



Regulations for the Awards of the University's Degrees of Master of Science, Master of Education and Doctor of Philosophy

MSc, MEd and PhD

Research Degrees Committee

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1.0 PRINCIPLES

1.1 Award Titles and Academic Standards

ALFA University College ('the University') will award the degrees of Master of Science (MSc), Master of Education (MEd) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) to enrolled/registered candidates who successfully complete approved programmes of supervised research. The University will ensure that its research degrees are comparable in standard with those conferred throughout higher education in Malaysia.

1.2 General Requirements

Research programmes may be proposed in any field of study as long as:

- (a) candidates have the potential of meeting the University's academic standards;
- (b) candidates can be trained and supported within a research-supportive environment;
- (c) the proposed programme will be:
 - (i) capable of leading to scholarly research;
 - (ii) presented for assessment to appropriate examiners in the form of a written thesis, which may be supplemented by materials other than in written form.
 - (iii) considered for approval only on their academic merits without being influenced by the concerns or interests of any associated funding body.

1.3 Award Objectives

A candidate who has critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic, demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, and presented as well as defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners will be awarded the M.Sc degree.

The PhD will be awarded to a candidate who have critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge, and presented as well as defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

1.4 Research Collaboration

The University will encourage co-operation with other, external organisations referred to as Collaborating Organisations for the purpose of research leading to research degree awards. Hence the University will welcome proposals for such co-operation that are mutually beneficial to both parties while benefiting the candidate who will be conducting research that is user-focused, extends the candidate's own experience, and where appropriate enable the candidate to be a member of a research community. The collaborating organisations may provide a wide range of supervisory or advisory experience and expertise to assist the development of the research programme. In addition, the collaborating organisation may provide access to candidates to various categories of resources such as equipment, facilities, premises, staff, and data in support of the research project. The co-operation with Collaboration Organisations may be formalised that will warrant the name(s) of the Collaborating Organisation(s) will appear on the candidate's thesis and degree certificate (see Section 12).

1.5 Research Degrees Committee

The University have established a Research Degrees Committee (RDC) within the University's academic governance structure to implement, develop, and oversee these regulations and their associated procedures.

1.6 Development and Review of Regulations

These regulations will seek to embody nationally-recognised good practice as recommended in the policies, codes, and regulations of key external agencies such as the Malaysian Qualifications Agency, the Ministry of Higher Education, funding bodies, research councils, etc. These regulations will be subject to regular review.

2 STUDENT ADMISSIONS

2.1 Types of Degree and Study Patterns

An applicant may seek admission to study for the University's degrees of MSc or PhD in full-time or part-time mode. Students undertaking 'Split PhD' study will also either study on a full-time or part-time basis (see 2.6 below). Students studying for PhD will undertake interim assessment processes as mandatory, namely, proposal defence and confirmation of PhD according to the timescales set out in section 8.1 and section 8.2.

2.2 General Entry Requirements

An applicant for MSc or PhD will normally be expected to hold:

- (i) A bachelor's degree in the field or related fields with a minimum CGPA of 2.75 or equivalent, as accepted by the HEP Senate; or
- (ii) A bachelor's degree in the field or related fields or equivalent with a minimum CGPA of 2.50 and not meeting CGPA of 2.75, can be accepted subject to rigorous internal assessment; or
- (iii) A bachelor's degree in the field or related fields or equivalent with minimum CGPA of 2.00 and not meeting CGPA of 2.50, can be accepted subject to a minimum of 5 years working experience in the relevant field and rigorous internal assessment.
- (iv) Candidates without a qualification in the related fields or relevant working experience must undergo appropriate prerequisite courses determined by the HEP and meet the minimum CGPA based on (i) to (iii).

An applicant for PhD will normally be expected to hold:

- (i) A master's degree in the field or related fields accepted by the HEP Senate; or
- (ii) Other qualifications equivalent to a master's degree recognised by the Government of Malaysia.
- (iii) Candidates without a related qualification in the field/s or working experience in the relevant fields must undergo appropriate prerequisite courses determined by the HEP; or
- (iv) A Bachelor's degree with the following conditions:
 - (a) a bachelor's degree in the field or related fields with first-class (CGPA of 3.67 or higher) or its equivalent from an academic or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme;
 - (b) undergo internal assessment; and
 - (c) any other requirements of the University; or
- (v) Bachelor's degree candidates who are registered for master's degree programmes may apply to convert to the doctoral degree programmes

subjected to the following conditions: (i). within 1 year for full time and within two years for part-time candidates; (ii) having shown competency and capability in conducting research at doctoral level through rigorous internal evaluation by the HEP; and (iii) approval of the HEP Senate.

- (vi) PhD by Retrospective or Prior Publications The applicant must have publications that contribute to the scholarship of knowledge in the field and are acknowledged by academic peers. A formal application must be submitted to the HEP and must include: (i) minimum of 5 publications or equivalent works in alignment with the theme of the specialization; (ii) an executive summary of the above publications to demonstrate the applicant's contribution to knowledge in the field; and iii. a list of scholarly published work. A Selection Committee must be established to review the formal application for PhD by Retrospective or Prior Publication and recommend to the Senate on the admission.
- (vii) The minimum language proficiency of the candidates must be determined by the HEP consistent with applicable programme standards or based on the needs of the programme i.e., learning outcomes and the medium of instruction.

2.3 Non-Standard Entry Qualifications

An applicant who does not possess any of the qualifications spelled out in paragraph 2.2 will be considered on his/her merits and in relation to the nature and scope of the proposed research programme. In this case, the University will look for evidence of the applicant's ability and background knowledge in relation to the proposed research. The evidence may include the following:

- (a) Professional experience, publications, written reports or other appropriate evidence of accomplishment;
- (b) At least a pass in an externally assessed qualifying examination at final year honours degree level that the University may find necessary before the candidate is being admitted to the programme.
- (c) Confidential statements attesting to the applicant's academic attainment and fitness for research by referees' who should not be proposed as supervisors or advisers for the project.

