

UIC General Regulations for Research Postgraduate Degree Programmes

1. Definition

The award of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree or the Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree is contingent upon a candidate having:

- (a) completed an approved programme of supervised research;
- (b) presented a written thesis which demonstrates an advanced level of knowledge and understanding in the candidate's field of study and which describes and summarizes the research undertakings and findings;
- (c) satisfied the Board of Examiners in an oral examination (and any other examination if deemed necessary), on matters relevant to the subject of the thesis; and
- (d) complied with supervision, attendance and all coursework requirements as laid down by the respective Division

2. The Office of Graduate Studies

The Office of Graduate Studies (GS) is responsible for ensuring that all students admitted to the PhD/MPhil programme have met the appropriate admission requirements; that research prospectuses are well conceived and reasonable; and that candidates have fulfilled all requirements for the PhD/MPhil degree prior to being recommended to the Senate for the aforesaid award.

3. Admission Requirements

3.1 Applicants seeking admission to the PhD degree programme should possess:

- (a) a Master's degree from a recognized university or comparable institution; or
- (b) a Bachelor's degree with First Class Honours from a recognized university or comparable institution; or
- (c) any other qualification deemed to be acceptable for this purpose.

Candidates under 3.1 (b) should have evidence of research achievement/experience. They may be admitted to the MPhil programme initially, but with a view to proceeding to the PhD programme after satisfactorily passing an assessment at the time of candidature confirmation. Candidates under 3.1 (c) may be required to take a qualifying examination, in which event their progress shall be reported to the GS at the end of their first year of study.

3.2 Applicants seeking admission to the MPhil degree programme should possess:

- (a) a Bachelor's degree with Honours from a recognized university or comparable institution; or

(b) a qualification deemed to be equivalent;

and shall, if required, satisfy the examiners in a qualifying examination.

Normally, only First and Second Class Honours graduates will be considered to have met the admissions criterion under 3.2 (a). Graduates with Third Class Honours degrees, with a period of relevant work experience and satisfactory results in the qualifying examination, may also be considered.

3.3 Language Requirements

Applicants whose first language is not English, or previous degrees not obtained with English as teaching-learning media are required to prove their language abilities by means of performance in a test, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or College English Test Band 6 (CET 6). The minimum requirement on scores is: TOEFL 550 (PBT)/79 (IBT), IELTS at 6.5, CET 6 at 500 and grade B in the CET-SET (Speaking English Test). These students will have to take an English proficiency test upon commencement of study to determine whether and which level of remedial English courses is required and pass the threshold standard in relevant international English proficiency test before their oral examination. Conditional offer may be issued to those who do not meet the English language requirements by the time of admission. These students are allowed to submit proof of English Language proficiencies before oral examination.

4. Registration

4.1 Double Registration

Unless otherwise approved by the College, registered candidates are normally not permitted to register part-time or full-time for any other qualification, either at the College itself or at any other local institution of higher learning. Candidates breaching this regulation are subject to discontinuation of their studies at the College.

4.2 Successful applicants shall be admitted to register provisionally for the degree of PhD / MPhil as full-time candidates.

4.3 Applicants will not be admitted if they are undertaking work not relevant to their area of study for more than 6 hours per week.

4.4 It is expected that full-time candidates who are studentship recipients will be engaged in duties within a Division of the College. These duties, such as teaching/research assistantships, will contribute to the overall development of the candidates' understanding of their chosen field.

4.5 All students are required to register with the College every semester to validate their student status. Students should complete the appropriate procedures within the period announced.

5. Period of Study

5.1 The normal period of study for the completion of the approved research and study programme is 24 months for MPhil candidate and 48 months for PhD candidate.

5.2 The period of study may be extended by a maximum period of 24 months. Application for extension must be endorsed by the Principal Supervisor, the Programme Director and the Dean of the Division. Approval for extension beyond the maximum period of study rests with the GS.

5.3 As indicated in section 7.2 below, students need to take some of the courses at HKBU. If more than 6 months are needed to complete these courses in Hong Kong, a written permission from the GS is required.

6. Programme of Study

6.1 Candidates will pursue a programme of study approved by the GS, and shall present themselves for relevant examinations and at such times as may be required by the examiners.

6.2 The programme of study shall comprise:

- (a) supervised original research work culminating in the submission of a thesis;
- (b) coursework as required by the respective Division;
- (c) attendance at lectures, study groups and workshops as well as participation in seminars, colloquia and conferences as directed by the supervisor(s);
- (d) any other courses needed to make up for the candidate's deficiencies as required by the supervisor(s) and the College; and
- (e) the Mandatory Common Core Programme, which shall be completed satisfactorily before the arrangement of confirmation of candidature.

6.3 Students who fail to fulfil section 6.2(e) above will be barred from (a) the arrangement for confirmation of candidature; (b) access to the academic transcript/testimonial (official copy and student copy).

