

 جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة United Arab Emirates University 	<b>Graduate Studies Policies Manual</b>	Policy Number	GP-03
		Effective Date	12-Aug-2018
	<b>Subject</b> The PhD Programs	Most Recent Review Date	15-Apr-2018
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### 3. The PhD Programs

#### Overview

Outlines the framework that governs students' pathway to graduation from the UAEU PhD Program.

#### Scope

Applies to the PhD Programs at UAEU.

#### Objective

The University is committed to the highest academic and administrative standards in the operation of its graduate programs. This Policy and its related Procedures provide the structures and processes required to manage student application, admission, progress and graduation with respect to the UAEU PhD Programs.

#### Policy

1. The University offers a Program leading to the award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), with the name of a Major, i.e. a broad area of specialization (e.g. Mathematics, Psychology, Electrical Engineering, etc.) cited on the degree diploma (certificate) and in the student's permanent academic record.
2. The PhD Program is given effect by this Policy and its related Procedures. The Procedures are the shared responsibility of the Graduate Studies Council and the Dean of the CGS.
3. Colleges may propose supplementary Rules and Regulations for the PhD Program as appropriate to the PhD Program in the respective College. Supplementary Rules and Regulations must not contradict and cannot annul any part of these Policies and Procedures. The Graduate Studies Council and the Dean of the CGS before their implementation must approve any PhD Rules and Regulations for a College.
4. The University will support the enrollment of gifted National and non-National students, through competitive Scholarships and Fellowships.

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## Procedures of Policy No. (3) - The PhD Programs

### 1. Program Administration

The PhD program is administered through the following:

- a) The Council of Graduate Studies that oversees the implementation of the PhD Program.
- b) The Assistant Dean for Research and Graduate Studies of the respective UAEU College and/or the College's PhD Program Coordinator.
  - (i) In consultation with the Assistant Dean, the Dean of the concerned College may recommend to the Signatory Authority a faculty member as the College's PhD Program Coordinator.
  - (ii) In consultation with the Assistant Dean, the Dean of the concerned College may also appoint a College PhD Committee consisting of faculty members, and chaired by the College's PhD Program Coordinator. The role of this Committee is to provide support and advice to the College's PhD Program Coordinator. Such a committee may be identical with or different from the College's Graduate Studies Committee composed of the Assistant Dean and the Graduate Program Coordinators.
  - (iii) A faculty member who serves as College Coordinator of the PhD Program is expected to demonstrate active scholarship within his or her discipline through a record of recent and substantial publications and presentations, research projects, contributions to professional organizations, and/or membership on editorial or advisory boards of reputable scholarly journals.
- c) In consultation with the Assistant Dean, the Dean of the concerned College may also appoint a Department's PhD Program Coordinator.
  - (i) The Department's Coordinator of the PhD Program is a faculty member recommended by the Department Chair upon consultation with the Assistant Dean, and is approved by the Dean of the College. He/she is usually also the Department's Master's Program Coordinator (or Chair of the Executive Committee for an Interdisciplinary Graduate Program), if a Master's program in the same discipline exists.
  - (ii) A faculty member who serves as the Department's Graduate/PhD Program Coordinator is expected to demonstrate active scholarship within his or her discipline through a record of recent and substantial publications and presentations, research projects, contributions to professional organizations, and/or membership on editorial or advisory boards of reputable scholarly journals.

### 2. The PhD Advisor

- a) Each PhD student who has been accepted into the PhD program in a Major in the Department will submit to the Department PhD Program Coordinator a proposal to designate a PhD Advisor, before the end of first semester of study. The PhD Advisor must be a faculty member in the College. The name of the PhD Advisor is to be approved by the Assistant Dean, in consultation with the College Dean, and submitted to the Dean of CGS. Any change in PhD Advisors is to be reported to the CGS.
- b) Faculty members who serve as PhD Advisors are expected to have obtained visibility and recognition within their discipline, demonstrated by substantial or sustained research, recent publications at the highest levels of their discipline, and/or leadership

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in professional organizations at the national and international level. PhD Advisors are expected to be able to direct the independent PhD research of the student. Advisors must have a terminal degree in the discipline in which the research is conducted, a strong record of research and scholarly activity, and prior supervisory experience, which may include supervision of a completed master's thesis or being a co-advisor of a completed PhD dissertation. Faculty members at the rank of Associate or Full Professor may supervise doctorate students even in the absence of prior supervisory experience.

