



جامعة السلطان قابوس
Sultan Qaboos University

Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Studies

2018



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Postgraduate Academic Regulations

Sultan Qaboos University
Deanship of Postgraduate Studies

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Definitions

University

Sultan Qaboos University.

Vice-Chancellor

SQU's Vice-Chancellor.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies and Research Dean.

Dean

Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

Assistant Dean

College Assistant Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Research.

Student

A full-time or part-time student enrolled in a postgraduate program.

Deanship

Deanship of Postgraduate Studies.

Department

The department in the college to which a postgraduate student belongs.

Programs

Postgraduate programs including postgraduate diplomas, master and doctorate degrees.

Academic Degree

A degree earned by a student upon completion of the requirements of an academic program based on approved performance standards.

Program Coordinator

A member of the department's faculty who coordinates all matters related to a program's requirements and student advising.

Supervisor

A faculty member or non-academic staff member who supervises students during their thesis work.

Co-Supervisor

A faculty member or non-academic Staff who contributes towards the supervision of students during their thesis work.

Non-academic Staff

A non-faculty staff member, who holds a Ph.D. or equivalent and who is appointed as Supervisor, Co-supervisor, or a member in the Thesis Committee.

Internal Examiner

HoD or delegate of the department faculty from outside the Thesis Committee who is a member of the Examining Committee or the

Comprehensive Examination Committee.

External Examiner

An expert in the field, from outside the program's department and the Thesis Committee.

College Postgraduate Studies Committee

A sub-committee of the College Board consisting of program coordinators from the academic departments in the college and chaired by the Assistant Dean.

Thesis Committee

A committee that consists of a supervisor as a chair, a co-supervisor, and one or more faculty members who hold a doctoral degree according to the nature of the program.

Thesis Examining Committee

A committee that consists of a chair, the thesis supervisor, an internal examiner, and one or more external examiners according to the nature of the program

Comprehensive Examination Committee

A committee that consists of a chair, an internal examiner, a faculty member, and an external examiner

Postgraduate Appeals Committee

A committee formed by the Vice-Chancellor that examine appeals submitted by postgraduate students.

Program Mode

Part-time or full-time of study.

Announcement

Postgraduate programs admission announcement.

Contents

Preface	9
1. Academic Calendar	10
2. Postgraduate Courses	10
3. Postgraduate Programs	10
3.1 Doctoral Programs	10
3.1.1 Doctorate by Thesis	10
3.1.2 Doctorate by Coursework and Thesis.....	11
3.2 Master's Programs	11
3.2.1 Master's by Coursework	11
3.2.2 Master's by Coursework and Thesis	11
3.2.3 Master's by Coursework and Comprehensive Examination.....	11
3.2.4 Master's by Thesis	11
3.3 Postgraduate Diploma Programs	12
3.4 Study Duration	12
3.4.1 Doctoral Program	12
3.4.2 Master's Program	12
3.4.3 Postgraduate Diploma Programs	12
4. Admission	13
4.1 Admission Requirements	13
4.1.1 Doctoral Program	13
4.1.2 Master's Program	14
4.1.3 Postgraduate Diploma Programs	15
4.2 Submitting Applications	15
4.3 Language Proficiency	16
4.3.1 Programs Taught in English	16
4.3.2 Programs Taught in Arabic.....	16
4.3.3 Waiver of English Language Proficiency Requirements	17
4.4 Bridging Courses.....	17
4.4.1 Conditions of Bridging Courses.....	17
4.5 Transfer of Credit Hours	18
4.5.1 Transfer Conditions	18
4.5.2 Transfer Procedures	18

5. Fees and Scholarships	19
6. Advising and Supervision.....	19
6.1 Program Coordinator	19
6.2 Thesis Committee	19
6.2.1 Doctoral Thesis	19
6.2.2 Master's Thesis	20
6.2.3 Responsibilities of the Thesis Committee	20
6.2.4 Change of Thesis Committee	21
6.3 Responsibilities of the Student	21
7. Amendment and Change of Program	21
7.1 Amendment of Program	21
7.2 Change of Program	22
8. Registration.....	22
8.1 Course Load	23
8.2 Add and Drop	23
8.3 Attendance.....	23
8.4 Postponement of Study	23
8.5 Audit	23
9. Grading and Progression Standards.....	23
9.1 Grading Scale	24
9.1.1 Grades with Numerical Value	24
9.1.2 Grades with No Numerical Value	25
9.2 Calculation of GPA	26
9.3 Progression Standards in Coursework	27
9.3.1 Repeating Courses	27
10. Thesis Evaluation	28
10.1 Thesis Progress Report	28
10.2 Seminars.....	28
10.2.1 First Seminar	28
10.2.2 Second Seminar	29
10.3 Preliminary Oral Examination	29
10.4 Thesis Defense	29

