



Let's Talk About **GRAD:**

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
2026-2030 ACTION PLAN



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The city of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation within Alberta (including Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6).

The University of Calgary is situated on land Northwest of where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, a site traditionally known as Moh'kins'tsis to the Blackfoot, Wíchîspa to the Stoney Nakoda, and Guts'ists'i to the Tsuut'ina. On this land and in this place we strive to learn together, walk together, and grow together "in a good way."





Let's talk about grad

Graduate education at the University of Calgary is evolving, shaped by ambition, collaboration and a shared commitment to excellence.

This Action Plan sets out how we will **engage, build, simplify** and **stand out** over the next five years to strengthen the graduate student experience and advance our collective impact.

Rooted in the university's *Ahead of Tomorrow* strategy and informed by extensive consultation, our priorities reflect what matters most to our community: meaningful support, innovative programs, strong partnerships and a clear, connected path forward.

Together, we are creating the conditions for graduate students, faculty and staff to thrive, now and into the future.



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Message from the Dean

Since the release of UCalgary's *Ahead of Tomorrow* Strategic Plan in late 2023, the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS) has been moving quickly to advance its priorities for graduate education. This 2026–2030 Action Plan highlights what we have achieved to date and outlines where we're headed as we work together to deliver a graduate student experience that stands out nationally.

Over the past two years, we've made remarkable progress. Minimum funding levels for thesis based students have increased, with annual increases now built into policy—a first in Canada. Our newly established Transdisciplinary PhD and Master's programs continue to grow as we prepare to welcome a second cohort. We appointed Canada's first Associate Dean, Graduate Supervision and Mentorship to better support supervisors, and through the Process and Systems Optimization (PaSO) project we've significantly improved graduate processes and systems. These are just a few examples of how UCalgary is leading the way.

Graduate education is, at its core, a shared effort. Faculty leaders, staff, supervisors, partners across the university and graduate students themselves all play a critical role. The five priorities and high level plan for 2026–2030 were shaped through broad consultation and reflect the perspectives of this diverse community.

As a living document, this plan will continue to evolve as the post secondary landscape changes. Our commitment is to stay connected with you—to **engage, build and simplify**—so we can strengthen the graduate community and make the journey easier for everyone. Together, we are positioning UCalgary to **stand out** to attract top talent, prepare future leaders and innovators, and continue to grow our reputation as a school of choice.



*Graduate students are at the centre of this work.
Thank you for being part of the journey.*

Tara Beattie, PhD

*Dean and Vice Provost, Graduate Studies
University of Calgary*





FGS purpose statement

Graduate students are at the centre of our purpose. FGS leads the campus graduate community in shaping graduate education and building awareness of the vital role graduate students play in research, innovation and society. In collaboration with our campus partners, we enable the delivery of high-quality programs and credentials, providing resources, opportunities and guidance that support the success, well-being and professional growth of graduate students, faculty and staff.



GRADfacts

A snapshot of graduate education at UCalgary during the 2025 academic calendar year, highlighting students, programs and faculty.



7,281

Graduate students



225+

Graduate program credentials



1,545

Active graduate supervisors



\$42M

In graduate awards distributed



3,564

Degrees conferred



154

Graduate internships fulfilled



120

Countries represented by graduate students



4%

Self-identified Indigenous graduate students



49%

Course-based graduate students



51%

Thesis-based graduate students

Celebrating our successes

Raising the Bar for Graduate Funding

With some of the most competitive packages in Canada, we are enabling graduate students to focus fully on research, innovation and impact.

Leading in Graduate Student Supervision and Mentorship

By appointing Canada's first Associate Dean in this field, we are strengthening support for supervisors and setting a new standard for the graduate student experience.

Simplifying the Graduate Student Journey

Since 2019, the Process and Systems Optimization (PaSO) initiative has delivered 500+ improvements, eliminating steps and saving over 15,000 hours.

