

THE UNIVERSITY OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ACADEMIC POLICY

Policy Ref. No. 039

Policy: **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES**

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Approved by: Board of Governors

Date of Approval: January 31st, 2024

Authorized by:



Clément Imbert

Professor Clément Imbert
Chairman of the Board of Governors
The University of Trinidad and Tobago

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POLICY DATA SUMMARY



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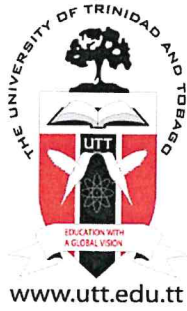
This document contains the regulations for all UTT postgraduate research programmes:

- *Master of Philosophy (MPhil)*
- *Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)*

For regulations, policies and procedures pertaining to taught masters and other postgraduate programmes not listed above, refer to the General Academic Regulations and specifically for assessment regulations refer to the Assessment Regulations for Taught Programmes.

A Full review of the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes shall be conducted every 3 years, with revisions as required based on changing requirements or impacted by decisions of the Board of Governors or Academic Council.

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Executive Secretary or an administrative support is appointed by the AAC to serve as recorder for the Panel.

2.4.4 Provision of Evidence to an Appeal Panel

Any written additions to the case must be received by the Chairman of the AAC at least five (5) working days before the Panel meets.

The student may be accompanied by a named representative who shall have the right to address the Panel. Students may only call witnesses with the prior agreement of the Panel. If this representative is legal counsel, notice of this shall be supplied to the Panel at least five (5) working days before the hearing, and the Panel may then also have its legal counsel present at the hearing. It shall be the responsibility of the student to arrange for any such witnesses to attend. Under no circumstances will UTT be responsible for the costs incurred by the representative.



The Chairman of the AAC shall simultaneously inform the student and the relevant PRC Chairperson/staff member of the time and venue of the meeting of the Panel.

The PRC Chairperson or nominee shall provide the Chairman of the AAC and the student with a written response to the grounds of the appeal not less than five (5) working days prior to the Panel meeting to consider the appeal.

The PRC Chairperson, or nominee, together with appropriate members of staff, shall be available to give oral evidence to the Panel at the time of its meeting.

2.4.5 Meeting of the Appeal Panel

The Appeal Panel shall make recommendations by majority vote.

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The Chairman of the Academic Appeals Committee shall decide, within five (5) working days of receipt of the Academic Appeal Form from the AVP-RIPS, if there are any valid grounds for appeal. To assist in this process, the Chairman of the AAC may request further information to be provided by the student within ten (10) working days of the date of the request. The timescale for the Chairman to render a decision on the appeal will begin from the receipt of such additional evidence. If there are no valid grounds for appeal, this shall be communicated in writing to the student by the Chairman of the AAC within five (5) working days of the decision.

If it is decided that there appears to be grounds for an appeal to be considered under these Regulations, the Chairman of the AAC shall provide the student with information on the date, time, and place of the meeting of an Appeal Panel. This notification will be sent within five (5) working days of the decision being made by the Chairman.

2.4.3 Convening an Appeal Panel

The hearing shall be not less than ten (10) working days and not more than twenty (20) working days after the student involved being informed that an appeal is to be held.

UTT will use all reasonable efforts to comply with the time limits prescribed within this section although there may be circumstances in which UTT cannot reasonably meet such time limits. In such an eventuality, the student will be notified in a timely manner.

The Chairman of the AAC shall appoint five (5) members to the Appeal Panel, drawn from the AAC. No member of the panel shall have had any previous involvement with the student.

A quorum for an Appeal Panel shall be three members, one of whom must be the Chairman or designate and one other member of the AAC and one postgraduate research student (Guild President or nominee). An

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If it is a grade appeal, the student will request a re-evaluation of his/her grade by the Course Instructor for justification. This re-evaluation is subject to an evaluation fee which will be determined by the Examinations Unit of the Registry. If the decision is not favourable, the student will request a formal grade evaluation by an Independent Examiner. The Independent Examiner's evaluation will be final and binding.

If the basis of the appeal is inadequate supervision, AVP-RIPS will attempt to resolve the matter via the respective PRC.

For any type of appeal recognised in this Regulations, the AVP-RIPS can direct the appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee which will manage the appeal in accordance with the Regulations outlined below.

2.4.1 Academic Appeals Committee

The Academic Appeals Committee (AAC) of the Academic Council will have general oversight of the operation of the appeal procedures in this section. The AAC will be responsible for establishing Appeal Panels to consider appeals against decisions of a PRC.

2.4.2 Composition of the Academic Appeal Committee

The composition of the AAC shall be as follows:

- Chairman to be a senior member of UTT, appointed by the VP-RASA;
- Six members of academic staff from different academic areas of UTT and appointed by the VP-RASA;
- Two research postgraduate students appointed by the President of the Students' Guild;
- Legal Counsel, if required.

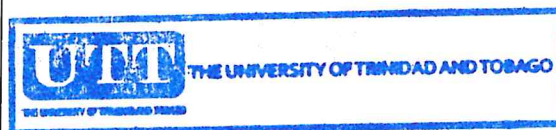
The AAC shall provide a report of its work semi-annually to the VP-RASA.

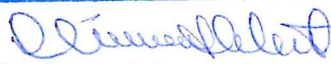
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2.2 Eligibility of Appeals

An appeal can only be submitted by a registered student or group of students. In cases where a group of students is registering an appeal, a spokesperson must be nominated to represent the group throughout the appeal procedure.

Anonymous appeals will not be entertained as full disclosure is essential for effective resolution.

2.3 Informal Appeals



Many issues can be resolved in an informal manner and so the University recommends that postgraduate research students pursue this route before lodging an official appeal. Resolution should first be attempted directly with the member of staff involved. If there is no resolution at that point, then the student is advised to raise the issue with their Advisory Committee. If they wish to raise the issue outside of their Advisory Committee then they can raise it with the Chair of the PRC. If resolution is still not forthcoming, then the student is encouraged to lodge a formal appeal with the AVP-RIPS using the procedure outlined below.

2.4 Formal Appeals

A formal appeal should only be made after informal attempts to resolve the matter fail.

