

Welcome Doctoral Students!

What Does it Mean to be a Scholar?

Virtual Orientation

Jim Field & Brenda Spencer
Graduate Program Directors

June 8, 2021



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

All too often, coming into a graduate program is talked about in organizational terms - completing courses, passing milestones, and “getting through” and “getting done”.

BUT

What sits underneath the journey, what makes it possible, such that you grow and flourish as a graduate student?

And, so, we think the questions are:

What does it mean to be a scholar?

What does it mean to do scholarly work?

1. To think deeply and critically about a subject, beyond yourself and, in that process, to make it your own.

2. To engage with others ethically - to think, to discover, to learn, to grow - in what Gadamer (*Hermeneutics, Religion, and Ethics*) called “mutual flourishing”.

This is only possible through civil discourse.

3. To pursue understanding with informed passion, as a form of careful devotion, with honesty and courage.

4. To listen for and ask good questions - especially those that challenge the way we think, that open our minds to other vistas.

This can be uncomfortable and difficult.

5. To be open minded.

As John Dewey (*Democracy and Education*) argued, this does not mean to be empty minded, to say “come right in; there is no one at home”, but to be prepared to change your mind, indeed to seek out difference in seeing, knowing, and being.

4. To carefully examine what you know, how you know, and why you know.

That is:

to engage in what Valerie Walkerdine (*Schoolgirl Fictions*) called a “double strategy”:

the ability to recognize and challenge our assumptions and the taken-for-granted conceptions of what is right, normal, and proper,

at the same time that we produce other accounts, and possibilities for transformation.

**5. To acknowledge and honour
who you have learned from.**

6. To engage in the art of strengthening. That is, not simply to accept without thinking or to reject out of hand, but to build a better world.

A Few More Facts about Graduate School:

- **It's hard!**
- **It requires perseverance and sacrifice (i.e.,
pathei mathos – learning through suffering).**
- **It takes time: Read, read, read; write, write,
write; think, think, think.**
- **It takes initiative and responsibility:**

**The impetus for your scholarship must come
from within.**

Comments, Questions, Concerns?

Doctoral Program Overview

Virtual Orientation

Welcome Doctoral Students!

Jim Field & Brenda Spencer
Graduate Program Directors

June 8, 2021



**UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY**

Usually in Years 1 and 2: Complete Coursework

- **Know the requisites for your program.**
- **Consult with your supervisor often.**
- **Plan early and as you go!**

The Milestones

1. Usually, by the end of 28 Months: Complete the Four Stages of Candidacy

Stage 1: Completed Coursework: approval by supervisor

Stage 2: Field of Study (FoS): approval by supervisory committee

Stage 3: Research Proposal: approval by supervisory committee

Stage 4: Oral Examination of the Research Proposal: pass by examining committee

2. Usually around 28 months:

- **obtain CFREB ethics approval**
- **start to conduct your research**

Usually between 4 to 6 years:

3. Write up the thesis

4. Defend – Final Examination:

A. oral

B. written

**Questions,
Comments,
Concerns?**