

# Graduate Courses and Research Pathways for MD/PhD Students prior to entering a full-time PhD Program

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The following are the pathways you may use to engage in graduate work prior to entering full-time PhD studies. In all cases, make sure that Dr. Rosenblum and Kendra Hawke are aware of your plans.

## **Apply to a PhD Program**

Students who have selected a PhD program and supervisor may apply and be a registered student in this program during their MD program. This is the clearest path to integrating your MD and PhD studies in order to move ahead with your academic program, as efficiently as possible.

### Advantages

- You can design your PhD program with your supervisor, and be certain that the courses you are taking will count towards your PhD.
- You will have a head start on your PhD program by taking courses, required training, and/or completing research in advance of your full-time start date.

### Important Reminders

Make sure that your supervisor knows:

- The specific date that you expect to start full-time PhD studies, for example, May 2017, or September 2017
- Their funding obligations will not begin until you are a full-time PhD student (have exited the MD program)

### Process

You are able to apply as early as during your first term of your MD program, through consultation with the MD/PhD Director, and the graduate unit.

Please see the [MD/PhD Student Handbook](#) for the all steps and tips for finding a graduate supervisor.

## **MD/PhD CREMS Summer Research Program**

If you are not certain of your plans for your PhD, and prefer to use this time to explore your options, you may take advantage of the MD/PhD CREMS Program.

### Advantages

- Provides a research experience, without the commitment of a PhD

### Process

Students are expected to seek out a mentor and project that is related to your goals as a clinician scientist. Students may participate in projects under the supervision of faculty in another institution (within Canada or the U.S.). However, a University of Toronto co-supervisor would be required, and a Supervisor/Student Agreement Form signed by all successful participants. This ONLY applies to work being performed in Toronto.

Once you have found a project, please ask your proposed supervisor to complete and submit the supervisor information form and submit to the CREMS Programs Office. The proposal will be reviewed by the Director of CREMS and the Director of the MD/PhD program for approval. Please visit the CREMS website for forms and due dates.

## **Register in a Graduate Unit as a Non-Degree Student (Special Student)**

It is possible to take graduate-level courses prior to applying to a full-time PhD program. You must select a specific program where you wish to take graduate courses. You can then contact Kendra Hawke with the program name, and she will assist you with an application to that unit as a non-degree graduate student.

### Advantages

- You may explore graduate-level courses in order to gauge your interest in the subject

### Important Reminders

- These courses will not automatically apply to your PhD.
- The number of courses that can be transferred into a graduate program is no greater than 25% of that program. For example, if your program requires 10 courses, a maximum of 2 courses can be transferred into your program.
- Regular doctoral stream students will have registration priority over non-degree students.
- Initial contact with graduate units regarding this process must be initiated through the PST Program Manager (Kendra Hawke).
- After the process is initiated by the PST Program Manager, you should meet with the unit's Graduate Coordinator, in order to be advised on the most appropriate courses relating to your future academic goals.
- Students who apply to SGS for non-degree registration pay an application fee. When you apply to SGS for a full-time graduate program at a later date, this fee will be waived. Please contact the PST Program Manager (Kendra) when it comes time to make this second SGS application.

## Process

Review the graduate units that you are considering and narrow them down to one or two, based on the courses that you wish to take. Once you have decided on a unit, discuss with Kendra Hawke.

Please note that you must officially transfer of any courses taken as a non-degree student into your graduate program. Once you are admitted to a degree program, your supervisor must include any courses completed during your time as a non-degree student in your program plan. You must contact your graduate administrator to complete paperwork to officially transfer these courses into your graduate program. This must be approved by your supervisor and the program chair.

## Graduate Units

The following graduate units have agreed to consider this type of registration, on a case by case basis. If a unit is not on this list, it is because they have not been approached. Please contact Kendra Hawke if there is a graduate unit you are considering that is not listed here:

- IBBME
- IHPME
- Immunology
- IMS
- LMP
- Molecular Genetics
- Physiology

Specific Recommendations for those considering IMS as a non-degree student, from IMS:

Students interested in advancing their research prior to starting full-time graduate studies at IMS do not need to be registered in the program to do so. There are several time-consuming tasks required prior to registration - e.g. identifying the most suitable supervisor and having fulsome discussion about project options in the lab; completing animal, ethics, biosafety and/or radioisotope certification; preparing a detailed research proposal; filing a REB protocol; learning the wet lab techniques you will need; or, preparing a literature review on the topic of the planned thesis. Completing these tasks will be better prepare you for your graduate admission interviews. This is especially important for those who do not hold a MSc, and wish to apply for PhDU admission.