

## AIR UNIVERSITY

### 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 degrees 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 described in this policy. This policy is in line with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Graduate Education Policy 2023.

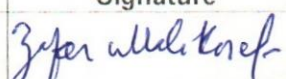
#### Award of MS/MPhil Degree

2. On the recommendations of the Faculty Board of Graduate Studies (FBGS) to Vice Chancellor (VC) through Director Academics and Registrar, Air University shall award MS/MPhil/MBA degrees to candidates who fulfill 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 of the Vice Chancellor on recommendations of the FBGS. The minimum requirements are further explained in subsequent paragraphs.

a) **Coursework.** The candidate shall either complete a minimum of thirty (30) Credit Hours (CH) of course work, or a minimum coursework of twenty-four (24) CH of graduate level courses along with a minimum of six (6) CH for research work/thesis. By the end of the second semester, up to 20% of students enrolled in a Master's program except MSPM, MSBA, MS-OSCM and MBA, may be allowed the coursework track based on their CGPA or genuine circumstances established before Class Advisor and Chair Department.

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. Academic Standing is placed at Annexure A (Table A1).

c) **Defense of Research Proposal.** A Master's student on the Thesis track is required to prepare, submit, and defend a thesis proposal, within the second or third semester, after carrying out a comprehensive literature review and taking guidance from his/her supervisor and Guidance & Evaluation Committee (GEC), and defend it successfully in not more than two attempts.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	1 of 12	

Defense of research proposal may be allowed till 4th semester in exceptional case approved by FBGS.

d) **Research Credits.** In addition to the coursework, all Master's students (except MBA 1.5) on the thesis track must register for at least Six (06) CH of research work, preferably in two semesters, and get satisfactory grades for these credit hours.

e) **Similarity/Plagiarism Check.** The thesis should pass a similarity/plagiarism test verified by the Office of Director QEC using specialist software, before it is sent to the external examiner (section 12). The thesis should also adhere to the Air University Policy on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Material for Instruction, Academic Assessment and Published Works.

f) **Research Publication.** A Master's student on the Thesis track should preferably publish a research paper as first or second author in any journal/international conference. This publication must be derived from his/her research thesis.

g) **Final Defense.** For a student on the Thesis track, it is essential to successfully defend the thesis in an open defense (in the form of an oral presentation) and earn its approval by a majority vote of GEC members. There should be a gap of minimum eight (08) weeks between the proposal defense and the final defense.

h) **Submission of Master's Thesis.** One copy of the hard bound Master's thesis (blue binding with silver text) duly stamped by the Office of Director Examinations and signed by Supervisor, 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 Fee.** Each Master's student is required to pay the full semester fees equivalent to Six (06) CH as per applicable rate of program 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. On submission of Thesis copy for evaluation purpose, and following semester registration for only Defense purpose, a student may be charged only allied charges contingent upon submission of a certificate by concerned Supervisor/Chair Department/Faculty Dean to the Registration Department prior to start of following semester in which only Final Defense Exam (FDE) is required.

### 3. Absolute Grading System

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

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	2 of 12	

#### 4. **Duration of Master's Studies**

The MS/MPhil degrees shall be awarded not before the completion of 1.5 years or 03 regular semesters and not after the completion of four (04) years or eight (08) regular semesters. An academic year consists of two regular semesters i.e., Fall and Spring semesters – the extendable period allowed beyond 1.5 years is three more semesters by the Dean of the concerned Faculty on the recommendation of the concerned Supervisor and Chair Department. Beyond the third year, extension is permissible by the recommendation of the FBGS and subsequent approval of the Vice Chancellor. The Office of the Dean Graduate Studies, Director Examinations, 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 by FBGS to VC through Director Academics and Registrar.


5. **Semester Leave.** A Master's student 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 the student on the recommendation of the 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 the Course Drop Policy. The Registration Office, after scrutiny of the records, shall process the case on file for approval of Vice Chancellor through the Office of Dean Graduate Studies and Registrar.

In case of semester leave requirement during the first semester due to medical or other proven inevitable circumstances, the student must have completed half of the semester including Mid-Exams. No fee waiver shall be granted in such a case. Any leave application prior to this period shall also be considered invalid.

In extraordinary circumstances a student may be granted leave for two semesters during the Master's 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.

#### **Admission in Master's Program**

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

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	3 of 12	

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

- (i) **Degree Requirement:** Four year HEC recognized BS degree/equivalent degree in the relevant field (or as approved by the Academic Council) with at least 120 CH beyond 12 years of schooling with a CGPA of at least 2.00 (on the scale of 4.00) OR First Division under annual system. In case of a foreign degree, HEC equivalence is mandatory.
- (ii) **Admission Test:** The student is required to pass the University MS/MPhil/MBA Admission Test with a passing score of 50% OR the applicant has to present evidence of having passed the GRE/HAT/Equivalent test with minimum 50% marks.
- (iii) **Intra-Disciplinary qualification:** Interdisciplinary qualification holders are also eligible for admission in MS/MPhil/MBA programs provided that the Departmental Admission Committee is satisfied with candidate's primary knowledge of applied domain by correlating his/her basic qualification and ability to undertake the level 6 courses. If deemed appropriate, the candidate would be required to register in a Zero Semester for additional courses (Maximum 09 CH) as suggested by the Departmental Admission Committee and the candidate would require to pass the Zero semester with minimum 2.00 CGPA without failing in any subject. Fee for these courses would be charged as per programs' applicable rates. However, MS/MPhil/MBA degree duration would be started from first semester of regular program.

