POLICIES REGARDING DESIGN AND CONDUCT OF THE DOCTORALPROGRAMMES

AHMEDABAD UNIVERSITY
January 2026

	CONTENTS	PAGE #
1	Introduction	2
2	Objective	2
3	Eligibility Criteria	2
4	Procedure for Admission	3
5	Stages in the PhD programme	3
6	Academic Advisor	3
7	Academic Registration	3
8	Coursework	4
9	Comprehensive Examination	5
10	Allotment of Dissertation Advisor	5
11	Dissertation Advisory Committee	6
12	Research Proposal	6
13	Registration for Thesis Work	6
14	Research Progress Reports and Seminar	7
15	Submission of Synopsis and Dissertation	7
16	Evaluation of Dissertation	8
17	Conduct of Dissertation Examination and Completion	8
18	Depository with UGC	9
19	Intellectual Property	9
20	Leave Rules	9
21	Withdrawal from the Programme and Validity of Candidacy	10
22	Financial Support	10
23	Amendments	11

1. Introduction

Ahmedabad University offers doctoral programmes in the following Schools of the University:

- Amrut Mody School of Management
- School of Arts and Sciences
- School of Engineering & Applied Science
- Bagchi School of Public Health

The University also encourages pursuit of doctoral research that cuts across disciplines of multiple Schools.

2. Objectives

The doctoral programme at Ahmedabad University is designed to provide both research capabilities and domain knowledge to doctoral candidates in various subjects. The programme aims to build competent academicians, researchers, teachers and practitioners in various fields.The emphasis is on:

- Admitting candidates committed to research
- Offering a curriculum with an appropriate balance of theory and practice
- Enabling excellence in research by emphasising a strong analytical approach
- Inculcating a spirit of inquiry
- Preparing candidates for a career in academia or in research and development

3. Eligibility Criteria

The candidate must have passed the Master's degree examination in Arts, Science, Commerce,Technology, Engineering, Management or Public Health with a minimum of fifty five per cent marks or an equivalent grade in a point scale where the grading system is followed.

The University offers PhD programmes through its School of Engineering and Applied Science, School of Arts and Sciences, Amrut Mody School of Management and Bagchi School of Public Health.

There is a provision for candidates to enroll for the doctoral programme after a four year Bachelor's degree provided the candidate has passed the Bachelor's degree examination with at least seventy five percent marks or an equivalent grade in a point scale where the grading system is followed. Such students will be admitted to the PhD programme first as pre-doctoral candidates and only upon completion of the requirements, they will be treated as doctoral candidates.

Candidates can also register for a part-time doctoral programme. However, the course requirements will remain the same as for full time students.

Part-time doctoral students will be required to take at least 12 credits of coursework in person. It is recommended that part-time students spend their first semester on campus. For the remaining course credits, the University will facilitate the scheduling of classes and/or the mode of delivery (hybrid /online) so that the remaining course credits can be completed off campus. Students attending in online/hybrid mode will have to attend the classes at the scheduled class time and not just use video recording of the classes later in lieu of attendance. Part-time students working in organisations must submit a no objection certificate from their employer.

4.Procedure for Admission

Shortlisted candidates will be called for a written test and interview. Admission to the PhD programme would be based on the past academic record, research aptitude, work experience and performance in the test and interview.

School of Engineering & Applied Science will conduct a written test and interview; however, applicants with a high enough GATE/CSIR-UGC-NET(JRF) score will be exempted from the written test.

School of Arts and Sciences will conduct a written test and interview; however, applicants with high enough rank/scores on CSIR-UGC-NET(JRF)/DBT/ICMR/ DST/JEST/GATE/GRE subject test or any other well recognised test, as decided by each discipline, will be exempted from the written test.

For admission in the Amrut Mody School of Management, there will be no written test but the applicant should have a high enough test score in CAT/GATE/GMAT/GRE//UGC-NET(JRF)/JEST or any other well recognized test, as decided by the School on a case by case basis.

The Bagchi School of Public Health will conduct a written test and interview.

The validity of the examination scores will be as prescribed by the respective examination bodies.

Admissions in each programme will be made on approval by the Dean/Associate Dean of the School on the recommendations of the duly constituted admissions committee. The admissions committee will consist of at least three faculty members and will be constituted by the Dean/Associate Dean of the School in consultation with the PhD Programme Chair.

