REGULATIONS GOVERNING RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

1. Postgraduate Studies Committee

The Postgraduate Studies Committee of the Senate of the University (hereinafter "the Committee") shall administer and manage all aspects of the progress of all candidatures as required in these Regulations.

2. General Conditions

2.1 The degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) will be awarded by the University when a candidate has successfully completed an approved programme of supervised research, has presented a written thesis satisfying the requirements specified for that award, has successfully defended this thesis in the presence of the examiners, and has satisfied other requirements as stipulated by the University authorities.

2.2 Normally the research work will be based in the University, but exceptionally the Committee may consider and, if satisfied, approve alternative arrangements.

3. Admission of Students

3.1 An applicant for admission to candidature for the degree of MPhil should normally:

(a) hold a relevant bachelor's degree with first or second class honours or at an equivalent standard awarded by a tertiary education institution recognised for this purpose by the University; or

(b) have obtained an equivalent qualification; or

(c) have provided satisfactory evidence of academic and professional attainment.

3.2 An applicant for admission to candidature for the degree of PhD should normally:

(a) hold a master's degree awarded by a tertiary education institution recognised for this purpose by the University; or

(b) hold a relevant bachelor's degree with first or second class honours or at an equivalent standard, and have registered in a programme of study for a master's degree at a recognised tertiary education institution for at least one year and have evidence of research achievement; or

(c) hold a bachelor's degree with first class honours or an equivalent qualification at a recognised tertiary education institution, and have evidence of substantial research achievement;[(Note)] or

(d) have obtained an equivalent qualification of (a) or (b) above; or

(e) have provided satisfactory evidence of academic and professional attainment.

3.3 In addition to the above, an applicant whose degree is not from a tertiary institution where English is used as the medium of instruction (MOI) for all courses for the degree

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Note: An admisison requirement that is adopted from the 2026 intake.

mentioned should obtain a minimum score of 79 (internet-based test) in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), or a band score of 6.5 or above in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or an equivalent score in a recognised test, or an equivalent qualification to prove his/her language proficiency which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.(Note) Applicants are required to fulfil additional requirements, if any, set by the programmes to which they apply for admission.

3.4 The details of the applicant, the area of study and topic of the applicant's programme, the proposed objectives of the investigation, its relationship to previous work in the same field, and the methods of approach must in all cases be outlined in the application. These will be presented on a standard proforma provided by the Committee.

3.5 The language for writing a thesis shall be determined at the time of admission. A thesis should be written in English except for candidates in the Department of Chinese or those who are otherwise approved to write their theses in Chinese or another language. An applicant who intends to write his/her thesis in a language other than English shall indicate such in the application form for admission for consideration of the relevant Department/Unit[i]. Approval shall be given by the Head of Department/Unit[i] concerned with inputs from relevant staff members who have expertise in the applicant's proposed research on the basis that the applicant can demonstrate a need to use Chinese or a language other than English to write his/her thesis, and the decision will be indicated to the Faculty/School-level Committee [ii] concerned. Any subsequent change of the language of thesis will require consultation and agreement of the Head of Department/Unit[i], the Supervisor and the student.

3.6 An applicant will not be prejudiced against during the admission process due to his/her choice of language for thesis writing, except that the admitting Department/Unit[i] must consider fully its ability to supervise and examine that thesis in the proposed language.

3.7 The admission of a student to the University is based on academic suitability and potential for a programme. There should be no discrimination on the grounds of sex, age, race, religion, ethnic origin or physical disability.

3.8 Physically handicapped applicants are assessed in accordance with the same admission criteria. It is the intention of the University to provide aid and support to students with disabilities as far as possible. Applicants are therefore invited to contact the School of Graduate Studies (hereinafter "GS") for information concerning existing facilities for disabled persons at the University. Newly admitted students are also encouraged to inform the University of their needs so that timely assistance may be provided.

4. Registration

4.1 An applicant who is successful shall be allowed to register provisionally for the degree of MPhil/PhD as either:

(a) a full-time candidate; or

(b) a part-time candidate.

Note: For IELTS and TOEFL qualifications for admission to MPhil/PhD programmes, the University only accepts results of tests that are conducted at a test centre and within the validity period, viz. two years, from the time of submission of an admission application for the specific intake cohort.

He/She is required to register in person with the GS on a specified date and is considered to have been admitted on the date of his/her first registration. Thereafter, he/she should present himself/herself for registration on a specified date before commencement of studies.

4.2 The Supervisor(s) will, via the Department/Unit[i] and the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned, inform the Committee whether the thesis will be written in Chinese or English. At the same time, the Supervisor(s) will be required to state that suitable examiners are available.

4.3 For applicants to be admitted into full-time or part-time candidature, they must satisfy the Supervisor(s) of their ability to complete the work in the prescribed period.

4.4 A candidate shall be attached to a Department/Unit[i] of the University.

4.5 Arrangements for registration and re-registration shall be prescribed by the Dean of GS.

4.6 A student who wishes to continue his/her study at the University but fails to pay the prescribed fees after a lapse of ten days or fails to register before the last day for registration without prior approval of the Dean of GS is considered as having withdrawn from studies at the University.

4.7 A student who for special reasons seeks permission for deferment of his/her registration may apply in writing to the Dean of GS at least one week before the specified date for registration. A fee for late registration will be charged and the student is required to register by the deferred registration date.

