



McGill

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

**DIVISION OF
EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE**

Student Handbook

REGISTRATION AND COURSE WORK

HOW DO I REGISTER IN THE PROGRAM?

Students are notified of the date of the formal registration for a given academic year via e-mail. The e-mail is sent approximately one month in advance of the date of registration and contains all of the pertinent information. All relevant forms are attached to the e-mail.

- (a) ***New Students:*** Registration occurs in late August/early September or January, before the beginning of lectures in the fall and winter semesters. Registration takes place at Lady Meredith House, in the presence of the Director.
- (b) ***Returning Students:*** Early Registration takes place in April or May, at Lady Meredith House, in the presence of the Director. Registration is subsequently validated by the Faculty if the student has paid tuition fees by the deadline in August. Failure to pay by the deadline will result in the imposition of a fine.

Registration is done by way of MINERVA. Students may not make changes to their academic record, such as adding or dropping courses, *without the approval of their supervisor and the Director*. A MINERVA form must be completed for every change made, and must be signed by both the supervisor and Director. Students are expected to complete their course requirements, as outlined in the admission letter sent by the Division, within 3 semesters (for Master's students) and within the first 2-3 years for Ph.D. students (depending on whether a student had a previous Master's or not).

HOW MANY, AND WHAT COURSES DO I HAVE TO TAKE?

For students admitted to the Ph.D. program with a previous M.Sc., a minimum of 12 course credits is required. For those entering the Ph.D. program with a bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences, or a doctor or bachelor of medicine, a minimum of 18 course credits is required. For students admitted to the M.Sc. program, a minimum of 9 course credits is required.

The choice of courses is decided after consultation with the thesis supervisor and the Director. Experimental Medicine differs from other graduate programs in the Faculty of Medicine in that the thesis topics cover a very wide area of biomedical science, including cell biophysics, respiratory physiology, exercise physiology, neuroscience, molecular endocrinology, molecular oncology, cellular immunology, molecular virology and pharmacology. Since the courses given by the Division cover only a segment of the above areas of science, students are encouraged to choose appropriate courses from those offered by other departments, in either the Faculty of Medicine or the Faculty of Science. Students must choose graduate level courses for credit towards their program requirements (i.e., 500- and 600-level courses). If a student does not have the necessary

background and requires more elementary courses, permission may be given to take such a course, on the understanding that it cannot count towards their program requirements.

WHAT GRADES ARE REQUIRED?

The pass mark at the graduate level is 65%. Students who fail one course are may be permitted to sit the supplementary examination if they so request. Alternatively, they may ask that the course be replaced. Students who fail more than one course, or who fail the supplementary examination, are asked to leave the program. Students accepted into a "probationary first year" are required to pass their course work with a B+ average. Promotion to the second year (or semester) of their program is contingent on meeting this requirement, as well as a satisfactory performance in the first thesis committee meeting.

HOW SHOULD I DIVIDE MY TIME BETWEEN COURSES AND THE THESIS PROJECT?

The Division recommends that students take between 6 and 9 course credits in their first year, and this should leave ample time to begin working on their thesis project. It should be understood that working towards a graduate degree involves considerably more than putting in 9 a.m to 5 p.m. working days. The Division does not accept that taking 6 - 9 course credits within the first academic year effectively prohibits any serious laboratory work.

WHAT IF I AM A FOREIGN GRADUATE AND HAVE LANGUAGE PROBLEMS?

Although you may have passed the TOEFL examination, you may find that you have serious problems with the English language. It is then important that you work at improving your English right at the beginning of your graduate studies. You will enter a probationary first year and take courses in "English as a second language", given by the Centre for Continuing Education at McGill. Your other course work will be partly or totally postponed to later years. Promotion to the second year depends upon a student proving that they have reached a satisfactory level of proficiency in English, both written and oral. This will be tested at a Thesis Committee meeting which will be held after the end of the second semester. For this meeting, students must write an extended abstract of the thesis project and describe any work that they have performed.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

HOW AM I SUPPORTED IF I HAVE NOT BEEN AWARDED A STUDENTSHIP?