5.Stages in the PhD Programme

A student who has registered in the programme but whose research proposal has still not been accepted will be designated as a 'Doctoral Student'. After acceptance of the research proposal, the designation will be changed to 'Doctoral Candidate'.

6.Academic Advisor

As soon as the student joins the programme, an academic advisor will be appointed by the Dean/Associate Dean of the School in consultation with the PhD Programme Chair.The academic advisor will be allotted keeping in view the interest of the student. The academic advisor will help the candidate select courses for study, suggest additional course requirements to broaden the area of research and provide guidance in preparing for the comprehensive examination.

7.Academic Registration

All doctoral students and doctoral candidates have to register in each semester. Till the comprehensive examination is passed, the student will register for only course credits (a full time student will register for typically 9-12 course credits and a maximum of 15 credits). After clearing the comprehensive examination, the doctoral student will register for course credits and /or for research proposal preparation . No credits will be assigned for research proposal preparation and only Satisfactory (S) /Unsatisfactory (U) grade will be given. After the research proposal is accepted , the student will register for thesis work and/or remaining course credits.

8. Coursework

The minimum course work for doctoral studies at Ahmedabad University shall be as follows:

- For students who have completed a Master's degree: A total of 36 credits of coursework has to be completed. Of these, 27 credits would be in the area of specialization and electives, and 3 credits each on Research Methods, Statistics, and Written Communication (or Technical Writing).
- For students who have completed a four year Bachelor's programme (not applicable for Bagchi School of Public Health): A total of 60 course credits have to be completed. Of these 60 credits, 3 credits each would be on Research Methods, Statistics and Written Communication (or Technical Writing), and the rest in the area of specialization and electives. The student will be admitted to the PhD programme first as a pre-doctoral candidate and then upon completion of the pre-doctoral requirements, he/she will be registered as a doctoral student. The structure of the programme will be as follows:
    - Students will complete pre-doctoral requirements (24 course credits) + PhD requirements (36 course credits). The pre-doctoral requirements may be met over one year. Upon the completion of pre- doctoral requirement, the student will be registered as a doctoral student.
- For continuation in the doctoral programme, a minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 2.85/4.0, without any NP (not passed) grade, has to be maintained. If students obtain a CGPA of less than 2.85 or have one NP (not passed) grade after the first year, then they will be given a warning. The fellowship will continue for another year. If they are not able to increase their CGPA to 2.85 and remove the NP (not passed) grade even after the second year, then their registration in the doctoral programme will be terminated.If a student has more than one NP grade at the end of first year, then the student's registration will be terminated.
- The time limits for completion of required coursework for full time students are:
    - 2.5 years for students who have to complete 36 credits of coursework.
    - 3.5 years for students who have to complete 60 credits of coursework.
- The time limits for completion of required coursework for part-time students are:
    - 3.5 years for students who have to complete 36 credits of coursework.
    - 4.5 years for students who have to complete 60 credits of coursework.
- If a student is unable to pass all the courses in the maximum time limit specified above, then his/her programme is likely to be terminated.
- Till the completion of their course work requirement, full time students have to register for a minimum of 9 course credits in a semester, unless fewer than 9 course credits remain. Part-time students should register for a minimum of 3 course credits per semester until the completion of their course credit requirement. Registering for more than 15 credits of course work in a semester will require the permission of the School Dean/Associate Dean.
- To earn course credits, doctoral students have to register for courses numbered 500 or higher.
- 25% of the credits can be taken through online courses. The guidelines for credit transfer through online courses is available on AURIS under the uploaded documents of the Office of the Academic Registrar. These credits will count towards the total credit requirements, but the grade will not be included in the calculation of the CGPA/SGPA.

9. Comprehensive Examination

All doctoral students will have to pass a comprehensive examination in the broad area of their research interest. The comprehensive examination will be normally taken within 6 months of completion of the required coursework. However, for a well-prepared doctoral student, the comprehensive examination can be taken after completion of 30 credits of coursework, provided that the remaining 6 credits are for elective courses. These must be completed in subsequent semesters. Completion of coursework requirements has to be verified by academic advisor and the programme chair before taking comprehensive exam and subsequently during Dissertation Advisory Committee meetings.

The comprehensive examination will be conducted by a faculty committee consisting of at least three faculty members as appointed by the Dean /Associate Dean of the School. The nature of the comprehensive examination (written and/or oral) will be decided by the School.