4.8 A student who wishes to change from full-time to part-time or *vice versa* may apply in writing providing justifications. Such application should be endorsed by his/her Supervisor(s) and the Head of Department/Unit[i], recommended by the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned and approved by the Committee. If approved, the period of study of the student will be shortened or extended on a *pro rata* basis.

4.9 A full-time student of the University is not allowed to pursue simultaneously any programme at another tertiary institution without the prior permission of the Committee. A student in breach of this regulation is subject to having his/her studies at the University discontinued.

4.10 A full-time student is normally not allowed to take up any full-time employment, paid or unpaid, during his/her period of study.

5. Period of Study

5.1 The normal duration expected for the completion of an approved programme of research leading to the degree of MPhil or PhD is as follows:

Degree	Study Mode	Normal Period	
MPhil	Full-time	2 years	
	Part-time	3 years	
PhD	Full-time	3 years	(with a relevant master's degree)
		4 years	(without a relevant master's degree)
	Part-time	5 years	(with a relevant master's degree)
		6 years	(without a relevant master's degree)

5.2 Everyone associated with research degrees should endeavour to see that students complete their degrees within these time frames.

5.3 Subject to the discretion of the Committee, the minimum period of research is as follows:

Degree	Study Mode	Minimum Period
MPhil	Full-time	18 months
	Part-time	30 months
PhD	Full-time	30 months
	Part-time	42 months

5.4 Exceptionally, the period of registered research may be extended to a maximum period as specified below:

Degree	Study Mode	Maximum Period
MPhil	Full-time	36 months
	Part-time	48 months
PhD	Full-time	60 months (with a relevant master's degree)
		72 months (without a relevant master's degree)
	Part-time	84 months (with a relevant master's degree)
		96 months (without a relevant master's degree)

5.5 Request for extension beyond the normal period of research has to be made by the student, endorsed by his/her Supervisor(s), the Head of Department/Unit[i] and the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned, and approved by the Committee.

5.6 Where application is made for permission to extend the period within which the candidate may submit for examination, brief details of the candidate's progress shall be presented, together with reasons for the delay in completing the programme and the expected date of completion.

5.7 Where the Committee agrees to the extension, it may set a limit to the period of research.

5.8 Students who continue study beyond the normal period of study shall pay an extension fee equivalent to one-half of the amount of normal tuition fee for the period concerned.(Note) The period of extension shall be three or more months and the extension fee is to be paid on a pro-rata basis.

5.9 If a candidate has undertaken part of a research programme as a registered candidate for a research degree in a university or such other recognised institution of higher education, it may be possible for this effort to be given some credit, providing it is relevant to the University programme. In the event that some of this research has been published, the Committee will decide what can be used in the University programme.

5.10 In such cases (Regulation 5.9 above), an application should be made by the candidate, explaining what work has been done and explaining its relevance to the University programme. The maximum credit to be given to such work, in the event such application has been approved, shall not exceed 50% of the normal period of research.

Note: The normal tuition rate refers to the prevailing UGC tuition rate for full-time students and the standard self-financed tuition rate for part-time students for calculation of extension fee.

6. Confirmation of Candidature

6.1 A candidate is regarded as on provisional candidature for the degree of MPhil/PhD during the initial period of studies.

6.2 Within the initial 6 to 10 months for full-time candidates and 9 to 15 months for part-time candidates, a candidate must prepare an outline paper for presentation at a topic-defence seminar before an Assessment/Qualifying Panel[#] and submit a report on research progress to his/her Supervisor(s).

[#]An Assessment/Qualifying Panel shall be formed within the initial 6 months for a full-time candidate (or the initial 9 months for a part-time candidate) to evaluate and make recommendation on the candidate's progress, and its formation should be determined by the candidate's Department/Unit[i] as endorsed by the Head of Department/Unit[i] and approved by the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned. The composition of the Panel shall consist of a Panel Chairman and three to four Panel members, as detailed below:

(a) A Panel Chairman who should not be the Supervisor of the candidate concerned and should be eligible to serve as a research postgraduate (RPg) supervisor, and for PhD candidates, is preferably a senior faculty member at the Associate Professor rank or above (i.e. Associate Professor of research/tenure track but not teaching track).

(b) All Supervisors (both the Chief Supervisor and the Co-supervisor(s)) and at least one independent faculty member, eligible to serve as a RPg supervisor, from the Department/Unit[i] of the candidate concerned.

6.3 The Supervisor(s) will submit to the Head of Department/Unit[i] an assessment report on the candidate together with the progress report from the candidate. In the assessment report, the Supervisor(s) shall give comments in various aspects of studies of the candidate, and on the basis of the recommendation of the Assessment Panel/Qualifying Panel on the candidate, make one of the recommendations listed below:

(a) the candidature be confirmed; or

(b) the candidate shall remain on provisional candidature for an extended period as described in Regulation 6.4 below; or

(c) the candidate shall transfer from PhD to MPhil candidature, or transfer from MPhil to PhD candidature, provided that the requirements concerning transfer of candidature set out in Regulation 7 below are met; or

(d) the candidature be terminated.

