University of Toronto
Major Modification Proposal:

Significant Modifications to Existing Graduate and Undergraduate Programs

This template should be used to bring forward all proposals for major modifications to existing graduate and undergraduate programs for governance approval under the University of Toronto’s Quality Assurance Process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program being modified:</th>
<th>Masters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please specify exactly what program and which components of that are being modified; e.g., BA...specialist, major and minor components.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposed major modification:</td>
<td>Change to program length</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department/unit (if applicable):</td>
<td>Cell and Systems Biology (CSB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty/academic division:</td>
<td>Arts and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean's office contact:</td>
<td>Sharon Kelly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proponent:</td>
<td>Cell and Systems Biology Graduate Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Version date:</td>
<td>February 14, 2020</td>
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<td>Please change as you edit this proposal.</td>
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</table>

1 Summary

- Please provide a brief summary of the change(s) being proposed as it relates to the current structure of the program.

We propose to change the minimum program length of the CSB Masters program as published in the SGS calendar from 6 sessions (24 months) to 4 sessions (16 months).

In the Fall of 2018 SGS began correcting an error in assessing the Balance of Degree fee for students in some graduate units, including CSB. The Balance of Degree fee is charged when, at the conclusion of their program, a student has paid less than the minimum degree fee, which is based on the full-time program length and is the minimum amount of tuition that every student must have paid upon completion of the program prior to graduation. As a result, a number of CSB MSc students who completed their degree prior to the 24 month minimum program length were unexpectedly charged a Balance of Degree fee. We seek, then, to amend our approved program length to more accurately reflect MSc program completion times within the department.
2 Effective Date

September 2020

3 Academic Rationale

- What are the academic reasons for the change proposed, and how do they fit with the unit’s and division’s academic plans?

Although the official program length of the MSc, as reflected in the SGS calendar, is 6 sessions full-time, many students complete the program requirements within 16 months, which aligns with the length of time required to efficiently provide a valued thesis degree. Although many MSc students complete degree requirements in 24 months, a significant number complete degree requirements in 16 months. Such variations are not unexpected in a research-thesis focused degree program. A 2018 FAS study indicated the average completion time by MSc students is 1.5 years.

The specific program requirements for the CSB MSc program are:

- **Coursework**: Students must successfully complete 0.5 graduate full-course equivalent (FCE)
- **Thesis**: Students must complete a thesis based on original research. The thesis is reviewed by the supervisor and two additional graduate faculty member and the student typically gives an oral public talk prior to a private oral defense.

The emphasis on 16 months is also critical to an on-time completion of the PhD within the time allowed for the funded cohort (5 years total) for those MSc students that go on to complete a PhD.

The program learning outcomes will not be changing; they are achievable within a 16 month period.

4 Description of the Proposed Major Modification(s)

- Please describe in detail what changes are being proposed. Major modifications include changes to the program requirements that will significantly change what students will know and be able to do when they complete the program.
- Other major modifications that may be included are significant changes to admissions requirements, significant changes to faculty engaged in program and; a change to mode of delivery, change to the language of the program and offering the program at another location or institution.
- Please be explicit about how the learning outcomes have changed and include both previous and proposed learning outcomes or one version of the current learning outcomes with the new learning outcome in track changes. You may wish to use Appendices A and B.
Major Modification Proposal: Significant Modifications to Existing Graduate and Undergraduate Programs

- Describe how the modification reflects universal design principles and/or how the potential need to provide mental or physical health accommodations has been considered in the development of this modification.
- Please provide calendar copy, either in track changes or as two separate documents in appendices C and D as applicable.

The change proposed is a reduction in the official MSc program length from 6 sessions to 4 sessions (full-time). The degree requirements, the ability of students to complete these requirements and the program learning outcomes will not be affected by this change, as they are achievable within this time frame. Masters’ students completing their program within 16 months is a common trend for the department.

This change was prompted by the correction of an error in calculating the balance of degree fee in previous years. Several of our recent MSc graduates who completed their degree prior to the minimum length of 24 months were charged this fee and we wish to rectify this for future graduates.

5 Impact of the Change on Students

- Outline the expected impact on continuing students, if any, and how they will be accommodated.
- Please detail any consultation with students.

The reduced minimum program length will not alter the academic and financial support (e.g. RA) that the department offers to students whose M.Sc. studies continue beyond a fourth session up to 24 months.

Discussed at Graduate student town hall meetings (Nov 9, 2018; Nov 7, 2019).

6 Consultation

- Describe the impact of the major modification on other programs and any consultation undertaken with the Dean and chair/director of relevant academic units.

There will be no impact on other programs.

This proposal was discussed and approved by members of the CSB Graduate Studies Committee, which includes research faculty members from each of the sub-disciplines and the three campuses (Oct 8, 2019) and at a CSB Faculty meeting (Nov 5, 2019).

Developed by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
Template last updated March 2, 2017
7 Resources

- Describe any resource implications of the change(s) including, but not limited to, faculty complement, space, libraries and enrolment/admissions.
- Please be specific where this may impact significant enrolment agreements with the Faculty/Provost’s office.
- Indicate if the major modification will affect any existing agreements with other institutions, or will require the creation of a new agreement to facilitate the major modification (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding, Memorandum of Agreement, etc). Please consult with the Provost’s office (vp.academicprograms@utoronto.ca) regarding any implications to existing or new agreements.

None. As noted above, students who must continue beyond a fourth session will continue to receive academic and financial support from the department, as they currently do.

8 UTQAP Process

The UTQAP pathway is summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Approvals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development/consultation within unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation with Dean’s office (and VPAP)</td>
<td>Unit-level approval as appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty/divisional council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission to Provost’s office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reported to the Provost and included in annual report to AP&amp;P</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ontario Quality Council—reported annually</td>
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Appendix A: Calendar Copy

Master of Science

Program Description

The MSc program in Cell and Systems Biology provides ideal training for career paths in education, business, and policy where science-based decision-making and the interpretation and transmission of scientific information are becoming increasingly important, particularly in many of the “knowledge-based” economies that are emerging the world over.

The MSc program trains scientists who are well suited to fill this demand. The program’s objective is to provide students with skills in the generation, critical evaluation, assessment, and communication of data so that they are equipped to proceed with further post-graduate degrees, or other career opportunities where such skills are desired.

Minimum Admission Requirements

- Applicants are admitted under the General Regulations of the School of Graduate Studies. Applicants must also satisfy the Department of Cell and Systems Biology’s additional admission requirements stated below.

- An appropriate bachelor’s degree with high academic standing from a recognized university, with a B+ (or equivalent) average in the final year of the bachelor’s program, and a mid-B overall average in the previous year of study.

Program Requirements

- Complete 0.5 full-course equivalent (FCE) of approved graduate coursework.

- Complete the CSB 1010Y MSc Seminar Series (1.0 FCE, minimum 24 seminars per year).

- Complete a thesis based on a research project.

- Give a public presentation of thesis research and defend the thesis at an oral examination.

Program Length

4 sessions full-time (typical registration sequence F/W/S/F)

6 sessions full-time (typical registration sequence: F/W/S/F/W/S)

Time Limit

3 years full-time