



Graduate Student Handbook 2026–2027

Department of
Aging and Family Science

Updated: September 2026

AGFS Graduate Student Handbook

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PLEASE NOTE: The following forms for Master of Arts students, referred to in this document, are available from the graduate studies webpage:

Appointment of Thesis Supervisor Form
Appointment of External Thesis Supervisor Form
Appointment of Thesis Co-supervisor Form
Notification of Thesis Proposal Presentation
Thesis Proposal Presentation Report
Notification of Thesis Defence
Thesis Defence Report Form
Thesis Release Form

(The graduate studies web page also has forms related to external courses, research assistance funding, conference funding assistance, leaves of absence, extensions, and reactivation.)

The following additional form for Master of Arts students is available from the Department or your advisor:

Student-Thesis Supervisor Expectations Form

COMMUNICATION NOTICE

About this handbook: A link to a copy of this handbook is available at the department's web page, at:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatestudiesatthemount/familystudiesandgerontology/default.aspx>. If any significant changes are made to the handbook, all students will be provided with a new copy. For small revisions, students will be notified and referred to an updated copy on the web.

Every effort is made to communicate information to students on an ongoing basis, with much of this communication taking place through a department email distribution list for graduate students. **Students must ensure that they have access to their MSVU student email account as this is the main email used to communicate with students.** Students should check their email regularly (every couple of days at minimum) so that they do not miss important announcements regarding events such as seminars and funding workshops.

Announcements are also posted on the AGFS Facebook page, which you can view even if you do not have a Facebook profile, at: <https://www.facebook.com/AGFSstudies>. All students with a Facebook profile are invited to “like” the department page so they can see announcements on their newsfeed.

Our administrative assistant is located in Evaristus 331.

GRADUATE STUDIES – AGING AND FAMILY SCIENCE

1.0 The University

Located in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq People, Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) is strongly committed to fostering equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA). MSVU is an institution that was established by women for the advancement of women with social responsibility and social justice at its core. We have a beautiful campus located in suburban Halifax Regional Municipality just minutes from downtown. The park-like campus with its well-treed grounds is situated on a hill, overlooking the waters of the Bedford Basin. It is dedicated to promoting academic excellence, a high degree of personalized education, and an environment characterized by values of its founders, the Sisters of Charity—equity, ethical concern, social responsibility, and service to the community.

1.1 Services to Students

Some specific links and services are described below, but students are strongly encouraged to thoroughly explore the Mount's webpage to learn more about the university and its specific services, policies, and procedures. The address is: www.msvu.ca

Information about web access (user names and passwords) computer labs, and technical support may be accessed at the Information Services webpage:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/studentservices/itservices/default.aspx>

For the graduate academic calendar:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatecalendar/default.aspx>

The graduate studies webpage:

<http://www.msvu.ca/academics/graduate-studies-at-the-mount/>

Note that this page has important information and **forms** related to grad studies policies such as continuous registration, leave of absence, extensions, etc.

Financial information, such as parking and tuition fees, is available at:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/beamountstudent/money/default.aspx>

The university provides a number of services to students (**see Appendix F for phone numbers of selected services**). For example, the *E. Margaret Fulton Communications Centre* provides library holdings, advanced on-line computer information systems, and Information and Technology Services (IT&S). Our Novanet catalogue consists of a consortium of Nova Scotian post-secondary library holdings, which means that you can

borrow materials from other NS libraries. Students are encouraged to attend library information sessions at the beginning of each term to become familiar with the library and all its services. Individual sessions also may be booked with university librarians. More information on services such as corral rental, hours of operation, and length of book loans may be found at: <http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/default.aspx>

The Alexa McDonough *Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice* (AMI) aims to achieve equity and improve lives through feminist initiatives that extend knowledge and understanding of issues related to women, girls, gender, and social justice for the Mount community and beyond.

The *Nancy Rowell Jackman Chair in Women's Studies* brings distinguished visiting scholars in women's studies or persons in public life who have contributed to the advancement of women, to the university for specified periods of time.

Other special facilities of interest to graduate students are *The Child Study Centre* day care facilities (part-time and full-time day care for ages 2 - 5) and *The Fountain Play Centre* (day care facilities for Mount students only during class times), *The Athletics/Recreation Facilities*, *The Centre for Women in Business*, *The Nova Scotia Centre on Aging* (see section 1.2), *The Global Health and Community Initiative* (see section 1.3) and *The Maritime Data Centre for Aging Research and Policy Analysis* (see section 1.4). Links to these facilities and more may be found on the MSVU website.

1.2 The Nova Scotia Centre on Aging (NSCA)

The NSCA, is affiliated with the Department of Aging and Family Science and located in the Margaret Norrie McCain Centre, 2nd Floor, Room 202. Established at the Mount in 1992, it is one of longest running of the university-based Centres on aging in Canada. The centre works in partnership with the academic community, government, the private sector, voluntary and professional organizations, and seniors on initiatives that benefit older people, their families, and the community. For more information on the NSCA, please refer to the following links: <http://www.msvu.ca/nsca> and consider friending NSCA on Facebook.

1.3 Global Health and Community Initiative

Led by Tier I Canada Research Chair, Dr. Zachary Zimmer, the Global Health and Community initiative aims to provide an international perspective on population aging and advance scholarship on the health and well-being of older persons around the world. The Initiative builds on Dr Zimmer's extensive networks and research in gerontological demography in developing countries including China, Thailand, Cambodia, and in various sub-Saharan African countries. The office is located in the Rosemarie Sampson Centre on

Aging located on 2nd Floor of the Margaret Norrie McCain Centre. For more information on the Initiative, please refer to the following link: <https://globalagingandcommunity.com>

1.4 Jessie MacIssacCampbel Maritime Data Centre (MDC) Lab

Initial funding for the MDC in 2002 was through Dr. Keefe's Canada Research Chair Program. This Lab is located in the Margaret Norrie McCain Centre, 2nd Floor, Room 201, also located in the Rosemarie Sampson Centre on Aging. The lab is outfitted with advanced computer systems, quantitative and qualitative software, cameras and microphones to record focus groups and interviews, and equipment used in data collection, analysis, and dissemination of research findings.. Contact Dr. Janice Keefe at 902-457-6466 for further information.

2.0 Our Graduate Programs

Graduate study in Aging and Family Science focuses on issues that impact societal concerns such as population aging, public policy, as well as on individual family members and families. Our programs prepare you for or enhance your career in areas such as aging, community or family services, family life education, and community development.

Two Master Degrees are offered:

The thesis-based **Master of Arts in Aging and Family Science MA(AGFS)**, requires 3.5 units of coursework and a 1.5-unit thesis. The thesis must demonstrate critical judgment, mature scholarship, and familiarity with research methods. The thesis contributes to knowledge in the candidate's chosen field. Each student's program is planned individually between the student and graduate advisor.

The course-based **Master of Aging and Family Science (MAFS)** requires five units of coursework and is aimed at individuals working in fields of family science and/or aging (or those who plan to work in such fields) who require broad-based professional knowledge rather than in-depth research training. Consistent with other professional Master's programs, this program is oriented more toward direct application of knowledge in practice and policy settings.

If they choose, students may additionally pursue one of two graduate certificates.

The **Graduate Certificate in Health Communication and Aging** is offered jointly through the Department of Aging and Family Science and the Department of Communication Studies. This program provides students with an understanding of the

interplay between human communication, aging and health. This program will: (a) encourage students to develop a broad understanding of communication and aging theories; (b) contribute to the advancement of health communication and aging as an emerging field of study; (c) provide enhanced opportunities for students to study the contextual nature of health communication and aging in its various forms; (d) develop in students an appreciation of the processes that define human communication and aging; and, (e) develop within students an appreciation for and awareness of ethical communication. In order to obtain the certificate, students must complete 2.0 units by taking the following courses which are 0.5 units each: GPRL 6102, GPRL 6511, GAFS 6611, GAFS 6633. Further information may be accessed through this link: <https://www.msuv.ca/academics/graduate-studies-at-the-mount/family-studies-and-gerontology/program-requirements>

A Graduate Certificate in Nutrition and Aging provides students with specialized knowledge of the interrelationship between nutrition and aging that is essential for understand the ways food and nutrition contribute to the physiological, psychological, and socio-economic dimensions of an older person's life. The program covers topics such as disease prevention, health promotion and appropriate recommendations for older persons with chronic health needs. To obtain the certificate, students must: 1) Complete 1.0 units by taking the following courses which are 0.5 units each: GAHN 6900, GAFS 6611. 2) Complete 0.5 units by taking one of the following as an elective: GAHN 6715, GAHN 6720, GAFS/GAHN 6735, GAHN 6745, GAHN 6750. 3) Complete 0.5 units by taking one of the following as an elective: GAFS 6609, GAFS 6616, GAFS 6633. Further information may be accessed through this link: <https://www.msuv.ca/academics/graduate-studies-at-the-mount/family-studies-and-gerontology/program-requirements>

Students may apply to transfer between the two programs.