6.4 In case (b) is recommended, the Supervisor(s) will recommend the end date of the extended period giving explanations on the determination of the end date, and specify conditions that the candidate has to meet in order to have his/her candidature confirmed by the end of the extended period. The end date of the extended period shall be within 14 months from the date of commencement of studies of a full-time MPhil and 16 months for a PhD candidate (21 months and 26 months for a part-time MPhil and PhD candidate respectively). The Head of Department/Unit[i] concerned shall give his/her comments on the case apart from indicating his/her endorsement or otherwise of the recommendation in the assessment report.

6.5 The assessment report together with the progress report shall be submitted to the Committee as endorsed by the Head of Department/Unit[i] and the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned. The Committee will determine that

(a) the candidature be confirmed; or

(b) the candidate shall remain on provisional candidature for an extended period as described in Regulation 6.6 below; or

(c) the candidate shall transfer from PhD to MPhil candidature, or transfer from MPhil to PhD candidature, provided that the requirements concerning transfer of candidature set out in Regulation 7 below are met; or

(d) termination of candidature be recommended for approval of the Senate.

6.6 In case of (b), the Committee shall decide on the end date of the extended period and a list of requirements the candidate will need to fulfil by the end of the extended period.

6.7 Within the extended period, in addition to fulfilling the list of requirements specified as referred to in Regulation 6.6 above, the candidate must complete the procedures for confirmation of candidature, i.e. prepare an outline paper for presentation at a topic-defence seminar before the Assessment/Qualifying Panel[#] and submit a report on research progress to his/her Supervisor(s) for reassessment of candidature.

[#]The Assessment/Qualifying Panel, formed in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulations 6.2 above, is to evaluate and make recommendation on the candidate's progress.

6.8 Upon receiving the progress report from the candidate, the Supervisor(s), in consultation with the Head of Department/Unit[i], shall assess the candidate and write a report with reference to the recommendation of the Assessment Panel/Qualifying Panel on the candidate, in which comments on the candidate during the extended period are given and one of the following recommendations, as endorsed by the Head of Department/Unit[i] and the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned, is made for consideration by the Committee:

(a) the candidature be confirmed; or

(b) the candidate shall transfer from PhD to MPhil candidature, where applicable; or

(c) termination of candidature be recommended for approval of the Senate.

7. Transfer of Candidature

7.1 A student may transfer from the candidature of PhD to MPhil provided that such a transfer takes place before the commencement of his/her third year of study (for a full-time student) or his/her fourth year of study (for a part-time student). The student shall submit an application in writing, together with a research proposal for MPhil study, at least 3 months (summer vacation period not to be included) prior to the intended date of transfer.

7.2 A student may transfer from MPhil to PhD candidature only if his/her application for such transfer has been approved. The application can be approved provided that

(a) the student meets the admission requirements of PhD;

(b) his/her capacity is of a standard higher than normal MPhil students;

(c) the proposed PhD research is a higher level of work than that of MPhil; and

(d) such transfer takes place about 12 months (for a full-time student) or 18 months (for a part-time student) before the expiry of the normal period of study.

7.3 The MPhil student shall submit an application in writing, together with a research proposal for PhD study, by the eighth month (for a full-time student) or the twelfth month (for a part-time student) from his/her commencement of MPhil study. He/she is required to present in a seminar before the Assessment/Qualifying Panel[#] the proposed PhD research proposal and at the same time defends his/her MPhil topic. The seminar shall take place before the meeting of the Department Board/relevant Board of the Unit[i] referred to in Regulation 7.4 below.

[#]The Assessment/Qualifying Panel, formed in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulations 6.2 above, is to evaluate and make recommendation on the student's progress.

7.4 An application for transfer of candidature should be endorsed by the Supervisor(s) of the student, together with the recommendation of the Assessment/Qualifying Panel should be deliberated and recommended by the Department Board/relevant Board of the Unit[i] and the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned, and approved by the Committee.

7.5 A transfer student shall date the period of study from the date of commencement of his/her study of the original programme.

7.6 A student whose PhD candidature has been confirmed and is approved to transfer from the candidature of PhD to MPhil is not required to go through the procedures for confirmation of MPhil candidature after the transfer.

7.7 A student approved to transfer from the candidature of MPhil to PhD shall complete within one year after the transfer the procedures for confirmation of PhD candidature as stipulated in Regulation 6 above except that the student is not required to present the PhD research topic in a seminar again.

8. Fees

8.1 A student shall be required to pay such fees as may be determined by the University from time to time.

8.2 Tuition fees are payable in two equal instalments before the start of the first and second terms of an academic year.

9. Leave of Absence

9.1 A candidate who wishes to be absent from his/her studies for three weeks or more must apply in writing to the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned through his/her Supervisor(s) and Head of Department/Unit[i] for leave of absence, if possible, one month

before the intended commencement date of leave. The application approved by the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned should be reported to the Committee.

9.2 Leave of absence may be granted for a maximum period of 12 months in aggregate.

9.3 Any periods of leave of absence taken shall not be included as part of the period of study.

9.4 Students approved to take leave of absence during part of the study period within a term of an academic year shall pay the full amount of tuition fee for the term. In the case of a student being given approval to take leave of absence for the whole term of an academic year, no tuition fee needs to be paid for the term concerned.

10. Withdrawal

10.1 A student who wishes to leave the University before graduation must seek official withdrawal from the University. The student should complete and submit an application form obtainable from the GS.

