

Guidelines for the PhD Program at IISER Mohali

(Approved by the Senate in its meeting held on December 26, 2008)

The major focus at IISER Mohali is to create a world class scientific institution with an intellectually alive atmosphere of research. The doctoral program at IISER Mohali involves course work, a comprehensive examination, thesis work and a thesis examination, leading to the award of a PhD degree. Besides research, students will be involved in several professional activities such as seminars, workshops, and review meetings. All doctoral students are expected to participate in the teaching program of the institute, as part of their training.

1 Admission:

Admission to the doctoral program is after a Master's degree in science. Besides the students of the Integrated Master's program, Postgraduate students with a Master's degree in science from other Universities/Institutes will also be admitted to the doctoral program. Under special circumstances, exceptional candidates with B.Tech/B.E. degree will also be considered for admission. Applicants to the PhD program are required to have at least a high second class in MSc and should have qualified a national level test such as GATE/NET/JEST/ICMR/DBT (and any other national level examination that the IISER Senate decides to recognize from time to time) or should have completed M.Tech through GATE, and will be selected through an interview process. The admission to the PhD program will be conducted twice a year, for the semesters beginning in July and December respectively. This admission procedure will be modified by the Senate from time to time, to suit the needs of the Institute.

2 Coursework:

The admitted PhD students will undergo a coursework comprising a total of 24 credits (this could for example be six 04 credit courses or eight 03 credit courses). At the end of the coursework, the student will undertake a comprehensive examination that will test the student's basic knowledge and preparedness for undertaking research. A PhD student must have a minimum CPI of 7.0 in the coursework and must pass the comprehensive examination as a pre-requisite for continuation in the PhD program. A CPI below 7.0 in two consecutive semesters will lead to the termination of the studentship of a PhD student. The comprehensive examination will be conducted by a three-member doctoral committee (including the research supervisor/advisor) constituted for each student by the Senate. The doctoral committee will assign either a pass or a fail grade to the candidate after

the comprehensive examination. This committee will monitor the progress of the student upto thesis submission. The requirements for coursework and comprehensive examination must be completed within two years from the date of joining the PhD program. A maximum of two attempts are allowed for the comprehensive examination, with a gap of at least two months between the attempts. A student who is not able to complete the coursework requirements and the comprehensive examination within two years of joining the program, will have to withdraw from the program. The aim of the coursework is to strengthen fundamental understanding in the subject and to prepare students to undertake research in their specific areas.

2.1 Guidelines for coursework:

- The grading procedures for PhD courses will be the same as that for other courses in the institute. The instructor at the end of a course will assign letter grades A, B, C, D, or F with respective grade points of 10, 8, 6, 4 and 0. A grade I will be assigned in case the course is left incomplete due to unavoidable reasons, and the student with an I grade will have to take a make-up examination in that course. The grade point will be calculated as an average over various courses credited by the student weighted with the respective course credits.
- Courses IDC601 and IDC602 will be seminar courses offered in July and December semesters respectively and will be taken by all the PhD students of the institute. These courses will be two credits each and will involve attending and delivering seminars.
- Some of the courses could be reading courses with faculty members at IISER Mohali.
- Under special circumstances, a student can request for exemption from course work of upto a maximum of 20 credits based on courses already taken in institutions like IISER/IISc/IITs, offering courses at the PhD level. This exemption will be granted by the Senate on the recommendation of the doctoral committee.
- The Senate may also allow a PhD student to take certain courses in other academic institutions.

3 Allocation of research supervisor:

A PhD student will work with a research supervisor (or with more than one supervisor, upto a maximum of three supervisors). Any faculty member of the Institute can function as a research supervisor. The supervisor can be chosen anytime, before completing the course requirements. However, every PhD student will be assigned a faculty advisor from the date of joining the program. This is to provide a certain flexibility in the supervisor allocation process. The preference for research area, the performance in the interview and the grades obtained by the students in the courses taken upto the time of allocation will be used as input for research supervisor allotment. Under special circumstances, the Senate can allow one of the supervisors to be a scientist from another academic institution.

4 Submission of PhD thesis:

On completion of the research work, the student will submit a thesis. The student is expected to give an open seminar before thesis submission. The thesis will be evaluated by at least three examiners nominated by the Senate of the Institute (ordinarily one will have to be from outside the Institute but from within India and another from outside India) and a viva-voce examination will be conducted. Taking into consideration the research work and the evaluation reports, the Senate will award the PhD degree to the candidate. The minimum residency requirement for submission of thesis is 2.5 years, out of which at least one year will have to be after the completion of the comprehensive examination. The registration of a student will get automatically canceled if he/she does not submit the thesis within 8 years of joining the program. After the comprehensive examination and upto thesis submission, every PhD student will submit a yearly progress report to his doctoral committee.

5 Fellowship and Fees

The PhD students will be paid a fellowship for four years from the date of joining the program. The period of fellowship will be extendable for one more year on the recommendation of the doctoral committee of the student. The fellowship amount will be fixed from time to time as per the MHRD guidelines. A PhD student can receive only one fellowship at a time. The PhD students will pay fees to remain registered and the amount of such fees will be fixed by the Board of Governors from time to time.

6 Exceptional Clause

The Senate will examine exceptional cases where relaxation of the above guidelines is warranted and grant the same if deemed fit.