- c) The student may request a change of PhD Advisor through the PhD Program Coordinator/s and the Assistant Dean, in consultation with the current PhD Advisor. A change of Advisor will normally not be implemented after the student has begun his or her dissertation research, and after the Research Proposal has been approved.

### 3. Expectations of Faculty Advisors

Departments and programs are responsible for encouraging and ensuring effective advising of their graduate students. Advisors and mentors are expected to do the following:

- Interact in a professional and civil manner consistent with university policies.
- Encourage students to learn creatively and independently.
- Develop clear understandings about specific research expectations and responsibilities, including timelines for completion of theses and dissertations.
- Provide feedback on student's work and progress toward degree in a timely manner.
- Discuss authorship policy with graduate students in advance of entering into collaborative projects.
- Acknowledge student contributions to research presented at conferences, in publications, and in applications for copyright and patents.

### 4. The PhD Advisory Committee

- The PhD Advisory Committee for a PhD student is approved by the Assistant Dean of the concerned College, upon nomination by the Departmental/College Coordinator/s of the PhD Program in consultation with the concerned student. This action must be taken before the end of the student's first semester in the program and is communicated to the CGS. The role of the Committee is to oversee the progress of the student and guide him/her towards the successful completion of all degree requirements including courses, examinations, and dissertation research.
- The PhD Advisory Committee consists of the student's PhD Advisor and at least one other full-time UAEU faculty member whose expertise is related to the student's area of specialization/research. All members of the PhD Advisory Committee must hold a doctorate degree. Upon the suggestion of the PhD Advisor in consultation with the student, additional faculty members (from UAEU or external) can be added as members of the PhD Advisory Committee.
- The PhD Advisor is the Chair of the PhD Advisory Committee.
- The second faculty member from UAEU, normally at the rank of Associate or Full Professor, is Co-Chair of the PhD Advisory Committee and will temporarily assume the PhD Advisor's duties if the PhD Advisor should become permanently unavailable. In this case the Co-Chair will serve as a temporary PhD Advisor until a new PhD Advisor is appointed.

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- e) If an external advisor is part of the advisory committee, he/she is expected to provide further support and guidance to the PhD student, whose plan may include spending some time at the external advisor's organization for training or research. Requests to appoint an external member to the Advisory Committee of a PhD student must be approved by the PhD Program Coordinator, the Assistant Dean for Research and Graduate Studies and the Dean of CGS.
- f) The student through the Coordinator/s of the PhD Program may request changes in the membership of the PhD Advisory Committee. They must be approved by the Assistant Dean, and communicated to the CGS.
- g) Appointments and changes to the PhD Advisory Committee must be in accordance with the "*Criteria for Selection of Faculty to Participate in Graduate Programs*".
- h) The student's Advisory Committee must meet regularly, at least once per semester, to advise the student on the course work as well as the student's progress in his/her research project, identify any potential concerns/problems and provide possible solutions to deal with the difficulties. After each meeting, a short report by the student advisor must be written and submitted to the PhD Program Coordinator of the College.

