

SOP for
Graduate Examination & Research Committee
(GERC)



Foundation University Islamabad
2020

GRADUATE EXAMINATION AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE (GERC)

FOUNDATION UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

1. **Rationale:** The Dean MS presented an agenda point in Deans Committee Meeting suggesting that the presentations and approval of PhD/MS synopses should be done at Deptt level, instead of doing it in full GSC meeting, as per practice in vogue. The agenda point was approved by the DCM.
2. This has necessitated the constitution of a sub-committee of GSC (named here as GERC), which should exclusively deal with MS / PhD scholars starting from, admission, comprehensive exam, synopsis, progress monitoring, evaluation and its documentation, to final thesis defense; all at Deptt level.
3. **Background.** PhD degree program is considered hallmark of any university. It is observed that completion of PhD course work and remaining processes in many instances are not adequately regulated. Even course work is a serious grey area at times. *It is noted that a poorly groomed PhD (as a faculty member) will only produce poorer quality PhDs, during the next 30 – 40 years of service. When taken into account the complete teaching / research engagements of such a Ph.D, with undergraduate / post graduate students, the roll-on multiplication factor for the damage caused to the next generation of students, will not be in hundreds but in thousands.* Therefore, it is imperative to have a regular process in place where a research proposal, thoroughly debated by the experts at Deptt level, should be approved and the scholar's progress properly monitored and documented. As a result, only those scholars measuring up to the threshold research output requirements, should be allowed to continue further. Foundation University, Graduate Examination and Research Committee (GERC) is constituted to exclusively provide such a process for MS /PhD scholars, by performing the functions stated here. The whole objective is to enhance the quality of research as well as that of the degree.
4. **The GERC Composition.** The composition of committee for each Deptt will be:-
 - a. Concerned Dean / HOD* (Chair)
 - b. PhD Supervisor (*Appointed, immediately after admission; later permanent supervisor*)
 - c. Co-supervisor (if any)
 - d. Expert on the particular subject area (Preferably: external for proposal defense)
 - e. Chairman GRC (member / Secretary)
 - f. Any other member co-opted by the chair

* For PhD scholar's GERC Dean will chair, while for MS HOD may chair the meetings.

5. **Status of GERC:** The GERC will act as a subcommittee of GSC. Minutes of GERC will be placed before the regular GSC meeting, for formal adoption and recommendation to BASAR, if necessary.

6. **Supervisor.** The committee will ensure that the supervisor / co-supervisor has an earned PhD; is active in his / her focused research area which is relevant and overlaps the broad contours of scholar's research interests / proposal. The supervisor should conform to the following:-

- a. The supervisor should preferably be an HEC approved supervisor in the relevant discipline.
- b. Furthermore, he/ she must be a productive researcher; publishing research regularly in the respective discipline.
- c. The supervisor should meet the HEC criteria for a supervisor.
- d. Supervisor must be a regular faculty member of FUI.

7. **The GERC Functions and Duties:** A doctoral GERC will be formed at the earliest after the acceptance of a scholar into the PhD program but not later than 1 month of scholar's joining date. For MS scholars, the GERC will be formed soon after the scholar has opted for thesis or within two weeks after the scholars' second semester result, whichever is earlier. In both cases this information will be communicated to the GSC, soon after expiry of the deadlines mentioned here. The working guidelines of GERC are as under:-

- a. **Meeting:** The committee will meet minimum once in a semester (or as needed) to check and document the scholar's progress and perform other functions noted here.
- b. **Monitoring the Supervisory Limit.** While assigning a supervisor to the scholar, the committee will ensure that the supervision load of the supervisor conforms to the following:
 - (i) **In case of PhD scholars:** A supervisor may supervise maximum upto 3 scholars. Full load of 05 x PhD scholars may only be allowed by GERC, in special circumstances.
 - (ii) **In case of MS scholars:**

(a) **Supervisor with PhD degree:** Maximum number of MS scholars to be supervised will be 12, provided no PhD scholar is under supervision. The number of MS scholars to be supervised will decrease by the number of PhD scholars, if being supervised simultaneously.

