

**POLICIES REGARDING DESIGN AND CONDUCT OF THE  
DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES**

**AHMEDABAD UNIVERSITY**

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## **1. Introduction**

Ahmedabad University offers a doctoral programme in the following Schools of the University: Amrut Mody School of Management

School of Arts and Sciences

School of Engineering & Applied Science

The University also encourages pursuit of doctoral research that cuts across disciplines of multiple schools.

## **2. Objective**

The doctoral programme at Ahmedabad University is designed to provide both research capabilities and domain knowledge to doctoral candidates in various subjects. The programme aims to build competent academicians, researchers, teachers and practitioners in various fields. The emphasis is on:

- Admitting candidates committed to research
- Offering a curriculum with an appropriate balance of theory and practice
- Enabling excellence in research by emphasizing a strong analytical approach
- Inculcating a spirit of inquiry
- Preparing candidates for a career in academia

## **3. Eligibility Criteria**

The candidate must have passed the Master's Degree examination in Arts, Science, Commerce, Technology, Engineering or Management with a minimum of fifty five per cent marks or an equivalent grade in a point scale where the grading system is followed.

The University offers the PhD programme through its School of Engineering and Applied Science, School of Arts and Sciences and Amrut Mody School of Management.

There is a provision for candidates to enroll for the doctoral programme after a four year Bachelor's degree provided the candidate has passed the Bachelor's degree examination with at least sixty percent marks or an equivalent grade in a point scale where the grading system is followed. Such students will be admitted to the PhD programme first as pre-doctoral candidates and only upon completion of the requirements, they will be treated as doctoral candidates.

Candidates can also register for part-time doctoral programme. However, the course requirements will remain the same as for full time students. There is no provision of online classes for doctoral candidates and the course credits will have to be completed by attending the classes in person.

## **4. Procedure for Admission**

Shortlisted candidates will be called for a written test and interview\*. Admission to the PhD programme would be based on the past academic record, research aptitude, work experience and performance in the test and interview.

Admissions in each programme will be made on approval by the Dean of the School on the recommendations of the duly constituted admissions committee. The admissions committee will consist of at least three faculty members and will be constituted by the Dean of the School in consultation with the Programme Chair.

\*[School of Engineering & Applied Science will conduct a written test and interview; however applicants with a valid GATE/NET score will be exempted from the written test.

School of Arts and Sciences will conduct a written test and interview; however, applicants with high enough rank/scores on CSIR-UGC NET/DBT/ICMR/DST/JEST/GATE/GRE subject test or any other well recognised test, as decided by each discipline, will be exempted from the written test.

For admission in Amrut Mody School of Management, there will be no written test but the applicant should have appeared for any of the given aptitude tests and the score should be valid as per CAT/GATE/GMAT/GRE/JRF/UGC-NET/JEST or any other well recognized test, as decided by the School on a case by case basis. The validity of the examination scores will be considered as prescribed by the respective examination bodies.]

### **5. Stages in the PhD Programme**

A student who has registered in the programme but whose research proposal has still not been accepted will be designated as a 'Doctoral Student' After the acceptance of the research proposal, the designation will be changed to 'Doctoral Candidate'.

### **6. Mentor**

As soon as the student joins the programme, a faculty mentor will be appointed by the Dean of the School in consultation with the Programme Chair, student and the intended faculty mentor. The mentor will be allotted keeping in view the interest of the student. The mentor will help the candidate select courses for study, suggest additional course requirements to broaden the area of research and provide guidance in preparing for the comprehensive examination.

### **7. Coursework**

The minimum course work for doctoral studies at Ahmedabad University shall be as follows:

- For students who have completed a Master's degree: A total of 36 credits of course work has to be completed. Of these, 27 credits would be in the area of specialization and electives, and 3 credits each on Research Methods, Statistics, and Written Communication (or Technical Writing).
- For students who have completed a four year Bachelors programme: A total of 60 course credits have to be completed. Of these 60 credits, 3 credits each would be on Research Methods, Statistics and Written Communication (or Technical Writing), and the rest in the area of specialization and electives. The student will be admitted to the PhD programme first as a pre-doctoral candidate and then upon completion of the pre-doctoral requirements, he/she will be registered as a doctoral student. The structure of the programme will be as follows:
  - Students will complete pre-doctoral requirements (24 course credits) + PhD requirements (36 course credits). The pre-doctoral requirements may be met over one year. Upon the completion of pre- doctoral requirement, the student will be registered as a doctoral student.
- If the student is unable to pass all courses (subject to the specified maximum time limit from the time of joining), or fails to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 2.7/4.0 she/he will have to leave the programme.
- The time limits for completion of coursework for full time students are:
  - 2.5 years for students who have to complete 36 credits of coursework.

