

# Recruiting Great Graduate Students

Faculty Development  
Academy Workshop

*May 10, 2018*







Panel

Discussion:

Finding Great Graduate  
Students for your Research  
Group

# Some Important Dates to Consider

## Annual timeline



### Recruiting Cycle

- Fall: Graduate Engineering Fair, social media marketing, recruitment officers answer inquiries
- December: Open portal for applications targeted for September intake.
- January-March: Majority of international applications are received.
- March-July: More typical time for domestic students to apply
- May-June: Latest time to make offers to international applicants so they can apply for a visa
- September 30: last possible date for a student to enrol for a September intake

# Application Pool for Engineering

Snapshot of our numbers, effective May 1, 2018

2500

Applications per  
year

1980

International  
Masters

41

Domestic  
Doctoral

262

International  
Doctoral



# Panel Members

Experienced researchers from across the faculty



Heather  
Sheardown  
**Professor,**  
**Department of**  
**Chemical**  
**Engineering**

Todd Hoare  
**Professor,**  
**Department of**  
**Chemical**  
**Engineering**

Tim Davidson  
**Chair and Professor,**  
**Department of**  
**Electrical &**  
**Computer**  
**Engineering**

Michael  
Thompson  
**Associate Dean,**  
**School of Graduate**  
**Studies**  
**(Engineering)**

# Information from Workshop

May 10, 2018

**Graduate students are more likely to show up on campus if they have developed a relationship through regular contact with their supervisor, graduate administrator, or the Recruitment and Promotion Coordinator.**

- As a reminder, there is no longer a Canadian Embassy in Iran. Iranian students must travel to Egypt for their visas (requires more time)
- Faculty are encouraged to consider graduate students from the United States and South America, particularly Brazil.

# Panel Question 1

With so many options on the internet, what platforms do you use and what is worthwhile to develop? (ex. better website, setting up a Facebook page, creating a blog)

Dr. Sheardown

- Don't use Facebook (wrong audience)

- Post photos of your group meetings and activities

- Send your students to conferences

Dr. Hoare

- Personalize your website and include video demonstrations

- Twitter and Instagram can be useful for promoting 3MT presentations, social activities, and advertising post-doctoral positions. Both platforms get a surprising amount of traffic!

- Manage your own online presence

Dr. Davidson

Create an Alumni page on your personal website to show the careers that your graduate students have pursued. Keep this up-to-date as their careers progress.

Post photos with descriptions to show the culture of your lab.

While it requires considerable nuance, self-promotion provides the opportunity to generate excitement about your work amongst potential graduate students and to generate name recognition within your research community. A "recent highlights" section on your web page, or a "humble brag" on LinkedIn might be ways to experiment.



## Panel Question 2

What is the most successful way that you have recruited students from outside of McMaster? In Canada and also, outside of Canada.

Dr. Sheardown

A colleague from Queen's University and I helped each other recruit graduate students. We both found great quality using this approach.

I like to recruit students from universities where I know the quality of their undergraduate curriculum.

Dr. Davidson

Talk to your colleagues about possible student pipelines to your research area or department. Follow up with students from those institutions/pipelines.

Look to link your research to areas where there is broad understanding of the potential to enhance a community, at a local, national, or global scale.

## Highlight opportunities/extra-curricular activities available within McMaster Engineering

- Professional skills development
- Conferences
- Clubs and teams
- Engineering Graduate Society

## Panel Question 3

What is the most successful way that you have recruited students from within our own programs? From another Faculty?

Use your undergraduate classes to promote your research

Share information about conferences you or your students have attended

Don't overlook the B+ students

Always interview potential graduate students!

Have candidates go out for lunch with your Masters and PhD students and solicit feedback from your research group

Consult with your current students for recommendations

Look for diversity

Be proactive in your communications with candidates

Find a co-supervisor, if a student's research interests are divided

## Panel Question 4

Do you have a philosophy on attracting applicants who bring with them their own funding in the form of scholarships, etc.?

Be cautious of scholarships that you are unfamiliar with. Check with your department chair, the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, or the School of Graduate Studies if you are unsure whether a scholarship is trustworthy for paying out.



## Panel Question 4

What interviewing strategies do you use?

The best interviewing strategies tend to be conversational style and allowing the student to do most of the talking. In that way, you can learn about the type of learning environment they are interested in, how they think they will be successful, what type of supervision they are expecting, and where they want to go after their graduate program.

Look for body language and enthusiasm.

Let the student ask the questions. You can learn a lot about them from what they want to know about your research, your research group, and where your students have pursued careers.

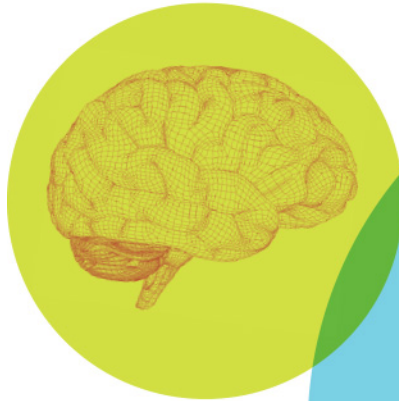
Ask them a question that demonstrates their thought process in solving problems

## Resources available within the Faculty of Engineering

Faculty members are encouraged to forward emails they receive to Siobhan Koch, Recruitment and Promotion Coordinator at [enggrad@mcmaster.ca](mailto:enggrad@mcmaster.ca).

Siobhan will follow up with the students for more information (GPA, current institution, citizenship, etc.) and ensure they are well-informed about the application process. She will also connect them with supervisors looking for students in their research areas.

# Open up to the audience



Share your  
questions with  
the panel







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**Website:**

<https://www.eng.mcmaster.ca/future-students/future-graduate-students#HowApply>