## 5. The PhD Examination Committee

- a) The PhD Examination Committee must be composed of at least four members, which include the student Advisor, as Chair of the Committee, two other UAEU faculty members, one of whom must be from outside the Department or Program, and an External Examiner.
- b) The Dean of the CGS appoints the members of the PhD Examination Committee, after nomination by the concerned College Dean, in consultation with the PhD Program Coordinator and the student's Advisor. This appointment will be made as early as feasible, but no later than 10 weeks prior to the student's targeted dissertation defense date.
- c) The External Examiner must hold or have previously held a senior-level faculty appointment at a peer level or higher ranked institution outside of the UAE, and must have expertise in the field of the PhD student's research. Furthermore, all examiners must hold a doctorate degree in a discipline related to the student's research. The selection of the External Examiner must comply with the *Guidelines for Selecting an External Examiner for a Doctorate Dissertation* publish by the CGS.
- d) The External Examiner will be expected to review the PhD dissertation on its completion, and to attend the dissertation defense at the UAEU.
- e) The College, with financial support from the CGS, will cover the external examiner's travel (normally in economy class), accommodation, and an honorarium.
- f) Appointments and changes to the PhD Examination Committee must be in accordance with the *Criteria for Selection of Faculty to Participate in Graduate Programs*.

## 6. Application to the PhD Program

- a) The minimum requirements for admission to the PhD program are:
  - (i) A Master's Degree from an accredited university recognized by the UAE Ministry of Education, in an area appropriate to the academic program to which application is being made.
  - (ii) A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or equivalent, in the Master's degree earned at an accredited university recognized by the UAE Ministry of Education.

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- (iii) A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited university recognized by the UAE Ministry of Education, in an area appropriate to the academic program to which application is being made with a minimum GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent.
- (i) A score of 6.5 or higher on the IELTS Academic exam or equivalent, for all disciplines in which the main language of instruction is English or the dissertation must be written in English. This test score must be less than two years old at the time of application, with the following exceptions:
  - A native speaker of English who has completed his/her Master's degree in an English-medium institution and in a country where English is the official language; or
  - An applicant with a Master's degree from an English-medium institution who can provide evidence of acquiring a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 or its equivalent, at the time of admission to his/her Master's program.
- b) A minimum IELTS score of 5.0 or equivalent is required for admission into an offering of the PhD Program whose language of instruction is Arabic.
- c) Individual Colleges may set additional and/or higher standards for admission to the PhD Program in the Department/College. However, all additional requirements must be approved by the Graduate Studies Council and, if necessary, the Academic Council.
- d) All PhD applications must be reviewed and recommended for admission or rejection by the respective academic Department (or the Executive Committee for an interdisciplinary program) in one of the Colleges.
- e) The Dean of CGS must endorse all PhD applications recommended by a College before admission procedures are initiated.
- f) The complete application package must include the following:
  - (i) Completed application form;
  - (ii) Identity documents as required for Emirati students (copies of passport and Khulasat Al-Qaid) and international students (copy of passport);
  - (iii) One certified copy of official diploma and transcript from each university attended;
  - (iv) An official copy of the applicant's score on the IELTS exam or equivalent;
  - (v) Two letters of recommendation from professionals familiar with the student's academic work;
  - (vi) Copy of the applicant's CV; and
  - (vii) Statement of the applicant's research experience and interest written in the same language as the program's official language of instruction.
- g) The deadline for applications is set annually by the Graduate Studies Council and announced on the UAEU website.

## 7. General Academic Requirements for the PhD Program

- a) The student and the PhD Advisor, in coordination with the student's Advisory Committee, will prepare a plan of study which must be approved by the Department's and/or College's PhD Program Coordinator. The plan of study is to be submitted to the CGS before the end of the student's first semester in the UAEU PhD Program.
- b) A plan of study will:
  - (i) Be relevant to the student's chosen field and the student's need for preparation, as determined by the PhD Advisory Committee;
  - (ii) Specify the general field of interest in which the student proposes to conduct major research;