10.4.1 Thesis Examining Committee.....	30
10.4.2 Thesis Defense Session	30
10.4.3 Repeating Thesis Defense	31
10.4.4 Thesis Submission.....	31
11. Comprehensive Examination	31
11.1 Comprehensive Examination Registration	31
11.1.1 Doctoral Comprehensive Examination.....	32
11.1.2 Master’s Comprehensive Examination.....	32
11.2 Members of the Comprehensive Examination Committee	32
11.3 Responsibilities of the Comprehensive Examination Committee.....	32
11.4 Repeating Comprehensive Examination.....	33
12. Withdrawal from the University	33
12.1 Voluntary Withdrawal.....	33
12.2 Unofficial Withdrawal.....	33
12.3 Reinstatement.....	33
13. Dismissal from University	33
14. Code of Conduct	34
15. Appeals.....	35
15.1 Grade Appeal	35
15.2 Postgraduate Appeals Committee.....	35
16. Graduation	36
16.1 Doctoral Program	36
16.2 Master’s Program.....	36
16.3 Postgraduate Diploma	37
17. Degree Conferral.....	37
18. Off-Campus Residency	37
18.1 Home Institution	37
18.2 Host Institution	37
18.3 Students’ Academic Visits.....	38
18.4 Joint Degree.....	38
18.4.1 Supervision	38
18.4.2 Graduation	39
18.4.3 Appeals/Code of Conduct/Withdrawal	39

Preface

This is the 3rd version of SQU Postgraduate Academic Regulations. The first version was approved in 2001 and the second in 2008. It is a new version in which updates and amendments that meet the requirements and procedures of SQU postgraduate are taken into consideration.

Rules and regulations stipulated in this version must be scrupulously adhered to by all concerned parties. It is the responsibility of the Deanship and Colleges to ensure that postgraduate rules are followed. Students are also required to abide by these regulations while they study in SQU.

1 Academic Calendar

The University calendar comprises two 15-week semesters (Fall and Spring) and two additional weeks for final examinations. The calendar indicates the beginning and end of each semester and the final examination schedule.

2 Postgraduate Courses

Courses from level 6000 and above are postgraduate courses, in which postgraduate students can only register. A student may register in no more than two courses from the bachelor degree level (5000 level for Science-based colleges if available and 4000 level for other colleges) as electives, and these will count towards the total program credits if the degree plan permits. Courses taken from outside the degree plan will show on the student's transcript, but will not be included in the graduation GPA calculation or towards the total number of credits required for graduation.

3 Postgraduate Programs

3.1 Doctoral Program

The doctoral program is based on two options: by thesis, and by coursework and thesis. In both options, the student is required to conduct significant and original research, demonstrate competence to implement sound methodology, and conduct research independently. The thesis should contribute to the scientific field by making a contribution to knowledge in the student's specified area.

3.1.1 Doctorate by Thesis

(0 credits)

This option is based upon undertaking guided research leading to a thesis. The student enrolled in this option sits for a preliminary oral thesis examination. The concerned department may require some students to register in no more than 12 credit hours courses which may include research methods and statistics according to the nature of the program.

3.1.2 Doctorate by Coursework and Thesis

(36 credits of coursework and 40 credits of thesis)

The student must complete all coursework requirements and pass the comprehensive examination by the end of second year. The comprehensive examination may be written, oral or practical, or a combination of two or more of these formats. Additionally, the student must complete a thesis of 40 credits. A total of 76 credits is required to complete a doctoral degree.

3.2 Master's Programs

The university offers four options for Master's programs. The student can earn a Master's by any of the following:

3.2.1 Master's by Coursework

(30-36 credits of coursework)

The student must complete all courses as described in their program degree plans.

3.2.2 Master's by Coursework and Thesis

(24-30 credits of coursework and 6 credits of thesis)

The student must complete the coursework requirements as described in their program degree plans. Additionally, they must complete a thesis of 6 credits. The student is required to take no less than 30 credits to earn a Master's degree in this option. The student may only register for the thesis after completing 12 credits of coursework.

3.2.3 Master's by Coursework and Comprehensive Examination

(30-36 credits of coursework and a comprehensive examination)

The student must complete the coursework requirements and pass a comprehensive examination in the form of written, oral or practical or a combination of two or more of these formats.

3.2.4 Master's by Thesis

(0 credits)

This option is based on research leading to a thesis. It is not necessary

that the thesis is an original contribution to the field of knowledge, but it may contain elements of innovation in research design or implementation. The thesis represents a summation of the student's total research efforts and contributes to the existing body of knowledge of the student's field, it also emphasizes that the student has attained the required level of competence in their field and in the application of research methods. Students must submit a proposal and a draft work plan outlining what they intend to do when applying for admission. Students enrolled in this option must register in two courses: One course in research methods and the other determined by the department.

3.3 Postgraduate Diploma Programs

(21-24 credits)

The university offers postgraduate diploma programs based on coursework with a minimum of 21 credits in which the student register in postgraduate courses.

3.4 Study Duration

3.4.1 Doctoral Program

The official study duration to earn a doctoral degree is 3 to 6 years, depending on the program and mode of study, counted from the date of registration in the first semester. An extension of two semesters may be granted on the recommendation of the supervisor, the acceptance of the college dean, and approval of the Dean.

3.4.2 Master's Program

The official study duration to earn a master's degree is from 1 to 3 years, depending on the program and mode of study, counted from the date of registration in the first semester. An extension of one semester may be granted on the recommendation of the program coordinator or supervisor, acceptance of the college dean, and approval of the Dean.

