

MB ChB/PhD Protocol

This protocol is for medical students who wish to take an approved course of study leading to the degrees of MB ChB and PhD

The purpose of combining the two degrees is to allow the most able of the medical undergraduates to undertake PhD training while still an undergraduate. One of the benefits would be that these students would then approach clinical training having had significant research training and experience. There is an acknowledged need for well-trained physician/scientists worldwide. Requirements of postgraduate training of both house surgeon and registrar level mean that few medical graduates in New Zealand can contemplate taking time after graduation from MB ChB to devote to full time research necessary for a PhD. The period after MB ChB graduation is normally occupied in obtaining postgraduate clinical qualifications.

It is important to emphasise that the Otago Medical School would not wish to see any compromise in the standard required for either qualification. The academic criteria for the course outlined below would ensure there is no compromise. The MB ChB remains a six-year course of undergraduate study while the PhD requires the usual minimum period of study.

The award of the PhD would be conditional upon the award of the MB ChB unless the student has a prior University qualification.

The same processes of selection and supervision will apply to both graduate and undergraduate entrants to second year medicine who wish to undertake the course.

A. Selection of Candidates

- i) Only students with exceptional academic ability as demonstrated by their academic record or research experience will be selected for this course of study.
- ii) Students entering the course will be required to have had research experience, for example, a structured summer programme for which the student will enrol. This programme would involve training in research methods and provide research experience.
- iii) Students entering the MB ChB/PhD course of study will require the prior approval of the Academic Board of the Otago Medical School and the Graduate Research Committee.
- iv) A student may exit the programme through choice or because of unsatisfactory progress. The student may enrol for a BMedSc(Hons) and use completed research work towards that degree.

B. Duration of the Course

- i) Students will complete the prescribed medical course.
- ii) Between third year and entry to sixth year, usually as a two-year period at the end of third year, candidates will complete two years of full time supervised research.
- iii) Candidates will complete additional research work during 4th, 5th and if needed 6th Year MBChB on a part-time basis (and may use the three-month elective period on a full-time basis in the trainee intern year if needed). This elective period may be used for PhD approved research in an overseas laboratory.
- iv) Candidates who have not met the duration of the PhD course requirements during this period will complete PhD research after MB ChB graduation.

C. Supervision

- i) From the time of acceptance into the MB ChB/PhD course of study the supervision of all research work will be as for a PhD. There will be a principal supervisor and at least one co-supervisor or a Departmental Advisory Committee. Supervision of those candidates who have enrolled for a BMedSc(Hons) with a view to applying towards the end of that year for entry to the MB ChB/PhD course of study will be as for a PhD.
- ii) Six monthly annual progress reports will be required from the candidates as for a PhD student. These will be reviewed by the Graduate Research Committee. At the end of the first year of research, approval from both the Academic Board of the Otago Medical School and the Graduate Research Committee would be required for the candidate to enrol for a second year. At the end of the second year of full time research progress would again be reviewed by both the Academic Board of the Otago Medical School and the Graduate Research Committee.

D. Enrolment

For undergraduate candidates enrolling in the course at the end of third year the enrolment procedures would be as follows:

Progress	Course	PhD enrolment	PhD Months	PhD EFTs
Year 1	Enrolled Health Sciences First Year			
Years 2 – 3	Enrolled MB ChB Years 2 & 3			
Summer	Enrolled in structured programmes in research methodology & practice			
Year 4	Enrolled BMedSc(Hons) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply to upgrade to PhD (does not submit BMedSc(Hons) thesis) Approval for admission to Integrated MB ChB/PhD programme 	Jan – Dec	12 FT	1
Year 5	PhD Year 2	Jan – Dec	12 FT	1
Year 6	Enrolled MB ChB Year 4 concurrently with PhD	Jan – Dec	12 HT	.5
Year 7	Enrolled MB ChB Year 5 concurrently with PhD	Jan – Dec	12 HT	.5
Year 8 (optional)	Enrolled PhD	Jan – Dec	12 FT	(1)
Year 8 (or 9)	Enrolled MB ChB Year 6 concurrently with PhD (including Elective quarter)	Jan – Dec	12 HT	.5

Enrolment of graduate entrants with research experience:

Progress	Course	PhD enrolment	Months	PhD EFTs
Years 1 – 4	Enrolled Honours Degree			
Year 5	Enrolled MB ChB Year 2			
Year 6	Enrolled MB ChB Year 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval for admission to Integrated MB ChB/PhD programme 			
Year 7	Enrolled PhD Year 1	Jan – Dec	12 FT	1
Year 8	Enrolled PhD Year 2	Jan – Dec	12 FT	1
Year 9	Enrolled MB ChB Year 4 concurrently with PhD	Jan – Dec	12 HT	.5
Year 10	Enrolled MB ChB Year 5 concurrently with PhD	Jan – Dec	12 HT	.5
Year 11 (optional)	Enrolled PhD	Jan – Dec	12 FT	(1)
Year 11 (or 12)	Enrolled MB ChB Year 6 concurrently with PhD (including Elective quarter)	Jan – Dec	12 HT	.5

This programme ensures the integrity of both degrees and that the students receive appropriate training in both medicine and research.

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