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- (iii) List appropriate courses including any Master or Bachelor level courses required as preparation, the language/s in which proficiency is to be established and the method/s by which proficiency is to be achieved; and
- (iv) List all general requirements of the CGS and any other specific requirements of the Department, Program, College, and University (if applicable).
- c) The student's registration for courses in the first semester will be based on a model study plan prepared by the Department/College PhD program for all new students.
- d) PhD students must complete all degree requirements within a minimum of six (6) and a maximum of twelve (12) semesters after matriculation, excluding leave periods.
- e) One extension of the time limit for a period no longer than two semesters can be requested when mitigating circumstances preclude completion of requirements within the maximum period allowed. Requests have to be recommended and supported by the PhD Advisor, and approved by the PhD Program Coordinator, College Dean, and the Dean of the CGS after consultation with the Graduate Studies Council.
- f) PhD students must register for all work to be taken for graduate credits. To be classified as full-time, a PhD student must register for at least nine credit hours of work each regular academic semester. The University publishes a Class Schedule, approximately two weeks before the beginning of registration for the approaching academic semester, as well as Registration Guidelines providing details on prerequisites, registration dates, and procedures, including required approvals and signatures.
- g) Students who have completed all required credits but not yet completed their dissertation will be allowed to continue their registration for dissertation work on a zero-credit basis, until the abovementioned time limit is reached.
- h) PhD students are expected to devote a significant portion of their time to their studies and research, and to be on campus with their peers on a regular basis. Students working on their dissertations must make regular and satisfactory progress every semester.

## 8. Requirements for the PhD Degree

- a) The PhD degree is granted in recognition of distinctive achievement and scholarly proficiency in a specific area of an academic discipline. This is demonstrated by completing advanced coursework, passing the comprehensive examination, writing a dissertation based on original and independent research and investigation, publishing research papers, and publicly defending the dissertation before the University community.
- b) The place of the traditional dissertation may be taken in some instances by a major artistic or creative project including or accompanied by evidence of independent and rigorous study and research. Such a project requires prior approval by the College Council of the concerned College, the Graduate Studies Council, and the Dean of the CGS.

## 9. Minimum Credit Requirements in the PhD Program

- a) Completion of at least 24 credit hours of graduate "taught" course work prior to Candidacy. His /her PhD Advisory Committee and the PhD Program Coordinator must approve each student's plan of study.
- b) Completion of at least 30 credit hours in research.
- c) Other Program requirements as determined by the College of the PhD Program and approved by the Graduate Studies Council and the Academic Council, if applicable.

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## 10. Registration Requirements

- a) The Doctoral Degree is earned on the basis of satisfactory completion of the required courses, the comprehensive examination and the dissertation. Courses taken at other institutions and in other degree programs may be used to satisfy program requirements upon approval of the PhD Advisory Committee and the PhD Program Coordinator/s (see section on “Transfer of Credits” for limitations).
- b) Unless approved in advance by the respective student’s Advisor and the PhD Program Coordinator, PhD students are expected to be enrolled in a minimum of nine credit hours each regular academic semester.
- c) Students must have an active registration in the academic semester in which they plan to graduate.

## 11. Residency Requirement

The minimal period in which the PhD Degree can be earned is three academic years (6 semesters) of full-time study (i.e., registered in a minimum of 9 graduate credit hours per semester). A Part-time PhD student must enroll in a minimum of 6 credit hours each semester until he/she completes all degree requirements; however, the total time for the completion of a PhD degree must not exceed twelve (12) semesters. Colleges may set higher residency requirements for their PhD programs such as restricting enrollment to full-time basis only.

## 12. Foreign Language or Other Special Tools of Research

In consultation with the College Dean, the Coordinator of the PhD Program can specify any additional requirements, such as a reading knowledge of a foreign language or a working knowledge of statistics, which are considered essential to mastery of the academic discipline. Such requirements become conditions for the completion of the degree and must be included in the approved program of study.

## 13. Comprehensive Examination

- a) Every PhD student must pass a Comprehensive Examination designed to evaluate the breadth and depth of the student’s knowledge of his or her discipline, as well as the student’s scholarly potential.
- b) The Comprehensive Examination is non-credit rated, while a Pass or Fail result for each attempt will be recorded on the student’s academic transcript.
- c) Each College/Department may set its own timing for this Comprehensive Examination, but it is in no case to be taken any later than the beginning of the student’s fifth semester.
- d) Students taking the Comprehensive Examination must be in good academic standing after completion of the required course work.
- e) The format and conduct of the Comprehensive Examination is the responsibility of the PhD Program in the College in which the student is enrolled. It may consist of individual examinations in several appropriate areas, or of a single combined examination. Where both written and oral examinations are given, the written examination will normally precede the oral examination.

