



PIFD Graduate Research Policy & Procedures (GRPP)

2025

PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF FASHION AND DESIGN

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PIFD Graduate Research Policy & Procedures (GRPP) 2025

Introduction

The Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD) Graduate Research Policy & Procedures outlines the rules and regulations designed to achieve excellence in research while upholding high academic standards. It details the lifecycle of the postgraduate research programmes concerning admissions, supervision, examination, research monitoring, dissertations, external examiners, viva presentations, ethics, and discipline. The PIFD Graduate Research Policy & Procedures align with PIFD's vision for research, innovation, and quality education, as well as the guidelines established by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan in the Graduate Education Policy 2023.

The PIFD research policy fosters a strong research culture at PIFD that encourages practices essential for producing high-quality, impact-factor, original work. The primary purpose of the research policy and procedures is to assist and support research scholars, faculty, and students in their research pursuits while keeping them informed of the policies and guidelines when commencing and conducting original study for the creation of new knowledge in the field.

The policy ensures the efficient and effective progress of research activities by guiding research scholars and faculty. It monitors research practices and ensures that the information collected by the researcher during the investigation is accurate, the procedures followed are methodical and sustainable, and the findings are precise and factual without any biases.

The policy and procedures are fundamental to maintaining high professional standards and research integrity, safeguarding the interests of researchers & participants, and minimizing ethical risks. It informs practices and activities concerning academic and financial matters, student relations, health and safety, and issues related to research.

The policy also defines research misconduct as fabrication, manipulation, or false interpretation of data or findings. It guides research scholars on how to implement core values related to research ethics, ensuring that academic communities are protected from academic misconduct. The research policy and procedures aim to raise awareness about preventing all forms of plagiarism among stakeholders, including students, mentors/supervisors, researchers, faculty members, and staff of the institute. It addresses a central issue of academic dishonesty and outlines the processes for investigating any complaints of plagiarism.

MPhil/ M. Des / MSc

PIFD graduate education policy for MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent Degrees (Level 7) follow the guidelines set by HEC. The following are the details of the admission procedure, eligibility requirements, coursework, timeline, examination, grading, and evaluation:

1. Admissions

1.1 Entry Requirements - Eligibility

The following are the eligibility criteria for admission to MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent programme according to PIFD Graduate Research Policy & Procedures and HEC guidelines:

- Sixteen years or 4 years of education (minimum 120 credit hours) after HSSC/F.A./F.Sc/Grade 12 or Equivalent shall be required for admission in the MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent programme.

1.2 Additional Requirements

i. A Personal Statement

A Personal Statement is also an important part of the admission requirement and must be submitted along with the admission application, and should include:

- Reasons for applying to the programme
- Research interest in the field
- Personal interests
- Aptitude and background
- Future career plans
- Any other relevant information

ii. Two strong reference letters (academic or professional)

iii. Updated Resume/ CV

iv. Attested copies of Degrees and Transcript

v. Professional Portfolio

For Practice-based programmes, professional portfolios (digital), or related/updated work.

vi. Original degrees at the time of the interview

vii. No Objection Certificate (NOC)

NOC is required from the faculty of other Institutes / Universities for registration in MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent degrees at PIFD.

The Admission Committee will evaluate the Personal Statement, Reference Letters, Professional Portfolio, degrees, and transcript of the applicant for eligibility and forward its recommendation to the Head of Department/programme (HoD).

1.3 Admission Test

PIFD will:

i. Conduct a rigorous admission test for admission to MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent programmes, with a passing score of 50%.

OR

ii. Accept the GRE/HAT General/Equivalent tests, with a passing score of 50%.

1.4 Intradisciplinary Qualifications

Intradisciplinary admission shall only be allowed if:

- i. The applicant has a strong interest in pursuing an MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent degree in a different discipline.
- ii. The applicant has passed the GRE-subject/equivalent test with a minimum of 50% marks in the discipline of admission and has taken 6-9 credit hours of deficiency courses at level 6.
- iii. The admission committee is satisfied that the applicant's knowledge of the primary area (level 6) has sufficiently prepared him/her to undertake the course of studies of the MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent programme (or, in the opinion of the admission committee, the preparation can be deemed satisfactory by taking a few additional courses after starting the programme).

1.5 Coursework Requirement

For the award of MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent degrees, candidate shall:

- Complete **24** credit hours of coursework along with a minimum of six (6) credit hours for research work/thesis.

OR

- If required, complete a minimum of 30 credit hours of coursework.
- In the case of research or practice-based work, the student must appear for thesis defense and submit creative work/ collection (depending on the nature of the study).

Deficiency Courses

As per HEC Graduate Policy, a student is required to take 6 - 9 Credit Hours of deficiency courses before enrolling in the MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent degree Programme.

