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**Graduate Success Guide:  
Master of Science  
Life Sciences**

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**Disclaimer:**SKC does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual identification, gender, age, or disability, except as allowed by the Indian preference provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Consistent with state and federal law, reasonable accommodation will be provided to persons with disabilities. The SKC Director of Human resources is responsible for coordinating the College's compliance with federal and state discrimination and sexual harassment laws, including Title II, Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies:

Director, Human Resources  
58138 US Highway 93, Pablo, MT 59855  
(406) 275-4977

This Graduate Success Guide is not a legally binding contract between students and Salish Kootenai College. The Guide is a source of information on the many services, activities, and policies of the College. Every effort has been made to provide current and accurate information in this publication; however, SKC Administration reserves the right to alter, amend, or abolish its policies, procedures, and guidelines at any time.

**Welcome to the Master of Science in Life Sciences Program for 2025-2026. Salish Kootenai College administration, faculty, and staff are committed to your success and to helping you get the most out of your graduate experience. In addition to supporting your academic and research goals, we aim to foster a culture that encourages exploration of new ideas, perspectives, and approaches including integration of traditional ecological knowledge and western science. Whether you are a new or continuing student, we welcome you to this academic year.**

**This success guide contains essential information for all graduate students in the program. If you are new to the program, this guide provides critical information as you start. If you are a continuing student, this guide may contain additional or revised information. All students are responsible for understanding and following the information and procedures contained in this document.**

**In addition to this student guide, the SKC Catalog provides many student policies and procedures. These include the Student Code of Conduct, procedures for academic misconduct and plagiarism, and procedures for grade appeals and grievance. Some of these procedures are also included in this handbook below. The SKC catalog is online at:**

**<https://skc.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2025-2026/2025-2026-catalog/>**

## **MS LS Program Contact Information**

### **Assistant to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for Graduate Studies**

Katrina Holmes  
Quequesah Building, Rm 109  
1.406.275.4023; [katrina\\_holmes@skc.edu](mailto:katrina_holmes@skc.edu)

### **Director, Master of Science in Life Sciences**

Dr. Christina L. Rush  
Beaverhead Building, PQLAW 205  
1.406.275.4894; [christina\\_rush@skc.edu](mailto:christina_rush@skc.edu)

### **Faculty, Master of Science in Life Sciences**

Dr. Clay E.S. Comstock  
Beaverhead Building, PQLAW 204  
1.406.275.4945; [clay\\_comstock@skc.edu](mailto:clay_comstock@skc.edu)

### **Faculty, Master of Science in Life Sciences**

Dr. Nathanael Herrera  
Beaverhead Building, PQLAW 204  
Beaverhead Building, PQLAW 204  
[nathanael\\_herrera@skc.edu](mailto:nathanael_herrera@skc.edu)

## Strategies for Success

There are some key ingredients to successfully completing your Master's Degree. These include effective time management, good communication, and planning. Here are some strategies that will help you attain your degree:

1. Develop healthy professional relationships with your major professor, committee members, and colleagues. Communicate clearly and openly as often as possible. Be proactive in asking questions, and in expressing your needs and any concerns that arise.
2. Develop attainable goals and discuss them regularly with your mentor. Track your progress toward these goals and adjust them when necessary. Meet regularly with your mentor – *at least once per week*.
3. Be deliberate about your work-life balance. Focus on work during your designated work hours and make time for breaks and mental health activities as needed. Sleep is an essential and often undervalued resource that supports creativity, productivity, and mental wellness.
4. Engage fully in the program and treat it as your work. Your thesis research is your job for these three years, so plan accordingly.
5. Stay engaged in your courses, completing coursework according to the schedule. Keeping up with coursework is critical to making progress in the program. If you are having difficulties in a class, set up a time for a meeting with the instructor. All faculty members are ready to support you, but not all timelines and requirements can be modified.
6. Take responsibility for staying on track with your degree. It is your responsibility, in collaboration with your major professor, to monitor your progress in completing the three main components of your degree: coursework, thesis, and paperwork.
7. Be familiar with policies, procedures, timelines, and other components of the college and the MS LS Program. These components are provided in this handbook, in the SKC online catalog, and are available from your mentor.

## GETTING STARTED

New students in the MS LS Program should complete the following:

- Sign up for Rave Alert—this is SKC’s emergency notification system. This will keep you informed of any emergencies on campus, as well as non-emergencies such as canceled classes, etc. Rave Alert link:  
<https://www.getrave.com/login/skc>
- Add SKC Security to your contact list—just in case!  
1.406.275.4751; 1.406.239.6267; 211 from On-Campus Landline
- Become acquainted with the campus.  
SKC map link: <https://www.skc.edu/skc-campus-map/>
- Be in touch with your Program Director to ensure timely registration for classes.
- Complete your annual “Alcohol Education & Sexual Assault Prevention” training modules online. The link for these will be sent directly to your Student Email with instructions.  
\*These training modules are a *requirement* as a Graduate student
- Consider applying for graduate STEM fellowships in addition to your yearly stipend. Your mentor can provide links and aid to apply for these fellowships which can last for a year or up to the entire time you are in the master’s program.  
\*NOTE: The Pell Grant cannot be used toward graduate degrees.