2.4 Management of the Selection Process

The Research Institute will manage the selection of appropriately qualified and/or experienced applicants for admission to a research degree. It will pass the applications to more than one member of University academic staff with relevant expertise and experience to make judgement on the suitability of the proposed research programme in the light of the following key factors:

- (a) The quality of the applicants and their potential ability in achieving the standard of the appropriate degree within the permissible timescales shown in section 5.1.
- (b) The viability of the proposed research programmes and their suitability for research degree study;
- (c) The availability of academic staff with appropriate expertise, and experience of supervision, and time to supervise;
- (d) Sufficient essential supporting resources, including as appropriate:
 - applicant's own funding and/or sponsoring organisation(s);
 - time that the applicant can devote to the research programme;
 - office space and equipment, including specialist equipment;
 - laboratories, workshops, consumables and other technical

- resources; and
 - computing and library/information resources.
- (e) An assessment, in the light of the factors spelled out in this section, of the risk of failure to complete the research programme to the standard required within the permissible timescale, including:
- the likelihood of the risk;
 - the likely impact of the risk on the research programme; and
 - the possible countermeasures/contingencies to minimise the risk.

2.5 English Language Competence

Applicants who already have sufficient command of the English language will be expected to satisfactorily complete the programme of work and to prepare and defend a thesis in English. Where English is not the applicant's first language, the applicant must show evidence of English language ability in line with equivalences tabulated below. Applicants are required to achieve a minimum Band 4 in Malaysian University English Test (MUET) or equivalent to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) Mid B2 score.

Schools will set their own minimum level of proficiency that is determined by the requirements of the subject discipline. For example, the scores may be higher in more linguistically demanding research areas.

The University may offer a place to read for a research degree subject to completion of not more than two years of pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes training followed by successful attempts of MUET test or any test that is equivalent to the CEFR. The completion of such training must be confirmed at Approval of Research Programme stage as part of the programme of related studies. These minimum University requirements may be supplemented by additional local requirements in Schools, subject to confirmation by the RDC.

English Competency	CEFR Low B1	CEFR Mid B1	CEFR High B1	CEFR Low B2	CEFR Mid B2	CEFR High B2
MUET	Band 2	High Band 2	Band 3	Band 3	Band 4	Band 4
IELTS	4.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	6.0	6.5
TOEFL iBT	30-31	35	42	46	60	79
Pearson Test of English	36	43	47	51	59	63
Cambridge English Qualifications and Tests	140	147	154	160	169	176
Linguiskill	142-146	147-153	154-161	162-168	169-175	176-180+

2.6 Split PhD Programmes

An applicant who is classed as International for fee purposes and who proposes to work mainly outside Malaysia and satisfies the University's normal entry requirements for higher degrees by research and whose English language capability is established prior to acceptance for admission to the University may be admitted onto a 'Split PhD' programme. Admitted candidates are subject to the appropriate duration for full-time or part-time programme completion. However, candidates must also attend the University for a total duration of 2 weeks and a maximum of 3 months per academic year, the pattern of which is to be agreed between the applicant and the relevant supervisor and

approved by the Research Degrees Committee as part of the process of approving the research programme. The period spent at the University must include the examination to take place and sufficient time for the candidate to make amendments to the thesis, if any, before returning overseas.

There must be satisfactory evidence as to the:

- (a) conduct and development of the research both at the University and overseas;
- (b) quality and accessibility of local resources/facilities needed to support the research degree programme. This may need to include access to a research community of active researchers and/or other research, depending on the nature of the programme;
- (c) robust arrangements for supervision of the candidate at a distance from AUC, that must include at least one local supervisor accessible to the candidate whilst studying overseas and regular and some direct contact with the AUC-based supervisor. Similar arrangements apply as for the approval of an AUC-based supervisor (Section 6 of the regulations refers); and
- (d) manner by which student's induction and training needs, including research methodology training, will be met.

The oral examination for the award will be held in Malaysia unless in special cases where the Research Degrees Committee may give approval for the examination to take place overseas via video-conferencing. The same oral examination procedure for all other research degree candidates will apply (Regulations Sections 9 to 16 refer). Candidates accepted for a place of study with the University by split programme will need to sign a contractual agreement to confirm the arrangements spelled out in this section. Other signatories will include the Director of Studies and the sponsoring organisation (if applicable).

2.7 Recognition of Prior Learning - Admission by Transfer

Applicants seeking to transfer their research degree registration to ALFA University College from another Malaysian Higher Education Institution are required to provide evidence of their timely progress and attainment at the requisite level to ensure they are performing at the appropriate level and is able to complete a successful thesis within the specified regulatory time frame. The evidence will include a copy of their annual progression/assessment report giving details of: the aims and objectives of the research project; the establishment of an appropriate methodology; a literature review, and a statement of intended contribution to the relevant subject discipline. Applicants should provide a statement of research and evidence of any ethics approval already granted.

Any suitable applicant who seeks to transfer to ALFA University College research degree programme will be required to undertake an assessment at the University if they have not successfully completed a similar interim upgrade assessment at their previous institution the deadline for this assessment will be agreed as part of the admissions process. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that the applicant is performing at the appropriate level and is in a position to successfully complete their thesis within the specified regulatory timeframe.

Applicants may apply for transfer of their research degree registration to the University from a non-Malaysian University. Their application must be accompanied with evidence that they are performing at the appropriate level and are able to complete a successful thesis within the specified regulatory timeframe for it to be considered.

3 ENROLMENT

- 3.1** All candidates are required to enrol and pay their tuition fee annually upon which they will be given access to the University's facilities and services, including supervision. On the other hand, failure to enrol within the prescribed period may lead to their exclusion and failure to progress on the course of study.
- 3.2** The University will require students to sign an agreement at enrolment where there is variation in ownership of their intellectual property that reflects the individual circumstances of their project such as in the case of collaborative and funded or sponsored project.

4 APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROGRAMME

4.1 Timescales for Approval

All enrolled candidates are required to seek approval of their research programme normally according to the following time table:

- (a) Full-time students: within 3 months of enrolment
- (b) Part-time students: within 6 months of enrolment

They can do this by filling in an appropriate form and submit their Research Intent.

4.2 Approved Study Routes

The candidate may seek approval for either MSc, MEd or PhD in the light of his/her qualifications, experience, and study ambitions.

4.3 Scrutiny of Research Programme Proposals

Each research programme proposal will be scrutinised by an academic 'rapporteur' normally after enrolment as soon as the candidate and supervisory teams are ready, but normally no later than the timescales indicated in section 4.1. The rapporteur, who should be a subject expert and based outside the supervisory team, will pass an appropriate academic judgement that will be brought to bear on the viability of the research programme and provide independent constructive advice to the candidate and the supervisory team.

