

AIR UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD)

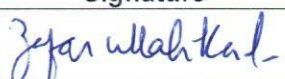
Introduction

1. This policy stipulates the requirements and conditions for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Air University. The degree requirements, time duration, admission and registration requirements, dissertation evaluation procedure, conditions for dismissal from PhD studies, and other related requirements are part of this policy. This policy is in line with the guidelines provided by the Higher Education Commission Graduate Education Policy 2023.

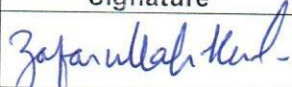
Award of Degree

2. On the recommendations of the Faculty Board of Graduate Studies (FBGS) to Vice Chancellor (VC) through the Director Academics and Registrar, Air University will award the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) to the Candidates who fulfill the requirements mentioned below. Faculties and Departments may specify additional requirements if considered appropriate/necessary on a case-to-case basis, with the approval of VC through FBGS. The standard requirements are further explained in subsequent paragraphs.

- a) **Coursework and Residency Requirement.** The minimum coursework required for award of PhD degree shall be 18 credit hours (CH) of graduate level courses, with at least half being 800 level courses beyond the Master's Degree, unless the Master's degree is from another discipline in which case the coursework will exceed 18 CH with at least half being at 800 level. When a PhD student is deemed to require additional courses to undertake PhD research, the concerned Department may recommend a maximum number of two additional courses. Residency requirement may be mandatory till completion of the coursework.
- b) **Absolute Grading Scheme.** The absolute Grading Scheme is placed at Annexure 'A' as in AU Academic Regulations.
- c) **Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).** The PhD student is required to maintain a CGPA of 3.00 or above on the scale of 4.00.
- d) **PhD Comprehensive Examination.** Upon meeting the coursework requirement mentioned in para 2(a) above, a student is required to pass the Departmental Comprehensive Examination (CE) to be granted candidacy as PhD researcher. Student failing the Comprehensive Examination will be allowed to retake the exam once.
- e) **Defense of Research Proposal.** Each Doctoral student is required to prepare, submit, and defend a research proposal, after carrying out a comprehensive literature review with guidance from his/her Supervisor and the Guidance and Evaluation Committee (GEC), and defend it successfully in not more than two attempts.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	1 of 19	

- f) **Research Credits.** In addition to the coursework, all Doctoral students must register for at least 30 CH of Doctoral research and get satisfactory grades for these Credit Hours.
- g) **Similarity/Plagiarism Test.** The doctoral dissertation should pass a similarity/plagiarism test before sending it to external evaluator(s) and local examiner(s) for evaluation, using specialist software.
- h) **Successful Evaluation of PhD Dissertation.** Positive report by the Supervisor and internal/external evaluator(s)/examiner(s) on the PhD dissertation is an essential requirement before final defense by the PhD Candidate.
- i) **Research Publications.** It is mandatory for a PhD Candidate to publish at least: (a) one research paper in 'W' category HEC HJRS journal or at least two research articles in 'X' category journals for Science disciplines, and (b) one research article in 'X' category journal or two research articles in 'Y' category journals for Social Sciences. The research article(s) shall be from the research work conducted by the PhD scholar and shall not be a review paper. The research shall be published after approval of the research synopsis and the article(s) must be published as first author in relevant research journal(s).
- j) **Final Defense.** An open defense of the dissertation is required after positive evaluation by the GEC, external evaluator(s) and local examiners. This final defense examination (FDE) shall be advertised on the university website and other fora of communication in the form of an oral presentation by the PhD scholar in the presence of GEC, any other members present and the Dean Graduate Studies/neutral Chair. The final decision shall be expressed in terms and scholar should earn approval by a majority vote of the Review Committee. In case of a GEC member's physical non-availability due to medical emergency or being abroad, s/he may be allowed to participate in FDE via suitable online mode, subject to prior approval of the Vice Chancellor through Office of the Dean Graduate Studies.
- k) **Final Submission of PhD Dissertation.** After successful final defense, the student will submit one hardbound copy with CD/DVD to Supervisor and one hardbound copy with CD/DVD to Office of Registrar to be forwarded to the Central Library for the repository. Both copies of the PhD Dissertation will be stamped on submission and dated by Exams Dept. in approved color scheme (Dark green binding with gold text) to be submitted within 30 calendar days from the date of the Final Defense or as permitted by Director Examinations based on the result of the final defense.
- l) **Completion Timelines.** The required coursework, Comprehensive Examination and Research Proposal Defense should be completed within the first six semesters of registration in the PhD program. The PhD degree shall be awarded not before the completion of three years or six regular semesters (Annexure 'B') and not after completion of six years; except in case a PhD scholar has submitted his/her Dissertation to the external evaluators a further extension of one semester may be granted on recommendation of the FBGS and approval by Vice Chancellor. In case of any semester leave taken as per Sec. 7, "only one semester of any leave granted will not be counted towards the duration of the studies". The completion

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	2 of 19	

date of PhD degree is the date of the successful Final Defense. The maximum duration shall be determined from the date of student's enrollment until the successful Final Defense.