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- f) The College's Council and Dean must approve the Rules and Regulations for the Comprehensive Examination in each College. The Assistant Dean files a copy of these approved Rules and Regulations with the CGS.
- g) Each College will provide each PhD student with a copy of the Rules and Regulations for the Comprehensive Examination during an orientation held early in the student's first semester in the PhD Program.
- h) The Rules and Regulations for the Comprehensive Examination will outline the nature of the examination, explain the logistics of the exam's administration, and define the passing score. Each Department or College will moreover provide appropriate grading rubrics for each Comprehensive Examination.
- i) The Comprehensive Examination may be repeated only once, no later than the end of the student's fifth semester.
- j) A second unsuccessful attempt leads to immediate termination of the student's enrollment in the PhD program. The College may recommend the award of a lesser qualification such as a Master's degree if the student has fulfilled all the relevant graduation requirements or the transfer of the student to another graduate program if the student meets the relevant admission criteria. In either case, any change in the student's enrollment status must be recommended by the PhD Program Coordinator and approved by the College Dean and the Dean of the CGS.

#### 14. Research Proposal

Upon passing the Comprehensive Examination, a PhD student is required to prepare a concise and complete Research Proposal that clearly defines the research problem and objectives, and outlines the research methodology that the student plans to follow. The proposal's content and format must follow the PhD Research Proposal Preparation Guidelines issued by the CGS. Each College will provide the logistics for submission and approval of Research Proposals for its PhD students. Furthermore, students who plan to perform research for their dissertation on human or animal subjects at UAEU or elsewhere must obtain ethical approval of the University through the Office of Research in advance.

#### 15. Admission to Candidacy

When a student has passed the comprehensive examination, has satisfied any program requirements for foreign language proficiency or special tools of research, has had his/her Research Proposal approved by the PhD Advisory Committee, and is in good academic standing, the PhD Program Coordinator will recommend the student to advance to Candidacy. The Dean of the College and the Dean of the CGS must approve the recommendation. Accordingly, the Dean of the CGS will communicate the decision to advance the student to Candidacy to the Registrar. Admission to Candidacy must take place at least two semesters before the expected completion of the PhD Program.

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## 16. Application for Degree

Each candidate for the award of a PhD must signify the intention to complete the requirements by a particular graduation date by submitting a completed Application for Degree Form. Because this form is used to check requirements, order the Diploma, and enter the student on the commencement program, it must be received in the CGS no later than the end of the third week of classes of the expected academic semester of graduation. Students must have an active registration in the semester they plan to graduate.

## 17. Journal Paper Requirement

Every PhD student is expected to have at least two research papers considered for publication in peer-reviewed publications/journals before the final defense of his/her dissertation. These papers will be made available along with the dissertation to the PhD Examination Committee, who will take the scholarly quality and the formal rigor of the papers into account when they evaluate the overall quality of the dissertation. Colleges may set a higher requirement for their individual program offerings, such as requiring that papers be accepted for publication before the dissertation defense. However, the Graduate Studies Council must approve all additional requirements.

## 18. Dissertation

The results of the candidate's individual inquiry must be presented in a written dissertation comprising a genuine contribution to knowledge in the particular academic field. The document will also demonstrate the candidate's acquaintance with the literature of the field and the proper selection and execution of research methodology. Furthermore, the dissertation must be written in the same language as the instructional language of the student's degree program. The physical form of the dissertation must comply with the regulations stated in the *Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Guidelines*, issued by the CGS.

