To: I/O Psychology Program, IIT  
From: Roya Ayman, Director  
Date: October 1, 2003  
Re: Thesis requirement for Ph.D. track students  

I/O faculty has consulted on the topic of completing a thesis versus a publishable project as a prerequisite for the Ph.D. program. Some students who felt this difference might not be fair had brought the question to our attention. Therefore, this message is drafted to inform all students of the requirements.

Background University Policy: It is important to remember that the university gives students 6 years maximum to complete a degree. Therefore, those who enter the Ph.D. track at IIT with a bachelor’s degree will potentially have a maximum of 12 years to complete their Ph.D. Those who enter the Ph.D. track with a MS degree will have a maximum of 6 years to meet all requirements of the degree.

Student who enter the Ph.D. track with a bachelors are expected to earn a masters degree before getting a Ph.D. Students are required to complete their core courses in Psychology with a B average in the first two years of their attendance at IIT as graduate students (this is considered a masters qualifying exam for an M.S. in Psychology). As mentioned above, the university gives students a maximum of 6 years to complete their thesis. The thesis is a research project that is of publishable quality and is conducted under the supervision of a faculty advisor in the I/O program. Students are expected to successfully defend this project in front of three faculty members (their thesis advisor and two other faculty members) and meet other IIT graduate school requirements before they can graduate with an M.S. Then they can move on to their Ph.D. degree requirements such as taking the comprehensive exams.

Students who enter the Ph.D. track with a MS degree without a thesis needs to meet the following requirements before they can take the Ph.D. comprehensive exams. This includes students admitted into the Ph.D. program with a MS in PHRD from IIT. First, they have to complete the core courses in Psychology with a B average in the first two years of their attendance at IIT. They also need to complete a publishable paper with a faculty advisor. Until now (2003-2004) our policy was that the I/O faculty advisor and one other faculty member read this paper. Once they approved the project as equivalent to a thesis, and of publishable quality, the student would have met this requirement. Starting next year, Fall 2004, students in this category will be asked to defend their project in front of a committee of three faculty members (their advisor and two others). During this academic year, 2003-2004, students in this category will have the option to have a defense presentation or use the old practice. The I/O faculty believes the opportunity for the student to present his or her study and answer questions about it is an exercise that is educational and beneficial to his or her scholarly development.