A formal appeal can be made against any academic matter affecting student grades, academic standing/progression of a student, alleged misconduct, the award of a degree or inadequate supervision. Appeals against academic judgement are not considered under this Regulations.

A student who wishes to lodge a formal appeal must submit the completed **Student Academic Appeal Form**, together with any supporting evidence to the AVP-RIPS. The complaint should be written clearly and succinctly and avoid vague allegations.

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President Research, Academic and Student Affairs (VP RASA) and the Academic Council.

1.9 Implementation of Inquiry Panel Decisions

The Inquiry Panel shall report its findings to the relevant Assistant Vice President (AVP). If the relevant AVP accepts an Inquiry Panel's recommendation to fail a student, a mark of zero will be entered against the element of assessment or the entire course or courses.

If an Inquiry Panel recommends the withdrawal of the student from the programme or from UTT, and if the AVP accepts the recommendation, the approval of the VP RASA must be obtained.

The final decision will be recorded and conveyed to the student through the relevant AVP who will:

1. Be responsible for sanctioning and implementing the decision of the Inquiry Panel
2. Inform the person investigated accordingly
3. Report the outcome of any academic misconduct complaint to the VP RASA/Academic Council.

A person against whom a complaint of misconduct has been established under these procedures may appeal to the President, UTT, within 20 working days of receiving the decision of an Inquiry Panel. If a person lodges an appeal, the implementation of any penalty will be suspended until the appeal is resolved.

2 Academic Appeals

2.1 Introduction

Although UTT is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for all its students, the University recognises that from time to time problems do arise and students may wish to express concern or dissatisfaction. UTT welcomes this feedback as an important aspect of its quality assurance procedures.

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probabilities proven, the Chair of the Panel will recommend one of the actions below:

1. Dismiss a complaint
2. Find a complaint established and impose no penalty
3. Find a complaint established and admonish the person
4. Find a complaint established and issue the person a letter of reprimand
5. Find a complaint established and order that the person forfeit marks in assessment(s); or fail a course; or all the courses in which the person is enrolled in a semester
6. Find a complaint established and terminate the person's fellowship/scholarship, where applicable
7. Find a complaint established and suspend the person for one or more semesters
8. Find a complaint established and suspend the person from enrolling for course(s), an award or from enrolling for any award of UTT for a period not exceeding four semesters
9. Find a complaint established and exclude the person from enrolment in UTT for a period not less than two years
10. Find a complaint established and have the person completely withdrawn from the programme
11. Find a complaint established and recommend to the Academic Council that a degree or other award conferred on the person be revoked and annulled
12. Find a complaint established and impose a combination of the above penalties.

A person who is suspended may not enrol at UTT for any programme from which the person is suspended while the suspension is in force. At the expiration of the full suspension period the person may reenrol without requiring further permission.

A person who is excluded may not enrol in UTT while the exclusion is in force. At the expiration of the period of exclusion the person may not reenrol without the expressed permission of the Vice


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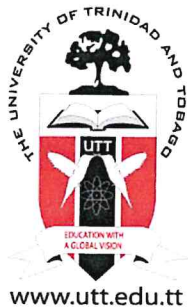
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An Inquiry Panel may decide that the nature of the student's offence is such as to call into question the validity of his/her past work. In such cases, the work concerned may be requested by the Chair of the Panel and scrutinised by the Panel for evidence of Academic Misconduct.

In the event of a deadlock, the Panel Chair will have a casting vote.

1.7 Conclusions of an Inquiry Panel

Having considered the evidence before it, an Inquiry Panel shall make its findings on the balance of probabilities. Where the complaint is a grave one, or likely to be attended by serious consequences if established, the Panel should be more clearly convinced of the misconduct than would be required in less serious cases.

If an Inquiry Panel concludes that, on the balance of probabilities, a student has not committed any Academic Misconduct it will record its conclusion in the following way:



Having considered the documentary and oral evidence presented to it, the Inquiry Panel is satisfied that the allegation of Academic Misconduct has not been proven against (*insert name of student*).

If an Inquiry Panel concludes that, on the balance of probabilities, a student has committed an offence of Academic Misconduct it will record its conclusion in the following way:

Having considered the documentary and oral evidence presented to it, the Inquiry Panel is satisfied that the allegation of Academic Misconduct has been proven against (*insert name of student*) and the Inquiry Panel makes the following recommendation.

1.8 Recommendations of an Inquiry Panel

If an Inquiry Panel is satisfied that the allegation of Academic Misconduct is, on the balance of

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At the same time, the AVP-RIPS shall arrange for an Inquiry Panel to be convened to consider the alleged infraction.

1.5 Membership of an Inquiry Panel



An Inquiry Panel shall comprise a Chair, three (3) members of academic staff and a representative of the Office of the student registry (non-voting). The Panel Chair will be appointed by the AVP-RIPS. The Inquiry Panel shall not include anyone that may have a conflict of interest in the matter.

The proceedings of an Inquiry Panel will be recorded by an administrative staff member from the relevant AVP's Office.

1.6 Proceedings of an Inquiry Panel

An Inquiry Panel shall normally meet to consider the alleged Academic Misconduct within ten (10) working days after the deadline for the response from the student. The Chair of an Inquiry Panel may, with good cause, defer the scheduled meeting of the Panel so long as the Panel meets no later than twenty (20) working days after the deadline for the response from the student.

The Chair of an Inquiry Panel shall schedule a hearing with the student concerned unless the student has signified in writing that he/she does not wish to attend or cannot attend with good reason. The student may be accompanied by a representative who shall have the right to address the Panel. If this representative is legal counsel, notice of this will be supplied to the Panel at least five (5) working days before the hearing, and the Panel may then also have its legal counsel present at the hearing. The Inquiry Panel will normally interview the person(s) involved in making the allegation of Academic Misconduct, and any other person(s) whom the Panel believes may be able to provide relevant information, and will have available to it the report of the alleged misconduct case, the Statement of Case, and the Statement of Response.

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A person who wishes to make a complaint of academic misconduct shall make it in writing to the AVP-RIPS. A complaint must:

1. Identify the person against whom it is made
2. Identify the nature of the misconduct
3. Provide appropriate evidence of the alleged misconduct.