It is a rule of the Division that every graduate student must be paid an adequate stipend, a prerequisite for acceptance into our graduate programs. The minimum stipends for each category of students are:

- (a) ***For Canadians and Landed Immigrants:*** The minimum annual stipend is \$14,000 + fees, which amounts to a minimum of \$18,250/year
- (b) ***For non-Quebec Canadians at the Master's Level:*** The minimum annual stipend is \$22,000/year.
- (c) ***For international students (at both the Master's and Ph.D. Levels):*** The minimum annual stipend is \$22,500/year.

WHAT AWARDS ARE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS?

Information on internal and external peer-reviewed studentships and fellowships may be obtained from the Division Secretariat, the office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Medicine (398-3523), the Fellowships Office of the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office (398-3995), and the administrations of the various hospital research institutes.

- (a) ***External Awards:*** These are the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Master's competitions. Both competitions take place in the Fall. Students in Experimental Medicine are informed of the A detailed listing of these, as well as information regarding information sessions, criteria for eligibility, application forms and deadlines is available on the Fellowships Office website at <http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/fellowships/grad/externalagencies/>.
- (b) ***Internal Awards:***
 - Recruitment Awards: These include certain entrance scholarships, McGill internal scholarship programs and travel awards. For further information regarding these, please refer to the departmental web site at: http://www.medicine.mcgill.ca/expmed/grad_funding_internal.htm.
- (c) ***Other external competitions available to graduate students in the Division:***

Public Agencies

National Cancer Institute
Health and Welfare, Canada

Private Agencies

Canadian Arthritis Society
Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Association
Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation
Cancer Research Society
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
Muscular Dystrophy Association
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

PROGRESSING THROUGH THE PROGRAM

Ph.D. and M.Sc.

HOW IS THE STUDENT'S PROGRESS MONITORED?

- (a) ***Thesis Committees:*** Within 2 months of the student's registration, the supervisor and the Academic Advisor of the Research Institute or Centre housing the student establish a thesis committee. The task of the committees is to monitor the progress of students at regular intervals to see that the work is going satisfactorily, that students are working hard enough to complete the thesis in a reasonable time (as a goal, University guidelines stipulate an average of 4 years), that when there are problems, either with the project or with the student-supervisor relationship, these are dealt with and solved promptly (see Appendix 2 for "Procedures for Dealing with Student-Supervisor Problems") and that students receive encouragement and advice from the members of the Committee. To this end, students are required to meet with the thesis committee every year, and this until they are ready to start writing the dissertation, at which time a final thesis committee meeting (whose purpose is to discuss the format and substance of the thesis itself) must be held. The first meeting must be held before May 15th in the case of a September registration, and before December 15th in the case of a January registration. An unsatisfactory report from the Committee will result in probationary status within the Ph.D. program.

The committee consists of the Academic Advisor, the thesis supervisor, and not less than two other investigators, one of whom must be from outside the Department of Medicine with expertise in the area of the thesis project. Committee members are chosen for their knowledge in the field of the student's Ph.D. project so that they can help and advise with the work.

Ph.D. Only

Preliminary Oral Examination: The Preliminary Oral Examination replaces the Thesis Committee meeting in the second year of the student's Ph.D. Although a course number has been assigned to the Oral (EXMD701D), it does not carry any credit weight towards the 18 or 12 course credit requirements. Short of