10.2 Approval will be granted by the Dean of GS only after proper clearance by relevant units.

10.3 A student who has been absent without leave for a period exceeding 30 calendar days in the aggregate in any 6–month interval after commencement of studies will be considered as having unofficially withdrawn from studies at the University.

11. Termination of Candidature

11.1 The Senate may, on the recommendation of the Committee, terminate a candidature at any time on the grounds of the candidate's unsatisfactory performance or failure to comply with these Regulations. A student with candidature terminated on academic ground is normally not allowed to be admitted to any programme of the University.

11.2 The student whose studies have been discontinued may appeal in writing against the decision within 10 days of being informed of the decision, enclosing all the necessary supporting documents. The Discontinuation Appeals Panel will consider the case. It is empowered by the Senate to decide on the case. The decision of the Panel will be final.

12. Supervision and Progress

12.1 At the time of admission, the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned in consultation with the Head of the relevant Department/Unit[i] shall make a recommendation to the Committee for the appointment of a full-time member of the academic staff as the Supervisor of the candidate.

12.2 At least one Co-supervisor in addition to a Chief Supervisor should be appointed for a PhD student. The Chief Supervisor and Co-supervisor of a PhD student should be a full-time academic staff member on a research-track/tenure-track appointment who possesses a relevant PhD degree and (a) holds an Associate Professor rank or above, or (b) holds an Assistant Professor rank but with a record of active research in the relevant field.

12.3 It is preferable to appoint at least one Co-supervisor in addition to a Chief Supervisor for an MPhil student. The Supervisor of an MPhil student should be a full-time academic

staff member holding an Assistant Professor or equivalent rank or above, and in addition should either

(a) have held a relevant PhD degree or equivalent for at least one year; or

(b) have held a relevant master's degree by research (e.g. MPhil) for at least three years, and have
    (i) successfully supervised or co-supervised an MPhil thesis or equivalent; or
    (ii) successfully supervised an MPhil thesis or equivalent at another institution.

12.4 A full-time junior academic staff member who possesses a relevant PhD degree and holds a working title of Research Assistant Professor/Assistant Professor with a record of active research in the relevant field can exceptionally be appointed as a Chief Supervisor of a PhD or an MPhil student, on condition that at least one other academic staff member meeting the appointment criteria stipulated in Regulations 12.2 and 12.3 above be appointed as a Co-supervisor. The junior academic staff member can also be appointed as a Co-supervisor of a PhD or an MPhil student.

12.5 A full-time academic staff member who does not meet the above conditions (Regulations 12.2 to 12.4) may

(a) in exceptional circumstances, be recommended by the Faculty/School-level Committte[ii] concerned in consultation with the Head of the relevant Department/Unit[i], for appointment by the Committee, with consideration being based mainly on experience in research; or

(b) only act as a Co-supervisor of an MPhil student together with another Supervisor who satisfies the above conditions or has been exceptionally approved.

12.6 In exceptional circumstances, a visiting/honorary/adjunct staff member who meets other appointment criteria can be appointed as the Chief Supervisor or Co-supervisor, whereas an emeritus professor can be appointed as the Co-supervisor. A full-time staff member who is going to leave the University may be specially approved to act as the Co-supervisor of the student whom he/she has been supervising, so long as he/she is going to be a visiting/honorary/adjunct staff member of the University. Another full-time academic staff member should be appointed as the Chief Supervisor of the student if needed. In the situation where a student is in his/her later stage of studies, e.g. in his/her last few months of studies, a departing staff member may be specially approved to continue to act as the Chief Supervisor of the student if he/she will continue to be a visiting/honorary/adjunct staff member of the University. The relevant Department/Unit[i] has to submit details of the case, *inter alia*, the proposed supervisory arrangement, reason for the proposal, time availability and commitment of the relevant staff member (whether departing staff or visiting/honorary/adjunct staff members) to provide proper supervision to the student preferably until end of the normal study period, the planned remuneration arrangement (if any) for the supervision work, etc., to the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned for consideration.

12.7 Supervisors will closely guide their candidates in the early phases of their research and thereafter will be responsible for helping them to work independently.

12.8 A further role of Supervisors is to keep the Department/Unit[i], the Faculty/School and the Committee aware of the progress made by the candidate, and of any significant modifications to the programme, and to make recommendations relating to confirmation of candidature, transfer of candidature and the examination of the candidate.

12.9 All students are required to submit via his/her Supervisor(s) a progress report on an annual basis (unless a progress report for confirmation of candidature has been submitted within the last three months). The Supervisor(s) shall submit to the Committee, together with the annual progress report, an assessment report on his/her student written with reference to the recommendation of the Assessment Panel/Qualifying Panel on the student as endorsed by the Head of Department/Unit[i] and the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned. For non-final year students, his/her Supervisor(s) shall make a recommendation as to whether the student shall be permitted to proceed and, where appropriate, requested to transfer from PhD to MPhil. The Supervisor(s) shall make the recommendation on transfer of candidature, if any, as early as practicable so that the transfer may take effect before the latest date allowed under the provisions in Regulation 7.

12.10 All students are also required to present their research findings in a seminar before the Assessment/Qualifying Panel[#] a few months prior to the date of oral examination (as referred to under Regulation 17.1). Additional presentation seminars may be arranged in between the two mandatory ones, i.e. the topic-defence seminar during the initial period and the seminar on research findings before oral examination.

