

AIR UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

POLICY ON AWARD OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE (MS), MASTER OF  
PHILOSOPHY (MPhil) AND MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)  
DEGREES

Introduction

1. This Policy stipulates the requirements and conditions for the award of the degree of Master of Science (MS), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) by Air University. The degree requirements, time durations, admission and registration requirements, evaluation procedures, conditions for dismissal from Master's studies, and other related requirements are part of this policy.

**Award of MS/MPhil Degree**

2. On the recommendations of the Faculty Board of Graduate Studies (FBGS) to Vice Chancellor through Director Academics and Registrar, the Air University will award MS/MPhil degrees to the candidates who satisfy the requirements mentioned below. Faculties and departments may specify additional requirements if considered appropriate/necessary on case-to-case basis, however such requirements may be implemented after approval by Vice Chancellor on the recommendations of the FBGS. The minimum requirements are further explained in subsequent paragraphs.

- a) **Coursework.** The minimum coursework required is 24 credit hours (CH) of graduate level courses.
- b) **Cumulative grade point average (CGPA).** Master's Students are required to maintain a CGPA of 2.50 or above on the scale of 4.00. Revised Academic Standing is placed at Annexure A (Table A1).
- c) **Defense of Research Proposal.** A Master's student is required to prepare, submit, and defend a thesis proposal, after carrying out a comprehensive literature review and taking guidance from his/her supervisor and GEC, and defend it successfully in not more than two attempts.
- d) **Research Credits.** In addition to the class coursework, all Master's students must register for six CH of research work, preferably in two semesters, and get satisfactory grades for these credit hours.
- e) **Plagiarism check.** The thesis should pass a plagiarism test verified by Director ORIC (Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization) using specialist software, before it is sent to external examiner (section 9).

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f) **Research Publication.** A Master's student must publish or present evidence of acceptance of at least one research paper as first or second author in an HEC recognized journal category 'Y' or above.

g) **Final Defense.** It is essential to successfully defend one's thesis in an open defense (in the form of an oral presentation) and earn its approval by a majority vote of GEC.

h) **Submission of Master's Thesis.** Three copies of Master's thesis (in hard bound copies of approved color) duly signed by GEC members & Dean Graduate Studies along with its soft copy on CD/DVD shall be submitted within 30 calendar days from the date of final defense. Director Examination & Dean Faculty (with consultation of the concerned Department Chair) may relax this period (maximum for another one month) if GEC requires a student to incorporate significant changes/additions in the thesis, with intimation to offices of Director Examination and Director Academics.

i) **Payment of Fees.** Each Master's student is required to pay the full semester fees for every extended semester beyond the normal duration of the respective degree program. Additionally Rs. 20,000/- would be charged as Thesis evaluation fee from graduate students.

### 3. Absolute Grading System

Absolute Grading system is placed at Annexure B (Table A2).

### 4. Duration of Master's Studies

The minimum duration of the Master's studies shall be two academic years (except MSPM and MS Management Science for which the minimum duration shall be 1.5 years and maximum duration three years) - an academic year consists of two regular semesters i.e. Fall and Spring semesters - extendable by two more semesters by the Dean of the concerned Faculty on the recommendation of the concerned Chair Department. A student failing to complete the degree requirements within three years shall have to apply in writing with justification to the FBGS through GEC. The FBGS may subsequently recommend an extension (beyond three years) to VC for a maximum period of two regular semesters (on a semester-to-semester basis before the expiry of previous extension, if any), with imposition of 50% tuition fee penalty, provided the student has successfully defended the research proposal, has been getting satisfactory research progress reports and FBGS has reasons to believe that student will be able to finish all the academic requirements, if given extension. Offices of the Dean Graduate Studies, Director Examination, Registrar and Director Academics will be intimated of any extension granted for record purposes. In case the student still fails to complete the degree requirements, then the case for his/her dismissal from that program will be referred to VC through FBGS and Director Academics.