Students requesting a transfer from the Master of Arts in Aging and Family Science (MA in AGFS; thesis-based) to the Master of Aging and Family Science (MAFS; course-based) will submit a reasoned argument, in writing, to their thesis supervisor. Normally, students will not be allowed to transfer into the MAFS after they have received ethics approval and started data collection for their thesis. All requests will be reviewed by the department. If approved, the student will then need to submit a **Change of Program** form to the Registrar's Office.

Students requesting a transfer from the Master of Aging and Family Science (MFGS; course-based) to the Master of Arts in Aging and Family Science (MA in AGFS; thesis-based) will submit the following to the Graduate Program Coordinator: (a) a new "Statement of intent", which includes information about their thesis interests, (b) a sample of writing (e.g., at least a 10-page paper from a university course, with research citations) that demonstrates their research potential, and (c) evidence that a faculty member has

agreed to supervise their thesis topic. It is recommended that students apply for this transfer no later than their second term in the program. All requests will be reviewed by the department. If approved, the student will then need to submit a **Change of Program** form to the Registrar's Office.

Master of Arts in Aging and Family Science MA(AGFS):

This program requires the completion of 3.5 units of coursework and a 1.5-unit thesis.

<i>Required Courses (4.0 units)</i>		
☐ AGFS 6606		0.5 unit
☐ GEPY 6608 or GEDU 6107 or GAHN 6675		0.5 unit
☐ AGFS 6609 or AGFS 6612*		0.5 unit
☐ AGFS 6613		0.5 unit
☐ AGFS 6633		0.5 unit
☐ AGFS 6691		1.5 units
<i>Electives (1.0 unit)</i>		
☐ 1.0 unit of electives selected from the following:		
AGFS 6610	0.5 unit	
AGFS 6611	0.5 unit	
AGFS 6614	0.5 unit	
AGFS 6616	0.5 unit	
AGFS 6644	0.5 unit	
AGFS 6650	0.5 unit	
AGFS 6658	0.5 unit	
GAFS 6735/GAHN 6735	0.5 unit	

** If AGFS 6609 is chosen as a required course, AGFS 6612 may be taken as an elective, and vice versa.*

To provide students with flexibility, and depending on the field of interest, students may replace one of the electives listed above with 0.5 unit of graduate coursework in other graduate programs at the Mount (e.g., Child and Youth Study, Education, Applied Human Nutrition, Women and Gender Studies). Or, as an alternative, students may, with permission of their advisor, elect up to 0.5 unit of external graduate electives from outside the university. Requests for exceptions to this policy will be assessed by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee on a case-by-case basis. Note that it is a good idea to discuss

all elective courses in consultation with the student's graduate studies advisor.

When available, courses may be completed via online learning.

Master of Aging and Family Science (MAFS):

This program requires 5 units of coursework.

<i>Required Courses (2.0 units)</i>			
☐	AGFS 6606		0.5 unit
☐	AGFS 6613		0.5 unit
☐	AGFS 6633		0.5 unit
☐	AGFS 6680		0.5 unit
<i>Family Science or Aging Stream (1.0 unit)</i>			
☐	<i>Family Science Courses</i> AGFS 6610 and AGFS 6612 OR <i>Aging Courses</i> AGFS 6609 and AGFS 6611		
<i>Electives (2.0 units)</i>			
☐	2.0 unit of electives selected from the following:		
	AGFS 6609 ^a	0.5 unit	
	AGFS 6610 ^b	0.5 unit	
	AGFS 6611 ^a	0.5 unit	
	AGFS 6612 ^b	0.5 unit	
	AGFS 6614	0.5 unit	
	AGFS 6616	0.5 unit	
	AGFS 6644	0.5 unit	
	AGFS 6650	0.5 unit	
	AGFS 6658	0.5 unit	
	GEPY 6608	0.5 unit	
	GAFS 6735/GAHN 6735	0.5 unit	

^a Elective for students in the Family Science stream

^b Elective for students in the Aging stream

To provide students with flexibility, and depending on the field of interest, students may replace one of the electives listed above with 0.5 unit of graduate coursework in other graduate programs at the Mount (e.g., Child and Youth Study, Education, Applied Human Nutrition, Women and Gender Studies). Or, as an alternative, students may, with

permission from their graduate advisor, choose up to 0.5 unit of external graduate electives from outside the university. Requests for exceptions to this policy will be assessed by the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee on a case-by-case basis. Note that it is a good idea to discuss all elective courses in consultation with the student's graduate studies advisor. Any selected courses may be completed via online learning.

Graduate Certificate in Health Communication and Aging

This program is offered jointly through the Department of Aging and Family Science and the Department of Communication Studies. Students must complete 2.0 units (1.0 unit from each department) with the following requirements:

- ☐ GPRL 6102 0.5 unit
- ☐ GPRL 6511 0.5 unit
- ☐ AGFS 6611 0.5 unit
- ☐ AGFS 6633 0.5 unit

Graduate Certificate in Nutrition and Aging

This program is offered jointly through the Department of Aging and Family Science and the Department of Applied Human Nutrition. Students must complete 2.0 units (1.0 unit from each department) with the following requirements:

- ☐ GAHN 6900 0.5 unit
- ☐ GAFS 6611 0.5 unit

0.5 unit in one of the following

- ☐ GAHN 6715 0.5 unit
- ☐ GAHN 6720 0.5 unit
- ☐ GAHN/GAFS 6735 0.5 unit
- ☐ GAHN 6745 0.5 unit
- ☐ GAHN 6750 0.5 unit

0.5 unit in one of the following

- ☐ GAFS 6609 0.5 unit
- ☐ GAFS 6616 0.5 unit
- ☐ GAFS 6633 0.5 unit

2.1 Admission Requirements

To be admitted to **the Master of Arts in Aging and Family Science (thesis-based)**

program, students will normally have completed a four-year baccalaureate degree from an accredited university in a social science area (e.g., psychology, sociology, aging, family science, child and youth study, social work, education) with a minimum of a B average (GPA 3.0). Undergraduate courses in statistics, research methods, and at least five courses (2.5 units) in aging or family science are required by all applicants. Where there are deficiencies, students are required to complete assigned pre-requisite undergraduate and/or graduate courses and obtain a minimum of B grade in each of these courses prior to acceptance. Applicants must complete the *Graduate Studies Application Package* by **February 15 for fall admission**. Applicants are required to submit a sample of writing that demonstrates their research potential as a graduate student in the Department of Aging and Family Science.

To be admitted to the **Master of Aging and Family Science (course-based) program**, students will normally have completed an undergraduate degree in aging, family science, sociology, psychology, or related health profession (e.g., social work, nursing, health education, pharmacy) with a minimum of a B average (3.0 GPA) in the last 10.0 units of study. An undergraduate research methods course and an undergraduate statistics course is also required as background preparation for graduate courses in research methods (GAFS 6606- required) and statistics (GEPY 6608- an elective). Where there are deficiencies, students are required to complete assigned pre-requisite undergraduate and/or graduate courses and obtain a minimum of B grade in each of these courses prior to acceptance. Applicants must complete the [*Graduate Studies Application Package*](#) by **February 15 for fall admission**.

Application forms are available from the [Admissions office](#). Completed applications should be submitted by the deadlines noted above for September or December admission. Applications received after the deadlines will be considered only if space and time permit. **(PLEASE NOTE:** Due to the short time frame in which January admission decisions are made, international students who require visas are strongly recommended to apply for September admission rather than January admission).

The Aging and Family Science Graduate Committee reviews applications for the MA program, and the university's Graduate Admissions Officer reviews applications for the MAFS program. Applicants who do not meet admission requirements with regard to GAFS/GAFS-related content may be asked to complete selected prerequisite/preparatory courses (and obtain a minimum of B grade in each course) or meet other conditions prior to their acceptance into the program. Short-listed candidates who are under consideration for admittance into the program may be called for an interview.