7. Coursework

7.1 MPhil students are required to successfully complete a minimum of 12 units of coursework (including three units of mandatory common core courses), and PhD students need to complete a minimum of 15 units of coursework (including three units of mandatory common core courses). Both MPhil and PhD students need to achieve a minimum GPA score of 2.67 to be considered satisfactory fulfilment of coursework requirement.

7.2 The required Mandatory Common Courses must be taken at HKBU and completed before confirmation of candidate. Other courses may be taken at HKBU or UIC.

7.3 Students who have a relevant Master's degree may be exempted from 3 units of coursework. Exemption is granted upon approval of GS at the time when student submits his/her Commencement Form.

7.4 For students who have been transferred from MPhil to PhD candidature and have successfully completed the MPhil coursework requirements, the units gained in their

MPhil coursework requirements can be counted towards their PhD coursework requirements if deemed appropriate by the Dean of Division.

7.5 For courses approved for transfer from another institution/university, the total number of units gained (but not the letter grade) will be recorded in the candidate's transcript. The College shall not approve transfer of units for courses with grades below the equivalence of grade "B-" in the College's grading system.

8. Candidature

8.1 A full-time candidate registered provisionally for the degree of PhD will be subject to a probationary period of up to 18 months.

(a) Between the 12th and 18th months after commencement of study, a provisional PhD candidate must attain full candidature by satisfying the requirement of the Mandatory Common Core Programme under section 6.2(e) above and the submission of a research prospectus and relevant documents for an open seminar, to be assessed by a Panel before consideration by the GS. The Assessment Panel shall be chaired by the Dean of the Division (or designate). Members shall comprise the Principal Supervisor, and at least one member in the field who comes from the same division or other divisions to assess the research prospectus, the relevant documents, and the seminar presentation. The designate of the Dean of the Division shall be a senior academic of the Division. If the Dean of the Division is the Principal Supervisor of the candidate, a designate must be appointed to chair the Panel. Failure to attain full candidature in a timely manner may result in dismissal.

(b) Upon satisfactory fulfillment of the Mandatory Common Core Programme and after review of the research prospectus and the reports from the Assessment Panel, the GS will determine whether to admit a provisional candidate to full candidature, or to terminate his/her period of provisional registration for the degree of PhD or to require the candidate to transfer to a programme of study leading to the degree of MPhil.

8.2 A full-time candidate registered provisionally for the degree of MPhil will be subject to a probationary period of up to 12 months.

(a) Between the 9th and 12th months after commencement of study, a provisional MPhil candidate must attain full candidature by satisfying the requirement of the Mandatory Common Core Programme under section 6.2(e) above and the submission of a research prospectus through the supervisors to the GS for consideration. Failure to attain full candidature in a timely manner may result in dismissal.

(b) Upon satisfactory fulfillment of the Mandatory Common Core Programme and after review of the research prospectus and the report from the supervisors, the GS will determine whether to admit a provisional candidate to full candidature, or to terminate his/her period of provisional registration for the degree of MPhil.

9. Transfer of Candidature

9.1 A student whose candidature for the degree of PhD has been confirmed may be permitted, with the approval of the GS, to transfer to candidature for the degree of MPhil, provided that such transfer is made at least 12 months before the expiry of the normal study period.

9.2 A candidate who is initially registered for the degree of MPhil and has completed at least the first year of his/her studies may be permitted, with the approval of the GS, to transfer to a programme of study for the degree of PhD provided that the candidate meets the requirements as specified under section 8 of the General Regulations.

10. Supervisors

10.1 All candidates shall be assigned one Principal Supervisor and one Co-supervisor. When it is desirable to access specific expertise elsewhere, an additional Co-supervisor may be appointed from another division or from outside the College.

11. Examiners

11.1 Candidates shall be examined by a Board of Examiners appointed by the GS.

11.2 The Board of Examiners shall consist of one external examiner and three internal examiners, including the Programme Director (or designate), Principal Supervisor of the candidate and the Dean of the Division (or designate) who shall chair the Board as a non-voting member. The Programme Director's designate shall be a senior academic of the Division and the designate of the Dean of the Division shall be a senior academic of the College. In case the Programme Director or the Dean of the Division is the Principal Supervisor of the candidate, a designate must be appointed to serve on the Board.

11.3 Appeals against decisions made by the Board of Examiners and/or the GS are provided for, but the highest and final authority rests with the Senate in all cases.

12. Leave of Absence

12.1 Candidates who wish to be absent from their studies must apply for leave of absence by completing the Leave Application form.

12.2 Any leave of absence granted for special purposes connected with studies will be counted towards the period of study.

12.3 Any leave of absence granted for special purposes not connected with studies will not be counted towards the period of study and will result in an extension of the period of study by the length of the period of absence.

12.4 Leave of absence for more than 12 cumulative months will not be granted.

13. Attendance and Performance

13.1 Regular contact with their supervisors is a requirement for all candidates. In order to monitor this contact and keep track of the study progress, candidates are required to submit a progress report to the GS every 6 months starting from their commencement of

studies. Supervisors shall also write an assessment of the candidate's performance and submit the report to the GS.

