

1. *Before arrival:* Graduate students are excited about beginning this new phase of their lives; international students may be even more excited if this also means learning in a new country. We are finding that new students have more energy and time to learn about SFU *in advance of their arrival.*

1.a. Try the **Virtual Orientation** on the Graduate and Postdoctoral (GS) website and sign up for in-person **Orientation**. There are two that may apply to your new students: the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GS) Orientation conference (run with the Graduate Student Society (GSS) that covers a lot of the most immediate issues that arise for students such as work permits, financial aid, health benefits, establishing a good relationship with their supervisor etc; and the Residence Orientation.

1.b. Join the incoming grad student Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sfugradstudies/>. We are finding that the most committed and interested students start out on those sites, asking questions, making connections, building networks.

1.c. Get them connected to those who will be steering them through the program. Introduce all of your new graduate students to your Graduate Program Assistant (GPA) and impress them with the importance of this person in answering questions about the program, deadlines, norms and expectations around your unit. Let them know the name of the Graduate Program Chair (GPC) in your unit and what role the Chair plays. Let them know that there is a GSS Advocate and the SFU Ombudsperson Office is there to help if they run into difficulty at any point in their time at SFU. Finally, the Associate Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Students also is available to help.

1.d. Can you connect them to a senior, successful graduate student who may have some insights in the particular transition from their previous academic setting to SFU? Graduate programs report that implementing a 'buddy system' helps students make the switch to grad school and helps them build community.

1.e. There are a number of good guides for students who are new to the Canadian academic environment. Now is an excellent time for them to learn about Canada, academic life and 'academic culture shock'. They should go to the University Affairs website and search for *How to survive your first year of graduate school parts I and II*. You might find these guides useful as well.

2. *Before arrival (for supervisors):*

2.a. Check your assumptions: Recognize that many of our students have studied in multiple locations not just their home country. So many are fully aware that academic cultures vary from country to country, and from institution to institution; still they will need time to learn the particular culture here in Canada and at SFU. Be aware that they will take some time to acclimatize, likely 1-2 semesters. You may wonder, during this time, whether you made the right decision to admit them, but be patient. (See below for suggestions during the first semesters.)

2.b. Review the resources that are available for international grad students and be prepared with suggestions *when these seem warranted*. Not all the students will need,

4.d. Be prepared to come back to both these documents as your relationship develops and particularly over the next couple of semesters as your student comes to better understand the norms of the academic Canadian culture in your discipline.

5. *The coming semesters:*

5.a. This provides an opportunity for you both to understand what SFU expects of you but also how these expectations may bring into relief variation in the supervisory relationship across cultures and institutions. A word about department orientations: many departments and departmental graduate caucuses hold their own orientation and this is a really a good idea. As you plan one think about accessibility. Is everyone going to feel comfortable going to a pub, for example? being out after dark? travelling by public transit? What food and beverage choices will you have at your event? and will any extra costs exclude those students who are waiting on student loans or their first TA paycheque?

5.b. *Building Community:* International students tell us that they find it very challenging to make meaningful connections with domestic students. New international students may feel unsure how to initiate new friendships with Canadian students and they are worried that their English is not up to the challenge. What can you do to help build community among your students? lab socials? cohort meetings that have a social aspect? a hike together on the local trails? Anything that brings your students together in a common activity will help international and domestic students build community together.

5.c. *Patience and openness:* The transition from undergraduate to graduate is a daunting one, more so for international students, especially if they have changed institutions. Moving from one country to another adds an additional layer of complexity and challenge. Our experience indicates that the first semester can be particularly tough. Facing an academic environment of total English immersion, students begin to wonder if they can handle it. We have learned that for many of our students, struggling with English triples the time it takes them to work through the material assigned to them in courses or in their research. Just learning how to navigate the public transit system, what to buy to put in the washing machine for laundry, how to find classrooms in the AQ can shake their confidence. Add to that homesickness, perhaps managing a long-distance relationship, or experiencing worry about family members far away, means that it is not surprising that some of our international graduate students do not perform as well as we (or they) expect in their first semester or two. However, the literature and our experience, demonstrates that they do meet our expectations. Moving this period of adjustment. Wht in t-2 (h) 4 im) 4m) 4th) 4a.3 (