



**Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University**

شفا تعمیر ملت یونیورسٹی

**Registrar Notification No 0112/SEN-22<sup>nd</sup>/2024**

**Dated: August 15, 2024**

**Approval of the Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University Regulations Governing the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Programs, 2023**

1. The Senate, Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University (STMU) in its 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting held on July 10, 2024, on the recommendations of the 34<sup>th</sup> Academic Council meeting, unanimously approved the ***“Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University Regulations Governing the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Programs, 2023”***.
2. Copy of the Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University Regulations Governing the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Programs, 2023 is attached herewith as **Annexure-A (38 Pages)**.
3. These regulations will partially supersede the already notified policy vide No. 0132/2023 dated December 18, 2023.

Prof. Dr. Izhar Hussain (T.I.)  
Registrar


**Distribution:**

- Controller of Examinations;
- All Deans;
- All Principals of University Colleges, Heads of Departments, Campus/ School Director;
- Treasurer;
- Director, Internal Audit;
- Director ORIC;
- Director, QEC.

**Copy for Information:**

- Chancellor, STMU
- Vice Chancellor, STMU

## ANNEXURE-A

	<b>Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University Regulations Governing the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Programs, 2023.</b>
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### **1. PREAMBLE**

These regulations governing the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Programs at Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University have been framed to replace the Chapter-7 entitled “MS/MPhil & PhD Regulations” of the Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University’s Academic Regulations, aligning with the requirements outlined in the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Graduate Education Policy-2023 (GEP-2023) notified vide RN 0132/2023 dated December 18, 2023.

### **2. TITLE**

These regulations, framed in supersession of the MS/MPhil & PhD Regulations of the university and the Higher Education Commission’s (HEC) Graduate Education Policy-2023 (GEP-2023) notified vide RN 0132/2023 dated December 18, 2023 shall be called, “*Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University Regulations Governing the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Programs, 2023*”.

### **3. COMMENCEMENT AND APPLICATION**

- i. These Regulations shall come into force with effect from Fall Semester/ Term/ Annual Intakes of Year 2023.
- ii. These regulations shall apply to all the PhD programs offered by the university and its constituent or recognized colleges/ departments/ schools/ institutes, however, different PhD programs may have their additional specific policies, regulations, procedures, SoPs. Additional specific regulations may be applicable to certain PhD programs.
- iii. Ignorance of the provisions outlined in these regulations will not be accepted as an excuse for failing to comply with them. In case of disputes regarding the interpretation of these regulations, the decision of the university's Academic Council shall be final. No legal action or appeal shall be entertained outside the university.

- iv. In matters of urgency about PhD programs, the Vice Chancellor will be empowered to make decisions based on the general principles of these regulations or established precedents. Such decisions shall be presented to the Graduate Studies and Research Management Council/ Academic Council for ratification.
- v. These regulations are subject to amendments or repeal as deemed necessary. Any changes shall follow the prescribed procedure for the approval of new regulations. Policies or directives from relevant authorities, such as the HEC or professional councils, may be adopted with the approval of the Vice Chancellor, subject to subsequent ratification by the university's statutory bodies.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

All expressions and terms used in these regulations shall have the same meanings as are assigned to them under Section 2 of the Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University Act, 2012 except the following:

- (a) “*Academic Advisor*” means a teacher of the University appointed by the Principal/ Director or Dean concerned for the purpose of guiding and counseling students in their academic endeavors during the course of study of the program;
- (b) “*Academic Calendar*” A schedule of the whole academic year (including fall, spring and summer semesters/ Terms, semester/ term starting date, holidays during the semester/ term, semester/ term termination date, Mid-Term exam week, Final exam week, Result notification date etc.);
- (c) “*Accreditation Council*” means a council established either by the Act of Parliament or under clause 10(e) of the HEC Ordinance 2002 to carry out accreditation of institutions including their departments, faculties, and disciplines by giving them appropriate ratings.
- (d) “*Admission Committee*” means the Admission Committee specified or set up under the regulations.
- (e) “*Adjunct Faculty*” means a contractual faculty member, temporary or part-time, such as teachers, researchers and scientists at any R&D or public/private sector university/ organization, hired by STMU for its departments, colleges, schools or university, to teach specific courses or provide instructional and research supervision support.
- (f) “*Audit Course*” means a course which the student can register without earning grade/ credit and without any liability of taking its examination
- (g) “*Comprehensive Examination*” means an examination conducted after the successful completion of coursework of a PhD program, to ascertain the suitability of a Candidate to undertake research work. The said examination will carry no credit.

- (h) “*Co-supervisor*” means the additional Research Supervisor who supervises/ guides the doctoral research of a candidate along with the Research Supervisor.
- (i) “*Course Work*” means the courses prescribed as a part of the Ph.D. program, which the candidate shall successfully complete as a pre-requisite.
- (j) “*Credits Hours*” means a uniformly recognized measure of time and effort expended to acquire knowledge, skills, competencies, and recognition that a learner has successfully completed the prior course of learning, corresponding to the qualification at a given level. One credit hour is equal to one hour of student – teacher contact per week for the theory courses and three hours of contact hours in practical courses.
- (k) “*Examiner*” means a person, qualified and experienced in the area of research of a Candidate, approved/ ratified by the GSRMC to examine and/or evaluate the dissertation work of the Candidate.
- (l) “*External Examiner*” means a scholar from within or outside Pakistan, not an employee of the STMU at the time, who will evaluate the dissertation of a PhD program candidate. The External Examiner shall have a PhD Degree in the relevant field and will be approved/ ratified by the GSRMC.
- (m) “*Graduate Level*” means a graduate level program as defined in the National Qualifications Framework, that is equivalent to level-7 and level-8 qualifications.
- (n) “*Guidelines for the Implementation of Uniform Semester System*” means the Policy guidelines issued by the Academic Division of HEC providing a uniform system to make Academic Year of Pakistani universities compatible with international standards.
- (o) “*h Index*” means a metric for evaluating the cumulative impact of an author's scholarly output and performance, measured by Web of Science.
- (p) “*Higher Education Commission (HEC)*” means the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan established under Ordinance 2002.
- (q) “*Intra-disciplinary Qualifications*” means the intra-disciplinary qualifications as referred to sub-disciplines occurring within one of the ten broad disciplines defined by UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-F-2013).
- (r) “*Level 6 Degree Programs*” means the academic programs as defined and mentioned in the National Qualifications Framework including Bachelor (Hons): BS, B.E., B. Arch., BSc (Eng), BSc (Agri), B. Tech (Hons), LLB, B. Com, MBBS, DVM, BDS, Pharm. D., DPT etc.
- (s) “*Level 7 Degree Programs*” means the academic programs as defined and mentioned in the National Qualifications Framework including MS, MPhil, MBA, MSc (Eng.), ME, M. Tech., LLM etc.
- (t) “*Level 8 Degree Programs*” means the academic programs as defined and mentioned in the National Qualifications Framework, that includes PhD or equivalent programs.
- (u) “*National Qualification Framework*” mean an approved framework of Pakistan’s national qualifications classifying them into eight hierarchical levels that is from level-

1 to level-8, based on learning outcomes i.e., skill, competence and knowledge specified against each.

- (v) “*Research Advisory Committee*” means the Research Advisory Committee specified or set up under the regulations.
- (w) “*Research Examinations Committee*” means the Research Examinations Committee specified or set up under the regulations.
- (x) “*Research Supervisor*” means a qualified faculty member or a scientist recognized by the University who supervises/ guides the doctoral research of a candidate to supervise/guide the Ph.D. research work of a candidate.
- (y) “*Term*” means an academic period of time as a part or whole of a program which may be an annual, semester, term, summer/ spring/ winter session or other calendar as may be prescribed.

#### **4. ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University (STMU) firmly believes in providing equal opportunities to every individual seeking education and knowledge at STMU, promoting a culture of fairness, respect, and inclusivity. University upholds a non-discriminatory policy that applies to all aspects of its programs and activities. STMU ensures that admission to its various degree programs, including PhD programs, is solely based on merit and no individual will be denied the privileges of the University merely on the grounds such as religion, race, cast, creed, class, color, domicile and other similar factors. University’s non-discriminatory policy serves as a foundation for creating a supportive and enriching environment where students, faculty, and staff can flourish and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and societal well-being without any bias or prejudice.