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 s/he meets all the admission and/or migration requirements of AU as per Migration Policy.

### 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. A student failing to register in any semester according to Registration Schedule shall cease to be a student of Air University. In such case the student's bona fide status may be restored by applying to the Registrar and clearing all dues and by depositing re-admission fee or any fine(s) within the first two weeks of the semester.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	4 of 12	

8. Master's students are required to register for 9-12 CH of coursework in each semester, for the first two regular semesters subject to satisfactory academic performance 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 (06). From third semester onwards, a Master's student may register for a maximum of six (06) research CH in addition to courses in a semester, provided s/he has completed 18 CH of coursework with CGPA not less than 2.50/4.00.

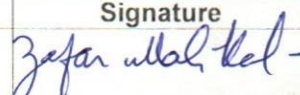
### **Supervisor, Guidance and Evaluation Committee (GEC) and External Thesis Examiners**

9. For a student on the Thesis track, 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 (FM) 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, s/he 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 including Supervisor; depending upon any specific requirement, in which case a Co-Supervisor may be appointed by Chair Department. Department Chair may appoint a larger GEC. The 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/industry other than AU. Members of GEC should not be relatives of the supervisor and/or the student.

### **Research Progress**

10. Within the second or third semester, a student on the Thesis track will prepare, submit and defend the thesis proposal. The Proposal Defense should be conducted with a gap of at least one week after issuing intimation of Proposal Defense to provide the students sufficient time for preparation. This Defense may also be held in a Summer Semester.

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

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	5 of 12	

the GEC, 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 "S" and "U" interim grades awarded by the Supervisor ideally with semester results or maximum within 15 days of the end of each semester. The Graduate Research Coordinator is to update the progress on thesis tracking module as well. Students who fail to submit the progress report in timely manner may not be allowed to register in following semester. Contingent upon submission of progress report (s) within two weeks of start of semester, s/he may be allowed for registration. Beyond this period, a student would only be registered subject to approval of supervisor, concerned Chair Department/ Dean and Dean Graduate Studies under intimation to Registrar Office.

In case of two consecutive 'U' grades, the MS student will be put on 'probation' and referred to the GEC which may decide to recommend the student for dismissal or to extend the probation to one further semester. In case of extension, the student's probation may only be ended if he/she is awarded a 'S' grade in the semester on probation. The Graduate Coordinator is to update the progress on PG thesis tracking module as well. Students who fail to submit the progress 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 or as decided by concerned Supervisor or Chair Department.

### Similarity/Plagiarism Check

11. Before sending the thesis for evaluation by external examiner(s) of GEC, the supervisor is required to conduct a plagiarism check of the Master's thesis, as per the Guidelines of the HEC Graduate Education Policy Section 5.4 including Committee on Publication Ethics (CODE) with References/bibliographies and tables of content removed from the submitted documents, using software approved by AU.

The thesis should also adhere to the Air University Policy on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Material for Instruction, Academic Assessment and Published Works of using up to 15% AI content.

The similarity index of the text should be less than 19% 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, Director Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) and Director Examinations. The office of Director QEC 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.

In case Similarity/Plagiarism is established, the case will be forwarded to Dir. QEC for further investigation under the offense of use of unfair means.

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	6 of 12	

## Evaluation of Master's Thesis

12. In addition to the evaluation of the thesis by GEC and similarity/plagiarism test, submission of finalized thesis to GEC/expert for evaluation shall be done within the normal duration, otherwise the student will have to apply for extension. After receiving positive evaluation reports by the external examiner(s) of GEC and Supervisor, the Department shall arrange for final defense of his/her thesis.

## Final Defense

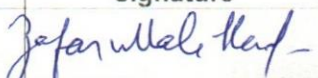
13. Master's student will be eligible for the final defense subject to fulfillment of conditions as mentioned in Para-2 and 4 above. Final Defense should be conducted with a gap of at least 10-12 days after issuing intimation of Final Defense to provide the students sufficient time for preparation. This Defense may also be held in a Summer Semester following a regular semester. The final defense must be an open defense (in the form of oral 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 communicate the results to the Dean of Graduate Studies for onward submission to Office of Director Examination for declaration / posting of results:

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

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 up to a maximum of three months. The department will award "U" grade to such students in the current semester. In case of semester transition during this period, scholar would be required to register in the following semester and to pay applicable fee and allied charges. The date of successful FDE would be considered as degree completion date.

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

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	7 of 12	

letter grade to the thesis, otherwise after Supervisor has certified that all required changes have been made then the student will be considered "Pass".

