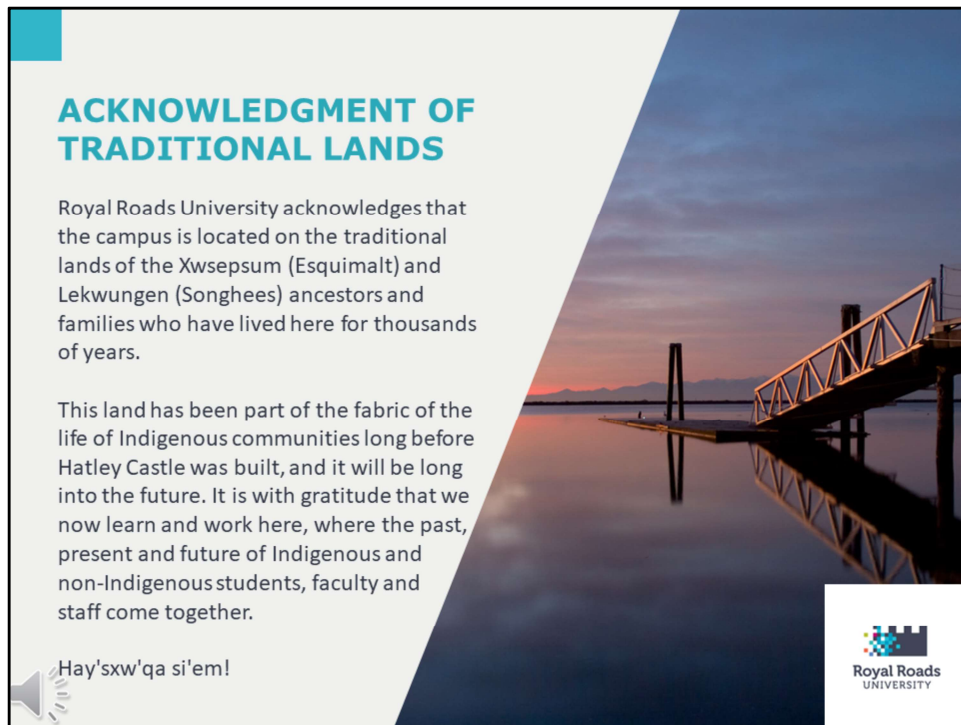





Are you a new graduate student at RRU? Welcome! We're so glad you've joined us!
My name is Theresa Bell, and I work in the writing Centre.




ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL LANDS

Royal Roads University acknowledges that the campus is located on the traditional lands of the Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) and Lekwungen (Songhees) ancestors and families who have lived here for thousands of years.

This land has been part of the fabric of the life of Indigenous communities long before Hatley Castle was built, and it will be long into the future. It is with gratitude that we now learn and work here, where the past, present and future of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff come together.

 Hay'sxw'qa si'em!



Royal Roads University is located on the traditional lands of the Xwsepsum and Lekwungen ancestors and their families who have lived here for thousands of years. I'm grateful for the opportunity to connect with you here. Together, we can continue the history of people coming together to learn from one another on these traditional lands.

What's new?



...only everything...



We're really happy that you made the decision to join us at RRU, and by offering you a place in your program, the university is confident in your ability to complete the program successfully. You don't have to do that alone, and the university has outstanding instruction and services in place to support you. However, we understand that at first, you might experience some doubt and anxiety about what the future holds. If you're feeling this way, you're not the only one. In fact, your emotional experience is so common that it even has a name! I call this initial anxiety "gradschoolitis" but it's also known as "the imposter syndrome".

Gradschoolitis symptoms:

Are you feeling:

- Overwhelmingly insecure?
- Certain you were temporarily insane when you signed up for the program?
- Certain that everyone else in your cohort is smarter than you and it's only a matter of time until they realize it?



Gradschoolitis presents with symptoms of feeling horribly insecure, questioning your sanity in starting your program, and believing that it's only a matter of time until everyone else in the cohort realizes they're smarter than you are. Gradschoolitis may also be telling you that you're the only person who feels this way.

Your anxieties are understandable. There's a steep learning curve involved in this new and significant stage of your life, and if you're coming to campus for a residency or on-campus program, there can be additional stress caused by being away from your familiar environment with your usual support teams. There's also the possibility of added stress from meeting new people, feeling vulnerable from participating in activities and discussions, and feeling overwhelmed by all the new people, information, and experiences you're having.

There's a learning curve



Here's the good news: Gradschoolitis is temporary, and you will feel better. It's true there's a learning curve, but it's a manageable curve. Also, since other students are also likely to be experiencing gradschoollitis, you're not alone!

How will you get there?



You'll likely start to feel better is once you've had some time to understand this new world you've entered and begin to integrate the academic side of your life with all the other parts of your life that make you the successful, intelligent, capable person you are. Finding your way to that integration will give you confidence, and confidence is a terrific antidote to gradschoolitis.