##### **I. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ADMISSION IN DOCTORAL DEGREE (LEVEL 8) PROGRAMS**

###### **(a) Basic Academic Qualification**

- i. For admission in PhD programs, a candidate must have an MS/ M.Phil., with thesis, or its equivalent degree with thesis (Level 7 qualification), in the relevant field, from an accredited educational institution and the said MS/ MPhil or equivalent degree shall have been awarded prior to entry into a PhD program.
- ii. Candidates having an MS/ M.Phil. or equivalent qualification, without thesis, in the relevant field will only be eligible for admission in PhD program if they have already published minimum of:  
One research article, in HEC recognized journal, as a first author;  
**OR**

Two research articles, in HEC recognized journal(s), as a second author.

**(b) Intra-disciplinary Qualifications**

Consistent with the best international practices intradisciplinary admissions at Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University shall only be allowed, if:

- i. The applicant has a strong rationale in pursuing a PhD in a different discipline.
- ii. The applicant has passed GRE-Subject/ Equivalent Test with minimum 50% marks in the discipline of admission. In case said test is not available in Pakistan the the GRE-Subject will developed by the university and applicant will have to pass the said test with minimum passing score of 50%.
- iii. The student shall complete at least 6-9 CHs of deficiency courses of level 7 in a zero semester, prior to start the regular semesters of PhD program.
- iv. The admission committee is satisfied that the applicant's knowledge of the primary area (level 7) will sufficiently prepare the student to undertake the course of study of the doctoral program or, in the opinion of the admissions committee, the preparation can be deemed satisfactory by taking a few additional courses (after starting the program).

**(c) Minimum CGPA/ %age of Marks**

- i. For admission in PhD programs a minimum CGPA of 3.0 out of 4.0 (in the Semester system) or 60% marks (in the Annual system), in the MS/MPhil or equivalent degree being considered for admission, will be mandatory, whether such degree was obtained from Pakistani or foreign universities.
- ii. In case the CGPA/ percentage of marks is not mentioned on the transcript, the candidate will have to produce equivalent weightage from the parent university.

**(d) Admission Test**

The candidate must have passed:

- i. GRE/ HAT General equivalent test, with the minimum passing score of 60%, conducted by the testing bodies accredited by the HEC; OR
- ii. GRE/ HAT General equivalent test, with the minimum passing score of 60%, developed at the University.

**(e) Statement of Purpose & Research Proposal**

The candidates seeking admission to PhD programs, must submit a Statement of Purpose & Research Proposal as an integral part of their admission application. Based

on this statement/ proposal the Admission Committee(s) will assess the candidates' preparedness, interests, and commitment to pursuing doctoral studies in their chosen field and also will evaluate whether the department possesses the necessary resources and expertise to effectively mentor and supervise the prospective candidates in their preferred subspecialty/ area of research. The Research Proposal shall encompass, among others, the following key elements:

- i. Title of the Potential Research Proposal.
- ii. Clear articulation of the current understanding of the intended field and ideas for potential research.
- iii. Explanation of the intended impact of the proposed research.
- iv. Demonstrating passion and enthusiasm, of the prospective candidate, for the area of research.

## **II. PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION IN DOCTORAL DEGREE (PhD) PROGRAMS**

### **(a) Application Submission Process**

- i. Applications for admission to the PhD Programs, offered by STMU in any semester/ term/ year, will be invited through various channels, that may include media announcements, the university website, or other appropriate means. All admissions will strictly adhere to a merit-based selection process and follow the prescribed admission criteria.
- ii. All interested candidates who wish to pursue a PhD degree program must apply online.
- iii. The interested candidates must submit their applications for admission in PhD program within the specified due date, as advertised at the time of admission. Any application received after the designated deadline shall not be entertained.
- iv. Each candidate seeking admission to a PhD program is required to complete a detailed application form, providing all the necessary credentials and supporting documents. Applications submitted after the deadline or with incomplete information, including those awaiting results of the preceding level, will not be considered for admission to PhD programs.
- v. Prior to submitting their online applications, candidates must thoroughly review the eligibility criteria for their chosen program to confirm their academic eligibility.

- vi. As part of the completed Admission Forms, candidates applying for the PhD programs must submit the documents as per requirement of the department/ college/ school/ university.

**(b) Departmental Admission Committee for PhD Programs**

- i. Each Department/ College/ School shall have an Admission Committee to evaluate and deal with the applications for admission in PhD Programs being offered by the department/ college/ school. The Departmental Admission Committee for PhD programs shall comprise of the following:
  - 1. Principal/ Head/ Director of the Department/ College/ School, who shall be the Convener.
  - 2. Three teachers of the Department/ College/ School, in the relevant field of the program (s), with PhD or equivalent qualification to be appointed by the concerned Dean, if available.
  - 3. One expert member from a department, other than the Department/ College/ School concerned, appointed by the Vice Chancellor.
- ii. The members other than the *ex-officio* members shall hold office for a period of three years. The quorum for a meeting of the committee shall be one half of the total number of the members.
- iii. Without prejudice to the generality of the relevant regulations, the committee shall perform the following functions:
  - 1. Scrutinize the applications, received by the concerned admissions office for the relevant PhD program, strictly following the prescribed eligibility criteria.
  - 2. Developing the question paper(s) for the University's Department/ College/ School GRE/ HAT General equivalent test, arranging for the conduct of test, evaluation of answer sheets and declaration of test results, if so needed.
  - 3. Assessing the statement of purpose, submitted by each PhD program candidate, for his/ her preparedness, interests, and commitment to pursue PhD studies in his/ her chosen field and evaluating the necessary resources and expertise available with the department to effectively mentor and supervise the prospective applicant in his/ her preferred subspecialty.
  - 4. Determining the applicant's eligibility for admission in the specific PhD program and shortlisting the applicants.
  - 5. Conducting the interview of applicants and determining the availability of a suitable supervisor and his/ her acceptance for the supervision of the candidate's



research work and availability of requisite laboratory, related equipment, and library support for the conduct of PhD program research.

6. Evaluating the transfer of credit, course exemption and/or deficiency cases and make recommendations in such cases as per prescribed regulations, however, for the said purpose the nominee of the Controller of Examination will be made the part of committee.
7. Finalizing the merit list of all the eligible candidates as per merit criteria and availability of relevant research supervisor and facilities.
8. Declaring the names of the selected candidates for admission in the PhD program(s).
9. Performing such other functions as may be prescribed by the rules and regulations.

**(c) Admission Test Results**

Candidates applying for admission in PhD program(s) must provide valid proof of qualifying scores in the GRE/HAT General equivalent test conducted by any testing bodies accredited by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) or the GRE/ HAT General equivalent test developed by the University's Department/ College/ School or GRE-Subject test (in case of intradisciplinary admissions), where applicable. The minimum marks required for eligibility are specified in Section 4(I)(b)(2) or 4(I)(d) of these regulations.

**(d) Merit Criteria**

Admission to PhD programs at STMU will be determined on a merit-based selection process. The evaluation will involve combining weighted marks obtained in previous academic examinations and the admission test. Subsequently, shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview. The final selection will be based on the weighted marks assigned to academic merit, performance in the admission test, satisfactory performance in the interview and availability of relevant research supervisor and facilities.

**(e) Selection and Provisional Admission Offer Letter**

- i. The evaluation of all applications for admission in PhD Programs shall be carried out by the respective Departmental Admission Committee, adhering to their designated functions.
- ii. The Departmental Admission Committee will prepare the merit list of candidates based on the previous educational achievements, admission test score and performance of the candidates in the interview.

- iii. The Departmental Admission Committee, subject to fulfilment of all requirements, will then declare the names of the selected candidates who have been granted admission to the PhD program(s) through the relevant admission office.
- iv. All admissions at STMU will initially be offered on a provisional basis. The admission will be provisionally confirmed once university receives all the necessary documents required from the applicant and completes the formalities.
- v. The Head/ Principal/ Director of Department/ College/ School, in his/her capacity as Convener of Admission Committee, with the assistance of relevant admission office, will issue the provisional offer letters and relevant information to the selected candidates.
- vi. The entire provisional admission process shall be completed at least one week before the commencement of classes for the respective semester/ term.