3.4.3 Postgraduate Diploma Programs

The official study duration to earn a postgraduate diploma is from 1 to 2 years depending on the programs and mode of study. An extension of one semester may be granted on the recommendation of the program

coordinator or supervisor, acceptance of the college dean, and approval of the Dean.

4 Admission

The Deanship is responsible for announcing the application deadlines for all offered postgraduate programs in coordination with the relevant colleges. Admission is open to applicants who meet the admission requirements of the advertised program. Accepted applicants will be assigned to one of two admission categories:

- A. unconditional** for students who have fulfilled all application and admission requirements, or
- B. conditional** for students who are required to fulfill admission requirements within the period given.

However, applicants should consider the following:

- Admission results depend on the criteria set out by the relevant college. Once approved by the College Board, the Deanship should be notified of these results.
- The university reserves the right to withdraw the admission if the applicant fails to meet any of the requirements within the specified period in the admission notification.
- Applicants are not allowed to apply for a program from which they have been dismissed, unless the date of dismissal was more than two years before the application.

4.1 Admission Requirements

4.1.1 Doctoral Program

Admission to a doctoral program entails that the applicant must have the following:

- A. A bachelor degree from a recognized institution.
- B. A master's degree from a recognized institution with:
 - A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 on a 4-point scale or its equivalent, or
 - A cumulative GPA ranging between 2.75 and 2.99 on a 4-point scale or its equivalent, taking into account the applicant's work experience (not

less than 2 years following completion of an undergraduate degree) and any academic activities they are engaged in, or

- Pass/No Pass system, subject to the evaluation of the concerned college.
- C. Fulfillment of the language proficiency requirements.
- D. Fulfillment of any other program specific requirements that are advertised.

Applicants with a degree of Doctor of Medicine M.D. from Sultan Qaboos University or any other recognized institution of higher education with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 on a 4-point scale or its equivalent need to meet c, d, and e

4.1.2 Master's Program

Admission to a Master's program entails that the applicant must have the following:

- A. A bachelor degree from a recognized institution with:
- a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 on a 4-point scale or its equivalent if admission is sought to a master's program by all options, or
 - a minimum cumulative GPA ranging between 2.50 and 2.74 on a 4-point scale or its equivalent with a minimum of two years of work experience, if admission is sought to a master's program by coursework, or coursework and thesis, or coursework and comprehensive examination, or
- B. A bachelor degree from a recognized institution and a post-Baccalaureate diploma in a related specialization from a recognized institution of higher education with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 on a 4-point scale or its equivalent. Holders of postgraduate diploma may apply for admission to all options, or
- C. A minimum of 21 credits with a minimum GPA of 3.00 on a 4-point scale and a cumulative GPA of 2.50 in the bachelor degree for currently enrolled postgraduate diploma students at SQU. In this case, the student may be considered for upgrading to the master's program in the same specialization. Hence, the credits earned and their grades will count towards the master's degree.
- D. Fulfillment of the language proficiency requirements.
- E. Fulfillment of any other program specific requirements.

4.1.3 Postgraduate Diploma Programs

Admission to a postgraduate diploma program entails that the applicant must have the following:

- A. A bachelor degree from a recognized institution (some programs may require a specific cumulative GPA).
- B. Fulfillment of the language proficiency requirements.
- C. Completion of any other specific program requirements.

4.2 Submitting Applications

The applicant must submit the following:

- A. An application form.
- B. An official transcript, copies of academic degrees, and copies of their passport and identification card. Applicants in the last year of study who are expected to graduate before starting the new program of study may be considered according to the advertised program.
- C. For doctoral programs only - a proposal that explains the student's research topic and includes the research problem, objectives, questions and method of data collection.
- D. For doctoral programs only - two recommendation letters from academics attesting to the applicant's competence in the discipline of interest and to their research capability.
- E. A letter of release from an employer for full-time study or a no-objection letter for part-time study.
- F. Proof of financial support, if required.
- G. Proof of fulfillment of language proficiency, if applicable.
- H. A medical report, if requested, issued no more than six months from the date of application, certifying medical fitness to pursue the course of study.
- I. Any other advertised program requirements.

4.3 Language Proficiency

4.3.1 Programs Taught in English

(Admission requirement)

The English requirement for programs taught in English is determined by the nature of the program, provided that the following minimum standards shall be met:

Doctoral Programs

- A. Band 6.5 or higher in the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or a score of 90 or higher in the International TOEFL-IBT, or
- B. Passing the English Course LANC6001 for applicants with a score of 6 in the IELTS or a score of 79 in the TOEFL-IBT, or
- C. Passing the English courses LANC6000 and LANC6001 for applicants with a score of 5.5 in the IELTS or a score of 69 in the TOEFL-IBT.

Master's Programs

- A. Band 6 or higher in the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or a score of 79 or higher in the International TOEFL-IBT, or
- B. Passing the English Course LANC6000 for applicants with a score of 5.5 in the IELTS or a score of 69 in the TOEFL-IBT.

4.3.2 Programs Taught in Arabic

(Admission requirement)

The English requirement for programs taught in Arabic is determined by the nature of the program, provided that the following minimum standards shall be met:

Doctoral Programs

Band 4.5 or higher in the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or a score of 49 or higher in the International TOEFL-IBT.

