

Atlantic Veterinary College (UPEI)

Background and Instructions for Transfer from an MSc Program to PhD program at AVC

Eligibility

MSc students must meet certain eligibility requirements to be considered for transfer to a PhD program. It is the responsibility of the student's faculty supervisor to discuss with the student the advantages and disadvantages of completing the MSc versus transferring to a PhD with the same theme. This transfer is only to be considered if the PhD scope of research is a natural extension and expansion of the original theme and it will usually occur with the same supervisor and a majority of the same supervisory committee members. However, it is possible to change the oversight composition provided that the research topic and prior course work are applicable to the new program. If the student plans to pursue a different research topic, they are required to apply for admission into the new graduate program under the same policies and processes as a new student. A student requesting a transfer to the PhD program must complete the application form with supporting documentation and have the approval of the AVC-GSR Committee and GS Coordinator (Associate Dean of AVC-GSR) before being accepted into the PhD program. The request for transfer should be made as soon as the supervisor and student agree that it is in the best interests of the student, all of the required supports have been identified and are available, and the supervisory committee has indicated their support of the plan. This must not be sooner than the end of the second semester and no later than the sixth semester.

Student Aptitude and Capability: The supervisor should provide a frank and forthright assessment of the student's aptitude for doctoral-level research and probability of timely completion of a successful doctoral degree. Students who are not committed to the extra time and scope of the research should not pursue the transfer to a doctoral degree. Previous progress reports submitted in the MSc program must support ongoing and acceptable progress. In assessing the aptitude for research, the student's supervisor should include the ability for independent, critical investigation of novel research objectives. The supervisor is required to provide a written summary of the student's research progress, including (but not limited to) the courses completed (normally more than 75% of MSc required courses), research conducted, papers submitted or published, and research seminars presented. The student's MSc supervisory committee must have a majority in support of the transfer and any dissenting opinions must be included in the report for consideration by the AVC-GSR Committee. The Department Chair must also indicate their support of the transfer, by way of signature on the PhD program approval form which communicates the department's acceptance of responsibility to oversee the student and supervisor working relationship.

Proficiency of Thesis Writing: The student must have demonstrated the ability to complete a thesis. The usual evidence for this would be to complete a written portion of their research, such as an introduction or research chapter of their MSc thesis, to the stage that it is considered a reasonably finalized component of their thesis and that chapter should preferably be ready for submission (or already submitted) for peer-reviewed publication in a journal.

Personal Support for the Graduate Student: If the student is successfully transferred to the PhD program, UPEI applies all tuition installments already paid for the MSc to the PhD. Therefore, the tuition of the MSc (six semesters) will be increased to the PhD (nine semesters) and then maintenance of status fees are instituted every semester until completion of the degree. It should be noted that the duration of the PhD, particularly for students who transfer from MSc to PhD, is never as short as the 9 semesters of tuition installments. Only about 20% of PhD students have defended before their 15th semester, and most are longer. This is something that the supervisor and student should discuss so that there is clarity

about how long the supervisor will provide a stipend. The AVC policy requires that the minimum stipend be provided until the end of the ninth semester but after that time, it is up to the supervisor to continue some level of stipend. The AVC-GSR Office highly recommends that the stipend be continued while the student remains engaged full time in their research and degree program (i.e. five years or longer), so supervisors should plan on contingency funding to ensure the student can be supported as a full time student for a reasonable amount of time.

Funding and Project Scope: The enhanced scope of the PhD project must be supported by available operating costs secured prior to the student being accepted for transfer. For this reason, consideration of the transfer should be made early in the program to provide adequate time to secure funding. The program objectives for the proposed PhD normally include some of the original MSc program objectives. The written description submitted as part of the application to transfer should focus on how the new program objectives address the increased scope specific to the PhD. A new program approval form should be submitted simultaneously so that the AVC-GSR Committee can appreciate the suitability of the original research for expansion to a doctoral-level program.

Instructions for Applying for Transfer from MSc to PhD:

1. Student initiates and completes the application form and ensures the attachments are included, as described below and including unofficial transcripts from the current MSc program.
2. The student, in collaboration with their supervisor, provides written justification for the request to transfer to a PhD program including:
 - Brief summary of the research progress to date, including status of completion (%) and evidence of proficiency at carrying out and communicating research through oral and written achievements.
 - Description of how the existing MSc objectives will be modified, or added to, in order to fulfill the expanded scope of a PhD program.
3. The student's supervisor provides a letter of support indicating:
 - the student's aptitude and capability for accomplishing doctoral-level research
 - availability of funding for personal stipend support through to the end of a reasonable duration to complete the thesis as a full time student (i.e. normally 15 semesters), with evidence of secured funding at least for 9 semesters of study
 - the funding plan for the increased research operating costs
4. Attach the proposed PhD Program Approval Form, which includes the Department Chair's signature representing the department's commitment to provide financial support to the student's program to a minimum program length of 9 semesters, if the faculty member cannot maintain the required financial support.
5. Attach a copy of the minutes in which the Supervisory Committee approved the transfer from an MSc to a PhD program.
6. Attach a copy of the most recently submitted progress report
7. Submit all the above to the AVC-GSR Office prior to the end of the sixth semester.

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Application for Provisional Admission to a PhD Program by Transfer from an MSc Program

Name	
Department of Current Registration	
Faculty Supervisor (s)	
Date of 1st Registration in Current MSc Program	
Submission Date	
Current Semester (Request for transfer must be made no sooner than the end of the second semester and no later than the end of the sixth semester)	
Required Attachments:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Unofficial UPEI Graduate Program Transcripts.2. Written justification for the transfer from MSc program to PhD program including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Brief outline of current MSc objectives and status of completion (%).- Brief outline of proposed PhD objectives, highlighting those that are carried over from the MSc program and describing how the expanded scope of a PhD program will be achieved.3. Supervisor's letter of support addressing:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Student's aptitude and capability for accomplishing doctoral-level research.- Availability of funding for personal stipend support and research costs, including evidence of secured funding for at least for 9 semesters of study.4. Meeting Minutes capturing discussion and approval of the Supervisory Committee for the transfer from an MSc to a PhD program.5. Most recent MSc program progress report.6. Completed PhD program approval form signed by the Chair of the Department.	
Submit this transfer application for consideration by the AVC-GSR Committee by emailing this form and all attachments as a single PDF to the AVC-GSR Office, the student's supervisor, and the department chair.	

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