

COMSATS University Islamabad
Registrar Secretariat, Academic Unit (PS)

No. CUI-Reg/Notif-770/24/805

March 26, 2024

NOTIFICATION

During its 38th meeting convened on January 09, 2024, the Academic Council, following the recommendations set forth in the 34th meeting of the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASAR), formally approved the following Common Policies and Procedure and template Scheme of Studies for PhD programs of CUI as per HEC Graduate Education Policy 2023 for implementation from Fall 2023 and subsequent admissions at CUI system:

Nomenclature of Degree: **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in...** [Please specify the field area]

- I. Minimum Duration: 03 Years II. Minimum Semesters: 06
III. Maximum Duration: 08 Years IV. Maximum Semesters: 16

Minimum No. of Courses and Credit Hours in PhD:

S #	Category	SAME / RELEVANT DISCIPLINE		INTRADISCIPLINARY	
		Min No. of Courses	Min No. of Credit Hours	Min No. of Courses	Min No. of Credit Hours
1.	Minimum Deficiency Courses of level 7	-	-	03	09
2.	Minimum Core Courses	01	03	01	03
3.	Elective Courses	06	18	05	15
4.	Flexible Course Structure: Adjusting Core and Elective Courses	If the number of core courses exceeds 1, the number of elective courses will decrease accordingly. For instance, a program with 2 core courses will have 4 elective courses to fulfill the required 18 credit hours of coursework.			
5.	Minimum Research Thesis	01	09	01	09
6.	Total (Minimum)	07	27	10	36
7.	Prerequisite	For admission based on relevant degrees, only General test is required as per HEC.		General and Subject tests are required, with the GRE Subject Test with at least 60% as an additional criterion	
		The zero semester of an intradisciplinary PhD candidate should not count towards the time limit for comprehensive exams, etc, or the maximum study duration.			

8. Admission to MS and PhD programs at CUI will adhere to existing criteria, with relevance of prior degrees being crucial. If deemed necessary, additional courses may be required to rectify deficiencies. Approval for admission within the CUI System is

contingent upon the relevance of the previous degree as per Notification No: CUI-Reg/Notif-458/23/493, dated February 28, 2023, stating that the decision made by the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASAR) during its meeting on November 30, 2022, stipulated that admission within the CUI System shall be contingent upon possession of a relevant prior degree. In instances where doubts regarding the relevance of a prior degree arise, the determination of relevance thereof shall be made by the respective Dean irrespective of title of the prior degree, based on recommendations put forth by the respective Campus Admission Committee, HoD, and Chairperson, on a case-by-case basis as required. The decision rendered by the Dean in such cases shall be documented within the student's personal file for record-keeping and reference purposes. The additional GRE-Subject test for MS and PhD programs won't be mandatory for such candidates.

- 9. Furthermore, if the Dean determines that the candidate does not possess the necessary relevant degree, the candidate shall be admitted under the Interdisciplinary category. Additionally, the candidate must undertake the additional GRE-Subject test for MS and PhD programs as a mandatory requirement. Such candidates are required to fulfill all mandatory requirements outlined under the Interdisciplinary clauses. However, if the Dean, by following the above procedure decides that the previous degree, irrespective of the title of the degree of the candidate does not fall under the Interdisciplinary category, the candidate shall not be admitted at CUI System.*
- 10. PhD students shall enroll for 09 to 12 credit hours per semester for coursework, with flexibility granted in exceptional cases such as force majeure incidents including inevitable accident, unavoidable casualty, vis major. type of calamity, cataclysm, catastrophe, disaster, tragedy. an event resulting in great loss and misfortune. The Dean may adjust credit hour requirements based on recommendations from the DAC, HoD, and Chairperson. Following coursework, students must register exclusively for a thesis of 09 credit hours each subsequent semester to ensure continuous enrollment throughout their study period.*
- 11. During its 38th meeting, the Academic Council approved the Common Policies, Procedures, and Template of Scheme of Studies for MS and PhD Programs at CUI, aligned with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Graduate Education Policy (GEP) 2023, with the exception of the above-mentioned paragraphs.*

1. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF DOCTORAL DEGREE (LEVEL 8)

- a. MS./MPhil or Equivalent Degree:
 - i. Students currently pursuing MS studies and expressing interest in progressing to a PhD. maybe provisionally admitted. Confirmation of this admission is contingent upon meeting the following conditions within one year from the date of provisional admission:
 - 1. Obtaining an MS. /MPhil degree as prescribed in these regulations.
 - 2. Clearing the prescribed admission test
- b. A minimum CGPA of 3.0 (on a scale of 4.0 in the semester system) or 60% (in the annual system) in the MS./MPhil or equivalent degree.
- c. Students demonstrating strong interest in obtaining a PhD. but having a CGPA below 3.0 (on a scale of 4.0 in the semester system) or 60% marks (in the annual system) in their most recent degree, may be admitted to a PhD. program after fulfilling specific requirements:
 - 1. Completion of additional courses of 9-12 credit hours at level 7 in a zero semester upon admission, with a minimum GPA of 3.00 out of 4.00.
 - 2. Satisfaction of the admission committee regarding the applicant's preparedness for the doctoral program.
 - 3. These requirements supplement other admission criteria of the University.
- d. GRE/GAT/HAT General with a passing score of 60%, or acceptance of an equivalent test to GRE/GAT/HAT General conducted by testing bodies accredited by HEC, with a passing score of 60%.
- e. Additionally, the University reserves the right to conduct subject tests for admission to PhD. programs, as deemed necessary.
- f. Applicants seeking admission to PhD. programs must submit a statement of purpose as an integral part of their application. The admissions committee will use this statement to assess the candidate's readiness and interest in pursuing doctoral studies, as well as to determine the department's capacity to train and supervise the applicant in their chosen subspecialty. The statement of purpose will include at least the following:
 - 1. Title of the potential research proposal.
 - 2. Clear articulation of the applicant's current understanding of the intended field and ideas for potential research.

3. Explanation of the projected impact of the proposed research.
4. Demonstration of passion and enthusiasm for the chosen research.
- g. Admission will be granted on the recommendations of the Campus Admission Committee.

2. COURSEWORK AND RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT

- a. If a graduate student wishes to shift the emphasis of their coursework, they can do so until the end of the first semester. However, to align with the new emphasis, the student must undertake additional courses related to the changed focus. The Departmental Advisory Committee (DAC) / Campus Admission Committee holds the authority to recommend such changes, which will require the final approval of the Dean of the respective faculty.
- b. If a candidate's prior degree coursework in the relevant field does not adequately prepare them for the Ph.D. program, they may need to address the deficiency by undertaking one or more additional non-credit courses, as recommended by the Departmental Advisory Committee / Campus Admission Committee.
- c. Admission will be granted on the recommendations of the Campus Admission Committee.
- d. Ph.D. Scholars seeking to enroll in a course with prerequisites they have already passed during their MS. program at the University will be exempted from registering for those prerequisite courses.
- e. Ph.D. Scholars cannot register for courses they have already completed and passed during their MS. program at the University. Instead, they must select other approved courses from the applicable Scheme of Studies to fulfill their coursework requirements.
- f. Courses will be conducted on campus through regular classes during morning, evening, or weekends, led by full-time faculty members of the University. Preference will be given to courses at the 800 level.
- g. A Ph.D. Scholar can enroll for a minimum of 09 and a maximum of 12 credit hours in a semester.

3. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

- a. Upon completing coursework, each PhD. student must pass the comprehensive examination to attain candidacy as a PhD. researcher. Students failing the exam can repeat it once. The student must apply for the exam using the designated form



through their supervisor to the Convener of the Departmental Advisory Committee (DAC), usually the Department Head.