For application materials, please contact:

Admissions Office, Mount Saint Vincent University

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 2J6
Telephone: 902-457-6128
Email: graduate@msvu.ca

Fax: 902-457-6455

2.2 Other Programs

The Department offers undergraduate majors, honours, minors, concentrations, and combined majors in Aging and Family Science. Additionally, a post-baccalaureate Bachelor of Education in Family Studies is offered through the Department of Education. Please refer to the University Undergraduate Calendar for a detailed description of these programs.

2.3 Financial Assistance

Scholarships and grants are available for application by students from many different sources. It is the student's responsibility to apply for these scholarships and meet the appropriate deadlines. When possible, the department provides support and assistance with scholarship and grant writing. The department does its best to apprise students of upcoming scholarship opportunities. Students should watch their MSVU email account for announcements. Some funding sources include:

Research Nova Scotia

<https://researchns.ca/>

Canadian Institutes for Health Research

www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca

Canadian Federation of University Women

administers two Canadian Home Economics fellowships, as well as other awards

<https://cfuw.org/fellowships-awards/>

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

www.sshrc.ca

Canadian Association of Gerontology

<http://cagacg.ca/>

Canadian Institute of Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR)

<https://cimvhr.ca/funding/scholarships/>

Please note: Other funding sources are available on a regular basis. These generally come from larger grants that have been awarded to the university. These will be posted regularly within the department. The Dean's office provides up to \$200 to MA students to assist with research related costs such as printing, mailing, and minor items of equipment, and up to \$250 for costs of presenting thesis research at a conference (application forms are available here:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatestudiesatthemount/graduatestudentfundingassistance.aspx>).

As well, a limited number of department graduate assistantships are often available each academic year. **Both incoming and returning students may apply for these assistantships** - application forms are available from the department office, and **must be received by June 1st** to be considered for assistantships in the upcoming year.

A limited number of scholarships and bursaries are available through the university (please see the graduate academic calendar- <https://www.msvu.ca/academics/university-academic-calendars/graduate-academic-calendar/>). Students are encouraged to explore various sources of financial assistance, including scholarships available through professional associations and other organizations.

Shannex Graduate Scholarship in Aging and Nutrition Established by Shannex

Incorporated to enhance research capacity related to long-term care. Awarded annually to support full time students entering a thesis-based Master's degree program in Aging and Family Science or Applied Human Nutrition with a research focus in an area related to long-term care. An application may be required.

Genevieve Keefe Graduate Entrance Scholarship

The Genevieve Keefe Graduate Entrance Scholarship is established by Dr. Janice Keefe in memory of her mother, a supporter of education, a mother and grandmother, and family CEO. This scholarship is awarded annually to an entrance student enrolled in the thesis-based Master of Arts in Aging and Family Science degree program at Mount Saint Vincent University. Preference will be for a student who is pursuing research in the area of aging, and its application to policy or practice.

F. Marie Jones Scholarship

The F. Marie Jones Scholarship, established by the family of F. Marie (Martin) Jones, BA '51, BEd '55, in recognition of Marie's life-long volunteer contributions to her alma mater, her community and more recently, her determined advocacy for residents of long-term care facilities. This scholarship is awarded annually to a student enrolled in the

thesis-based Master of Arts in Aging and Family Science degree program with a focus on aging. Preference will be for a student who is pursuing research on long-term care.

2.4 Other Assistance

Equipment and software such as a digital tape recorder, transcription foot pedal, laptop computer, and MAXQDA (on USB drive) is available to students on a sign-out basis.

MA students completing data collection, data analysis, or thesis writing will have first priority for borrowing this equipment. All graduate students completing course assignments and who may need temporary access (for more than 24 hours) because of an unexpected emergency will have second priority for borrowing. The equipment may not be used for any other purpose. Files may not be permanently stored on the laptop hard drive and no external programs are to be downloaded to the laptop.

Students may borrow the equipment for a maximum period of three weeks. Extensions may be granted, however, borrowers must request the extension 4-5 days prior to the end of the borrowing period.

Equipment will be stored in the departmental office in a locked cabinet. The administrative assistant will maintain a waitlist of students interested in borrowing the laptop. The laptop must be able to be returned to the University within a 24-hour period if necessary (eg out-of-province use will be very rare to non-existent).

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, for quantitative data analysis) is available on all campus computers. MAXQDA (for qualitative data analysis) is available on computers in the Seton 315 computer lab.

Office 365 is available to all students, and this allows students to download the Office Suite for free on up to 5 personal devices. As part of Office 365, you can save your work online in “OneDrive” (1 TB of space available). Students also have 200 MB of storage space on the MSVU server (h:/drive). Students are strongly encouraged to use Office 365 or the MSVU server space to back up all of their coursework and thesis work (e.g., thesis drafts, digital interviews, transcripts, SPSS data files and output, MAXQDA data files, etc.) OneDrive can be accessed off campus by signing into “myMount/email”, whereas the MSVU server is only accessible on campus. For more information, visit:

<https://www.msvu.ca/campus-life/campus-services/it-services/office-365-at-the-mount/>

3.0 Use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in Assignments (including Thesis)*

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the classroom is carefully monitored, managed and regulated. In some cases, the use of AI could be considered as plagiarism and cheating. It is therefore extremely important that students are aware of the regulations around AI in the classroom. MSVU has an online resource discussing generative AI for MSVU students at this location: <https://libguides.msvu.ca/ai/students>. The Department of Aging and Family Science has a policy on the use of AI, and it is provided below. ***However, each professor may decide what is deemed to be an acceptable and unacceptable use of AI in their own class. Students should always consult course syllabi and the professor for detailed information.***

Department of Aging and Family Science Policy on generative AI

The Department of Aging and Family Science permits the use of generative AI tools (such as *Chat GPT and Bing AI*) in very specific situations and strictly prohibits its use in others. If students do use an AI tool in situations deemed appropriate by this policy and/or through discussions and decision by their professor, they must include a statement in the assignment, quiz, exam, or other assessment method, declaring the specific AI tool they used and how they used it to complete their work. Students are reminded that university studies provide the opportunity to grow and develop personally and professionally. The acquisition of knowledge and the development of critical thinking, analytical and communications skills are important competencies students develop throughout their academic careers. Using AI tools as a substitute for acquiring this knowledge and these skills is unacceptable.

Acceptable: Students are permitted to use AI tools for formative work such as:

- Gathering information, or generating ideas
- Checking spelling and grammar

Specific instructors may decide whether to accept the use of AI tools in these situations.

Unacceptable: Use of AI is strictly prohibited from:

- Impersonating yourself in classroom contexts, such as by using the AI tool to compose or respond to group discussion either in a discussion forum on Moodle or in the Collaborate chat.
- Completing group work that your group has assigned to you, unless the professor has allowed this practice.
- Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
- Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments.
- Writing responses to essay questions in Moodle quizzes, take-home exams, or MS Forms quizzes or surveys.

In these unacceptable situations, any use of the AI tool is considered an unauthorized means to complete an examination or other assignment or assessment and would be considered academic misconduct.

STUDENTS: You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws, or contains misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited in order to stay within university policies on academic honesty (APA is developing guidelines regarding citing ChatGPT and other AI generative tools). Any assignment found to have used generative AI tools in unauthorized ways may receive a penalty (please see [section 2.2.23](#) in the Academic Calendar). When in doubt about permitted usage, please ask your instructor or supervisor for clarification.

4.0 Aging and Family Science Graduate Courses

AGFS 6606 Research Methods/0.5 unit

An examination of the elements of the research process. Emphasis will be given to various methodologies, that are used for research in aging and family science, and attention will be given to the philosophies underlying quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

AGFS 6609 Fundamentals of Social Gerontology/0.5 unit

An examination of theoretical perspectives affecting individual and societal aging and an overview of contemporary issues affecting older adults. Students will analyse scholarly literature on family relationships, economic security, retirement, health and other issues of specific interest to class registrants.

AGFS 6610 Family Life Education/0.5 unit

An examination of the theoretical principles and methodological approaches employed in planning and implementing family life education programs within the variety of disciplines focusing on families and individuals across the life course. Students will have the opportunity to reflect upon the philosophies underpinning their practice. A critical perspective will be employed.

