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Guidelines on Conducting MPhil and PhD Thesis Examinations

A. Introduction

1. The thesis examination is mandatory for those enrolled in research postgraduate programs. It is conducted by a Thesis Examination Committee (TEC).

2. An MPhil TEC normally consists of at least four faculty members. Two thesis supervisors will both be on the committee. Of the other two members, one is appointed as Chairperson. All four are voting members.

3. A PhD TEC normally consists of a Chairperson and at least six voting examiners. The examiners include the thesis supervisors, two faculty members from the candidate's major Thrust, one faculty member from outside the Thrust, and one faculty external to the University who has expertise in the field being examined.

B. Protocol

1. A thesis examination takes place in a single session, comprising four parts. The first two parts are open to all members of the University and to Thrust/Base's guests. The third part is closed to all but the candidate and the TEC, and the fourth is a closed session of the TEC in the absence of the candidate.

2. The first part is an oral presentation by the candidate, emphasizing the major elements of the research and the results obtained. The candidate is expected to apportion no more than 60 minutes for the presentation.

3. The second part is an open questioning session, involving the TEC members, and others in attendance. During this part of the examination, all questions are addressed through the Chairperson, and any dialogue is limited to the candidate and the individual questioner.

4. The third part is a closed session involving a less formal discussion between the candidate and the TEC. Other than the candidate and the TEC, other persons are not ordinarily allowed to attend this part. However, in exceptional circumstances, with the prior agreement of the candidate, the thesis supervisors and the TEC Chairperson, other persons may be allowed to attend as observers. It should be noted that observers are not permitted to participate in the examination or attempt to influence the examiners in their assessment of the thesis examination. At the end of this part of the examination, the candidate and any observers must leave the examination venue.

5. The fourth and final part is a closed session involving only the TEC, who then assess the quality of the thesis, and the performance of the candidate during the examination. In arriving at a decision, the votes of members of the TEC carry equal weight.

6. The TEC will convey the outcome of the thesis examination to the student immediately after the thesis examination. The outcome will be recorded in a proforma report, the "Report on Thesis Examination Results for Research Postgraduate Degrees", as described below.

C. Reports

1. Report on Thesis Examination Results for Research Postgraduate Degrees

The examination result will be reported in a proforma entitled "Report on Thesis Examination Results for Research Postgraduate Degrees" and submitted by the TEC Chairperson.

1.1. This Report comprises several parts, to be completed by the examiners. Some parts need to be completed before the examination.

1.2. The TEC Chairperson shall collect Part 2 of the report from all the examiners and complete Part 3 and Part 4.1 of the report.

1.3. The report must include all comments that the TEC or the Chairperson wishes to make on the conducting of the examination, the quality of the thesis, the contribution of the thesis to the field of study, the performance and competency of the candidate in the thesis examination, and any other remarks relating to the thesis and the examination.

1.4. All TEC members must sign the report.

1.5. The TEC Chairperson shall return the completed form to Thrust/Base for further follow up, as described below.

2. Chairperson's Report on Thesis Examination

The Chairperson is also required to submit an online "Chairperson's Report on Thesis Examination" to the FYTGS within one week from the date of the thesis examination, reporting any irregularities observed during the conduct of the thesis examination.

D. Outcomes

A thesis examination, whether MPhil or PhD, will have one of the following results:

1. Passed;
2. Passed subject to minor corrections;
3. Passed subject to major corrections;
4. Failed but may be resubmitted; or
5. Failed.

The protocols for handling each outcome are described below.

1. Passed

    1.1. Procedure. The Chairperson will forward the completed "Report on Thesis Examination Results for Research Postgraduate Degrees", together with the final thesis, to the head of the candidate's Thrust. After signing the report, the Thrust Head will forward it to the Dean or the Dean's designee for endorsement. Finally, the Thrust/Base will forward it to the Academic Registry Services for action and record.

    1.2. Thesis submission deadline. If a thesis has been graded "Passed", the candidate must, within one week of the date of the thesis examination, submit an electronic copy of the final thesis, together with the electronic copy of the authorization page containing the student's signature, and a signature page containing signatures of the thesis supervisors and Thrust Head, to the University's Thesis Submission System.

2. Passed subject to minor corrections

    2.1. Procedure. In this case, the Chairperson should pass the entire set of documents to the thesis supervisors who should keep the report until the candidate has submitted a revised thesis to his/her satisfaction before the deadline as described below. The full set of documents, with the final thesis, should then be forwarded to the Thrust Head and the Dean or the Dean's designee for endorsement before passing to the Academic Registry Services for action and record.

