

# THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES



## GRADUATE STUDIES GUIDE FOR STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

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## **GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES**

Scholarship, research, creativity and their application to human development are the foundations of university life.

The University of the West Indies is committed to imparting existing knowledge through its diverse undergraduate courses and to advanced training at the graduate level. The foundation of this teaching and training is the University's research work that continuously generates new knowledge and understanding. Research informs the teaching programmes and is applied to human problems and the advancement of society regionally and globally.

Research degrees are offered through the M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes. In these, students conduct research in conjunction with a supervisor, who is a faculty member and recognized scholar in a particular research field, or with a supervisory team of faculty and other experts in the relevant discipline. Following the award of the research degree, original findings are normally published; thus contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and to development.

Many of the taught Masters' Programmes also include training in research methodology and students are required to submit a Project Report or Research Paper in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree.

Guidelines are provided in this Booklet on the roles and responsibilities of the departments, institutes or centres offering the degrees as well as the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and students. Leadership and coordination are provided through the School for Graduate Studies and Research of the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus.

## **THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE FOR GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH**

The School for Graduate Studies and Research has overall responsibility for all Higher Degrees offered at the University of the West Indies. The office of the Dean of the School is situated on the Mona Campus in Jamaica. Final approval for the award of degrees, upgrading of registration, new programmes, must come from this office.

On each Campus, there is a Committee for Graduate Studies and Research which is responsible for the administration of all higher degrees on that Campus. This extends to such routine matters as application; registration; supervision; scholarships; progress reports; oral, written, project and thesis examinations; support for research and publication; thesis grants; hardship grants; general information; guidance and counselling and intervention and conflict resolution, where necessary.

In each Faculty, there is a Graduate Studies Sub-Committee which considers applications to that Faculty and makes recommendations. The Sub-Committee also makes recommendations concerning leave of absence, extensions to time limits, and any problems you may have concerning your Programme of Study.

The Administrative Staff in the Office of the School for Graduate Studies and Research at St. Augustine are always willing to assist you with whatever problems you may encounter. Please do not hesitate to come in and seek advice on any matter.

## **ON MASTERS' (M.Phil) AND DOCTORAL (Ph.D) DEGREES**

All Masters' (M.Phil or equivalent) and Doctoral (Ph.D) programmes of study at the University of the West Indies culminate in the presentation of a thesis conveying the results of the independent study and research carried out by the Graduate Student. It is necessary for Graduate Students, Supervisors, Advisory Committees and Examiners to ensure that the qualitative and quantitative distinction between the M.Phil Degree and Ph.D Degree be understood and maintained.

### **THE MASTER'S THESIS**

A Master's Thesis reviews the state of knowledge in a particular field, creates and evaluates a new design or novel experiments in a particular aspect of an area of study or makes an appropriate critique or interpretation of the subject. The Master's Thesis should be evidence of the Graduate Student's ability to review effectively the relevant literature in the field, to undertake independent research and to present the results in a clear, systematic and scholarly form.

It is expected that a Master's Thesis will make at least some independent contribution to knowledge or understanding in the subject area in which the student is working.

### **THE DOCTORAL THESIS**

A Doctoral Thesis must set forth a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding, adding to or critiquing through approved research methodologies to the current theoretical underpinnings and empirical base in the student's field of study.

The Thesis must be set forth in a scholarly manner demonstrating the original and independent investigations conducted and setting forth unambiguously its achievements, contributions and findings in a format appropriate to Doctoral Theses in the particular discipline.

The Doctoral Thesis must reflect not only mastery of the subject area under investigation and competence in research techniques, but also the ability to select an important problem for investigation and to deal with it in a mature and competent manner.

The Doctoral Degree is, by nature and tradition, the highest certificate of membership in the academic community. It is meant to indicate the presence of superior qualities of mind, intellectual interest and high attainment and knowledge in a chosen field. It is not conferred merely as a certificate to a prescribed course of study and research, no matter how long or how faithfully pursued. Independent achievement at a high intellectual level is a necessary prerequisite to its conferment. A Doctoral thesis or parts thereof must be judged to be potentially publishable.