Admission in PhD Program

3. Eligibility and other matters related to admission are as follows:

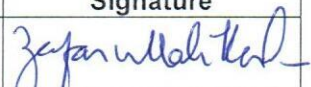
a) **Eligibility Criteria.** The applicant is required to meet the following minimum eligibility requirements:

(i) **Degree Requirement:** Prior to admission into a PhD program, the student shall have been awarded MS/MPhil or equivalent degree as described in this policy. Where necessary, the candidate may be admitted in Zero Semester to clear the deficient course of 9-12 Credit Hours, if/ as determined by the Departmental Admission Committee. Passing of Deficient courses with min 3.0/4.0 is mandatory in maximum two chances. The Zero Semester would not be counted towards maximum degree duration.

(ii) **Entry Test:** Pass the Air University (equivalent to Graduate Record Examination GRE/Higher Education Aptitude Test (HAT in relevant category) with a passing score of 60% OR Pass an equivalent test conducted by Air University OR conducted by testing bodies accredited / recognized by HEC.

(iii) **Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA):** (a) For admission in a PhD program, a minimum CGPA of 3.00 (out of 4.00) or 60% (in the annual system degree awarded in percentage %) in the MS/MPhil/equivalent degree being considered for admission, is required, whether such degree was obtained from Pakistani or foreign universities. (b) If the CGPA/Percentage is not mentioned on the transcript, the candidate must produce equivalent weightage from the degree awarding university. (c) A student having strong demonstrated interest in obtaining PhD degree, but with CGPA below 3.00 (out of 4.00 in the semester system) or 60% marks (in the annual system degree awarded in percentage %) in the most recent degree obtained, may be admitted to a PhD program after fulfilling the following requirements:- (i) Register and pass additional courses of 9-12 CH of level 7 (Masters level) taking a zero semester at the awarding university/HEI/DAI and score minimum 3.00 out of 4.00 GPA, (ii) Satisfy the admission committee that the applicant's knowledge of primary area (level 7; Masters) has sufficiently prepared him/her to undertake the course of studies of the doctoral program, and (iii) fulfill all other requirements set in this policy for admission to a PhD program.

(iv) **Intradisciplinary Degree Admission Requirement:** The candidate who is intended to admission in a PhD program at AU with intra-disciplinary qualification is required to pass GRE-Subject/Equivalent Test with minimum 50% marks in the discipline of admission and also required to pass 6-9 CH of deficiency courses of level 7 of relevant degree program. The candidate should have strong interest in pursuing a PhD in a different discipline. These requirements shall be in addition to any other requirements set in this policy for admission to a PhD program. In such a case, the candidate would not be a student of PhD program. Such candidates would be offered provisional admissions to MS/MPhil programs offered in Fall &

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	3 of 19	

Spring intakes to enable the candidates to apply for PhD programs where intradisciplinary candidates are accepted.

Contingent upon this qualification with min 3.0/4.0 in max two chances to fulfill the deficiency requirement, the candidate would be required to apply for PhD program (as and when offered), Pass the GAT (Subject)/ or Equivalent Test with 60% marks and appear before admission committee prior to admission. Based on Departmental Admission Committee's recommendation the candidate may be admitted in a PhD Program. The Committee may further determine (where required) the deficient/ essential course (s) to study in addition to required mandatory 18 Credit Hours to complete the course work.

b) Statement of Purpose. All applicants are required to submit a Statement of Purpose along with the application form, writing clearly their intended research interest and preference/choice of Supervisor where applicable. The statement of purpose will include: (i) Title of the potential research proposal, (ii) Clear articulation of the current understanding of the intended field and ideas for potential research, and (iii) Explanation of the intended impact of the proposed research.

c) Rejection and Transfer Cases. In case of rejection of application, applicant may apply again, in the following semester or later, after removing the observations of concerned Department or Admission Office. An applicant, who is already pursuing a PhD program elsewhere, can get transferred to Air University if s/he meets all the admission requirements of Air University. However, s/he will be required to follow the AU Migration and Transfer Policy. A maximum of nine credit hours (CH) coursework only (excluding research credits) is transferrable.

d) Deficiency Courses. In case the concerned Department places an additional requirement that an applicant should clear one or more Deficiency Course(s), provisional admission may be granted subject to clearing such Deficiency Course(s). In such a case, a provisionally admitted student will be required to Pass the course(s) which will not be graded towards the CGPA and the duration for completing such course(s) may not be counted towards the PhD duration. The student will have a maximum of two chances to clear the Deficiency Course(s) with the required CGPA i.e. 3.00 out of 4.00 and will be charged fee, in addition to other admissible fee, as determined by the level and CH of the course(s). Such Deficiency Course(s) will appear in the Transcript showing only Pass/Fail grades. A student not Passing the Deficiency Course(s) within the maximum allowed attempts will not be granted admission to the PhD Program.