**(f) Acceptance of Provisional Admission Offer Letter**

- i. The provisional admission process of a candidate into the PhD program will be completed once the candidate submits a signed acceptance of the admission offer, pays the prescribed fees, and submits the required documents verified by the College/Department/School/Campus admission office. Failure to complete his/ her provisional admission process by the specified deadline will result in the cancellation of the candidate's selection, and the seat will be offered to the next candidate on the waiting list.
- ii. Upon provisional admission, the candidate will receive a Roll Number from the respective Department/ College/ School for the chosen PhD program.
- iii. The Department/ College/ School/ Campus admission office will initiate the verification of the candidate's educational documents from the respective Board/ University. The "*Provisional Admission Confirmation Letter*" will be issued by the concerned Department/ College/ School/ Campus admission office, preferably during the first semester/ term/ year, after the completion of the document verification process. However, for foreign candidates, the confirmation of admission will also be subject to the submission of a No Objection Certificate (NOC) duly issued by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan for the purpose of admission to the Department/ College/ School /University.

**(g) Deferment of Admission**

- i. In cases where a candidate faces circumstances beyond his/ her control, such as a family member's death, health issues, iddat/ divorce, or any other personal matters, he/ she may be allowed, by the Dean of the concerned Faculty, to defer his/ her admission before the commencement of classes for the subject academic/ admission

session. However, such deferment requests must be supported by verifiable documentary proof.

- ii. The Dean of the concerned Faculty may grant permission for deferment of admission in the PhD program for a maximum period of one semester/ term (1 year, in case admissions of same program are offered after one year), however, the said permission will be subject to the condition that if the university does not offer the said program within the specified timeline, the candidate shall not hold the university responsible. In said cases, for any subsequent admission in the said program, the candidate will have to apply and compete a fresh.
- iii. The candidate is responsible for promptly informing the university of their intention to join the program within the agreed-upon time limits for their deferment case.
- iv. In case a student opts for deferment of admission in the PhD program, he/she shall pay the one-time admission/ registration charges and tuition fee that will be non-refundable, however, can be adjusted upon joining the said program in the next semester/ term.

## **5. UNIVERSITY REGISTRATION**

- i. A student duly admitted in a PhD program shall be required to register himself/ herself with the University through his Department/ College/ School concerned within the specified deadlines and in the prescribed manners.
- ii. The Registrar shall issue a University Registration Number to the student after due scrutiny of his application.
- iii. A registered student of the University shall have the privilege to benefit from the Department/ College/ School/ University facilities and to appear in the University Examinations related to his program of studies.
- iv. Separate University Registration shall be sought for each program, if so needed.

## **6. Ph.D. DEGREE PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY**

- i. PhD degree programs at STMU shall be based on coursework, comprehensive examinations, defense of synopsis/ research proposal, and research work.
- ii. Upon completion of the registration process, the Ph.D. program of a student shall consist of three sequential components:  

Part-I	Coursework.
Part-II	Comprehensive Examination and Synopsis/ Research Proposal Defense.

- Part-III Research Work, dissertation Submission Colloquium, and Dissertation Submission. These steps will be followed by the dissertation evaluation and the defense of the dissertation, by the student, at the program's conclusion.
- iii. All initial registrations in PhD programs are considered provisional and will be confirmed only upon successful completion of both Part-I and Part-II.
  - iv. The required coursework, comprehensive exam, and defense of synopsis/ research proposals will normally be completed within first four semesters/ terms/ two years of registration; however, it should not exceed beyond six semesters / terms (3 years) of the registration into a PhD program.
  - v. In case of failure to complete Part-I and Part-II (Coursework, Comprehensive Examination and Synopsis/ Research Proposal Defense), in the specified time period, the PhD program's provisional registration of the student shall stand cancelled and university will issue the transcript to the student accordingly.

## **7. COURSEWORK**

Course work is a requirement for each Ph.D. degree program and each student provisionally admitted in a Ph.D. program shall have to pass the coursework, as specified in the Curriculum/ Scheme of Study of their respective program, before appearing in the comprehensive examination and synopsis/ research proposal defense.

### **(a) Minimum Credit Hours and Coursework Requirements**

- i. Every PhD program student is required to complete minimum of 18 credit hours of coursework, if they are from the same discipline.
- ii. The courses should be as per the approved Curriculum/ Scheme of Study of their respective program and shall preferably be of 800 or above level.
- iii. 18 credit hours of coursework must not have been previously credited toward any other degree. It is impermissible to double-count coursework, for the purposes of fulfilling PhD requirements, that has been counted towards the completion of another degree.
- iv. In cases of intradisciplinary admissions the students will be required to pass the deficiency courses in addition to fulfilling the requirement of minimum of 18 credit hours courses.
- v. The courses shall be offered to the PhD program students, through regular classes, by the qualified and competent faculty members/ scholars/ researchers.

## (b) Registration of Courses

- i. **Continuous Enrollment:** Students enrolled in PhD programs are required to maintain continuous registration by paying the specified fees and officially registering for courses or research dissertation during each semester/ term or year, as the case may be.
- ii. A Ph.D. program student will normally be required to register a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 12 credit hours in a semester.
- iii. **Registration Deadline:** Course/ Research registration must be completed within the time frame as specified, by the concerned college/ department/ school or university, for each semester/ term/ year. Failure to register in any semester/ term/ year results in the student no longer being considered an active student, however, students may apply for discontinuation of studies on the basis of medical health difficulties or other emergent situations for a period of one semester/ term. The non-active status of a PhD student may be restored at the start of next semester subject to approval of the concerned Dean and submission of prescribed fees and the said period will be counted towards the total duration of PhD studies. Failure to register in two consecutive semesters/ terms will result in the permanent cancellation of PhD admission of the student.
- iv. **Registration Period:** PhD program students must register for the prescribed courses/ research dissertation for a specific degree program and semester/ term/ year at least seven days before the semester's/ term's/ year's start date. In exceptional cases, the Dean/Principal/Director may extend the registration deadline by a maximum of two weeks from the commencement of the semester/ term/ year.
- v. **Non-Credit Courses (NC):** Students enrolled in PhD program may register for additional non-credit (NC) courses from the applicable scheme of study or any other approved Scheme of Study (SoS) as recommended by the PhD admission committee, as pre-requisite courses, at the time of admission or by the DRAC, if deemed essential. Passed NC courses will be recorded on the transcript as "Additional Courses". NC courses, whether passed or failed, will not be counted towards the calculation of GPA/ CGPA. At the time of registration, it will be mandatory to categorically specify whether passing NC course(s) is mandatory for the program or if attending the course is sufficient.
- vi. **Audit Courses:** Students enrolled in PhD program may be allowed to undertake course(s) of the Department/ University as an audit course. In case of audit course, the student will not be required either to submit assignments or to appear in the continuous and terminal examinations. Once the course is undertaken on the basis of audit, the same may not be converted into credit.

- vii. **Registration Process:** Registration process shall be conducted through a paperless online system. However, in special circumstances, the registration process may be completed through written request.

**(c) Change of Course(s)**

- i. **Course Changes:** PhD program students may change courses within two weeks from the start of a semester. This change will be subject to approval from the Dean/ Principal/ Director/ Head of the Department/ College/ School. No course changes will be allowed after two weeks from the start of the semester.
- ii. **Course Drops:** Students may drop any registered course within two weeks of the semester's commencement.
- iii. **Course Withdrawal:** Students may withdraw from a course; they must submit an application for withdrawal at least two weeks before the commencement of Final Examinations.
- iv. **Academic Penalties:** In both cases of drops or withdrawal, there will be no academic penalty. However, in the case of withdrawal, the student's transcript will include a notation of "W".

**(d) Examinations of Coursework**

- i. Each PhD program student shall undergo continuous assessment/ evaluation in every course they are enrolled in during an academic semester/term/year. This assessment/ evaluation will encompass quizzes, tests, assignments, individual/group presentations/discussions, projects, reports, and any other prescribed methods and finally by the University examinations covering the whole course.
- ii. Failure to appear for the University examination of a course will result in the student being marked as absent and failing the course.
- iii. The Controller of Examinations, in consultation with the respective Chairperson/Head of the Department, will determine the dates and venues for university examinations.