The initial pre-admission assessment of the acceptability of the research programme (see section 2) will set the stage for the scrutiny to address the following issues:

- (a) The viability of the research as reflected by its proposed aims and objectives and the candidate's ability to achieve the standards of the relevant degree within the maximum permissible timescale.
- (b) The content of the proposed workplan, its clarity, and feasibility, including use of explicit milestones that are consistent, overall, with the University's requirements for timely completion.
- (c) The strength, i.e., subject expertise and experience, of the supervisory team and adequacy of other supporting resources that have been identified as necessary.

4.4 Role of Research Degrees Committee in Approving Research Programmes

The Research Degrees Committee acts on behalf of the University to evaluate all applications for the approval of research programme proposals. They will give their nod of approval if, through their monitoring decisions and processes, they are satisfied that scrutiny at Research Institute level has been properly undertaken.

4.5 Treatment of Funded Research

In cases of funded research, the terms of funding should not detract from the fulfilment of objectives and requirements of the candidate's research degree.

4.6 Supporting Programme of Related Studies

In the light of the candidate's prior qualifications and experience and his/her study ambitions, they will be expected to agree with his/her supervisors an appropriate supporting programme of related studies such as research methods and other courses established in Schools to secure research programme approval. The objectives of the programme include any or all of the following: To prepare candidates with a broad understanding of the context in which research takes place.

- (a) To foster awareness amongst the candidates on the philosophy of knowledge underpinning all forms of enquiry.
- (b) To help candidates develop generic, interpersonal transferable skills that will be of value to them throughout their careers.
- (c) To help candidates consolidate or acquire a range of analytical and research skills, including methods appropriate to the research programme.
- (d) To ensure candidates acquire appropriate detailed subject-specific knowledge.

Candidates may be recommended to obtain another award that they have registered for in addition to the degree of MSc or PhD where the programme includes learning activities leading to the award and fulfils all its requirements. Candidates will be able to access information on training and development activities and events via the Research Degrees Blackboard Site.

4.7 Concurrent Study

The Research Degrees Committee may permit a candidate to register for another programme of study concurrently with the research degree programme provided that one of the programmes is by part-time study and that the dual registration will not detract from the research.

4.8 Recognition of Previous Work

The Research Degrees Committee may approve a shorter than usual registration period for a candidate who has previously undertaken research as a candidate for a research degree after taking into account of all or part of the time already spent by the candidate on such research.

4.9 Presentation of Theses in Languages Other than English

Candidate who wishes to present his thesis in other languages is required to officially write-in to the RDC for consideration. A candidate may be given permission to present a thesis in a language other than English if, under normal circumstances, it is sought at the time of research programme approval. Such permission will normally only be given if the subject matter of the thesis involves language and related studies.

4.10 Modes of Study

A candidate must confirm his/her study mode, i.e., full-time or part-time when seeking research programme approval. A full-time candidate will normally devote, on average, at least 35 hours per week to the research. Similarly, a part-time candidate will normally devote to the research at least 12 hours per week on average. A candidate may seek approval from the Research School for a change of mode of study at any point in the programme.

4.11 Confidentiality

A candidate may keep the thesis to remain confidential after the completion of the programme subject to the approval by the Research Degrees Committee normally no later than the time of the Approval of Examiners and Thesis Title and not exceeding two years from the date of the oral examination. An additional period of one year may be approved if in some instances the publication of the thesis would be detrimental to the candidate of the University.

4.12 Ethical Approval of Research Programmes

An ethical approval must be sought with regard to any research whether clinical, biomedical or social research undertaken by research degree candidates that involves direct contact with patients or healthy participants, or the secondary use of existing human and animal materials or specimens. An ethical review will be undertaken by the Research Institute-based research ethics committees. In a situation when ethical review is necessary, the candidate must consider it at the approval of research programme stage and verified at the Proposal Defence stage.

5 TIMESCALES FOR COMPLETION

5.1 Normal Minimum and Maximum Permissible Timescales

The following time scales are normally expected of candidates to complete their research programmes, i.e., have submitted a thesis for oral examination.

Degree & Mode	Normal minimum permissible time for completion from date of enrolment	Normal maximum permissible time for completion from date of enrolment
MSc / MEd		
Full-time	18 months	30 months
Part-time	24 months	36 months
PhD		
Full-time	24 months	48 months
Part-time	36 months	84 months

For candidates who receive studentship funding from an external source, they may be expected to meet a different timescale as stipulated by their funding body.

5.2 Shortening the Period of Registration

The Research Institute may give approval to candidates to submit their thesis before the normal minimum permissible time for completion indicated in 5.1 above where there is evidence that the research is proceeding exceptionally well. Candidates should submit an application for such approval at the same time as the application for approval of examination arrangements.

5.3 Change in Mode of Study

Where Research Institute-level approval is given to a candidate for a change in mode of study (see section 4.10) the proportion of time during which the candidate was studying in the previous mode will be used to recalculate the maximum permissible time for completion of the degree.

5.4 Break in Study

Graduate School-level approval may be given for study to be suspended where a candidate is prevented, by ill-health, personal reasons or other valid cause, from being able to meaningfully engage in their research and make progress. Application for time out from their research for periods of between 2 and 12 months may be approved in any one application. The period of the break in study against the maximum permissible time indicated in section 5.1 will not be counted.

5.5 Writing-up Period

Candidates may seek Research Institute-level approval for a writing-up period with a reduced tuition fee, to allow for completion of the thesis within the maximum permissible time indicated in section 5.1. Approval of the writing-up period is subject to several important restrictions as follows:

- (a) Writing up status is **available for one year only** to full-time candidates and up to **two years** to part-time candidates. Candidates who fail to complete in this period and additional time has been granted (see section 5.7) in lieu of exceptional circumstances candidates will be levied the University's standard part-time fee for the duration of the remaining period of the candidate's registration.
- (b) Eligibility will normally be strictly determined as follows:

Degree	Mode	Eligibility for writing-up status under normal circumstances
PhD	Full-time	In Year 3
	Part-time	In Year 4
MSc / MEd	Full-time	In Year 2
	Part-time	In Year 3

- (c) The candidate cannot assume being given the writing-up status. The Director of Studies' certification that the candidate is in fact writing up should first be obtained.