- b. The necessary coursework, comprehensive exam, and synopsis/research proposal defense will be accomplished within the first six semesters of PhD program registration. Both the student and the supervisor share the responsibility. Failure to comply may result in registration cancellation and issuance of coursework completion transcripts to the student.
- c. Under HEC policy, two attempts are allowed for the comprehensive exam. If unsuccessful on the first attempt, the student can retake the failed paper(s). The reexam must be held not earlier than 45 days and not later than six months from the previous result declaration. Failure to clear the exam within two attempts or the specified time frame renders the student ineligible for Ph.D. candidature, leading to admission cancellation.
- d. In cases of force majeure, like noncompliance due to circumstances beyond the student's control, the Dean may address the matter following the stipulated procedure.
- e. The exam will assess conceptual knowledge relevant to the student's discipline. It will cover the studied courses, ideally at the graduate level, on a single composite question paper, and evaluation will be aggregate-based, pass/fail, and not graded.
- f. The Department, in consultation with the Departmental Advisory Committee, is responsible for the Comprehensive Examination. A committee, comprising at least three senior PhD. teachers from relevant or allied departments, designs question papers, administer the exam, and forward results to the Examinations Department for further proceedings as per practice in vogue.

1.1 RESEARCH PROPOSAL (SYNOPSIS)

- 1.1.1 The student is required to submit a synopsis or research proposal in consultation with their supervisor, based on the advice of the Departmental Advisory Committee.
- 1.1.2 It is preferable for a PhD student to have their synopsis approved within the first four semesters from the date of their first registration. However, in exceptional circumstances, the respective Departmental Advisory Committee may grant a maximum of two-semester relaxation upon the recommendation of the supervisor or Supervisory Committee. In case of failure of Synopsis approval in maximum permissible time duration, the admission of student shall stand cancelled without any notice.

- 1.1.3 The synopsis shall be approved by the respective Dean of the Faculty, using the prescribed proforma and based on the recommendations from the following:
- The respective supervisor / supervisor committee
 - Departmental Advisory Committee.
- 1.1.4 The Office of the Registrar shall issue a notification regarding the approval of the PhD. synopsis, and it shall be presented to the Board of Advanced Studies and Research for information.
- 1.1.5 If applicable, the area of specialization shall be notified along with the title of the PhD. synopsis for the respective students. The area of specialization will be mentioned in the student's transcript only if it has been approved and mentioned in the notified Scheme of Studies for the respective PhD. program.
- 1.1.6 The Convener of the Departmental Advisory Committee (Head of Department/Chairperson) shall provide the "Turnitin Similarity Report" for the approval of the PhD. synopsis. The respective Dean shall approve the synopsis based on the "Turnitin Similarity Report" to ensure the quality and prevent plagiarism in the research conducted at university. The similarity percentage shall be within the upper limit as per the HEC regulations.

1.2 **PLAGIARISM, SIMILARITY TEST, AND OPEN DEFENSE**

- 1.2.1 The University's plagiarism regulations align with the guidelines provided by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The policy is regularly updated in accordance with any amendments made by the HEC. Applicable to graduate students, the regulations aim to prevent and address cases of plagiarism, fostering a culture of academic honesty and originality. The regulations outline expectations for academic integrity, consequences of plagiarism, and procedures for investigating and addressing plagiarism allegations. Adherence to these regulations enhances a culture of integrity among graduate students.
- 1.2.2 Plagiarism, ensuring academic integrity, and conducting defenses are key aspects of maintaining the quality and ethics of research. The following guidelines are established for addressing plagiarism, conducting similarity tests, and organizing open defenses:
- 1.2.2.1 Under no circumstances shall a dissertation based on plagiarized research be acceptable. Both researchers and their supervisors bear the primary responsibility for preventing plagiarism. Adhering to the provisions outlined in the document "Governing Research Supervision and Research Ethics" is crucial to avoid



plagiarism.

1.2.2.2 Plagiarism prevention must follow the guidelines set by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

1.2.2.3 In the event of a dissertation being found plagiarized, it will be managed in accordance with the Anti-Plagiarism Policy issued by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, which is subject to updates over time.

1.2.2.4 Before submitting the dissertation to external examiners, a similarity test must be conducted in alignment with HEC's Anti-Plagiarism Policy. This test helps identify any potential instances of plagiarism.

