

Memorandum

From: Ahmad Afsahi
Professor and Chair of Graduate Studies

Date: Updated Nov 22, 2025 (initially posted on Sept 10, 2020, updated Jan 5, 2021)

Re: Policy to determine the minimum coursework requirements for new PhD students with a Master's degree from the ECE Department at Queen's and in the same area of study

Background

The Second paragraph of Regulation 2.1.5 of Smith Engineering Graduate Council Manual states:

2.1.5 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

- For students who received a Master's from the same Department at Queen's and in the same area of study, the minimum course requirements shall be decided in consultation with the PhD Advisory Committee and approved by the Department Head or Graduate Coordinator.

Department Policy

For new PhD students who may be subject to Regulation 2.1.5 of the Smith Engineering Graduate Council Manual, a Committee will be struck and will hold a meeting at the start of the student's PhD program (September or January) to determine the minimum required number of courses for their PhD program. As this is an academic decision, a formal process is required to implement this regulation in a fair and transparent way, to keep the Committee's deliberation on the student file, and to forward a copy to the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs.

Committee Membership:

- Chair of Graduate Studies (Committee Chair)
- Members of the Student's PhD Advisory Committee

The Committee Chair and the Members of the PhD Advisory Committee are voting members of the Committee for a total of four voting members (even if the PhD student is supervised by more than one supervisor). The primary Supervisor, Internal Examiner, Department Representative, and Chair of Graduate Studies must all be present in the meeting to determine the minimum coursework requirement for the student's PhD program. A unanimous agreement between the voting members is needed to approve a plan.

Committee Terms of Reference:

- To determine if the PhD student has received their MASc/MEng degree from the ECE Department in the same study area as their PhD thesis research area.
- To review the plan of study for the student's PhD research program, and to determine the minimum coursework requirement for the student's PhD program.
- After the deliberation, the Chair is responsible to ask the Committee to enter their decision on the *Minimum PhD Coursework Requirement* Form, sign, and date it. The final remarks on the form can be compiled by the Chair and agreed upon by the Committee.

Additional Notes:

- In September/January, when the student's PhD program commences, the Department in consultation with the student's Supervisor(s) establish the PhD Advisory Committee consisting of the Supervisor(s), an Internal Examiner, and a Department Representative.
- In consultation with the student's PhD Advisory Committee and the Chair of Graduate Studies, the Supervisor is responsible to schedule a meeting at the start of the student's PhD program (September or January) and inform the Department.
- To comply with privacy regulations, the PhD student's authorization is required for the Committee to review the student's transcripts.
- The completed PhD Minimum Coursework Requirement Form will be kept on the student file and submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs.

Minimum PhD Coursework Requirement Form

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Committee	Name	Minimum Number of Required Courses	Signature	Date
Supervisor(s):				
Internal Examiner:				
Dept. Representative:				
Graduate Chair:				

Remarks:

Committee Chair