



University
of Manitoba

FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

Strategic and Reconciliation Plan 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Over the past year, the Strategic Planning Committee for the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS), known as the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (FGPS) as of June 2025, has been engaged in a series of community consultations with graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty and staff members. Questions for consideration were developed by the committee, which was comprised of a representative from every Faculty at the UM engaged in graduate level programming, and were shared with the community through an online survey and a series of focus groups over the fall term. Various committees were also consulted, including the FGS Executive Committee and the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility working group.

I would like to thank everyone who attended an in-person consultation or provided their thoughts online; your input into the process is greatly appreciated and is a valuable contribution to the planning process. It is important to note that FGPS has several important stakeholders that are part of our work: we have the staff within FGPS who work with units, students and stakeholders across the UM and we have all the graduate program staff, faculty, graduate chairs, department heads and Deans who facilitate graduate education in their local context. All will be key stakeholders as we move forward.

Several key documents were used as resources to ensure that the FGPS strategic plan is aligned with other UM plans. These include **MomentUM: Leading Change Together**, **Time for Action: UM's Truth and Reconciliation Framework** and **Change Through Research:UM Strategic Research Plan**. We also are cognizant of the work done by the President's Task Force on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility, the Anti-Racism Task Force and the Task Force on Mental Health and Well-Being.

To facilitate this alignment, we have adopted the vision and mission of **MomentUM** and revised it for graduate education and postdoctoral fellows. We have embraced the values of **MomentUM** and have added other values that are relevant to our stakeholders. We have adopted the three commitments, reflected on their role in graduate education and the development and mentoring of postdoctoral fellows, and carefully considered the strategic themes. As a reminder, below are the UM's commitments and themes:

Commitments

- Fostering a vibrant community
- Advancing Reconciliation for transformative change
- Building a sustainable future

Strategic themes

- Creating knowledge that matters
- Empowering learners
- Reimagining engagement

As we move into the next phase, key indicators to support the strategic and reconciliation plan will be identified for implementation in monitoring progress towards our goals. Through these shared efforts, I look forward to the next years of success in the graduate student and postdoctoral fellow community.

Kelley Main





Vision

The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will promote a vibrant and thriving community of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty members and graduate support staff whose research, programs and professional practices will lead change for a better Manitoba and world.

Mission

We strive to provide leadership and service in graduate education and professional development for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty members and graduate support staff by enhancing the skills and knowledge needed to excel in their fields and contribute meaningfully to the cultural, social, and economic well-being and health of Manitoba, Canada, and the world.

Values

The UM core values are Belonging, Curiosity, Impact, Integrity, and Well-being. The Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies also strives to ensure that graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and units offering graduate programs are rooted in meaningful mentorship opportunities that are adaptable to the changing needs of our society.

We also value:

Adaptability

We will aid graduate units to review their pathways and programs to ensure they provide the critical skills graduates will require in their careers. We will work with partners to ensure graduate students and postdoctoral fellows have opportunities to continually excel in their chosen fields as the world changes around them.

Mentorship

FGPS will work to build a culture of strong mentorship for all graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and members of the UM community that intersect with them, that facilitates mutual respect, understanding and the ability to work towards a set of shared outcomes.

Excellence

FGPS will continue to uphold academic standards, through ensuring consistencies across units, understanding of regulations, adherence to protocol and procedures. UM graduate degrees will be a true reflection of the highest standards of excellence.





HOW WE GET THERE: LEADING CHANGE TOGETHER

FOSTERING A VIBRANT COMMUNITY



UM has a vital community of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows who are emerging scholars in their field.

A thriving community of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows will be one that is driven by a collective goal of coming together. Events such as 3MT, MT180 and 3MP are some of the ways to energize our UM community and showcase graduate students and postdoctoral fellows across all stages of their time at UM. We will find new ways to connect these scholars.

It is imperative that we find ways to build a community of scholars through shared storytelling and opportunities to connect as programs, faculty mentors, students and postdoctoral fellows. Sharing successes, telling stories about interesting research questions or unique opportunities that graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are engaged in will broaden the impact of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. We want past, present and future scholars to be connected to their UM community both within and across disciplinary fields. Story telling is one way to help achieve that.

ADVANCING RECONCILIATION FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

“Our final sacred law, Nibwaakaawin “wisdom”, “intelligence”, is a culmination of all the laws. A life led with truth, honesty, humility, respect, love and courage is a life led wisely. Wise decisions create a good life. Our wise decisions benefit people seven generations from now.” (Kaagegaabaw, 2023 p. 74).

References

Kaagegaabaw, James Yukelich, The Seven Generations and the Seven Grandfather Teachings (2023).





Graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and all members of the UM community can take action to move forward to establish and maintain mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. Critical to this commitment are awareness, access, education and opportunities.