## Electronic Accounts

The graduate program will guide students on how to gain access to their personal SKC student email, JICS account (a Resource Planning system), Brightspace (an online Learning Platform), and Papercut (a Managed Print System).

### Student Email Accounts

To request an SKC Student Email complete the following form: [SKC Student Email](#)

How to access your SKC student email account:

1. Go to: <https://www.skc.edu/>
2. Locate: "MySKC" dropdown menu
3. Select: "MySKC Student"
4. Select: "Email" button
5. You will then enter your login and password information.  
Once your student email is set up and verified, you will receive instructions and log-in information for JICS, Brightspace, and Papercut.

### JICS Account (Jenzabar Internet Campus Solution)

JICS student accounts provide access to see academic, advising, and student accounts, i.e. current class schedule, academic history, quarterly grade report, financial aid, account balances & account payments, announcement, course history, online registration, degree progress, and unofficial transcripts.

How to access your JICS account:

1. Go to: <https://www.skc.edu/>
2. Locate: "MySKC" dropdown menu
3. Select: "MySKC Student"
4. Select: "JICS" button
5. You will then enter your login and password information.

### Brightspace

Brightspace is an online learning platform utilized by SKC Faculty to upload course materials.

There are two ways in which you can log into your Brightspace account:

The first way to log in to your Brightspace account:

1. Go to: <https://www.skc.edu/>
2. Locate: "MySKC" dropdown menu

3. Select: "MySKC Student"
4. Select: "Brightspace" button
5. You will then enter your login and password information.

The second way to log in to your Brightspace account:

1. Go to: <https://brightspace.skc.edu/>
2. Click: "Login with your Student Account"
  - Directions on how to get to your Brightspace account via mobile app.
3. Go to your app store and search "Pulse" then download the app
4. Login with the same information you would use on your desktop.

### **Papercut**

"Papercut" is a print management system software that is designed to minimize paper waste and allow for a secure printing experience. In order to print from a school computer, you will need a "Papercut print account." Printing accounts for the Life Science masters program has a grant code. Please discuss with your mentor to have access to printing.

How to access your Papercut account:

1. Go to: <https://www.skc.edu/>
2. Locate: "MySKC" dropdown menu
3. Select: "MySKC Student"
4. Select: "Papercut" button
5. You will then enter your login and password information.

### **Student ID**

A "Student ID" is required for multiple purposes—including access to your Papercut account—as well as to access the Joe McDonald Health & Fitness facilities.

To obtain your Student ID:

1. Follow the link to the SKC Help Desk Page: <https://helpdesk.skc.edu/new> (you will need to ensure that you are logged in to your SKC Student Account)
2. Within the "Category" dropdown, select "Digital Account Support"
3. Within the "Subject Line," input something to the effect of "New Student ID"
4. Upload a JPEG of the picture you wish to have displayed on ID card
5. Fill out Contact information
6. Submit your request ("Create Ticket" tab)
7. Go pick up your new Student ID at the A. Mathias building (be sure to bring a photo ID with you).



**Academic Calendar, 2025-2026**

| <b>Fall (2025-10)</b>                              |               |
|--|---------------|
| Classes Begin                                      | September 15  |
| Last Day to Change Registration (Drop/Add Classes) | September 19  |
| Indigenous People's Day                            | October 13    |
| Midterm  | October 13-17 |
| Last Day to Withdraw from Classes                  | October 31    |
| Veteran's Day Holiday                              | November 11   |
| Last Day of Classes                                | November 21   |

| <b>Winter (2025-20)</b>                            |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| Winter Break                                       | November 21-January 5 |
| Last Day to Register for Classes                   | January 2             |
| Classes Begin                                      | January 6             |
| Last Day to Change Registration                    | January 9             |
| MLK Jr. Holiday                                    | January 19            |
| Midterm  | February 2-6          |
| Last Day to Withdraw from Classes                  | February 20           |
| Last Day of Classes                                | March 13              |
| Spring Break                                       | March 16-27           |
| <b>Spring (2025-30)</b>                            |                       |
| Last Day to Register for Classes                   | March 27              |
| Classes Begin                                      | March 30              |
| Last Day to Change Registration (Drop/Add Classes) | April 3               |
| Midterm  | April 27-May 1        |
| Graduation Pow-Wow                                 | May 15-16             |
| Last Day to Withdraw from Classes                  | May 15                |
| Community Service Day (Campus Closed)              | May 15                |
| Memorial Day Holiday (Campus Closed)               | May 25                |
| Last of Classes                                    | June 5                |
| Graduation Day                                     | June 6                |

## Registration & Advising

All students in the MS LS Program are assigned a mentor. Your mentor will work closely with you to ensure that you properly register for classes, accomplish the sequence of steps to complete your thesis, and meet your career and academic goals for graduate school. Effective professional communication with your mentor is important. It is your responsibility to contact your mentor each academic quarter prior to being granted access to registration. You will meet more frequently (at least once per week) for thesis work, beginning at the start of the program.