Master's Programs

Band 4 or higher in the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or a score of 39 or higher in the International TOEFL-IBT.

Required Language Proficiency test results in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 must be valid for two years from the date of the test result until the date of application.

4.3.3 Waiver of English Language Proficiency Requirements

Doctoral programs

The English requirement is waived for applicants for any of the following:

- A. Their native language is English.
- B. The applicants have fulfilled the English requirement in 4.3.1 in a master's degree, provided that the period from which the master degree awarded to the applicants should not exceed 2 years from the date of application.

Master's programs

The English requirement is waived for applicants if their native language is English.

4.4 Bridging Courses

Department admission committees may require some candidates to take no more than 18 credits at the bachelor degree level to improve their competency in their chosen specialization, based on the conditions listed below. These courses must be completed with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 within a maximum of one academic year.

4.4.1 Conditions of Bridging Courses

- A. Student must have Band 5.5 or higher in the academic International English Language Testing System (IELTS), or a score of 69 or higher in the International TOEFL-IBT for programs taught in English in order to be able to register in the bridging courses.
- B. The student has to register for bridging courses in the first semester; otherwise admission to the program is withdrawn.
- C. Students may repeat only one course provided that they do not exceed the one-year duration of the bridging courses.
- D. Bridging course credits and grades will not count towards the master's program degree plan.
- E. The student's admission to the program is withdrawn if the student obtains an F grade in two courses or an F grade in the same course twice.
- F. The bridging courses period will not count towards the official master's degree study duration.
- G. Postponement of study is not allowed.

4.5 Transfer of Credit Hours

The department board in the college may approve transferring program credit hours that have not been used to earn an academic degree to the new program into which the student is admitted according to the conditions below. These credits will be recorded on the transcript as a TC grade and will count towards the total credits required for graduation, but will not be included in the student's cumulative GPA calculation.

4.5.1 Transfer Conditions

Transferred credits must meet the following conditions:

- A. The maximum number of transferred credits cannot exceed 50% in the admitted program.
- B. Transferred credits must be from a recognized institution.
- C. The courses must be recorded on an official transcript.
- D. Transferred courses must be equivalent to courses in the student's degree plan.
- E. Transferred credits should not have been obtained more than two years prior to admission to SQU.
- F. Only courses with a minimum grade of "B" or its equivalent may be transferred.
- G. Credits earned by correspondence cannot be transferred.

4.5.2 Transfer Procedures

- H. The applicant should submit an application for the transfer of credits to the HoD prior to the end of the Add/Drop period of the first semester.
- I. The candidate's department board reviews the student's application, takes a decision and informs the Assistant Dean.
- J. The Assistant Dean informs the Deanship in writing about the decision.
- K. The applicant is informed by the HoD.
- L. Fees and Scholarships.
- M. The university charges fees for enrollment in postgraduate programs. Guidelines on available scholarships are announced annually.

5 Fees and Scholarships

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6 Advising and Supervision

The faculty member and students are collectively responsible for the success of advising. Both are shouldered with a set of responsibilities to ensure a healthy and interactive relation full of mutual respect which ultimately reflects positively on the student's study and results in effective completion of the research within the specified time.

6.1 Program Coordinator

Each postgraduate program will have a coordinator who will help to:

- A. Orient students to the Postgraduate Academic Regulations.
- B. Advise and supervise students.
- C. Follow up with the students' degree plan requirements.
- D. Ensure students register in their courses every semester.
- E. Be available during the hours specified for advising.

6.2 Thesis Committee

6.2.1 Doctoral Thesis

Upon admission into the doctoral program by thesis option, the department shall form a thesis committee for the student. Students admitted into the doctoral program by coursework and thesis, a thesis committee must be formed in the final semester of their coursework. The committee is then approved by the department board and send to the Deanship through the Assistant Dean. The thesis committee consists of a supervisor, co-supervisor and one or more faculty members.

The doctoral by thesis supervisor must:

- A. Have a doctoral degree or equivalent and be at the rank of assistant professor or equivalent.
- B. Be a faculty member in the department or a non-academic staff member.
- C. Have previously supervised a masters/doctoral thesis or co-supervised

a doctoral dissertation.

- D. Have sufficient funding for the student's research where the study requires laboratory or field-based work with running expenses.

6.2.2 Master's Thesis

The program coordinator will assist the student in choosing the thesis committee, and in obtaining the approval of the committee from the department's board and send to the Deanship through the Assistant Dean. The thesis committee consists of a supervisor and co-Supervisor and may also include one or more faculty members.

6.2.3 Responsibilities of the Thesis Committee

- A. Develop student research and reporting abilities.
- B. Help students to identify a viable research topic and guide them to references and sources which enable them to complete their research.
- C. Be available during the hours specified for supervision.
- D. Read chapters and work done by the students and provide them with comments and constructive feedback which guarantee the completion of the research in the best form possible and in a timely manner.
- E. Give necessary suggestions to solve any problem faced by students during the write-up phase of the research.
- F. Continue the supervision process until an official letter is issued announcing the end of supervision
- G. Inform students about their unavailability when attending conferences or going on official trips and coordinate with them about means of communication while away so that their absence does not have a negative impact of the supervision process.
- H. Include the student's name as a first author in the scientific papers they publish when the paper arises from work done on the student's thesis.
- I. Avoid assigning any work to the students outside their research scope, except for scholarship students.
- J. Follow up with students to ensure registration for thesis in every semester until graduation.
- K. Do not interfere with the student's personal or private affairs.