Registration Requirement of PhD Student

4. A PhD student is required to maintain his/her registration (both for coursework and for research work) throughout the duration of PhD studies and to pay the required fee(s) as per AU rules. If s/he fails to register in any semester, s/he shall cease to maintain his/her status as PhD student of the University. In case the student applies for reinstatement of his/her status to the Registrar within immediate following semester and s/he shall have to

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	4 of 19	Zafar Mahidul -

pay all dues, deposit re-admission fee and fine as applicable, within 2 weeks of the start of the semester.

PhD Coursework

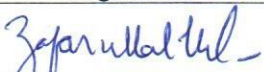
5. A PhD student is required to register for nine to twelve CH coursework per semester, in the first two regular semesters. Dean of the faculty, on the recommendation of Chair Department, may allow registration for a minimum of six CH instead of nine CH. After completion of required coursework, a PhD student is required to register for research work as per existing policy and procedures of registration and fee payment. Ideally the additional courses should be registered prior to start of Research Work but if Supervisor/GEC believes that certain courses are important/helpful for the student to complete his/her research/Thesis, then s/he can register in such courses before submission of final draft of Thesis. All PhD Scholars (irrespective of department/program) would be registered for the Comprehensive Exam with a universal code after successful completion of coursework.

A student can complete coursework requirements with the following conditions:-

- a) A student on Probation may take a new course if it is an Elective Course; such a course may replace a failed Elective.
- b) A student can repeat maximum two courses during completion of coursework.
- c) Grades less than A- can be improved in a regular semester.
- d) A failed course can be replaced with a new course as recommended by supervisor / HoD. Asterisk would be marked on failed or low grade course.
- e) Additional course would be non – credited for depiction on transcript having no effect on CGPA.

Beyond Duration of Normal PhD Studies

6. The minimum/normal duration of the PhD studies shall be three academic years - an academic year consists of two regular semesters i.e., Fall and Spring, extendable by three more academic years (on semester-to semester basis) by Dean of the concerned Faculty on the recommendation of the concerned Chair Department. For every extended semester beyond normal duration, a student would be charged applicable fee as per policy. The Doctoral Dissertation must be sent to external and local examiners/experts for evaluation by Office of Graduate Studies as soon as possible. Scholars who fail to get their final defense examination (FDE) scheduled within the allowed time shall have to apply in writing to the FBGS through GEC for the extension beyond the sixth year with justification(s). Subsequently, the FBGS may recommend to VC an extension of one final regular semester provided the Candidate has submitted his/her finalized Dissertation to external and local examiners/experts for evaluation, and the FBGS has reasons to believe that the scholar will be able to get his/her final defense scheduled and complete all other academic requirements within the extended time frame. Offices of the Director Examinations, Registrar and Director Academics will be intimated of all the extensions granted, for record purpose.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	5 of 19	

In case the scholar still fails to complete the degree requirements, the FBGS will refer the case of dismissal from the program of studies to the VC through Director Academics and Registrar.

Semester Leave.

7. A PhD scholar is eligible for leave up to one semester provided the student has completed the first semester. An application for a semester leave will be made by student on recommendation of Chair Department and concerned Dean submitted to the Registration Office within two weeks of commencement of semester. The student would be required to pay applicable allied charges only. In case of applying after two weeks of start of semester the fee would be charged as per Course Drop Policy. The Registration Office after scrutiny of record shall process the case on file for approval of Vice Chancellor through the Office of Dean Graduate Studies and Registrar.

In the event of a semester leave request during the first semester due to documented medical or other unavoidable circumstances, the student is required to have completed at least half of the semester, including Mid-term Exams. It is important to note that no fee waiver shall be granted under such circumstances. Additionally, any leave application submitted before reaching this halfway point will be considered invalid.

In extraordinary circumstances a student may be granted leave for two semesters during PhD program. Such application will be submitted one semester before the intended semester, or in exceptional circumstances, only within the first two weeks of a running semester. Any application made after such time limits will be automatically considered invalid. Only one semester of any leave granted will not be counted towards the duration of the studies.

