

PhD students - acceptance and regulations - School of Molecular Cell Biology & Biotechnology

Introduction:

This document is written for PhD students. It aims at describing the acceptance procedures and the regulations during the course of the PhD studies*.

*The document is written for both genders.

Chapter 1: Acceptance

1. Registration time:

- 1.1 Students are encouraged to register before Oct 1st. This date matches the beginning of the academic year and allows planning of teaching assistance positions.
- 1.2 Nevertheless, a PhD student can start the actual appointment and studies at any point during the year, according to the regulations below. We ask that in this case, to the best of the student's ability, the registration process takes place already in the summer, according to the regulations detailed below.

2. Acceptance regulations:

Acceptance regulations are different for: (1) students who completed their Master thesis in the School of Molecular Cell Biology and Biotechnology, (2) Students who switch from a Master course to a direct PhD course, (3) Students who obtained their Master degree elsewhere:

- 2.1 Students who successfully finished the Master studies in the School (according to the Faculty's regulations: a combined average grade higher than 80 and a thesis grade higher than 85), will be automatically accepted to the school without the need to go through acceptance committees.
- 2.2 Students who switch to a direct PhD course must be interviewed by a School Committee that will be appointed by the school's PhD committee. The prerequisites for applying to the direct PhD course (time since starting the Master studies, number of academic hours taken, courses and grades) will be those that were dictated by the School of Advanced Studies of the Faculty of Life Sciences. Students who successfully pass the interview by the School Committee will be automatically accepted to the PhD course.
- 2.3 Students who obtained their Master degree from an academic institute other than the School of Molecular Cell Biology & Biotechnology will have to be accepted according to the following regulations:
 - 2.3.1 The candidate has to provide the School with a complete candidate file that includes:
 - (a) A formal approval of the B.Sc. and Master degrees including grades of courses taken and final grade. The Master degree must be with a thesis (according to the regulations of the Faculty of Life Sciences: a

combined average grade higher than 80 and a thesis grade higher than 85).

(b) Curriculum vitae and two letters of recommendation to be sent directly to the head of the PhD committee.

2.3.2 The Head of the PhD committee will assemble an acceptance committee that will discuss the application and if necessary will interview the candidate.

2.4 As all PhD students in our School receive a scholarship, acceptance is conditioned on a written letter from the student's prospective mentor in which it is stated that if needed, the mentor agrees to cover the scholarship and the tuition of the student.

Chapter 2: PhD course of studies

1. Academic committee:

1.1 An academic committee will be assigned to each student. This committee is responsible for following the academic progress of the student's PhD. The committee is comprised of three faculty members. One of the members must be from our School and will serve as the head of the committee. One of the two additional faculty members will be from outside the school.

1.2 The members of the committee are not allowed to collaborate with the student. If such collaboration is established, the head of the School Ph.D. committee will appoint a substitute member, after consulting with the student's mentor.

1.3 The student's mentor is not part of the academic committee and does not attend its meetings (described below)

1.4 During the meetings of the academic committee, presentation is allowed only for the results (without an introduction chapter, research aims, summary or discussion). Food and drinks are not allowed during committee meetings.

2. Research proposal

2.1 A proposal report should be submitted to the committee members less than a year from the beginning of graduate studies. If needed, it is possible to postpone the submission of the progress report to 18 months from the beginning of graduate studies.

2.2 The structure of the proposal is detailed in the appendix of this document (appendix: structure of a PhD proposal).

2.3 Reminders to submit the proposal will be sent 11, 14, and 17 months from the beginning of graduate studies.

2.4. If a student fails to submit the proposal 18 months from the beginning of the graduate studies, the student's file will be handled first by the School's PhD Committee and then, by the Faculty School of Advanced Studies.

2.5. Following submission of the proposal and deciding who will serve as members the school secretary will set a meeting of the Academic Committee with the student (without the student's mentor). In this meeting, the student will present the research proposal and will discuss it with the Committee. Following the meeting, the Academic Committee will summarize the meeting, in a written report, and will send it to the school secretary and to the head of the school PhD committee. The report will state whether or not the Academic Committee approves the research proposal.

2.6 In case the Academic Committee does not approve the submitted research proposal, the Committee will set a time for reevaluating the student's progress. This reevaluation can be either with or without assembling the committee.

3. Mid-report:

3.1 The mid-report should be submitted to the members of the Academic Committee within one year from submitting the research proposal and no later than 2.5 years after the beginning of PhD studies. A month before this time, the secretary will send a first notification. The structure of the proposal is detailed in the appendix of this document (appendix: structure of a PhD progress report).

3.2 Mid-term report will require the convening of the PhD student's academic committee. The committee will file a report describing the progress of the student.

4. Final report:

4.1 One year and 6 months after the mid-report and no later than four years after the beginning of graduate studies, the student should submit to the Academic Committee a final PhD report. A month before this time, the secretary will send to the student and the mentor a first reminder.

4.2 The Academic Committee at this stage will aim to determine whether the student is ready to start summarizing the PhD thesis in writing. In case there are no special issues, the Academic Committee may decide to approve the final report without a meeting. Otherwise, the committee may decide to meet with the student to discuss the report. In either case the Academic Committee will file a written report to notify their decision regarding the approval of the final report and state that the student can start writing the thesis.

4.3 If the committee does not approve the final report (i.e., does not approve writing the thesis), it can ask the student to submit a revised final report after a certain period of time in order to follow the student's progress. As above, the committee may decide to approve the final report either with or without a meeting with the student.

Chapter 3: Thesis submission

The thesis should be prepared and submitted according to the regulations of the University. The thesis should be submitted to the secretary of the School of Advanced Science in our Faculty.

Chapter 4: Student lectures

1. Each PhD student has to give two lectures during the course of his PhD studies:

1.1 A first short lecture will be given just before or after the submission of the research proposal.

1.2 A longer and more festive lecture will be given towards the end of the PhD studies. It will take 45 minutes and the student may invite friends and family for this lecture.

2. The PhD lectures will be given in a special School PhD Forum, which will be held weekly in a specific time slot for 45 minutes (one academic hour). In each meeting, either two short lectures (chapter 4, 1.1) or one PhD final lecture (chapter 4, 1.2) will be given. In case the final lecture cannot be given in the context of PhD Forum (due to conflicts of timing or because the student has to leave to his post doctorate), an alternative time slot will be reserved for the final PhD talk. It is recommended (but not obligatory) that all lectures are given in English.

For any questions and advice regarding the course of the PhD studies, please contact the head of the PhD Committee – Prof. Tal Pupko (talp@tau.ac.il)