1.3 Infractions of Academic Conduct in Coursework

If a student is suspected of an act of Academic Misconduct in an item of coursework, the Instructor for the course will prepare a report for the relevant Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee within five (5) working days of the suspicion. The report will indicate the reasons for suspecting that an infraction has occurred, and will include the item of coursework involved.

If the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee, after reviewing the evidence, agrees that an infraction may have occurred, the matter is referred to the AVP-RIPS. This part of the process will be completed within seven (7) working days of receipt by the Chair of the Teaching and Learning Committee of the allegation of an infraction.

1.4 Inquiry Panel for investigating Allegations of Academic Misconduct

The Chair of the relevant Teaching and Learning Committee will provide copies of the pertinent reports and any other relevant information and documentation to the Chair of the Inquiry Panel.

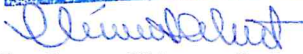
The AVP-RIPS shall write to the student(s) concerned within five (5) working days of receiving the notification of the alleged Academic Misconduct, notifying the student(s) of the allegation in a Statement of Case. The student(s) will be asked to respond within seven (7) working days of the date of the letter with a Statement of Response.

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facilities such as libraries.

5. **Misrepresentation:** Misrepresentation is the giving of false or misleading information in academic matters. It includes falsely claiming credit for past study; falsely stating that thesis/dissertation material has not been used in another thesis/dissertation.
6. **Unethical behaviour:** Unethical behaviour is behaviour that breaches accepted ethical standards. It includes failing to observe the terms of an ethical approval to conduct research.
7. **Collusion:** where two or more students (or a student and another person) collaborate without official approval in the presentation of work which is submitted as the work of a student; or where a student allows his work to be incorporated in, or represented as, the work of another student.
8. **Falsification:** where the content of any assessed work has been invented or falsely presented by the student as his own work or altering or changing documents to benefit the student.
9. Taking unauthorised notes or devices into an examination.
10. Obtaining an unauthorised copy of an examination paper.
11. Communicating, or trying to communicate, with another student during an examination; or trying to convey information to any other student during an examination.
12. Being party to impersonation in relation to an examination.
13. Any other act or acts that compromise the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

1.2 Infractions of Academic Conduct in Research

Any person who has direct knowledge of academic misconduct in research may make a formal written complaint. A written and signed complaint of academic misconduct may be made under these procedures against:

1. Any person enrolled as a student of UTT.
2. Any person formerly enrolled as a student, or holding a degree or other award conferred by UTT.

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Appendix I - Academic Misconduct and Academic Appeals

1 Academic Misconduct

The integrity of the academic processes and the learning environment at UTT requires appropriate recognition of legitimate efforts. UTT has responsibility for the management of all awards and for complaints laid against persons who have already graduated. For these reasons, UTT has adopted the following policy.

Specific to the academic pursuits of students, UTT believes that the maintenance of academic standards is a joint responsibility of the students and academic staff of UTT. Academic misconduct is against University standards and is defined as: plagiarism, cheating, or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretences or behaving in a manner that compromises the integrity of the academic process.

1.1 Specific Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use or paraphrasing of another person's work, and the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas.
2. **Cheating:** Cheating is the providing or receiving of information during tests and examinations; or providing or using unauthorised assistance at the computer terminal, or on field work. Cheating would not usually include consultation with others or discussion amongst students about the preparation of assignments unless that was specifically forbidden. It includes unauthorised collusion.
3. **Fraud:** Academic fraud is the falsification and fabrication of, or dishonesty in reporting research results.
4. **Improper Behaviour:** Improper behaviour is behaviour that interferes with students or staff in the pursuit of their academic endeavours. It includes disruptive behaviour in class or institutional

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and the examiners will discuss. The AVP-RIPS may appoint a second external examiner within two weeks of the defence. The second external examiner must be furnished with a copy of the thesis and reports from each of the examiners. The recommendation of the second external examiner must follow one of the three options given and must report to AVP-RIPS usually six weeks after receiving the documentation from the University;

3. Once the outcome is agreed upon to the satisfaction of the examination committee, the student is informed in writing by the Office of RIPS of the outcome of the examination. Provided the outcome is the award of the degree, then the Student Registry is informed, and the student's name is added to the graduation list for approval by Academic Council, and then for approval by the Board of Governors.

11.2 Approval and Award of the PhD

The decision to award the PhD degree is based on examination of the dissertation and upon successful completion of the oral defence.

1. All examiners, including the external examiner must discuss the final award. Where one or more examiners disagree, this will be noted by the Chair and reported to the Office of RIPS within 5 working/business days;
2. Where one or more examiners disagree on the final award, the AVP-RIPS, the examination chair, and the examiners will discuss it. The AVP-RIPS may appoint a second external examiner within two weeks of the defence. The second external examiner must be furnished with a copy of the dissertation and reports from each of the examiners. The recommendation of the second external examiner must follow one of the three options given and must report to AVP-RIPS no later than six months after receiving the documentation from the University;

Once the final award to be made is agreed upon to the satisfaction of the examination committee, the student is informed in writing by the Office of RIPS on the outcome of the examination. The Office of the Student Registry is then informed, and the student's name is added to the graduation list for approval by

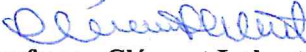
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webpage inclusive of candidate's full name, programme (Academic Unit), degree, thesis/dissertation title, date, time, and location of the oral examination. Students with compelling confidentiality concerns about this public announcement can request an exemption from the Office of RIPS.

The Assistant Vice President-RIPS shall appoint the Chairman of the oral examination Committee. The examining committee judges the candidate's work and makes a recommendation to the Office of RIPS. Decision outcomes from an Oral Examination (Defence) must be one of the following:

1. if the Committee determines that the responses to questions raised in the defence meet appropriate academic standards for the granting of the MPhil/PhD degree, the candidate will be judged to have passed the defence;
2. if the Committee determines that the presentation and the responses to questions raised in the defence were not of adequate or appropriate academic standards, the student will be afforded a chance of a second defence;
3. if the Committee determines that the presentation and the responses to questions raised in the second defence were not of adequate or appropriate academic standards, the student will be judged to have failed the defence.