PhD Supervisor and Guidance and Evaluation Committee (GEC)

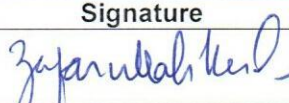
8. Within one month of the confirmation of Doctoral student's admission to the PhD Program, the FBGS will approve a PhD Supervisor, as per the criteria given in Annexure 'C'. Being the Supervisor of the PhD Scholar, s/he will chair the GEC as Convener. After the appointment of Supervisor and registration of the PhD scholar, approval of the FBGS will be required within the first semester for a GEC consisting of a minimum of three members including:

- a. Supervisor (Convener)
- b. Co-supervisor (Member; optional)
- c. One Internal Regular Faculty Member of Air University (Member).
- d. One Regular Faculty Member of another HEC-recognized University (Member).

All members of the GEC must be PhD degree holders and fulfill HEC criteria (Annex 'C'). The member of GEC should not be relative of the Supervisor and/or the student.

Publications and PhD Research Work Ownership

9. PhD research work completed under supervision is a shared property of supervisor and supervisee. All publications resulting from such research shall reflect the authorship of both parties and shall be subject to mutual consent complying with AU Intellectual Property Policy.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	6 of 19	

External Evaluation of Dissertation

10. In addition to the evaluation of the doctoral dissertation by GEC and plagiarism test, the Dissertation will also be sent, through Office of Graduate Studies, for evaluation to:

- a) at least *two* external experts who shall be
 - (i) PhD faculty member from the world top 500 universities ranked by the Times Higher Education or QS World Ranking in the year corresponding to dissertation evaluation year OR
 - (ii) Pakistan-based Distinguished National Professors, Meritorious Professors from any national university; or Professors from top universities ranked by HEC; or Professors from any Pakistani University having a minimum H-Index 30 for Sciences, 15 for Social Sciences or 8 for Art & Humanities as determined by Web of Science.

OR

- b) At least *one* external expert qualifying any one of the conditions mentioned at 'a' above if the PhD candidate publishes dissertation research in a peer-reviewed journal that is classified by the HEC in category 'W' for Sciences and 'X' or above for Social Sciences/Management Sciences.

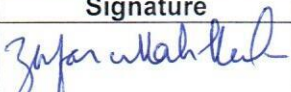
The selection of external evaluators will be based on the relevance of the research area to the expertise of the evaluator. The following general guidelines shall, at least, be observed: relevance of expertise, no conflict of interest, objectivity, diversity in terms of geography, culture and professional background, reputation, availability, professionalism, communication (capable of providing clear and constructive feedback on the dissertation) and compatibility (well-versed with research methodology, approach and theories used in dissertation). The external evaluators should not be member of GEC and relative of the Supervisor and / or the student.

The Office of the Dean Graduate Studies shall ensure the completion of evaluation process for and by external evaluators within 2 months by keeping an active follow-up. In case of non-receipt of evaluator report within maximum 3 months, the evaluator may be changed subject to approval of Director Academics and Vice Chancellor.

Appointment of External Evaluators

11. Each Department will recommend, through concerned Dean, five names to office of Dean Graduate Studies for each Doctoral Candidate, who shall not be co-authors of PhD scholar's research work, as external evaluator(s) according to the criteria specified above. From the recommended name(s), Director Academics will approve the external evaluator(s). Subsequently the Office of Graduate Studies will contact and send soft copies of the dissertation to the approved evaluator(s). The received evaluation report(s) will be forwarded to concerned Supervisor and concerned Chair Department.

Page 7 of 19

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	7 of 19	

Appointment of Local Examiners

12. Each Department will recommend, through concerned Dean, four names to the Office of Dean Graduate Studies, as Local Examiners who shall not be co-authors of PhD scholar's research work, within country, in addition to one local external examiner in GEC for each Doctoral Candidate. From the recommended names, Director Academics will approve two Local Examiners. Subsequently the Office of Graduate Studies will contact and send soft copies of the dissertation to the Local Examiners. The received evaluation report(s) will be forwarded to concerned Supervisor and Chair Department. The Local Examiners will be required to attend the Final Defense Examination.

Change of Supervisor

13. The case of change of PhD Supervisor, if inevitable, will be initiated by concerned Chair Department and forwarded by Dean to FBGS for necessary approval by VC. The concerned Chair Department may initiate the change of Supervisor in case the Supervisor (i) has resigned from the University and is no longer a Regular Faculty Member, or (ii) a Supervisor has proceeded on leave from the University for a period exceeding one semester; unless the PhD scholar has submitted the First Draft of the Dissertation to his/her Supervisor. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair Department may recommend retention of Supervisor/GEC member in case of (ii) above. The approval will be sent to all concerned for record purpose. The same procedure will be followed in the case of any change in GEC. However, such changes shall not form a reason for extending the PhD studies beyond maximum duration.