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5. **Semester Leave.** A Master's student is eligible for leave up to one semester in the following conditions:

- a) The student has completed his/her coursework.
- b) The student has not completed his/her coursework but has extraordinary personal or medical circumstances that do not allow him/her to study for one semester.
- c) The student is on probation and the required courses are not being offered by his/her respective department. In case the student does not proceed for leave, he/she may be allowed to register for one elective course

The leave granted will not be counted towards the duration of the studies.

#### Admission in Master's Program

6. Eligibility and other matters related to admission are as follows -

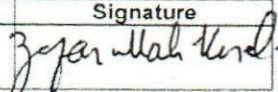
a) **Eligibility Criteria.** The applicant is required to meet the following minimum eligibility requirements.

- (i) Four year HEC recognized BS degree/equivalent degree in the relevant field with at least 124 CH beyond 12 years of schooling with a CGPA of at least 2.00 (on the scale of 4.00) OR equivalent i.e. First Division under annual system.
- (ii) GRE (General) (minimum score of 151 in Quantitative Reasoning, 145 in Verbal Reasoning and 3.5 out of 6.0 in Analytical writing) or GAT General, with at least 50%. In case of non-availability of GRE/GAT General due to any reason, concerned Department may arrange an equivalent test under the auspices of Air University. The applicant is required to score at least 60% in this test for becoming eligible for admission.

b) **Rejection and Transfer Cases.** In case of rejection of application, applicant may apply again after removing the observations of concerned Department or Admission Office. An applicant, who is already pursuing a Master's program elsewhere, can get transferred to Air University provided he/she meets all the admission requirements of AU.

#### Registration Requirement of Master's Student

7. A Master's student has to maintain his/her registration and pay the applicable fee for coursework as well as for the research work, throughout the duration of Master's studies. If a student fails to register in any semester, he/she shall cease to

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be a student of the Air University. In case the student applies for reinstatement of his/her status to the Registrar, he/she shall have to clear all dues, deposit re-admission fee and fine as applicable, within 45 days of start of the semester.

8. Master's students are required to register for nine CH of coursework in each semester, in the first two regular semesters. Students of MS Mgt Sciences and MS Project Management may be required to register for up to 12 CH coursework in each semester. The Dean of the Faculty, on the recommendations of Chair Department, may allow registration of minimum of six CH instead of nine. From second year of the program onwards in which student has registered, a Master's student may register for a maximum of 3 research CH in addition to courses in a semester, provided he/she has completed 18 CH of coursework with CGPA not less than 2.50/4.00. After completion of coursework a student may be allowed to register for 6 CH of research in one semester.

#### **Supervisor, Guidance and Evaluation Committee (GEC) and External Thesis Examiners**

9. Before the end of the first semester, a supervisor will be appointed by concerned Chair Department duly approved by FBGS. The supervisor will preferably be a PhD qualified faculty member of AU with at least three years of relevant teaching/research/professional experience in a HEC recognized University/Institute or a Professional Organization of national repute. In an exceptional case of MS-qualified FM as supervisor, he/she will be required to have at least four years of post-MS relevant teaching/research experience with at least two co-supervisions in the four-year period. A GEC will be formed by the Department Chair within four weeks of the appointment of the Supervisor, with the approval of FBGS. GEC will consist of at least three members; depending upon any specific requirement. Department Chair may appoint a larger GEC. GEC will be chaired by the Supervisor of the Master's student and must have at least one faculty member of AU in addition to the Supervisor (preferably holding PhD degree) and one external member (holding PhD degree), who is a researcher/faculty member of public or private sector HEI other than AU. Members of GEC should not be relatives of the supervisor and/or the student. The VC will also appoint one external examiner, as part of GEC, on the recommendation of FBGS through Dir Academics. Each Department will recommend two names, as external thesis examiner, to FBGS for each Master's student. The external thesis examiners cannot be a supervisor of the supervisor or a coauthor in any publication of the student or the supervisor. The record of GEC of a student is to be maintained by the Office of Dean Graduate Studies.