6.2.4 Change of Thesis Committee

Members of the Thesis Committee may be changed. Such a change may be requested by the student or the supervisor, stating the reasons for the change and taking into account progress made and time spent in the program up to that date. This change must be approved by the department board.

6.3 Responsibilities of the Student

It is the student's responsibility to fully understand the rules and regulations regarding the degree requirements as well as all other academic regulations. Ignorance of these rules and regulations does not constitute grounds for waiving or breaching them. Below are the main responsibilities of the student:

- A. Adhere to the Postgraduate Academic Regulations and the decisions issued by the relevant authorities of the university.
- B. Respect the supervisor and take into account their teaching and administrative commitments.
- C. Respect the established time schedules for the research phases and accomplish the required tasks in the agreed upon time.
- D. Follow their supervisors' advice and incorporate their comments.
- E. Attend the agreed upon supervision hours.
- F. Maintain contact with the supervisor and keep the supervisor informed about the progress made during all research phases.
- G. Acknowledge the contributions of the supervisor or any member of the thesis committee in the scientific papers they publish.

7 Amendment and Change of Program

7.1 Amendment of Program

Students may amend their programs. This may include substitution of courses, a change of program options or specializations within the same program, or a change in the topic or title. The mode of study (full-time/part-time) may only be changed before the start of registration for the second semester. This amendment must be accepted by the program coordinator or main supervisor and must receive the approval of the HoD and be accepted by the Deanship.

7.2 Change of Program

Students who wish to change programs should withdraw from their current program and reapply for the new one. Courses completed in the original program may be considered as transfer credits (TC) (if applicable).

8 Registration

Students must register for each semester during their study within the official registration period announced by the Deanship. They must register from the first semester they join the program and in every semester until they graduate. During the thesis write-up stage, students must submit a progress report in order to be able to register for the subsequent semester.

Late registration may be allowed upon approval of the college dean and the Dean under extenuating circumstances for up to one week from the end of the Add/Drop period. Late registration is not guaranteed and is contingent on place availability.

8.1 Course Load

The minimum semester course load for a full-time student must be 9 credits, except when the student is registered for a thesis. The normal course load for a part-time student is 6 credits, with 3 credits being the minimum. Failure to conform to the course load leads to deregistration in that semester.

A full-time and part-time student may register for the thesis after completing 12 credits of coursework with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 with acceptance of the supervisor and the HoD. Student with a cumulative GPA less than 3.00 may be allowed to register for the thesis upon approval of the Dean

8.2 Add and Drop

Students may add or drop courses during the Add/Drop period, provided that it shall not affect the student's record. A course dropped between the end of the Add/Drop period and the end of the withdrawal period will appear as a withdrawn (W) in the student's transcript. A course dropped after the withdrawal period will result in an F grade.

8.3 Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes they are registered in and will be issued an official “Absentee Warning Notice” if they miss 10% of the total semester contact hours. Students will receive an FW grade if they miss 20% of the total semester contact hours and will be issued an “Absentee Failure Notice”.

8.4 Postponement of Study

Upon receiving acceptance from the HoD and approval from the college dean, the student may be granted permission to postpone study during the program’s official study duration if there are compelling reasons such as health or unexpected family conditions. Normally, postponement must be processed within the withdrawal with W period and should not exceed two semesters. Periods of postponement are not counted towards the program’s duration, and a clearance form of university debt must be signed after obtaining college acceptance.

8.5 Audit

With the acceptance of the program coordinator and the course instructor, and subject to space availability, the student may audit a course from outside the degree plan. Registration as an auditor may only be processed directly after regular registration is completed. The student must attend classes, but may neither sit for an examination nor receive credit hours for the course. An AU grade will be recorded on the student’s transcript. Audited courses cannot be converted to credits. If the student misses 20% of the class hours, the AU registration will be removed from their record.

9 Grading and Progression Standards

Student performance evaluation is based on fulfillment of previously determined criteria. This includes the grade point average system which should reflect the student’s ability to produce quality work. Results are reported as letter grades (A, B, C, etc.) which represent the level of achievement in the coursework and thesis, for the option coursework and thesis. It should be noted that there is no fixed relationship between these grades and the percentage scale. The use of percentages is simply one of many available approaches to assessing the student’s level of achievement.

9.1 Grading Scale

Letter grades are used to represent the student's level of achievement in a given course.

9.1.1 Grades with Numerical Value

Grades are described as follows:

- (A) **Excellent:** All course objectives have been achieved in an outstanding manner.
- (B) **Good:** Most course objectives have been achieved in a more than satisfactory manner.
- (C) **Satisfactory:** Course objectives have been achieved in an acceptable manner, but without insufficient mastery expected from a postgraduate
- (D) **Fail:** Course objectives have not been achieved.