5.6 Timeliness of Thesis Submission

The thesis can be submitted for examination at any time within the minima and maxima indicated in 5.1 above (but see sub-section 11.2) **and in any event must not exceed the maximum permissible time appropriate to the degree and mode of study**. A candidate who has not presented his/her work within this period is deemed to have withdrawn from the University or, may, in exceptional circumstances, seek approval for additional time to complete. (see section 5.7).

5.7 Exceptional Approval of Additional Time to Complete

Research Institute-level approval will not normally be given to allow a candidate more than the maximum permissible time specified in 5.1 above subject to endorsement by the Research Degrees Committee. A full-time candidate, may, with **exceptional reason**, seek approval for up to a maximum of **12 additional months** to complete (up to 24 additional

months for a part-time candidate. The request for additional time will be considered on their merits and approval would normally be given where it is clear that delayed completion is the result of the exceptional circumstances----factors which are beyond the control of the candidate and/or supervisor(s) and could not be anticipated or planned for as part of good management of the research programme. The application for approval for interruptions to the progress of the research should be sought via an application for Break in Study (see section 5.4) and made on the appropriate form with the written support of the candidate's supervisor(s).

5.8 Withdrawal from Study

Candidate withdrawal from registration when her/his research is discontinued must be notified by Research Institute staff to the Research Degrees Committee on the appropriate form

6 SUPERVISION

6.1 Size of Supervisory Team

Exceptionally, the Research Degrees Committee may approve only one supervisor, the Director of Studies, who has substantial experience of successful supervision to completion at the level proposed. Otherwise, a research degree candidate must normally have two and not more than three supervisors.

6.2 Required Expertise and Experience of Supervisory Team

Where a supervisory team is involved, its members must have appropriate subject expertise and must normally have a combined experience of supervising at least one candidate to successful completion at the level proposed. Such experience may be substituted with the successful completion of the University's Research Supervisor Development Programme. However, at least one supervisor on the supervisory team must have successfully supervised at least one student to completion at the level proposed in all cases.

6.3 Responsibilities of the Director of Studies

The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring the supervision of the candidate on a regular and frequent basis, and to act as the principal point of contact for administrative matters. They will also be accountable to the Research Institute in the first instance and to the Research Degrees Committee for the proper conduct of the research programme, including compliance with relevant University policies. The Director of Studies must be a full-time staff of, or have a contract of employment with, the University. Emeritus and Visiting Professors is restricted to being appointed as a first or second supervisor.

6.4 Role of Advisers

An adviser(s) may be proposed to contribute specialised knowledge or a link with an external organisation, in addition to the supervisors,

6.5 Restrictions on Candidates Acting as Supervisors

A research degree of any higher education institution may be appointed as a co-supervisor or adviser.

6.6 Change in Supervisory Arrangements

The relevant Research Institute's approval must be obtained for any change in supervision arrangements.

7 MONITORING AND SUPPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

7.1 Research Degrees Annual Monitoring Exercise

The University will carry out a monitoring exercise to establish at least annually whether the candidate:

- (a) is still actively engaged on the research programme;
- (b) is maintaining regular and frequent contact with the supervisors;
- (c) will likely achieve the academic standards of the degree at the level in question;
- (d) will likely complete the research successfully within the normal maximum permissible timescale (see section 5.1).

The Research Degrees Committee will, at least annually, consider the outcome of the monitoring process within Schools and will take appropriate action in the light of this consideration.

7.2 Student Withdrawal

Members of academic staff, who will normally be the supervisory team, may instigate a student withdrawal based on relevant evidence and sound academic judgement in line with section 7.1 and/or due to other internal or external factors. The following are some examples of reasons for instigating a student withdrawal:

- lack of engagement
- not meeting the student responsibilities
- lack of progress
- failing to meet the required standard of academic writing
- failing the Proposal Defence
- failing to pay the tuition fees on time.

External factors that impact on candidates' registration status may also be taken into account when instigating a withdrawal. These could be, for example, where Home Office rules apply and where candidates do not have a valid visa for continuing their study at the University.

7.3 Responsibilities of the Research Institute Head of Research Degrees and/or Postgraduate Research Tutor

To help with the effective monitoring and support of research degree candidates, each Research Institute that admits research degree candidates will designate a senior member of staff as Head of Research Degrees. Research Institute support structures also allow for a supporting Postgraduate Research Tutor (or Tutors) to assist the Research Institute Lead in supporting the research student community.

8 PROPOSAL DEFENCE

8.1 Timing of Application for PhD Programme Proposal

All candidates registered for a degree of PhD or MSc study must undertake Proposal Defence process. The process has both a formal progress and review function. It allows for a formal evaluation of candidate progress that involves assessment by academic staff who are not the candidate's supervisors. Candidates are assessed through a two-part process; testing the candidate's oral skills via his/her presentation/examination of the work produced so far, and assessment of the candidate's writing ability at Doctoral and Master's level via a submission of a 6000-word report. The process is managed in the Research Institute where

members of an Assessment Panel assess, review, and recommend a decision on the candidate's research proposal of which is subject to the approval at University level by the Research Degrees Committee. The stipulated timescale for submission of application for PhD Proposal Defence for a full-time PhD candidate is up to 12 months but within 15 months and up to 24 but within 27 months for a part-time PhD candidate. Similarly, the timescale is up to 6 months and within 12 months for a full-time MSc candidate and 6 months but within 18 months for a part-time MSc candidate.

8.2 Timing of Referral Applications for PhD Proposal Defence

PhD and MSc degree candidates who defaulted on the timescales stipulated in section 8.1 will miss an assessment opportunity and will subsequently be referred. Full-time PhD candidates must submit referral applications within 18 months (9 months for MSc candidates) of their start date or 33 months (12 months for MSc candidates) if studying part-time. Candidates who meet the timescales when making their first attempt but do not pass and are referred will have 3 months (if studying full-time) or 6 months (if studying part-time) in which to submit a referral application from the date of the Assessment Panel decision. The candidates who fail to meet these timescales will either be counselled by their supervisory team to write-up for MSc, depending on adequate progress with the project, or withdrawn due to failure.

8.3 Scrutiny of Proposal Defence within Schools

In support of the PhD Programme Proposal Defence application form itself, the candidate must prepare a written report on the work already undertaken. The report should normally be no longer than 6,000 words in length and include:

- (a) a brief review and discussion of the work; and
- (b) a statement of the intended further work, including details of the original contribution to knowledge, which is likely to emerge.