Degree Completion Timeline

- The MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent degree shall be awarded by the universities, not before the completion of 2 years or four regular semesters as a full-time student, and not after the completion of 4 years or eight regular semesters as a part-time student.
- In case a student is unable to secure an MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent within the prescribed timeframe, he/she may apply for an extension in duration. In the event of force majeure (i.e., delay on account of circumstances beyond the control of the student), the application will be forwarded by the Head of Department/Programme to the Examination Committee (EC). The Examination Committee shall determine the causes of the delay. The decision of the EC will be forwarded by the HoD to BASR, which may grant an extension of one year.
- An extension of a maximum of one more year may be granted by the BASR after reviewing the case if the student is still unable to fulfill degree requirements after the one-year extension given earlier.

1.6 Credits Transfer

The BASR may consider credits earned by a student at another HEC-recognized institution, subject to a maximum of 50 percent of the minimum credit requirements for the degree, on the recommendations of the Equivalence Committee, provided that:

- i. The contents of the course(s) for which credit is claimed are identical or similar to the course included in his / her planned coursework.
- ii. The course for which credit is claimed should not have been used for any other Degree within the institute.

- iii. Courses with less than a B grade shall not be considered for transfer of Credit Hours.
- The transfer of research work is permissible, provided that the host university accepts the research conducted at the parent university before the credit transfer.

1.7 Medium of Instruction

The medium of instruction and examination shall be English (Except for courses prescribed by PIFD, if any).

1.8 Examination

The following are the guidelines for examination:

- There shall be two examinations, Mid and Final, in each semester. In addition to these examinations, the teacher shall give home assignments and quizzes, etc., to the students. The form of these examinations will be left to the teacher, who will be solely responsible for the conduct of the examination as well as evaluation in his / her course. The grade given in the course by the teacher shall be final.
- Only those students who have at least 75% attendance in theory and practical / Lab work separately in each course shall be eligible to appear in the final examination.
- The final examination for a semester shall be held on a date, time, and place to be notified by the department in advance.
- The mid-semester examination will be held during the 9th week of the semester, and carries 20 % of the total allocated marks for the course. This examination shall be held by the teacher concerned, who will determine the form of the examination.
- There will be no Supplementary or Special Examination in a Semester System; if a student fails a course, he/she is required to repeat it. An incomplete grade (I) will be awarded by the faculty only in exceptional cases beyond the control of a student after the recommendation of the examination committee.
- The final examination covering the full syllabus shall be held at the end of each semester.

- The final examination for a semester shall be held on a date, time, and place to be notified by the department in advance.
- The teacher shall send the final award list along with answer sheets of mid, final, and practical for the course to the office of the Controller of Examination within the period prescribed. A soft copy of the award list should also be sent to the office of the Head of the Department /Program Director.
- On receipt of the award lists, the Controller of Examination shall notify the results and circulate, accordingly.

1.9 Grading & Evaluation

- The absolute Grading System is recommended for adoption in the Institute. The grading shall be done on a **4.00** scale.
- Equivalence between Letter Grading and Numerical Grading shall be according to the Fractionalized Grading Policy.

Grading Table

Marks Range	Grade Point	Letter Grade
85 – 100	4.00	A+
80 – 84	3.70	A
75 – 79	3.30	B+
70 – 74	3.00	B
66 – 69	2.70	B-
63 – 65	2.30	C+
60 – 62	2.00	C
56 – 59	1.70	C-
53 – 55	1.30	D+
50 – 52	1.00	D
Below 50	0.00	F
Incomplete	0.00	I
Withdraw	0.00	W
No Grade reported	0.00	N
Transfer Credits	- -	TR

Minimum Required GPA / CGPA

- If a student fails to obtain a CGPA of **2.50** at the end of each academic year (Fall and Spring), his/her admission shall stand canceled. However, he/she may seek fresh admission as and when the Institute offers.
- A CGPA of 3.00 out of 4.00 is required to qualify for the award of the degree.

Doctor of Philosophy, PhD

A PhD degree is the highest level of academic qualification, which focuses on advanced and original research carried out by the doctoral candidate to develop new and original ideas and contribute to their field of study. The policies and procedures related to doctoral degree Admissions, Supervision, Examination, Research Monitoring, Thesis / Dissertation, External Examiners, and Viva Voce are explained in this section.

2. Admissions

The PhD admission policy and procedures align with HEC Graduate Education Policy 2023. It defines the entry requirement, which includes the eligibility and selection criteria.

2.1 Entry Requirements - Eligibility

According to PIFD Graduate Research Policy & Procedures and HEC guidelines, the following are the eligibility criteria for admission to a doctoral programme at PIFD.