- 3.5 years for students who have to complete 60 credits of coursework.
- The time limits for completion of coursework for part-time students are:
  - 3.5 years for students who have to complete 36 credits of coursework.
  - 4.5 years for students who have to complete 60 credits of coursework.
- Till the completion of their course work requirement, full time students have to register for a minimum of 9 course credits in a semester. Registering for more than 15 credits of course work in a semester will require the permission of the School Dean.
- To earn course credits, doctoral students have to register for courses numbered 500 or higher.
- 25% of the credits can be taken through online courses. The guidelines for credit transfer through online courses is available on AURIS under the uploaded documents of the Office of the Academic Registrar.

### **8. Comprehensive Examination**

All doctoral students will have to pass a comprehensive examination in the broad area of their research interest. The comprehensive examination will be normally taken within 6 months of completion of the coursework. However, for a well-prepared doctoral student the comprehensive examination can be taken after completion of 30 credits of course work with consultation of the Dean of the School and faculty mentor.

The comprehensive examination will be conducted by a faculty committee consisting of at least three faculty members as appointed by the Dean of the School. The nature of the comprehensive examination (written and/or oral) will be decided by the School.

The result of the comprehensive examination will be a pass or fail grade.

Students may receive a Master's degree upon successful completion of the course work and the comprehensive examination. For this, they will have to complete a dissertation requirement by working on an allotted topic for at least a semester.

In case a candidate fails the comprehensive examination, she/he may take the examination again within a period of 3 months. If the candidate fails in the second attempt also, then she/he will have to leave the programme. Such candidates will be given a certificate.

For full time students entering with a Master's degree, the comprehensive exam should be cleared within six registered semesters (excluding summer term) of admission. For full time students entering with a Bachelor's degree, the comprehensive exam should be cleared within eight registered semesters (excluding summer term) of admission.

Part-time students entering with a Master's degree, should clear the comprehensive exam within eight registered semesters (excluding summer term ) of admission. Part-time students entering with a four year Bachelors degree should clear the comprehensive exam within ten registered semesters (excluding summer term) of admission.

### **9. Allotment of Dissertation Supervisor**

After passing the Comprehensive exam, the student will select a dissertation supervisor based on mutual discussion with the faculty. It should be noted that

- any faculty of the rank of Assistant Professor and above can be a dissertation supervisor. The faculty member should have a PhD degree.
- a faculty member shall not have, at any given point of time, more than four doctoral candidates.

## **10. Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC)**

Within 3 months of the passing of the Comprehensive Exam, the DAC will be constituted. The remaining course credits, if any, can be taken in subsequent semesters. The doctoral student in consultation with the proposed PhD supervisor will send the suggested names of the DAC members to the Dean of the School. If the Dean is in agreement, then the names will be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School for approval by the Graduate Faculty Committee (GFC). The committee will be appointed by the GFC based on the students' interest and recommendation of the School.

The DAC shall consist of:

- 1) PhD supervisor (Chairman)
- 2) Two faculty members of Ahmedabad University, who are experts in the subject area of the dissertation.
- 3) If needed, the DAC may include a co-supervisor or another member from within or outside the university to bring specific expertise in the committee.
- 4) For part-time candidates who are doing part of their research work in their parent organization, the DAC in addition will include a co-supervisor, who would be from his/her organization.