The candidate will either:

- i) be examined orally on the report by two or more assessors, including at least one person external to the supervisory team who may be the rapporteur at the research programme approval stage (see section 4.3); and/or
- ii) makes an oral presentation of and defend work in progress at a Research Institute research seminar or equivalent; the audience must include one person external to the supervisory team.

The nomination of assessors is subject to the approval of the Research Institute Head of Research Degrees or appropriate Postgraduate Research Tutor. In either case, evidence of the candidate's performance in the oral presentation and defence of work in progress will be considered by the Research Degrees Committee in considering the application.

The submission of the application for PhD Proposal Defence must be at the sole discretion of the candidate. Whilst it would be unwise for a candidate to submit the application against the advice of the supervisors, it is his/her right to do so. Along the same line, candidates should not assume that a supervisor's agreement to the submission guarantees successful PhD Proposal Defence.

8.4 Role of the Research Degrees Committee in approving PhD Proposal Defence Applications

The Research Degrees Committee's acts on behalf of the University when it performs its role in deciding whether or not to approve all applications for PhD Proposal Defence. It seeks to satisfy itself that scrutiny at Research Institute level has been properly undertaken. In particular, before approving, the Committee will look for evidence that the Research Institute has established that the candidate has made sufficient progress and that the proposed

programme provides a suitable basis for work at PhD standard that the candidate is capable of pursuing to timely completion.

8.5 Unsuccessful PhD Proposal Defence

If, under the regulations in sections 8.1 and 8.2, a candidate fails to make a successful PhD Proposal Defence, the candidate will be counselled as to his/her option. These may include writing up for MSc in the case of a PhD candidate, provided that there is reasonable confidence on the part of the candidate and supervisory team that the award objectives for the MSc in section 1.4 can be achieved or withdraw from the study.

8.6 Change of Registration from PhD to MSc

Due to a turn in event, candidates who have passed the PhD Proposal Defence assessment via the process described in section 8.3, may, at any time prior to the submission of the thesis for examination, apply to the Research Institute for the registration to be changed to that for MSc. This may be due to factors such as taking up employment, financial issues, health matters, visa restrictions, etc. Conditional to the successful application of the change of registration, there must be reasonable confidence on the part of the candidate and supervisory team that the award objectives for the MSc described in section 1.4 can be achieved.

9 EXAMINATIONS - GENERAL

9.1 Stages of the Examination

The examination for MSc and PhD will have two stages: firstly, the candidate's submission and examiners' initial assessment of the thesis who will prepare their preliminary report on the thesis and secondly, its defence by oral examination culminating in the examiners' recommendation relating to the award of the degree.

9.2 Requirement to Complete Formally Assessed Coursework

A candidate whose programme of work leading to the degree of PhD includes formally assessed coursework (see section 4.6) will not be permitted to proceed to the MSc/PhD examination until the coursework examiners are satisfied with the candidate's performance. Hence, the result of the assessment must be communicated to and validated by the examiners of the thesis.

9.3 Extenuating Circumstances Affecting the Oral Examination

A candidate will normally attend an oral examination on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies. Where, the Research Degrees Committee is satisfied that a candidate would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination on the due date and time previously set for exceptional reasons of sickness, disability, or comparable valid cause over and above the normal difficulties experienced in life, the Committee may agree to postpone the oral examination to a suitable later date.

The candidate must send a request made in writing to the ALFA Graduate School as soon as possible before the date of the oral examination for consideration by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, in consultation with the examiners of such exceptional extenuating circumstances. The request must be accompanied by supporting independent documentary evidence, such as medical evidence. The request should include the following information:

- Summary of the nature of the circumstances and the candidate's view of their effect

- on his/her ability to undertake the oral examination;
- Period of time to which the circumstances apply;
- An indication of the attached documentary evidence in support of the extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical note, self- certification, or any of the types of evidence); and
- Any other effects or anything else that should be accounted for.

The Chair of the Research Degrees Committee and the Examiners will normally disregard possible emergence of circumstances believed to be part of the normal difficulties and unfortunately distressing aspects of life that the candidates are expected to cope with. Their consideration will include the following:

- Severity and timescale of the circumstances;
- Extent to which the circumstances may be associated with timing of the oral examination; and
- Availability of documentary evidence.

9.4 Location of the Examination

The oral examination will normally be held in the Malaysia. Exceptionally, the Research Degrees Committee may give approval for the examination to take place overseas via video-conferencing or similar technology on receipt of a justifiable case by the candidate's Director of Studies. However, the candidate must and at least one of the examiners or the Independent Chair must be at the same physical location to ensure they are fully supported during the assessment.

9.5 Recommendations on Conferment of the Degree

Following completion of the examination, the examiners will make a recommendation on the award of the MSc/PhD and pass it to the Doctoral School staff to be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor who acts on behalf of the University in conferring the degree.

9.6 Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards

An aegrotat may be awarded in cases where a candidate is unable to complete the research on the grounds of ill health. However, the candidate's Director of Studies would need to present sufficient evidence of the student's achievement at the level in question (Master's or Doctoral) for examination. For this purpose, a thesis or alternative form of submission, such as a collection of published materials, papers or reports with a critical introduction and presented as a bound thesis, would be acceptable types of evidence. Candidates seeking an aegrotat award will also be assessed on an individual basis by the Research Degrees Committee (on the advice of the supervisory team) to determine whether an oral examination would be necessary, or would need to be dispensed with, depending on their personal circumstances. A posthumous degree of MSc or PhD may be awarded on the basis of a thesis (or equivalent as stated above) completed by a candidate that is ready for submission for examination. In such cases the Research Degrees Committee will seek evidence that if the oral examination had taken place, the candidate would have been likely to succeed.

9.7 Procedures for Handling Allegations of Research Misconduct

The University has a Policy and Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct against Doctoral and Master's Research Students that details the procedures for dealing with allegations of plagiarism, collusion, or any other form of dishonest conduct. Details can be found in the University's Rules and Regulations document.

9.8 Grounds for Declaring Examinations Null and Void

The Research Degrees Committee need to be convinced that all examinations are conducted wholly in accordance with the University's regulations. If it is made aware of any non-compliance, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

9.9 Exclusion of Candidates from Examining

A candidate for a research degree may not act as an examiner.