[#]The Assessment/Qualifying Panel, formed in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulations 6.2 above, is to evaluate and make recommendation on the student's progress.

12.11 Where the Supervisor, either Chief Supervisor or Co-supervisor, is absent from the University for a period of six weeks or more or leaves the University during the period of study of the student, alternative supervisory arrangement shall be made, unless otherwise justified.

12.12 The Head of Department/Unit[i] shall submit a proposal on the appropriate supervisory arrangement to the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned for consideration. For cases involving replacement of supervisors by full-time academic staff members meeting appointment criteria, approval can be given by the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned. For other cases, the approval of the Committee has to be obtained.

13. Change of Circumstances

A candidate shall be required to report to the Supervisor(s) and the Dean of GS any material alteration in his/her circumstances which may affect the candidature.

14. Residence Requirements

14.1 The University deems it important for each student to interact with his/her Supervisor(s) and with peer students. A student, full-time or part-time, is therefore required to participate in seminars and other academic activities of the University. Supervisors shall encourage and advise students to participate in seminars and other academic activities relevant to their studies and report students' participation to the Committee via the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned.

14.2 Full-time students are expected to be on campus during the academic year except for approved field trips/study conducted outside Hong Kong, China, and approved leave of absence. The field trips and studies conducted outside Hong Kong, China, shall normally be for a short period of not longer than 3 months. Approval from the Head of Department/Unit[i] and the Supervisor(s) concerned shall be obtained before a student leaves for the field trip/study. For a period longer than 3 months, endorsement by the

Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned and approval by the Committee Chairman (or the delegate) shall be sought additionally. The approved study can be shown in the student's transcript. Provision concerning leave of absence is given in Regulation 9.

14.3 Part-time students are required to participate in seminars or other academic activities of the University on campus at least once every 6 months after commencement of studies.

15. Presentation of Thesis

15.1 A candidate who wishes to be examined for the degree of MPhil/PhD shall, by agreement with the Supervisor, give notice to the Dean of GS of his/her intention to present a thesis at least three months in advance of the intended date of presentation. The candidate shall at the same time indicate the title of the thesis, and submit an abstract of 200 to 500 words on its content for an MPhil thesis or not more than 500 English words or 800 Chinese characters for a PhD thesis.

15.2 A candidate may present a thesis only after the expiry of the minimum duration of the prescribed period of research.

15.3 Where a candidate has not presented a thesis by the expiry of the maximum duration of the period of research, the Committee may, on the recommendation of the Supervisor(s), the Head of Department/Unit[i] and the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned, permit the candidate to present a thesis at a later date, stipulating the final date after which presentation will not be permitted. This period shall not exceed 12 months.

15.4 Having given proper notice, the candidate shall subsequently present to the Dean of GS through his/her Supervisor four copies of a thesis embodying the results of the research undertaken and an electronic copy of the Turnitin originality report of that thesis, subject to the following expectations:

(a) An MPhil thesis shall represent a worthwhile contribution to the knowledge or understanding of the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls, while a PhD thesis shall represent a substantial original contribution to the knowledge or understanding of the field of learning within which the subject of the thesis falls.

(b) The thesis shall contain an abstract summarising the content of the thesis.

(c) The thesis shall not incorporate work published by the candidate prior to his/her registration unless this has been approved by the Committee.

(d) The thesis shall be the candidate's own account of his/her research and shall be accompanied by a declaration to this effect signed by the candidate.

(e) The thesis must include a statement of the candidate's objectives and must acknowledge published or other sources of material which have been drawn upon in the preparation of the thesis and any assistance received.

(f) The text of an MPhil thesis shall usually not exceed 40,000 English words or 60,000 Chinese characters while the text of a PhD thesis shall usually not exceed 100,000 English words or 150,000 Chinese characters (excluding tabulated data, diagrams and appendices). Any major deviation from this guideline will require the approval of the Committee based on a recommendation from the Supervisor(s).

(g) The presentation of the thesis shall conform to the *Regulations Governing the Format of Theses*.

15.5 Two hard copies and one electronic copy of the approved thesis shall become the property of the University.

15.6 The copyright of the thesis is vested in the candidate.

15.7 Both hard and electronic copies of the thesis will be made freely available in the University and the Digital Library, and the library of the attached Department/Unit[i], unless an application for restriction (provided in Regulations 15.8 and 15.9 below) is approved.

15.8 Where a candidate or the attached Department/Unit[i] wishes the thesis to remain confidential or to be on restricted access for a period of time after completion of the work, application for approval must be made, via the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned, to the Committee at the time of giving notice of intention to present the thesis. In cases where the need for confidentiality or restricted access emerges at a subsequent stage, special application for the thesis to remain confidential or to be on restricted access after submission must be made immediately. The period approved shall not normally exceed two years.

15.9 Where the Committee has granted approval to the application, the thesis shall be held on restricted access for a time not exceeding the approved period.

16. Appointment of Examiners

16.1 After a candidate has given notice of intention to present a thesis, a Panel of Examiners shall be appointed. The Panel shall comprise:

(a) A Chairman of the Panel who should be a member of staff of the University at the Associate Professor level or above and outside the candidate's Department/Unit[i]. The Chairman shall be responsible for managing the examination process and shall have no vote in the decision on the assessment of the thesis.