Accessible Pathways to Experience and Professional Growth

On-campus internships provide graduate students with direct access to mentored, meaningful opportunities to build skills and explore careers.

Our mandate at the University of Calgary

As the Faculty of registration for all graduate students, FGS has accountability for providing both academic leadership and administrative services, supports and resources for graduate education university-wide. Our leadership ensures effective governance, quality, innovation and service integration are at the forefront, resulting in strong outcomes for UCalgary graduate students.

FGS values

Our shared principles guide how we lead and support our community, fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, innovation, inclusion and wellbeing that strengthens the graduate experience at UCalgary.





Collaboration

We work together and unite our diverse strengths to achieve shared goals.

Healthy Culture

We foster open communication, shared values and uphold ethical behaviour in our interactions.

Inclusivity

We create spaces where everyone feels heard, valued and empowered to contribute.

Leading Accountably

We lead with integrity and transparency, champion fairness, equity and honesty.

Innovation

We drive growth, generate new ideas, create solutions and enhance the graduate student experience.

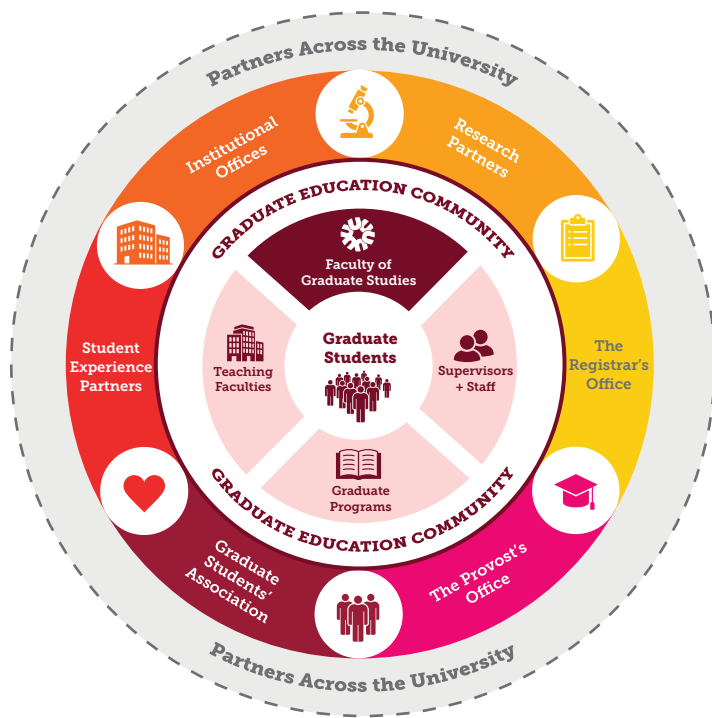
Service Excellence

We provide quality advice, efficient service and effective support.



Graduate education community (GEC)

The Faculty of Graduate Studies provides leadership and coordination for this community, establishing the framework that supports high-quality graduate education across the university.



Graduate Education Community
A community with graduate students at its core, focused on designing, delivering and advancing graduate education and supports.

Faculty of Graduate Studies
Leads and coordinates the community, establishing frameworks, policies, standards and supports.

Graduate Programs
Design and deliver graduate education.

Graduate Students
The reason we exist and at the centre of our community.

Supervisors + Staff
Mentor, support and guide graduate students effectively.

Teaching Faculties
Provide academic leadership and instruction excellence.

Partners Across the University
Contribute expertise, services and support that strengthen the graduate student experience.

Plan development and consultation process

Our work began with a deep dive into the university's *Ahead of Tomorrow* strategic plan and the four implementation plans (Academic Innovation, Research and Innovation, Community and Operations) to identify the many objectives, activities and initiatives that connect with the work of FGS and the graduate community. We explored our current impact, envisioned our potential future contributions and generated priorities that could shape the years ahead in alignment with UCalgary's direction.