Numerical values are assigned to these grades as shown below:

Grade	Numerical Value
A	4.00
A-	3.70
B+	3.30
B	3.00
B-	2.70
C+	2.30
C	2.00
F	0.00

This scale applies to the coursework and thesis option for master and doctorate programs, but not to the comprehensive examinations or the programs by thesis option. It also applies to bachelor degree courses taken by the student as a part of the postgraduate program, which means that any grade below C will be recorded as an F grade when calculating the cumulative GPA.

9.1.2 Grades with No Numerical Value

I[X] Incomplete

A student is given an incomplete grade I[X] when all the course requirements are not completed on time. This grade can be changed no later than a month from the end of the examination period and will be used when the following two conditions are met:

- A. The student has been prevented by such exceptional circumstance as an accident, family emergency, or illness from completing all the course requirements on time.
- B. The student has a passing level in those coursework components completed by the end of the course.

Incomplete grades include: I[F], I[C], I[C+], I[B-], I[B], I[B+], and I[A-]. The instructor may request the student to provide necessary documentation and get college approval before granting an incomplete status. The student will be informed in writing of the conditions for completion and the closest possible day to complete course requirements. An incomplete grade is not intended to give an extension to a student who has completed all coursework components with a failing grade, nor is it used to help a student who has not completed their course requirements on time. Unless a new grade is submitted to the Deanship before the end of the deadline, the appropriate I[X] grade will show on the student's transcript.

[W] Withdrawal

A [W] grade is granted to a student who has formally withdrawn from a course before the end of the withdrawal period. A course dropped after the end of the deadline is granted an F grade.

[FW] Absentee Failure

An [FW] grade is granted to students who exceed the permitted absence hours (see section 8.3). No credits will be obtained in this course.

[AU] Audit

An [AU] designates a course registration with an audit status (see section 8.5).

[IP] In Progress

An [IP] is granted when the work of a course extends beyond the end of a regular semester. This typically applies to a thesis and enables students to maintain their enrollment in the program.

[P] Pass

A [P] grade is granted for a course that is not graded on the numerical scale but carries a credit value in a degree program. Typically, courses with objectives related to general exposure, skill courses, or applied field practice attract this grade. A course with a P grade is included in the total number of credits required for graduation.

[NP] No Pass

A [NP] grade is granted for a course that is not graded on a numerical scale but that carries a credit value in a degree program. Typically, courses with objectives related to general exposure, skill courses, or applied field practice attract this grade. A course with a NP grade is included in the total number of credits required for graduation.

[TC] Transfer of Credits

A [TC] grade designates credits acquired in another program. A course with a [TC] grade is included in the total number of credits required for graduation, but is not included in the Grade Point Average.

9.2 Calculation of GPA

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is a weighted average which determines the student's academic status according to three levels:

- A. Semester GPA:** This is calculated based on the courses taken in a given semester.
- B. Cumulative GPA:** This is calculated based on all courses taken in all semesters to date. It is a single total calculation (not the average of semester averages).
- C. Graduation GPA:** This is the GPA recorded on the student's final official transcript. It is obtained by calculating the grades of each course in the student's degree plan and excluding grades of courses that are not part of the plan.

In order to calculate the GPA, the numerical value of the grade is multiplied by the credit value of the course. The result is called the “Grade Points Earned”. To obtain the GPA, the total grade points earned are then divided by the total credits attempted with numerical value, taking into account all elements of the academic policy (e.g., exclusions, repeated courses, etc.). The grade designations of I, W, IP, AU, TC, P and NP are not included in the calculation of this average. The GPA is calculated to three decimal places and rounded to two using standard rounding rules.

9.3 Progression Standards in Coursework

- A. For master’s and doctoral programs, if applicable, a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in coursework is required for continuation in the program. If the CGPA falls below 3.0, the student is placed on probation and is given only one semester to regain the required CGPA.
- B. For a postgraduate diploma program, a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 in coursework is required for continuation in the program. If the CGPA falls below 2.75, the student is placed on probation and is given one semester only to regain the required CGPA.

A student who earns an F grade in any course, regardless of the reasons, will be subject to a full review by the college dean. If sufficient evidence of special circumstances and suitability for postgraduate study are presented, the student may be allowed to register in the program on probation and must repeat the course in which the F grade was earned.

9.3.1 Repeating Courses

- A course with an F grade must be repeated.
- Students may repeat a maximum of two courses with a grade below B.
- If the course is not offered, the probationary student, upon the recommendation of the program coordinator and acceptance of the HoD and the college dean, may register for a substitute course.

All grades received in all courses will show in the student’s transcript. When calculating the GPA, however, the highest grade received in the repeated course is counted.

10 Thesis Evaluation

10.1 Thesis Progress Report

Students registered for a thesis are required to submit a Progress Report in order to be able to register in the subsequent semester. The report, signed by the student and their supervisor, will contain a section for each of them to complete. The student section will summarize their progress and will propose a work plan with expected outcomes for the coming semester or year. The supervisor will provide feedback on the work plan and evaluate the student's overall performance, indicating whether it is "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory". Both the student and supervisor must sign the report form.

If the student's progress is judged to be "unsatisfactory", the college dean will appoint an ad hoc committee chaired by the Assistant Dean to investigate the issue and make appropriate recommendations. The Dean should be informed of these recommendations and of the decision of the college dean.