Students should contact their academic mentor in the following situations:

- Prior to withdrawing from any course or withdrawing from the college, as there may be consequences for the students' plan of study.
- Questions or concerns about Graduate policies, procedures, and deadlines.
- Once a week (at minimum) for thesis work

**Important:** *SKC places full responsibility upon the student for registering for the proper courses and fulfilling all requirements for a degree as set forth in the catalog. While academic advisors provide advice and guidance, students are ultimately responsible for their own academic progress, which includes following the curriculum plan as outlined in the SKC Catalog. Students who do not follow the curriculum plan may not be able to complete their degree program in the expected length of time and may need more time to complete requirements for graduation.*

### Registration Process

Graduate students will be granted access to register for upcoming classes via their JICS account.

1. Log onto JICS
2. Choose the Student Resource tab
3. Choose Online Registration
4. Choose Add Drop Course
5. Choose the correct term: fall is 10, winter is 20, spring is 30 & summer is 40.
6. In the Add by Course Code section, start typing the course letters. A course list will pop up. If you need to know the course code, choose Course Search to look up a class or view the class schedule on the [www.skc.edu](http://www.skc.edu) website.
7. Once you are finished choosing a class, click Add Courses.

## **MS LS CURRICULUM AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The Master of Science in Life Sciences consists of a minimum of 90 quarter credits as follows:

Core Curriculum: 49 credits

Thesis Research Credits: 41-87 credits

The Master of Life Sciences degree is a three-year, research-intensive degree for students interested in developing research skills with a basis in cellular chemistry, biochemistry and genetics. During the three-year degree path, students will advance the knowledge base of Life Sciences through advanced core classes, learn novel techniques to apply in the lab with state-of-the-art equipment and computational programs, and participate in academic teaching. Students will explore Indigenous research methodologies and the unique perspectives and policies for research in reservation communities.

Upon graduation, Master of Life Sciences students will have completed a research publication in a peer-reviewed journal and a thesis document for publication in the Salish Kootenai College Library. Graduates of the master's program will have skills translatable for Life Sciences positions in STEM academia, the science industry and a culturally relevant science background for research positions on the reservation. Graduates will also be equipped to complete competitive Ph.D. programs at the university level.

### **Core Curriculum**

The core curriculum consists of twelve courses deemed as essential in pursuing a master's degree in Life Sciences. These courses provide a foundation for graduate study and attainment of the program's learning outcomes.

Thesis Research for the Master of Science in Life Sciences program:

At least 41 credits of master's thesis research are required. Research projects will be developed in tandem with the SKC mentor and appropriate collaborating scientists including external committee members.

Students may transfer to SKC up to 15 quarter-credits of selected University graduate courses upon consultation with the student's mentor and the graduate program director. Transfer courses must meet SKC's requirements including credits awarded from an accredited institution, with at least a "B" grade. Acceptability of transfer courses is determined by the MS LS Program Director.

## Seminar and Advanced Topics

Seminar and Advanced Topics courses provide students with the opportunity to gain advanced knowledge of current ideas, and perspectives in a variety of topics related to natural resource management. These courses are interactive, include student discussion and presentations, and may include guest speakers. Seminar and Advanced Topics may apply toward the required elective credits.

## Thesis Credits

Students enroll in thesis credits while developing, conducting, and reporting their research. A minimum of 41 thesis credits is required.

## Graduate Program Grading System

Students enrolled in the MS LS Program are required to maintain a *minimum* GPA of 3.0.

Grades are given based on student achievement of course requirements as listed in each course syllabus. All graduate courses must be passed with a minimum grade of “B”. There is no plus/minus grading.

| Grade | Grade Interpretation | Points/Credits |
|-------|----------------------|----------------|
| A     | Above Average        | 4              |
| B     | Average              | 3              |
| C     | Failure              | 2              |
| F     | Failure              | 0              |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

| Pass/Fail Grades |                               | Points/Credits |
|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>P</b>         | <b>Pass</b>                   | <b>0</b>       |
| <b>I</b>         | <b>Incomplete</b>             | <b>0</b>       |
| <b>W</b>         | <b>Withdrawal from Course</b> | <b>0</b>       |
| <b>F</b>         | <b>Failure</b>                | <b>0</b>       |

### Incomplete Grades

An incomplete grade may be given to a student only if the following conditions exist:

1. The student has attended more than 3/4 of the regularly scheduled class sessions and has a grade of B or higher.

\*If these conditions are not present, the student will be given the appropriate earned grade. If an instructor does assign an incomplete grade, the instructor must submit an Incomplete Grade Form to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and give a copy to the student specifying what requirements need to be completed and the time frame for completion.

## **SKC and MS LS Policies & Procedures**

The following student policies, procedures, and guidelines are provided in the SKC Catalog. When students register for classes at the College, they agree to abide by the stated student policies and the Code of Conduct.