AGFS 6611 Aging, Health and Community/0.5 unit

An examination of issues regarding individual, community and population health and aging. Health promotion, chronic disease management and social determinants affecting physical and mental health of older people are considered. Policies and practices to improve health outcomes of older population are evaluated.

AGFS 6612 Family Relations across the Life Course/0.5 unit

An examination of the social and psychological factors affecting contemporary family life with particular emphasis on roles, dynamics, and pathways across the life course. Students will analyse scholarly literature as a foundation for critique of interactional and societal dynamics.

AGFS 6613 Critical Theories in Aging and Family Science/0.5 unit

An advanced theory course designed to develop analytical skills and critical thinking. The focus is on current social scientific theories and their implications for aging and family science.

AGFS 6614 Family Violence across the Life Course/0.5 unit

An analysis of family violence across the life course, covering intimate partner violence, child abuse, sibling, parent, and adolescent violence, and the abuse of older adults. Theoretical and practical perspectives will be developed through the course. An understanding of family violence from a critical ecological perspective will serve as a recurring theme throughout all discussions and analysis. *Note: Students who received credit for AGFS 3314 may not take this course for credit.*

AGFS 6616 Global Aging and Health/0.5 unit

The course examines the current state of global population aging and aspects that associate with well-being of older persons worldwide. Attention is paid to social life, social change, economic systems, health care demands, and family forms and functions. Focus is comparative across countries, regions and cultures.

AGFS 6633 Social Policies on Family and Aging/0.5 unit

This is an advanced course in the analysis and development of social policies relating to the family and the elderly. The focus is on how policy is developed, the relationship between research and policy, and how to critically analyse existing policies.

AGFS 6644 Military and Veteran Families/0.5 unit

An analysis of research, theory, and practice focusing on military and veteran families across the life course. Informed by critical-ecological theory, emphasis in the course will be on military and veteran family resiliency. *Note: Students who have received credit for AGFS 3344 may not take this course for credit.*

AGFS 6650 Special Topics/0.5 unit

These courses are designed to allow students to study in greater depth a topic in aging and family science that is treated only briefly in another graduate course or not covered in another graduate course. *Note: No more than 0.5 unit towards a graduate degree may be acquired through special topics.*

(Note: this course cycles between an aging focus and a family science focus every second year)

AGFS 6658 Directed Study/0.5 unit

Independent examination of the research literature designed to meet the special needs of individual graduate students. The graduate student will make arrangements with the faculty member in advance of registration. *Note: No more than 0.5 unit of credit towards a graduate degree may be acquired through independent study.*

Prerequisite: Permission of the department Chair and the faculty member involved

AGFS 6680 Seminar in Aging and Family Science/0.5 unit

A synthesis of research and practice in Aging and Family Science. Students will reflect upon their learning throughout the degree and apply their research/theoretical ideas to practical contexts in Aging and Family Science through the development of a project planned in consultation with a faculty member.

AGFS 6691 Thesis/1.5 units

Required for completion of the MA (FSG) degree. Registration involves working with individual faculty members on the conceptualization, production, and defence of the thesis. Enrolment in this course occurs when the candidates are preparing their thesis. The **Appointment of Thesis Advisor Form** must be completed before enrolling in this course.

GEDU 6107 Qualitative Research Methods/0.5 unit

This seminar course will explore various qualitative research techniques and the underlying theoretical assumptions which inform qualitative research. The course will also involve evaluation of sample qualitative studies in education and field testing of particular techniques. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.

GEPY 6608 Intermediate Statistics and Research Design/0.5 unit

This course examines more advanced topics in analysis of variance such as repeated measures in one-way and factorial designs. It also includes multiple regression and multivariate statistics such as discriminate analysis and factor analysis. The use of data analysis by computer is emphasized.

Prerequisite: GEPY 6601 or equivalent

GAHN 6675 Qualitative Methods of Nutrition Research/0.5 unit

An examination of various qualitative methods and underlying methodological approaches in food, nutrition, and dietetics. Attention will be given to study design, sampling, recruitment, data collection and analysis, knowledge translation and ethical considerations. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.

GAFS 6735/GAHN 6735 Food and Nutrition for Older Adults 0.5 unit

Prerequisite(s): admission to a master's program or permission of the instructor

A critical examination of the issues, policies and practices affecting the food and nutrition status of older people living in the community and in continuing care settings. Attention will be given to determinants of health, cultural diversity, isolation, compassion and client centred care.

5.0 Faculty Research Interests

Janice Keefe, Ph.D. (Guelph) Chair: Family/friend caregiving- including assessment, employment and caregiving and analyses of policy to support caregivers, quality of life in long term care facilities, home and continuing care policy and human resource issues, rural Aging, and the contributions of older people

Contact: McCain 201F, 457-6466, janice.keefe@msvu.ca

Deborah Norris, Ph.D. (Dalhousie): Mental health and well-being of military and veteran families, military family resilience and post-traumatic growth, family psychoeducation, critical theories, family relations and social support, qualitative research methodologies, family violence

Contact: EV 325, 457-6376, deborah.norris@msvu.ca

Zachary Zimmer, Ph.D. (Michigan): Canada Research Chair in Global Aging and Community, Graduate Program Coordinator: Intergenerational relations, disablement, global population aging, migration, demographic change, health disparities

Contact: McCain 201C, 902-457-5541, zachary.zimmer@msvu.ca

Margaret Campbell, Ph.D. (Concordia): Families, suicide, and grief, public safety families, LGBTQ+ families, disability and family life, sexual rights and parenting of people with disabilities, families navigating high-risk and non-traditional work environments. **Contact:** 902-457-6170, Margaret.campbell9@msvu.ca

6.0 Graduate Advisor

Every student admitted to the Aging and Family Science Program is assigned an academic advisor. The advisor will be a full-time faculty within the department. Together, the academic advisor and student plan a program designed to meet the student's career goals and help develop the student's strengths. Students are encouraged to have regular contact with their advisor, especially before registering for courses, and to help clarify any

concerns or questions they might have regarding policies, time lines, etc. For those in the Master of Arts program, the academic advisor assigned does not necessarily become the student's thesis advisor.

7.0 Graduate Committees

Students may be interested in serving on either of the following two committees. For the Aging and Family Science Graduate Committee, a student representative is either selected by the dept graduate student body or hired by the department (through the Student Works program). A student representative is elected by the general study body to serve on the Graduate Studies Program and Policy Committee.

a) Departmental Graduate Committee

The Aging and Family Science or University Graduate Committees are responsible for addressing any concerns or suggestions the student may have. The graduate program in Aging and Family Science Graduate Studies is coordinated through a committee comprised of department faculty and a student representative, and this committee is chaired by the Graduate Program Coordinator. The committee monitors the functioning of the program, develops and evaluates program policy, and addresses issues as they arise. The faculty who serves on this committee review MA applications, admit students, approve proposals, and approve thesis committees. The Graduate Program Coordinator (Chair of the committee) often serves on the University Graduate Studies committee and provides regular reports on the work of that group.

Students can communicate with the committee by speaking to their advisor or their student representative. Students are also encouraged to meet together to discuss their respective experiences. The Aging and Family Science Graduate Committee organizes orientation and updating sessions periodically, and encourages graduate students to meet outside of class sessions or departmentally organised events.

b) University Graduate Committees

Two university-level committees administer the graduate studies program: (a) The Graduate Studies Scholarships, Assistantships, and Awards Committee, and (b) The Graduate Studies Program and Policy Committee (GSPPC). Faculty are appointed from all departments with graduate programs to represent their programs in discussions of graduate policies and practices and in review of scholarship applications. The Student's Union names a student representative to the Graduate Studies Program and Policy Committee.