9.10 Independent Chair

An Independent Chair oversees all research degree oral examinations. The Chair will be a non-examining chair who may not take part in the formal assessment process and contribute to the judgement. The overarching role of the Chair is to ensure that:

- the oral examination process is rigorous, fair, reliable, and consistent;
- the candidate is given the opportunity to defend the thesis and respond to all questions posed by the examiners;
- the examiners are questioning the candidate fairly and professionally;
- the examiners adhere to the University's regulations and procedures; and
- the examiners and the candidate are given advice about the regulations if required.

Although the Chair will not take part in the formal assessment process, he/she will normally:

- have access to a copy of the thesis during the examination;
- have sight of the examiners' preliminary reports before the examination commences;
- sign off the examiners' joint recommendation form when they have completed their assessment in order to verify that due process has been followed; and
- complete a short report on the oral examination for audit purposes.

9.11 Involvement of Supervisors in the Oral Examination

The candidate may give consent to supervisors to attend the oral examination. The supervisors may speak if called upon during the examination but must not participate in the preliminary private meeting of the examiners, and excuse themselves prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.

10 EXAMINERS

10.1 Size and Composition of Examining Team

A candidate must be examined by an examining team comprising of at least two and normally not more than three examiners, of whom at least one must be an external examiner. To avoid conflicts of interest, the examining team must have suitable experience and expertise, be unbiased, and be clearly independent of the supervisor, of the student, and of each other.

10.2 Internal Examiners

An internal examiner is defined as a member of staff of the University or a member of staff of the candidate's Collaborating Organisation who is appointed as an examiner for the candidate.

10.3 External Examiners

An external examiner must be independent both of the University and of the Collaborating Organisation, must not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser, and must not normally be a supervisor of another candidate at the University. Former members of staff and former students of the University may not normally be approved as external examiners until three years have lapsed after the termination of their association with the University. The Research Degrees Committee must also ensure that an external examiner is not approved so frequently resulting in his/her familiarity with the Research Institute that might prejudice objective judgement.

10.4 Exclusion of Supervisors from Examining Teams

The candidate's supervisory team members may not be appointed as examiners for that candidate.

10.5 Examiners for Candidates Who are University Staff or Staff of Collaborating Organisations

Where the internal examiner is a member of staff of the candidate's organisation, a second external examiner must be appointed. Hence the candidate will have one internal and two external examiners to ensure objectivity in the examination process.

10.6 Examiners' Expertise

Examiners must be experienced in research in the general area of the candidate's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.

10.7 Examiners' Experience

At least one external examiner must have substantial experience, i.e., at least several instances of examining research degree candidates in the field and at the level in question. Where this is not possible, for example in emerging subject areas, the Research Degrees Committee may exercise its discretion by ensuring that the proposed examining team includes an internal examiner who has significant examining experience outside the University.

10.8 Size and Composition of Examining Team

A candidate must be examined by an examining team comprising of at least two and normally not more than three examiners, of whom at least one must be an external examiner. To avoid conflicts of interest, the examining team must have suitable experience and expertise, be unbiased, and be clearly independent of the supervisor, of the student, and of each other.

11 PREPARATION FOR THE EXAMINATION

11.1 Approval of Examination Arrangements

The Director of Studies must seek the approval of the Research Degrees Committee for the candidate's examination arrangements normally **no later than four** months before the expected date of the examination. Unless the examination arrangements have been approved, the examination may not take place. Accept in very special circumstances, the Research Degrees Committee may act directly to appoint examiners and arrange the examination of a candidate.

11.2 Procedure for Submitting the Thesis

Doctoral School staff will notify the candidate of the thesis submission procedure, including the number of copies to be submitted for examination and fulfilment of any conditions prior to the candidate's eligibility for examination.

11.3 Notification of Date of Oral Examination

Faculties are responsible for scheduling the date and time of the oral examination, determining its location, and making hospitality arrangements. They send these details to ALFA Graduate School staff who, in turn, will formally notify the candidate, the examiners, and the Independent Chair of these details.

11.4 Briefing of Examiners

Doctoral School staff will send a copy of the thesis to each examiner, together with the examiner's preliminary report form, the University's regulations, and written guidance on how to conduct the examination. In addition to the written guidance, experienced Research Institute staff will brief the internal examiner(s) who is/are new to their role.

11.5 Completion of Examiners' Preliminary Reports

Doctoral School staff will ensure that all the examiners have submitted their completed preliminary reports on the thesis to the University before the oral examination takes place.

12 THE CANDIDATE'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EXAMINATION

12.1 Timely Submission of the Thesis

The candidate must ensure that the thesis is submitted to Doctoral School staff normally within the relevant permissible timescale (see 5.1).

12.2 Responsibility for the Decision to Submit the Thesis

The submission of the thesis for examination must be at the sole discretion of the candidate. Whilst it would be unwise for a candidate to submit the thesis against the advice of the supervisors, it is his/her right to do so. Along the same line, candidates should not assume that a supervisor's agreement to the submission guarantees the award of the degree.

12.3 Satisfying Conditions of Eligibility for Examination

The candidate must satisfy any of the University's conditions of eligibility for examination in terms of being enrolled and registered at the time of the assessment.

12.4 Candidate's Exclusion from Arrangement of the Examination

The candidate must not be taking any part in making examination arrangement of the examination and must not be having have any formal contact with the external examiner(s) between the time of appointment of the examiners and the oral examination.

12.5 Candidate's Declaration

Candidate must complete a declaration statement at first assessment and also for resubmissions to confirm their intention for the thesis to be assessed and that the thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award (for example at another institution). Candidates must indicate in the declaration inclusion of work covering a wider field that has already been submitted for a degree (e.g., Master's degree) or comparable award, and where so, which work has been incorporated, for example where some of the work may have been developed from the previous study.

12.6 Required Format of the Thesis

The candidate must ensure that the thesis submitted for examination and finalised following examination are in accordance with the requirements of the University's regulations (see section 12).

13 THESIS

13.1 Style of Thesis

The thesis is presented for examination in monograph style.

13.2 Format Requirements

The submitted thesis must adhere to the following format requirements:

- (a) Theses must be submitted in accordance with paragraph 12.3;
- (b) Theses must normally be A4-formated;
- (c) The referred fonts are Arial, Calibri, and Times New Roman and the font size must not be less than 12;
- (d) The paper must be white and weighs within the range 70 g/m² to 100g/m²
- (e) Soft-bound theses that are printed on the recto side of the page only are prepared for assessment;
- (f) One-and-a-half or double or spacing should be used in the typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used. Pages must be numbered consecutively through the main tex. The numbers must be positioned centrally, 20 mm above the bottom edge of the page. The left (binding edge) for soft-bound theses should have a margin of 40mm;
- (g) The title page must give the following information:
 - a maximum of a twelve-word full thesis title;
 - author's full name;
 - name of the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements;
 - name of collaborating organisations(s), if any; and
 - month and year of submission.