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
|  |                                     |
| Student Rights and Responsibilities        | <a href="#">Code of Conduct</a>     |
| Academic Misconduct                        | <a href="#">Academic Misconduct</a> |
| Plagiarism Guidelines and Procedures       | <a href="#">Plagiarism</a>          |
| Grade Appeal Procedure                     | <a href="#">Grade Appeal</a>        |
| Complaints and Grievance Procedure         | <a href="#">Grievance Procedure</a> |
| Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act | <a href="#">FERPA</a>               |

### **Additional Information about Plagiarism and Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Absolute integrity is expected of every Salish Kootenai College Graduate student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values. At SKC, values include honesty, fairness, and respect. Students and faculty of SKC assume the responsibility of maintaining and furthering these values.

Individuals enrolled in SKC's Graduate programs are members of a profession and students in an academic program. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations but in all college relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of college resources, participation in internships or other learning opportunities, and research.

Violations of academic integrity may result in disciplinary procedures as outlined in the SKC Catalog. SKC graduate students have access to complaint and grievance procedures as provided in the SKC Catalog. If fellow students, staff, or faculty suspect a violation of academic integrity, the violation should be reported to the Program Director. Plagiarism is defined as presenting the work of others, whether it be direct quotes, phrases, ideas, or a body of work, such as visual or audio media, as one's own work, without proper acknowledgement of the original source. This includes presenting one's own previous work, whether submitted for academic purposes or other informal or formal publication, without proper citation. This also includes submitting work from generative AI as one's own work.

The SKC Plagiarism Policy defines levels of plagiarism, possible consequences, and procedures used by the College in cases of alleged plagiarism. It is each student's responsibility to be aware of all rules and policies related to plagiarism, academic integrity, and the use of artificial intelligence (AI).

### **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Large language model generative artificial intelligence (generative AI) tools, such as ChatGPT and others, have become available for wide use. While generative AI tools can offer inspiration and new possibilities, they should not be seen as unacknowledged substitutes for original student work. Any use of generative AI tools in place of original work, particularly if not cited, will be considered plagiarism. References for citing AI tools, such as ChatGPT may be found online, such as the University of Michigan site, ChatGPT and other AI tools. Every course instructor may have individual statements for use of AI in their course(s) in the course syllabus. It is important to locate and read these statements to understand considerations for use of AI in each class.

Students are reminded that anything uploaded to an AI tool such as ChatGPT is entered in the public domain. That means that anything uploaded for revision or editing in ChatGPT or such tools is available to the public. Students must be cautious about uploading material, and in particular must not upload any material that could be

construed as cultural intellectual property of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes or other federally recognized tribes.

### **Additional Policies of the MS in Life Sciences**

#### **Admission**

Procedures for admission to the MS LS Program are:

Interested applicants must complete Part 1 and Part 2 listed below:

#### *Part 1-General SKC Graduate Admissions materials*

1. SKC Graduate Admissions Application;
2. Official transcript from high school or GED or HiSET (must include diploma date);
3. Official transcript(s) from all colleges and universities attended (including degree and award date as appropriate);
4. Proof of Immunization.
5. Verification of Residency, if a Montana Resident
6. Tribal Certification Release form. This is required for tribal enrolled, and first- or second-generation descendants of a federally recognized tribe.

#### *Part 2-Master of Science in Life Sciences Admissions materials*

1. Two-page typewritten statement of the applicant's preparation for graduate studies to include: A personal statement, identified mentor for research, research in as much detail as possible referencing talking points from selected mentor, career or Ph.D. goals after graduation and a wider impact statement for how your research and goals will impact the CSKT and wider scientific communities.
2. Three letters of recommendation from people who are in a position to make relevant comments on the applicants' intent and potential for success in the M.S. program. Only one of the letters may come from an SKC employee. Ideal recommendations will come from faculty and mentors from previous research experience both at and outside of SKC.
3. Resume/Curriculum Vitae. This should include any and all past work, academic experience, research experience, publications, poster and oral presentations at scientific conferences.
4. Formal interview with the Department of Master of Science in Life Sciences Graduate Committee.

After receipt of a complete application including all of the items listed in Part 1 and Part 2, the selection committee will review the materials for the following criteria.

- A cumulative undergraduate grade point average of at least 3.0 ("B") in all courses used for credit in the major.
- Completion of a Bachelor of Sciences degree in Life Sciences-related fields (e.g., life sciences, microbiology, molecular biology, etc. with key courses to include physics, organic chemistry, upper-level genetics, upper-level biochemistry and some minimum coursework in cellular and molecular biology).