8.0 Graduate Seminars

Graduate seminars are held several times during each fall and winter term in the Department of Aging and Family Science and all students and faculty are expected to attend. Participation in graduate seminars is a normal part of the graduate student experience. Seminar notices are normally distributed throughout the university and any interested person external to the department is welcome to attend. Students should also check their MSVU email for seminar announcements. These sessions provide an opportunity for graduate students and faculty to share their research or other scholarly activities and ideas. The graduate seminar schedule will be made available shortly after the beginning of each semester and/or posted as seminars are confirmed. Students must document their participation in these seminars in their annual report to the Aging and Family Science Graduate Committee. Full-time students are expected to attend a minimum of 2 departmental seminars per term (Fall and Winter). **Part-time students should consult with their advisor regarding attendance requirements.**

9.0 Annual Report

Every student is required to complete an annual report that documents their progress in the program during the previous academic year. This report will be submitted to the Department Chair for review. The deadline for submission is **June 1st** of each year. Normally, the department sends out a form with specific categories to which to respond, including a category for an overall self-evaluation of progress. **Appendix A provides an example of the types of categories on the form.**

10.0 The Thesis (Master of Arts)

The thesis component of the Master of Arts in Aging and Family Science degree program requires a student to undertake a major independent research study in a selected area of Aging and Family Science. Although the format and content of a thesis will vary in accordance with the nature of the study, a thesis will normally include a comprehensive review of the published writings of related aspects, an articulation of the research question(s), a theoretical framework, a detailed methodological plan, ethical considerations and safeguards, a report and analysis of the findings, implications, conclusions and recommendations. Assessment of the thesis is based on the quality of both the (a) data and analysis and (b) interpretation and conclusions drawn from the data.

The expectations of the thesis outcome are sufficiently flexible to enable diversity in methodologies, theories, and processes. Students may choose from a number of

methodological and data analyses approaches. These approaches may include but are not limited to: archival analysis of documents, program evaluation, primary data collection that lends itself to either qualitative or quantitative analysis, or secondary data analysis (again qualitative or quantitative or both) of existing data sources. Students work with their thesis advisor to choose the most appropriate methodology to answer their research question. The interdisciplinary nature of the field of Aging and Family Science also enables students to draw on a wide range of theoretical perspectives.

The thesis must demonstrate students' competencies in methods of research and critical appraisal of previous research and scholarship. The thesis should be of such a length as to constitute a significant contribution to the field of Aging and Family Science. In evaluating the thesis, it is important to note that significance, conciseness, and quality of the document and the defence are of greater weight than the number of pages in the document.

Suggested reading:

Locke, L. F., & Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2013). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals* (6th ed.). Sage.

Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2014). *Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process* (4th ed.). Sage.

10.1 Thesis Advisor and Thesis Advisory Committee

The thesis will be written under the direction of a full-time faculty member of the Department of Aging and Family Science, referred to as the thesis advisor, and a thesis advisory committee. The **Appointment of Thesis Supervisor Form** needs to be completed for approval of both thesis advisors and thesis advisory committee members. All forms are available on the Graduate Studies webpage unless otherwise noted. This form is sent by the thesis advisor to the Graduate Program Coordinator, who then approves it and sends it to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

Please note: The thesis advisor must be approved prior to registering in the thesis course.

The thesis advisor also recommends to the Graduate Program Coordinator two persons to serve on the advisory committee. One of these individuals will normally be from within the department and one will normally be from outside the department. The thesis committee will review and approve the thesis proposal, be available to advise the student in all stages of the research project, and approve the examination copy. Normally, students work more closely with the thesis advisor than with other thesis committee members.

In some circumstances, the thesis advisor may be external to the department. In such cases, the student get the **Appointment of External Thesis Supervisor Form** completed.

When the thesis advisor is external to the department, at least one of the other two members of the thesis committee must be from the department. There is also a form for **Appointment of Thesis Co-Supervisor** if applicable.

10.2 Responsibilities of Thesis Advisor

When a faculty member agrees to serve as a “thesis advisor,” he/she assumes several responsibilities:

- a) to be accessible to students and to be available for consultation within a reasonable time frame;
- b) to be as helpful as possible in suggesting research topics and in assisting students to define their theses;
- c) to work with the student to identify appropriate thesis committee members;
- d) to inform students approximately how long it will be before written work, such as drafts of chapters, can be returned with comments;
- e) to be thorough in their examination of thesis chapters, supplying, where appropriate, detailed comments on such matters as literary form, structure, use of evidence, relation of the thesis to published work on the subject, citation of references, and making constructive suggestions for rewriting and improving the draft;
- f) to indicate clearly when a draft is in a satisfactory final form, or, if it is clear to the advisor that the thesis cannot be successfully completed, to so advise the student;
- g) to know the departmental and university regulations and standards to which the writer of a thesis is expected to conform, and to make sure that the student is aware of them;
- h) to arrange for alternate supervision while on sabbatical leave;
- i) to advise and help the student to approach other faculty members for assistance with specific problems or even to request the reading of a chapter or section of the thesis.

10.3 Responsibilities of Student

When a graduate student undertakes the writing of a thesis, he/she also assumes several

responsibilities:

- a) to obtain a thesis supervisor (may be done in consultation with the academic advisor, Graduate Program Coordinator, and/or departmental chairperson)
- b) to choose a topic (often with advisor's help) and to produce a thesis that is their own work;
- c) to submit copies in the format requested (paper or electronic) of all thesis proposal drafts and thesis drafts to advisors and/or committee members;
- d) to produce a thesis that meets the standards of scholarship required by the university and the department, including demonstration of their capacity for independent scholarship and research in their field;
- e) to acknowledge direct assistance or borrowed material from other scholars or researchers;
- f) to realize that the advisor has undergraduate or other duties that may at times delay the student's access to the advisor on short notice;
- g) to give serious and considered attention to advice and direction from the advisor;
- h) to submit their work to the judgement of the department and to abide by its decision when any rights of appeal, if exercised, have been exhausted;
- i) to be familiar with information in the graduate student handbook and various dates, timelines, and required outputs (i.e., electronic and bound copies of theses) related to thesis and convocation;
- j) to know the departmental and university regulations and standards to which the writer of a thesis is required to conform.

10.4 Rights of Advisor

The advisor has the following rights:

- a) to expect the student to give serious and considered attention to advice concerning what he/she regards as essential changes in the thesis;

- b) to terminate supervision and advise the student to find another advisor if the student does not heed advice and ignores recommendations for changes in the thesis, or if the student is not putting forth a reasonable effort;
- c) to have their thesis supervision properly credited by the department as an intrinsic part of their workload so that, in the assignment of duties, they are not overburdened to the point of having their effectiveness impaired as advisors.

10.5 Rights of Student

The student has the following rights:

- a) to have a clear understanding of what is expected in thesis-writing;
- b) to expect help from their advisor in establishing a feasible topic and in solving problems and assessing progress as the thesis is being written;
- c) to receive a fair assessment of the completed thesis and explanations of negative criticism;
- d) to be allowed to have a new advisor when he/she can offer convincing reasons to the department for the change;
- e) to be protected from exploitation by their advisor or other faculty members if the latter should
 - a. intrude upon the student's right of authorship or
 - b. constrain the student's research efforts for purposes not directly related to the advancement of the thesis project;
- f) to submit a thesis even if the advisor is not satisfied, although such action should be taken only in extreme cases and after full consultation with the department.

10.6 Responsibilities of the Department

- a) to uphold a good standard for theses;
- b) to provide adequate advising at all times so that when an advisor leaves the university for another permanent position, substitute arrangements are made as soon as possible;

- c) to allow students to change advisors if their research interests shift or develop in a new direction;
- d) to provide procedures that assist and encourage students to complete the thesis, such as early review and approval of topic and methodology, guidelines on access and appeals, oversight of the student's schedule, and a clearly stated system of thesis review and evaluation;
- e) to provide a fair evaluation of the thesis, normally by giving considerable responsibility to the committee and the thesis advisor.

10.7 Thesis Registration (AGFS 6691 or AGFS 6691.CN)

Students will typically enrol in this course once substantial work on the thesis has begun and once the majority of their coursework has been completed. As already noted, the thesis advisor must be approved before enrolling in this course. When students enrol in AGFS 6691 (section 01 if starting in fall term, section 02 if starting in winter term), the fee they pay for that course covers a full calendar year of thesis registration. It is not until 12 months after this initial registration that they need to enrol in the **thesis continuation (AGFS 6691.CN)** should they still be working on their thesis. Enrolment in GSFG 6691.CN lasts for 4 months, so must be renewed on a term basis. Please note that summer session for AGFS 6691.CN occurs only in May and covers the full four summer months. Students who successfully complete their thesis requirements within the first month of any of those 4-month periods (i.e., the first month of the Fall, Winter, or SSI semester) will not be required to pay the thesis continuation fee.