The result of the comprehensive examination will be a pass or not pass grade.
In case a candidate has not passed the comprehensive examination, she/he may take the examination again within a period of 3 months. If the candidate does not pass in the second attempt also, then she/he will have to discontinue from the doctoral programme. Such candidates will be given a transcript certificate

For full time students entering with a Master's degree, the comprehensive exam should be cleared within six registered semesters (excluding summer term) of admission. For full-time students enteringwith a Bachelor's degree, the comprehensive exam should be cleared within eight registered semesters (excluding summer term) of admission.

Part-time students entering with a Master's degree, should clear the comprehensive exam within eight registered semesters (excluding summer term) of admission. Part-time students entering with a four year Bachelors degree should clear the comprehensive exam within ten registered semesters (excluding summer term) of admission.

10. Allotment of Dissertation Advisor

After passing the Comprehensive exam, the student will select a dissertation advisor based on mutual discussion with the faculty. It should be noted that

a. any regular faculty of Ahmedabad University of the rank of Assistant Professor and above can be a dissertation advisor.The faculty member should have a PhD degree. Faculty of other Universities/Institutes cannot be the main advisor; however they can serve as a co-advisor.
b. For PhD scholars working in Central government/ State government/other reputed research institutions whose degrees are given by Ahmedabad University under a signed MOU, the researchers in such research institutions, who are equivalent to Professor/Associate Professor/Assistant Professor ,can be recognized as dissertation advisors on the approval of the Academic Council of Ahmedabad

University. In such cases, a faculty member from Ahmedabad University has to be appointed as a co-advisor.

c At any given point in time, a faculty member shall not be the main advisor for more than four doctoral candidates.

11.Dissertation Advisory Committee (DAC)

Within 3 months of the passing of the Comprehensive Exam, the DAC will be constituted. The PhD Programme Chair , in consultation with proposed dissertation advisor and the doctoral student, will send the suggested names of the DAC members to the Dean/Associate Dean of the School for approval.After the Dean's approval, the names will be forwarded by the PhD Programme Chair to the Dean of the Graduate School for final approval.

The DAC shall consist of:

1) Dissertation advisor (Chairman)

2) Minimum of two faculty members of Ahmedabad University, who are experts in the subject area of the dissertation.

3) If needed, the DAC may include a co-advisor or another member from within or outside the university to bring specific expertise to the committee.

4) For part-time candidates who are doing part of their research work in their parent organization, the DAC in addition will include a co-advisor, who would be from his/her organization.

12. Research Proposal

Once the DAC has been formed, the candidate will prepare a research proposal under the guidance of the dissertation advisor .The research proposal would elaborate the genesis and potential impact of the study and all possible details of the research. The research proposal will then be presented to the DAC and the School faculty. The research proposal should be presented to the DAC within six months of clearing the comprehensive examination. The DAC may ask the candidate to revise and resubmit the research proposal after incorporating all the suggestions and comments given by them, and if necessary, give a revised presentation to the DAC.

Once the DAC approves the research proposal the status of the student will be changed from "Doctoral Student" to registered "Doctoral Candidate".

A copy of the DAC approval and approved Research proposal will then be submitted to the Office of the Graduate School.

13. Registration for Thesis Work

(i) The doctoral candidate will register for thesis work as soon as his/her Research Proposal has been accepted by the DAC. This could be even in the middle of the semester. No credits will be assigned for thesis work.

(ii) At the end of each semester, the thesis advisor, in consultation with the DAC, will assess the student's progress during the semester and will award either a Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U) grade .

(iii) The registration of the student will normally be terminated if he/she accumulates two Us in

consecutive semesters or a total of 3 Us towards the thesis grades.
(iv) A letter of warning will be issued to the doctoral candidate by the School Dean/Associate Dean if the student has been awarded a U grade for the thesis work.

14. Research Progress Reports and Seminars

Every semester, the registered doctoral candidate will have to submit a progress report of his/her research work and make a presentation to the DAC. All faculty and students may attend the presentation.

The DAC would be responsible for monitoring the progress of the student. The periodic progress report will also be submitted to the Office of the Graduate School by the dissertation advisor, with a copy to the Programme Chair.
In case the progress of the student is unsatisfactory, the DAC shall record the reasons for the same and suggest corrective measures. If the student fails to implement these corrective measures, the Dissertation Advisory Committee may recommend suspension of University fellowship/assistantship or cancellation of registration from the programme.

