



Research Resources for Graduate Students

This page provides research resources intended to support graduate students in having a successful learning experience. This website has relevant information for all graduate students who are in the thesis, dissertation, course or project route. It is a “work-in-progress” and we welcome comments and suggestions for its improvement. Please email fgs@athabascau.ca.

Finding a Supervisor and Supervisor Committee Members for Thesis & Dissertation Students

A supervisor is a faculty member who will mentor you in your research during your program of study. Your program will determine the timing of your selection: some research-based graduate programs expect students to identify a prospective supervisor prior to applying for admission while other programs expect them to find a supervisor after admission and before beginning their thesis work.

If you are a Master’s student, you should select a supervisor once you have been approved to the thesis route. If you are a Doctoral student, you should identify a supervisor no later than when you begin your proposal course. Normally, you will select a supervisor from your academic unit. If the faculty member you choose agrees to supervise you, he or she will complete the appropriate form which will then be submitted to FGS for approval. The following websites provide lists of faculty members and their research interests, which may be in the area you would like to examine.

[Faculty of Business \(AUFB\)](#)

[Faculty of Health Disciplines \(FHD\)](#)

[The Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences \(FHSS\)](#)

[The Faculty of Science and Technology \(FST\)](#)

[Centre for Distance Education \(CDE\)](#)

Ethics and Integrity

When students or supervisors are trying to determine their [intellectual property](#) rights, they must, at a minimum, consider the following:

1. Athabasca University policies and procedures (the “**AU Policies and Procedures**”);
2. Regulations and professional codes of conduct governing the practice of their academic discipline;
3. Intellectual property law; and
4. Third party agreements.

It is the responsibility of you and your supervisor to be aware of the applicable rights and restrictions under each of the above listed resources and to ensure that your research is conducted in accordance with the requirements stipulated therein.

The Faculty of Graduate Studies strongly recommends that you consider potential supervisors and have discussions with them before work begins on your thesis/dissertation or other research. You and your supervisor should also discuss and establish clear expectations about respecting ownership of intellectual property. Intellectual property rights allow the creators or owners of patents, trademarks, or copyrighted works to benefit from their own work or investment in a creation. Early in your program, you and your supervisor should discuss ownership of intellectual property, such as the thesis, datasets used for the research, and authorship for a publication based on the thesis. Guidelines are available to identify and clarify issues of intellectual property that can arise between graduate students and their supervisors.

If the research project involves human subjects, you must receive written approval from the [AU Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#) before you can collect data or conduct interviews. Approval is required irrespective of the source of financial support (if any) and irrespective of the location of the project. You will not obtain REB approval until the proposal has been approved by your supervisory/examination committee for the thesis/dissertation (see [Graduate Handbook](#)).

Webinars/Workshops

If you are a current graduate student or post doctorate fellow, various webinars and workshops are available to assist you to enhance your professional and academic skills. Most of the webinars are free for Athabasca University and other CARI graduate students.

[Upcoming presentations](#)
[Past presentation recordings](#)

[Research Tutorials at AU Library](#)

[The International Institute for Qualitative Methodology \(IIQM\)](#)

Writing Resources

[Write Site:](#)

The Write Site is designed to help you with academic writing assignments, and you can use this service to receive feedback on academic writing issues, such as organization, mechanics, grammar, and style, in your assignments.

Funding Opportunities

Various types of financial assistance are available. You can find a list of awards and scholarships on the [Masters Level Student Awards](#) page and the [Awards for Doctoral Students](#) page.

On the FGS webpage, you will find a list of the [current awards and scholarships](#). FGS normally advertises these awards about two months in advance of their application deadline. FGS also sends out [Weekly Announcements](#) (usually on a Monday or Tuesday of each week) that lists upcoming award/scholarship deadlines.

You may also be eligible to access full or part time funding programs from Provincial and/or Federal funding. The [Financial Aid office](#) can assist you in navigating the student financial aid process to identify loans, awards and grants, and planning tools.

In addition, the [Graduate Studies at the University of Victoria](#) lists resources to assist graduate students with application requirements for external funding competitions. It includes tips for supervisors and other faculty members on writing a reference for a student applying for an award or scholarship.

Presenting at a Conference

If you want to present at local, national or international conferences, funding may be available to you. Conference presentations are an excellent way to build your resume or CV for potential employment opportunities. Presenting your papers or posters at a conference can also help you learn about the research in your field, get feedback on your project, and meet key research leaders in your discipline. There are multiple funding sources, and you can apply to more than one source more than once during your program of study.

Funding is also available to cover some of the costs you might encounter presenting at a conference. For Alberta residents, there is the [Profiling Alberta Award](#). For non-Alberta and Alberta residents there is the [Graduate Student Travel Awards](#). In addition, the [Graduate Student Research Fund](#) provides funds for the costs of presenting at a conference, and some costs of conducting research, such as travel costs for interviews or purchase of an interview questionnaire.

Research Software Tools

If you are doing a thesis or dissertation, you may need to purchase a software program to input and analyze data. Several software tools are available, and the methodology of the study will determine which type of software you use. Tools such as [SPSS](#), [Jamovi](#) and [JASP](#), for example, are useful for quantitative data, while [NVIVO](#) is more appropriate for qualitative studies. You should discuss the methodology of the study and the appropriate type of software with your supervisor and/or supervisory committee before purchasing it.

Here are some of the commonly used software tools:

[SPSS:](#)

IBM SPSS offers advanced statistical analysis, machine learning algorithms, text analysis, open source extensibility, integration with big data and seamless deployment into applications. It is easy-to-use. Students with all skill levels can use this statistical software. There is a student rate to purchase SPSS.

[Jamovi:](#)

Jamovi is a new and easy-to-use “3rd generation” statistical spreadsheet. It is an alternative to costly statistical products such as SPSS and SAS.

[JASP:](#)

JASP is a platform-independent statistical software program with a graphical user interface. It is open-source, free of charge, and statistically inclusive, as it offers both frequentist and Bayesian analysis methods. It makes Bayesian analyses easier for statistical practitioners.

[NVIVO:](#)

NVivo can be used for [qualitative](#) and mixed methods research. It can help with organizing, analyzing and identifying insights from interviews and open-ended questions. Examples of qualitative data include interviews, open-ended survey responses, articles, social media and web content.

[Mobile Research Applications:](#)

This site is a resource for exploring hand-held and web-based applications available to qualitative researchers. It includes a list of apps that can assist with all aspects of data generation, collection, processing, and analysis, as well as project management.

Funding is available if you want to purchase the software tools for use for a one-year period. Please visit these web sites for [Access to Research Tools Award](#) and [Access to Data Management Analysis Software Fund](#).

Avoiding Predatory Conferences and Publications

Some journals and conferences recruit papers and manuscripts under suspicious circumstances. Early career researchers, including graduate students, are most vulnerable to predatory and suspect conferences and journals. The following web links will help you to identify and avoid suspect requests that you may receive:

- [Avoiding predatory journals and questionable conferences \(A resource guide\)](#)
- [Predatory Conferences Undermine Science And Scam Academics](#)
- [Predatory conferences 'now outnumber official scholarly events'](#)
- [Beware the Imposter: Predatory Conferences Lure the Unsuspecting](#)
- [Guide to help students avoid publishing in disreputable journals](#)

Becoming a Research Assistant

Athabasca University researchers often hire graduate students as Research Assistants, and you may be able to find one of the temporary opportunities that becomes available from time-to-time. [The Research Centre](#) provides information on employment opportunities, hiring procedures, roles, and responsibilities of research assistants.