- i. 18 years of education in a design or relevant field with a minimum of 3.0 CGPA (out of 4.0 in the semester system) or 60% marks or 1st division (in the annual system). 16 years of education, having a minimum CGPA of 2.5 (out of 4.0) in the semester system or 1st division in the annual system.
- ii. Applicant enrolled in MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent studies and interested in continuing to PhD may be granted provisional admission upon satisfaction with the Admission Committee regarding the Statement of Purpose and students' commitment to the PhD programme, provided that confirmation of the admission shall be subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions within one year from the date of provisional admission:
 - Award of MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent degree, within one year (In case of non-compliance, the admission will be canceled).

- Clearance of the admission test, as per PIFD regulations.
- iii. An applicant who demonstrated a keen interest in obtaining a PhD degree but has a CGPA below 3.00 (out of 4.0 in the semester system) or 60% marks (in the annual system) in MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent (most recent degree obtained) may be admitted to a relevant PhD programme after fulfilling the following requirements:
- The applicant has a strong interest in pursuing PhD in a different discipline.
 - The admission committee is satisfied that the applicant's knowledge of the primary area (level 7) has sufficiently prepared him or her to undertake the course of studies of the doctoral programme. These requirements shall be in addition to any other requirements set in this policy for admission to a PhD programme.
 - The applicant has passed the GRE-Subject / Equivalent Test with a minimum of 50% marks in the discipline of admission and has taken 6-9 Credit Hours of deficiency courses of level 7.
 - The applicant must have minimum one year of professional working experience after MPhil/M.Des/MSc/MS/Equivalent, in the field of study.

These requirements shall be in addition to any other requirements set in this policy for admission to a PhD programme.

2.2 Additional Requirements

The following are the additional mandatory requirements for admission.

- i. Attested copies of degrees and transcript.
- ii. Updated Resume/ CV.
- iii. English language test IELTS with a minimum score of 7.0 is required for international/foreign students where the medium of instruction is not English.
- iv. A Statement of Purpose / Research Proposal:

A Statement of Purpose (SOP) or Research Statement is an important part of the Doctoral admission requirement and application. The applicant must submit a SOP along with the application. The admissions committee shall use the information provided to ascertain the preparedness and interest of the candidate in pursuing doctoral studies and also to see whether the department has the requisite resources to train and supervise the doctoral candidates in the subspecialty in which the applicant is interested. A Statement of Purpose should include:

- Topic/ Title of the Research Proposal

- Research Objectives
- Initial Research Questions
- Research Background/ Historical Context
- Interest and passion for the area of research
- Understanding of the intended field of research for the generation of original knowledge and its impact locally or globally
- Short Methodology
- Bibliography

v. A Personal Statement:

A Personal Statement is also an important part of the Doctoral admission requirement and must be submitted along with the admission application and other important documentation. It should include:

- Reasons for applying to the programme
- Research interest in the field
- Personal interests
- Aptitude and background
- Future career plans
- Any other relevant information

vi. Reference Letters:

Two strong reference letters (academic and professional) with the contact details of the referee are mandatory. The referee should not be a close family member.

vii. Strong Professional Portfolio:

Another important requirement for PhD in Design is the submission of a professional portfolio or related / updated work (Digital) with relevant work experience.

viii. Original Degrees at the time of the interview:

The Admission Committee will evaluate the SOP, Personal Statement, Reference Letters, Professional Portfolio, degrees, and transcript of the applicant for eligibility and forward its recommendation to the Head of Department/programme (HoD).

2.3 PhD Admission Test

PIFD will conduct:

- A test equivalent to GRE/HAT General developed at the University, with a passing score of 60%.
- OR
- Accept a test equivalent to GRE/HAT General, conducted by testing bodies accredited by HEC, with a passing score of 60%.
- PIFD may conduct a subject-specific test where necessary.

2.4 Admission Procedure

- An applicant seeking admission to PhD programme must apply on the prescribed form to the Registrar/ Graduate Admission Office.
- All applications shall be forwarded to the concerned department by the Registrar/ Graduate Admission Office.
- The department will scrutinize the application for eligibility.
- The HoD will propose relevant faculty members for the interview. The Admission Committee will be constituted comprising of at least three members of the academic staff and convened by the Dean or Head of Department, who will scrutinize the application.
- Interviews will be conducted once the applicant has cleared the admission test with a passing score of 60%.
- The applicant will be selected according to the following criteria:
 - i. The applicant's academic and professional portfolio. His/ her understanding of the topic and the ability to execute a focused and relevant study that meets the degree standards.
 - ii. The research proposal is relevant, viable, and current; will create new knowledge that will positively impact the field of study.
 - iii. The availability of a supervisor from the field of study with experience and expertise.
 - iv. The availability of sufficient staff and resources for conducting scholarly or practice-based research in the specific area of study.

