All required courses must be specified on the program form. Courses may be listed as a choice or several options (eg, 1 of PSYC 517, BIOL 550E or ANTH 500-1.5 units).

Typical Special Arrangement Master's Program (minimum 12 units of graduate level work)

With thesis

Master's thesis (INTD or DEPT 599)	6-9 units
Graduate courses (including directed studies)	6-9 units
Senior undergraduate courses (300 or 400 level)	3 units

Without thesis

Master's project (INTD or DEPT 598)	3 units
Comprehensive examination (INTD or DEPT 597) (<i>optional</i>)	0 units
Graduate courses (including directed studies)	9-12 units
Senior undergraduate courses (300 or 400 level)	3 units

Typical Doctoral Programs by Special Arrangement

When student already has a Master's degree in the subject

Dissertation (INTD or DEPT 699)	30 units
Graduate courses (including directed studies)	6-9 units
Senior undergraduate courses (300 or 400 level)	3 units

When student does not have a Master's degree in the subject

Dissertation (INTD or DEPT 699)	30 units
Graduate courses (including directed studies)	12-15 units
Senior undergraduate courses (300 or 400 level)	3-6 units

Program Changes

Any changes to a degree program or Supervisory Committee must be approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies before alternative courses are taken. The reasons for the changes must be given

Funding

Funding for students in programs by Special Arrangement is limited. Although there are some fellowships set aside for Interdisciplinary students, SpecialArrangement students may not be eligible for awards or assistantships available to students in established programs.

Departmental programs by Special Arrangement

It may be possible for departments to offer Master's and Doctoral degrees even though they do not have an established graduate program. Since these degree programs are created on an individual basis, the Faculty of Graduate Studies requires that applicants and departments satisfy a stringent approval process.

In order to be considered for approval to offer a Master's degree by Special Arrangement, the department must have an active undergraduate program and have graduated students from the program in each of the last three years.

It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange the details of the program. The faculty and department are under no obligation to arrange or approve Special Arrangement programs.

Proposal Approval

Before an offer of admission can be made applicants must have a proposal approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The proposal is jointly developed by the applicant and the projected supervisor and consists of a completed *Special Arrangement Program Proposal Form* (including signatures of the proposed Supervisory Committee) and a rationale for the program.

Program and Course Designation

The student's official record will indicate the program as "SpecialArrangement". The degree program may consist of appropriate courses from within the department as well as courses from other departments. Departments without approved graduate programs may offer the following courses for Special Arrangement degree students only:

DEPT 580 (1.5-3)	Directed Studies
DEPT 597 (0)	Master's Comprehensive Examination (non-thesis)
DEPT 598 (3)	Master's Report/Project (non-thesis)
DEPT 599 (6-15)	Master's Thesis
DEPT 680 (1.5-3)	Directed Studies (PhD)
DEPT 699 (30-45)	PhD Dissertation

Interdisciplinary Programs by Special Arrangement

Interdisciplinary programs can be offered by Special Arrangement where at least one of the proposed departments has a established graduate degree program at the level for which the student is applying. It is the applicant's responsibility to arrange the details of the program and identify a "home" department. Typically the home

department, is the department which will provide access to similar resources and services as is provided to graduate students within that department. The student and supervisor should meet with the graduate advisor or department chair to obtain agreement to serve as the home department.

Some departments require that Interdisciplinary students meet the same admission requirements as graduate students within that department.

The Faculty and departments are under no obligation to arrange or approve interdisciplinary programs.

Proposal Approval

Before an offer of admission can be made, applicants must have a proposal approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. This proposal is jointly developed by the applicant and the projected supervisor and requires submission of a completed Special Arrangement Program for Approval form (including signatures of the proposed Supervisory Committee) and a rationale for the program. The program must be genuinely interdisciplinary and the rationale must indicate the reasons why the proposed program could not be accommodated within an established program at the University of Victoria.

Program and Course Designation

The student's official record will indicate the program as Interdisciplinary (INTD) and any project, comprehensive examinations, thesis or dissertation will carry the prefix INTD.