Registration involves working with the thesis advisor and the thesis committee on the conceptualization, production, and defence of the thesis. Students who are enrolled for thesis credit present two seminars: the thesis proposal and the defence of thesis results.

AGAIN, PLEASE NOTE: Once a student starts working on their thesis, enrolment must be continuous. The first enrolment lasts for one year. After that, students must enrol in AGFS 6691.CN every 4 months.

10.8 Thesis Proposal

Students typically complete one semester or two units of course work before formulating a research proposal. The academic advisor assigned to the student upon admission does not necessarily become the thesis advisor. The thesis advisor may be selected in consultation with the academic advisor, Graduate Program Coordinator, and/or departmental chairperson. It is advised that substantial review of relevant research literature be carried

out before the thesis committee is finalized. A proposal developed as part of a course, such as “Research Methods”, does not necessarily become the thesis proposal. By far, the greatest amount of time for conducting the research and for writing the thesis needs to be devoted to reviewing related literature, refining the problem statement or hypothesis, developing the methodology, procedures, and instruments. Data collection and analysis typically require less time if the review of literature and proposal have been thorough. The department has copies of previous theses that students may want to view within the department office (Evaristus 331). Students can view and/or download pdf copies of recent theses (2008 and onward) at the library’s “E-Commons” website (<https://ec.msvu.ca/home>)

The purpose of the proposal is to communicate precisely the nature of the inquiry that is to be carried out. The proposal typically includes:

- a statement of the problem or research focus,
- an explanation of the theoretical and practical importance of the study,
- the research questions or hypotheses,
- definitions of key terms,
- a review and critique of related research,
- the theoretical framework,
- the method (techniques for data collection),
- a review of ethical considerations and safeguards,
- a plan for data analysis,
- a budget for data collection, analysis and thesis preparation,
- a discussion of the limitations of the inquiry, and
- references.

Although the degree of explicitness required in a proposal may vary from study to study, the student should be aware of the benefits associated with a careful, precise proposal. Provocative research questions usually arise out of a familiarity with the literature of a particular area of study. Moreover, a clear understanding of theoretical frameworks will also facilitate the research and writing process. Therefore, at the time of writing the proposal, the student should be able to demonstrate familiarity with the literature and a sound understanding of the theoretical framework(s) that will inform the research. The critical review of related research and the presentation and application of an appropriate theoretical framework(s) contained in the proposal can form the basis of the literature review chapter and theoretical framework chapter in the final thesis. Therefore, the thesis proposal can and should be viewed as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

When the thesis proposal is ready to present, the thesis advisor will forward the completed **Notification of Thesis Proposal Presentation Form** to the Dean of Graduate Studies and copied to the Graduate Program Coordinator at least two weeks in advance of the

proposed date of presentation.

Upon conclusion of the proposal defence, the thesis committee will meet *in camera* (privately) and conclude that:

- the proposal is approved;
- the proposal is approved subject to revisions;
- the proposal is not approved, and it must be resubmitted for a second defence; or
- the resubmitted proposal is not approved, a grade of “F” is submitted. There is no opportunity for another resubmission.

The thesis advisor will then forward the completed **Thesis Proposal Presentation Report Form** to the Dean of Graduate Studies, copied to the Graduate Program Coordinator and the student.

10.9 Stylistic Matters

“What you put on paper, and how you put it there, reveals your standards of excellence, your knowledge, and the quality of your thinking more eloquently than anything else about you” (Leedy, 1993, p. 331).

The Department of Aging and Family Science **requires** that students follow the style guidelines set out in the most recent edition (currently 7th edition) of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2020). The department has a copy of this manual in the main office (EV 331), and copies are available in the library. Copies can also be purchased from the book store. It is strongly encouraged that students purchase their own copy early on in their program, as this style guide provides information on a number of stylistic considerations, such as use of appropriate language, citing references, creating a reference list, headings and subheadings, reporting statistics, and creating tables.

Correct citation procedures are very important. **Please see Appendix B for helpful information on avoiding plagiarism.**

References

Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2022). *Tri-council policy statement: Ethical conduct for research involving humans – TCPS 2* (2022). https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2022.html

Leedy, P. D. (1992). *Practical research: Planning and design* (5th ed.). Don Mills, ON: Maxwell MacMillan Canada.

10.10 Procedure for Submitting Applications to the University Research Ethics Board

When human subjects are used in research, the question of ethical standards must be addressed. Students are required to adhere to the Tri-Council Ethics Policy and obtain approval for research involving human subjects from the University Ethics Review Board (UREB). Copies of the Tri-Council Ethics Policy and other Mount research policies are available through the University website at <https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/research-ethics/human-research-ethics/research-ethics-documentation> or from the office of the Associate Vice-President Research.

The UREB provides an ethics application form that encourages the development of succinct and relevant submissions, which will expedite the review process. The form (including appendices such as copies of instruments, surveys, interview guides, questionnaires, letters to potential research subjects, consent forms, and signed Thesis Proposal Presentation Report) is submitted by email to ethic@msvu.ca. can find out more information at:

<https://www.msvu.ca/en/home/research/researchethics/ethicsreviewprocess.aspx>.

Succinct, ethics applications require careful attention and detail, therefore they take time to complete, and several drafts may be necessary to develop a thorough ethics application. Examples of previous ethics applications (by students and faculty) can be viewed in the department administrative assistant's office (EV 331).

Please note: The thesis committee must approve the research proposal before an application is submitted to the UREB. Approval consists of a defence of the proposal held in accordance with departmental regulations and a signed approval form (Thesis Proposal Presentation Report), which must be included with the application to the UREB.

Before students can proceed with their research, they also are required by the university to complete the **Tri-Council's Course on Research Ethics (CORE) Tutorial**, and submit proof of their completion of the course to the Research Office (accomplished by using their Mount email address to register for the tutorial). Information about this policy can be found at: <https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/research-ethics/human-research-ethics/>

The tutorial can be accessed at: <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

Additional key points:

- Research ethics clearance is effective for one year. A mandatory **Annual Report** is due on the anniversary date of the original ethics approval. If this report is not received, the student's research activity may be suspended.
- A **Final Report** is also required from the Research Office. A student's thesis cannot be approved without the completion of this mandatory form, which can be found on MSVU's 'forms and applications – human participants' webpage. Completion of Research states: "A final report allows the REB to close its files in addition to providing the REB with information that may be used in the evaluation any approval of related studies". This final report is submitted after all data collection is completed, and it is not necessary to wait until the thesis defence to submit the report.
- The **Annual Report (Renewal Request)** Form and **Final Report** Form and all other ethics-related forms can be found at:
<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/research/researchethics/forms.aspx>.
- Standard Operating Procedure documents related to "Continuing Review" (REB.SOP.405), "Completion of Research" (REB.SOP.406), and "Suspension or Termination of REB Clearance" (REB.SOP.407) are located here:
<https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/research-ethics/human-research-ethics/research-ethics-documentation/reb-standard-operating-procedures/>

10.11 Organization of the Thesis

1. Title page (see **Appendix C**)
2. Copyright Notice
3. Signed approval page (see **Appendix D**)
4. Dedication (*if any*)
5. Abstract (see **Appendix E**) (*not more than 500 words*)
6. Preface (*if any*)
7. Acknowledgement (*if any*)
8. Table of contents (*listing chapter heads and subheads, references and appendix*)
9. List of tables (*if any*)
10. List of figures or illustrations (*if any*)
11. List of plates (*if any*)
12. Body of text
13. Endnotes (*if any*)
14. References
15. Appendices (*if any*)

10.12 Thesis Defence

Upon approval of the thesis for defence by the thesis committee, a date for the defence is selected. The thesis advisor will forward the completed **Notification of Thesis Defence Form** to the Dean of Graduate Studies, copied to the Graduate Program Coordinator, thesis committee members, and student at least two weeks ahead of the proposed defence date. The thesis defence is chaired by the Dean or a faculty member designated by the Dean.

Upon conclusion of the defence, the thesis defence committee will meet *in camera* (privately) and conclude either:

- the student successfully defended the thesis, passing grade awarded;
- the thesis is approved with minor revisions;
- the thesis required major revisions, it is revised and resubmitted for a second defense; or
- the thesis is not approved, there is no opportunity for resubmission. A grade of F is submitted.

The outcome of the thesis defence is noted on the **Thesis Defence Report Form**, which is sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies by the thesis supervisor. All members of the committee are required to sign this form.