11 Approval and Award of Degrees

11.1 Approval and Award of the MPhil

The decision to award the MPhil degree is based on fulfilment of the requirements in Article 8, successful examination of the thesis and upon successful completion of the oral defence.

1. All Examiners, including the External Examiner must discuss the final award. This will be noted in the report by the Chair and submitted to the Office of RIPS within 5 working/business days;
2. Where one or more examiners disagree on the final award the AVP-RIPS, the examination Chair,

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thesis/dissertation. Examiners who do not conform to the first deadline shall be given an extension of usually thirty (30) calendar days. Failure to conform to this final deadline shall result in a new Examiner being appointed by the Office RIPS on the recommendation of the PRC.

All examiners will be required to submit their decision on one of the following:

1. The thesis/dissertation is acceptable without modification.
2. The thesis/dissertation is acceptable with minor modifications, which are provided, to the supervisor.
3. The thesis/dissertation requires major revision and is returned to the student for revision and re-submission to the supervisor.

A thesis/dissertation which requires major revision must be re-examined by all examiners.

Examiners are to keep confidential all matters related to the examination of postgraduate research theses/dissertations. The Assessment forms shall always be treated as confidential to those involved in the examination process, any appeal process, the Examiners, Office of RIPS, the Supervisor, and the student.

The External Examiner's written report must be received before the oral examination can take place.

10.3 Oral Examination/Defence

An oral examination can be scheduled once all examiners have completed their review of the thesis/dissertation and no sooner than four weeks after submission of the thesis/dissertation to the Office of RIPS. All other degree requirements must also have been completed.

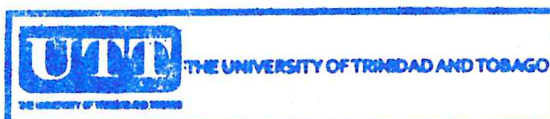
The oral examination is open to all members of the University and to the public. Once an oral examination has been scheduled by the Office of RIPS, the following details will be made available on the postgraduate

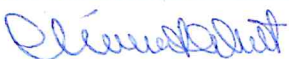
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than three years and not more than four years from the date of first enrolment. Part time PhD candidates shall normally be required to submit their dissertation in a period that is not less than five years and not more than eight years from the date of first enrolment.

The Supervisor and Advisory Committee must ensure that the thesis/dissertation is of a standard acceptable for examination before submission to Office of RIPS.

1. A digital copy of the thesis/dissertation, in the required format, shall be submitted to the Office of RIPS. Refer to the approved document on *"Guidelines for the Presentation of Postgraduate Projects, Masters' Theses and Doctoral Dissertations"*.
2. The thesis/dissertation shall be forwarded, by the Office of RIPS, to the Examination Committee within ten working days of the submission.



10.2 Examination of a Thesis/Dissertation

Theses (MPhil) and dissertations (PhD) must be assessed by an examiner external to the University, as well as by the Supervisor and Advisory Committee. Procedures for choosing a suitable External Examiner must be initiated at least two months before completion of the dissertation.

An External Examiner, distinct from the Supervisor and members of the Advisory Committee, shall be appointed from outside of UTT by the Office of RIPS, based on a recommendation from the Supervisor for each MPhil or PhD candidate. The External Examiner must hold appropriate academic/professional qualifications and/or experience. The appointee shall normally have a distinguished record in the specific area of the research topic.

The Supervisor and/or the Co-Supervisor and Advisory Committee Members together with the External Examiner shall form the Examination Committee for assessing the candidate's thesis/dissertation.

The Examiners shall be given sixty (60) calendar days to submit their written examination report on the

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9.4 Independence of Assessment

Prior to the Oral Defence, the Supervisor, Office of RIPS, and candidate must scrupulously avoid discussing the thesis/dissertation merits or academic content with the External Examiner.

9.5 Identity of the External Examiner

The Candidate should not know the identity of the External Examiner until after the report from the external examiner has been submitted to the Office of RIPS.

9.6 Participation in the Oral Defence

The External Examiner's participation in a Candidate's Oral Defence offers the opportunity for a valuable dialogue about the thesis/dissertation and the research it presents. Therefore, the participation of the External Examiner in the Oral Defence is required.



10 Submission and Examination of a Thesis/Dissertation

For research postgraduate degrees, the thesis/dissertation, performance (as required) and the oral defence shall be used to determine the award of the degree. All examiners must complete, sign and submit a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to the Office of RIPS before assessing the thesis/dissertation.

10.1 Submission of a Thesis/Dissertation for Examination

Full time MPhil candidates shall normally be required to submit their thesis in a period that is not less than two years and not more than three years from the date of enrolment. Part time MPhil candidates shall normally be required to submit their thesis in a period that is not less than three years and not more than five years from the date of enrolment.

Full time PhD candidates shall normally be required to submit their dissertation in a period that is not less

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External Examiner nominees should not be contacted by the candidate, Supervisor or Programme after submission of the nominations.

9.2 Eligibility Requirements for External Examiner for PhD candidates

The Supervisor and PRC are responsible for nominating well-qualified, objective, experienced individuals not associated or affiliated with the University. Reflecting the importance of this role, it is imperative the External Examiners for PhD candidates:

- Possess previous experience with the supervision and examination of postgraduate research students
- Possess an established reputation in the area of the research and be able to judge whether the thesis/dissertation is acceptable
- Hold a PhD or a degree at the same level at which the candidate is pursuing
- Hold the rank of Associate, Full, or Emeritus Professor (or the equivalent) at a university that offers the degree the candidate seeks or have comparable expertise and standing
- Have not acted as External Examiner for a candidate with the same Supervisor in the past three years.

9.3 Arm's Length Requirements for External Examiners

A person is ineligible to serve as External Examiner if, with respect to the candidate, they are:

- a close friend or relative
- an institutional colleague within the past 6 years
- a former supervisor (for the Candidate, Supervisor or Co-Supervisor only)
- a person who has offered future employment or mentorship to the candidate involved in a dispute.

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84.3 Capacity to Study

If a student's health or personal circumstances prevent them from continuing their course of study the PRC may recommend that the student be temporarily withdrawn for a period of one academic year. This decision must be approved by Office of RIPS.