(b) **Supervisor with MS degree:** Maximum number of MS scholars to be supervised will be 04.

8. **Course work Completion:-** After the successful completion of course work with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 out of 4.00, the student will take comprehensive examination as per SOP approved by the competent authority. The comprehensive examination shall be conducted as soon as possible, after completion of course work, as per process noted here.

9. **PhD Comprehensive Examination:-** A comprehensive examination will consist of two parts, namely Part A and Part B as explained below.

- a. **Part – A Written Comprehensive Examination.** The exam will be conducted by the Controller of Examination in coordination with the HOD. The comprehensive examination shall be based on the entire PhD course work consisting of major and minor areas of study, plus additional subjects recommended by the Deptt / supervisor and considered essential for scholar's breadth of knowledge, in the intended research area(s). This exam will consist of two papers, one covering student's major area of study and the other covering the minor subjects, as well as those subjects recommended by the Deptt / supervisor. The minimum pass marks for each paper in Part A shall be 70%. In addition 60% weightage will be given to the major subject areas and 40% to the minor/ additional subjects studied during the course work. The exam cell will ensure implementation of this weightages.
- b. **Part – B Oral Examination.** This part of the exam will be conducted soon after completion of part A but not later than two weeks, by the GERC with Dean in the chair. The oral exam shall be intended to ascertain the scholars' in-depth knowledge in the areas such as, but not restricted to, the analytical abilities, critical analysis skills and research aptitude of the scholar; covering the proposed/ intended themes of PhD research.
- c. **Result of the Comprehensive Exam .** The result of the comprehensive exam for the individual scholar will be declared by the COE within one week of the oral examination. However, it will neither be given numerical grade nor will count

towards CGPA. The result shall be given in letter grades P(pass) and F(fail). If the scholar fails in the first attempt, he / she will be given one last chance to pass within 45 days from the declaration of the comprehensive exam result. *Failure to clear comprehensive exam in two chances and within two years, will lead to termination of the candidature and registration of the scholar.*

10. **Evaluation of Scholar's Synopsis / Research Proposal.**

- a. The GERC will be convened with Dean in the chair and external expert in the relevant research area as member. It will debate each & every aspect of scholars' research proposal including hypothesis, research questions, conceptual model/framework, methodology, validity of data collection instruments, choice of data analysis tools, expected results and contribution to the body of knowledge at the end.
- b. The committee may **pass** the scholar straight away, **pass with advice** of few improvements or **reject** the proposal. In the last case the scholar will be deemed to have availed **one chance**. The scholar will be given one last chance to come back and defend the new proposal, on the date and time as determined by the committee. Proceedings of the committee will be recorded and kept with the respective HoD in scholar's folder, for use in the subsequent meeting. The GERC decision about the final outcome, will be arrived at by a majority vote. If the number of votes for 'pass' equals the number of votes for 'fail', then the verdict of the Chair would be taken as final.
- c. After the research proposal has been approved, the PhD scholar will formally present the research / thesis progress in every semester to this committee, which will critically examine the regular progress, direction and quality of research completed upto that GERC review, (format of the presentation by scholar is attached at **Annex-A**).
- d. In case the scholar's direction and quality of research are considered not in line with the target research proposal, the committee will provide appropriate guidance and same will be documented as well.

- e. The scholar's progress shall be graded by all members using proforma **Annex-B**.
- f. While defending the research proposal, the scholar will submit a time line of his/her work, clearly identifying targets of research to be achieved / reported in the next meeting of the committee.
- g. There will be 02 x progress reports of the scholar in each year and same will be discussed in yearly committee meetings by the members; documented and kept by the supervisor for records.
- h. Each progress report of the scholar on proforma **Annex-C**, will be unambiguous and conclusive. It will have explicit remarks about the progress of the scholar (satisfactory/ unsatisfactory). As per FUI regulations, if a scholar gets 02 x negative (not satisfactory) reports, he / she will lose his/her right to be a research scholar in that program.
- i. The scholar who becomes absent without any verifiable reason or fails to present his/her work before the committee on the pre-announced date, will be considered to have earned one unsatisfactory report, by default.
- j. While conveying negative report to the scholar, extract from relevant rules should be reproduced on the report e.g. "If you earn 02 x negative assessment reports during your course of PhD, your candidature as PhD scholar will automatically be cancelled"
- k. This report will be communicated to the scholar on his/ her latest email address given in the Deptt and also maintained both in soft & hard form by the respective Dept.