**(e) Conditions for Eligibility to Appear in the University Examinations**

- i. A student must meet the following criteria to be eligible to appear in the University Examinations for any course in a semester/ term:

- a. The student must be officially registered at the University.
  - b. The student must have registered for the specific course and be enrolled in the program.
  - c. The student must have cleared all outstanding fees, dues, and any other financial obligations before the commencement of the University examinations.
  - d. The student must have maintained a minimum attendance of 75% and satisfactorily completed the coursework as per the requirements of the relevant department.
  - e. The student must have obtained permission from the Controller of Examinations, through their respective department, using the prescribed form.
- ii. In the event that a student falls short of the required attendance percentage in lectures, seminars, practical sessions, laboratory demonstrations, etc., they will not be permitted to sit for the University examinations for that course. Instead, they will be considered to have withdrawn from the course, and it will be recorded on their transcript with a letter grade of “W”.

**(f) Marks, Grade Points and Letter Grades**

- i. The minimum pass marks in a course shall be 64% or a C grade.
- ii. Each course will be allocated 100 marks, with 60 typically designated for classwork (continuous assessments) and 40 for the University examinations (terminal assessment). However, adjustments to this allocation for a particular program will require approval from the Controller of Examinations.
- iii. Letter grades and corresponding grade points for a course shall be determined based on the aggregate marks obtained by the student in both classwork assessments and University examinations, as outlined below:

<b>%age Marks</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Grade Point</b>
90-100	A+	4.00
85-100	A	4.00
80-84	A-	3.66
75-79	B+	3.33
70-74	B	3.00

67-69	B-	2.66
64-66	C	2.33
Below 64	F	0.00

- iii. Marks shall be rounded off after combining the marks from continuous assessments and terminal assessments. The rounding off process shall involve rounding up to the next whole number if the first decimal is 5 or greater, while ignoring and dropping the decimal if it is less than 5. For instance, 70.5 will be rounded off to 71, and 70.4 will be rounded off to 70.

**(g) Computation of Semester/ Term GPA and CGPA**

- i. The Grade Point Average (GPA) represents the average grade points earned in all courses completed and examined during a specific Semester/ Term and shall be computed using the following formula:

$$\text{GPA} = \frac{\text{Sum over all courses in a semester/term (Course Credit Hours} \times \text{Grade Points Earned)}}{\text{Total Credit Hours in the semester/term}}$$

- ii. The Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) reflects the average grade points earned in all courses completed and examined up to the current point and shall be calculated using the formula:

$$\text{CGPA} = \frac{\text{Sum over all courses taken in all semesters/terms (Course Credit Hours} \times \text{Grade Points Earned)}}{\text{Total Credit Hours in the semester/term}}$$

- iii. Courses audited, taken for non-credit, graded on a pass/fail basis, withdrawn from, or marked incomplete will not be included in GPA computation. For CGPA, in addition to the aforementioned courses, replaced grades will also be disregarded. The special letters used for the above terms are as follows:

<b>Term</b>	<b>Special Letter</b>
Withdrawal	W
Incomplete	I
Replaced Grade	(Grade)
Non-Credit	NC
Audit	AU
Pass/Fail	Pass or Fail



- iv. GPA and CGPA values shall be rounded to two decimal places. The rounding off rule shall dictate that if the third decimal is 5 or greater, the second decimal is rounded up to the next higher digit. Otherwise, the third decimal is dropped without altering the second decimal. For example, 2.496 shall be rounded off to 2.50, 2.493 shall be rounded off to 2.49 and so on.
- v. **Letter Grade I (Incomplete):** In rare circumstances where a student is unable to sit for the University examinations of one or more courses due to verifiable exceptional grounds, such as hospitalization or natural disasters, they may receive a letter Grade "I" (Incomplete). This decision will be subject to approval by the Principal/Director or Dean upon recommendations from the concerned teacher and Head of the Department, based on a written application from the student.
- vi. It shall be responsibility of the student to communicate his/ her availability to the Head of department/ college so that the date of university's examinations for his/ her incomplete course(s) may be fixed on as early as possible basis.
- vii. An Incomplete grade will automatically convert to an "F" grade by the end of the subsequent regular term. However, the student may opt for withdrawal from such courses if circumstances warrant it, provided they do so in a timely manner.

#### **(h) Minimum CGPA Requirements**

- i. A PhD program student is required to achieve a minimum of 3.0/4.0 CGPA in coursework, in order to appear in comprehensive examination followed by proceed to the next stage of the program.
- ii. A PhD program student with less than 3.0 CGPA may repeat a maximum of two courses in which he/she received a grade point less than 3.0, to improve his/her CGPA.

#### **(i) Course Repeating Procedure**

In case a student needs to repeat a course he/ she will have to follow the below mentioned procedure:

- i. The student shall apply to the Head of College/ Department/ School for permission to repeat a course. The Head of College/ Department/ School will decide the case taking due cognizance of the Supervisor's recommendation.
- ii. The student shall have to pay the prescribed tuition fee for the course(s) he/she intends to repeat.

- iii. On the transcript of said student both the old and new earned grade(s) will be mentioned, however, the CGPA shall be calculated on the basis of the better of the two grades.
- iv. The student shall be required to repeat the course(s) within two semesters after the first attempt.

**(j) Dissertation Research Registration**

A PhD program student is required to register for Dissertation Research each semester after completing coursework to maintain enrolled student status throughout the program.

**8. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION FOR PhD CANDIDACY**

- i. Upon successful completion of the coursework, with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 out of 4.0, every PhD program student is required to pass a comprehensive examination with a minimum of 60% marks as well as the defense of Synopsis/ Research Proposal to qualify for the grant of candidacy as a PhD researcher.
- ii. Comprehensive Examination is to be conducted within six months after the declaration of coursework result and normally be passed within the first 2 years of admission to a PhD program.
- iii. The following guidelines will govern the administration of the comprehensive examination:
  - a. The department/ college/ school shall organize the comprehensive examination of each PhD student in a timely manner. The Head of the department/ college/ school, will be responsible for establishing and notifying the Comprehensive Examination Panel (CEP), whenever needed. The said panel will comprise of the Head of the department/ college/ school, as convener, with a minimum of two examiners as approved by the concerned Dean on the recommendations of Head of the department/ college/ school.
  - b. In case the Head of the department/ college/ school is the supervisor of a student appearing in the said exam, the Dean of the concerned faculty shall serve as the convener of said committee. In case the student(s) of the Head of the department/ college/ school and the Dean of the concerned faculty is/ are appearing in the said exam, the senior most Professor (in his/ her absence Associate Professor) of the concerned department/ college/ school, whose students are not appearing in the said examination, shall serve as the convener of CEP.

- c. The Head of department/ college/ school will be responsible for arranging the development of written comprehensive examination question papers, through subject specialists, conducting the examination, communicating with the examiners and reporting the results to the University's Examinations Department for official notification.
- d. The written Comprehensive Examination will encompass the student's understanding of the core concepts within their respective discipline along with PhD coursework and/or subjects/ content considered essential for the intended area of research and will be conducted in a single comprehensive question paper.
- e. The said examination will preferably be aimed to explore the critical thinking, analytical reasoning, scientific argument, knowledge synthesis and research acumen of the student.
- f. In order to successfully pass the comprehensive examination, a student must achieve a minimum of 60% marks in the written paper.
- g. The result of comprehensive examination will be expressed as either "pass" or "fail," and no grading will be applied.
- h. A student will have a maximum of two chances to pass the comprehensive examination. In case a student does not pass the comprehensive examination in first attempt, he/ she will have only one more chance to reappear in the said examination. The student must retake the comprehensive examination within a period not less than 45 days and not more than four months from the declaration of the result of first attempt. The condition of "*not less than 45 days*" applies as long as the total time limit of two years for clearing the comprehensive examination is not exceeded.
- i. A student who fails to qualify the comprehensive examination within two attempts or within the specified time frame will not be eligible for PhD candidacy, and his/ her admission shall stand canceled.

## **9. DEFENSE OF SYNOPSIS/ RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

- i. A research scholar registered for a PhD Program shall be required to carry out a literature survey and prepare a written synopsis/ research proposal of the intended topic of research. He/ She shall be required to pass the defense of his/ her Synopsis/ Research Proposal after the completion of (i) Course Work Examination and (ii) Passing the Comprehensive examination, but before the completion of six semesters.