1.2.2.5 A defense of the dissertation is a crucial step after the dissertation receives positive evaluation by committee members. The following minimum principles and guidelines apply:

1.2.2.5.1 The defense details must be announced on the University website and other relevant communication platforms to enable interested individuals to participate.

1.2.2.5.2 The defense venue will be accessible to both University community members and external participants, such as community halls or other public venues.

1.2.2.5.3 A neutral chairperson, appointed by the concerned Dean oversees the defense to ensure fairness and compliance with regulations.

1.2.2.5.4 A committee is responsible for evaluating both the dissertation and the defense process.

1.2.2.5.5 The researcher presents their dissertation to the audience, highlighting its key aspects and findings.

1.2.2.5.6 A session for questions and answers follows the presentation, providing an opportunity for evaluators and the audience to engage in dialogue.

1.2.2.5.7 The evaluation is based on the quality of research presented and the researcher's ability to effectively defend their work.

1.2.2.5.8 The defense committee renders a final decision, which could include:

I. Pass

II. Pass with minor amendments.

III. Deferral for resubmission and re-defense

IV. Fail (in exceptional circumstances, with reasons documented by the defense committee)

1.3 FACULTY AND SUPERVISORY STAFF

- 1.3.1 For launching an MS./Equivalent program, a department must have a minimum of two (2) full-time faculty members holding PhD. degrees in the relevant field. If a PhD. program is also planned in the same discipline and department; this number can be increased to three (3).
- 1.3.2 The appointment tenure for full-time faculty members must not be shorter than the duration of the intended degree program.
- 1.3.3 The teacher-to-student ratio will be 1:12. A supervisor can oversee a maximum of twelve (12) MS./PhD. students concurrently, with no more than five (5) of these students being PhD. candidates.

1.4 FACULTY'S RELEVANCE TO SUBJECT/DEGREE PROGRAM

- 1.4.1 Faculty members' subject and supervisory relevance shall be determined based on:

- 1.4.1.1 Qualifications, including bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.

- 1.4.1.2 Research output, including thesis /dissertations and published articles.

- 1.4.1.3 Teaching and administrative experience.

- 1.4.1.4 The Relevance Assessment Committee (RAC) is responsible for evaluating the suitability of faculty members for program and dissertation supervision. Comprising a minimum of five members, the committee includes the Dean of the Faculty, the Incharge of the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) of the university, two external subject experts with a rank of at least professor or associate professor, and a member of the Program Team/Assessment Team who played a significant role in crafting the self-assessment report of the program.

1.5 CREDITS TRANSFER, EVALUATION AND GRADING

- 1.5.1.1 COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) facilitates student transfers from local or foreign educational institutions to University, as well as transfers among various University campuses. The migration process adheres to the University's regulations and guidelines, ensuring a systematic and thorough evaluation of each migration request. In extraordinary situations, upon recommendations from the Rector/Vice Chancellor/Campus Director of the respective institution, the Registrar's Office oversees approval cases under the authority of the Rector. The Rector holds the power to authorize student transfers within University or from reputable foreign/Pakistani universities, subject to specific conditions.

- 1.5.1.2 The Policy Guidelines set forth by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for



the Implementation of the Uniform Semester System extend to Level-7 and 8 programs. This extension encompasses various aspects, including the transfer of credits for course work between universities, student assessments, grading systems, and related matters. The transfer of research work is also permissible under specific conditions determined by the University. This allowance is contingent upon the host University's acceptance of the research conducted at the parent University before initiating the process of credit transfer.