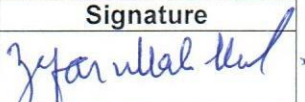
Comprehensive Exam (CE)

14. Within one semester of the completion of his/her coursework (securing a min CGPA of 3.00/4.00), and within the timeframe given in Sec. 2I, the PhD student shall take the Comprehensive Examination (CE) of the Department. Research credits will be counted towards the PhD degree when such credits are taken in candidature i.e. after passing the Comprehensive Examination. Student will have two chances to clear the CE. After passing the Comprehensive Examination, the status of the PhD student will be converted to PhD Candidate. The student shall be awarded a 'U' grade if not able to clear the CE in the first attempt.

The CE will be administered by a CE Committee chaired by the respective Dean with members comprising the concerned Chair Department, one Senior FM from the concerned Department and one specific-area subject specialist from within the Department. In case the Dean is also Supervisor of the PhD Student appearing for the CE, the Dean Graduate Studies will chair the CE Committee and the Dean may be part of the Committee.

The CE will consist of Written Examination(s) from an approved Syllabus publicized by the respective Department/Faculty. Examination(s) will assess the breadth and depth knowledge of the discipline in which the student is admitted.

The following are the guidelines for conducting a Comprehensive Examination: -

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	8 of 19	

- a. The exam(s) should be based on a recapitulation of the conceptual knowledge of the discipline to which the student is admitted.
- b. The exam(s) shall cover the courses studied, preferably at the graduate level, conducted on one composite question paper.
- c. The evaluation shall be on an aggregate basis, expressed in terms of pass/fail and shall not be graded.

Result of Comprehensive Examination

15. The Comprehensive Examination shall not be assigned a numerical grade and the results will be expressed in terms of Pass/Fail only. The office of the Director Examinations will announce the official result of the CE on receiving the results and all requisite documents from Supervisor/GEC/concerned Department as per AU examination policies.

Defense of Research Proposal

16. After passing the CE, and within the first three years of registration into a PhD program within the timeframe given in Sec. 21, a Doctoral student will be required to prepare, present, and defend a research synopsis outlining his/her intended research, to GEC for its approval (title of intended PhD Dissertation is not part of the research synopsis, although student may propose a tentative title). This Defense may also be held in a Summer Break following a regular semester.

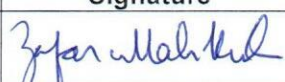
In this Defense, the student must ensure that the selection of the research area (i) shall correspond to the community needs at regional and local levels and comply with the priority national research agenda. (ii) Reflect the basic and pure research. (iii) Signify emerging areas of research that coincide preferably with sustainable development goals (SDGs). The synopsis shall also cover how his/her research work would benefit the economy, industry, culture, society, community, etc., of the country. Two chances (with a gap of up to six weeks) will be given to student to clear his/her topic defense.

Result of Proposal Defense

17. The result of the Proposal Defense will be expressed in terms of Pass/Fail only. A 'U' grade shall be awarded to a PhD student if he/she is not able to clear the Research Proposal Defense. A student unable to clear the Research Proposal Defense in two attempts will be issued transcripts for completion of coursework upon cancellation of his/her registration.

Change of Research Area of the Student.

18. Any change(s) in the area of research and research proposal of any student, once it has been finalized, is not a preferred situation and all possible efforts will be made by concerned Department Chair to discourage students to change their area of research as it will result in wastage of student's time and Department resources. However, if it is inevitable, then FBGS will forward its recommendations to VC through Director

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	9 of 19	

Academics. Change of research area will not be taken as a reason, by the student, for extending the duration of PhD studies.

Research Progress

19. After successfully defending the Research Proposal, the PhD candidate is required to submit progress reports, signed by the supervisor, to the GEC, Chair Department, and the Director of Examinations. These reports should ideally include semester results and must be submitted within thirty days of the end of each semester. The respective supervisor will then post interim grades, either 'S' (Satisfactory) or 'U' (Unsatisfactory). Additionally, the minutes of GEC meetings, outlining the candidate's progress based on an oral/seminar presentation, are to be submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies by the middle of each semester. Failure to submit the progress report on time may result in a fine of up to Rs. 5,000. The candidate will be allowed to register for the next semester only after paying the fine and submitting the progress report. It is essential for the Research Graduate Coordinator in each department to maintain updated records of the students through active liaison and keep all concerned departments informed.

Submission of First Draft of Dissertation

20. On completion of research requirements (as per research proposal), PhD Candidate will submit the first draft of the PhD dissertation satisfying the HEC Guidelines for the Doctoral Dissertation (Annex 'D') to his/her Supervisor (who may suggest changes/corrections etc., and ask the Candidate to resubmit). If the Supervisor finds the dissertation to be satisfactory, s/he shall ask the Candidate to finalize the Dissertation and its title for further evaluation by all concerned.