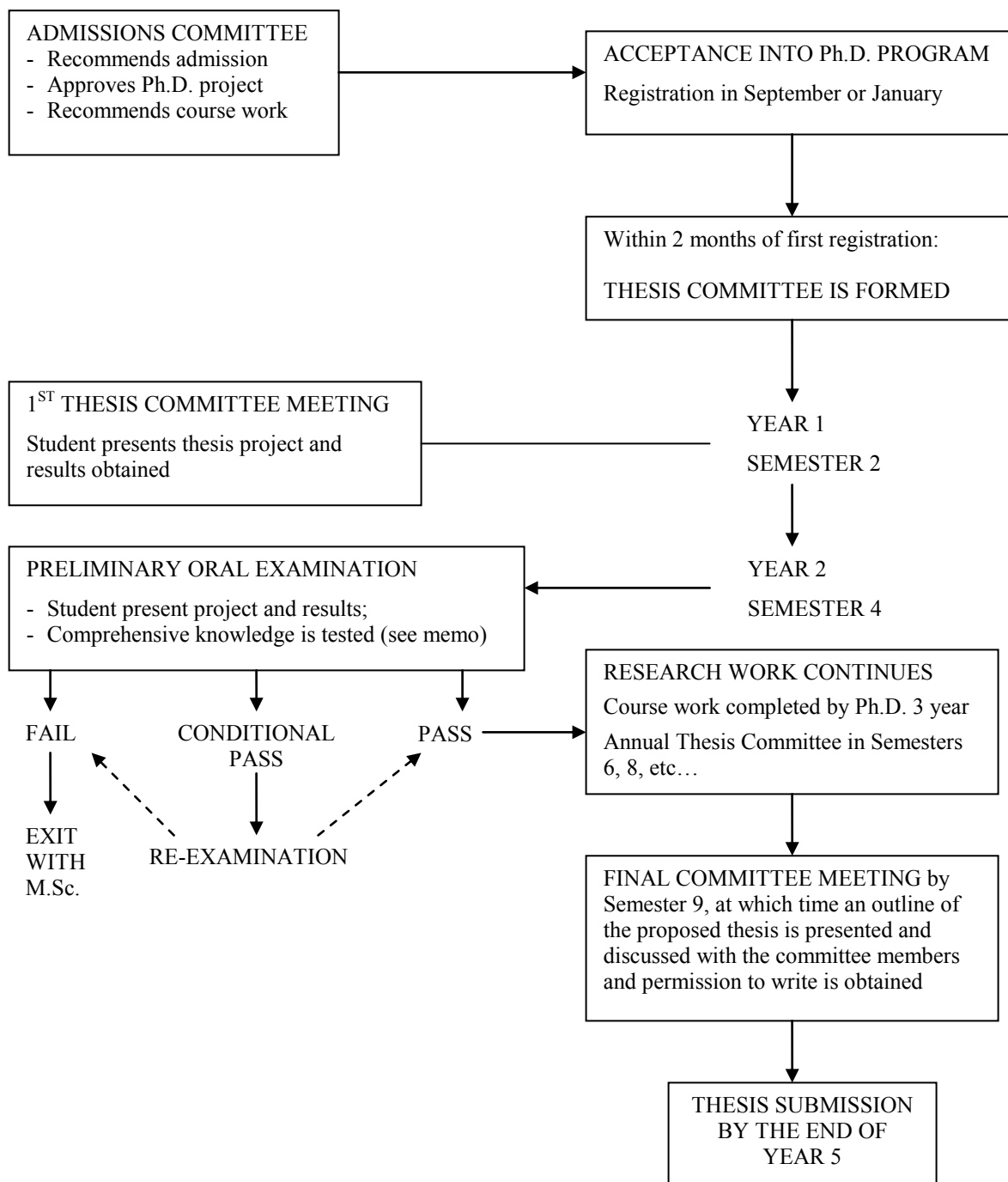
extraordinary circumstances, the Oral must be held before May 15th of the second year in the program (in the case of a September first registration) and before December 15th of the second year in the program (in the case of a January first registration).

The purpose of the examination is to test whether (i) the students' work is progressing satisfactorily and is of sufficiently high calibre to warrant continuation in the program, and (ii) the students have a broad enough knowledge not only of their own field of research but also of related areas in their discipline. The examination is therefore, in part, a seminar for the students, who present their thesis projects and experiments thus far completed, and in part a comprehensive examination. The two parts are given equal weight when considering the students' performances.

The students are awarded a Pass or Fail. A Pass signifies that students may proceed to complete the Ph.D. If a student fails, the option is given to exit the graduate program by writing a Master's thesis. A Conditional Pass signifies that the performance of the student has not been satisfactory but there are extenuating circumstances for allowing the student to resit the exam no later than 6 months after the first oral. A Pass is then awarded only if the second examination is judged to be satisfactory.