- ii. The synopsis/ research proposal defense examination will be conducted by the Panel of Examiners notified for the said purpose. The Head of the department/ college/ school, will be responsible for establishing and notifying the Synopsis Defense Examination Panel (SDEP), whenever needed. The said panel will comprise of the Head of the department/ college/ school, as convener, with a minimum of two examiners as approved by the concerned Dean on the recommendations of Head of the department/ college/ school.
- iii. The defense of synopsis/ research proposal will be a closed-door oral examination and the SDEP will ascertain the suitability of the proposed research synopsis/ research proposal submitted by the student and will evaluate in-depth knowledge, analytical abilities, and aptitude of the student in the area of his/ her proposed PhD research work. The student will defend the synopsis/ research proposal as a part of this examination.
- iv. The SDEP shall determine, by majority vote, whether the student be allowed to proceed for the doctoral research or otherwise. If the performance of the PhD student in the defense examination of his/ her synopsis/ research proposal is satisfactory, he/ she will be declared pass and his provisional registration shall be confirmed. If the number of votes for “Pass” equals the number of votes for “Fail”, the convener of SDEP will have the casting vote and his/ her decision will be final.
- v. In case the performance of student is unsatisfactory, the student shall be given one more opportunity to appear for the oral defense examination within four months of the first examination however it should not exceed maximum three years limit.
- vi. A student who fails to qualify the oral defense of synopsis/ research proposal, within two attempts or within three years from the date of provisional registration, the admission of the student shall stand automatically canceled.
- vii. The required coursework, comprehensive exam, and defense of synopsis/research proposals should be completed within the first six semesters/ 3 years of the registration into a PhD program.

## **10. RESEARCH WORK**

### **(a) Departmental Research Advisory Committee**

- i. Each Department/ College/ School offering PhD program(s) shall have its Departmental Research Advisory Committee (DRAC). DRAC will comprise of the Head of the concerned department/ college/ school, and maximum of five faculty members, preferably PhD program(s) supervisors of the concerned department/ college/ school/ university. Head of the concerned department/ college/ school shall be the Chairperson of the DRAC and the members will be appointed by the

concerned Dean on the recommendations of Head of the concerned department/ college/ school.

- ii. The DRAC shall be responsible to ensure the quality and integrity of research work of the PhD program students. It shall propose supervisors for the guidance of research of students. It shall evaluate the progress reports of the research students as may be submitted periodically by the supervisor of the student and recommend/ take necessary actions thereupon. It shall also arrange lectures and seminars to acquaint the research students with the research techniques and relevant topics. In case of change of the (proposed) supervisor, it might have to change the topic/ subject of research to address the issue of intellectual property. It shall recommend the synopsis of the research work of the candidate for consideration and approval of the Institutional Review Board and Ethics Committee of the University. DRAC will evaluate and recommend the applications of the PhD program students for Research Funding to the Director, Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) for necessary action.
- iii. The Principal/ Director or Dean, as the case may be, shall put up the topic of synopsis/ subject of research and name of the supervisor to the GSRMC for final approval.

**(b) Registration and Enrollment of Research Work**

- i. Throughout the duration of their studies, PhD program students must maintain continuous registration status. This involves the payment of specified fees and official registration for courses or research dissertation during each semester, term, or year, as applicable.
- ii. Thus, after completion of the coursework, all the PhD program students shall register for required number of credit hours Dissertation Research of their respective program and will pay the specified fees during each semester or term or year, as the case may be, till the completion of their PhD program.
- iii. Failure to register in any semester, term, or year will result in the student no longer being considered enrolled in the program. However, students may apply for leave/ discontinuation of studies based on medical health difficulties or other emergent situations, in accordance with prescribed regulations.

**(c) Research Supervisor and Co-Supervisor**

- i. All PhD program students shall be required to carry out the research work of their PhD degree program under the guidance of a recognized Research Supervisor from the department/ college/ school or university.

- ii. Research supervisor of PhD program must possess a PhD degree from a recognized university in the relevant or allied area in which they intend to supervise students, should not be below the rank of an Assistant Professor or equivalent, must either be the regular or adjunct faculty member of the university, should have no conflict of interest in personal, financial, or professional stakes and should have the time and availability to supervise PhD dissertation.
  
- iii. A PhD program supervisor must have published the following number of research articles in the HEC's recognized research journals as per category specified in the HJRS for the publication year:
  - A. For Science & Technology:**
    - a. Within last 3 years after PhD: at least one research publications in W category journal. **OR**
    - b. Within last 5 years after PhD: at least five research publications in X category journal.
  
  - B. For Social Sciences, Arts, Humanities and Business Education:**
    - a. Within the last 3 years after PhD: at least one research publications in W category journal. **OR**
    - b. Within last 5 years after PhD: at least five research publications in Y or higher category journal(s).
  
  - C. For Regional and National Languages:**
    - a. Within the last 3 years after PhD: at least one research publications in X category journal. **OR**
    - b. Within last 5 years after PhD: at least five research publications in Y or higher category journal(s).
  
- iv. The research supervisor shall be allocated to a PhD program student as soon as possible after his/ her enrollment in the PhD program.
  
- v. An adjunct faculty member of the university serving as regular faculty, researcher or scientist at a public or private university/ DAI or R&D organization may be appointed as Research Supervisor for PhD students subject to the approval of GSRMC. 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.

- vi. The appointment of a supervisor will be made by DRAC, on the request of student, however, the proposed supervisor must be from the list of the approved supervisors of the department/ college/ school or adjunct faculty member. The official notification of the appointments of all Research Supervisors of PhD programs will be issued by the Registrar's office subject to the approval of GSRMC.
- vii. In case of interdisciplinary research areas or any other particular circumstances, a student along with a research supervisor may also have a co-supervisor at any stage of his/ her research work. The specific role and responsibility of the co-supervisor and consent of the research supervisor will be mandatory along with recommendations of the DRAC for consideration and final approval of such appointment by the Graduate Studies and Research Management Council.
- viii. The co-supervisor may either be from the STMU or other university, research center or relevant research organization, however, he/ she shall be duly recognized for the purpose by the Graduate Studies and Research Management Council.
- ix. In case a research supervisor is absent or on leave from the university, for a period exceeding six months, the GSRMC on the recommendations of DRAC may officially appoint a research co-supervisor, subject to eligibility for PhD research supervision, from the same department/ college/ school or faculty who will supervise the said student.
- x. In case a research supervisor leaves the university, the DRAC may allow him/ her to continue as a co-supervisor for the said student. However, a new research supervisor may be appointed by GSRMC on the recommendations of the DRAC and same will be notified by the university.
- xi. Research supervisor/ co-supervisor will not be entitled to supervise any student who is blood relative or spouse.
- xii. The approved supervisor or/and co-supervisor of a student will normally be not changed except under extraordinary circumstances. The procedure of change of a supervisor and co-supervisor will be the same as prescribed for a fresh case.

**(d) Research Supervisory Committee (RSC)**

- i. After the provisional registration of a student in a PhD program and appointment of Research Supervisor, a Research Supervisory Committee (RSC) shall be notified for each student. The said committee shall be formed with the approval of the concerned Dean and within a maximum of 12 months of the date of initial enrolment of student in the PhD program. RSC shall be responsible for periodically reviewing, assessing, guiding and monitoring the progress of the PhD program research work of the student. RSC shall comprise of the following:

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| a. The Research Supervisor   | Chairperson |
| b. Co-supervisor (if any)  | Member      |
| c. Expert(s) from relevant research field to be appointed by the Dean. | Member(s)   |
- ii. The responsibilities of the Research Supervisory Committee, established for each PhD student, will be as below:
- a. To evaluate the synopsis/ research proposal and finalize the research topic.
  - b. To guide the research scholar in developing the study design, research methodology, and identification of any necessary courses.
  - c. To periodically review and provide guidance in the progress of the research work of the PhD student until the submission of the dissertation.
  - d. To verify and certify the research papers published by the PhD student to meet the prescribed requirements for the award of degree.
  - e. To evaluate and follow up for the progress of research funding case(s) of the student.