## **11. Research Proposal**

Once the DAC has been formed, the candidate will prepare a research proposal under the guidance of the dissertation supervisor. The research proposal would elaborate the genesis of the study and all possible details of the research. The research proposal will then be presented to the DAC and the School faculty. The research proposal should be presented to the DAC within six months of clearing the comprehensive examination. The DAC may ask the candidate to revise and resubmit the research proposal after incorporating all the suggestions and comments given by them, and if necessary, give a revised presentation to the DAC.

Once the DAC approves the research proposal the status of the student will be changed from "Doctoral Student" to registered "Doctoral Candidate".

A copy of the DAC approval and approved Research proposal will then be submitted to the Office of the Graduate School.

## **12. Research Progress Reports and Seminars**

Every six months, the registered doctoral candidate will have to submit a progress report of his/her research work and make a presentation to the DAC. All faculty and students may attend the presentation.

The DAC would be responsible for monitoring the progress of the student. A copy of the periodic progress report will also be submitted to the Office of the Graduate School by the dissertation supervisor.

In case the progress of the student is unsatisfactory, the DAC shall record the reasons for the same and suggest corrective measures. If the student fails to implement these corrective measures, the Dissertation Advisory Committee may recommend suspension of University fellowship/assistantship or cancellation of registration from the programme.

The student can make an appeal against the DAC recommendations to the School Dean. The

decision of the School Dean will be further reviewed on student appeal by a three member committee. This committee would include the Senior Dean (Academic), Dean, Graduate School and Research, and a Professor (other than the dissertation supervisor) from the School of the student. The decision of this committee would be final.

The student will have up to 10 years (including any academic leave) from the date of joining to complete all academic requirements related to the doctoral programme.

### **13. Submission of Synopsis and Dissertation**

Prior to submission of the dissertation, the student shall make a presentation in the School that will be open to all faculty members and research students, for getting feedback and comments, which may be suitably incorporated into the draft dissertation under the advice of the supervisor.

Candidates can submit the synopsis and dissertation any time after the completion of two years from the date of registration, but in no case later than seven years (including any academic leave) from the date of registration. The registration date is the date on which the DAC approves the research proposal.

Some Schools may require doctoral candidates to publish at least two research papers in refereed journals/conferences before the submission of the dissertation and provide the acceptance letters/ reprints.

The PhD. dissertation and synopsis will be first evaluated by the DAC who may provide suggestions for revision. After the approval by DAC, the candidate will submit the following documents to the Dean of Graduate School through the Programme Chair:

- PhD. synopsis (3 printed copies and a pdf file)
- PhD. dissertation (3 printed copies and a pdf file)
- a report regarding the check for plagiarism issued by the University Library using some standard software.

The dissertation should contain a certificate of completion signed by all members of the DAC. The dissertation supervisor will also suggest to the Dean of Graduate School a list of at least 8 national and international experts who could serve as external examiners of the dissertation.

### **14. Evaluation of Dissertation**

From the suggested list of external examiners, the Dean of Graduate School will select two examiners and send them the synopsis to obtain their consent for examining the dissertation. In case, one or both do not agree then additional names from the list will be selected till two examiners have given their consent. The names of the selected examiners will be kept confidential.

- Once the examiners have given their consent, the dissertation will be sent to the two examiners. They will be requested to send their comments within 6 weeks. The examiners may recommend:
  - (a) acceptance of the dissertation in the present form
  - (b) reevaluation by external examiner after incorporation of major changes
  - (c) incorporation of minor changes to the satisfaction of the Dissertation Examination Committee
  - (d) rejection of the dissertation.

- If both the external examiners submit a negative report indicating rejection of the dissertation, he/she shall not be eligible for the Ph.D. degree. A work that has been rejected may be resubmitted after revision within two years of the receipt of the rejection letter and subject to the payment of prescribed fee.
- If one of the two external examiners gives a positive and another gives a negative report then a third external examiner will be appointed by the Dean of Graduate School. The recommendation of the third external examiner will be final.
- Based on the comments and evaluation received from the external examiners the process will progress to dissertation examination stage or will be sent back to the student and DAC for additional work.
- After unconditionally positive reports from majority of the examiners have been received, the dissertation examination of the candidate will be conducted.