INTD 580	Directed Studies
INTD 597	Master's Comprehensive Examination
INTD 598	Master's Report/Project (non-thesis)
INTD 599	Master's Thesis
INTD 690	Directed Studies (PhD)
INTD 699	PhD Dissertation

Application Procedures

The application and approval process typically takes four to six months as the program proposal must be formulated by the applicant and prospective Supervisor(s), permission for certain courses obtained, and the program approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Approval is not guaranteed. **Courses should not be started without formal approval of the program by the Faculty of Graduate Studies. Applicants are strongly urged to make an appointment with the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies for an information session early in the process.**

- 1 The applicant should contact the appropriate academic department(s) to determine if there is an interest among potential supervisory committee members. Some departments rarely participate in Special Arrangement or Interdisciplinary programs.
- 2 If there is sufficient interest by supervisory committee members, the student should begin the regular process for admission. This involves submitting a completed application form, application fee, assessments, and official transcripts from all previous post-secondary institutions. Indicate if the application is for an Interdisciplinary program. If a completed Special Arrangement for Approval form is not submitted with the application, a blank form will be sent with a letter of acknowledgement of receipt of the application.
- 3 The student must submit a proposal and rationale for the Special Arrangement degree including a completed "Special Arrangement for Approval" form to the Graduate Admissions and Records Office. If courses are listed which are in departments other than those of the supervisory committee, written permission to enrol in those courses must be submitted to Graduate Admissions and Records before the proposal will be forwarded to the Dean. The student's supervisor(s) must provide an additional letter of support for the program. The department(s) should also indicate how the student will be funded.
- 4 The application will be checked by Graduate Admissions and Records and reviewed by the Dean of Graduate Studies. If approved, a letter of admission and a registration package will be sent to the student. The only official offer of admission is generated by the Graduate Admissions and Records Office. Students should not make plans to attend until such a letter has been received.

Special Arrangement Proposal Worksheet

Program Details for discussion:

Degree proposed:

Department (or departments if Interdisciplinary):

Topic of your proposed research:

You may identify potential committee members by talking to faculty members in person, reviewing their interest areas in the calendar, or researching their work. Be aware that your committee, must meet the Faculty of Graduate Studies minimum requirements:

Master's Programs

The committee shall consist of at least three members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies including the Academic Supervisor. At least one member must be from a department with a regular graduate program and who has supervised successful candidates for graduate degrees.

Doctoral Programs

The committee shall consist of at least four members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies including the Academic Supervisor. At least one member must be from a department with an active PhD program. Two members must have had successful experience in PhD supervision.

You may contact them in person, by phone, or by email. They will be better able to discuss your proposal with you if you have provided them a written statement regarding your intended research.

Potential committee members:

Name	Department	Reason	Contacted?
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Funding/Costs for discussion

There are costs to be considered for graduate programs. In addition to tuition, students may incur research costs, living expenses, travel costs, etc. You should discuss your expectations with your supervisor early in this process. Funding available to students in degree programs by Special Arrangement is often less than that available to students in established programs. If you require financial support to pursue the program, you should inform your supervisor at the beginning of the process.

Funding expectations:

Other expectations for discussion

Your supervisory committee may have expectations beyond the completion of coursework and your thesis. You should discuss the requirements for timely completion of the phases of your program, research commitments, teaching expectations, the nature and timing of PhD Candidacy examinations, etc.

You may have expectations regarding workspace, access to your committee members, support and advice, work opportunities, etc.

These should all be discussed and established during the preliminary phases of your planning. If something is critical to your being able to continue in the program, get the commitment in writing.

Environmental Expectations

Workspace:

Access to departmental resources (photocopying, secretarial assistance, etc):

Participation in departmental functions:

Performance expectations

Required courses complete by:

Minimum grades for continuation:

Time/work commitments:

Candidacy expectations (PhD students only) -written, oral, based on courses, research, composition of examining committee, requirements for successful completion, etc:

Other:

Transfer the relevant details to the Special Arrangement Proposal for Approval Form.