**(e) Preparation and Submission of Synopsis/ Research Proposal**

- i. A PhD program student, after initial registration, is expected to explore the potential areas of research during the terms of his/ her coursework for developing the synopsis/ research proposal under the guidance of his/ her research supervisor and supervisory committee.
- ii. The synopsis/ research proposal is normally finalized during the first year after coursework and can be submitted for approval after fulfilling the course work requirements.
- iii. The student shall finalize and submit the synopsis/ research proposal, to the Head/ Principal of the department/ college/ school in no more than four months of passing the comprehensive examination.
- iv. The “Similarity Report” shall be provided by the Supervisor of the student to the concerned Dean, who shall recommend the case on the basis of an acceptable “Similarity Report” for the approval of GSRMC.
- v. The student will have to defend the said synopsis/ research proposal during the examination conducted by the department/ college/ school, after passing the coursework examination with minimum CGPA of 3.0 out of 4.0, and the comprehensive examination.

**(f) Monitoring Students’ Progress in the PhD Program**

- i. Each PhD program student will submit a research progress report in the standard format to his/ her research supervisor during each semester of his/ her PhD research



work. This report will outline the student's research progress and achievements during the reporting period, along with a future work plan.

- ii. The research supervisor of each PhD program student shall be required to submit the progress report of each student, with his/ her recommendations, to the Head of the department/ college/ school to be reviewed by the DRAC in each semester. The DRAC will review these progress reports during each semester in which the dissertation is registered.
- iii. In instances of unsatisfactory progress, the research supervisor will be required to submit an adverse progress report of the student to the Head/ Principal of the department/ college/ school. The Chairperson of the DRAC will issue a warning letter to the student, which will be documented in the student's file record.
- iv. In case a student receives two consecutive adverse reports or accumulates three adverse reports over the entire study period, the Dean of the concerned faculty, based on DRAC's recommendation, will forward the case for the cancellation of the student's admission to the GSRMC. The Registrar will then issue the notification of the cancellation of admission, upon approval of admission cancellation by the GSRMC.
- v. Before recommending the cancellation of registration for a PhD program student, the DRAC will issue a show-cause notice to the said student, seeking his/ her explanation.
- vi. In the event of admission cancellation due to an unsatisfactory report from the research supervisor, the affected student retains the right to file an appeal to the Vice-Chancellor. The decision of the Vice-Chancellor shall be final.

**(g) PhD Dissertation Preparation Guidelines**

- i. Each student enrolled in a PhD program is required to conduct an individualized, investigative, and creative research study, typically spanning a minimum of three years of full-time research. The resulting PhD dissertation should demonstrate the relevance, credibility, effectiveness, and legitimacy of the research conducted during the period of enrollment for the degree.
- ii. The research undertaken for the PhD dissertation should address emerging areas, emphasizing basic/pure research that aligns with global, regional, or local community needs, ideally aligning with the priority national research agenda.
- iii. The PhD dissertation must constitute an original and innovative contribution to the body of knowledge, presenting new findings, inventions, innovations, or solutions to socio-economic problems. It should be written in English, or in another language

as permitted by the Academic Council upon recommendation of the Graduate Studies and Research Management Council.

- iv. The content of the PhD dissertation should not include work for which an award has already been conferred by this university or any other academic institution.
- v. The PhD dissertation must be well-balanced, logically organized, clearly structured, and free from grammatical and spelling errors. It must adhere to the formatting, writing style, referencing, paper binding, and other related guidelines approved by the Graduate Studies and Research Management Council.
- vi. Each PhD dissertation must include standardized initial pages as per the requirements of the university, including the author's declaration, a plagiarism-free certificate/undertaking by the PhD student, a certificate from the research supervisor, a certificate of approval of the PhD dissertation, and any additional requirements specified by the HEC and notified by the Registrar's Office after approval by the relevant statutory bodies of the university.

#### **(h) PhD Dissertation Submission Procedure**

- i. Each PhD student is required to submit his/ her dissertation in the standard format within five years (ten semesters) from the date of initial registration. An extension of up to four semesters/ terms/ two years may be granted by the relevant Dean upon the student's request and supervisor's recommendation. In case of failure in dissertation submission for external evaluation in the maximum permissible time duration of 14 semesters/ terms/ seven years, the admission of the student shall stand cancelled.
- ii. Dissertation submission for evaluation shall be contingent upon fulfilling the conditions of research article published in HEC-recognized journal(s) as categorized in HJRS at the time of acceptance of the research article. A research article appearing online with valid DOI on website of an HEC's research journal shall be considered published w.e.f. the date it appeared online with DOI.
- iii. Prior to submission, the dissertation must be approved by the student's supervisor(s) and the research supervisory dissertation committee to assess its quality, completeness, and adherence to academic standards.
- iv. At the time of submission of dissertation, the Supervisor of the student, through Dean of concerned faculty, must provide a Plagiarism Detection Report to the Controller of Examinations, ensuring that the Similarity Index complies with HEC

standards. This check excludes preliminary and end-matter sections of the dissertation.

- v. Upon meeting all submission requirements, the student must deposit four spiral-bound hard copies and a soft copy (PDF format on CD/DVD) of the dissertation to the Head of College/Department/School.
- vi. Additionally, the PhD student shall also be required to pay the prescribed dissertation evaluation/ examination fees to the University while submitting the dissertation.

**(i) Similarity Test on the PhD Dissertation**

- i. At Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University all efforts are done to maintain high academic standards and promote ethical practices among its students and faculty. It will be the prime responsibility of both the PhD program students and their supervisors to prevent plagiarism or any other form of dishonesty as they undermine the integrity of academic work and research.
- ii. For meeting the highest standards of integrity and to avoid plagiarism COPE guidelines shall be followed by PhD program students and their supervisors and under no circumstances a PhD dissertation based on plagiarized contents shall be acceptable.
- iii. Similarity test shall be conducted using Turnitin software on the dissertation of each PhD program student before its submission to the external experts and the similarity percentage must be within the limit as per HEC policy.
- iv. Any instance of plagiarism/ academic misconduct of PhD program student will be properly investigated and the students will be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions as per the regulations and procedures of the university.
- v. In case any PhD dissertation is found to be plagiarized, it will be dealt with in accordance with the Anti-Plagiarism Policy of STMU along with relevant updates issued by the Higher Education Commission, from time to time.

**(j) PhD Dissertation External Evaluation**

- i. The Head of the College/ Department/ School, as the case may be, after ensuring in consultation with the DRAC that the PhD dissertation submitted by the student is of an acceptable standard, shall forward the same, through the Dean of the

Faculty, along with other required documents including plagiarism report, to the Controller of Examinations.

- ii. Along with the dissertation, in consultation with the student's Supervisor, the Head of the College/ Department/ School, through the Dean of Faculty, shall also submit to the Controller of Examinations, the names of four (4) External Examiners out of the GSRMC approved List of External Examiners. The Vice Chancellor will nominate two of them to evaluate the dissertation. The identity of the approved Examiners shall not be disclosed to the candidate until the evaluation reports have been received.
- iii. The Controller of Examinations, in line with the approval of the Vice Chancellor, shall send the dissertation to two external examiners for evaluation. If needed, the dissertation may be sent to an additional third external examiner, however, the honorarium of the third examiner shall be paid by the student.
- iv. The External Examiners shall be requested to examine the dissertation and send their evaluation reports within eight (8) weeks of the receipt of the dissertation. Where an examiner is unable to meet the original or a re-negotiated deadline or refuses to evaluate the dissertation, the Vice Chancellor shall have the authority to appoint another examiner out of the list of Approved Examiners.
- v. Persons having their names in publication(s) or remained involved in the research supervision of a particular student cannot be considered as external examiner for the dissertation of said student.
- vi. The dissertation shall be evaluated as "Approved", "Not Approved" or "Conditionally Approved" and each external examiner shall clearly state in the evaluation report whether or not the dissertation is of sufficient merit to justify the award of a Ph.D. degree or whether the student should revise the dissertation on the suggested lines.
- vii. In cases of "Conditionally Approved" evaluation reports the external examiners shall be required to specify the changes required to be made and whether or not he/she needs to go through the revised dissertation before its final approval.
- viii. If both the external examiners evaluate the dissertation as Approved, the dissertation shall be provisionally accepted. Any recommended minor revision, modification, etc., suggested by the external examiners shall be carried out before the oral defense examination.