- 3.0 GPA in key courses (physics, organic chemistry, upper-level genetics, upper-level biochemistry and minimum cellular and molecular biology coursework). Students lacking some of these courses, or with lower than a 3.0 GPA in key coursework may be admitted to the program but must make up for the deficiency in their first year. Students will not be permitted to enroll in graduate-level classes without the appropriate prerequisite course. Graduate-level courses may have additional individual prerequisites.
- Professionalism and quality of writing in submitted materials
- Level of research experience
- Level of professional experience in research presentations (oral and/or poster)
- Quality of the letters of recommendation

|   |                   |   |               |
|---|-------------------|---|---------------|
| Other University 4-year Molecular Biology Degrees   | SKC Life Sciences | SKC Wildlife & Fisheries  | SKC Hydrology |
| <b><u>Bachelor's of Sciences Degree</u></b>   |                   |   |               |
| <b><u>Provisional Acceptance</u></b><br>Must complete some key courses to include: Physics, Organic Chemistry, 3 semester (5 quarter) credits of Molecular Biology within One Year.           |                   | <b><u>Direct Candidacy</u></b><br>Accepted into graduate coursework. Must mutually select mentor for research credits and thesis development within One Year.                         |               |
| <b><u>Year Two</u></b><br>Full engagement in graduate coursework. Mutually select mentor. Some progress on research credits for graduation thesis. Minimum 3.0 GPA on all courses.            |                   | <b><u>Year Two</u></b><br>Complete all outstanding graduate coursework with a minimum 3.0 GPA and significant progress on research credits for graduation thesis.                     |               |
| <b><u>Year Three</u></b><br>Graduate coursework complete with a 3.0 minimum. Significant progress on research credits for graduation thesis. Significant progress on Graduation requirements. |                   | <b><u>Year Three</u></b><br>Graduation requirements to include: One peer-reviewed publication in-press, Research thesis and dissertation defense date accepted by graduate committee. |               |
| <b><u>Extension Period</u></b><br>Within a <u>Maximum Six-Month Academic Period</u> All Graduation Requirements are Finalized and Accepted.   |                   |   |               |



## Graduation Requirements

Completion of a master's degree in Life Sciences will include the following minimum requirements:

- A final overall GPA of 3.0
- Successful completion of 49 quarter credits in graduate coursework
- Successful completion of 41 quarter credits in thesis research
- One publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal
- Graduate Teaching Assistant experience for 3 quarter credits
- Successful defense of a graduate thesis to the assigned graduate committee
- Acceptance of written graduate thesis with edits within no more than 6 months past the graduation date

Graduates of the Life Sciences master's degree program must meet significant, measurable aims.

### (1) GPA

Students are required to maintain a 3.0 GPA average throughout their coursework. In the event that a student falls below the required GPA minimum, they will be placed on academic probation and their graduate committee members will be notified. Students will have one quarter to re-establish a 3.0 minimum GPA or will be required to exit the program. Re-admittance after one year is allowable, however the student will be required to complete the entrance procedure and be accepted by the graduate admittance panel.

### (2) Graduate Coursework

The minimum requirement for coursework must be completed. It is allowable for students to take more than the minimum coursework credits. Students admitted on a provisional basis may be required to complete undergraduate coursework prior to some of their graduate courses. Students who express an interest in special topics beyond the 6- quarter credit minimum will be allowed to take credits with mentor approval.

### (3) Thesis Research

Novel laboratory research is an integral part of the Life Sciences Graduate program. It is extremely important for students in the program to develop a research thesis project and devote significant time in the laboratory to achieve measurable, scientific progress. The Graduate Life Sciences Seminar in the first two years, is designed to create dedicated time for students to present laboratory results alongside current literature. In the third year of the program, students should be immersed in laboratory work and in the process of converting their results and methods into publishable print for their final thesis and peer-reviewed publication. The student's mentor and graduate committee will be updated on a regular basis to oversee appropriate research progress. If it is determined at any point that a student is found to neglect laboratory attendance to a significant degree, students will be placed on academic probation and have one quarter to

provide evidence of satisfactory research progress. If academic probation is exceeded, the student will be required to exit the program. Re-admittance may only be achieved with graduate committee approval for a six-month probationary period. Students may be allowed up to six months additional research laboratory time, outside of a probationary period, to complete results for publication.

**(4) Peer-Reviewed Scientific Publication**

Career advancement in the scientific community relies upon a record of scientific achievement that may increase the base of knowledge for the wider scientific community. Graduates of the Life Sciences Master's Program must provide evidence they will be successful contributors to the scientific community and be able to demonstrate their professional abilities as a published scientist.

**(5) Graduate Teaching Assistant Experience**

Scientists in the academic field are not required to learn teaching pedagogy as a part of their curriculum. In order to have better prepared master's graduates, students will be required to participate as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) for a minimum of 1-quarter credit, (maximum 3-quarter credit) per year after the first year or when the student has completed 75% of their coursework.

**(6) Graduate Thesis Defense**

At the completion of research, students will produce a thesis document that must follow the Master's Life Sciences Graduate Thesis guidelines. The document must be submitted to the selected graduate committee for review. If approved, the committee, mentor, and student will schedule a defense date. The student will present thesis work on the agreed date to the committee, the Life Sciences faculty and the wider student body. The committee, mentor, and student will meet after the presentation for a question and answer session. After the defense, graduation will be approved or not approved by the committee and mentor. Any final extension may be suggested at this time.