Similarity/Plagiarism Check

21. Before sending the PhD dissertation for evaluation by external evaluator(s), the Supervisor is required to conduct a similarity/plagiarism check of the PhD Dissertation, as per the Guidelines of the HEC Graduate Education Policy Section 5.4 including Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) with References/bibliographies and tables of content removed from the submitted documents, using software approved by AU with the help of the office of Director Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC). The similarity index of the test should be less than or equal to 19%, with less than or equal to 5% from any single source. If the similarities of a report are from the author's own (previous) work, then they may be ignored only if the material has been cited by the author. Similarly, the Dissertation should adhere to the Generative-AI Policy of the University. A certificate to this effect duly signed by Supervisor and countersigned by Department Chair and Director QEC is to be forwarded to Registrar and Director Examination. This certificate shall also be attached with the hardbound and soft copies of the PhD Dissertation.

Evaluation of the PhD Dissertation

22. Candidate must submit his/her finalized dissertation to GEC at least 06 months prior to the maximum allowed duration. Based on GEC satisfactory report/acceptance, the

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	10 of 19	Zafar Malik

dissertation must be sent to external evaluator(s) and local examiners by the Office of Graduate Studies within maximum 2 weeks after receiving the draft from the Dept. In case the External Evaluator (s) gives his/her assessment of dissertation as "Accept with Minor Changes", the PhD Candidate will incorporate these changes in the dissertation and the Supervisor will certify that these changes have been incorporated. Subsequently, the Final dissertation will not be resubmitted to the same Evaluator(s). If the report of the External Evaluator(s) states "Accept with Major Changes", the matter may be referred to GEC (minus the local external examiner) who will ask the Candidate to modify his/her research or dissertation accordingly. The Supervisor will then certify that the requisite changes have been made and the final dissertation will not be resubmitted to the external evaluator(s). After receiving positive evaluation report by external evaluator(s), the local external examiners and the Supervisor, the Graduate Research Coordinator shall arrange the conduct of Final Defense for PhD candidate within one month from the receipt of evaluation report(s). In case of unsatisfactory comments (rejection of the research work) by: i- one of the external evaluators, the dissertation will be sent to the standby expert for evaluation, ii- both external evaluators, the matter will be referred to Dean Graduate Studies for further deliberation with concerned Supervisor, Chair Department and Dean.

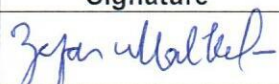
Final Defense Examination

23. The PhD Candidate will be eligible for final defense subject to fulfillment of all pre-requisites and shall confirm to Dept. his/her readiness for FDE. The final defense must be an open defense by the Candidate, attended by GEC, all the available FMs, MS and PhD students of the Dept., and by the Department Chair and Dean in the presence of Dean Graduate Studies/neutral Chair and Director Examinations. This Defense may also be held in a Summer Break following a regular semester. The Review Committee consisting of Dean Graduate Studies (Convener), Dean concerned Faculty, External Member of GEC and two Local External Examiners as members will evaluate the dissertation and defense. Other GEC members will be non-voting participants who may be consulted by the Review Committee after the Defense and before their decision. The minimum quorum required for the Review Committee will be Convener and three other members of the Review Committee. Director Exams, or a nominee of Vice Chancellor, may attend the Defense as a Neutral Observer to ensure that the Defense was conducted fairly and in accordance with the rules and regulations. Based on its evaluations, Review Committee will make one of the following decisions:

- a) Pass
- b) Pass with minor changes
- c) Deferred (Major changes required, second final defense if needed)
- d) Fail

Final Defense Pass with Minor Changes

24. In case Review Committee announces "Pass with minor changes", the Candidate will incorporate these changes in the dissertation within 30 days and the Supervisor will certify accordingly so that PhD scholar may proceed with the final submission.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	11 of 19	

Deferred Final Defense

25. In case the Review Committee announces that the result is "Deferred" and recommends that a second Final Defense by the PhD Candidate is required, Dean Graduate Studies will announce the time of next defense also; otherwise PhD Scholar will incorporate the changes in the dissertation and the Supervisor will certify accordingly so that the scholar may proceed with the final submission. The scholar will be required to complete all changes with a period of up to three months as permitted by Director Examinations.

Non-compliance with University Policy/Quality

26. In case of non-compliance with AU Policy/Quality issues, the Dean Graduate Studies, or nominee of VC in the final defense, may recommend any observations to VC for approval and subsequent corrective action by concerned Dean prior to announcement of FDE result.

Final Submission of PhD Dissertation

27. After successful final defense, the student will submit one hardbound copy (ref Sec. 2k) with CD/DVD to Supervisor and one hardbound copy with CD/DVD to Office of Registrar to be forwarded to the Central Library for the repository. Both copies of the PhD Dissertation will be submitted within 30 calendar days from the date of the Final Defense or as permitted above in case of Deferred status.