- ix. If one external examiner evaluates the dissertation as “Approved” and the other evaluates as “Conditionally Approved”, the student shall be required to make the suggested changes to the satisfaction of concerned external examiner/ supervisor, as applicable. If the external examiner and/or supervisor, as the case may be, approves the changes in writing, the dissertation shall be provisionally accepted.
- x. If both the external examiners evaluate the dissertation as “Conditionally Approved”, the student shall be required to make the suggested changes to the satisfaction of both the external examiners/ supervisor, as applicable. If the external examiner/ supervisor, as the case may be, approves the changes, the dissertation shall be provisionally accepted.
- xi. In case one external examiner evaluates the dissertation as “Approved”, while the other evaluates it as “Not Approved”, the dissertation shall be referred to a third external examiner to be nominated by the Vice-Chancellor. If the third external examiner evaluates the dissertation either as Approved or Partially approved, the actions will be as mentioned in earlier paragraphs and the dissertation of the student shall be provisionally accepted. If the third external examiner evaluates the dissertation as Not Approved the Ph.D. dissertation shall stand rejected and the student shall be dropped out of program and shall be declared ineligible for award of PhD degree.
- xii. If both the initially appointed external examiners evaluate the dissertation as Not Approved the Ph.D. dissertation shall stand rejected and the student shall be dropped out of program and shall stand declared ineligible for award of PhD degree.
- xiii. The aforementioned evaluation status, along with the resulting desired actions, are summarized in the table below:

<b>Evaluation Report by the First Two Examiners</b>	<b>Evaluation Report by the Third Examiner (where required)</b>	<b>Student’s Action: Defend the Dissertation, or Amend &amp; Defend the Dissertation, or Drop Out of the Program</b>
Approved & Approved	-	Defend
Approved & Conditionally Approved	-	Amend & Defend
Conditionally Approved &	-	Amend & Defend

Conditionally Approved		
Approved & Not-Approved	Approved	Defend
	Conditionally Approved	Amend & Defend
	Not Approved	Drop out
Conditionally Approved & Not-Approved	Approved	Amend & Defend
	Conditionally Approved	Amend & Defend
	Not Approved	Drop out
Not Approved & Not Approved	-	Drop out

- xiv. The criteria for appointment as external examiners (external evaluators) for the Ph.D. dissertation shall be as per the following requirements set by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) or any amendments made to those requirements from time to time by HEC and duly notified by the Registrar office after approval of the competent authority of STMU:
- a. The PhD dissertation must be evaluated by at least two external examiners who shall be the PhD faculty members;
    - **Either** 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**
    - Pakistan-based Distinguished National Professors, Meritorious Professors or Professors from any Pakistani University having the following minimum H-Index as determined by Web of Science:
      - 30** for Sciences;
      - 15** for Social Sciences; or
      - 8** for Arts and Humanities.
    - 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.
  - c. The external examiners must be in the same or related fields as in the dissertation, should not have any Conflict of Interest in personal, financial, or professional stakes, must be capable of making unbiased evaluations and good reputation in the field, with a track record of fair and thorough evaluations.

- d. The external examiner should have the time and availability to review the dissertation, expected to conduct himself/ herself in a professional and respectful manner throughout the evaluation and defense process, if involved, expected to provide clear and constructive feedback on the dissertation together with maintaining confidentiality and well-versed with the research methodology in the dissertation.

**(k) Dissertation Oral Defense Examination**

- i. The Head of the College/ Department/ School, after ensuring that the changes incorporated in the dissertation, by the student, have been approved by the external examiner(s) or supervisor, as the case may be, shall forward the desired number of copies of the updated dissertation to the Controller of Examination, along with the names of four or more examiners.
- ii. If the dissertation is evaluated as adequate, the student shall be allowed to appear for the oral examination to defend his/her dissertation before a panel of examiners. The date of dissertation defense shall be notified by the Controller of Examinations in consultation with the supervisor at least two weeks in advance.
- iii. The student shall be required to defend his/ her dissertation before the Oral Defense Examination Panel (ODEP) comprising of the two examiners appointed for Dissertation Oral Defense Examination, from among the proposed names, and/or external examiners who evaluated the dissertation of student, if available, on-line.
- iv. The supervisor of the student shall be the facilitator of meeting of the committee and the co-supervisor, if any, shall also accompany the supervisor. The Chairperson/Head of the Department may also join the panel in its meeting(s) as observer.
- v. The Oral Defense Examination of a PhD student shall be public and to be attended, along with ODEP members, by the members of the DRAC, Student's RAC, all faculty members of the university/ colleges/ departments/ schools, research programs students and other interested experts/ researchers.
- vi. The format of the dissertation defense shall include oral presentation by the candidate followed by a question-answer session by the participants. The presentation part of the dissertation defense shall be open to all those interested.
- vii. The candidate shall be allowed to choose for open or closed *viva-voce* examination part and the evaluation shall be done by the examiners only.

- viii. Each examiner may seek clarification/questions, if any, to be answered during the oral defense examination and student will respond/ clarify all the questions/ queries.
- ix. If the student is successful in the dissertation oral defense examination, the result shall be forwarded to the GSRMC for further action towards the award of the PhD degree. The GSRMC shall approve the award of PhD degree to the successful students and the Controller of Examinations shall proceed accordingly.
- x. The student shall be given maximum of two chances to defend the dissertation successfully. After a failed attempt, the ODEP shall specify the time period within which a student shall be required to defend his/her dissertation again, however, that should not be more than four months from the date of the oral defense examination and should be within the maximum time limit for PhD degree program.
- xi. In case student fails to defend his/ her dissertation defense examination in two attempts, he/ she shall stand failed in PhD program and shall be declared ineligible for the award of PhD degree.
- xii. It shall be the responsibility of the Head of the department/ college/ school to ensure that the oral defense examinations are conducted in a timely, orderly and productive manner.

**(I) PhD Program Student's Results Notification**

The formal notification of a Ph.D. program student's examination results shall be issued by the Controller of Examinations, subject to the fulfilment of following requirements mandatory for the award of PhD degree:

- a. The student has successfully completed the minimum coursework required for the concerned PhD program with CGPA of 3.0 or above on the scale of 4.0 along with additional pre-requisite courses specified by the admission committee or required as per regulations.
- b. Student had passed the PhD comprehensive examination with a minimum of 60% marks.
- c. Student had successfully passed the synopsis/ research proposal defense examination within maximum period of three years.
- d. The student has fulfilled the condition of minimum research publications, related to his/her own PhD research work, in HEC approved research journals of appropriate category.



- e. The student has cleared all university dues of the program.
- f. The PhD dissertation of student was evaluated by the external examiners as Approved and had been provisionally accepted.
- g. The student has been successful in the dissertation oral defense examination and his case for award of degree has been approved by GSRMC or by the Vice Chancellor subject to its subsequently ratification by the GSRMC.

**(m) Award of PhD Degree**

- i. Upon declaration of result, the University shall issue a transcript and provisional Ph.D. degree certificate to the successful students verifying that the student has been awarded the PhD degree.
- ii. The University will award the Ph.D. degree certificate to the successful students during the coming Convocation of the university. In case student needs the degree before convocation date he/ she may apply for that as per prescribed procedure.
- iii. The university will hold the copy right of the outcome of the PhD research dissertation.

**(n) Depository with HEC and STMU**

- i. A soft copy of the dissertation (in PDF format) shall be submitted to the HEC for hosting the same on its Pakistan Research Repository (PRR), a collection home for PhD dissertation of all the Public / Private Sector Universities / DAIs.
- ii. One soft copy and one hard copy of the dissertation shall be placed on the university PhD Dissertation Repository and in the university's library and one copy in Controller of Examinations Office for record.

**11. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

The pursuit of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is a journey marked not only by academic rigor and intellectual exploration but also by adherence to the provisions of the university's regulations, rules, administrative guidelines and procedures. In this section, few specific administrative matters governing various facets of the PhD journey have been included, for the awareness of different stakeholders, that govern various aspects of the PhD program.

**(a) Limit for Supervision of Research Students**

- i. A Research Supervisor is limited to supervising a maximum of 12 students concurrently enrolled in MS/ MPhil or equivalent, and Ph.D. programs.
- ii. Out of the 12 students, no more than 5 students shall be from Ph.D. program(s), simultaneously.
- iii. Students who have successfully completed their final Viva-Voce examinations will not be included in the calculation of the number of research students assigned to a Research Supervisor.
- iv. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> year, two PhD students in 4<sup>th</sup> year and maximum up to 5 PhD students from 5<sup>th</sup> year onward, subject to fulfillment of other conditions provided in these regulations.

