



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Edith Hillan
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DATE: September 15, 2004 for the meeting on September 22, 2004

AGENDA ITEM: 11(c)

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

School of Graduate Studies: Proposal of the Faculty of Dentistry to change the timing of the M.Sc. to Ph.D. Transfer Examinations in the M.Sc. Specialty Program, as described in the attachment, effective September 2004.

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee has general responsibility for policy on, and for monitoring, minor changes within degree programs.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

The School of Graduate Studies approved this proposal at its Council meeting on May 25, 2004.

HIGHLIGHTS:

This proposed changes in timing concern only the doctoral stream M.Sc. program option involving specialist dental training and research leading to a thesis. An increasing number of students in this program are expressing interest in continuing their training to Ph.D. level. The current timing of the examination means that their only option is to complete the MSc and then apply for the Ph.D. However, this increases the length and costs of the program. It is also the case that many who are interested in a PhD decide not to proceed once the MSc has been completed usually because of their debt load and family responsibilities.

By recognizing the unique structure of this program and revising the regulations concerning timing of the transfer examination will allow students sufficient time to prepare for the examination.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

There are no new/additional financial resources required to implement the timing change.

RECOMMENDATION:

For Information.



School of Graduate Studies

University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

May 28, 2004

Professor Vivek Goel
Interim Vice-President and Provost
Room 225, Simcoe Hall
27 King's College Circle
University of Toronto

Dear Professor Goel:

At its meeting of May 25, 2004, the Council of the School of Graduate Studies approved the following motion:

THAT SGS Council approve the proposal of the Faculty of Dentistry to change the timing of the M.Sc. to Ph.D. Transfer Examinations in the M.Sc. Specialty Program, effective September 2004.

The motion and supporting documentation are attached. Division IV Executive Committee approved the proposal at its meeting of April 6, 2004.

On behalf of the Council of the School of Graduate Studies, I am presenting this item to Governing Council committees, for information.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Alderdice
Secretary to SGS Council
and Coordinator of Policy, Program and Liaison

Encl. (1)
/smr

c.c. T. Chan U. DeBoni A. Drummond (attachments)
 C. Johnston D. Locker
 L. Yee S. Zaky (attachments)

H:Council/FollowUp/2003-2004/May 25/Dentistry M.Sc. Specialty Program Transfer Exam Timing Change

Motion

School of Graduate Studies Council Tuesday, May 25, 2004

Item 11.

11. Program Requirement Changes

11.2 Dentistry, M.Sc.

MOTION (/) THAT SGS Council approve the proposal of the Faculty of Dentistry to change the timing of the M.Sc. to Ph.D. Transfer Examinations in the M.Sc. Specialty Program, effective September 2004.

See attached.

NOTE:

Division IV Executive Committee approved this proposal at its meeting of April 6, 2004.

With SGS Council's approval this item will go to Governing Council committees for information or approval, as appropriate.

***FACULTY OF DENTISTRY'S MSc PROGRAM INVOLVING ADVANCED
CLINICAL TRAINING AND RESEARCH LEADING TO A THESIS***

**PROPOSAL FOR MODIFICATION TO THE REGULATIONS CONCERNING
THE TIMING OF THE MSc TO PhD TRANSFER EXAMINATIONS**

Background

The doctoral stream MSc program in the Faculty of Dentistry consists of three options:

1) Thesis only

This is a two-year program that involves minimal coursework and research leading to a thesis.

2) Specialist dental training and research leading to a thesis

This program involves training in one of the 10 dental specialties and research leading to a thesis. The length of the program varies between 2 and 4 years according to the specialty. This reflects the extent of the clinical training necessary for accreditation in the different specialities.

Two years: Dental public health

Three years: Dental anaesthesia; Endodontics; Oral Medicine; Oral Pathology; Oral Radiology; Orthodontics; Paediatric Dentistry; Periodontology; Prosthodontics

Four years: Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Anaesthesia; Oral Pathology and Oral Medicine

3) Specialist dental training – coursework only

This program, recently approved by SGS Council, also involves training in one of the ten specialties. However, the thesis is replaced by additional research methods courses and a research practicum. As with option 2), the program varies from 2 to 4 years depending upon the specialty (as above).

Although all three options are considered doctoral stream programs, options 2 and 3 are distinct, not only because of their length, but also because students taking these options pay a combination of professional and doctoral fees, fall outside the funded cohort and receive minimal financial support.

Note: This proposal concerns Option 2 only – Specialist dental training and research leading to a thesis.

Objective

Current estimates suggest that there are 300-400 unfilled clinical professorial positions in Faculties of Dentistry in North American universities. One of the reasons for this is the length and costs of the training required. In order to be eligible for these positions an individual must have the following qualifications; an undergraduate degree (3-4 years), a DDS degree (4 years), training in one of the dental specialities (3-4 years) and a PhD (4-5 years).

One of the Faculty of Dentistry's objectives is to increase the number of individuals with specialist dental training who go on to do a PhD.

Regulations concerning the MSc to PhD transfer examination state that this must be taken 18 months and in exceptional circumstances 24 months after registration. Given the organization of this program, and the emphasis on clinical training in the first year, students do not have sufficient time to undertake sufficient preliminary research and prepare a PhD level proposal in order to meet the 18 to 24 month deadline. Consequently, few students transfer, and those who do must apply for permission from SGS for a late transfer.

An increasing number of students in this program are expressing interest in continuing their training to the PhD level. The timing of the transfer examination means that their only option is complete the MSc and then apply for the PhD. However, this increases the length and the costs of the program. It is also the case that many who are interested in a PhD decide not to proceed once the MSc has been completed usually because of their debt load and family responsibilities.

One solution to this problem is to revise the structure of the MSc so that the first year is devoted to research. However, this option is not acceptable to the directors of the specialty-training component of the program since it would involve considerable disruption. It would also mean that the clinical settings in the Faculty of Dentistry and Toronto hospitals in which the students train would, over the transition period, lack the clinical staff necessary to serve their patient populations.

A simpler solution is to recognize the unique structure of these programs and revise the regulations concerning the timing of the transfer examination to allow students sufficient research time to prepare for the examination.

Proposal

That the regulations concerning the timing of the MSc to PhD transfer examinations (as specified in the Yellow Book: SGS Policies and Procedures) for students undertaking the Faculty of Dentistry MSc involving specialist dental education with research leading to a thesis be revised as follows:

Two-year programs *- the MSc to PhD transfer examination must be taken 18 months and in exceptional circumstances 24 months after the commencement of the program.

*Three-year programs*** - the MSc to PhD transfer examination must be taken 30 months and in exceptional circumstances 36 months after the commencement of the program.

*Four-year programs**** - the MSc to PhD transfer examination must be taken 36 months and in exceptional circumstances 42 months after the commencement of the program.

** As per the current regulation for a two-year MSc program.*

*** The first 12 months are the intensive clinical training period and research begins in month 13 of the program.*

****The first 18 months are considered the intensive clinical training period and research begins in month 19 of the program.*

Note

Students taking the program that involves specialist dental training with additional coursework instead of a thesis (option 3) will not be allowed to transfer to the PhD.