To explore these possibilities more fully, we turned to the people who make up our graduate community. From Summer 2024 to Winter 2026, we engaged faculty and staff in planning sessions, workshops, consultations and surveys. These conversations allowed us to put our values into action—listening, collaborating and aligning across the institution to understand where we are and where we can go together.

What we heard

- You asked us to **engage**. There is strong momentum for deeper consultation, partnership and co-creation across the graduate education community as we implement this plan.
- You asked us to **build** a vision for the future of UCalgary graduate education, leveraging opportunities in research, innovation, digital transformation and community engagement, and mitigating risks tied to fiscal pressures, global dynamics and rapid technological change.
- You asked us to **simplify**, so that it's easier to navigate systems and processes and get things done as a student, supervisor or staff member.
- You are keen for us to **stand out**, and make UCalgary a top institution of choice for both students and supervisors.
- Your most urgent **priorities** included increasing funding for students, strengthening supervisory supports, growing innovative programming and enhancing student services—progress reflected in student wellbeing, academic and career success, sustainable program growth and strong community partnerships.



Our priorities

We're focused on strengthening every stage of the student and graduate experience through clear, high-impact priorities that advance our academic mission. By enhancing supports, modernizing systems and investing in quality and innovation, we aim to create an environment where our community can thrive. Our priorities outline the key areas that will guide our work as we continue to elevate the graduate student journey and empower future success.

1. Deliver student journey supports and opportunities that elevate the student experience and bolster student success.

2. Provide competitive and sustainable student funding and financial support.

3. Drive program evolution and enrolment growth with quality and innovation at the forefront.

4. Co-create enhanced support, recognition and professional development opportunities for the graduate community.

5. Make graduate policies, processes and systems simpler, better and faster for students, faculty and staff.

Priority 1

Deliver student journey supports and opportunities that elevate the student experience and bolster student success.

In consultation with students and the graduate community, we will enhance inclusive, coordinated supports and services that help students achieve their academic and research goals while growing professionally and prioritizing their wellbeing. We will simplify navigation of the student journey by consolidating information and resources within a new digital GradHub.

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Graduate student-facing supports and services review	Engage + Plan	Launch	Ongoing Iteration		
Enhanced advising, support and engagement initiatives	Schedule to be confirmed based on learnings from Supports and Services Review				
New GRAD Foundations course	Build	Launch		Ongoing Iteration	
Student services feedback mechanisms (satisfaction surveys)	Engage + Plan	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration	
Digital GradHub: Holistic student journey info and resources	Build	Launch		Ongoing Iteration	
Increased work integrated learning opportunities	Launch		Ongoing Iteration		
Expanded professional and career development programming	Engage + Plan	Build		Launch	Ongoing Iteration
Growth in SAGE (Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement) program supports	Build		Launch		Ongoing Iteration
Re-establish an ii' taa'poh'to'p graduate studies working group focused on policy guidance and strategic supports for Indigenous graduate students	Engage + Plan	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration	



Priority 2

Provide competitive and sustainable student funding and financial support.

We will significantly increase guaranteed funding minimums for thesis-based graduate students, positioning UCalgary as a leader among U15 institutions. We will pursue diverse funding sources for all graduate students, including expanding access to philanthropic and research funding.

	2026	2027		2028	2029	2030
Increased funding minimums and bridge funding support	Launch	Ongoing Iteration				
Expanded financial support from philanthropy and partnerships	Engage + Plan	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration		
Increased investment of research funding in graduate student support	Engage + Plan	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration		