(b) Three other examiners: two internal and one external. The Supervisor or Co-supervisor of the candidate shall be *ipso facto* one of the internal examiners. They should be at the Assistant Professor level or above, preferably at the Associate Professor level or above (on research-track/tenure-track appointment for internal examiners) for PhD theses. Each of them shall have a vote in the decision on the assessment of the thesis.

16.2 In exceptional circumstances, an emeritus professor or a visiting/honorary/adjunct staff member who meets other appointment criteria can be appointed as an internal examiner.

16.3 The Dean concerned, with input from the Head of the candidate's Department/Unit[i] and the Supervisor(s) of the candidate on nomination for appointment of Panel of Examiners, shall make a recommendation to the Committee for the appointment.

16.4 The Chairman of the Panel does not need to have expertise relevant to the research work but shall be able to understand the discussion of examiners on the thesis. Other examiners should have expertise relevant to the research work. For a PhD thesis examination, the external examiner should normally be expected to have expertise in the actual field in which the thesis is written, while for an MPhil thesis examination, the

external examiner shall be expected to be familiar with the general area in which the thesis is located.

16.5 Examiners other than the Supervisor must have no supervisory relationship with the candidate.

16.6 An external member should be in a position to be impartial.

16.7 The candidate's Supervisor or Co-supervisor(s), if not appointed as an examiner, will be invited to be present throughout the oral examination.

16.8 No person who is registered for a higher degree may act as an examiner.

17. Examinations

17.1 A candidate for the degree of MPhil/PhD shall undergo an oral examination of his/her thesis by the Panel of Examiners. All examinations shall normally take place in Hong Kong, China.

17.2 The Supervisor will be required to write a report on the performance of the candidate during his/her research studies, which may include a recommendation report for consideration by the Panel of Examiners. This report will be considered by the Panel of Examiners in conjunction with the thesis.

17.3 The Panel of Examiners will decide on the time and location of the examination, which will normally occur within three months of the receipt of the thesis from the Supervisor.

17.4 The focus of the oral examination will be on:

(a) the candidate's knowledge and understanding of the thesis thereby assuring the Examiners that the thesis is the candidate's own work;

(b) the clarity and competence of the research investigations, results and conclusions; and

(c) the contribution of the research to the field of knowledge.

17.5 Additional forms of examination to the oral may be employed if the Panel of Examiners believes that special circumstances can justify this arrangement. In these cases the candidate must be given adequate notice to be able to prepare for the new form of examination.

17.6 In the event that one of the internal examiners cannot attend the examination, telephone or video conference shall be arranged where possible, or else an alternative examiner can be appointed by the Committee, in order to avoid any great delay in the process.

17.7 In case the external examiner is from overseas, telephone or video conference shall be arranged where possible, or else a local academic from outside the University shall be appointed as his/her representative.

17.8 For any special situations under which going to the examination location or returning to Hong Kong, China, is impossible for the candidate and/or the Panel of Examiners attending the examination, a special request for allowing the candidate and/or the Panel of Examiners to attend the examination via telephone or video conference can be made with justifications by the Supervisor of the candidate, and with the support from the Head of

Department/Unit[i] and the Faculty/School-level Committee[ii] concerned, for consideration by the Committee.

18. Report of the Panel of Examiners

18.1 Having completed its examination of the thesis of the candidate, the Panel of Examiners shall report to the Committee. The reports shall be confidential to the Committee and to the Senate.

18.2 The Panel of Examiners shall confer after the examination and examiners other than the Chairman of the Panel shall agree on making one of the following recommendations:

(a) that the degree of MPhil/PhD be awarded; or

(b) that the degree of MPhil/PhD be awarded subject to the candidate making minor amendments to the thesis to the satisfaction of the Chairman on behalf of the Panel by a specified date, normally within 2 months for a full-time student or 3 months for a part-time student; or

(c) that the conferment of the MPhil/PhD degree shall be subject to the candidate making significant amendments to the thesis to the satisfaction of the Panel by a specified date, normally within 4 months for a full-time student or 6 months for a part-time student, and that the candidate may be requested by the Panel to defend the revised thesis, if such is deemed appropriate by any of the examiners; or

(d) that the conferment of the MPhil/PhD degree shall be subject to the candidate making major amendments to the thesis to the satisfaction of the Panel by a specified date, normally within 6 months for a full-time student or 9 months for a part-time student, and that the candidate is required to defend the revised thesis; or

(e) that the degree of MPhil/PhD not be awarded but that the candidate be permitted to present a revised thesis and to present himself/herself for examination again within 12 months; or

(f) for PhD examination only, that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to the candidate making minor amendments to the thesis to the satisfaction of the Chairman on behalf of the Panel, as the thesis is below the standard expected of a PhD thesis but is considered to have fulfilled the standard required for an MPhil degree; or

(g) that the degree of MPhil/PhD not be awarded and the candidature be terminated.

The Panel is not required to recommend a grade for the thesis but has the option to indicate whether it is an outstanding thesis.

18.3 For recommendations (b) to (d), minor amendments refer to those related to corrections of wordings, improvement in presentation, clarifications on details and/or rewriting of small sections of the thesis; significant amendments refer to those that require substantial further study such as expanding and/or further exploring some existing areas, while major amendments refer to those involving structural changes to the thesis, re-analysis of data and/or development of a substantive addition to the work.