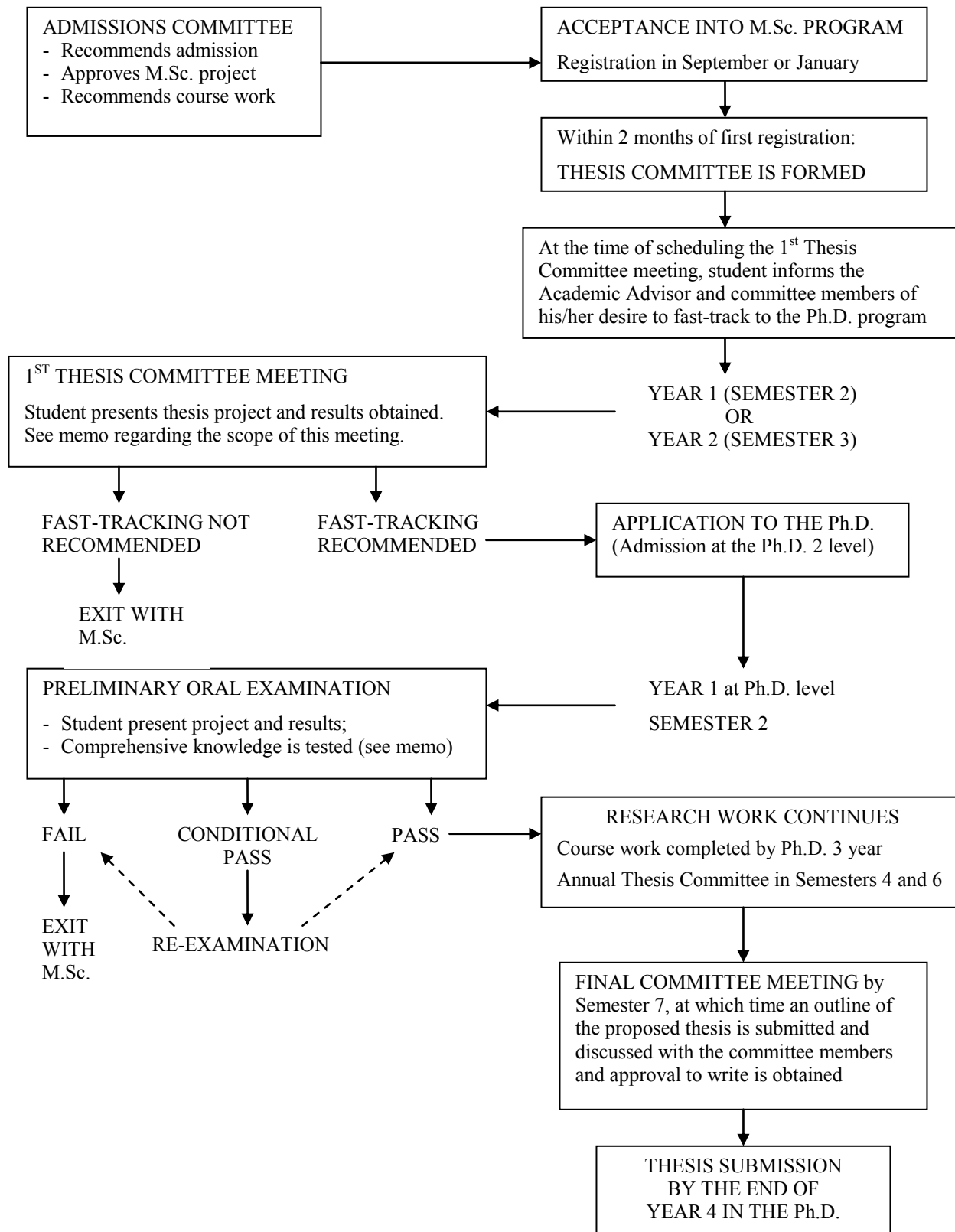
The timelines to completion of the M.Sc. and Ph.D. are thus, as follows:

TIMELINE FOR THE Ph.D.
FROM ADMISSION TO PRELIMINARY ORAL
 (for direct-entry students or students having entered with a prior M.Sc.)



TIMELINE FOR THE Ph.D. FROM ADMISSION TO PRELIMINARY ORAL

(for students having fast-tracked to the Ph.D.)



THESIS SUBMISSION AND FINAL ORAL
(section under construction)

WHEN AM I READY TO START WRITING A THESIS?

WHAT ARE THE STEPS LEADING TO THESIS SUBMISSION?

WHAT OCCURS BEFORE THE FINAL ORAL AND WHEN CAN IT BE HELD?

WHO SERVES ON THE FINAL ORAL COMMITTEE?

WHEN ARE ALL OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE FULFILLED?