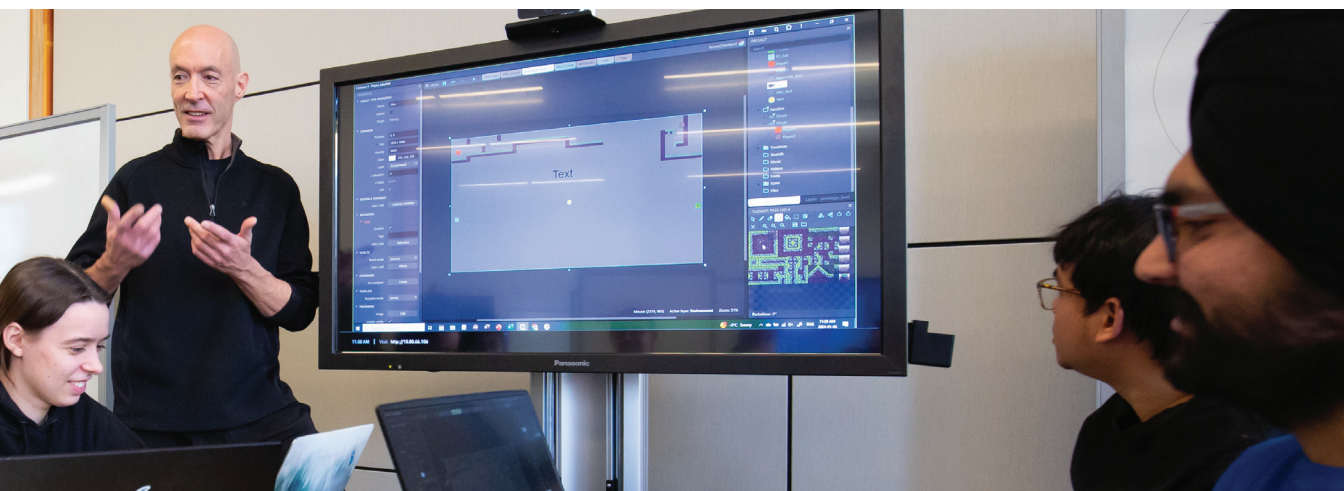


Priority 3

Drive program evolution and enrolment growth with quality and innovation at the forefront.

In collaboration with teaching Faculties, we will build a vision for the future of UCalgary graduate education, while continuing to develop and launch new graduate programs, review and evolve existing programs, and implement strategies to recruit and retain great students. We will leverage innovative options (transdisciplinary and accelerated master's programs, online learning, flexible pathways and credentials) to make graduate education more accessible for all.

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Long-term vision for the future of UCalgary graduate education		Engage + Plan		Build	Launch
New programs aligned with market demand	Build	Launch		Ongoing Iteration	
Accelerated master's programs	Build	Launch	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration
Transdisciplinary program growth	Ongoing Iteration				
Enhanced quality assurance reporting	Build	Launch		Ongoing Iteration	
Graduate program review and renewal framework	Plan	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration	
Campus-wide graduate student recruitment strategies	Ongoing Iteration				
Centralized graduate admissions services	Ongoing Iteration				



Priority 4

Co-create enhanced support, recognition and professional development opportunities for the graduate community.

We will foster increased satisfaction and engagement by activating new resources and options for support, mentorship and supervisory development for supervisors, and introduce new onboarding, training and recognition opportunities for graduate program directors (GPDs) and staff.

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Supervisor and GPD listening sessions	Launch	Ongoing Iteration			
Essential supervisory supports and resources	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration		
Supervisory community of practice	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration		
Acknowledgement of supervisor and GPD responsibilities	Engage + Plan	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration	
Improved onboarding, supports and resources for GPDs	Engage + Plan	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration	
New onboarding course for incoming graduate program staff	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration		
New recognition programs across the graduate community	Engage + Plan	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration	



Priority 5

Make graduate policies, processes and systems simpler, better and faster for students, faculty and staff.

We will leverage technology, automation and AI to continuously improve graduate systems and processes. We will review and update graduate policies to ensure regulations and guidelines support the success of students, faculty and staff while upholding essential standards and institutional commitments.