18.4 Each examiner (other than the Chairman of the Panel) shall submit within one week after the examination an individually completed thesis assessment report, giving comments on

the thesis and the performance of the candidate in the examination, and specifying the requisite improvements to the thesis.

18.5 The Chairman of the Panel shall compile a Chairman's report after receiving a copy of individual assessment reports from other examiners. The Chairman's report must include a summary of the key points and major comments of other examiners on the thesis. If deemed necessary, the Chairman may consult members of the Panel when writing the report.

18.6 For recommendations (b) to (g) above, the Chairman of the Panel shall detail the specific deficiencies and where appropriate specify the conditions that must be met before a resubmission could be made.

18.7 In the event that there is no consensus among examiners on the recommendation to be made, the Chairman shall additionally give a detailed account of the discussion, including reasons for certain decisions and any significant minority position, to facilitate the decision by the Committee. In his/her report, the Chairman shall be impartial and summarise the results.

18.8 After considering the reports of the Panel of Examiners, the Committee shall make a recommendation to the Senate.

18.9 Where the Senate accepts a recommendation made under the terms of Regulation 18.2 (b)-(f), the Supervisor shall be responsible for confirming that the amendments required by the Panel have been made.

19. After Examination

19.1 In case a candidate cannot submit a revised thesis by the stipulated deadline, the candidate should submit an application with justification on the delay. The Chairman of the Panel shall consult other examiners and decide if the deadline for revisions can be extended.

19.2 A revised thesis shall be assessed as satisfactorily revised or not based exclusively on whether the amendments in the revised thesis have addressed the comments/suggestions indicated in the examiners' reports.

19.3 For a thesis subject to minor amendments, the Chairman of the Panel, in consultation with the full Panel or any Panel members if and as appropriate (referred to in Regulation 19.4 below), shall decide in the manner stipulated in Regulation 19.2 above and indicate his/her decision within two weeks from the date he/she receives the revised thesis from the GS. In case no decision has been received by the end of the period, the GS will give two more working days for the Chairman to either arrive at a decision or provide any views or concerns he/she may have on the revised thesis. If the Chairman of the Panel is unable to respond by the end of the extended period, the GS will refer the revised thesis to the examiners, including the possible further comment from the Chairman if one was received, for a decision by majority vote.

19.4 For a thesis subject to minor amendments, the Chairman of the Panel shall consult with the Supervisor (and other examiner(s) or the full Panel if judged advisable) in relation to any substantive as opposed to editorial changes and confirm whether the revised thesis has addressed all of the comments/suggestions in the examiners' reports satisfactorily. In case the decision thus reached is that the revised thesis does not satisfactorily meet the required amendments, the Panel of Examiners shall set a new deadline for further revisions indicating that the extension is final. Should the candidate fail to submit the

revised thesis by the extended deadline, the degree of MPhil/PhD will not be awarded and the candidature will be terminated.

19.5 For a thesis subject to significant amendments without the need for the candidate to defend the revised thesis, each of the examiners other than the Chairman of the Panel has to indicate his/her decision within four weeks from the date he/she receives the revised thesis from the GS. In case any of the examiners has not indicated a decision by the end of the period, the GS will give two more working days for an indication. If any of the examiners is unable to respond by the end of the extended period, the matter will be raised with the Chairman of the Committee for advice on the proper action.

19.6 For a thesis subject to significant amendments without the need for the candidate to defend the revised thesis, if any of the examiners other than the Chairman of the Panel indicated that he/she is not satisfied with the revised thesis, examiners other than the Chairman shall make one of the following recommendations:

(a) a new and final deadline be given for further revisions; or

(b) the degree of MPhil/PhD not be awarded and the candidature be terminated; or

(c) for PhD thesis only, the MPhil degree be awarded to the candidate, as the thesis is below the standard expected of a PhD thesis but is considered to have fulfilled the standard required for an MPhil degree.

19.7 The recommendation (b) or (c) above should be submitted to the Committee for approval.

19.8 For a candidate whose thesis is subject to major amendments, or significant amendments and the candidate is required to defend the revised thesis in an examination again, upon receiving the revised thesis endorsed by the Supervisor of the candidate, the GS will arrange the second examination with the same Panel of Examiners, as detailed in Regulation 20 below.

19.9 Where a candidate whose thesis is subject to major amendments, he/she has to register and pay a fee as a student on extension from the day following the date on which he/she is notified of the recommendation or the date on which his/her normal study period expires, whichever is later.

20. Second Examination

20.1 Generally, the second examination shall be arranged the same as for the first examination with major differences specified below.

20.2 During the examination, the Panel of Examiners shall focus on the amendments made in the revised thesis, and the extent to which the candidate responded to the Panel's previous comments/requirements.

20.3 The examiners other than the Chairman of the Panel shall agree on and make one of the following recommendations for consideration by the Committee:

(a) The Panel of Examiners is satisfied with the amendments made in the revised thesis. The Panel recommends that the degree of MPhil/PhD be awarded to the candidate.