### **Award of Medals**

15. Only Master's students on research track securing positions in their departments would be considered for award of medals. They must have successfully cleared final defense and have submitted hardbound copies within the normal duration. Submission date as stamped by Exam Dept. on hardbound copies would be considered. Exams Dept. would ensure stamping of hardbound copies within three working days (if all conditions are clear) or communicate the deficiencies to the Dept. within three working days. Students fulfilling these conditions would be considered for award of medals as per University Medal Award Policy. Students completing their degree on the coursework track would not be considered for the award of medals.

### **Final Submission of MS/MPhil Thesis**

16. After successful final defense, the student will submit one hardbound copy (blue binding with silver text) to Supervisor, duly stamped by the Office of Director Examinations (Section 2.h) and one hard and soft copy to Registrar Office to be forwarded to the Main Library for the repository after issuance of Transcript and degree.

### **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.
  - b) CGPA is below 2.50 in two consecutive semesters (irrespective of courses taken in each semester).
  - c) S/he has two consecutive probations and is recommended for dismissal by GEC.
  - d) SGPA is below 2.00 in first semester
  - e) Fails twice in the defense of research proposal.
  - f) Declared fail in final defense after availing two chances.
  - g) Fails to complete all the degree requirements within the maximum time allowed including the extension period.
  - h) He/she carries out plagiarism or falsification of research data.

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


OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	8 of 12	



## Award of MBA Degree

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

- a) **Minimum Duration of MBA Program.** The **MBA: Business stream**, for students with a background in business (BS in Business/equivalent qualification), is a program with a minimum requirement of 30 CH, spread over three (03) regular semesters out of which 24 CH are allocated to coursework while six (06) CH are for capstone/coursework/thesis.
- b) The MBA – Regular (non-business) stream, for students with a non-business background, is a 02-year program with 04 regular semesters and is comprised of 60 CH out of which 54 CH are allocated to coursework while 06 CH are for capstone projects/thesis/additional coursework.
- c) **Course work.** As prescribed above, the MBA Business stream is 24 CH of graduate level courses while for the award of the MBA-Regular stream it is 54 CH of coursework. For MBA Business Stream, the details of exempted credit hours would be annotated on the Final Transcript.
- d) **Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).** MBA students are required to obtain a CGPA 2.50 or above on the scale of 4.00 on completion of academic requirements. The Academic Standing is placed at Annexure A (Table A1).
- e) **Grading System.** The Absolute Grading system is placed at Annexure B (Table A2).
- f) **Capstone/Coursework/Thesis Credit Hours.** In addition to coursework, all MBA students shall register for at least 06 CH of a business Capstone Project (with not more than two students in a Project) or thesis work or may be allowed coursework for these credit hours.
- g) **Research Progress.** Within the second or third semester, a student on the Thesis track will prepare, submit and defend the thesis proposal. The Proposal Defense should be conducted with a gap of at least one week after issuing intimation of Proposal Defense to provide the students sufficient time for preparation. This Defense may also be held in a Summer Semester
- h) **Similarity/Plagiarism Check.** The thesis should pass a similarity/plagiarism test verified by the Office of Director QEC using specialist

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	9 of 12	

software, before it is sent to external examiner (section 9). The thesis should also adhere to the Air University Policy on the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Material for Instruction, Academic Assessment and Published Works.

i) **Evaluation of Master's Thesis.** In addition to the evaluation of the thesis by GEC and similarity/plagiarism test, submission of finalized thesis to GEC/expert for evaluation shall be done within 1.5 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) of GEC and Supervisor, the Department shall arrange for final defense of his/her thesis

j) **Final Defense of Thesis.** For MBA students with the Thesis Stream, it is essential to successfully defend thesis in an open defense (in the form of an oral presentation) and earn its approval by a majority vote of GEC. There should be a gap of minimum 6 weeks between proposal defense and thesis defense.

j) **Final Presentation for Capstone Project.** For MBA 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 mandatory to qualify.

k) **Submission of Thesis/Capstone Project.** One Thesis/MBA Capstone project in hard bound copy (in blue binding and silver text colors, duly signed by all GEC members) along with its soft copy on CD/DVD shall be submitted within 30 calendar days from the date of final presentation/defense. Students of the previous intake/batches will continue to be governed by previous policy on the subject.

### Award of Medals

19. MBA students on Thesis research track / Capstone project securing positions in their departments may be awarded medals as per University Medal Award Policy while non-Thesis students would not be considered for the award of Medals.

20. This policy shall be applicable to all MS/MPhil/MBA programs wef Intake of Fall-2023 Semester.



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

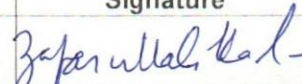
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OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	10 of 12	Zafar ulah Khan

Table A1

Academic Standings applicable for MS/MPhil/MBA Intake of Fall – 2023 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 courses to improve CGPA)
6.	<2.50 in second consecutive semester or <2.00 in 1 <sup>st</sup> semester	Dismissed

OPI	Date	Page No	Signature
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	11 of 12	

**Table A2**  
**Absolute Grading Scheme, applicable from Fall – 2023 Semester for**  
**MS/MPhil/MBA Programs**

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
Faculty of Graduate Studies	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023	12 of 12	