84.4 Behaviour



If a student's behaviour interferes with the provision of a safe and productive learning environment, the student may be referred to Student Support Services and Recruitment for counselling and advisement. Should the said behaviours persist, the student may be recommended for withdrawal by the Office of RIPS.

9 External Examiner

9.1 Nomination of External Examiner

The External Examiner is external to the University for MPhil and PhD candidates. The Supervisor nominates at least two (but preferably three) persons for the role of External Examiner. The Office of RIPS will select and invite the External Examiner. Nominations for External Examiner are submitted to the Office of RIPS usually six weeks prior to the intended date of submission of the thesis/dissertation for external examination. For each nomination the Supervisor must submit a full CV outlining their qualifications, research, and teaching experience, special field of expertise, publications, and any other relevant details.

Failure to provide this advance notice is likely to result in delays in the later stages of the examination process.

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thesis/dissertation.

Should a student's progress or behaviour consistently fail to meet expectations as outlined above and in the Postgraduate Student Handbook, the PRC may recommend to the Office of RIPS that the student be required to withdraw.

8.4 Withdrawal

A student may be recommended for withdrawal from a postgraduate research programme for concerns regarding the following:

- Failure to register
- Failure to attend or progress
- Capacity to Study
- Behaviour



A student who is withdrawn from the University is entitled to appeal the decision in accordance with Appendix I - Section 2. Students should also refer to the Involuntary Withdrawal Policy.

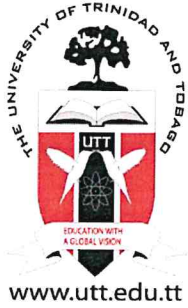
8.4.1 Failure to Register

A student may be required to withdraw from their programme of study if they fail to register for two consecutive semesters according to Section 6. The recommendation for a student to withdraw from a postgraduate research programme must be made by the PRC and be approved by the Office of RIPS.

8.4.2 Failure to Attend or Progress

A student may be required to withdraw for failure to progress at a satisfactory standard as outlined above. The recommendation for a student to withdraw from a postgraduate research programme must be made by the PRC and be approved by the Office of RIPS.

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8.2 UTT Research Ethics Approval

Students engaging in research concerning the health, safety and privacy of human research subjects, the welfare of animals as research subjects and the integrity of the environment must be guided by the University's Research Ethics Policy.


Students must submit a proposal to, and be granted approval by, the UTT Institutional Review Board (UTTIRB) prior to the collection of research data. This proposal shall be submitted through the Supervisor to uttIRB@utt.edu.tt for consideration by the Committee. After the review process the Supervisor is informed of the decision through the Office of RIPS.

8.3 Satisfactory Progress & Completion of Work

Students are expected to engage fully with their programme of study, take responsibility for their own learning and co-operate with members of staff in their programme and the wider university. Students are also to be guided by the requirements for their programme as outlined in the Postgraduate Student Handbook. The Periods of Study outlined in Section 4 of these Regulations should be used as a guide for the student in the planning and execution of their programme of study. In cases where there are extenuating circumstances that require longer periods of study, the Supervisor will review and forward the students request to RIPS for approval.

Students are required to inform their Programme of the development of any health or personal issues that may negatively impact their progress through their programme of study. Should the Programme not be informed then these challenges cannot be considered.

The performance of every student enrolled in a postgraduate research programme will be reviewed annually by their respective Advisory Committee. The findings and recommendations of the Advisory Committee will be submitted to the Office of RIPS to be endorsed. The performance of the student will include grades achieved in courses, the progression of their programme of research activity and the development of their

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Research Methodology	3
Directed Reading	3
PhD Proposal	3
PhD Dissertation	P/F
Minimum Credits for PhD Degree	12

Additional subject-specific courses may be necessary and required by the supervisor and sourced from other Programmes within UTT. Each student shall be required to read for and pass all mandatory postgraduate courses.

A minimum pass mark of 66% (B-) must be obtained in all courses taken in a postgraduate research programme. No more than two course failures shall normally be allowed. A failed course may only be repeated twice. Failure at the third attempt, in any course, shall result in the student being withdrawn from the programme. However, consideration would be given should there be an Extenuating Circumstance (Refer to General Academic Regulations).

MPhil and PhD candidates who have successfully:

- submitted a research proposal to and received approval from the UTT Research Ethics Committee
- completed all the required courses
- presented at least two (2) public seminars on their research work
- submitted a thesis/dissertation and
- delivered/defended an oral presentation to the student body and staff within the Programme (Academic Unit).

shall be eligible for the conferral of MPhil or PhD.

Student Progress Reports must be submitted by the Supervisor at the end of each semester to the PRC; the annual Progress Report must be submitted to the Office of RIPS.


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8 Monitoring & Progression

This section of the Regulations is concerned with the principles and philosophy governing the design and operation of postgraduate research courses and theses/dissertations at the University. In keeping with a central premise, it is intended that there should be some flexibility in designing and delivering courses and assigning projects, however, this must be done within clearly specified university-wide parameters while paying attention to the University's validation process.

8.1 Courses and Coursework


All students pursuing a postgraduate research degree at UTT must enrol in all courses outlined in the programme structure detailed below in Tables (2) and (3). If necessary, the Supervisor shall recommend to the postgraduate research student additional courses for which the student must register and pass.

Table (2) The programme structure of the MPhil degree

Course Title	Credits
Introduction to Research	3
Research Methodology	3
Directed Reading	3
MPhil Proposal	3
MPhil Thesis	P/F
Minimum Credits for MPhil Degree	12

Table (3) The programme structure of the PhD degree

Course Title	Credits
Introduction to Research	3

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progression or award, unless given permission by the Office of RIPS.

7.6 Changes to Supervision

If there are changes to the composition or distribution of roles on a postgraduate research student's Advisory Committee, the Office of RIPS must be notified by the Supervisor.

- If the Supervisor demits office with the thesis/dissertation close to completion, the Office of RIPS may permit the Supervisor to retain this position or be appointed as a Co-supervisor. If a Supervisor does not wish to continue supervising, students assigned to that Supervisor shall be reassigned to another Supervisor by the Advisory Committee
- If the Supervisor is on study leave or any other leave exceeding two months, arrangements must be made to ensure continuity of supervision. It is highly recommended that an interim Co-supervisor be appointed
- When an academic member of staff who is approaching retirement, accepts an assignment as Supervisor, he/she in collaboration with the Programme Leader and Advisory Committee shall appoint an interim supervisor to ensure smooth transition.
- A variety of circumstances may lead to a termination of the student-supervisor relationship. Once the student is in good academic standing, the programme (Programme Leader and PRC) has the responsibility to assist the student in the re-appointment of a new Supervisor.
- Once there is a change in supervision the Data Capture Form shall be updated and submitted to the Office of RIPS.

