

Mini-Master's (DBMS Guidelines)

Students registered in a Master's program in DBMS, with first-class standing, and who show exceptional promise in their research may be considered for promotion to a Doctoral Program in the same Field, without completion of the Master's degree. Promotion to a Doctoral Program requires the recommendation of the Field Coordinator, the approval of FHS Graduate Council and the approval of the SGS. Students admitted to a Doctoral Program by the mini-Master's route may revert to the Master's Program within the same Field in DBMS in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the supervisor(s), the department/program and the School of Graduate Studies.

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 (6.0 units) 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 Field 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 FHS Graduate 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.

1. Procedure for Application and Approval:

The student will meet with the supervisor, the supervisory committee and the Field 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 Field Coordinator or delegate)
- Letter of support from the supervisor
- Outline of student's current and proposed research (3 pages in length maximum, single spaced, excluding figures, tables and references).

- Completed application package for admittance to the Doctoral Program, plus a decision sheet for conditional admission into the Doctoral Program, “pending successful completion of the mini- Master’s”. Paper application form and decision sheet should be used, available upon request from the DBMS Program Assistants, rather than the full online application process.

The application will be forwarded to the Chair of Council c/o the School of Graduate Studies. When the mini-Master’s candidate is in the same Field as the Chair of Council, the application shall be forwarded to the Associate Chair of Council c/o the School of Graduate Studies. The Chair or Associate Chair will either approve the application, thereby accepting the student into the Doctoral 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 Field Coordinator (or delegate) 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.

2. Procedure for Examination of the Research Proposal of the candidate 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/Director or Delegate as Chairperson
- Supervisor
- Two faculty members (cross-appointees or the supervisory committee may be used)

The Mini-Master’s Oral Examination Form will contain a signature line for the candidate indicating that the candidate has been informed of the make-up of the Committee and that there are no conflicts.

An oral examination will be held normally no later than 2 weeks (10 working days) after submission of the written report to the members of the examining committee. 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 promotion to the Doctoral Program or not. Two or more negative votes by the examining committee will result in failure of the mini-Master's examination. The decision of the examining committee shall be forwarded to the SGS.

Students who pass their mini-Master's examination will be allowed to transfer to the Doctoral Program in the following September, January or May. The Chair and/or Associate Chair of Council shall report any promotions to the Graduate Council at the next meeting. Students who do not pass the mini-Master's examination will be allowed to complete the Master's thesis, according to SGS regulations.