Dismissal from PhD Program

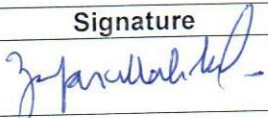
28. A student /Candidate shall be dismissed from the PhD Degree program in case of one or more of the following conditions:

- CGPA remains below 3.00 on completion of his/her course work.
- CGPA is below 3.00 in two consecutive semesters (irrespective of courses taken in each semester).
- Fails twice in the comprehensive examination or defense of research proposal.
- Awarded two consecutive 'U' grades and GEC recommends dismissal.
- Declared 'fail' in the final defense.
- Fails to complete all the degree requirements within the maximum time allowed including all extensions (Annex B).
- Plagiarism or falsification of the research data is established.

Scholars who fail to pay applicable fee for every extended semester, beyond normal duration of respective program, and the Dissertation/Thesis Evaluation fee or any outstanding dues would be notified for award of degree once all dues are paid.

Re-admission of a dismissed PhD candidate/student

29. After dismissal from a PhD program, a PhD student/Candidate cannot join any PhD program offered by Air University.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	12 of 19	

Plagiarism in Dissertation

30. If Similarity/Plagiarism is established beyond specified limits is determined, the case will be forwarded to Director QEC for further investigation in accordance with the Anti-Plagiarism Policy issued by the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan, as updated from time to time.

Grievance Committee

31. The University Graduate Programs Grievance Committee, as constituted by the VC, will address any grievances of PhD students and faculty member(s) to provide timely support and justice to all stakeholders.

Force Majeure

32. In the event of force majeure i.e., delay on account of circumstance(s) beyond the control of a student, or in case the delay is caused due to process or administrative reasons, the university may grant an extension within the maximum duration specified in Section 6 above "Beyond Duration of Normal PhD Studies".

Issuance of Partial Transcript

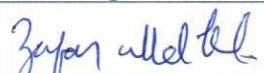
33. A student who successfully completes his/her coursework and passes the comprehensive examination but is unable to defend a PhD research proposal or does not complete the required research for obtaining a PhD degree within the maximum duration shall be granted a Partial Transcript upon completion of necessary requirements as determined by the University.

Implementation of PhD Policy 2023

34. This Policy shall be applicable to all students of Air University Islamabad and all campuses, with effect from the Intake of the Fall-2023 semester. However, while the students enrolled before the promulgation of this Policy would continue to be governed by previous policies effective at the time of their enrollment, such students may also consent to migrate to this Policy.



(JAVAID AHMED)
Air Marshal (R)
Vice Chancellor
Air University Islamabad

No. IBD/AU/600/21/09/DFGS dated 19 December, 2023

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	13 of 19	

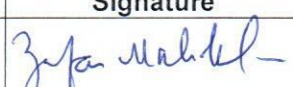
Absolute Grading Scheme for PhD Program

S No	Marks in %age	Grades	GPA
1.	85 - 100	A	4.00
2.	80 - 84.99	A-	3.67
3.	70 - 79.99	B+	3.33
4.	65 - 69.99	B	3.00
5.	60 - 64.99	B-	2.67
6.	55 - 59.99	C+	2.33
7.	50 - 54.99	C	2.00
8.	Below 50	F	0.00

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	14 of 19	

Timelines (Minimum/Normal and Maximum) for PhD

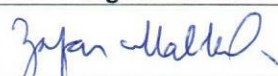
STATUS	SEMESTER											
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Minimum/Normal Duration = 3 years, Maximum Duration = 6 years												
Minimum/ Normal* Duration	9 CH	9 CH	CE	PDE		FDE Thesis/ Dissertation Submission						
Maximum allowed duration	6 CH	6 CH	6 CH	CE	PDE	CE&PDE max						FDE