**(7) Acceptance of Written Graduate Thesis**

By a maximum of six-months after the graduate thesis defense, all edits to the final written graduate thesis must be made, submitted to and accepted by the graduate committee and mentor for the final degree to be conferred.

## **Academic and Professional Integrity**

Absolute integrity is expected of every Salish Kootenai College Graduate student in all academic undertakings. Integrity entails a firm adherence to a set of values. At SKC, values include honesty, fairness, and respect. Students and faculty of SKC assume the responsibility of maintaining and furthering these values.

Individuals enrolled in SKC's graduate programs are members of a profession and students in an academic program. Academic integrity is expected not only in formal coursework situations but in all college relationships and interactions connected to the educational process, including the use of college resources, participation in internships or other learning opportunities, and research.

Violations of academic integrity may result in disciplinary procedures as outlined in the SKC Catalog. SKC Graduate Students have access to complaint and grievance procedures as provided in the SKC Catalog. If fellow students, staff, or faculty suspect a violation of Academic Integrity, the violation should be reported to the Program Director.

## **Continuous Enrollment and Leave of Absence**

Graduate students must register for a minimum of 12 credits each fall, winter, and spring term.

\*Paid thesis research fellowships are expected for summer terms where students may travel to other university laboratories or may conduct their work at SKC. Graduate students will not be expected to conduct unpaid research internships.

A Leave of Absence from the program may be approved by the MS LS Program Director under the following circumstances:

1. Parental leave or major illness;
2. Extended family leave due to illness;
3. Post-defense periods in which there is final thesis editing only. After one academic quarter, one-credit registration is required for each quarter up to the six-month allowable time frame.

Under these circumstances, students are allowed a leave of absence up to one-year with approval of the Program Director. Because leave of absence presumes the student is not engaged in college activities, no college resources (except those available to the general public) are available during the leave-of-absence and students will not be charged tuition.

In the case of other extenuating circumstances, the student must provide a letter of request for the leave to the Program Director, documenting the circumstances, the period of leave requested, and any other pertinent information. The Program Director has authority to approve or disapprove such leaves.

All students who are approved for a leave will be informed of any conditions for continuing in the program.

### **Returning from Leave of Absence**

Students returning after a leave of absence should contact their Program Director and Mentor one academic term prior to return to discuss a plan for progression and completion.

### **Academic Progress**

Students must complete a minimum of 36 credits per academic year and maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 or better to maintain good standing in the MS LS Program.

Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 in a quarter will be counseled by their mentor and/or faculty members/committee members and will need to submit a plan for improvement. Students who do not meet the requirements of academic progress for two quarters in a row may be dismissed from the program.

### **Readmission**

Students who step out of their graduate programs and who do not maintain continuous registration will be dropped from their program's roster and will need to petition their program for readmission with a written request submitted to the Program Director. The petition for readmission will require an evaluation of the student's progress and a plan with a time-table for completing the degree. Readmission is not guaranteed.

### **Time Limit for Program Completion**

All degree requirements for the MS LS degree must be completed within four academic years (twelve academic quarters). Students who do not complete the degree within the four-year time period may apply for one six-month extension period to complete their degree requirements. After the extension period, students may be dismissed from the program without prejudice.

### **Withdrawal from the Program**

Students who wish to withdraw from their graduate program must notify their mentor and/or Program Director in writing. Students must also notify the SKC Registrar. The Committee Chair will notify the student's Committee Members.

## DIRECTORY OF CAMPUS RESOURCES

### Graduate Admissions

Quequesah Building, Room 109

1.406.275.4023

[katrina\\_holmes@skc.edu](mailto:katrina_holmes@skc.edu)

Graduate Admissions aims to support those students who are interested in applying for a Graduate degree program at SKC. Graduate Admissions is available to answer questions about program admission criteria and process.

### Master of Science in Life Sciences

#### Contact Information

Katrina Holmes – Assistant to the VPAA for Graduate Studies: 1.406.275.4023;

[katrina\\_holmes@skc.edu](mailto:katrina_holmes@skc.edu)

Dr. Christina L. Rush – MS LS Program Director: 1.406.275.4894;

[christina\\_rush@skc.edu](mailto:christina_rush@skc.edu)

Dr. Clay E.S. Comstock – MS LS Faculty: 1.406.275.4945; [clay\\_comstock@skc.edu](mailto:clay_comstock@skc.edu)

Dr. Nathanael Herrera – MS LS Program Faculty; [nathanael\\_herrera@skc.edu](mailto:nathanael_herrera@skc.edu)

### Financial Aid & Scholarships

Robert DePoe III Building

1.406.275.4857 or 1.406.275.4773

[financialaid@student.skc.edu](mailto:financialaid@student.skc.edu)

The Financial Aid Office staff will assist you with information on funding sources and processes needed in order to meet the cost of attendance for your college expenses. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is required to apply for grants, scholarships, and loans.

The FAFSA is free and located online at [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov). After the FAFSA application is submitted it can take up to 3-5 business days to process. Once SKC receives the application from [studentaid.gov](http://studentaid.gov), you will receive an email notification from the SKC Financial Aid office letting you know the process and documents needed to complete your financial aid file. Your financial aid file must be completed in order to determine financial eligibility. Students will need to follow up with email notification of requested documents.