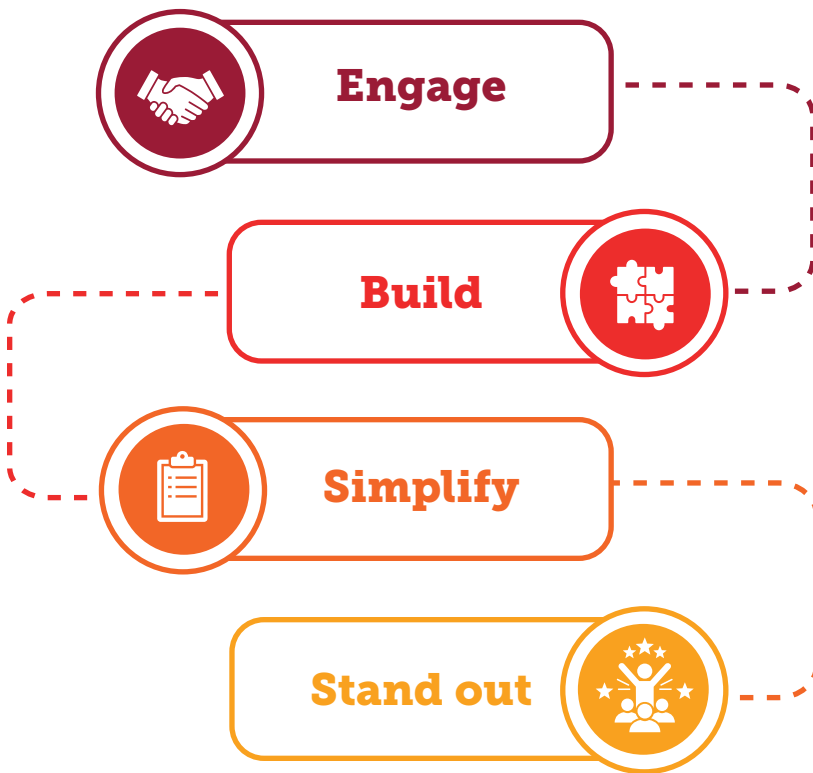
	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Review and update of graduate policies and guidelines	Ongoing Iteration				
Simplified navigation of graduate information in the Academic Calendar	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration		
Continuous improvement of processes and systems	Ongoing Iteration				
New thesis-based student/supervisor functionality	Ongoing Iteration				
Automated admission and funding letters	Build	Launch	Ongoing Iteration		
Transition from manual PDFs to e-forms	Ongoing Iteration				
Streamlined funding/payment processes and tracking	Engage + Plan		Build	Roll Out	Ongoing Iteration
Real-time student access to information about their funding	Engage + Plan		Build	Roll Out	Ongoing Iteration
Graduate awards database and website redevelopment	Engage + Plan		Build	Roll Out	Ongoing Iteration
Streamline transcript review and GPA calculations using AI	Engage + Plan		Build	Roll Out	Ongoing Iteration
Expand use of Slate for current student communications	Schedule to be confirmed based on institutional approvals and timelines				
Transition to Slate application for admission					



Our Commitment in Action

Together, we will continue to **engage** with purpose, **build** meaningful connections, **simplify** the path forward and **stand out** in a changing landscape—moving from idea to impact with every step forward.

By aligning around these priorities, we strengthen our graduate community today while creating lasting momentum for tomorrow, ensuring UCalgary remains a destination where talent thrives, innovation takes shape and excellence sets us apart.





Special acknowledgements

Our work is shaped by meaningful collaboration across the university. This plan reflects those partnerships, and we offer our sincere appreciation for the insight, commitment and shared purpose that guided its development.

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- Graduate Students' Association (GSA)
 - Graduate Student Supervisors
 - Graduate Associate Deans
 - Graduate Program Directors (GPDs)
 - Graduate Program Managers
 - Graduate Program Staff
 - Teaching Faculty Deans
 - The Provost's Office leadership and team
 - The Registrar's Office leadership and team
 - The Vice-Provost (Student Experience) Office leadership and team
 - The Vice-President (Research) Office leadership and team

We gratefully acknowledge our external consultants for their expert facilitation, guidance and insights throughout our journey. Their partnership and dedication made a meaningful contribution to our success.

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