Regular Admission

- Applicants meeting the minimum admission requirements are considered for admission as a regular student.
- Regular student offers of admission are either with no conditions, conditional, or with additional requirements. A student may register on a full-time or part-time basis and will follow PIFD Semester regulations.

Conditional Admission

Conditional admission may include, but are not limited to:

- Requirements for submitting full official documentation.
- Completion of a previous degree or attaining a required qualification.
- Degree equivalence certificate if required.
- Conditional offers of admission will have time limits before starting the coursework or a suitable time frame as decided by the admission committee.

- The offer of admission will be canceled if these conditions are not met.

All admissions will be forwarded for approval to the Graduate Admission Committee.

2.5 Joining Doctoral Programme

- Once admission is confirmed, the student will report and submit the required joining proforma to the concerned Head of Department (HoD). The HoD will forward the joining proforma to the Registrar's office. All copies of the original application, joining proforma, and all the documents will be forwarded by the Registrar to the concerned section/ departments. The Graduate Admission office will maintain their record and proceed further.
- After all the required documents are submitted, the Registrar's office will notify the joining.
- The copies of the joining report will be sent to all concerned persons including the Supervisor, Controller of Examinations, Head of Department, Account Office, and Security. In case funding is involved, the funding agency will be notified.
- The student's admission file will be sent from the Registrar's office to the HoD for further processing.

2.6 Programme Structure

TITLE	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
DURATION & MODE OF THE PROGRAMME	Full-Time (3 years to 6 years) Part-Time (5 years to 8 years)
RESEARCH TYPE	Theory-based Research - Thesis/ Dissertation Practice-based Research - Thesis & Collection
TOTAL CREDIT HOURS:	Minimum 48 Credit Hours <u>Compulsory Course Work:</u> 18 Credit Hours <u>Thesis / Creative work:</u> Minimum 30 Credit Hours
COMMENCEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME	Fall/ Spring or both
MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SEATS	5

3. Supervision

PIFD Graduate Research Policy & Procedures follow the detailed guidelines stated in the HEC Graduate Research Policy 2023. The policy covers the principles, criteria for selection of PhD supervisors, publication requirements, supervisory process, and teaching and research assistantship.

3.1 Supervision of Doctoral Research

The Head of the Department/ programme shall notify a PhD Supervisory Committee comprising of :

- Supervisor
- Co-supervisor
- Two subject experts

The copies of the notification will be sent to members of the PhD Supervisory Committee and BASR. The supervisor will convene the PhD Supervisory Committee for consultation.

The maximum number of seats for each PhD programme in an academic year shall be five. The Head of Department, with the approval of the Academic Council, will allocate the number of seats depending on the availability of supervisors and resources.

Doctoral Research Supervisor

The research supervisor shall be allocated to a doctoral student from the date of his/her enrollment in the programme. Following are the guidelines for the allocation of research supervisors:

- i. A research supervisor shall hold a PhD degree from an HEC-recognized national/international university/degree awarding institute (DAI) in the relevant field of study.
- ii. The supervisor should primarily be a regular/adjunct faculty member of PIFD.
- iii. The PhD supervisors shall be active researcher, who have produced a high level of creative work, contributing to their field, through research publications, exhibitions, projects, etc.
- iv. The field of research of supervisor should also be relevant to the one that the PhD student intends to carry out.
- v. A supervisor should have No Conflict of Interest in personal, financial, or professional stake.

- vi. He/she should be capable of conducting themselves professionally and respectfully throughout the supervision process.
- vii. A supervisor should be available to supervise doctoral dissertations and give clear and constructive feedback to the research candidate.
- viii. The confidentiality and protection of the intellectual property of the doctoral dissertation should be strictly maintained by the supervisor.
- ix. External co-supervisor(s) may be appointed by the HoD if appropriate supervision is not available internally, especially in disciplines with limited experts in the field.
- x. In the case of a non-faculty PhD supervisor who otherwise meets the criteria of being a PhD supervisor, shall be taken as an adjunct faculty member for a period not less than the minimum time required to complete the student's PhD research. Such a person shall also provide an NOC from the parent organization.
- xi. A change of supervisor and co-supervisor may be allowed with the recommendation of the Supervisory Committee to the HoD within the first two years of the PhD studies.