SKC FAFSA Code: 015023

### Child Care

Salish Kootenai College Early Learning Center

1.406.275.4785

The Early Learning Center provides full- and part-time programs for children 2 to 5 years of age. The center services the students, faculty, and staff of SKC.

**Disability Services**  
**John Peter Paul Building**  
**1.406.475.4968**

Salish Kootenai College is committed to providing educational opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are provided for eligible students with identified disabilities. Visit with Disability Services to understand your rights and responsibilities related to accommodations for disabilities.

**Library**  
**D'Arcy McNickle Library Building**  
**1.406.275.4875**

The D'Arcy McNickle Library provides services for SKC students and houses archives of CSKT documents. Library services include assistance with reference materials, interlibrary loans, and access to online databases of articles and books.

**SKC Student Health Center**  
**Agnes Vanderburg Building**  
**1.406.675.2700 x 1630**

The SKC Student Health Center offers primary health care and acute care. For detailed information please call the clinic.

**Center for Prevention & Wellness**  
**Kenmille Building**  
**1.406.275.4913**

The Center for Prevention & Wellness specializes in health promotion and direct services related to advocacy, mental health counseling, and public health services. All services are free and confidential for all SKC students. Services offered:

- Counseling Services
- Advocacy and Support Services
- Certified Peer Education
- Prevention Education

**Joe McDonald Health Facility**  
**1.406.275.4978**

The Joe McDonald Health Facility is open to students, faculty, and staff and offers a variety of workout equipment such as treadmills, bikes, bench presses, and free weights. We also offer a walking track and a collegiate basketball court. A variety of health and fitness classes are open to all students.

**Graduation Application – Registrar's Office**  
**Robert DePoe III Building**  
**1.406.275.4864**

**At the beginning of winter quarter in the year you will receive your degree, meet with your Advisor/Major Professor so they can perform a degree audit and you can complete all graduation application materials prior to submitting them to the Registrar's Office.**

**A degree audit and thesis completion form must be completed by your Committee Chair/Graduate Advisor and be attached to your graduation application showing you have or will meet all degree requirements.**

### **Housing Services**

**Robert DePoe III Building  
1.406.275.4827 or 1.406.275.4884**

**SKC Student Housing provides safe, affordable, on-campus housing options to full-time SKC students. Options are available for single students as well as students with children. Applications and information are available on the SKC Housing website.**

### **Admissions**

**Robert DePoe III Building  
1.406.275.4855**

**[admission@skc.edu](mailto:admission@skc.edu)**

**Admissions is the first point of contact for prospective and new students. The Admissions staff can assist students with information about college programs, services, and enrollment.**

### **Career Services**

**Robert DePoe III Building  
1.406.275.4826**

**[eva\\_oruste@skc.edu](mailto:eva_oruste@skc.edu)**

**Career Services is committed to providing comprehensive services that will empower students to identify and attain their educational and career goals. Career Services assists current and potential students with: writing cover letters and resumes; developing interview skills, etc.**

### **Security**

**SKC Security Building  
1.406.275.4751**

**SKC Campus Security provides crime deterrence through random patrols and watching for potentially hazardous situations and criminal activity.**

**SKC Campus Security offers the following:**

- ☐ **Campus Information**
- ☐ **Jumpstarts**
- ☐ **Loaner Gas Can**
- ☐ **Assistance with After-Hour Building/Office Lockouts**

## **Appendix A**

### **The Thesis Requirement**

A master's thesis is a substantial document presenting independent research that makes a contribution to the current body of knowledge in the student's respective scholarly field. The student will conduct an original research project with the aid of their mentor and thesis committee. The thesis demonstrates a student's mastery of research techniques, data interpretation, and critical thinking skills for Life Sciences.

The final product of the thesis process is a written document for binding and publication that meets the following academic outcomes:

- Mastery of related scientific literature
- Demonstration of the integration of Western and Indigenous knowledge and research methods
- Demonstration of critical thinking of research results, conclusions and future work
- Effective scholarly writing including accurate presentation of methods and data

The student's mentor is an important guide in the thesis process. That individual serves as a mentor both while you are doing the research and while the results of that work are prepared for the final written thesis. Although you have primary responsibility for the content, quality, and format of the thesis, the mentor must be consulted frequently. They approve the final document before presentation to the committee for graduation recommendation.

The student will assemble a research committee of three to four individuals, including their mentor and at one other SKC faculty member. Additional committee members who are experts in the chosen area of research may be accepted upon approval of the Program Director.

### **The Master of Science in Life Sciences Thesis Process**

The thesis process has seven distinct stages as outlined below. The timing provided is for students who are full-time and complete the program in three years. Students who have requested extensions may have different timing.

#### **STAGE 1: Development and Approval of Master's Thesis Research**

Timing: First Quarter

During this stage, a number of activities take place:

- Select a thesis topic
- Write initial research plans as a part of the master's thesis course.
- Participate in research methods courses.
- Select a Thesis Committee.
- Submit the Thesis Committee Form to gain approval from the Program Director.



