

MINI MASTERS

Students registered in a Master's program at Queen's University, with first-class standing, and who show exceptional promise in their research may be considered for promotion to a doctoral program in the same Program, without completion of the Master's degree. Promotion to a doctoral program requires the recommendation of the Program, the approval of Council and the approval of the SGS. Students admitted to a doctoral program by the mini-master's route may not revert to the master's program within the same Program. In exceptional circumstances, the student may, after withdrawal from the doctoral program, seek readmission to the master's program in the same Program, or make application for admission to a master's program in another Program, through the normal application procedures.

Promotion into a doctoral program without completing the Master's thesis is reserved for students who meet the following criteria:

1. Must have completed at least one term, full time, and have completed at least two graduate courses, or equivalent.
2. Must complete all course requirements for both the Master's and Doctoral degree prior to graduation.
3. Should have an undergraduate honours degree with a minimum upper second class standing or equivalent.
4. Must have an overall first-class average in graduate courses completed.
5. Must meet Program criteria for demonstrating promise and ability at research. This may take the form of oral or written presentation as well as letters of support from faculty familiar with the student's progress.
6. Must apply to Council following one term of enrolment (4 months) and prior to the end of the fifth term of study (20 months). All requirements for completion of the mini- master's must be satisfied by the end of the sixth term.

Application Procedure

The student will meet with the supervisor, the supervisory committee and the Graduate Coordinator or delegate to agree upon whether he or she should apply to the Ph.D. program without completing the Master's thesis. During this meeting, the ramifications of the transfer to the doctoral program are to be clearly defined for the student.

The following documents are required for submission to the SGS:

- Updated transcript (internal transcript acceptable)
- A brief justification outlining the student's qualifications for admission (to be completed by the Graduate Coordinator or delegate)
- Letter of support from the supervisor
- Outline of student's current and proposed research.
- Completed application package for admittance to the doctoral program, including a decision sheet for acceptance into the Ph.D. program, "pending successful completion of the mini-master's".

The application will be forwarded to the Chair of Council. The Chair will either sign the decision sheet, thereby accepting the student into the PhD program pending successful completion of the mini-master's examination, or, in the case where he/she queries the qualifications of the student, have the application forwarded to Council for discussion. Both the PhD Program Director in the student's Program, and the supervisor must attend the Council meeting when the application is discussed.

No later than 40 working days after the approval to proceed via the mini-master's route has been confirmed in writing by the SGS, the mini-master's candidate will defend a written research report and proposal in an oral examination to an examining committee. The oral examination will be held no later than two weeks after submission of the written research report to the members of the examining committee.

Procedure for Examination of the Candidate's Research Report and Proposal for the Mini-Master's

The candidate must prepare a written report that normally should not exceed 10 pages in length, single spaced (excluding Figures, Tables and References), clearly delineating the background of the research project, the work done to date, and the proposal for development of the research into a doctoral thesis. This report will be submitted to an examining committee composed of the following members:

- Head/Graduate Coordinator/Delegate
- Two faculty members who will cover content expertise if not covered by above
- Supervisor

At the examination, the candidate will present a 15-20 minute talk on his/her research report and proposal. This talk will be followed by an oral examination.

Questioning or comments of the examining committee will primarily relate to the background of the project, what the student has accomplished, and the basis for expanding the project. This should normally last no longer than 1.5 hours.

At the end of the examination, the candidate will be asked to leave the room while the examining committee members discuss the performance of the candidate. The examining committee will decide if the student will be recommended for direct advancement to the Ph.D. or not. Two or more negative votes by the examining committee will result in failure of the mini-masters examination. The decision of the examining committee shall be forwarded to the School of Graduate Studies and Research. Once the decision has been made by the examination committee the Mini Masters Defense Form found on the Centre for Neuroscience Studies webpage <http://neuroscience.queensu.ca/graduate/current-students/forms> is required to be filled out and then forwarded to the School of Graduate Studies.

Students who pass their mini-master's examination will be allowed to transfer to the doctoral program in September. Council members will be informed at the next Council meeting of the promotion. Students who do not pass the mini-master's examination will be allowed to complete the MSc thesis, according to SGS regulations.

Procedure for Examination of the Candidate's Research Report and Proposal for the Mini-Master's

The candidate must prepare a written report that normally should not exceed 10 pages in length, single spaced (excluding Figures, Tables and References). This written report should have the following approximate composition:

Criteria	Description	Weight
Thesis Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly delineated background of PhD thesis proposal (i.e. literature review), and motivation 	1/3
Work Accomplished to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> report on work accomplished to date, i.e. summary of MSc project 	1/3
PhD Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposal for development of the research into a doctoral thesis. Provide an outline of projects planned for the PhD (i.e. thesis projects proposal). Each project should be presented in abstract form including for each project: title, goals, justification of approach, hypotheses, expected outcomes, anticipated impact 	1/3

This report will be submitted to an examining committee composed of the following members:

- Head/PhD Director or Delegate as Chairperson
- Two faculty members who will cover content expertise if not covered by above
- Supervisor. (Note: it is the supervisor's role to assemble the mini-MSc examining committee, including the chairperson.)

At the examination, the candidate will present a 15-20 minute talk, spending approximately equal time on their research report (MSc accomplishments) and proposal (PhD plan). This talk will be followed by an oral examination with questions and comments. The oral examination should normally last no longer than 1.5 hours and will spend approximately equal time on the MSc accomplishments and PhD plan, including the background of the thesis proposal. The committee will evaluate the following aspects of the proposal (following NSERC/CIHR guidelines):

1. Quality of research proposal
 - a. specific, focused, and feasible research question(s) and objective(s)
 - b. clear description of the proposed methodology
 - c. significance and expected contributions to research
2. Relevant training completed or available; such as academic training, professional skill training or others
3. Demonstration of sound judgment and ability to think critically
4. Demonstration of responsible and ethical research conduct, including honest and thoughtful inquiry, rigorous analysis, commitment to safety and to the dissemination of research results, and adherence to the use of professional standards. The ability or potential to communicate theoretical, technical and/or scientific concepts clearly and logically in written and oral formats

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