The **UM Time for Action** plan articulates the four overarching commitments that the university has made to reconciliation.

They are:

Integrate
Indigenous
Knowledges
and Ways of
Being

Create a
Sense of
Belonging

Empower
Learning

Decolonize
and
Indigenize
Spaces and
Places



FGPS will support these commitments with the following reconciliation action plan that is designed to help us on the path to wisdom in graduate education and postdoctoral scholarship.

Integrate Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Being

We will facilitate and integrate Indigenous Knowledges into graduate and postdoctoral education.

The following goals and actions guide this work:

Graduate Programs and governance will advance Indigenous Knowledges, representation and collaboration.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Continue to ensure our policies facilitate the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Being. One example of this to date is the ability of Knowledge Experts, which includes Knowledge Keepers and Elders, to serve as voting members on the thesis committees of graduate students.
- Ensure that decision-making bodies include Indigenous representation and give voice to Indigenous Knowledges and Ways of Being.
- Consult and work collaboratively with the Office of the Vice President Indigenous (OVPI). One example is the creation of an Indigenous Awards committee made up of Indigenous scholars, which was done in consultation with the OVPI.



Create a Sense of Belonging

Future Indigenous students and postdoctoral fellows will know that their curiosity and interests can lead to success at the graduate level and beyond, and that there is a community of scholars ready to encourage and support them.

The following goals and actions guide this work:

Indigenous students and postdoctoral fellows thrive and find a sense of belonging at UM.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Work with all academic units that have graduate programs, the **Indigenous Graduate Student Success Coordinator** housed in **Migizii Agamik** and the **Graduate and Postdoctoral Society** to create a welcoming environment for future students and postdoctoral fellows.
- Identify and share best practices to better support Indigenous graduate students and will create and support opportunities for Indigenous graduate students to come together for professional development or community connections.
- Work towards creating space of mutual respect and showing future and current graduate students and postdoctoral fellows that we are committed to creating conditions for all to be their authentic selves.
- Consult with Indigenous graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to learn more about their lived experience and how the university can better support their success.
- Showcase the work of past and present Indigenous graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to show new Indigenous students the UM is a place where they can flourish.
- Support the initiatives of units who wish to explore graduate programming with Indigenous communities or organizations and help guide units through the governance approval process. Collaborations such as the Anisinew M.Ed. in Inclusion and Reconciliation cohort is one example (news.umanitoba.ca/anisinew-m-ed-in-inclusion-and-reconciliation) that may inspire others to consider the benefits of a cohort model developed with community.



Statue of Louis Riel outside of Migizii Agamik

The journeys of 2024 Vanier Scholar **Pahan PteSanWin** and her Indigenous rematriation and reparations research (news.umanitoba.ca/change-through-rematriation), **Dr. Wanda Phillips-Beck** as a UM Distinguished Dissertation Award 2022 winner (news.umanitoba.ca/delivering-truth-in-the-name-of-reconciliation, www.youtube.com/watch?v=81CuqnJjEg8) and 2022 Vanier Scholar **Gabrielle Fontaine** (news.umanitoba.ca/inventing-new-access-to-cancer-screening) are all examples that showcase Indigenous graduate students leading the way.



Empower Learning

Time for Action identified two key themes that are important to consider in the context of graduate education:

- Initiating a review of curriculum, programs, training and content for opportunities to integrate Indigenous knowledges.
- Identifying ways to support Indigenous language teaching and learning.



Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge, Fort Garry Campus

The following goals and actions guide this work:

Graduate programming integrates Indigenous Knowledges into curricula, research, and academic practices, and respects Indigenous worldviews and methodologies.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Share admission and curriculum changes implemented by graduate programs to address inequities to inspire other units who desire to make changes to further reconciliation.
- Highlight the Working in Good Ways framework (umanitoba.ca/community-engaged-learning/working-in-good-ways) developed by Community Engaged Learning and the Researching in Good Ways framework being developed by the Offices of the Vice-President (Indigenous) and the Vice-President (Research and International) as a strategy to support faculty, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and others who are engaged, or plan to engage, in research with Indigenous and other marginalized communities.
- Further support the importance of Indigenous languages. As one example, FGPS provides the opportunity for Indigenous students to incorporate Indigenous languages into their thesis work. This facilitates the honouring of traditional knowledge in the original language.
- Advocate for increased funding for Indigenous students to ensure that financial resources are not a barrier to graduate education. As well, we will work with the **Office of the Vice-President Indigenous** to identify specific opportunities for funding that can alleviate a particular barrier. One example of this is the **Indigenous Summer Scholarship** which was designed in consultation with the OVPI and is available for eligible Indigenous graduate students. This can be used, for instance, to help address gaps that occur in band funding over the summer term.
- Meet regularly with the **Indigenous Graduate Student Success Coordinator** to pro-actively support Indigenous graduate students and communicate and collaborate to support Indigenous students from the time of application until convocation.