## **PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR THE UPGRADING OF AN M.PHIL. REGISTRATION TO THE PH.D.**

1. Postgraduate students who are registered for the M.Phil. Degree and who wish to be considered for the upgrading of their registration to the Ph.D. must request the upgrading in the 2nd year of registration. Applications for upgrading will not be considered after the 3rd year of registration. Applicants should have completed all departmental coursework requirements by this time. Students should apply to the Assistant Registrar (Admissions), School for Graduate Studies and Research to have this matter initiated.
2. A Supervisor should state in his/her written report to the Head of Department/Director of Institute/Centre and Assistant Registrar why he/she considers the student to be outstanding and whether in his/her opinion the work can be developed to the level of the Ph.D.
3. All M.Phil. candidates should note that students who have submitted for examination outstanding M.Phil. Theses may be recommended by the University Examiners to have their registration status upgraded to that of the Ph.D. This is an alternative route to the Ph.D. but can only be determined after the M.Phil. thesis has been submitted and fully examined.
4. All recommendations from Departments/Institutes/Centres for Ph.D. registrations are subject to the approval of the Dean, School for Graduate Studies and Research.
5. The following are the procedural guidelines which students, supervisors and Departments/Institutes/Centres should follow in seeking the upgrading of registration status from the M.Phil. to Ph.D.
  - (i) The student should consult with the Supervisor on this matter.

- (ii) The student through the Supervisor and the Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre should apply to the School for Graduate Studies and Research formally seeking upgrading of his/her registration.
- (iii) The Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre should consult with the Student Advisory Committee, and if he/she is in agreement establishes an Upgrading Assessment Committee. If the Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre is not in agreement, he/she should submit his/her comments to the Assistant Registrar on the matter, copying his/her letter to the Supervisor. Campus Committee for Graduate Studies and Research will deliberate and recommend in such instances.
- (iv) If the Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre is a supervisor in an upgrading matter, he/she must delegate his/her responsibilities as Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre in such a matter to a Senior academic colleague in the Department/Institute/Centre.
- (v) The Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre will appoint an Upgrading Assessment Committee including an independent Chairman, after discussions with the Student Advisory Committee and other Departmental colleagues. He/she will consult also with the Chairman of the appropriate Faculty Committee (where applicable) and the Chairman of the Campus Committee on this matter.
- (vi) The Upgrading Assessment Committee should comprise the Supervisor(s), plus at least two independent Assessors normally chosen from the academic staff of the University, together with the Chairman. In the case of students for whom a Supervisory Committee has been appointed, such a Committee plus the independent Chairman should constitute the Upgrading Assessment Committee.

- (vii) Assessors should be chosen on the basis of their knowledge and experience at the appropriate level in the area of the student's research. One of the assessors may be drawn from outside the University community in the appropriate circumstances.
- (viii) The designated Chairman should request from the student a copy of his/her Upgrading Proposal for each of the Assessors and a mutually agreed date should be set for the oral presentation by the student of his/her:
- ◆ report on the work done and accomplishments to date under the M.Phil. registration;
  - ◆ research proposal to upgrade the work to the Ph.D. beyond the M.Phil. level. Students and Supervisors must note that the Upgrading Assessment Committee will make a rigorous review of the student's past performance and future prospects, so as to evaluate both the student's capacity for independent research at the Ph.D. level and the scope and quality of the expected Ph.D. research.
- (ix) The oral presentation by the student of the upgrading proposal should be conducted by the Chairman, and questions posed to the student by the Assessors. The Chairman will meet with the Assessors after the oral presentation and will receive from them either a joint report or individual reports on the presentation with a recommendation concerning the upgrading and any other relevant issues.
- (x) Such Reports together with that of the Chairman's should be forwarded to the Assistant Registrar for the deliberations of the Campus Committee for Graduate Studies and Research. Campus Committee then submits a recommendation to the Dean, School for Graduate Studies and Research, and the Supervisor and student would be informed by the Assistant Registrar of the decision.

## **THE M.A./M.Ed/M.Sc PROJECT REPORT OR RESEARCH PAPER**

The M.A./M.Ed./M.Sc. Project Report/Research Paper completed by students in taught Masters' Programmes should demonstrate:

- ◆ independent, wide ranging reading in the subject area;
- ◆ reasonably in-depth analysis of the literature;
- ◆ familiarity with research methods, data collection and analysis, and design and conduct of experiments, as appropriate to the specialisation;
- ◆ findings reported in the approved academic style appropriate to the discipline.

It is not expected that the student must necessarily make a contribution to knowledge, but should show a clear understanding of the topic being investigated and its application.