### **15. Conduct of Dissertation Examination and Completion**

The dissertation examination will be conducted by the Dissertation Examination Committee (DEC). The DEC will be formed by the Dean of Graduate School and will comprise of the following members:

- 1) Chair - nominee of GFC from amongst the University faculty.
- 2) At least one of the external examiners –present either in person or online
- 3) All members of the DAC

The dissertation examination will be open to the University community. Public notice within the University will be given at least one week before the date of the examination. The candidate will make a presentation of his/her research to the DEC and the audience. After the examination, the DEC will deliberate and come with a decision on the dissertation examination which will be communicated to the Graduate School Office.

If the decision is to pass the candidate with no revisions, then the Dean of the Graduate School will send to the student a Certificate of Completion and Requirements for Final Submission of Dissertation.

If the decision is to pass the student with revisions, the Dean of Graduate School will provide the student a letter stating the decision and listing the comments of the DEC on the revisions required and the person who will verify that the revisions have been incorporated in the dissertation(a copy of the letter will also be sent to the Chair of DEC).

Once the Chair of DEC sends to the Dean of Graduate School, the revised version of the dissertation and a Certificate of Verification that the revisions have been incorporated, the Office of the Dean of Graduate School will either organize another examination (if that has been recommended by DEC) or send the student a Certificate of Completion and

Requirements for Final Submission of Dissertation.

Requirements of Final Submission of Dissertation: Three hardbound copies and a PDF file of the soft copy of the dissertation should be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School

After the final submission of dissertation is completed, the dissertation process would be deemed to be complete and the candidate's name will be recommended by the Dean of the Graduate School to the Academic Council and Board of Governors for their approval so that the degree can be awarded in the following convocation. The University shall issue a provisional certificate to the candidate stating that the PhD degree has been awarded in accordance with the regulations of the UGC.

#### **16. Depository with UGC**

Following the successful completion of the evaluation process and announcement of the award of PhD, the University shall submit a soft copy of the PhD dissertation to UGC within a period of 30 days, for hosting the same in INFLIBNET, to make it accessible to all Institutions/ Universities.

#### **17. Intellectual Property**

Any patents or patentable materials that emerge from the research associated with a PhD degree will be subject to the IP policy of the University. For part time candidates working on the projects related to their organization an IP policy has to be mutually agreed upon prior to the start of the PhD research work.

#### **18. Withdrawal from the Programme and Validity of Candidacy**

A candidate who drops out of the doctoral programme because of an exigency can maintain his candidacy valid for one year subject to prior approval of Academic Council/Vice-Chancellor. The candidate must submit an application stating the reasons for such a break. The application must be recommended by the PhD supervisor or mentor and forwarded by the Dean of the School. The said candidate will be readmitted if she/he pays the appropriate fees at the end of the period of absence.

#### **19. Financial Support**

Ahmedabad University awards full tuition fee waiver and financial support to full time doctoral students. The financial support could be either in the form of a University Fellowship, University Assistantship or fellowship from sponsored projects. Presently, the University Assistantship is INR 40,000 plus tuition fee waiver and University Fellowship is INR 50,000 plus tuition fee waiver.

The number of University Fellowships/Assistantships will be decided annually. The following criteria are laid out for award of University fellowships/assistantships:

- The University Fellowship /Assistantship will require supporting the teaching efforts at the University (this can be at any School or Centre but preferably at the School where the student is being enrolled) for 20 hours per week. The student will be governed by the rules and regulations governing teaching assistantships.

- A student cannot simultaneously hold two forms of financial support: University supported and external funding. If funding opportunities are available, then doctoral students in different Schools must apply for external funding once they are admitted to the programme.
- University Fellowship/Assistantship will be awarded to a student for a maximum period of four years subject to satisfactory academic performance. The student would be required to maintain a minimum GPA of 3.25 for renewal of the fellowship/assistantship each year.
- Beyond four years, the Schools may support through part- time teaching, research grant funds etc.
- If a student takes leave from the programme, the assistantship/fellowship will be suspended (or discontinued, as may be decided). The student will have to pay the required fee for maintenance of student status.

## **20. Amendments**

Ahmedabad University reserves its rights to change, amend any of the provisions of this document. Such changes will be recommended by the Graduate Faculty Committee and approved by the Academic Council.