Decolonize and Indigenize Spaces and Places

MSpace is the University of Manitoba's virtual repository for scholarly works and a required step for graduate students to deposit a thesis as part of the final steps towards graduation.

The following goals and actions will guide this work:

Graduate programs will enable the use of Indigenous names and naming practices.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Facilitate the ability of Indigenous students to submit their thesis under their chosen or spirit name, if they so choose, regardless of how they are legally identified. This is an important step considering the erasure that has happened with Indigenous names and is consistent with the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Act #17** which appeals to all levels of government “to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system.”

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

UM's graduate students and postdoctoral fellows will be the future generation whose commitment to their educational and career trajectories helps to ensure a sustainable future for Manitoba, Canada and the world.

The FGPS Office will strive to reduce waste and use reusable items. As one example, the 75th anniversary celebration provided reusable lunch bags for those participating in our showcase and other campus partners. FGPS staff will continue to be part of green event attendance such as one staff meeting that toured the UM Greenhouse.



WHERE WE WANT TO BE

CREATING KNOWLEDGE THAT MATTERS FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION AND POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW DEVELOPMENT

Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are at the forefront of knowledge creation at UM. FGPS will work with units to elevate graduate and postdoctoral training through increased access, improved financial resources, and enhanced opportunities.

The following goals and actions guide this work:

Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows will be immersed in an equitable, inclusive and adaptable graduate and postdoctoral education environment.



To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Help units to create pathways into graduate education by providing information on best practices in fair graduate admissions processes that support diverse life experiences.
- Facilitate a review of program development to ensure programs can meet the needs of a diverse student body.
- Work with units to ensure awareness of best practices in curriculum review and and facilitate the visioning process to invigorate graduate programming that supports change and adaptability. Support units in their efforts to incorporate Indigenous Knowledges and understanding into programs/experiences.

Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows will have financial well-being and stability and access to fair, transparent and sustainable funding.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Review graduate student funding and postdoctoral fellow salary minimums every three years to adjust for increasing costs of living.
- Work to ensure funding commitments are transparent for students and postdoctoral fellows.
- Advocate for increased financial resources for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

Learning, skill-building and community-building opportunities are available to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows through strengthened professional development offerings and meaningful interdisciplinary connections.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Complete a review of professional development offerings for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows and make recommendations for change.
- Enhance opportunities for building connections between units by providing and supporting interdisciplinary programming in graduate studies, hosting interdisciplinary events, working closely with the university offices associated with our graduate students and postdoctoral fellows such as the Offices of the Vice President Indigenous, Vice President of Research and International, and External Relations.





- Create opportunities for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to better understand and articulate how the skills and knowledge they have gained align with diverse career needs to foster their entry into the workforce.

EMPOWERING LEARNERS

FGPS will work with units in their creation of programs and environments that encourage all graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to fully explore, create and conduct research.

The following goals and actions guide this work:

Graduate and postdoctoral education embodies lifelong learning, supported by academic programming and pathways for graduate education.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Work towards expanding opportunities for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to identify and develop the skills and competencies that they need to succeed in a changing world.
- Support units in incorporating opportunities for experiential learning within graduate programs and share information with units on best practices on how to incorporate experiential learning into programs. Such opportunities may be found beyond courses and the specific academic requirements of a program.
- Encourage units to consider how micro-diplomas and diplomas may create new pathways for students to engage in graduate education.

Faculty mentors and graduate support staff have the skills and professional development opportunities needed to be effective mentors.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Work towards offering professional development for faculty and staff that is adaptable, aligns with diverse career paths and assists in the development of cultural competencies to support students and postdoctoral fellows.
- Ensure staff have access to the necessary training to support their work in furthering graduate education through opportunities for training in best practices.





Faculties and graduate student and postdoctoral fellow associations work together to respond to emerging issues and share information effectively.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Ensure graduate students and postdoctoral fellows have representation on committees that focus on their experiences at UM.
- Review structures and supports for graduate student and postdoctoral fellow mentorship.

REIMAGINING ENGAGEMENT

The University of Manitoba has many strong connections to communities locally, nationally and internationally and creates authentic, respectful and reciprocal relationships to exchange knowledge and pursue innovative solutions together. FGPS will ensure an open, transparent and engaged approach to graduate education and support of postdoctoral fellows.

The following goals and actions guide this work:

The community is aware of the knowledge creation and innovation that graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are engaged in throughout their academic journey.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Engage actively with the wider community through storytelling.
- Develop and support initiatives that foster an awareness of work produced by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

Staff are engaged, well-supported, and equipped to contribute to an inclusive and outstanding graduate education environment.

To achieve this, FGPS will:

- Ensure staff have the opportunity to participate in campus events.
- Provide staff training support that advances goals for excellence in graduate education.
- Promote respectful dialogue among all members of the community.