I'm going to provide 5 tips to overcome gradschoolitis, and I hope you'll find these suggestions helpful.

1. Give yourself time

You have lots of time to fully define yourself as a graduate student, so trust the process and the time that it takes.



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Tip number one: Give yourself time. Trying to rush through to feeling better may actually end up causing more anxiety because of the pressures you'd be placing on yourself. Remember that no one expects you to be a polished graduate student immediately – after all, if you were able to excel at being a graduate student immediately, there wouldn't be any learning involved for you, so earning the degree wouldn't be meaningful. You have lots of time to fully define yourself as a graduate student, so try to trust the process and the time that it takes. By the time you're finished your degree, the things you've learned about yourself and what you can achieve will likely be just as relevant and important to you as the degree.

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2. Accept the support that is offered to you

You can rely on the people and activities that already support you personally and professionally, and now that you're an RRU student, you have a whole new team!



Tip number two: Accept the support that is offered to you. You can rely on the people and activities that already support you personally and professionally, and now that you're an RRU student, you have a whole new team! Your professors, program staff, and university supports like the Writing Centre and the Library are here to help you succeed, and we'll be with you throughout your time at Royal Roads. We know what it's like to be a new graduate student, and we're here to help!

3. Be patient and kind to yourself and your colleagues

Everyone is doing their best to manage the loud and persistent messages of gradschoollitis.



Tip number three: Be patient and kind to yourself and your colleagues. As I said at the beginning, you're not the only one experiencing gradschoollitis, and it can cause mysterious behaviours in people. For example, under stress, introverts tend to stop talking, whereas extroverts get chattier, and in the process, both groups manage to totally freak out each other. A stressed introvert might react to chatty extroverts by thinking, "they're all so talkative – I can't keep up – I must be an idiot because I'm so unsure of what I'm doing – I'd better just be quiet until I feel confident about my understanding!". In contrast, extroverts see the introverts not talking and think, "They aren't saying anything – do I sound like an idiot? I don't know what I'm doing and I'm feeling really unsure - it sure would help to talk this through further". Inadvertently, the two groups confirm each other's insecurities without ever saying a word about how they're actually feeling. If your behaviour or other people's behaviours are confusing you, it might just be that you and everyone else are doing as best as possible to manage amidst the loud and persistent messages of gradschoollitis.

4. Remember that everything will be okay



Trust yourself and the process provided to you by the university. Soon enough, overcoming gradschoolitis will be another challenge you've overcome and another example of how capable you are.



Tip number four: Remember that everything will be okay. That might sound simplistic, but whether you're an introvert or an extrovert, someone with a great deal of academic experience, or someone who is new to the academic environment, you'll find your way. Trust the process provided to you by the university and trust yourself, and soon enough gradschoolitis will be another challenge you've overcome and another example of how capable you are.

5. Ask for help



You have a Royal Roads team supporting you, and we're all here because we want to help you succeed. We're all working together to support you, and all you need to do is ask for help.



Tip number five: Ask for help if you're feeling overwhelmed. As I mentioned, you have a Royal Roads team supporting you, and we're all here because we want to help you succeed. Whether it's your instructor, program associate, program head, someone in Student Services, those of us in the Writing Centre, one of the librarians, or someone else at the university, we're all working together to support you, and all you need to do is ask for help. We understand gradschoolitis, but we also know that you're going to be okay, and we're excited to work with you so we can help you succeed.

To sum up:

Gradschoolitis is a normal experience for new graduate students, and you're not the only person experiencing it. To overcome gradschooolitis:

1. Give yourself time;
2. Accept the support that is offered to you;
3. Be patient and kind to yourself and your colleagues;
4. Remember that everything will be okay; and
5. Ask for help.



To sum up: Gradschoolitis is a normal experience for new graduate students, and you're not the only person experiencing it. To overcome gradschooolitis:

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Accept the support that is offered to you;

Be patient and kind to yourself and your colleagues;

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Ask for help.

Contact the Writing Centre



[Writing Centre Website](#)



[Book an Appointment](#)



[WriteAnswers](#) (searchable
FAQs and contact point)

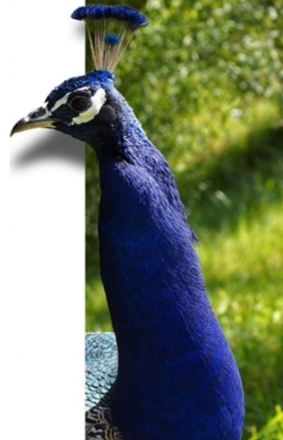


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We're always happy to give gradschoolitis pep talks in the Writing Centre, so please contact us if you'd like to connect. I hope you have a great experience in your program, and we're looking forward to working with you!

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