13.2 If a candidate fails to satisfy the requirements under the above section, or make satisfactory progress, the supervisor(s) shall advise the candidate in writing. A copy of the letter will be sent to the GS for record. If the candidate is a studentship recipient, upon the recommendation of the supervisor(s) and the Dean of the Division, the studentship may be terminated.

13.3 If the candidate continues not to satisfy the requirements of attendance and performance, he/she may, after due warning, be dismissed from the College.

13.4 A candidate may notify the GS in writing of any illness or other special circumstances which may have prevented him/her from satisfying the requirements of the General Regulations or may have adversely affected his/her performance and which he/she might like to be taken into account before the GS.

14. Suspension, Withdrawal and Dismissal

Suspension

14.1 Under special circumstances, a student may be permitted to suspend his/her studies for a period of up to one year. This is granted in cases of health problems, financial difficulty, urgent family affairs or job-related problems.

14.2 For suspension, students must complete the clearance procedures at the Division Office, Library, Student Affairs Office, Finance Office and the GS.

14.3 Subject to approval of the GS, the effective date of suspension is given 3 working days from the day of submission of the completed application.

14.4 Upon expiration of the suspension period, the student must return to his/her studies. If the student fails to report to the GS according to schedule, he/she will be classified as having unofficially withdrawn.

Withdrawal

14.5 Students intending to leave the College prior to graduation must apply for official withdrawal. A student who leaves the College without following the proper procedures will be considered as having unofficially withdrawn. No official documents will be issued to such a student, and he/she will not be re-admitted under this status.

14.6 For official withdrawal, students must complete the clearance procedures at the Division Office, Library, Student Affairs Office, Finance Office and the GS. Students must settle any outstanding tuition fee before an official withdrawal status is given by the GS.

14.7 Subject to approval of the GS, the effective date of withdrawal is given 3 working days from the day of submission of the completed application.

Dismissal

14.8 The College may at any time, by action of the Senate, require any student to terminate his/her studies at the College either on academic or disciplinary grounds, or on other grounds deemed as appropriate. The Senate may also dismiss a student whose conduct or general influence is considered harmful to the institution. Such a student will normally not be considered for re-admission.

15. Thesis Requirements

15.1 The thesis shall comply with the following conditions:

- (a) The thesis should be written in English.
- (b) The thesis shall form an original contribution to knowledge in the given discipline. The originality shall be shown either by the discovery of new facts or theories or by the demonstration of innovative, critical thinking. The format of the thesis can include non-traditional element.
- (c) The thesis shall not incorporate published work by the candidate unless the work was published subsequent to the registration of the candidate.
- (d) The thesis shall be the candidate's own account of his/her research and shall be accompanied by a declaration to this effect signed by the candidate.
- (e) Where a candidate's research work is part of a collaborative project, the thesis must clearly indicate the candidate's individual contribution and the extent of collaboration.
- (f) A candidate shall not submit work that has previously been included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to the College or any other institution in support of an application for a degree, a diploma or other qualification.
- (g) The thesis shall be suitable for publication either as submitted or in an amended form.

16. Examination

16.1 A candidate for the degree of MPhil shall be examined in terms of his/her thesis submitted, by an oral examination, and in some instances, by means of a written examination. The GS will appoint a Board of Examiners to conduct these examinations normally within 3 months from the submission of the thesis to the GS.

16.2 The focus of the examination of candidates is on:

- (a) the subject matter of the thesis, in particular the quality of research supporting it;
- (b) the field of study encompassed by the thesis;
- (c) the originality of the research;
- (d) the written and oral presentations of the research results and conclusions; and
- (e) the contribution of the research to the field of knowledge.

17. Examination Results

17.1 Candidates who have fulfilled the requirements of candidature and

coursework, submitted an acceptable thesis, and satisfied the Board of Examiners shall be recommended, through the GS, to the Senate for the conferment of the degree.

18. Appeals against Decisions

18.1 Appeals against decisions concerning course grade assignment, eligibility of coursework unit transfer, or qualification for candidacy may be addressed to the Director of GS or his designate who may refer the cases to the Senate for consideration.

19. The Award

19.1 Students, who have fulfilled the requirements of candidature and coursework, submitted an acceptable thesis approved by the Board of Examiners, shall be recommended to the UIC Senate, through the GS, for conferment of the degree of either MPhil or PhD as appropriate. UIC Senate will submit the list of PhD and MPhil candidates to HKBU Senate for its approval.

19.2 Students will be notified of the HKBU Senate resolution via GS. A graduation letter together with a testimonial and a transcript (student copy) (if applicable) will be issued by HKBU to the student before the issuance of the official diploma.

19.3 The diploma will be issued by HKBU every November. If students could not fulfil all the graduation requirements at early September, they have to wait till next year; however, in such situation, a testimonial could be issued first.