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### Research Progress

10. Within the third semester, a student will prepare, submit and defend the thesis proposal. In special circumstances, by permission of the concerned Dean, a student may be given an extension of one semester to defend his/her thesis proposal. After successful defense of Research Proposal and subsequent approval of the Topic by the FBGS, research progress reports by the Master's student duly signed by the Supervisor are to be submitted to GEC, Chair Department and the office of the Dir Examinations for posting of awarded "S" and "U" interim grades within 30 days of the end of each semester. The Postgraduate program coordinator is to update the progress on thesis tracking module as well. Students that fail to submit the report in time may be fined and will be allowed to register for the next semester only after payment of the fine and submission of the progress report.

### Plagiarism Check

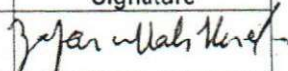
11. Before sending the thesis for evaluation by external examiner(s), the supervisor is required to conduct a plagiarism check of the Master's thesis using software approved by AU. The similarity index of the test should be less than 20% before sending it for evaluation. A certificate to this effect duly signed by supervisor and countersigned by Department Chair is to be forwarded to Registrar, Dir ORIC and Dir Exam. The office of Dir ORIC will crosscheck the plagiarism report and verify the certificate. This certificate shall also be attached with the final hardbound copies of the Master's thesis. If Plagiarism is established in the thesis of MS/MPhil student (at a later stage on a complaint received), then the Supervisor will also be held responsible for this act and will be blacklisted for five (05) years. A disciplinary action against such supervisor may also be initiated by the University. However, if the complaint is proved to be false, then the complainant of false allegation of plagiarism may be blacklisted for five (05) years.

### Evaluation of Master's Thesis

12. In addition to the evaluation of the thesis by GEC and plagiarism test, submission of finalized thesis to GEC/expert for evaluation shall be done within two years from the date of admission, otherwise the student will have to apply for extension. After receiving positive evaluation reports by the external examiner(s) and Supervisor, the student shall apply for final defense of his/her thesis. The correspondence with the external examiners shall be done through the office of the Dean Graduate Studies.

### Final Defense

13. Master's student will be eligible for the defense, and will formally apply for it, provided he/she has met conditions as mentioned in para 2 and 4 above. The final

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defense must be an open defense (in the form of presentation) attended by entire GEC, all available faculty, AU MS & PhD students, Department Chair and preferably Dean. For this purpose, Director Exams or his/her representative will also attend the final defense. Master's thesis will be awarded a Letter Grade by the GEC after the final defense. In case of non-compliance with AU Policy/Quality issues, the Dean Graduate Studies may recommend corrective actions to concerned Dean/Chair Department for necessary compliance and subsequent approval by Vice Chancellor. Once the letter grade has been awarded to the thesis, it shall stand as final grade of thesis. After the final defense GEC will make one of the following recommendations to the VC through FBGS:-

- a) Pass without any observation.
- b) Pass with minor changes.
- c) Major changes required (second final defense, if needed).
- d) Failure.

Note: In case GEC recommends "Pass with minor changes", the student will incorporate these changes in the thesis within 30 days and the Supervisor will certify accordingly. In case of major changes, Supervisor will communicate required time to Chair Department.

14. In case GEC is of the opinion that a second final defense by the student is needed, GEC will recommend the time of next defense also and shall not award any letter grade to the thesis.

15. Master's students securing positions in their departments may be awarded medals as per University Medal Award Policies.

#### Final Submission of MS/MPhil Thesis

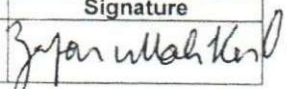
16. After successful final defense, the student will submit final hard bound copies (in required numbers) duly signed by all concerned & soft copy to the following offices:-

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| a) Concerned Department | 01 Copy  |
| b) Registrar            | 01 Copy (Registrar will send this copy to Library) |
| c) Director Exams       | 01 Copy  |

#### Dismissal from Master's Program

17. A student shall be dismissed from the Master's Degree program if:-

- a) CGPA remains below 2.50 on completion of his/her course work even after availing all chances for improvement of grades with not more than three attempts to pass a course.

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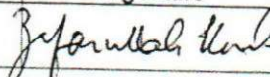
- b) CGPA is below 2.50 in two consecutive semesters (irrespective of courses taken in each semester).
- c) SGPA is below 2.00 in first semester.
- d) Fails twice in the defense of research proposal.
- e) Declared fail in final defense.
- f) Fails to complete all the degree requirements within the maximum time allowed including the extensions.
- g) On account of plagiarism or falsification of research data.
- h) Fails to pay fee for every extended semester, beyond normal duration of respective program, and the Thesis Evaluation fee.