**STAGE 2: Thesis Proposal Approval**

Timing: End of First Quarter

- Thesis Committee meets to approve the research topic and proposal.
- Student secures Institutional Review Board and/or CSKT Tribal Research Review Board approval or other reservation review approval as appropriate.

**STAGE 3: Research Work**

Timing: End of First Quarter, winter break and onward until Thesis Writing Approval date

- Student collects and analyzes data and/or conducts research as per the approved proposal

**STAGE 4: Thesis Document**

Timing: Second Quarter of Third Year

- Student completes the first draft of their thesis. This will include presentation of findings from the data collected, analysis and discussion in the context of the literature reviewed, and conclusions drawn.
- Student distributes the first draft to their Thesis Committee and arranges a meeting to discuss the draft and receive input for preparing the final thesis document.

**STAGE 5: Thesis Document**

Timing: Third Quarter of Third Year

- Final thesis document will involve: interaction with individual committee members to refine, edit, and clarify arguments presented; maps, charts, tables and figures, abstract, acknowledgements, and appendices; and, circulation of the final thesis to the examining committee.
- The thesis document must follow the outline and writing conventions provided below.

**STAGE 6: Thesis Defense**

Timing: Final Academic Quarter (Third Quarter of Third Year, extension may include summer break)

- Students provide an oral presentation concerning their research and answer questions from the Thesis Committee and other individuals attending the defense.
- Complete draft of thesis due to Committee at least three weeks before scheduled defense.
- Each students' Thesis Committee is responsible for establishing that the student has personal mastery of scholarly and cultural information pertinent to the topic.
- Only with the committee's final approval of the student's completed thesis or project and submission of the final edited document will the degree be conferred.

**STAGE 7: Final Document Preparation**

- Complete final edits of the thesis within six (6) months of Committee approval of the thesis. Two paper copies of the final document and one .pdf are submitted to the Program Director. One paper copy will be bound and submitted to the SKC Library.

## Thesis Document

The final thesis document will use the following format:

|      |   |
|------|---|
|      | Signed letter to the Graduate Studies committee                         |
|      | Statement of permission to use (signed and dated by master's candidate) |
|      | Title page  |
| ii   | Copyright page  |
| iii  | Dedication  |
| iv   | Acknowledgments   |
| v    | Abstract  |
| vi   | Preface   |
| vii  | Table of Contents   |
| viii | List of Tables  |
| ix   | List of Figures   |

Minimum of 2 chapters, each divided into sections (Arabic page numbers):

- Biological/chemical relevance
- Background (can include multiple sections divided by topic)
- Results (multiple sections divided by topic, includes figures)
- Materials and Methods
- Conclusions, discussion and future work
- List of References
- Appendix (may include author vita and extra figures)

Students are encouraged to begin working with their mentor as soon as possible to develop the format to be used in their individual thesis.

## Final Thesis document

The final document may include published or submitted research paper as one of the two research chapters.

Document length: the document length will vary from project to project. Most will include 100-200 pages not including the Title page and appendix.

Format: The document will adhere to scientific standards for publication. Font size is no smaller than 11 pt and no larger than 12 pt. Acceptable fonts are Arial or Times New Roman. Text is double spaced. Left-hand margins must be 1.5" for book binding purposes. Right-hand margins must be 1". Figures will each be displayed on their own page following the reference to the figure in the text. All figures must have a figure

legend. Tables will each be displayed on their own page following the reference to the table in the text.

(sample letter to graduate committee)

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by (student first and last name) entitled "Research Thesis Title Here." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Life Sciences.

---

John Doe, Ph.D. [Date]  
Thesis Advisor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

---

[Other Committee Member] [Date]

---

[Other Committee Member] [Date]

---

[Other Committee Member] [Date]

Accepted for the graduate committee:

---

Vice President of Academic Affairs, Salish Kootenai College [Date]

[Sample statement of permission to use]

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's degree at Salish Kootenai College in the Department of Life Sciences, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library. Brief quotations from this thesis are allowable without special permission, provided that accurate acknowledgment of the source is made.

Permission for extensive quotation from or reproduction of this thesis may be granted by the Thesis Advisor, or in their absence by the Vice President of Academic Affairs when, in the opinion of either, the proposed use of the material is for scholarly purposes. Any copying or use of the material in this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
[Student Signature]

Date \_\_\_\_\_

[Sample Title Page]

**Cytoskeletal Proteins as Effectors of Structural Alterations in Cellular  
Adhesions and Physical Interactions in Methionine Regulation**

A Thesis Presented for  
The Graduate Committee  
Salish Kootenai College  
Department of Life Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science  
From Salish Kootenai College

By

[Student Name]

[Date]

[sample copyright]

Copyright © [Student Name] [Year]

All rights reserved

[sample dedication]

### **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to Dr. Smith, Ms. Smith, for their dedicated instruction and introduction to science and to my parents for their support.



