

Interfaculty Graduate Program Biological and Biomedical Engineering Fast-Track to the Ph.D. Program Policy and Procedures

The BBME Graduate Program permits some Master's students to proceed directly to the Ph.D. Program after completion of the Master's course work without having to complete a thesis. This arrangement is called Fast-Tracking and is used when a student has performed very well in the course work and has demonstrated excellent research progress and creative potential, and when their Master's research has given rise to a project that can be extended to a Ph.D. level project. To be eligible to Fast-Track to the Ph.D. Program, a Master's student must:

- have completed all coursework (with the exception of the Seminar course to be completed by the first term in the Ph.D. program) by the end of the first year in order to fast track within 18 months;
- have maintained a strong cGPA of at least 3.7;
- have demonstrated excellent research progress;
- have formulated a valid Ph.D. project that represents a logical extension of the research already accomplished;
- be recommended for transfer by the Master's Thesis Supervisor.

Procedures

To take advantage of the Fast-Track mechanism, a student must:

- Request an admission override from the BBME Student Affairs Office to apply to the fast track program and be accepted.
- Successfully complete a Fast-Track Committee meeting.

(The student will then be fully integrated into the Ph.D. Program and will follow the requirements for completing a Ph.D. Degree as outlined on the BBME Web site.

Fast-Track Committee

The Fast-Track Committee is selected by the Supervisor and student with the approval of the GPD, and will become the Ph.D. Advisory Committee if the Fast-Track meeting is approved. The Graduate Program Coordinator will attempt to schedule the meeting. However, it is the student's responsibility to assist with scheduling the meeting if necessary, and supply the necessary documentation. The Fast-Track Committee should comprise:

- Thesis Supervisor
- Chair or Chair's Rep (A faculty member of the BBME Program assigned by the Graduate Program Director)
- Thesis Committee Member (external to the department of the supervisor's primary appointment, in a field related to the project)
- Additional members are required if there are co-supervisors.

Objective

The Fast-Track Meeting determines whether or not a student will be permitted to “Fast-Track” to the Ph.D. program.

Procedure

The Fast-Track meeting will follow the same general procedures as the Ph.D. Preliminary Meeting where the student presents an oral presentation of approximately 15 – 20 minutes, summarizing the research accomplished to date and outlining the proposed program of research for the Ph.D. (It is recommended that the student read the Policy and Procedures for the Ph.D. Preliminary Meeting: http://www.bbme.research.mcgill.ca/admin/Info_P1-PhD-Preliminary_Meeting.pdf).

The student must circulate the presentation document to the Fast-Track Committee, with a copy to the Graduate Program Coordinator at info.bbme@mcgill.ca, due one week prior to the meeting unless otherwise specified by the GPC. This document will be prepared with the aid of the Supervisor and it should be 5 pages long excluding figures and references. Failure to circulate the presentation document on time may impact the student’s status in the program. Additional details may be found here: [Requirements for completing a Master’s Degree](#).

After the student has presented, the Fast-Track Committee will question the student to evaluate the background knowledge and general suitability for the Ph.D. program.

The student will then withdraw and the Committee will deliberate to determine the outcome of the meeting.

Outcomes

Approved: The Committee is satisfied that the student meets all the requirements for a Fast-Track to the Ph.D. Program.

The Committee must then ensure that all the objectives of the Ph.D. Preliminary Meeting have been achieved. Thus it will:

- Define the topics of the general examination in the Thesis Proposal and Comprehensive Exam;
- Request the student take additional courses required to broaden his/her background as needed;
- Confirm that the Committee make-up is appropriate.

To this end, the Committee will complete the Ph.D. Preliminary Meeting form in addition to the Fast-Track form and the Fast-Track Meeting will be accepted as the Ph.D. Preliminary meeting for tracking purposes.

Not Approved: The student does not meet the requirements for a Fast-Track to the Ph.D. Program and will remain in the Master’s Program. The student must fulfill the program requirements of the Master’s Degree and submit the Master’s Thesis.

Notes

1. There is no provision to repeat a denied Fast-Track request.
2. All course work (except the second term of the Seminar course) MUST be completed before the student can transfer to the PhD.
3. As per GPS policy: A student who has already fast tracked from a Master's to Doctoral program or back tracked from a Doctoral to a Master's program (with or without having completed the Master's degree) is not eligible for admission to the original program.

The methods adopted for examination and evaluation and the areas to be examined in the Fast-Track examinations are specified by departmental regulations and are in agreement with the Graduate Studies guidelines approved by the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, McGill University. The Graduate Studies' Fast-Track guidelines can be found in this link:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/gps/students/registration/progress/fast-track>