The upper limit in terms of length should be 125 pages, exclusive of notes, bibliography, appendices etc.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENTS INSTITUTES/CENTRES**

### *Responsibility to the Research Student*

The interaction between Graduate Research Students and the University usually begins with the Department in which there is a research interest. In particular, the Head of Department (or the Director of an Institute) and a particular member of Staff may serve as the very first point of contact. The responsibility of the Heads of Departments/Director of Institute/Centre to research students include:

- ◆ outlining to graduate students the areas of research strength in the Department;
- ◆ introducing Graduate Students to members of the academic, technical and administrative staff of the Department, particularly the key research players;
- ◆ outlining the expectations of M.Phil. and Ph.D. research and the issues and common problems experienced by students and Departments in the pursuit of such activities;
- ◆ providing an outline of the equipment and facilities in the Department for supporting graduate level research;
- ◆ identifying areas of support for research students:
  - financial support - teaching/research assistantships, demonstratorships, part-time tutoring, etc.
  - office space/a place to study,
  - technical support - laboratory space, equipment and materials, technicians, computers, library access, etc.
  - administrative support - telephone/fax/e-mail, photocopying, thesis preparation, tea/coffee etc.

- University research funds, Departmental funds, external funding,
- research supervision and Advisory Committees.

It is within Departments that research will be undertaken and it is therefore vital that Heads of Departments create an enabling, supportive environment where the research work of all graduate students and by extension members of academic staff can flourish.

### *Responsibility to the School for Graduate Studies and Research*

Heads of Departments/Directors of Institutes/Centres have a direct responsibility also to the School for Graduate Studies and Research to ensure progress and quality in terms of graduate research students:-

- ◆ recommending the acceptance of graduate research students
- ◆ ensuring that facilities are available for the conduct of the proposed research;
- ◆ nominating Supervisors and members of Advisory Committees;
- ◆ ensuring progress of all graduate students including the submission of timely progress reports each Semester;
- ◆ conducting research seminars for graduate students;
- ◆ nominating Examiners for Theses.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISOR**

1. Giving guidance about the nature of research in the relevant discipline(s) and the standard of performance expected at the M.Sc. Project Level, at the M.Phil. or Ph.D levels, about the planning of the research programme, about the objectives and scope of the research to be undertaken, about literature and sources, about requisite techniques (including arranging for instruction where necessary), and about attendance at classes and laboratories where relevant.
2. Advising the student of the nature of guidance or comment to be offered on the student's written work, since comments have to be in accordance with the general principle that the work should be the student's.
3. Arranging regular meetings with the student, usually once per week and with the Advisory Committee, usually once per semester.
4. Being accessible to the student at other times and as the need arises.
5. Giving detailed advice on the completion dates of successive stages of the research so that the completed research may be submitted within the scheduled time.
6. Requesting written work as appropriate and returning such work with constructive criticism in reasonable time and within the time period stated and or promised.
7. Arranging for the student to present his or her research to staff and other graduate students at Graduate Research Seminars at appropriate times during the student's registration.
8. Giving general guidance to students, where necessary, on matters pertaining to oral and other examinations, research seminars, etc.

9. Ensuring that the student is made aware of inadequacy of progress or of standard of work below that generally accepted; also reminding students of the time limits for the completion of the particular programme of study or research.
10. Paying particular attention to non-Campus or overseas students who may in the early stages need very frequent contact, and often advice of a seemingly elementary kind.
11. Having met with the Advisory Committee and the student, submit full reports every semester to the School for Graduate Studies and Research on the student's progress which the student must see. If the student is making insufficient progress, or the work is below standard, the Supervisor and the Advisory Committee should recommend whether the student should be allowed to continue or should be warned.
12. Reminding the student to act in accordance with University regulations governing entry to the thesis/research paper/project report examination (normally three months before the expected date of submission of the thesis).
13. Making recommendations to the Head of Department on the nomination of the examiners of the student's thesis/research paper/project report, (normally three months before the expected date of submission).
14. Ensuring that the final work of the student satisfies accepted standards of usage for scholarly writing, which includes standards of grammar, spelling, punctuation, references, footnotes, bibliography, and that the presentation conforms to the University's General Regulations (advising the student to consult the Thesis Guide).
15. Giving guidance and support to the student in the correction of the Thesis, Project Report, etc. as may have been required by the School for Graduate Studies and Research after the examination process has been completed and prior to the final acceptance of the Thesis.