(b) The Panel of Examiners is not satisfied with the amendments made in the revised thesis. The Panel recommends:

(i) that the degree of MPhil/PhD be awarded subject to the candidate making minor amendments to the revised thesis to the satisfaction of the Chairman on behalf of the Panel by a specified date, normally within 2 months for a full-time student or 3 months for a part-time student; or

(ii) for PhD examination only, that the degree of MPhil be awarded subject to the candidate making minor amendments to the revised thesis to the satisfaction of the Chairman on behalf of the Panel, as the revised thesis is below the standard expected of a PhD thesis but is considered to have fulfilled the standard required for an MPhil degree; or

(iii) that the degree of MPhil/PhD not be awarded and the candidature be terminated.

20.4 Each examiner (other than the Chairman) should give comments on the revised thesis concerning the extent to which the candidate responded to the Panel's previous comments/requirements and on the performance of the candidate in the second examination, and specify the corresponding requisite improvements to the thesis where appropriate.

20.5 The Chairman's report shall include a summary of the key points and major comments of other examiners concerning the extent to which the candidate responded to the Panel's previous comments/requirements, and specify major requisite improvements to the revised thesis where appropriate, as reflected in the discussion of examiners and other examiners' reports.

21. Re-examination

21.1 Where the Senate accepts a recommendation made under the terms of Regulation 18.2 (e), the candidate shall be permitted to present one resubmission only. It must take place within 12 months of the date of the first recommendation of the Panel of Examiners. If further work needs to be done within the following term period of an academic year, the student shall be required to register and pay tuition fees for the term concerned.

21.2 The arrangements and rules for the re-examination shall be as if the candidate was being examined for the first time, unless the Senate, on the original recommendation of the Committee, has excused the candidate from a further oral examination.

21.3 The Panel of Examiners for the re-examination shall be the same as for the first examination, unless otherwise determined by the Committee.

21.4 A candidate who has failed to satisfy the Panel of Examiners in a re-examination shall not be permitted to present himself/herself for re-examination on a further occasion.

22. Appeals

22.1 Appeals against a recommendation of the Committee shall be made in writing to the Senate within 10 days of the announcement of the recommendation concerned.

22.2 Senate will be the final stage of appeal within the University.

23. Academic Dress for Graduates

23.1 ***Gown***

23.1.1 PhD graduates - A maroon robe with a 7.5 cm width of gold velvet facing outlined on both sides edged with bright gold cord braid. Bell-shaped sleeves with three stripes of gold velvet edged with bright gold cord braid.

23.1.2 MPhil graduates - A black robe with a 7.5 cm width of red velvet facing outlined on both sides edged with bright silver cord braid. Bell-shaped sleeves with two stripes of red velvet edged with bright silver cord braid.

23.2 ***Hood***

23.2.1 PhD graduates - A maroon hood of 110 cm long with red and grey silk lining throughout, edged with a 7.5 cm width of velvet in gold and trimmed with red silk.

23.2.2 MPhil graduates - A black hood of 110 cm long with red and grey silk lining throughout, edged with a 7.5 cm width of velvet in red and trimmed with red silk.

23.3 ***Cap***

23.3.1 PhD graduates - A round black velvet bonnet with a gold tassel.

23.3.2 MPhil graduates - A black cap of mortar-board pattern with a silver tassel.

24. Testimonials

24.1 A student who wishes to have a letter certifying his/her student status or attendance records may apply to the Registry for such a testimonial.

24.2 A student who wishes to have a personal recommendation or reference letter should approach a teacher who knows him/her well, usually his/her Supervisor.

25. Transcripts

25.1 A student who wishes to apply for transfer or admission to another educational institution or for employment may apply to the Registry for an official transcript.

25.2 An official transcript shows the relevant particulars of a student, title of his/her programme, grades obtained, postgraduate studentships, academic awards and disciplinary actions taken, if any. An approved study in another institution can be shown.

25.3 An official transcript will be sent direct by the Registry to the institution or prospective employer upon the student's request and payment of the prescribed fees and postage.

25.4 An official transcript is not issued to a student as a personal copy or to any private individual.

25.5 Official transcripts shall not be issued to students who have not completed at least six months of study.

25.6 A student who has pursued the programme for less than six months or has unofficially withdrawn from the University or has unpaid accounts or obligations due to the University will not be issued any transcript or testimonial.

26. Academic Awards

26.1 By virtue of the Lingnan University Ordinance, Lingnan University is empowered to confer Degrees upon the approval of the University Senate on students who have fulfilled the requirements of an approved programme of study.

26.2 Degrees are conferred at the annual Congregation or by the President as Chairman of the Senate before the annual Congregation.

26.3 The certification of an academic award is in both Chinese and English and shows the full name of the recipient, the title of the award and the title of the study programme concerned.

26.4 The certificate of award bears the signatures of the Chairman of the Council, the President and the Registrar of the University, and the University seal.

26.5 The University may withhold the conferment of an academic award to a student who has unpaid accounts or unreturned materials on loan due to the University, or who has not met any other obligations due to the University.

27. Exceptions

Any departures from these Regulations shall be considered as exceptions and must be approved by the Senate.

Revised in October 2025

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[i] Department/Unit refers to a unit that house RPg students which can be a school/an academic department/an academic unit/a division/a research institute, and the "Head" refers to the staff in-charge of the unit

[ii] Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee (RPSC) concerned for the three Faculties and the School of Data Science (SDS); Board of Graduate Studies for the School of Graduate Studies (GS); and School of Interdisciplinary Studies Management Board for the School of Interdisciplinary Studies (SIS)