## 19. Final Oral Examination and Dissertation Defense

- a) The Final Oral Examination will take the form of a presentation and defense of the dissertation. The PhD Program Coordinator of the concerned College will schedule the Final Examination, in consultation with the CGS. The defense part of the session must be open to all interested parties, will be publicized on campus by the CGS, and take place at least twenty (20) working days before the end of the semester of graduation. The candidate must have an active registration during the semester in which the final examination is taken.
- b) The external member of the Committee must attend the defense. However, if for special circumstances he/she is unable to attend the defense, the defense will be rescheduled in coordination with the CGS for a new date as early as possible. The conduct of the dissertation defense must comply with the *Guidelines for Holding a Thesis or Dissertation Defense* published by the CGS.
- c) Immediately after the presentation, the Committee will convene in a closed meeting to deliberate the student's dissertation and overall performance. It will then prepare and

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- submit, on a form provided by the CGS, a report stating the outcome of the examination, as well as the Committee's recommendation to the PhD Program Coordinator, who will in turn submit copies of the report to the Assistant Dean and to the Dean of the CGS. Based on the outcome, the Coordinator will also submit the relevant grade to the Registrar.
- d) The recommendation concerning the dissertation will be made by a majority vote of the Examination Committee members and show one of the following:
- (i) Recommendation to approve the dissertation as presented;
  - (ii) Recommendation to approve the dissertation after minor modification and verification by the student's Advisor. Student must submit modified dissertation to the Advisor within five (5) working days of being informed of the decision;
  - (iii) Major revision of the dissertation according to stated guidance, and resubmission for review by the Examination Committee within a period of not less than three months and no longer than one year; or
  - (iv) Rejection of the dissertation and academic dismissal of the student from the PhD Program. The student may file a written appeal to the Dean of the CGS within five (5) working days from the date of being informed of the decision.
- e) Within three (3) working days of the dissertation defense, the Chair of the Examination Committee will notify the student in writing of the Committee's recommendations and, where applicable, any reason/s for rejection of the dissertation. In cases where major revision and resubmission was required, a second and final Oral Examination will be scheduled and will be conducted by an Examination Committee, which will consist of at least two-thirds of the original members of the previous Committee, including the student's Advisor. The Committee's recommendation after the second oral examination can only be either to approve the dissertation as presented or to reject it.
- f) The CGS is responsible for ensuring that the final version of the dissertation meets the standards required of a permanent, published document. After the student successfully passes the oral examination, the candidate submits to the CGS one error-free, unbound copy of the dissertation. This copy will be examined carefully, and the CGS reserves the right to require changes to bring the document up to the standards stated in the *Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Guidelines*.
- g) After making these final changes, the candidate must submit to the CGS an electronic version along with other documents, as stated in the *Steps Leading to Graduation for Doctorate Students* published by the CGS, as well as the required number of copies of the approved dissertation. These materials must be received in the CGS no later than ten (10) working days before the due date for grades for the semester as set by the Registrar's Office.
- h) The bound copies of the dissertation will be distributed as follows:
- (i) One copy to the student;
  - (ii) One copy to the student's Advisor;
  - (iii) One copy to the student's Department or College;
  - (iv) One copy to the Registrar's Office;
  - (v) One copy to the CGS;
  - (vi) Two copies to the University Library; and
  - (vii) Additional copies as required by the student's College.
- i) Students will have up to one semester only after their defense date to submit their final, bound dissertation.

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- j) Students can request to delay making their dissertation public for up to two years from their defense semester by requesting to place a delay on releasing their dissertation to the University Library for public access at the time of submitting the bound dissertation to the College of Graduate Studies. Requests require the approval of the Dean of the CGS.

## 20. Recommendation for Degree

Successful candidates will be recommended for the PhD Degree to the Dean of the CGS by the Dean of the College by no later than the date when the semester grades are due to the Registrar's Office (as listed in the University Academic Calendar). Candidates must be in good academic standing to graduate, with no temporary grades ("I" or "N") for courses required for the degree on their transcripts. Accordingly, the Dean of the CGS approves the recommendation and informs the Registrar. The Enrollment Office will verify that the student has met all degree requirements and will proceed with the procedure to clear and approve the student for the award of the PhD degree.