**(b) Admission Cancellation in Ph.D. Program**

- i. Admission to the university's PhD programs is subject to the following provisions for potential cancellation, as per the university's regulations and policies:
- ii. Failure to report to the Department/ College/ School within two weeks of the program's commencement, without valid justification, can result in admission cancellation by the Dean of the concerned faculty.
- iii. The admission of a PhD program student may be canceled at any time by the Dean of the respective Faculty upon receiving a written request from the student, duly recommended by the Head/ Principal of the Department/ College. If the cancellation occurs for a newly admitted student, any applicable fee refund will be made in accordance with the university's policy.
- iv. The admission of a PhD program student may be canceled, by the Dean of the respective faculty, if the student fails to deposit the fees and charges of the university within the stipulated deadlines.
- v. Admission of a PhD program student may be canceled by the university if a student is expelled or punished by the Department/ College/ University on disciplinary grounds.
- vi. Admission of a PhD program student may be revoked by the university if a student is convicted by a court of law for an offense involving moral turpitude or other offenses.

- vii. Students failing to maintain the minimum required grades or scores for qualifying the award of PhD degree, despite utilizing all permitted chances for improvement, will face admission cancellation.
- viii. The admission of students shall stand cancelled upon consistent three unsatisfactory academic performances, graded by the Supervisor/ ~~DRAC~~ and subsequently approved by the GSRMC.
- ix. Admission of a PhD program student shall stand cancelled if he/ she fails to fulfill all the requirements necessary to qualify for the award of PhD degree within the prescribed maximum time limits for the program.
- x. The Registrar of the University will hold the discretion/ authority to cancel the admission of a PhD student, on the recommendations of the Dean of concerned faculty, in cases of prolonged absence.
- xi. If at any time, after the admission in PhD program, it is found that a candidate had not fulfilled all the requirements as stipulated or had submitted forged/ tempered document(s) or provided wrong information for seeking admission, the Registrar of the university may revoke the admission of the said candidate with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor.

**(c) Leave of Absence**

- i. PhD program students must complete their studies without any disruption or break in between and must officially register themselves for courses or research dissertation during each semester, term, or year, as applicable.
- ii. However, under unavoidable circumstances a PhD program student may apply for leave of absence/ discontinuation of studies for the whole semester/ term. A PhD program student may be allowed leave of absence/ discontinuation of studies for a maximum period of two semesters/ terms, throughout the entire PhD program, however, it shall not be allowed in the very first semester/ term of studies or for two consecutive semesters/ terms. However, under extreme circumstances, the GSRMC, on the recommendations of the DRAC may approve leave of a student for two consecutive semesters/ terms/ one year.
- iii. During leave of absence semester/ term, the student shall be charged the registration fee and leave of absence status shall be mentioned in the transcript. The said period will be counted towards the maximum permissible time for the completion of the degree, however, shall not be counted for the minimum permissible duration of PhD degree program.

- iv. A PhD program student shall not be entitled for a leave of absence if the grant of such leave can lead to exhaustion of the time limit for passing the comprehensive examination, defense of synopsis/ research proposal or completing the degree program.
- v. The written application for the leave of absence of the student shall need approval from the Dean of the concerned faculty subject to recommendations of the respective Supervisor and Head of Department/ College.
- vi. It will be mandatory for the student to apply for discontinuation of PhD studies before the start of semester/ term for which the leave is being applied for. No leave application will be entertained if received after the start of that particular semester/ term.
- vii. On the basis of medical/ health difficulties or other emergent situations, the PhD program student may be allowed discontinuation of studies during a particular semester/ term, at the request of student. The fee for the said semester/ term shall be charged and shall not be allowed to roll over into the next semester/ term.

**(d) Restoration of Admission**

- i. Continuous registration of courses/ research dissertation, along with paying of university fees/ dues, within the specified deadlines during each semester/ term is mandatory for maintaining “*Regular Student Status*” by each PhD program student. Any student who fails to register in any semester/ term of his/ her PhD study shall lose the status of a regular student and his/ her status in the university records shall be marked as “*Absent*”. For such student the restoration of admission is mandatory to continue his/ her studies that will be subject to the following conditions:
- ii. Any such student who loses Regular Student Status during his PhD studies shall have one chance during the entire study period to apply for restoration of admission before the commencement of the very next semester/ term, provided that the maximum duration for the completion of the degree is not exhausted. A student shall not be entitled for the restoration of his/ her admission if he/she fails to register in two consecutive semesters and the admission of said student shall stand cancelled without any notice.

- iii. The application of student, for the restoration of admission, will be submitted for the approval of the Dean on the recommendations of the respective Supervisor and Head of the Department/ College.
- iv. The said student shall be liable to deposit the admission fee, registration fee, semester fee/ dues etc., along with his/her application form for the semester in which the restoration / readmission is requested.
- v. The said period of absence shall be counted towards the total duration of his/ her studies/ leave of absence period and Absent status will be reflected in his/her transcripts.

**(e) Ph.D. Degree Completion Timeline**

- i. The duration of PhD degree studies shall normally be not less than three years and not more than five years.
- ii. The Dean of the respective faculty, on the recommendations of the student's Research Supervisory Committee/ Departmental Research Advisory Committee, may allow an extension in the time limit for a maximum of four semesters/ terms/ two years beyond the time period of five years for completion of the PhD studies. The GSRMC may allow two semesters/ terms/ one year extension, beyond seven years of registration in PhD program, however, the maximum time for the award of Ph.D. degree shall be eight years for students admitted in Fall 2023 and onward.
- iii. The date of notification of the award of the PhD degree, after the PhD dissertation defense examination, shall be the date of completion of PhD studies.
- iv. The maximum duration shall be determined from the date of enrollment of the student till the date of the completion notification of the PhD degree.

**(f) Publication of Research Article(s)**

- i. Each PhD program student shall be required to publish his/ her dissertation research work in HEC recognized academic journals, as categorized in HJRS at the time of acceptance of the research article, as part of the PhD degree requirements. A research article appearing online with valid DOI on website of an HEC's research journal shall be considered published w.e.f. the date it appeared online with DOI.

- ii. For the award of PhD degree, each PhD program student shall be required to fulfill the following requirements of publications of research articles:

**The student must have published:**

**I. For Sciences Disciplines:**

One research article in W category journal.

**OR**

Two research articles in X category journals.

**II. For Social Sciences Disciplines:**

One research article in X category journal.

**OR**

Two research articles in Y category journals.

- iii. The PhD student must be the first author of these publications.
- iv. The published research article(s) shall be relevant to the PhD research work of the concerned student.
- v. The article shall be published after the approval of research synopsis.
- vi. The article shall be published in the journal relevant to the student's research work.
- vii. Review articles, letters to editors, notes, corrigendum and addendum will not be counted as a research article for the award of Ph.D. degree.

**(g) Relevance Assessment Committee (RAC)**

- i. For ascertaining the relevance of faculty members in the related discipline to the PhD program and supervision of PhD theses research, the university shall constitute a Relevance Assessment Committee (RAC), with the approval of the Vice Chancellor.
- ii. Wherever required, the subject and supervisory relevance of concerned faculty members shall be determined on the following basis:

- a. Qualifications of faculty member including bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees.
  - b. Research conducted by faculty member including dissertation and published articles.
  - c. Experience of faculty member including teaching and administrative domains.
- iii. The Relevance Assessment Committee shall comprise of the following members:
- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| a. Dean of the Concerned Faculty  | Convener         |
| b. Two External subject experts not below the level of Professor/ Associate Professor                 | Member(s)        |
| c. Director QEC, STMU   | Member/Secretary |
| d. Program Team/ Assessment Team member involved in preparing self-assessment of the relevant program | Member           |
- iv. For the assessment of relevance of faculty members of different subjects and research relevance the Vice Chancellor may appointment relevant experts as members of the RAC.
  - v. The RAC will meet as necessary to evaluate the subject and supervisory relevance of the concerned faculty members.
  - vi. The committee will provide detailed reports, outlining the detailed reasons and rationale for its assessment decisions, to the Registrar for further action.

#### **(h) Interpretation and Discrepancy in PhD Program Regulations**

In case of any discrepancy regarding the PhD program regulations, the matter will be placed before the following committee and the decisions of the said committee shall be placed before the GSRMC for ratification:

- Registrar, STMU
- All the Deans of Faculties
- Controller of Examinations, STMU