

December, 2004

### **A Proposal to Offer a New In-Program Degree, the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.)**

This is a proposal for an in-program graduate degree to be instituted at the University of Toronto, to be known as the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.). Doctoral students in programs that have incorporated the degree will receive it *en route* to the Ph.D., when they have completed all requirements for the Ph.D., exclusive of the thesis. The effective date will be the date upon which the first doctoral program follows the steps outlined below and is authorized to offer the degree. The degree will not be awarded retroactively.

The reasons for this initiative are all based on the premise that graduate students who are engaged in a long, complex degree program can benefit from the identification of scholarly milestones that can affirm their progress and empower them to complete their work. In programs where this type of degree is consistent with scholarly traditions, the presence of the M.Phil. will be a useful recruitment tool, especially in the context of direct entry doctoral programs. Discussions with current graduate students indicate that the years between the completion of one degree and the next can be long, and that creating a way to mark real achievements in an official way would be appreciated. We reject the concept of an in-program M.A. or M.Sc. that functions as a time marker or as a failed Ph.D. The creation of a new degree with rigorous criteria is in keeping with our academic standards and aspirations. The M.Phil. will be awarded for the completion of a significant portion of the work required toward the Ph.D. Candidates for the Ph.D. who have been awarded the M.Phil. will not be eligible to transfer from the Ph.D. to an MA/MSc program. Ultimately, the Ph.D. will be awarded when the dissertation and its successful defense are also completed.

The following criteria will apply to the In-Program Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) degree:

1. The M.Phil. degree will be conferred only as an in-program degree on candidates for the Ph.D., who are in good academic standing, according to the General Regulations of the *SGS Calendar*.
2. The requirement for the M.Phil. degree will be that the candidate has completed all requirements for the Ph.D. degree exclusive of the thesis, including course requirements, language requirements and departmental examinations.
3. Only graduate units whose requirements for the Ph.D. degree include substantial pre-thesis program requirements, such as significant course requirements, departmental qualifying examinations, and language requirements, will offer the M.Phil. degree. Normally, a graduate unit will be authorized to award the M.Phil. degree:
  - a. To candidates admitted on the basis of a bachelor's degree only when its program requirements for this category of student include the completion of at least five full-course equivalent graduate courses and a departmental qualifying examination; and
  - b. To candidates admitted on the basis of a master's degree only when its program requirements for this category of student include the completion of at least three full-course equivalent graduate courses (exclusive of any taken in the master's program) and a departmental qualifying examination.

This proposal has been discussed on two occasions by each of the four divisional SGS Executive Committees, and was extensively debated at two meetings of SGS Council prior to the January 27, 2004, meeting at which it was passed by Council. Discussion at a meeting of SGS Council on October 26 affirmed that the Council wishes to see this proposal go forward. The proposal was presented to the GSU General Council in November, 2003. A motion of GSU support for the M.Phil. proposal received almost unanimous support at that meeting. A reaffirmation of that support is given in a letter from the current GSU President (attached).

Discussion at OCGS Council (June, 2004) indicates that they support the concept. If approved by University of Toronto governance, the degree requirements will be considered by the OCGS Appraisals Committee. Subsequent to their acceptance of the guiding principles (as above), *each graduate unit at University of Toronto can decide whether the awarding of this degree is consistent with its disciplinary culture.* A proposal from a graduate unit to offer this degree within an existing Ph.D. program will require the approval of the relevant divisional graduate executive committee as well as SGS Council. The existence of the M.Phil. will be an aspect of the next periodic appraisal of that doctoral program, but the act of adding it will not necessitate an appraisal.

The resources required to incorporate an in-course degree are modest. The M.Phil. will be awarded only in absentia. Graduate units awarding the M.Phil. degree will inform SGS when eligible candidates in their graduate units have completed the requirements for the degree. These students will receive a notation on their transcripts saying that they have been awarded an M.Phil. degree. Diplomas will be produced and conveyed to the students on a biannual basis. There will be some modest one-time cost associated with putting registration measures into place, and ongoing costs associated with file notation and diploma production. To give some sense of the maximum number of students who might reach this stage of achievement each year, the numbers of doctoral students who are currently registered in Year 4 are: Division I: 125 students in 21 programs; Division II: 227 in 21 programs; Division III: 203 in 14 programs; Division IV: 230 in 21 programs. Discussions suggest that there is particularly strong support for the degree among programs in Divisions I and II. It is intended that currently registered students and future students in programs that elect to offer the M.Phil. will be eligible for it. Students who have lapsed, and former students who have completed their Ph.D. are not eligible.

At a number of major North American research universities a similar in-program Master of Philosophy degree is offered, i.e., a degree awarded en route to the Ph.D. when the candidate has completed an advanced stage of the Ph.D. program. A list of representative peer institutions, both public and private, is attached. The information was gathered from institutional publications in 2003. The U of T proposal is most similar to the Yale model.