    2.2. Thesis submission deadline. In this case, the final thesis and the *iThenticate* report must be submitted within three months from the date of the thesis examination, or a date specified by the TEC, whichever is earlier. The *iThenticate* report should be handed in to the supervisors, via the Thrust for review and endorsement.

    - The thesis supervisors will record whether the corrections are satisfactory in the "Report on Thesis Examination Results for Research Postgraduate Degrees".
    - Upon approving the thesis, the supervisors will forward the signed report, together with the final thesis, to the Thrust to obtain signatures of Thrust Head.
    - Candidates should allow sufficient time for the above approval processes.
    - Finally, the candidate must submit an electronic copy of the final thesis, with the electronic copy of the authorization page containing the student's signature and the appropriate signatures of approval, to the University's Thesis Submission System.

3. Passed subject to major corrections

    3.1. Procedure. In this case, the Chairperson should pass the entire set of documents to the thesis supervisors who should keep the report until the candidate has submitted a

revised thesis approved by the TEC before the deadline as described below. The full set of documents, with the final thesis, should then be forwarded to the Thrust Head and the Dean or the Dean's designee for endorsement before passing to the Academic Registry Services for action and record.

3.2. Thesis submission deadline. In this case, the final thesis and the *iThenticate* report must be submitted within 12 months from the date of the thesis examination, or a date specified by the TEC, whichever is earlier. The *iThenticate* report should be handed in to the TEC via the Thrust for review and endorsement.

- The revised thesis requires the approval of the full TEC.
- The TEC may recommend that a re-examination be held before a final assessment is arrived at. If a re-examination is required, the TEC membership should be the same as that for the first examination, unless otherwise recommended by the Thrust or FYTGS. In this case, the protocol is repeated, as for the first examination.
- The TEC will need to indicate whether the major corrections are satisfactory by completing the "Report on Thesis Examination Results for Research Postgraduate Degrees". If the members are satisfied with the revised thesis, the final thesis must be submitted, with the electronic copy of the authorization page containing the student's signature and the appropriate signatures of approval, to the University's Thesis Submission System.

4. Failed but may be resubmitted

4.1. In this case, the Chairperson should forward the duly completed "Report on Thesis Examination Results for Research Postgraduate Degrees" to the head of the candidate's Thrust. After signing the report, the Thrust Head will forward it to the Dean or the Dean's designee for endorsement.

4.2. Procedure. The result "Failed but may be re-submitted" requires that the entire examination process be repeated, including the re-establishment of a TEC.

- The TEC membership may or may not be the same as that for the first examination.
- Failure in the second attempt of thesis examination will result in the automatic withdrawal of the candidate from the program of study and termination of registration at the University.

4.3. Timeline. At least six months should pass before the second thesis examination. The protocol is repeated, as for the first examination.

5. Failed

In this case, the candidate is automatically withdrawn from the program of study and his/her registration at the University is terminated.

E. Submission of Final Thesis

1. Thesis copy. On successful completion of the thesis examination, and after any required corrections, a candidate must submit a copy of the thesis (either hard or electronic) to the Thrust/Base.

For final theses which have been graded "Passed subject to minor corrections" or "Passed subject to major corrections", students are required to submit the thesis for originality check via *iThenticate*. The *iThenticate* report should be handed in to their thesis supervisors, and the Thesis Examination Committee if applicable, for review and endorsement via their Thrust.

The Thrust/Base will arrange for the appropriate signatures of approval to be obtained, and then return the signed copy to the candidate. The candidate will upload and submit the Signature Page and the Authorization Page as a PDF file and the final thesis as another PDF file to the University's Thesis Submission System. The candidate does not need to replace the two unsigned pages in the thesis PDF with the scanned signature pages. The candidate will receive email acknowledgement of successful upload. The final thesis will be forwarded to the thesis supervisors for approval via the Thesis Submission System.

Note: Candidates should allow sufficient time for the thesis supervisors to check and verify their final version of the thesis, and for the Thrust/Base to obtain signatures of approval before the submission deadline.

2. The "**Report on Thesis Examination Results for Research Postgraduate Degrees**" will be submitted by the Thrust/Base to the Academic Registry Services.

3. **Other documents.** Candidates are also required to submit other documents to the Thrust/Base together with the final thesis. Details are available on the FYTGS website.

4. **Failure to meet submission deadline.** If a candidate fails to submit the final thesis before his/her specific deadline, the candidate will be deemed to have failed to meet the thesis examination requirements of the University and to have failed the requirements of the degree program being pursued. If the candidate fails to meet the deadline in submitting the final thesis, and the delay is no fault of the candidate, the candidate may appeal for an exception to the above rules in a written letter. The appeal must be supported by the thesis supervisors and PG Coordinator of the Thrust, and endorsed by the relevant Hub. It should then be submitted to FYTGS for further arrangements.