18. After dismissal from a Master's program, student shall not join any Master's program offered by the Air University

#### **Award of MBA Degree**

19. On the recommendations of the Faculty Board of Graduate Studies (FBGS) to Vice Chancellor, the Air University will award MBA (2 years) degree to the candidates who satisfy the requirements mentioned below:

- a) **Minimum Duration of MBA (2 years) Program.** The minimum duration for award of MBA degree is 2 years.
- b) **Course work.** The minimum course work required for award of MBA (2 years) degree is 54 CH of graduate level courses.
- c) **Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).** MBA (2 years) students are required to obtain a CGPA of 2.50 or above on the scale of 4.00 on completion of academic requirements.
- d) **Project/Thesis Credit Hours.** In addition to coursework, all MBA (2 years) students must register for at least six CH of a business Capstone Project (with not more than two students in a Project) or thesis work and get satisfactory grades for these credit hours.
- e) **Plagiarism Check.** The thesis should pass a plagiarism test before sending it to external examiner for evaluation, using specialist software.

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f) **Final Defense of Thesis.** For MBA (2 years) student with Thesis option, it is essential to successfully defend one's thesis in an open defense (in the form of a presentation) and earn its approval by a majority vote of GEC.

g) **Final presentation for Capstone Project.** For MBA (2 years) students with project option, successful open defense (in the form of a presentation) of the Capstone Project and approval by a majority vote of Capstone Project Graduation Evaluation Committee (CP-GEC) is required.

(h) **Submission of Capstone Project.** Three copies of the MBA (2 years) Capstone project in hard bound copies of approved color (duly signed by all CPEC members) along with its soft copy on CD/DVD shall be submitted within 15 calendar days from the date of final presentation/defense for the intakes of Fall 2021 Semester and onwards. Students of the previous intake/batches will continue to be governed by previous policy on the subject.

(i) After successful final defense, the student will submit final hardbound copies (in required number) duly signed by all concerned to the following offices:-

- i. Concerned Department 01 Copy
- ii. Registrar 01 Copy (Registrar will send this copy to Library)
- iii. Examination Department 01 Copy

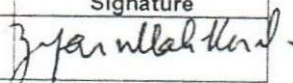
21. This policy shall be applicable to all MS/MPhil/MBA programs wef Fall – 2021 with the exception of Section 5 (Semester Leave) which shall be applicable to all currently enrolled students.

22. The policy shall be reviewed as and when required.



(Javaid Ahmed)  
Air Marshal (R)  
Vice Chancellor  
Air University, Islamabad

No. IBD/AU/600/21/09/DFGS dated: 03 August, 2021

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\*Table A1

Academic Standings applicable for MS/MPhil/MBA Intake of Fall – 2021 and onwards intakes

S No	CGPA	Academic Standing
1.	$3.75 \leq \text{CGPA} \leq 4.00$	Honor
2.	$3.50 \leq \text{CGPA} < 3.75$	Very Good
3.	$3.00 \leq \text{CGPA} < 3.50$	Good
4.	$2.50 \leq \text{CGPA} < 3.00$	Satisfactory
5.	<2.50 in a semester	Probation (Repeat Course(s) to improve CGPA)
6.	<2.50 in second consecutive semester or <2.00 in 1 <sup>st</sup> semester	Dismissed

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## Annexure B

**\*\*Table A2**  
Absolute Grading Scheme, applicable from Fall – 2021 Semester for  
MS/MPhil/MBA/PhD Programs

S No	Marks in %age	Grades	GPA
1.	85 - 100	A	4.00
2.	80 - 84.99	A-	3.67
3.	75 - 79.99	B+	3.33
4.	70 - 74.99	B	3.00
5.	65 - 69.99	B-	2.67
6.	60 - 64.99	C+	2.33
7.	50 - 59.99	C	2.00
8.	Below 50	F	0.00

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