13.3 Submission of Thesis

Candidates are required to submit their thesis through Turnitin prior to examination. For the assessment process, candidates are required to print copies of the electronic file for the benefit of the examiners. These will be submitted for examination to ALFA Graduate School in a temporary soft-bound form that is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed. The thesis must be in its final form in all respects except for the binding, the incorporation of any amendments required by the examiners, and the removal of any previously published material (see sub-section 12.8).

Following examination, the candidate must incorporate any amendments required by the examiners in the thesis and submit it in electronic form (PDF/A format) to rdc@alfa.edu.my together with a Thesis Deposit Form. The candidate must confirm that the contents of the electronic thesis are identical with the version submitted for examination, except the incorporation of any required amendments. PDF/A, which is a standardised version of the PDF format, is suitable for the University's long- term archiving requirements.

13.4 Submission of Theses in English

The thesis must be presented in English (see paragraph 4.11) unless the Research Degrees Committee give specific permission otherwise. Candidates are advised to seek professional proofreading services if required.

13.5 The Abstract

The thesis must contain an abstract of approximately 300 words that provides a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and the contribution to the existing body of knowledge. This should be placed after the title page and printed single-spaced. In addition, a loose copy of the abstract must be submitted having the title of the thesis as a heading, the name of the author, and the degree for which the thesis is submitted.

13.6 Objectives and Referencing

The thesis must include a statement of the research objectives and acknowledgement of any assistance received and published or other sources of material consulted, including an appropriate bibliography.

13.7 Inclusion of Published Work

The candidate has the privilege of publishing material in advance of the thesis and must cite any such work in the thesis. Submission of the initial soft bound copy of the thesis for examination may be accompanied with copies of published material. However, any such published material must be removed from the final electronic copy of the thesis before it is submitted as the Version of Record in abidance with copyright laws.

13.8 Maximum Word Limits

The word count of the text in the main body of the thesis, i.e., excluding reference list, ancillary data etc. should normally not exceed the following:

PhD	80,000 words
MSc / MEd	50,000 words

13.9 Dissemination of Research Findings

Following the award of the degree, Doctoral School staff will send the electronic copy of the thesis in PDF/A format as provided by the candidate, to the University Library. The thesis will be uploaded to the ALFA University College Research Archive (AUCRA). The Director of Studies will be responsible for sending a link to the thesis to any Collaborating Organisation. However, candidates may be granted an embargo period, usually of 12 months, to curtail dissemination of their research for certain publishing reasons. In these cases, the full text of thesis will not be made available until the embargo period expires.

13.10 Confidentiality Restrictions

The Research Degrees Committee may agree that a confidentiality restriction is placed on the thesis for a specified period (see sub-section 4.12). The Research Degrees Committee may approve an application for confidentiality normally only in order to enable a patent application to be lodged, to protect commercially or politically sensitive material, or to protect material that may result in competitive advantage. In such cases, the full text of the thesis will not be made available on AUCRA for the duration of the period but only the author's name, thesis title, research degree award, year of submission, research centre/department and name of the supervisors will be published instead. However, the purpose of the restriction in this way is not to protect researchers and research leads. Although the normal maximum period of confidentiality restriction is two years, in exceptional circumstances the Research Degrees Committee may approve a longer period. However, the Committee will not automatically grant confidentiality for the maximum duration where a shorter period would be adequate.

13.11 Copyright

Copyright in the thesis and all artefacts submitted for examination other than the physical copies of the thesis for assessment remain the property of the candidate.

14 EXAMINATION

14.1 Preliminary Assessment of the Thesis

Each examiner will read and assess the thesis content before any oral examination is held. They will then complete and submit an independent preliminary report on the result of their assessment to the ALFA Graduate School staff. They must indicate whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree, and where possible, make an appropriate provisional recommendation, which later will be subject to the outcome of any oral examination.

14.2 Examiners' Action Following the Oral Examination

Following the oral examination, where the examiners are in agreement, a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree must be submitted to AUC Graduate School staff. The preliminary reports and joint report and recommendation must together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to justify the chosen recommendation. On the other hand, separate reports and recommendation must be submitted where the examiners are not in agreement.

14.3 Recommendations Available to the Examiners

Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend that:

- (a) the degree is awarded to the candidate; or
- (b) the degree is awarded to the candidate subject to amendments being made to the thesis

- to the satisfaction of the examiners (see sub-section 14.4); or
- (c) the candidate is permitted to resubmit for the degree and be re-examined, with or without an oral examination (see section 15); or
- (d) in the case of a PhD examination, an MSc degree is awarded to the candidate subject to amendments being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiners that satisfies the requirements for MSc as indicated in sub-section 1.4; or
- (e) Normally, in cases where research misconduct is proven, the degree will not be awarded to the candidate who will also not be permitted to be re-examined (see sub-section 14.8).

14.4 Amendments to the Thesis

Where amendments are required to the thesis (as in options (b) and (d)) in sub-section 14.3) the candidate must submit the corrected thesis **within four months FTE of the date of the oral examination**. The Research Degrees Committee may approve an extension to this period where there are valid reasons for delay.

Where the examiners recommend that the degree is awarded to the candidate subject to the candidate making amendments to the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) (see sub-section 14.3(b)), they must indicate on the appropriate form what amendments are required. The examiner(s) responsible for going through the amendments should normally respond to confirm their satisfaction with the amendments within a four-week period.

14.5 Dissenting Examiners

Where there is no unanimity in the examiners' recommendations⁵, the Research Degrees Committee may:

- (a) accept a majority recommendation, which includes at least one external examiner; or
- (b) accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
- (c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner – especially if the internal examiner(s) disagree(s) strongly with the view of the external examiner; any such appointment must be made in accordance with the approved procedures for the appointment of examiners.

14.6 Use of Additional External Examiners Following Examination

The additional external examiner, if appointed under sub-section 14.5(c), must prepare an independent preliminary report on the thesis. The external examiner may consider it necessary to conduct a further oral examination. The recommendations of the other examiners must not be informed to the external examiner. On receipt of the report from the additional external examiner, the examination process will be completed as set out in section 9.