The student can make an appeal against the DAC recommendations to the School Dean. The decision of the School Dean will be further reviewed on student appeal by a three member committee. This committee would include the Executive Provost, Dean, Graduate School and Research, and a faculty (other than the dissertation advisor) from the School of the student. The decision of this committee would be final.

The student will have up to 10 years (including any academic leave) from the date of joining to complete all academic requirements related to the doctoral programme.

15. Submission of Synopsis and Dissertation

Prior to submission of the dissertation, the student shall make a presentation in the School that will be open to all faculty members and research students, for getting feedback and comments, which may be suitably incorporated into the draft dissertation under the advice of the advisor. Candidates can submit the synopsis and dissertation any time after the completion of two years from the date of registration, but in no case later than seven years (including any academic leave) from the date of registration. The registration date is the date on which the DAC approves the research proposal.

Some Schools may require doctoral candidates to publish at least two research papers in refereed journals/conferences before the submission of the dissertation and provide the acceptance letters/ reprints.

The PhD dissertation and synopsis will be first evaluated by the DAC who will verify that all coursework requirements are completed and may provide suggestions for revision. After the approval by DAC, the candidate will submit the following documents to the Dean of Graduate School through the PhD Programme Chair:

- PhD synopsis (2 printed copies and a pdf file)
- PhD dissertation (2 printed copies and a pdf file)
- a report regarding the check for plagiarism issued by the University Library using any standard software.

The dissertation should contain a certificate of completion signed by all members of the DAC. The dissertation advisor will also suggest to the Dean of Graduate School a list of at least 8 national and international experts who could serve as external examiners of the dissertation.

16. Evaluation of Dissertation

From the suggested list of external examiners, the Dean of Graduate School will select two examiners and send them the synopsis to obtain their consent for examining the dissertation. In case, one or both do not agree then additional names from the list will be selected till two examiners have given their consent. The names of the selected examiners will be kept confidential.

1) Once the examiners have given their consent, the dissertation will be sent to the two examiners. They will be requested to send their comments within 6 weeks. The examiners may recommend:
    a. acceptance of the dissertation in the present form
    b. reevaluation by external examiner after incorporation of major changes
    c. incorporation of minor changes to the satisfaction of the Dissertation Examination Committee
    d. rejection of the dissertation.

2) If both the external examiners submit a negative report indicating rejection of the dissertation, he/she shall not be eligible for the Ph.D. degree. A work that has been rejected may be resubmitted after revision within two years of the receipt of the rejection letter and subject to the payment of prescribed fee.

3) If one of the two external examiners gives a positive and another gives a negative report then a third external examiner will be appointed by the Dean of Graduate School. The recommendation of the third external examiner will be final.

4) Based on the comments and evaluation received from the external examiners, the process will progress to dissertation examination stage or will be sent back to the student and DAC for additional work.

5) After unconditionally positive reports from majority of the examiners have been received, the dissertation examination of the candidate will be conducted.

17. Conduct of Dissertation Examination and Completion

The dissertation examination will be conducted by the Dissertation Examination Committee (DEC). The DEC will be formed by the Dean of Graduate School and will comprise of the following members:

1) Chair - nominee of GFC from amongst the University faculty.

2) At least one of the external examiners –present either in person or online

3) All members of the DAC

The dissertation examination will be open to the University community. Public notice within the University will be given at least one week before the date of the examination.

The candidate will make a presentation of his/her research to the DEC and the audience. After the examination, the DEC will deliberate and come with a decision on the dissertation examination which will be communicated to the Graduate School Office.

If the decision is to pass the candidate with no revisions, then the Dean of the Graduate School will send to the student a Certificate of Completion and Requirements for Final Submission of Dissertation.

If the decision is to pass the student with revisions, the Dean of Graduate School will provide the student a letter stating the decision and listing the comments of the DEC on the revisions required and the person who will verify that the revisions have been incorporated in the dissertation(a copy of the letter will also be sent to the Chair of DEC).

Once the Chair of DEC sends to the Dean of Graduate School, the revised version of the dissertation and a Certificate of Verification that the revisions have been incorporated, the Office of the Dean of Graduate School will either organize another examination (if that has been recommended by DEC) or send the student a Certificate of Completion and Requirements for Final Submission of Dissertation.