4. Examination

4.1 PhD - Programme of Study / Coursework

Duration & Regulations

Once the student is registered, the study period of the Doctoral programme shall be counted from the date of joining the PhD studies till the Completion Notification of the doctoral degree, once the copies of the final thesis/dissertation are submitted to the HoD office after the changes and amendments suggested by the examiners have been made. The coursework is a fundamental part of the programme. However, a PhD must be based on research, not only on credit hours. Following are the details of the timeline and rules of the PhD Study Programme:

- i. **The minimum period for the completion of PhD studies shall be three years or six semesters, whereas the maximum period shall be six years.**
- ii. Upon recommendation of the Supervisor and HoD, the time may be extended for the maximum period by one year.
- iii. On the recommendation of HoD, an extension of another year may be granted by the BASR.
- iv. The student will submit the PhD study plan and timeline within three months after joining, to the Supervisor for approval from the Board of Studies. The study plan shall include the Area of Research.

- v. A student must complete **18** credit hours of coursework, with a minimum CGPA of 3.0, preferably in the first year (two semesters), offered through regular classes.
- vi. The courses shall preferably be of 800 level.
- vii. The PhD student shall be required to register for a minimum of 9 credit hours in each regular semester at PIFD and for a minimum of 3 credit hours in the summer session.
- viii. If a student fails to register in any semester, it may result in the cancellation of PhD registration.
- ix. The progress report (on a prescribed proforma) shall be evaluated by the Supervisor as Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory at the end of each semester and communicated to the HoD with a copy to the Controller of Examination.
- x. A PhD student is required to pass any deficiency courses recommended by the Admission Committee. These courses shall be mentioned in the plan of study as core courses or recommended courses.
- xi. Each PhD student is required to take her / his coursework and Comprehensive Examinations during the first two years of his / her PhD study period.
- xii. The evaluation of each course will be done as per PIFD semester regulations. The weightage of Sessional marks will be 50%, Mid-term 20%, and Final 30%.
- xiii. To pass a course, a minimum grade point of 2.0 is required.
- xiv. A PhD student shall be allowed to repeat a course only twice.

4.2 Comprehensive Examination

A Comprehensive Examination intends to assess the student's knowledge of the theory, field of research, and capability to communicate his/her understanding of the courses studied. As per HEC guidelines, once the coursework is completed by the PhD student, he/she will be required to pass the Comprehensive Examination to grant candidacy as a PhD scholar/ researcher.

- i. The Comprehensive Examination shall be taken in the taught courses and shall be defined & conducted by the Graduate School/ Department under the supervision of the concerned HOD.
- ii. The mode of examination shall be a comprehensive written test.
- iii. The exam should be based on a recapitulation of the conceptual knowledge of the discipline to which the student is admitted.
- iv. Overall 60% marks shall be required to pass the examination. The evaluation shall be on an aggregate basis, expressed in terms of pass/fail, and not on grade points.

- v. If the student fails to pass the Comprehensive Examination, he/she will have the provision to retake the exam once.
- vi. In case of failing the Comprehensive Examination in two attempts, registration of the concerned PhD student shall be canceled.
- vii. The paper for the Comprehensive Examination will be prepared and checked by the concerned department; the HoD will appoint a committee within the department.
- viii. The result of the Comprehensive Examination, along with the date sheet, question paper, and answer sheets, shall be submitted to the HoD office.

4.3 Synopsis Defense / Oral Examination

After passing the Comprehensive Examination, a PhD student will be eligible to appear in the oral examination, Synopsis Defense.

- The Head of Department/programme will communicate the date and time of the oral examination.
- The student will be required to present his proposed research project/research proposal to the examining committee, highlighting the rationale of the proposed study, original contribution, methodology, potential contribution, and impact.

4.4 Evaluation of Comprehensive Examination & Synopsis Defense

- The pass percentage of both written and oral examinations will be 60%.
- For the overall result of both examinations, the weightage of the written exam will be 60% and the oral exam 40%.
- A PhD student registered in research must maintain a 'Satisfactory' grade throughout his / her study period.
- If a PhD student obtains an 'Unsatisfactory' result at the end of any semester in research, he/she will be placed on probation.
- Two consecutive 'Unsatisfactory' results or three total 'Unsatisfactory' in research will cease a candidate to be a PhD student.
- The HoD concerned shall be responsible for forwarding the final result (along with marked answer scripts and attendance sheets) duly signed by all committee members to the Controller of Examination office in sealed envelopes.
- The Controller of Examination Office shall notify the results.

4.5 Annual Progress Report

Once the PhD student has cleared all examinations, he/she will submit their research study progress report at the end of each academic year to the Supervisory Committee.

The Supervisory Committee will generate An Annual Progress Report of their students. The format of the report submitted by the student shall be in the form of a composite report with details of research activities carried out throughout the year.

The Annual Progress Report prepared by the Supervisory Committee shall include:

- Assessment of Student's progress over the last year.
- Details of any formal training or workshops concerning the research topic.
- Details of research activities carried out.
- Details of supervisory arrangements, including assessment of student's work, frequency of supervisory sessions, suggestions given, and amendments made.
- Any matter related to unethical practices or plagiarism.
- Student's work is according to the required standards.