11. **Doctoral Seminar**. Every PhD Scholar will be expected to give a final seminar before submission of draft thesis to the Controller of Exam, for foreign evaluation. The seminar will be widely publicized inviting experts and research scholars from local universities as well as all research scholars of the Deptt. GERC will ensure the compliance of amendments proposed/ agreed during the doctoral seminar before sending scholar's dissertation to the foreign evaluators.

12. **Publication of Research Article**. It is mandatory that a PhD scholar must publish 01 x research article in HEC recognized journal of min 'Y' category for social Sciences and of min category 'X' for Science and Engineering subjects (or as approved by HEC from time to time). The article must be based on research carried out during the PhD research period and related to the scholar's focus research area of PhD.

13. **Foreign Evaluation of the Research Thesis**. After the Doctoral Seminar, the thesis will be certified as 'ready' for foreign evaluation by the respective HOD and forwarded (in hard and soft form) to the Controller of Examination FUI; along with a panel of minimum

six foreign experts and four external examiners (local), from the list of experts duly approved by the BASAR. The name of the Internal examiner will also be sent for approval, by the competent authority.

As per HEC rules the PhD thesis shall be finally evaluated by two foreign subject experts of the relevant area selected from technologically advanced Countries. The Controller of Examination will seek approval of three foreign experts, two external examiners and the internal examiner from the Rector. But the thesis will be initially sent to two foreign experts after seeking their consent.

- a. If case both the experts approve/recommend the thesis with some changes, their reports will be communicated to the Campus Director and the Dean of the faculty informing that the scholar qualifies for the public defense (after incorporating the suggested changes).
- b. In case the report received from one foreign expert is positive but with some minor changes and recommended fit for public defense, but the report of second expert is adverse, with major changes but not recommended for public defense, then the thesis will be forwarded to the third expert for his /her report.
- c. In case two experts do not recommend /approve the thesis, the candidate will be informed and dealt with as per examination rules.
- d. Two positive reports/ recommendations of the foreign experts shall qualify the scholar for public defense. The reports of the foreign experts will be assessed by an authorized standing committee approved by the competent authority.

14. **Thesis Defense.**

- a. Before submission of thesis, the PhD scholars may be encouraged by the supervisor to attend at least 05 x theses defense and / or seminars in different public / private universities, preferably in the scholar's discipline of knowledge/ research, in order to enrich his / her knowledge and research perspective.
- b. Two copies of the final thesis duly certified by the supervisor and HOD, that observations made by the foreign expert have been addressed will be sent to the CE, for external examiners. The CE will forward the same to the approved external examiners and seek their comments on the thesis (in writing), and also confirm the convenient date for Public defense. The public defence shall be notified by the CE. The concerned Department/Faculty shall make necessary arrangements and coordinate with the members.

The Thesis Defense / Examination Committee shall comprise of the following.

- (i) Dean of the Faculty (Chair)
- (ii) Concerned HOD
- (iii) Internal Examiner
- (iv) Two External Examiners
- (v) Representative of CE

The supervisor will remain available for any queries that may arise. The presence of two external experts is mandatory. Post Graduate Students of the faculty shall be encouraged to attend the public defence. The result of the public defense shall be conveyed to the Controller of Examination by the HOD, as per specified format, through the respective Dean along with one bound copy of final thesis. The result will be notified by the controller of examination after completing all formalities.