7.7 Retirement of Supervisors

A retired member of UTT may continue to serve on the advisory committees of postgraduate research students on the recommendation of the PRC. The Office of Research, Impact and Postgraduate Studies (RIPS) approves the PRC's recommendation.

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of the student's development, thereby broadening and deepening the range of expertise and experience of the postgraduate student. The Committee is required to approve the final thesis/dissertation before examination.

The Advisory Committee, whether MPhil or PhD, must meet at least once per semester to monitor and direct the student's progress.

7.4 Role of the Office of RIPS in Postgraduate Supervision

Postgraduate programmes vary widely across the University and therefore may operate in different ways. The role of the Office of RIPS is to support the postgraduate research student through their programme by providing them with guidance on completing their programme in a timely manner as well as resolving any discrepancies that may arise during their course of study. This may include:

- Assisting in the identification of a supervisor
- Approving the supervisors and composition of advisory committees
- Reviewing a student's progress
- Reminding students of important deadlines
- Scheduling of research and upgrade seminars
- Submitting the thesis/dissertation for examination
- Guiding and scheduling oral defences
- Managing the resolution of supervisor-student conflicts
- Assisting and supporting students with personal difficulties impacting their progress.

7.5 Declaration of Personal Interest

Any academic staff that has a personal relationship with any student they are supervising, or have been asked to supervise, must declare it to their programme leader and the Office of RIPS. The academic staff will be relieved of all advisory/supervisory functions in matters affecting the student's

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advice and support at every stage of the student's programme of study.

7.3.1 Composition of the Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee for each MPhil/PhD student must have a minimum of three members and a maximum of five members inclusive of the Supervisor and Co-Supervisor. The Supervisor shall be the Chair of the Advisory Committee.

This Committee shall comprise:

1. One Supervisor (mandatory from UTT)
2. Co-Supervisor (optional) – one UTT or non-UTT personnel
3. UTT Advisory Committee Members (a maximum of two persons)
4. External Advisory Committee Members (optional) - a maximum of two persons.
5. It is recommended that at least one committee member be from a postgraduate programme other than the programme in which the student is registered.

7.3.2 Roles & Responsibilities of Advisory Committee

Advisory Committee members must be available to assist at every stage of the student's programme, including:

- an approved plan of study
- selection of coursework
- formulation of the research proposal
- research/study design and methodology
- revision and discussion of results
- presentation and publication of the thesis/dissertation.

It is the responsibility of the Advisory Committee to provide constructive criticism and assessment

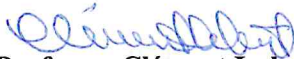
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experience with the research content.

2. A suitable Supervisor holds the rank of either Professor or Associate Professor or, in special circumstances, an Assistant Professor with noteworthy supervisory and/or research experience¹.
3. A List of Eligible Supervisors must be approved by the PRC. Supervisors must meet the criteria established by the Academic Unit with which they are affiliated
4. A suitable Supervisor shall be appointed by the Office of RIPS, based on the recommendation of the PRC, for each postgraduate research student upon entry to the programme.
5. Supervisors shall normally be full-time staff members at UTT.
6. Co-Supervisors, if required, shall be suitably qualified persons from UTT and/or some other suitable institution or industry expert with at least a Master's degree.
7. In those situations, where the research is multidisciplinary in nature, the Supervisor shall normally be from the Academic Unit in which the student is registered.
8. The Supervisor shall be responsible for providing the academic guidance and direction to the student and shall convene at least one meeting per semester with the Advisory Committee to assess the student's progress. A written annual progression report shall be sent to the Office of RIPS either in August or December, depending on month of first registration. A staff member registered for a postgraduate research degree shall not normally be appointed as a Supervisor.

¹ Supervisory experience refers to previous experience with MSc./MPhil/PhD supervision/co-supervision/advisory committees. Refereed publications would be counted as research experience.

7.3 Advisory Committee

An Advisory Committee is appointed by the Supervisor in consultation with the Student to provide

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- The dissertation should exhibit critical analysis of both the student's own work and that of other experts in the field
- Within the dissertation the work of others should be clearly distinguished from the student's original contributions and findings.

6.5 Transfer from PhD to MPhil

A student pursuing a PhD may, once approved by RIPS, transfer to MPhil status provided he or she has not yet submitted a dissertation for PhD examination. Once transferred to the MPhil programme, the thesis will then be examined against the MPhil standard.

Further guidance on the transfer process can be found in the Postgraduate Student Handbook.

7 Supervision

7.1 Supervisors

There are detailed guidelines for students registered for a postgraduate research programme and staff involved in the supervision of research students, approved by RIPS. All research students and Supervisors are expected to familiarise themselves with the Postgraduate Regulations and Handbook, which are available on the University website.

7.2 Eligibility

The following should be adhered to when appointing a Supervisor for a postgraduate research student:

1. The Supervisor should be a person who is a subject matter expert, or has significant

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An option exists whereby students enrolled in the MPhil programme may upgrade their enrolment to PhD level, provided their work meets the required standards. Upgrading from an MPhil to a PhD should normally be attempted within the second year (14 to 18 months) of study for full-time students, and within the third year (22 to 30 months) of study for part-time students of the MPhil candidature.

The upgrade from MPhil to PhD is only granted when strong evidence exists that the Candidate's research has sufficient scope and could contribute to the body of knowledge to produce a PhD dissertation. The additional work must also include new, expanded research beyond what was proposed for the MPhil thesis. The completion of the dissertation following the upgrade should normally occur within a total of three or at most five years' work when registered full-time or four, or at most eight years when registered part-time.

The Principal Supervisor along with the advisory committee members must provide their support for the Candidate to upgrade.