The supervisory committee will give their recommendations on whether the student will be allowed to continue unconditionally or conditionally. In case there is no progress, the supervisory committee can decide to cancel the registration after approval from BASR.

4.6 Research Activities to be carried out by Doctoral Candidate

Once a PhD student passes the Comprehensive Examination and Synopsis Defense and becomes a doctoral candidate, he/she will be required to give two seminars on his/her research topic, exhibit two design works for practice-based research, and at least one publication in an international conference/ journal, before submission of final doctoral dissertation.

5. Doctoral Dissertations & Creative Work

After passing the examination, a doctoral candidate must write a dissertation that demonstrates the relevance, originality, credibility, effectiveness, and legitimacy of the research conducted in their field of study. This research should be of high quality, featuring innovative ideas, theories, and creative work that significantly contributes to knowledge creation and addresses socioeconomic or other related issues. To enhance the quality of a doctoral dissertation, the following regulations suggested in the HEC Graduate Education Policy, as followed by PIFD, are recommended:

5.1 Selection of Research Area

The research area of the doctoral candidate shall:

- i. Correspond to the community needs at regional and local levels and comply with the priority national research agenda.

- ii. Reflect on the basic and pure research.
- iii. Signify emerging areas of research that coincide preferably with sustainable development goals (SDGs).

5.2 Quality in Reporting

The quality of presentation and reporting in the dissertation shall reflect the following characteristics:

- i. The thesis document is presented in English and is well-written.
- ii. The contents are balanced, well-organized, appropriately styled, clearly structured, logical, and comprehensible.
- iii. The document is free from grammatical and spelling errors and flawed terminology.
- iv. Minor shortcomings such as inaccurate use of abbreviations and uncoordinated sentence structure have been addressed.
- v. Quantitative research proposals must include a valid statistical design for data analysis.
- vi. Formatting shall be compatible with international standards.

5.3 Methodological Quality

To produce PhD researchers capable of conducting independent research, it is essential to ensure the technical soundness of their dissertations. The following guidelines, as outlined in the HEC Graduate Research Policy, are beneficial in making the PhD research methodologically robust:

Quality of Qualitative Research

A PhD dissertation should highlight the following when conducting qualitative research:

- The research illuminates the subjective meaning, actions, and contexts being searched.
- The research generates the knowledge needed to comprehend the structures and processes surrounding individuals or entities.
- The doctoral candidate has addressed and responded to real-life issues.
- A detailed description is provided to interpret the meaning and context of the research.
- Different sources of knowledge are compared and analyzed to address the same issue.

Quality of Quantitative Research

The quantitative research methods should have:

- Reliability
- Validity
- Internal Validity
- External Validity
- Replicability

Appropriate Methods in Relation to the Aims of the Study

To achieve the research objectives, and answer research questions, a doctoral dissertation shall:

- Reflect a fair proportion of the latest knowledge of contemporary techniques and methods concerning study objectives.
- Contain detailed, easily comprehensible discussions regarding the applied methods and techniques.
- Justify the use of methods and techniques to achieve study objectives.
- Show evaluation of obtained results in relation to the objectives.
- The methods and techniques used and the results obtained should justify and support the study objectives.

Relevance to the Policy and Practice

The research should have significantly answered questions related to policy and practice in that area, establishing its usefulness and usability. Accordingly, a PhD dissertation shall:

- Reflect judicious evaluation of study results concerning policy-related aims and goals undertaken while starting the research.
- Discuss the practical implications of the findings in association with the developing practices in that area.
- Establish the benefit of the results for devising policy as stated in the beginning.
- Discuss how the resulting policy would be useful for the organization/society.
- The significance of study output for publication and patent.

The assessment of the results performed by the author must not be superficial and lacking substance.

5.4 Creative Work -Practice-Based Research

For Practice-based research, the creative work of the research candidate forms a significant part of the study and covers the creative and critical context. The thesis thus includes the creative output or work, demonstrating the originality of the idea in

the form of a collection, along with a strong portfolio and dissertation (written text) generated from intellectual inquiry and theoretical context.

- For the Practice-Based Research, an exhibition of the collection (6 -8 pieces) is required along with the dissertation.
- A dissertation of 50 thousand to 80 thousand words is also required for Practice-based Research.
- An Archival record of candidates' practices in the form of photographs, videos, digital records, etc. must be submitted along with the dissertation. It must be submitted to the HoD in a standard retrievable form.