15. This SOP will be implemented with effect from the date of approval from BASAR.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Riaz
Chairman GRC



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Annex- A

(Scholar's Proposed/ Approved Thesis Topic)

Scholar's Particulars

Name of Scholar: _____ **Reg #** _____ **Cell #** _____

Mailing Address: _____

Report No	Report Period	From	To	Date
Father'/Guardian Name/ cell #		Email Address of scholar:		
Father/ Guardian Address				
Permanent Address				
Institution: FURC/FUI/FUSLKC	Deptt:	Date of Admission in Master		
Date of Admission in Ph.D		Degree Requirement Completion Date		
Employed at		Designation		
Note: It is the entire responsibility of the scholar to inform the HOD, about any change in his/her contact details such as cell #, email address etc to ensure receipt of correspondence from the University.				



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Annex-B

Supervisor Particulars

Name		Institute/Deptt	
Cell #		Email	
HEC Approved / Not Approved			
<u>List of PhD Scholars under Supervision</u>			
S.No	Name of Scholar/ Reg. no	Research Topic	Remarks
<u>List of MS Scholars under Supervision</u>			
S.No	Name of Scholar/ Reg. no	Research Topic	Remarks
GERC Members	Dr---		
	Dr----		
	Dr----- (External)		

Date: _____

Name & Signature of HoD



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Scholar's PhD Course Work *

* To be submitted by the scholar once after completion of course work

Sr.	Code	Courses	Semester	Grade	Deptt
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
Credit Hours Completed in PhD	Overall CGPA in PhD course work	Qualified Part A? Yes/No Date of Qualification.	Qualified Part B ? Yes/No Date of Qualification.....		

Date _____

Name/ Reg No. / Signature of Scholar

Confirmation for the Awareness of FUI Rules/regulations

The scholar must carefully read the questions asked below & give the appropriate response in the last column

S. No	Questions	Answer*
1.	Are you aware of the last date to complete thesis (without BASAR's Extension)? Please Mention date	_ _ _
2.	Are you aware of the regulations and schedule of the University for PhD programs	Yes
3.	Are you aware of the HEC/ FUI Plagiarism policy?	Yes
4.	Have you read the HEC Policy on PhD Programs?	Yes
5.	Have you received a copy of the PG Handbook?	Yes
6.	Did you attend any PhD theses and / or seminar ?	Yes
7.	If yes(mention no of Theses / Seminars Attended)	8

** Supposed values are entered in this column for demonstration only. Scholar should enter actual values.*

Date _____

Name/ Reg no / Signature of Scholar _____



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Sample slides for the scholar's presentation to GERC

Tentative Roadmap-PhD Study

The scholar should provide a **time line** of research activities in the following table.

S.No	Activity*	Target Date*	Remarks
1	Thematic Analysis	31 Jan 2017	Done
2	Chapter writing (intro)	01 Mar 2017	In Process
3	Deposit paper for publication	05 April 2017	
4	Chapter writing (Theoretical framework)	31 May 2017	
5	Chapter writing (Analysis)	01 June 2017	
6	Chapter writing (topic)	05 July 2017	
7	Deposit paper for publication	13 Aug 2017	
8	Chapter writing (topic)	5 Sep 2017	
9	Concluding Chapter	22 Oct 2017	

** Supposed values are entered in this column for demonstration only. Scholar should enter actual values.*



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Record of Scholar's Research Progress

(for use by members of GERC only)

Name of Scholar: Reg no.: Title of Research:		
Progress of Research		Tasks planned for next Semester
1. Passed Comprehensive Part A & B 2. Topic Finalized 3. Preliminary paper (other than synopsis) written, deposited and discussed with supervisors 4. Thematic analysis including content Analysis and Textual Analysis 5. Attended PhD Seminars / Thesis Defense.		1. Complete Chapter on theme 2. Send paper for publication 3. Complete chapter on Theoretical framework

S.No	Names of Committee Members	Progress Grade (Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory)	Remarks / Signatures
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

Overall Progress Assessment of the scholar Mr / Ms ----- by GERC,

held on _____

Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory

Secretary GERC



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Annex-C

Summary of Research Work Completed by the Scholar

Summary of research Work Completed (upto date)

Preliminary paper Deposited*
Topic finalized
Thematic Analysis
Relevant themes short listed by supervisor
Writing chapter on -----

Paper Published / Presented

None

Conference Publications

None

* The contents/ headings of this table may be changed, the way it best reflects the performance / evaluation of the scholar's work.