



Guideline Name:	Carleton University Fast-Track Guidelines
Originating/Responsible Department:	Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs
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Contact:	Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs

What is fast-tracking?

Fast-tracking refers to outstanding Carleton University master's students being admitted into a PhD program, without completing their master's program.

Students who fast-track and complete their PhD do not receive a master's program credential.

Programs do not require explicit language in the graduate calendar for students to fast-track.

Admissions

PhD programs often specify that students have a master's degree as part of the admissions requirements. Fast-tracked students can be admitted to a PhD program, without a completed master's program, based on evidence of the student being an outstanding applicant.

Units may impose specific admissions requirements in order for students to fast-track (e.g., successful completion of the PhD comprehensive exam).

Advanced Standing

Courses completed as a master's student will be used as part of the basis of admissions to the PhD when fast-tracking; however, course work completed as a master's student could be considered for advanced standing towards the PhD. Advanced standing would be for courses that fulfill the PhD program requirements and contribute to the PhD program's learning outcomes.

Time to Completion

If a student fast-tracks into a PhD, their time to completion adheres to the university regulations, which dictates time limits from the date of their initial PhD registration (see Regulation 13 of the Graduate Calendar).

If a student receives advanced standing for coursework, their time to completion is expected to reduce, as they should be able to engage in their thesis research sooner.

Process

Fast-tracking should be considered early in the student's third term of registration in their master's program.

Based on an initial assessment by the unit, the student can be encouraged to apply to the PhD. The unit's admissions committee will make a formal assessment and recommendation on the applicant. A recommendation for admission to FGPA should indicate that the recommendation is a "fast-track", along with any recommendations for advanced standing. Once the student receives their letter of offer, they can accept the offer and withdraw from their master's program; a student cannot be simultaneously enrolled in two programs.

Funding

Domestic students who are fast-tracked into a PhD program can expect to receive PhD level funding, from FGPA, in line with that offered to new PhD applicants of similar caliber. This funding will normally be higher than the level currently received as a Master's student.

Please note that external awards/scholarships will be issued or amended based on external agency criteria. Therefore, fast-track candidates who are scheduled to receive an external award/scholarship should confirm if there is any impact on this funding resulting from the change to a PhD program.