

# COMSATS University Islamabad

Registrar Secretariat, Academic Unit (PS)

No. CUI-Reg/Notif-2058 /24/ 2129

September 16, 2024

## NOTIFICATION

The Academic Council in its 39<sup>th</sup> meeting held on August 01, 2024, approved the following with immediate effect for implementation at CUI System, based on the recommendations of all/respective Board of Faculties of CUI and Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASAR) respectively:

The Academic Council discussed in detail the proposed Guidelines for Open Defense Procedures and Recording Protocols for Online Presentations as per "Clause 3.10 Plagiarism, Similarity Test, and Open Defense of Graduate Education Policy-2023 (GEP-2023)" and approved the following policy and procedure for Open Defense:

**Plagiarism** must be addressed in accordance with COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) guidelines. In the event that a PhD dissertation is found to be plagiarized, it will be handled according to the Anti-Plagiarism Policy issued by the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan, as updated periodically. Prior to submission to external experts/examiners, the dissertation must undergo a similarity test, conducted in line with the HEC's Anti-Plagiarism Policy.

**Open Defense** of the dissertation is mandated following a positive evaluation by committee members. The defense process must adhere to the following detailed principles and guidelines:

### a) Public Announcement:

1. Announcement of the defense must be disseminated on the university website, official social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram), and other communication channels, by the respective campus ensuring accessibility to interested individuals. This multi-channel approach ensures broad reach and maximizes engagement from various stakeholders, including faculty members, students, and the wider academic community.
2. Additionally, clear instructions on how interested parties can participate, whether in-person or remotely, should be provided across all communication channels to facilitate seamless access to the defense session and encourage active participation in the academic dialogue.

### b) Public Access:

1. The defense venue should be accessible to the public, whether held within the university premises or at external locations such as community/town halls, conference centers, or other significant public venues. This practice aligns with the accessibility standards observed by universities and ensures that interested individuals, including members of the academic community and the general public, can attend the defense session without barriers. By providing inclusive access to the defense venue, CUI promotes transparency, academic engagement, and the dissemination of scholarly knowledge to a wider audience.

### c) Neutral Chair/Convener:

1. The Dean of the respective faculty or his/her nominee, in case of the absence of the Dean, must preside over the defense proceedings, online or in-person, to ensure fairness and compliance with

Handwritten signature and date: 16/9

regulations, mirroring the impartiality practiced by leading universities. The role of the Chair/Convener is pivotal in maintaining the integrity of the defense process by facilitating constructive dialogue, enforcing procedural guidelines, and fostering an environment conducive to scholarly discourse. Chair/Convener who is not directly involved in the dissertation research or evaluation, upholds the principles of impartiality and transparency, thereby instilling confidence in the integrity of the defense proceedings.

**d) Review Committee:**

1. A dedicated review committee, comprising qualified members, is tasked with evaluating both the dissertation and the defense.

**Composition of Open Defense Committee at CUI**

- Dean of Concerned Faculty: Convener
- Two External Examiners: Members
- Chairperson of the respective Department: Member
- Student's Research Supervisor: Member
- Head of the concerned Department: Member/Secretary

- a. If the Dean of the concerned Faculty is unavailable both online and/or in-person during the Oral Defense, the Chairperson assumes the role of Convener.
- b. If the Chairperson of the concerned Department is unavailable online and/or in-person to serve as Convener, the respective Dean nominates the senior Professor or senior faculty member, if any Professor is not available, of the concerned Department to fulfill this role online and/or in-person.

**e) Presentation:**

1. The PhD researcher is entrusted with presenting the dissertation during the defense session, providing a detailed overview of the research methodology, findings, and conclusions. This presentation serves as an opportunity for the researcher to demonstrate their knowledge, expertise, and the significance of their work to the committee and other attendees. Additionally, it allows for the clarification of any questions or concerns raised during the defense, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research conducted.

**f) Question and Answer Session:**

1. Following the presentation, a designated question and answer session ensues, providing an invaluable opportunity for defense evaluation. This session facilitates a thorough examination and clarification of various research aspects, allowing committee members and attendees to delve deeper into the dissertation's content, methodology, and implications. It fosters academic dialogue, critical inquiry, and ensures a comprehensive assessment of the research conducted.

**g) Objective Evaluation:**

1. The evaluation of the defense is based on the quality of the research and the researcher's ability to effectively defend their work. This evaluation criterion aligns with the rigorous standards applied by leading universities, ensuring a fair and thorough assessment. The focus is on the originality,

*inj*  
*16/9*

significance, and rigor of the research, as well as the clarity and depth of the researcher's responses during the defense session.

**h) Final Decision:**

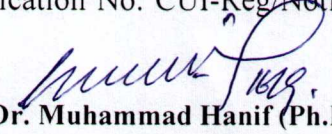
1. The final decision regarding the defense outcome is expressed in specific terms:
  - *Pass*
  - *Pass with minor amendments.*
  - *Deferred for resubmission and re-defense.*
  - *Fail (only under exceptional circumstances, with reasons documented by the defense committee)*

**i) Mode of Open Defense Proceedings and Recording Protocols:**

1. Normally, Open Defense for MS and PhD will be conducted in person only. However, under exceptional circumstances "Force majeure" and events such as natural disasters, wars, extra ordinary strikes like curfew and other similar extraordinary events beyond the control of a MS/PhD students' remote location for medical treatment or travel constraints, the Rector, upon the recommendations from the Convener of the above committee, determines the mode of the Open Defense (online via Zoom/Microsoft Teams/other reliable Virtual Platform or in-person).
2. Security and privacy measures include using password-protected meetings and restricting access to authorized participants registered for open defense. Recordings of the session are securely stored, and dissemination is managed to maintain confidentiality.
3. Digital copies of the thesis, evaluation forms/reports, and committee reports are retained. The Convener ensures fairness, academic integrity, and consistency throughout the defense process. If an online defense is permitted, the entire proceedings are recorded and securely archived by the examination department for permanent reference.

All relevant clauses will partially modify the corresponding clauses of graduate rules, regulations, common policies, and all other notifications issued from time to time with respect to the extent of the above.

This issues with the approval of the Rector CUI and supersedes the notification No. CUI-Reg/Notif-2046/24/2116 dated September 12, 2024.

  
**Dr. Muhammad Hanif (Ph.D)**  
Deputy Registrar

**Distribution:**

1. All Campus Directors / Incharge, Islamabad Campus
2. All Principal Officers / All Deans of Faculties
3. All Chairpersons of Academic Departments / All Heads of Departments
4. Treasurer / Controller of Examinations / Director of Planning & Development / HRD
5. All Incharge Graduates/Academics/Examination/Registration/Admission/Accounts of Campuses
6. GM, Rector Office / Incharge HR / QEC / Cuonline, PS / Sr. Manager (IT) ISB
7. Internal Distribution, Registrar Office

**Cc:**

1. SO to the Rector
2. PS to the Registrar