- 1.5.1.3 Each department establishes a standing committee responsible for evaluating credit transfers from other universities. Credit hours are only transferrable between recognized Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and globally recognized universities to maintain credibility. Credit transfers into accredited programs are exclusively permitted from relevant accredited programs, in accordance with the regulations established by the relevant accreditation bodies.
- 1.5.1.4 Applicants become eligible to apply after successfully completing their first semester and must submit their applications at least four weeks before the upcoming semester's commencement. Applicants are required to maintain their enrollment status at their parent University throughout the application process.
- 1.5.1.5 Candidates must provide certificates such as SSC & HSSC/equivalent, BA/BSc, MS., etc., demonstrating a minimum of 60% marks. The merit of applicants will match or surpass the merit criteria established for the University's respective batch admissions.
- 1.5.1.6 Students who previously participated in the University entry test but failed to secure admission due to low merit are not eligible for transfer.
- 1.5.1.7 Only courses with a minimum grade of B are transferable, and they must align with courses offered by the University or their equivalents at least 80% of same/similar course contents.
- 1.5.1.8 Transferred credits contribute to degree requirements and will be shown separately on transcript, but the CGPA/GPA of transferred credits does not affect the CGPA calculation at the University.
- 1.5.1.9 Candidates must complete at least 60% of the credit hours required for their degree program.
- 1.5.1.10 The originating University/college/institute from which a student intends to migrate must be reputable, accredited where applicable, recognized by HEC, and holds a commendable standing/ranking.
- 1.5.1.11 Applicants from international institutions must ensure that their



institute/University holds accreditation from the respective accreditation body and HEC.

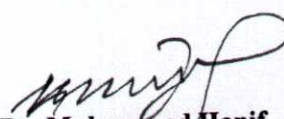
- 1.5.1.12 Inter-institutional transfers within the University are permissible only once and are processed based on established procedures, periodically revised, and sanctioned by the Rector/University.
- 1.5.1.13 Transferred students are ineligible for Honors/Awards at the University.
- 1.5.1.14 Applications must be submitted at least four weeks before the commencement of a regular semester.
- 1.5.1.15 For accredited programs, recommended migration cases are reported to accrediting councils like PEC to obtain NOC before admission.
- 1.5.1.16 The Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) governing University Migration, as amended over time, apply to all migration cases.
- 1.5.1.17 Applicants need to submit the completed form along with essential documents to the relevant Campus Director. The application package includes official transcripts of semesters completed at the Parent University, photocopies of Matric and FSc/ equivalent, BA, MA, MS., etc., examination mark sheets, detailed course outlines for completed courses, NOC from the Parent University, character certificate from the Parent University, and a bank draft payable to the University as the migration processing fee. Migration/Transfer Fee (PKR): Migration from foreign universities: 250,000, Migration from local universities: 100,000, and Transfer within University: 10,000. Additionally, students at CUI have the flexibility to pay their fees in dollars by using the conversion rate established by the State Bank of Pakistan on the date when the fee voucher is issued. The migration fee is subject to change without prior notice.
- 1.5.1.18 The University retains the right to reject any application without stating a reason, and such rejections cannot be contested in any court of law.
- 1.5.1.19 Migration of students from one campus to another is a privilege extended by COMSATS University Islamabad (University) to facilitate students, not an inherent student right.
- 1.5.1.20 Migration is granted only in special or unavoidable situations, such as medical/health difficulties or emergent/accidental circumstances. Applicants must provide substantial evidence with the application.
- 1.5.1.21 The migration process must be completed before the commencement of a semester. Students must apply at least four weeks in advance. Late applications may be considered for the subsequent semester if feasible.

- 1.5.1.22 Migration is not permitted during the first semester under any circumstances.
- 1.5.1.23 Only students with Good Academic Standing (GAS) status are considered eligible for migration.
- 1.5.1.24 Upon receiving a migration request, the Head of Department (HoD) must obtain written consent from the current supervisor, co-supervisor, student supervisory committee, and departmental advisory committee.

This is issued in continuation of Notification No. CUI-Reg/Notif-1735/23/1823 dated August 18, 2023, and partially modifies the relevant clauses of the HEC Graduate Education Policy (GEP-2023) effective from Fall 2023 admissions within the CUI System. Further, all graduate forms, templates, procedures, and process, etc., shall remain the same.

The students admitted prior to and including Spring 2023 at CUI shall fulfill their degree requirements as stipulated in the CUI Graduate Handbook 2023.

All other graduate rules, regulations, statutes, policies and practices of the University shall remain applicable, subject to amendments as made from time to time.


Dr. Muhammad Hanif
Deputy Registrar

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