

Terms of Reference: “Fast-track” transfers in the School of Fisheries Research-Based Graduate Programs

Fisheries and Marine Institute, Memorial University of Newfoundland

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SOF Academic Advisory Committee

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Purpose of this document

Students who have completed at least one year of M.Sc study can apply to transfer directly into the Ph.D program, without completing their Master’s degree. This process is sometimes informally referred to as “fast-tracking” or “rolling-up.”

This document contains guidance for students and committees about when a student is eligible to fast-track. In addition, it provides guidance to the Academic Advisory Committee on how to assess applications to fast-track.

Eligibility Criteria

Normally, students who apply to enter the Ph.D program will already hold a Master's degree or equivalent. Per the calendar (<https://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=GRAD-7843>) students who have spent at least one year in an M.Sc program can transfer directly into a Ph.D program without completing their M.Sc (hereafter: "Fast-track").

To be eligible to apply for a fast-track in the Marine Institute SOF grad programs, a student must normally:

- Be enrolled in the fourth semester of study
- Have completed all coursework associated with their program of study
- Be up-to-date with all required documentation within the program, including annual progress report (APRs) indicating acceptable progress through the program
- Have, at minimum, submitted one publication deriving from their M.Sc research (or related work) to a peer-reviewed journal, where that student is first author

The student's supervisor must normally:

- Demonstrate adequate funding will be in place to support the student through the remainder of a Ph.D program

How to Apply to Fast-Track

Requests to fast-track should be sent via email to the chair of the AAC. The email should include the following:

- In the body of the email, confirm that each of the above criteria is met.
- (Attachment) Statement (max one page) explaining why the student wishes to transfer. This statement should speak to how the scope of their research will be expanded to match the graduate profile and learning outcomes of the Ph.D program.
- (Attachment) Letter from their supervisor, endorsed by all committee members, that supports the student's transfer into the Ph.D program. This letter should speak to the student's capacity to conduct research at the Ph.D level.
- (Attachment) A funding plan, demonstrating how the student will be funded for at least the next two years of their program.
- A copy of their CV.

Review

The AAC will review the application and:

- Assess whether the basic eligibility criteria are met.
- Assess, via the student's APR forms, whether the student has maintained a good standard of work throughout their program of study.
- Read the statement and assess whether the fast-track appears appropriate and in-line with the expectations of a Ph.D program.

Outcome

The AAC will endeavour to reach a determination within one month of the student submitting their application. Note that the AAC will especially scrutinize the proposal, to assess whether it represents a re-scoped project that is in line with expectations of a Ph.D, rather than simply a longer M.Sc.

The AAC will either **accept** the transfer, will **ask for more information, or revision** to the application, or **reject** the transfer. The AAC will aim to reach consensus on these decisions, but if consensus cannot be reached, then a simple majority vote (which can be broken by the chair in the event of a tie) will be used.

Note that the AAC's decision is a recommendation that will be forwarded to the School of Graduate Studies, who will make the ultimate determination about whether to approve the transfer.

Normally, students should complete their comprehensive examination within one semester of their transfer being approved.