10.2 Seminars

Students enrolled in a program requiring a thesis (by thesis or by coursework and thesis) must give two seminars during their course which should be scheduled as part of their respective department's seminars. These will enable students to receive constructive feedback from faculty and students, and they should also help them to develop their argumentation and presentation skills.

10.2.1 First Seminar

The first seminar should cover the background, objectives and methodology of the research. The Assistant Dean will notify the Dean that this requirement has been fulfilled.

A. Doctoral Programs

The first seminar for doctoral degrees must be held after the first semester of thesis registration and before the end of the second semester.

B. Master's Programs

The first seminar for master's programs must be held before the end of the first semester of thesis registration.

10.2.2 Second Seminar

The second seminar should be held before the thesis defense for doctoral and master's programs. It should include a summary of the research and the main findings. The Assistant Dean will notify the Dean that this requirement has been fulfilled.

10.3 Preliminary Oral Examination

A student enrolled in a doctoral by thesis program must sit for preliminary thesis examination at no later than the end of the third semester. Based on the student's research proposal, the examination is intended to assess the student's readiness to engage in the proposed research. The preliminary oral examination is assessed by the thesis committee and an external examiner nominated by the HoD. The examination is chaired by the HoD or a delegate. The committee assigns the student either a "pass" or "no pass" result. The college reports the results of the examination to the Deanship. The relevant department may give those who fail in the examination another attempt to take it provided that the repeat attempt is within a semester. However, failure in the repeat attempt will result in withdrawal from the program.

10.4 Thesis Defense

Before initiating the procedure for the thesis defense, the student must have completed all required program courses with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. The student must have also completed the two required seminars. On being advised by the Thesis Committee that the thesis is ready for defense, the candidate's department will nominate members of the Examining Committee and decide on the date, time and place of examination. This information will be forwarded to the postgraduate studies committee in the college for acceptance and later send to the Dean through the Assistant Dean for approval at least one month from the date of the second seminar and one month prior to the defense date. A copy of the thesis and the Thesis Report Form will be sent to each member of the Examining Committee. The defense of master's and doctoral theses may take place in either semester, between semesters, or in the summer break, subject to the availability of the Examining Committee members.

10.4.1 Thesis Examining Committee

The Thesis Examining Committee consists of:

- Chair:** A non-voting faculty member from outside the student's department.
- Supervisor:** The student's thesis supervisor.
- Internal Examiner:** HoD or delegate.
- External Examiner:** One external examiner for master's programs and two for doctoral programs who are chosen from outside the student's department and outside the Thesis Committee. It is preferable if one of the external examiners for the doctoral program comes from outside the Sultanate of Oman.

The Examining Committee will:

- A. Review the Thesis Report Forms. Each voting committee member should comment on the thesis using the Thesis Report Form prior to attending the oral defense.
- B. Conduct the oral defense of the thesis in accordance with Postgraduate Academic Regulations.
- C. Require the Chair to prepare a report at the end of the defense that summarizes the proceedings and to submit it together with the Thesis Report Forms to the Assistant Dean who forwards it to the Deanship within one week from the end of the defense.

10.4.2 Thesis Defense Session

Involvement in the thesis defense is limited to members of the Thesis Examining Committee. Members of the Thesis Committee may attend the defense, which includes the following procedures:

- A. Preliminary Session: The Examining Committee goes briefly over the Thesis Report Forms before the candidate is invited into the room.
- B. Thesis Presentation: A presentation, not exceeding half an hour, is made, covering the thesis objectives and major findings.
- C. Question Session: The Chair regulates the time so that the whole process should not exceed three hours. At the end of the question session, the student is requested to leave the room.
- D. Decision Session: The Defense Committee decides by majority vote to place the thesis in one of four categories:

1. “pass”
2. “pass pending minor revisions”
3. “deferred pending major revisions”
4. “no pass”

Letter grades with numerical values apply to the thesis by coursework and thesis option (see section 9.1.1).

10.4.3 Repeating Thesis Defense

When the committee’s decision is “deferred pending major revisions”, or a grade less than 3.00 for the thesis by coursework and thesis option is assigned, a second defense in front of the same Examining Committee is required within a maximum of three months from the date of the first defense. In the second defense, the committee will grade the thesis by coursework and thesis option and for the thesis option will place the thesis in one of three categories: “pass”, “pass pending minor revisions”, or “no pass”.

10.4.4 Thesis Submission

After the thesis has been approved, four bound copies of the final version in the correct format must be submitted to the Assistant Dean within four weeks of the thesis defense. The Assistant Dean will then send two copies plus an electronic copy in pdf and docx formats to the Deanship.

11 Comprehensive Examination

Before taking the Comprehensive Examination, a student must have completed all required courses with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00. The examination may be given in an oral and/or written and/or practical form, as specified in the approved program. It should be designed to cover all the courses undertaken by the student. The examination should be of a higher level than that of courses taken at the bachelor level. Passing the examination requires complete comprehension of the material taken in the courses and an understanding of terminology and skills.

11.1 Comprehensive Examination Registration

The department forwards to the College Postgraduate Studies Committee the names of the Comprehensive Examination Committee members and

the student's name and determine the date, time and place of examination. The examination must be held no later than six weeks from the end of the semester. Failure to attend the examination without the advance notification of the college dean and the Dean will result in the designation of a "no pass" in the comprehensive examination.