Requirements of Final Submission of Dissertation: Three hardbound copies and a PDF file of the soft copy of the dissertation should be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School

After the final submission of dissertation is completed, the dissertation process would be deemed to be complete and the candidate's name will be recommended by the Dean of the Graduate School to the Academic Council for seeking approval from the Board of Governors for award of the degree .The University shall issue a provisional certificate to the candidate stating that the PhD degree has been awarded in accordance with the regulations of the UGC.

18. Depository with UGC

Following the successful completion of the evaluation process and announcement of the award of PhD, the University shall submit a soft copy of the PhD dissertation to UGC within a period of 30 days, for hosting the same in INFLIBNET, so that it accessible to all Institutions/ Universities.

19. Intellectual Property

Any patents or patentable materials that emerge from the research associated with a PhD degree will be subject to the IP policy of the University. For part time candidates working on the projects related to their organization, an IP policy has to be mutually agreed upon prior to the start of the PhD research work.

20. Leave Rules

Doctoral students may be granted different types of leave, as detailed below. To avail any leave, an application will have to be submitted to the PhD Programme Chair in consultation with the Dissertation Advisor. Applications must be submitted well in advance of the date

of commencement of the leave requested.

- Vacation Leave (VL)

Each PhD student may be granted 15 days of Vacation Leave (VL) per Academic Year. These leaves can be availed at any time during the year, preferably during the summer break and winter break with the permission of the advisor or Programme Chair. Programme Chairs will be responsible for maintaining a record of VLs availed by students.

- **Medical Leave**

Leave on medical ground, duly supported by a medical certificate, may be granted to a student for up to 30 days per calendar year. Such leave shall not entail any loss of financial assistantship. All Medical Leaves must be approved by the University Doctor.

- **Maternity Leave**

A female student may be granted maternity leave of upto 180 days once in the entire duration of the doctoral programme. There will be no loss of financial assistantship for the first 3 months of maternity leave. A male student may be granted paternity leave upto 15 days once in the entire duration of the doctoral programme. There will be no loss of financial assistantship for the 15 days of paternity leave

- **Absence without Sanctioned Leave**

Absence without sanctioned leave will entail loss of financial assistantship for the period of absence, and may result in the termination of the student's programme.

- **Permission to Proceed for Academic Work Outside Ahmedabad University**

Doctoral students may be permitted to proceed for academic activities outside Ahmedabad University to carry out field work, library work, computational work, experimental work, and also to attend conferences, courses or to undertake other research work as recommended by the School. Leave for the above activities will be sanctioned by the PhD Programme Chair in consultation with course instructors and/or dissertation advisor.

21. Withdrawal from the Programme and Validity of Candidacy

A candidate who drops out of the doctoral programme because of an exigency can maintain his/her candidacy valid for one year subject to prior approval of Academic Council/Vice-Chancellor.The candidate must submit an application stating the reasons for such a break. The application must be recommended by the dissertation advisor or academic advisor and forwarded by the Dean of the School. The said candidate will be readmitted if she/he pays the appropriate fees at the end of the period of absence.

22.Financial Support

Ahmedabad University awards full tuition fee waiver and financial support to full time doctoral students. The financial support could be either in the form of a University Fellowship, University Assistantship or fellowship from sponsored projects. Presently, the

University Assistantship is INR 40,000 plus tuition fee waiver and University Fellowship is INR 50,000 plus tuition fee waiver.

The number of University Fellowships/Assistantships will be decided annually. The following criteria are laidout for award of University fellowships/assistantships:

- The University Fellowship /Assistantship will require supporting the teaching and institutional efforts at the University (this can be at any School or Centre but preferably at the School where the student is being enrolled) for 20 hours per week.

- If funding opportunities are available, then doctoral students in different Schools must apply for external funding once they are admitted to the programme.

- University Fellowship/Assistantship will be usually be awarded to a student for a maximum period of five years from the date of joining the doctoral programme, subject to satisfactory academic performance. The student would be required to maintain a minimum CGPA of 2.85 at the end of two consecutive semesters for continuation of the fellowship/assistantship each year.

- Beyond five years, the Schools may financially support the student through part- time teaching, research grant funds etc.

- If a student takes leave from the programme, the assistantship/fellowship will be suspended (or discontinued, as may be decided). The student will have to pay the required fee for maintenance of student status.

- Full-time PhD students being funded by the University or through sponsored projects cannot seek employment elsewhere.

23. Amendments

Ahmedabad University reserves its rights to change, amend any of the provisions of this document. Such changes will be recommended by the Graduate Faculty Committee and approved by the Academic Council.