

Direct Track to PhD Procedure – Faculty of Biology

Purpose:

This procedure outlines the steps and requirements for MSc students in the Faculty of Biology who wish to transfer to a direct PhD track. The procedure allows students who have demonstrated significant research progress and have obtained sufficient results during the first year of their MSc studies to transition to the PhD program, fostering academic excellence and research success within the faculty.

Criteria:

Students must meet the criteria outlined by the Technion Graduate School, detailed on the official website.

- Completion of at least one full semester post-research topic approval (approximately one year into the MSc program).
- Completion of at least 50% of the MSc course credit requirements with an average grade of 90 or higher.
- Graduates with distinction in a 4-year undergraduate track with an average grade of 85 or above, and graduates with distinction in a 3-year undergraduate track may apply after one semester post-research topic approval, provided they have completed at least one-third of their MSc coursework (minimum of 8 credits).

Research Progress: the student must demonstrate significant MSc research results that can serve as the basis for a PhD dissertation.

Application Process:

Students must submit the following to the Faculty's Graduate Coordinator:

- A letter of intent explaining their reasons for wishing to transfer to the direct PhD track (in Hebrew or English).
- A progress report (up to 5 pages, excluding references) including introduction, research objectives, hypothesis/research question, preliminary results, and a preliminary PhD research plan.
- A recommendation letter from their advisor.
- A recommendation letter from an additional faculty member.

Review by the Graduate Studies Committee:

- The Graduate Studies Committee will review the submitted documents to ensure completeness.
- Students will undergo an oral examination to assess research progress, understanding of the research area, and readiness for PhD-level work.
- Main goals of the examination are to:
 1. Evaluate the student's research experience, understanding of methods, and critical thinking.
 2. Assess the significance of preliminary results as a basis for a PhD project.
- The exam will be conducted by a panel of at least three faculty members and the Faculty's Graduate Coordinator.
- A subject expert may be invited if necessary.
- The exam will be conducted in the absence of the student's advisor.
- Students will present their research (up to 10 slides) covering introduction, preliminary results, hypothesis/research question, and a preliminary PhD research plan.
- Panel members may ask clarifying questions at any point during the examination. However, they will aim to allow the student to finish presenting their main points prior to general discussion. Following the presentation, a free-format Q&A discussion will take place.
- The duration of the exam will be 15–30 minutes.

Decision and Notification:

Evaluation Criteria: the committee will base its decision on the significance of the research results and their suitability to serve as a basis for a PhD project, and the student's ability to pursue a PhD project.

Notification: students will receive a written decision within two business days. If approved, transition guidelines to the PhD program will be provided.

Transition to the PhD Program:

- Students must complete the MSc curriculum and fulfill all PhD program requirements.
- A PhD candidacy examination (Predoc exam, please refer to a separate protocol) must occur within six months of the transition.

Appeal Process:

- Students who are refused transition to the direct PhD track may appeal the decision.
- Appeals must be submitted by the student in writing to the Head of the Graduate Studies Committee via the Graduate Coordinator within two weeks of receiving the decision.
- The committee will review the appeal and may request additional information or schedule a follow-up meeting with the student before reaching a final decision.