16. Making representation to Head of Department, or to the Chairman, Campus Committee for Graduate Studies and Research, if an effective working relationship with the student has not been established.
17. Advising and assisting students on matters pertaining to the presentation of research findings at scholarly conferences, publication of findings in peer reviewed Journals, or in book form, etc.
18. Convening meetings at least once per semester of the Advisory Committee to review the progress of the student's research.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT**

1. Keeping the schedule of meetings agreed to with the Supervisor(s) and/or Advisory Committee.
2. Taking the initiative in raising with the Supervisor problems or difficulties, however elementary they may seem.
3. Seeking guidance and comment on the research programme as necessary.
4. Accepting and acting on the advice given by the Supervisor, unless the student, after careful consideration and discussion with the Supervisor, and for good reasons, decides otherwise.
5. Maintaining good progress in one's research in accordance with the schedule agreed to with the Supervisor.
6. Assisting the Supervisor and the Advisory Committee in the completion of the Semester's Progress Report.
7. Passing creditably and at the first attempt any Departmental or Qualifying courses which may have been prescribed.
8. Giving and participating in Graduate Research Seminars and other scholarly activities.
9. Making representation to the Head of Department if an effective working relationship is not established with the Supervisor or any member of the Advisory Committee or if, for reasons beyond the student's control, the work is not proceeding satisfactorily. If the Supervisor is also the Head of Department, making such representation to the Dean of the Faculty and then to Chairman, Campus Committee for Graduate Studies and Research, or to any member of the Campus Committee for Graduate Studies and Research.

10. Presenting written material as required by the supervisor in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage; for example, in the preparation of a Thesis or Project Report.
11. Taking responsibility for the final presentation of the Thesis or Project Report in terms of writing, style, grammar, spelling, references, end/footnotes, bibliography.
12. Submitting a Thesis, Project Report or Dissertation within the time limits set by the University.
13. Familiarizing yourself with the rules and regulations of the University, particularly the **“General Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees”** and its **“Policy on Research Ethics”** for example.

## **ON COMMITTEES OF ADVISERS FOR GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS**

### **APPOINTMENT**

1. A Supervisor(s) and a Committee of Advisers are to be appointed by the School for Graduate Studies and Research for each graduate student registered at the University of the West Indies for a higher degree by research i.e. M.Phil. (or equivalent) and Ph.D. candidates.
2. Advisory Committees will be nominated by the Departmental Head, and appointed by the Dean, School for Graduate Studies and Research.
3. In keeping with normal practice, at the time of acceptance of an M.Phil. or Ph.D. candidate, Departments will nominate a Supervisor and where necessary Joint or Co-Supervisors to direct the graduate student's research.
4. The Advisory Committee should be appointed as soon as possible after the graduate student has begun Master's or Doctoral work and in general, no later than the end of the first semester of the student's registration in the programme.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

1. The Advisory Committee shall be made up of at least three persons, including the Supervisor(s) of the student's research.
2. The Supervisor will serve as Chairperson of the Committee of Advisers.
3. Committee members may be drawn from a different Faculty Campus, or from outside the University (one member).

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Advisory Committees will provide a wider boundary of experience, intellect, reasoning and scholarship, a resource upon which the graduate student may draw, beyond that of the Supervisor(s). The Supervisor(s) remains principally responsible for guiding and directing the research work of the student and for his or her academic development.
2. The Advisory Committee shall take all reasonable steps to assist the graduate student to overcome any difficulties he or she may be facing in completing the research programme in the stipulated time and to act as a source of advice and support.
3. The Advisory Committee will be convened as soon as possible after their appointment to review the background of the graduate student and to discuss and approve a programme of study and research, and plans for executing the same.
4. The Advisory Committee will review at least once per Semester the research progress of the graduate student to date, his/her expected results and to make suggestions to the graduate student for the completion of the research including thesis preparation.
5. The Committee will formally report each Semester through the Registrar to the Dean, School for Graduate Studies and Research on the progress of the graduate student and make appropriate recommendations, with a copy of the recommendations being provided for the student. The Committee's report will replace the existing Supervisor's report.
6. Members of the Advisory Committee will serve as evaluators of all Graduate Research Seminar(s) given by the student and in any upgrading of the Registration (M.Phil. to Ph.D.) exercise.

7. Members of the Advisory Committee may serve as Internal Examiners of the student's thesis, so as to assure the School for Graduate Studies and Research that the thesis and in particular a doctoral thesis contains original research, makes a contribution to knowledge and is presented in the acceptable manner.
8. Any other duties which may be assigned to the Advisory Committee from time to time by the Dean, School for Graduate Studies and Research, and to deal with specific issues concerning a student's progress.

The Registry  
UWI  
St. Augustine, Trinidad  
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