A student who is unsuccessful in their application to upgrade to PhD status may be considered for MPhil examination provided all other conditions are met. Further guidance on the upgrade process can be found in the Postgraduate Student Handbook.

6.4.1 Requirements of a PhD

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the award of PhD must meet the minimum standard outlined below:

- The dissertation must present a distinct contribution to the field of study. Contributions include the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts and the development of new insights

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considered on a year-by-year basis up to a maximum of three years per programme of study.

6.3 Requirements of Research Theses/Dissertations

A thesis/dissertation submitted for examination must reflect the student's own work. A signed declaration of this is required when submitting a thesis/dissertation for examination.

A postgraduate student will not be permitted to submit a thesis/dissertation for examination which has been previously submitted to another university or institution for examination.

Guidelines regarding the structure of the thesis/dissertation, word length and referencing style are provided in the "*Guidelines for the Presentation of Postgraduate Projects, Master's Theses and Doctoral Dissertations*". To minimise delays in the examination process, students are advised to adhere to the stipulated guidelines.

The submission of the thesis/dissertation for examination must be done in consultation with the thesis/dissertation Supervisor.

6.3.1 Requirements of an MPhil Thesis

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the award of MPhil must meet the minimum standards outlined below:

- The thesis must represent a contribution to the field of study which includes a critical review of existing knowledge and an account of the student's own innovative work, in which advanced techniques are successfully applied to a research problem.
- The work should take due account of previously published work in the field of study by clearly distinguishing the student's original contributions and findings from others.

6.4 Upgrade from MPhil to PhD

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6 *Enrolment and Registration*

Once in receipt of an offer letter from the University, students are required to confirm their acceptance and enrol within two to four weeks of receiving same unless required to do so sooner or later by the programme in which their study is based.

Once enrolled in a postgraduate programme, students are required to be continuously registered. Students who are not registered for more than two consecutive semesters may be required to withdraw from their programme of study. Students are to be guided by registration deadlines outlined in the Academic Calendar. Also refer to Clause 6.2 of this regulation.

Students are not permitted to be enrolled or registered in more than one degree/programme of study at the same time either at UTT or at another tertiary level institution.

6.1 *Exemption from a Portion of Study*

Exemption from part of an MPhil or PhD programme may be permitted for students who have conducted research in an equivalent level programme at UTT or another accredited tertiary level institution provided that the remaining portion of study at UTT is not less than half of the 'Period of Study' detailed in Section 3 of these Regulations. Further guidance on seeking such an exemption is provided in the Postgraduate Student Handbook.

6.2 *Leave of Absence*

Applications for Leave of Absence may be granted on the recommendation of the Supervisor. These are treated on a case-by-case basis and are granted for a maximum of one academic year per application. The application must be supported by the programme Leader and approved by the Board for Postgraduate Studies and Research. Additional requests for Leave of Absence are


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5.3.2 Assessment of Applications

Applications are reviewed by the PRC to ensure that research interests fit the Academic Unit's strategic research areas. The PRC also ensures that an appropriate Supervisor is assigned, and resources are made available for the normal duration of period of study. As part of the application, the applicant may be required to attend an interview with the prospective Supervisor and/or PRC.

The PRC can make the following recommendations:

1. Full acceptance – Applicant has satisfied all entry requirements and will be admitted providing supporting documentation is submitted in accordance with stipulated deadlines;
2. Provisional acceptance – Applicant will be granted acceptance and will be fully admitted providing the conditions outlined in the acceptance letter are met within the stipulated deadline;
3. Non-acceptance – Applicant has not satisfied the entry requirements and/or the programme is unable to support the proposed research topic.

Applicants may be required by their supervisor to complete additional courses when specialized information/skills/training is required. The additional courses will provide the research students with the underpinning knowledge required to successfully complete the postgraduate research programme of their choice.

The requirement for the completion of additional courses may be stated in the offer letter along with the course titles, parent programme and credits. The recommendations of the PRC will be recorded and communicated by the Office of RIPS to Student Registry which will then inform the applicant of the decision in writing.


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Supervisor will provide commitment, accessibility, professionalism, stimulation, guidance, respect, and consistent encouragement to the student. The Advisory Committee must be established within the first year of the student's programme. This applies to both MPhil and PhD students.

For further information and guidance on supervision, please refer to the Postgraduate Student Handbook.

5.3 Application

5.3.1 Timelines

The University accepts students into postgraduate research programmes in either January or September each year.

Persons wishing to apply to start a postgraduate research programme at UTT in September are advised to submit their applications, complete with supporting documentation, no later than March of the year of desired entry to the programme. Persons wishing to apply to start in January are advised to submit their applications, complete with supporting documentation, no later than June of the year preceding desired entry to the programme.

Applicants are advised to contact Student Registry regarding the status of their application. The University aims to provide feedback on the outcome of an application usually within six weeks.

Every student must complete their enrolment as guided within two weeks of the start of their research programme and must undertake to comply with the conditions of enrolment. An applicant for enrolment is required to produce for inspection the original documentary evidence at the time of registration.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed in writing.


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assessed, providing the widest possible range of entry routes, and take full account of the applicant's prior learning, experience and skills.

2. Admission procedures do not unfairly discriminate against any individual or group and make appropriate allowances for individual differences.
3. Entry requirements for admission to the University's programmes are clearly expressed and made widely available.
4. Although credit may be awarded for courses completed at other approved institutions, no more than 50% of the total credits required for a named award at UTT may be attained from an external institution, except for specific articulation agreements between the UTT and the other institution. Credits for courses to be transferred must have a grade of B or higher, or its equivalent.

Applicants may also be required to complete an assessment and/or an interview to determine suitability for the programme selected.

5.1 Identification of Area of Research Interest

Prior to the submission of an application form, applicants are advised to explore their desired area of research. Applicants should consult with either the Programme Leader of the discipline in which the research work is to be based or a professorial member of staff to identify a prospective research topic and Supervisor. The PRC, on receipt of the application shall recommend whether the student be allowed to enrol in a postgraduate research programme, with approval from RIPS.

Further details on how to approach the Academic Unit are provided in the Postgraduate Student Handbook or the University website.