Once any minor changes have been made satisfactorily, and once the student has completed the **Ethics Final Report Form** (see section 9.15 on time sequence; although this can be completed earlier), the thesis supervisor will forward the completed **Thesis Release Form** to the Dean of Graduate Studies, copied to the Registrar and the Graduate Program Coordinator.

10.13 Thesis Printing and Distribution

Once final editing is completed and approved, the student is responsible for making electronic (pdf) and hard copies of the final thesis. MSVU now primarily requires electronic thesis submissions rather than hard copies. To submit an electronic copy of your thesis to MSVU, save your finalized, committee-approved thesis as a single PDF. Complete the Thesis Non-Exclusive License Form, then email both the PDF and the signed form directly to the MSVU archives at archives@msvu.ca

A pdf copy of the thesis must be submitted to the library. Information on how to do this is located at: <http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/universityarchives/thesisdeposit.aspx> Please note that the **Thesis Non-Exclusive License Form** also needs to be completed as

part of this process.

Historically, students also got a hard bound copy for themselves, their advisor, and sometimes other committee members. Please consult with your advisor and committee members in advance regarding what format they would like to receive the thesis- e.g., pdf copy, hard bound, coil bound, etc..

The Mount library does not offer binding services. Information on companies that provide this service can be found at:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/library/universityarchives/thesisdeposit.aspx>

All theses will have a standard cover, blue in colour with the university logo, the title, degree, the student's name and year embossed in gold on the cover and an abbreviated title, degree, student surname and year on the spine.

10.14 Instructions to be Followed in Preparing the Thesis for Printing (hard bound copies) and Electronic Submission

- **LEGIBILITY**

- An **original** or **superior copy** should be provided for printing.
- If supplying a **computer print-out**, please do not photo-reduce it.
- The ideal paper for printing purposes has a hard, bright, even surface. Thick, opaque, **bond paper** (with paper mark) should be used.
- The following **font** is preferred: Times New Roman 12-size font
- Ensure that a **running head** is on all your pages (except the title page- see APA manual)
- **Margins** need to be as follows: left margin: 1.5 inch, all other margins (right, top, bottom): 1 inch.
- Ensure that **illustrated materials** such as graphs, charts, maps, etc. are sharp and clear.
- Theses should be submitted **unbound** and should be placed individually into file folders, cardboard boxes or envelopes. File folders are preferred.

- Do not print on reverse side of leaves.
- **COMPLETENESS**
 - Ensure that each thesis is complete with **no missing pages**
 - Other points to be checked include:
 - a) the date on which the degree was conferred, and
 - b) pages correctly identified.
- **COPYRIGHT**
 - The University Copyright notice © must appear on the thesis. It must be added to the title page or failing that on the succeeding page, as indicated in the example below:

© John Robert Smith, 2015
 - Completion of **Thesis Non-Exclusive License Form**
 - Please ensure that written authorization from authors of **previously copyrighted material** is included: articles, maps, published tests, etc. The material cannot be added to the MSVU E-Commons unless written authorization from the copyright holder is provided. Written authorization may take weeks or months to obtain, so students should procure copyright authorization as far in advance as possible.
- **Major Reasons for Rejecting a Thesis for Electronic Submission or Printing**
 - missing or unsigned authorization forms (Thesis Non-Exclusive License Form)
 - the date (on which degree was conferred) missing in either thesis or on the Thesis Non-Exclusive License Form
 - missing pages (leaves)
 - poor legibility of any thesis that will not produce a quality image
 - the presence of unauthorized previously copyrighted material
 - in more than one file (for electronic copy)
 - file is not in pdf format (for electronic copy)

10.15 GSPPC Policy on Personal Information Contained in a Thesis

Canadian privacy legislation mandates the removal of any personal information from theses/dissertations that are forwarded to the National Library of Canada Thesis Deposit Program. According to the Privacy Act, personal information is any information, however recorded, that could be used to identify an individual. This does not include information that indicates an individual's professional identity. The candidate and the thesis supervisor are responsible for ensuring all personal information is removed or concealed before the thesis is submitted. See <https://libguides.msvu.ca/c.php?g=702786&p=4995736> for more information. If personal information is found in a thesis, the thesis will be returned to the thesis supervisor for action.

10.16 Sequence of Events for Thesis (Master of Arts)

Normally, the sequence of events for students in the Master of Arts program will be as follows (see Table 1 for estimated time lines related to convocation):

- Student discusses general topic with academic advisor.
- Academic advisor suggests readings, journals, etc., and/or suggests another faculty member for consultation.
- Student conducts initial review of literature and formulates a specific research problem.
- Student prepares research plan that answers the following questions:
 - What is the general area in which you wish to study?
 - What specific question do you propose to answer?
 - Why do we need answers to this question?
 - What does current research say about this question?
 - How do you propose to answer this question?
- Student seeks thesis advisor interested in topic. This will involve discussion with any of the following people: academic advisor, faculty advisors, Graduate Program Coordinator, and/or Department Chair.
- Student presents choice of thesis advisor to the Graduate Program Coordinator with the **Appointment of Thesis Supervisor Form**, **Appointment of External Thesis Supervisor Form**, or **Appointment of Thesis Co-Supervisor Form** signed by the thesis advisor.
- Student registers in AGFS 6691 (Thesis) (and then enrolls in AGFS 6691.CN each

term—fall, winter, and summer session I—if not completed within one year).

- Student meets with the thesis advisor to complete the **Student-Thesis Supervisor Expectations Form** (available from Thesis Supervisor). This form should be reviewed (and revised if necessary) on a regular basis.
- Student prepares complete proposal. NOTE: It will likely take several drafts to develop a complete and final proposal. As the student proceeds with review of relevant literature and development of methodology, the student may, in consultation with advisor, seek the advice of other faculty members who have expertise relevant to aspects of the proposed study. These faculty members may or may not become members of the thesis committee. Usually the student works closely with their advisor, only meeting with the committee once the proposal is substantially developed and close to being ready to present.
- If not already done, student and thesis advisor discuss make-up of thesis committee. **NOTE:** This is also documented on the **Appointment of Thesis Supervisor Form**, **Appointment of External Thesis Supervisor Form**, or **Appointment of Thesis Co-Supervisor Form**.
- When the final proposal is approved by the committee for presentation, the advisor calls a proposal meeting. At least two weeks ahead of this meeting, all of the following should be completed: (a) the **Notification of Thesis Proposal Presentation Form** is completed; (b) a copy of the approved proposal is made available to each committee member and one copy of the proposal (for file) should be left with the Aging and Family Science Department for review by other faculty and students; and (c) an abstract (**see Appendix D for example**) and invitation to the thesis proposal defence should be submitted electronically to the department administrative assistant which will then be forwarded to the graduate student distribution list.
- Proposal seminar is held with the thesis advisor chairing the presentation.
 - Suggested format:
 - Introduction by thesis advisor
 - Half hour presentation by student
 - Questioning by committee members followed by questions from others present
 - Committee members meet privately.
 - Committee meets with student.
- The **Thesis Proposal Presentation Report Form** is completed.
- Student submits an **Ethics Application** to University Research Ethics Board,

including the signed Thesis Proposal Presentation Report Form.

- Study in progress. Student works mainly with the thesis advisor, and consults committee members as needed. In consultation with thesis advisor, student submits approved copies to committee members. Reasonable turn-around time, a minimum of two weeks, should be agreed upon by committee members and student. NOTE: It is typical for several drafts of a thesis to be written before it is determined to be ready for final defence. This is a natural part of the thesis process.
- The following must be completed at least two weeks prior to the intended defence date: (a) the completed thesis (final draft, ready for defending) is submitted to the thesis advisor and the committee (in our department, this should be in hard copy rather than electronic copy as suggested in the university policies); (b) an electronic copy sent to the Dean of Graduate Studies and to the Graduate Program Coordinator; (c) an electronic copy sent to the Aging and Family Science office; (d) a Public Thesis Seminar announced through the department distribution list (abstract, date and time of defence); and (e) the **Notification of Thesis Defence Form** is submitted to all appropriate people.
- The Dean or a designate appointed by the Dean will chair the defence.
Suggested format:
 - Student presents summary of research focus, methodology, method, findings and recommendations (30 minutes).
 - Committee members question the student, one at a time, in a “round robin” format starting with the external reviewer. Upon completion of one cycle of questioning by all committee members, the chair of the thesis defence invites committee members, one at a time, to participate in a subsequent round of questions, should they so choose. The Chair of the thesis defence then invites all others present to ask questions.
- The **Thesis Defence Report Form** is completed.
- The student makes any required revisions to their thesis and submits an **Ethics Final Report Form** (this form can be downloaded at the Ethics section of the Research Office webpage) to the Research Office, copied to the thesis advisor.
- Following completion of any revisions and the submission of the ethics report, the thesis (with revisions, if required) is accepted. The thesis advisor completes the **Thesis Release Form**.
- The student submits a pdf version of the thesis to the library and gets at least one hard

copy bound.