6. External Examiners

As per PIFD policy following HEC guidelines, the PhD Dissertation must be evaluated by:

External Examiners/Reviewers from Advanced Countries

- Two external experts who shall be:
 - i. Two or at least one PhD faculty member from the world's top 500 universities ranked by the Times Higher Education or QS World Ranking in the year corresponding to the dissertation evaluation year.
 - ii. In case two foreign examiners are unavailable, then one Pakistan-based Distinguished National Professor, Meritorious Professors from any national university, professors from top universities ranked by HEC, or professors from any Pakistani University having a minimum H-Index of 30 for Sciences, 15 for Social Sciences, or 8 for Art & Humanities as determined by Web of Science, can be an external examiner.

OR

- At least one external expert qualifying any one of the conditions mentioned above if the PhD candidate publishes dissertation research in a peer-reviewed journal that is classified by the HEC in category W for Sciences.

6.1 Selection Guidelines for External Examiner

The following general guidelines shall, at least, be observed while selecting an external examiner/evaluator:

- i. Relevance of Expertise: The examiner's expertise should be in the same or related fields as in the dissertation.

- ii. No Conflict of Interest: The examiner should have no personal, financial, or professional stakes in a particular decision or outcome.
 - iii. Objectivity: He/she should be capable of making unbiased evaluations.
 - iv. Diversity: His/her knowledge should be diverse in terms of geography, culture, professional backgrounds, etc.
 - v. Reputation: The examiner must have a track record of fair and thorough evaluations.
 - vi. Availability: He/she should have the time and availability to review the dissertation.
 - vii. Professionalism: Should be capable of conducting themselves professionally and respectfully throughout the evaluation and defense process (if applicable).
 - viii. Communication: Should be capable of providing clear and constructive feedback on the dissertation.
 - ix. Confidentiality: Should be capable of maintaining confidentiality and protecting the intellectual property of the dissertation.
 - x. Compatibility: Should be well-versed with the research methodology, approach, and theories used in the dissertation.
- The Vice-Chancellor, on the recommendation of the Head of Department/programme and the supervisor, shall appoint a panel of external examiners.
 - The Controller of Examination will email the thesis to the approved examiners with the request for thesis evaluation within six weeks. A copy of the letter will be forwarded to the Head of Department/programme.
 - Each examiner shall assign one of the following four categories to the thesis. The reviewer will be required to provide a detailed evaluation and critique of the thesis on the prescribed PIFD proforma.
 - a. Excellent: High-quality research. A significant contribution to new knowledge. The work is original and shall have a great impact on the field of study. Addresses important issues relevant to locally and internationally. The structure of the dissertation and writing quality (quality of expression) are exceptional. The methodology, analysis, and findings, are well explained.
 - b. Good: The dissertation meets the degree requirements. The research contributes to new knowledge in the field of study. The structure of the thesis is good and well-explained. The quality of writing (quality of expression) is good and meets the required criteria.
 - c. Sufficient: The doctoral dissertation does not significantly contribute to new knowledge. The research is sufficient but not of a higher level. It meets the basic requirements of the degree but needs revision. The quality of writing needs improvement. The research needs to

communicate with its reader. (Detailed comments will be attached with the proforma).

d. Insufficient: The dissertation provides insufficient data, methodology, and findings. It does not meet the expectations and requirements of a doctoral degree.

- The external examiners shall send the evaluation report to the Controller of Examination, who will forward it to the HOD for communication with the supervisor and co-supervisor.
- If an external reviewer does not respond within six weeks, and two satisfactory reports have been received, the student will be allowed to defend her / his thesis in front of the panel of thesis examiners.
- PhD graduate office shall keep track of the reports received. In case of a delay of more than six weeks, the HoD shall initiate a request to the PIFD Controller of Examination for a reminder to be sent to the evaluator.
- The PIFD Controller of Examination will only be authorized to communicate with the examiner regarding the thesis examined and will keep the HOD informed.

7. Open Defense / Viva Voce

After a positive evaluation of the dissertation by the committee members, an open defense of the dissertation is required.

The PIFD Vice-Chancellor will appoint a panel of thesis examiners, including the supervisor, co-supervisor (if any), HoD, and at least two PhD experts from a comprehensive list of examiners. These examiners will review the thesis before the defense.

The Open Defense or Viva Voce will be in the form of an oral presentation in an open gathering, followed by a detailed meeting of the panel to examine and question the doctoral candidate regarding his/her research dissertation. The decision of the panel shall be based on the majority.

In general, the following minimum principles and guidelines shall be ensured:

- i. Public Announcement: On the university website and other forums of communication, so that anyone interested can participate.
- ii. Public Access: Within or outside the university or important public venues.
- iii. Neutral Chair: To ensure that defense was conducted fairly and following the rules and regulations.
- iv. Review Committee: To evaluate the dissertation and defense.
- v. Presentation: PhD scholar presentation of the dissertation.