5.2 Find a Supervisor

Every student in a postgraduate research programme must have a research Supervisor and an Advisory Committee. The Supervisor's principal role is to help students achieve their academic potential. The

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4 *Periods of Study*

The normal periods of study for research postgraduate degrees offered are shown below in Table (1).

Table (1): The normal periods of study for research postgraduate degrees

DEGREE	FULL TIME	PART TIME
Master of Philosophy	2-3 years	3-5 years
Doctor of Philosophy	3-4 years	5-8 years

Students enrolled in MPhil programmes must be registered for a minimum of two years if they are full time, or three years if they are part time before they are eligible to submit their thesis for examination, unless prior exemption from part of the programme has been recommended by the PRC and approved by the Office of RIPS.


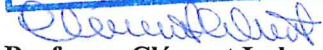
Students enrolled in PhD programmes must be registered for a minimum of three years if they are full time, or five years if they are part time before they are eligible to submit their dissertation for examination, unless prior exemption from part of the programme has been recommended by the PRC and approved by the Office of RIPS.

In cases where there are extenuating circumstances that require longer periods of study, the PRC will review and forward the student's request to the Office of RIPS for approval.

5 *Admission*

The University is committed to providing admission, progression and academic awards based solely on academic criteria. The University will ensure that:

1. Entry requirements for all programmes enable each applicant's capabilities to be fully

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programmes. Programmes also produce a Programme Handbook which outlines the specific requirements for relevant research degrees and can be sourced online.

All postgraduate research degrees include a compulsory taught component. Detailed information on individual programme requirements, including course requirements, options and assessment methods, is set out in the Programme Handbook.

3.1 Minimum Entry Requirements

3.1.1 Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

The minimum standard for entry into the MPhil programme is:

- A Taught Master’s degree from an accredited university or
- A Bachelor’s degree from an accredited university with minimum GPA of 2.7 on a 4.0 scale or
- Other professional qualifications and industrial or business experience deemed to be suitable by the PRC or designate.

In this document PRC means Committee members or one nominated to act on behalf of the Committee.

3.1.2 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

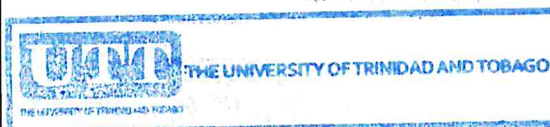
The minimum standard for entry into the PhD programme is:

- A Research Master’s degree from an accredited university or
- Taught Master’s Degree from an approved university with a “B” average or equivalent GPA with relevant research components.

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2 Postgraduate Research Degrees Offered

The Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees are research degrees which typically involve independent study, directed by a supervisor, and the production of a thesis/dissertation. A minimum of five courses are required to complement the research. There must be an oral defence of the thesis/dissertation.

2.1 Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

The Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree is awarded on completion of a thesis, based on innovative work, in which advanced techniques are successfully applied to a research problem.

2.2 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is awarded on completion of a Dissertation, based on original research, leading to a new contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of study.

3 Entry Requirements

The entry requirements for each programme of study are set by the programme and are published on the University website. Applications are considered on a case-by-case basis, as meeting the entry requirements does not automatically guarantee an offer of admission.

There are published policies, regulations and guidelines available on the University website that should be brought to the immediate attention of students. The content of these reference documents is designed to guide students throughout the life of their programme at UTT. By accepting an offer to engage in a programme of study at UTT, the student agrees to abide by the University's policies, regulations and guidelines. Some of these apply to all programmes whereas some are specific to postgraduate research

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14. NDA – Non-Disclosure Agreement.

1 **Introduction**

These Academic Regulations and Procedures for postgraduate research programmes are a coordinated set of parameters to enable The University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) to develop, in a principled and consistent way, the educational provisions and learning experience it offers to students in its postgraduate research programmes - MPhil and PhD.

They are intended to ensure that rigorous academic standards are maintained, quality is enhanced, and the University's provision for postgraduate research programmes is able to evolve in a proactive way that meets the University's mission and the changing needs of its students, employers, the professions and the wider community that it serves.

Central to Academic Standards are the interests of the students and their success. In order to succeed, students need access to high-quality learning, teaching, and research activities that are up-to-date, informed by current thinking in the discipline through the scholarship of staff, and meet the requirements of industry, relevant professional bodies and the international research community.

Thus, students must be able to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skill through assessments that are challenging, rigorous, fair, transparent and appropriately aligned to the learning undertaken and the intended outcomes of that learning. Students are expected to develop skills in planning and carrying out research activities in a focused and productive manner.

Postgraduate students should be able to gauge their learning needs and achievements, develop independence in learning and judgment, and make informed choices in planning their studies and their future. The provision of effective learning support is also essential to ensure that their learning needs are addressed and that they all have an equal opportunity to succeed.

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Glossary

There are a few key terms and abbreviations used throughout this document, and it is important to have a consistent interpretation of what the terms mean. The list below is not meant to be exhaustive but provides the basis for allowing other terms to be defined as they are introduced within the Postgraduate General Regulations.

Key Terms and Abbreviations

1. RIPS – Research, Impact and Postgraduate Studies
2. AVP-RIPS – Assistant Vice President, Research, Impact and Postgraduate Studies;
3. VP-RASA – Vice President, Research and Student Affairs
4. MPhil – The Master of Philosophy;
5. PhD – The Doctor of Philosophy;
6. GPA – Grade Point Average and is usually calculated using a scale of 0 to 4;
7. Course – A self-contained unit of student learning with clearly defined aims, learning outcomes, content, learning and teaching strategies and assessment strategies;
8. PRC – Programme Research Committee, is an academic programme level committee established by the Academic Governance Framework;
9. UTTIRB – The UTT Institutional Review Board;
10. Pre-requisite course – Pre-requisite course – a course that must be successfully completed as a requirement before another course or courses can be taken;
11. Programme – refers to a coherent period of study with overall aims and learning outcomes that lead to a named award or “programme” not to be confused with an academic unit or “programme”;
12. Qualification – a named award at a defined level gained through the successful completion of a specified programme;
13. AAC – Academic Appeals Committee;

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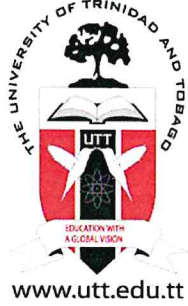
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