Table 1. ESTIMATED THESIS TIME LINE FOR CONVOCATION^a

<i>TIME LINE</i>	<i>SPRING CONVOCATION</i>	<i>FALL CONVOCATION</i>
<i>Committee Received</i>	2 weeks prior	2 weeks prior
<i>Last Date for Oral Defence</i>	March 30	September 9
<i>Final Editing Complete</i>	April 10	September 15
<i>Final Copy sent to Library</i>	last Friday in April	third Friday in September
<i>Graduation</i>	May 17-18	November 5 th

^a Note, the dates for oral defense, final editing, final copy, and graduation are estimates- please check the academic calendar for the exact date, and then work backwards to estimate the other deadlines. Consult with your thesis advisor if you have any questions about these estimated timelines.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Example of Annual Report
(report only on work *in the preceding year*)

1. General Information

- Student name
- Current year of report
- Type of program (MA or MAFS)
- Name of academic or thesis advisor
- Year admitted into the program, Year in program (e.g., 1st, 2nd)

2. Progress on course work

- Courses taken in the previous year, grades in completed courses
- Grades and titles of term papers
- Progress on course requirements
- Incomplete grades

3. Progress on thesis (if applicable)

- Thesis title
- Brief description
- Advisor
- Committee members
- Expected completion date
- Progress to date (in the previous year)

4. Teaching experience

- Teaching experience (teaching assistantships, supervision, etc.)
- Other relevant activities (seminars, lectures, etc.)

5. Research experience

- Research seminar participation- as presenter or attendee (please list the titles, presenters' names, and dates of all department and non-department seminars attended)
- Research assistantships
- Other research activities (ongoing research outside of thesis)
- Research awards (applied for and/or received)
- Publications (provide full references in APA format)
- Conference papers (including invited colloquia- provide full references in APA format)

6. Practical experience

- Practicum experience, internships, etc.

7. Service

- University service committees, relevant community service, etc.

8. Computer literacy progress

- Skills attained, seminars

9. Academic financial support

- Scholarships, fellowships, graduate teaching/research assistantships (amounts received and dates)

10. Additional information

11. Overall assessment of previous year's work and progress to date in the program

- Compare to "Plans for upcoming year" from previous year's report, if applicable.

12. Plans for upcoming year

APPENDIX B

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism refers to presenting someone else's words or ideas, obtained from any source, including the internet, as though they were one's own. Plagiarism is considered to be a major academic offense. MSVU and the Department of Aging and Family Science is committed to promoting academic integrity, which in large part means avoiding plagiarism. To avoid it, students should first and foremost be aware of what constitutes plagiarism. The full MSVU graduate academic calendar, available online, has a detailed section on plagiarism. The MSVU library has a guide on generative AI for MSVU students available here: <https://libguides.msvu.ca/ai/students>. The library also provides resources on how to find, use and cite appropriate references. One-on-one meetings with a librarian are also possible. Students may also consult Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, specifically their page on 'Best Practices to Avoid Plagiarism':

(https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding_plagiarism/best_practices.html). Also of use is OWL website on APA formatting and style, found here: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html.

APPENDIX C
Sample Title Page

Mount Saint Vincent University
Department of Aging and Family Science

Dynamics of an Aging Family

by

Lesley Dale Doe

A Thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Aging and Family Science

October, 2015

Halifax, Nova Scotia

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APPENDIX D
Sample Signature Page

Mount Saint Vincent University
Department of Aging and Family Science

Dynamics of an Aging Family

by

Lesley Dale Doe

Approved:

Tracey White, Ph.D.
Thesis Advisor
Associate Professor of Aging and Family Science

Pat Black, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor of Aging and Family Science

Shawn Green, M.A.
Associate Professor of History

APPENDIX E
Sample Abstract Page

ABSTRACT
Causes and Consequences:
The Histories of Home Care Policies in Three Provinces, 1985 – 2000

Publicly-funded home care programs have received increasing attention from policy-makers in the last decade, not only because they are considered to be cost-effective substitutes to medical care provided in hospitals, but as well because of the ever-increasing numbers of elderly persons who need assistance to live in their homes and so avoid the more costly and less popular alternative of facility-based care.

In this study, the population of interest is the frail elderly. The particular concern is how the evolutionary shifts in publicly-funded home care policies have had impact on them and those who are their caregiver networks. Have there been patterns and directions over the life courses of home care programs? If so, what are the factors that determine those patterns and directions? There are consequences to those who need the service. The research goal is to contribute to the strategic thinking of policy-makers. To that end, the histories of publicly-funded programs in three jurisdictions from 1985 to 2000 are analyzed and compared. Using a neo-institutional framework to structure the comparative analysis, the study identifies that policy shifts are usually incremental. When more than incremental, the shift occurs in time periods defined by influences beyond the boundaries of the home care system, and only then, when certain factors interact. Those four factors are (1) the commitment by a cadre of influential and competent government actors within

the jurisdiction (2) to a larger agenda of change, (3) of which home care programming is one aspect, and (4) while ensuring that the policy changes satisfy groups who are influential in health care policy design. In Canada, these influential groups have been government (provincial and Federal), physician groups and hospitals administrators.

Using the analytic framework for explanation, it is forecasted that a national home care strategy will not be implemented based on the Health Accord of 2003, because it does not meet the conditions necessary for more than incremental change to occur. Most specifically, it does not meet the interests of some First Ministers. Optional strategies are introduced, again using the framework to forecast the consequences of one that initiates without acknowledgement of long term social support services, as well as a strategy that does. Finally, anticipated shifts in three arenas relevant to home care policy are introduced - the foundation for social policy creation, the accommodationist relationship between governments and physician groups, and the ways which policy is constructed - and the impact of these shifts on the findings.

Despite the incrementalist approach to policy development uncovered in this research, it is difficult not to advocate for a shift in focus towards a more social model of care for Canada's elderly with assurance that some resources are dedicated to the care of the frail elderly in their homes. The alternative puts at risk the values of collective responsibility and protection of society's marginalized, devalues the social aspects of the meaning of health, and leaves caregivers vulnerable to the continuity of insufficient acknowledgement, support and compensation.

APPENDIX F

General Directory

Admissions Office.....	902-457-6117
Art Gallery.....	902-457-6160
Assisi Front Desk.....	902-457-6412
Athletics/Rec (general info).....	902-457-6420
Audio Visual.....	902-457-6538
Bookstore.....	902-457-6157
Campus Ministry.....	902-457-6446
Career Placement Centre.....	902-457-6567
Counseling.....	902-457-6567
Curriculum Resource Centre.....	902-457-6426
Dean's Office/Graduate Studies.....	902-457-6400
DLCE (Distance Education).....	902-457-6437
EMERGENCIES.....	902-457-6111
Fax number for AGFS	902-457-6134
Financial Aid.....	902-457-6356
Financial Services.....	902-457-6277
Health Office.....	902-457-6354
Health and Dental Plan Manager.....	902-457-6532
Housing.....	902-457-6356
Information & Technology Services Help Desk.....	902-457-6538
Institute for the Study of Women.....	902-457-6568
International Student Advising.....	902-457-6488
Library.....	902-457-6250
Nova Scotia Centre on Aging.....	902-457-6546
Parking- general information.....	902-457-6286
Registrar Office – general info.....	902-457-6117
Security – general info.....	902-457-6111
Student Affairs.....	902-457-6359
Switchboard.....	902-457-6788
Dr. Margaret Campbell.....	902-457-6170
Dr. Janice Keefe.....	902-457-6466
Dr. Deborah Norris.....	902-457-6376
Dr. Zachary Zimmer.....	902-457-5541
AGFS Administrative Assistant.....	902-457-6321
Maritime Data Centre.....	902-457-6780/1/2/3