- vi. Question and Answer Session: To provide a basis for defense evaluation.
- vii. Objective Evaluation: This is based on the quality of the research and the researcher's ability to defend.
- viii. Final Decision: The decision is expressed in the following terms:
 - Pass or
 - Pass with minor amendments or
 - Deferred for resubmission and re-defense or
 - Fail (in exceptional circumstances and for the reasons to be recorded by the defense committee)

If a doctoral candidate fails to satisfy the examiners in the doctoral thesis defense, the panel of examiners may require the candidate to defend the thesis for a second time within six months. This will be the last chance given to the doctoral candidate.

7.1 Distinction/ Honors / Right to Publication

The doctoral candidate who successfully passes the thesis defense and is suggested minor changes shall incorporate all the suggestions and submit them to the HoD through the supervisor. A detailed summary of the changes incorporated in the thesis, with one hardbound copy of the thesis, shall also be submitted. Two CDs/DVDs containing soft copies of the thesis and abstract in PDF format shall be provided to the office of the HoD.

For exceptional dissertation and viva defense, the panel of thesis examiners may confer the following awards to the doctoral candidate:

- Distinction
- Honors
- Right to Publication

The notification for the award of PhD degree shall be issued after all the administrative formalities/requirements are completed for the degree. The Head of the Department/programme shall initiate the case through the Vice-Chancellor, PIFD for the final notification.

8. Ethics And Discipline

8.1 Ethical Conduct & Academic Integrity

The regulations related to ethical conduct & academic integrity incorporate ethical principles and practices essential for carrying out responsible and accurate research. The standard set in PIFD research policy and procedures follows the guidelines

outlined in **HEC Graduate Education Policy 2023**, the main regulatory framework to prevent academic misconduct. However, it may be noted that these guidelines are not binding but rather prescriptive.

To foster Academic Integrity and promote Honesty, PIFD shall:

- i. Develop/adopt/adapt and regularly publicize policies promoting academic integrity and dealing with allegations of academic misconduct.
- ii. Prevent foreseeable risks to academic and research integrity.
- iii. Strengthen the system governing the conduct of doctoral research.
- iv. All governing bodies must ensure that the occurrence of academic misconduct and breaches is monitored and action taken to document and address the underlying cause.
- v. Ensure that information to maintain academic integrity is available to all prospective and current students.
- vi. Ensure that unauthorized access to private and sensitive information is detained/controlled.
- vii. The institute policy ensures the protection of the rights and welfare of individuals/ humans participating in research.
- viii. Regularly assess and ensure that academic and research integrity is maintained by developed policies and procedures. In this regard, it shall be ensured that a self-assessment checklist has been prepared and implemented.

8.2 Research Misconduct- Plagiarism

Plagiarism or using another person's ideas, research, or results without giving them credit, is a serious research misconduct and is addressed in the **HEC Anti-Plagiarism Policy 2023 adopted by PIFD**.

8.3 Aims of the Policy

This Policy seeks to create awareness about avoiding all kinds of plagiarism. It addresses a central problem regarding academic dishonesty and the processes involved in probing any complaint of plagiarism.

The Policy is based on the following general principles:

- i. Awareness for Preventing Plagiarism

The faculty members should arrange regular capacity-building activities within each calendar year to create awareness about avoiding plagiarism in its various forms.

- ii. Following Research Ethics

The faculty, students, and staff should follow research ethics to avoid plagiarism in their academic and research contributions.

iii. Respecting Intellectual Contribution

Researchers/Scholars and Faculty members should acknowledge other researchers' intellectual work, as per the norms of their respective disciplines.

iv. Devising Process for Probing Plagiarism

Plagiarism is considered a serious matter, and there is a need to curb this menace through proper, detailed, and defined processes.

8.4 Addressing Grievances of Graduate Students/ Research Scholars

To address grievances/ complaints of research students, prospective enrollees, research sponsors, or other stakeholders fairly, justly, and timely, PIFD follows the HEC Graduate Education Policy 2023.

The objectives and purposes are as follows:

- i. Provide timely responses to grievances of students, potential students, or stakeholders.
- ii. To develop a culture in which grievances are viewed as opportunities for improvement.
- iii. Ensure that students or potential students are free to complain without fear of discrimination.
- iv. Ensure that staff are aware of grievance processes and are appropriately trained to ensure that the processes are consistently applied.
- v. Requires respectful behavior among all parties when handling grievances.
- vi. Communicate effectively on time to keep all parties up to date with the progress of grievances.
- vii. Ensure that all information is held with the utmost confidence.
- viii. Ensure that the principles of natural justice are applied.
- ix. To ensure that grievances are resolved to the satisfaction of all parties.