



July 2nd, 2020  
Le 2 juillet 2020  
Via Zoom

## GDVM Roundtable Discussion Report

Prepared by: Eric Dupuis, GDVM President

### **Purpose**

The GDVM Roundtable was organized to introduce the new Executive Committee to members and to recapitulate the role of the GDVM Association. It was also an opportunity to discuss any ideas, issues, and expectations members had for the 2020-21 academic year. A total of 10 students attended including 7 Executive Members. The questions raised during the discussion were addressed by Paul Haslam, MA Coordinator, please see below.

### **Notes**

#### **Student Experience**

- Students are struggling with motivation to work on their thesis or MRP.
- Students are also having difficulty finding a supervisor for their research.
- It was noted that the faculty introduction during the orientation for new students in September 2019 was overwhelming. It made students feel like they needed to have their supervisor selected sooner than what was realistically expected.
- A number of students are considering taking the course based Masters due to the Pandemic. Many students were planning on finding their supervisor in March & April however, they are now struggling to do so.

#### **PhD Student Experience**

- Some students are in limbo about what will happen next with research in the field with current covid travel restrictions.



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- If we can help with the orientation and support of incoming PhDs that'll greatly be appreciated especially as many of them would be pursuing their coursework online.
- There is uncertainty surrounding the scholarship application period. Will the school organize info sessions on how to apply for grants and scholarships such as OSG or Vanier and others.

### **Courses**

- Students found that the number of courses offered in the 2020 Fall and 2021 Winter term are very limited. Many of the courses have already been taken during the 2019-20 academic year which makes them unavailable for many students.
- Bilingual students have an advantage as they can choose to take a course in French or English.

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### **Follow-up Items**

#### **A) Follow-up items addressed by the GDVM Executive Committee**

**It was suggested that the Association starts a Peer Review Circle / Book Club as an opportunity for students to connect via zoom weekly to work on their research together.**

The planning process for these discussion groups has started, the first group is expected to meet in August. Students will be able to discuss their research ideas/process/concerns, set-up personal goals, or simply work together online with other GDVM students.

#### **Update regarding the campaign for tuition fee reduction.**

The university has decided not to reduce tuition fees for the upcoming academic year. They have waived some incidental fees. The association will continue to work with GSAED to put pressure on the central administration to reduce tuition fees.



**B) Follow-up items addressed by Paul Haslam, Coordinator: MA in  
Globalization and International Development**

**Are there any academic exceptions because of the Pandemic?**

There were Covid-related extensions granted for the Spring/Summer semester, and the faculty was very forgiving with deadlines, but that has ended. Similarly, M.A. students in the 2019 cohort were permitted to register in the course-based program on an exceptional basis, as a way of facilitating their progress through the program.

**Is there a plan for graduate student study spaces to be available on campus anytime soon?**

Yes. We are setting up a reservation system which will help students reserve an office space to go work on campus (MA and PhD offices). There will be room for one student per office at any given time. If students need immediate access because their “home” situation makes work impossible, than you should contact either Paul Haslam (MA) or Joshua Ramisch (PhD) and we can formally ask for an exception from the Vice-Dean Undergraduate. But basically, we expect this scheduling system to be in place soon.

**Students with supervisors are having difficulty getting in touch with their supervisors. Apparently, some are not replying to their emails.**

Students with this problem should get in touch with the secretariat ([EDIM.SIDGS@uottawa.ca](mailto:EDIM.SIDGS@uottawa.ca)). If we don't know there's a problem, we can't help. If we are told, we can follow up. That being said, people take vacation in the summer and you can't expect people to respond to emails on their vacation time (but this should be indicated in “out-of-office” replies on their email account).



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**Will there be other courses added to the course offering?**

No.

**And if more students are choosing to do the course-based masters, will the School consider offering more courses due to this?**

No, the School just doesn't have the resources nor the finances to open up more courses in the Fall or Winter semesters. Students must remember that they can take optional courses outside of SIDGS also, and on an exceptional basis, 3 outside courses are permitted in the course-based option. It must be remembered that the course-based was set to open in September 2020, so additional "practice" courses will be available for that cohort in Spring/summer 2021. All students currently registered in the program (cohort Sept 2019 or earlier) were accepted on the premise they would be following the thesis or MRP options. So, the course-based option was offered to them as a Covid-related adaptation only, which they should have taken only if it fit with their plans to get through the program on a timely basis (ie. within 4 semesters – which frankly, one could also do in the MRP option)

**How many courses can be taken outside of the department?**

That depends on which stream the student is in. This information can be found [here](#).

- Course-based: 6/18 optional course units may be selected from graduate courses offered by other programs, upon approval by the program director or a delegate (on an exceptional basis, 9 credits for students who entered in 2019 or earlier). Students entering in 2020 will only have the right to take 6 credits of non-DVM courses.
- MRP: 6/12 optional course units may be selected from graduate courses offered by other programs, upon approval by the program director or a delegate.
- Thesis: 3/6 optional course units may be selected from graduate courses offered by other programs, upon approval by the program director or a delegate.



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There's no approved course list. It is the student's responsibility to look at other departments for courses that interest them, ensure that the course would fit in their schedule, and ensure that they have the space left in their program requirements for the optional course credits. The student can always confirm they have the space in their program requirements with the secretariat.

**How many students don't yet have a supervisor?**

Numbers as per Jo, but I believe it's 17 students.

**How should students approach potential supervisors during the Pandemic?**

The same way we would normally suggest they do so- send an email to professors with similar research interests to ask if they are taking on supervisions. They can always look at the list of professors on the EDIM website [here](#) to see their profiles to see what their research interests are, as well as to get their contact information. Remember, you can look for a supervisor in another department, and the fit doesn't have to be perfect – generally, I'd look for either a fit on theme OR geographic region of expertise (for example, I research CSR and Latin America, but supervise on CSR in Africa, and a wide range of topics in Latin America) Looking at the departmental webpages (other departments as well as ours) listed on UNIWEB is good place to start: <https://uniweb.uottawa.ca/members>

**Have there been any workshops organized on how students should choose their research topic? And for finding the right supervisor?**

No, however this is discussed at orientation each year, and we'll develop a written document for that orientation. If students want to narrow down their research topic and get help finding the right supervisor, they should talk directly to the professors or the Coordinator of the MA program, Prof. Paul Haslam. Students must remember that



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supervision is part of our job and so they have the “right” to approach profs and shouldn’t feel shy about it. However, MA students are transitioning from being consumers of knowledge (in the B.A.) to producers, and therefore it is your responsibility to come up with a broad topic in which you are interested, and your responsibility to try to find a supervisor. Often that first meeting with a possible supervisor will help you determine if the fit is good, and help you narrow the topic. If you have tried to meet with a potential supervisor and failed (failed to get an answer, been rebuffed, etc.), please contact the M.A. coordinator Paul Haslam and we will discuss options, and/or follow up with potential supervisors.

**The faculty profiles on the uOttawa website should be updated. Many are not descriptive and students wonder if they are accurate and up to date?**

We are not responsible for the faculty profiles- each individual professor is responsible for their own profile. That being said, most are sufficiently up-to-date for a student to get a sense of research interests. You can also look for independent faculty webpages such as those on [academia.edu](http://academia.edu), google.scholar, [researchgate.net](http://researchgate.net); or search the library database for books and articles written by them.