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	15 of 19	

Criteria to be appointed a PhD Supervisor

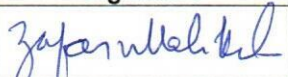
General Requirements

- a) The Supervisor will be a Regular PhD-qualified faculty member of AU. A Co-Supervisor may be a regular faculty member of Air University or researcher at a public or private university or DAI, or may have a position of researcher or scientist at any R&D or public/private sector organization. However, in the case of a non-faculty PhD supervisor, who otherwise meets the criteria of being a PhD supervisor, shall be taken as an adjunct faculty member, for a period not less than the minimum time required to complete the student's PhD research, prior to assigning a PhD supervision. Such a person shall also provide an NOC from the parent organization.
- b) The research supervisor shall be given opportunities to attend and qualify course(s) on MS/MPhil/PhD Supervision which should also have contents on research ethics, publications, patents, etc. Such courses may include certified self-paced MOOCS, or a course designed/offered by National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) or by a university in the following manner: i. Basic level course: to supervise students of MS/MPhil/equivalent degrees. ii. Advance level course: to supervise PhD researchers.
- c) At the time of supervisor allocation, the supervisors: i. Must be relevant to the field of research in which the student intends to conduct research. ii. Should have NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST in personal, financial, or professional stakes. iii. Should have the time and availability to supervise PhD dissertation and give clear and constructive feedback. iv. Should be capable of conducting themselves in a professional and respectful manner throughout the supervision process. v. Should be capable of maintaining confidentiality and protecting the intellectual property of the dissertation. vi. Should, primarily, be a regular faculty member of the supervisee's University/HEI/DAI. In addition to the aforementioned guidelines: vii. The research supervisor shall be allocated to a doctoral student from the date of enrollment. viii. The supervisory workload of research supervisors should be determined based on the nature of the institution, availability of teaching and research facilities, and the academic standing of supervisors. However, it is mandated that the maximum supervisory load shall not exceed five PhD students, simultaneously. Further, fresh PhDs can supervise MS/MPhil and co-supervise PhD students, while a PhD faculty member, after two years of obtaining a PhD degree, can supervise one PhD student in 3rd year, two PhD students in 4th year and maximum up to 5 PhD students from 5th year onward, subject to fulfillment of other conditions provided in this policy.
- d) PhD research work completed under supervision is a shared property of supervisor and supervisee. All publications resulting from such research shall reflect the authorship of both parties and shall be subject to mutual consent.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	16 of 19	

Publication Requirements

Science and Technology	Social Science, Arts and Humanities and Business Education	Regional and National Languages
Within last 3 years after PhD: at least one research publication in W category OR Within last 5 years after PhD: at least five research publications in X category journals	Within last 3 years after PhD: at least one research publication in W category OR Within last 5 years after PhD: at least five research publications in X and Y category journals	Within last 3 years after PhD: at least one research publication in X category OR Within last 5 years after PhD: at least five research publications in X or Y category journals

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	17 of 19	

HEC Guidelines for the Doctoral Dissertation

This section is taken from Section 3.8 of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Graduate Education Policy 2023.

The quality of presentation and reporting in dissertation shall reflect the following characteristics: i. The document is well written. ii. The contents are balanced, well organized, appropriately styled; clearly structured, and well cohered; and iii. The document is free from grammatical and spelling errors and flawed terminology. iv. Minor shortcomings such as inaccurate use of acronyms and clumsy looking sentence structure have been addressed.

Qualitative Research should include a valid statistical design for data analysis. vi. Formatting shall be compatible with international standards.

The researcher should ensure that the technical soundness of the PhD dissertation is integral. The following guidelines shall be useful in making the PhD research methodologically sound. In case of Qualitative Research methods the research should go beyond illuminating the subjective meaning, actions and contexts of those being researched, showing evidence of the adaption and responsiveness of the research design to the circumstances and issues of real-life social settings met during the course of the study, demonstrating that the sample considered produces the type of knowledge necessary to understand the structures and processes within which the individuals or situations are located, providing descriptions to allow the researcher or reader to interpret the meaning and context of what is being researched, highlighting different sources of knowledge about the same issue compared and expanding upon subjective perceptions and experiences treated as knowledge in their own right and explaining how data leads to analyses and further interpretations.

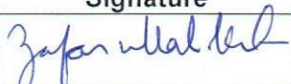
Quantitative Research should include a description on the Reliability, Validity (both internal i.e., indicating what they appear to be, and external, i.e. showing generalization to other situations), and Replicability of the results.

Appropriateness of the Methods to the Aims of the Study

To achieve the research objectives, the alignment of the research approach and methods is necessary. Thus, a PhD dissertation, at least, shall reflect a fair proportion of latest knowledge of contemporary techniques and methods in relation to study objectives, contain detailed and easily comprehensible discussions regarding the applied methods and techniques, justify the use of methods and techniques to achieve study objectives, show evaluation of obtained results in relation with study objectives, and show that the methods and techniques used should justify the results obtained. f. The obtained results should support the study objectives.


Relevance to the Policy and Practice

The dissertation should have significantly answered questions related to policy and practice in the concerned area while establishing its usefulness and usability. Accordingly, the dissertation, at least, shall reflect judicious evaluation of study results in relation with policy related aims and goals undertaken while starting the research, discuss the practical implications of the study results in association with the developing practices in that area,

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	18 of 19	

establish usefulness of the study results for devising policy as stated in the beginning, discuss how the resulting policy would be useful for the organization/society. Further, the research output should be significant enough to be published or patented; thus the assessment of the results performed by the author must not be superficial and lacking substance.

19 DEC 2023


(JAVAI AHMED)
Air Marshal (Retd)
Vice Chancellor
Air University, Islamabad

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies	30 th Nov. 2023	19 of 19	