14.7 Use of a Further Examination to Supplement the Oral

The examiners may request a further examination in addition to the oral examination. The approval to the request for further examination must be sought from the Research Degrees Committee without delay. The examination must normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination unless the Research Degrees Committee permits otherwise. Any such examination must be deemed to be part of the candidate's first examination.

14.8 Outright Failure

The Vice-Chancellor may neither decide to award the degree nor permit re-examination on the recommendation of the examiners. In such cases, the examiners must prepare and forward an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation to the candidate by Doctoral School staff.

15 PUBLICATION

- 15.1** All publications should be in under the name of ALFA University College along with Malaysian supervisor's name
- 15.2** Doctorate candidates are required to publish
1. Two (2) articles in Scopus-Index Journals **OR**
 2. Two (2) articles in any other Index Journals
- 15.3** Master candidates are encouraged to publish at least one (1) article in Scopus indexed journal.

16 RE-EXAMINATIONS

16.1 Requirements for Re-examination

The Research Degrees Committee may permit one re-examination, subject to the following requirements:

- (a) a candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners at the first examination may, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee be permitted to revise the thesis and be re-examined;
- (b) the examiners must provide the candidate with written guidance on the deficiencies of the first submission, through Doctoral School staff; and
- (c) the candidate must submit the revised thesis for re-examination **within the period of 12 months from the date of the oral examination**. The Research Degrees Committee may approve an extension of this period, where there are good reasons to prove a valid delay.

16.2 Appointment of an Additional External Examiner for the Re-examination

The Research Degrees Committee may require that an additional external examiner is appointed for the re-examination; any such appointment must be made in accordance with the approved procedures for the appointment of examiners.

16.3 Forms of Re-examination

There are four forms of re-examination:

- (a) where the candidate's performance in the first oral examination was satisfactory but the thesis was unsatisfactory, the Research Degrees Committee will exempt the candidate from a further oral examination; the examiners will re-examine the revised thesis and certify whether it satisfactorily meets the criteria for the award of the degree;

⁵Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the candidate but they must make it clear that the final decision rests with the Vice-Chancellor.

- (b) where the candidate's performance in the first oral examination was unsatisfactory and the thesis was also unsatisfactory, any re-examination must normally include both a re-examination of the thesis and an oral examination (but see sub-section 15.11);
- (c) where on the first examination the candidate's thesis was satisfactory but the performance in the oral and/or other examination(s) was unsatisfactory, the candidate will not be requested to revise and re-submit the thesis but must be re-examined in the oral and/or other examination(s) **within 6 months** of the first examination;
- (d) where on the first examination the thesis was satisfactory but the candidate's performance in relation to the other requirements for the award of the degree was unsatisfactory, the examiners may propose instead a different form of re-examination to test the candidate's abilities that is subject to the approval of the Research Degrees Committee.

16.4 Preliminary Assessment of the Thesis on Re-Examination

Each examiner must read and examine the thesis and submit an independent preliminary report on it to ALFA Graduate School staff before any oral examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner must consider whether the revised thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.

16.5 Examiners' Action Following the Re-Examination

Following the re-examination of the thesis under sub-paragraph 15.3(a) or following an oral or other examination under 15.3(b), (c) or (d), the examiners must, where they are in agreement, submit a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree to ALFA Graduate School staff. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners must together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to justify the chosen recommendation. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations must be submitted.

Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend that:

- (a) the degree is awarded to the candidate; or
- (b) the degree is awarded to the candidate subject to amendments being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiners (see section 15.6); or
- (c) the candidate is permitted to resubmit for the degree and be re-examined, with or without an oral examination (see section 15); or
- (d) in the case of a PhD examination, an MSc degree is awarded to the candidate subject to amendments being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiners that satisfies the requirements for MSc as indicated in section 1.4; or
- (e) Normally, in cases where research misconduct is proven, the degree will not be awarded to the candidate who will also not be permitted to be re-examined (see section 14.8).

16.6 Amendments to the Thesis Following Re-examination

Where amendments are required to the thesis (as in options (b) and (d)) in section 15.5) the candidate must submit the corrected thesis within four months FTE of the date of the oral examination. The Research Degrees Committee may approve an extension to this period where there are valid reasons for delay. Where the examiners recommend that the degree is awarded to the candidate subject to the candidate making amendments to the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) (see section 14.3(b)), they must indicate on the appropriate form what amendments are required. The examiner(s) responsible for going through the amendments should normally respond to confirm their satisfaction with the amendments within a four-week period.

16.7 Dissenting Examiners Following Re-examination

Where there is no unanimity in the examiners' recommendations⁶, the Research Degrees Committee may:

- (a) accept a majority recommendation, which includes at least one external examiner); or
- (b) accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
- (c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner – especially if the internal examiner(s) disagree(s) strongly with the view of the external examiner; any such appointment must be made in accordance with the approved procedures for the appointment of examiners.

16.8 Dispensing with the Oral Examination on Re-examination

In the case of a re-examination under sub-section 15.3(b), where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory, they may recommend that the Research Degrees Committee dispense with the oral examination, since it would not

serve any useful purpose, and not award the degree under sub-section 15.6(c) (see also sub-section 15.12)

16.9 Failure on Re-examination

The Vice-Chancellor may neither decide to award the degree nor permit re-examination, on the recommendation of the examiners. In such cases, the examiners must prepare and forward an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation to the candidate by Doctoral School staff.

17 APPEALS

17.1 Appeals Against the Recommendations of Research Degree Assessors

Candidates can appeal against decisions made by the University Research Degrees Committee on Proposal Defence decisions or Research Degree Examiner Panels on final award decisions and request for it to be reviewed on the following grounds:

- There has been an irregularity in the application of the published regulation, policy or procedure that has had an impact on the decisions.
- There is relevant new evidence or information that the candidate did not provide at the time of the assessment and the candidate has valid reason why it was not submitted then.

18 COMPLAINTS

18.1 Complaints Relating to the Quality of the Candidate's Learning Experience

The University will carry out investigation and resolution of issues of dissatisfaction raised by students against teaching/supervision or service-related provision.

⁶Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the candidate but they must make it clear that the final decision rests with the Vice-Chancellor.