11.1.1 Doctoral Comprehensive Examination

Students enrolled in the doctorate by coursework and thesis program must sit for the comprehensive examination in the last semester of the second year.

11.1.2 Master's Comprehensive Examination

Master's students enrolled in the master's by coursework program must sit for the comprehensive examination in the last semester of study.

11.2 Members of the Comprehensive Examination Committee

- Chair:** A non-voting faculty member from outside the student's department.
- Internal Examiner:** HoD or delegate.
- A Faculty Member:** From the student's college.
- External Examiner:** From outside the student's department, appointed by the College Postgraduate Studies Committee.

11.3 Responsibilities of the Comprehensive Examination Committee

The committee's responsibilities include:

- A. Preparing the examination in consultation with the department, supervising and grading the examination to determine whether the student has or has not passed.
- B. The Committee Chair reports the examination results to the Assistant Dean within one week from the date of the examination and sent to the Deanship.

11.4 Repeating Comprehensive Examination

A student who has not passed the examination may take it a second time within a maximum of one semester from the date of the first examination. A third examination is not permitted.

12 Withdrawal from the University

12.1 Voluntary Withdrawal

Students who intend to withdraw permanently from the university must consult with the program coordinator or the supervisor before applying officially for withdrawal in order to explore all available options.

12.2 Unofficial Withdrawal

Students will be considered to have unofficially withdrawn from the university and their enrollment will be terminated in the following cases:

- A. Fail to return in the semester following an approved postponement of study.
- B. Fail to register for two consecutive semesters.
- C. Fail to meet the academic requirements of the program within the official period.
- D. Fail to pay tuition fees.

12.3 Reinstatement

After consultation with the relevant college dean, the Dean may in exceptional cases reinstate a student in the previous program of study. A reinstatement application will not be considered if the study stoppage exceeds two years.

13 Dismissal from University

The student may be dismissed from the university with no possibility of reinstatement in the following cases:

- A. Failing to meet academic requirements within the granted extension of study.
- B. Failing to get off probation within one semester.

- C. Failing to complete the required coursework in the doctoral program by thesis within one academic year for full-time students and two academic years for part-time students.
- D. Getting off the first probation but falling on probation again.
- E. Receiving an F grade twice in the same course.
- F. Receiving an F grade in two courses in the same semester.
- G. Violating disciplinary rules stated by the university.

14 Code of Conduct

Students are required to adhere to conventional norms and keep positive habits and behaviors inside the university as these have a salient effect on maintaining positive personality traits and orderly life at SQU. They should also be familiar with approved academic integrity and the consequences of violating it. (Please refer to the Student Academic Misconduct Policy for more information). Students must:

- A. Adhere to the Postgraduate Academic Regulations and other university regulations, documents and decisions issued by the concerned university bodies, and refrain from inciting others to break them.
- B. Attend lectures, classes and other required university sessions.
- C. Pay tuition fees.
- D. Not verbally or physically assault university faculty, students, administrators, staff, security forces, contractors, university guests. Violations include, but are not limited to, disruptive, provocative, contemptuous, and disrespectful behavior.
- E. Not submit a research project, paper or an assignment which has already been submitted elsewhere to gain another academic degree at the university or other academic institutions.
- F. Not interfere with other students' work, or commit acts of cheating, forgery or plagiarism. This includes submission of work whose text, ideas, and arguments belong to others without proper citation through references or footnotes.
- G. Maintain university laws, especially those relevant to the code of conduct and research ethics pertinent to humans, animals and others and those that have to do with the confidentiality of data.
- H. Not publish information about events taking place at the university on social media or any of its various applications without written permission from the university or another concerned body.

- I. Maintain the rules of using the Internet appropriately and refrain from using it for purposes that violate Oman's values, morals, norms and Islamic principles. It is forbidden to keep within campus films, books or videotapes and audiotapes or magazines which violate Oman's values, ethics, or Islamic morals or those that are against university laws.
- J. Not discriminate against people with different religious beliefs either physically or verbally. They must not indulge in verbal or written arguments about religious sects or insult them.
- K. Respect the university's cultural, literary and other activities. They must also closely follow the rules of participating in these.
- L. Not collect money, donations or funds for any purpose without prior consent obtained from concerned bodies at the university.
- M. Not interfere with the confidentiality of information or privacy of staff at the university.
- N. Return their university ID card when submitting a clearance form for university debts.
- O. Dress according to standards of modesty appropriate to Omani customs, traditions, and Islamic values and principles that the university strives to uphold.

15 Appeal

15.1 Grade Appeal

Students may appeal against a grade obtained in any course within one month of the official grade announcement. In this case, appeals must follow the following procedures. First, the student submits an appeal to the course instructor with a copy to the HoD. If they reject it, the student may appeal in writing to the relevant HoD. The HoD then forms a committee, which does not include the course instructor, to investigate the appeal. The course instructor is required to provide the committee with all relevant material. The committee reports its findings and recommendations in writing to the HoD. Based on the committee's report, the HoD makes a decision regarding the appeal and forwards it to the college dean for appropriate action.

15.2 Postgraduate Appeals Committee

Students may submit an appeal to the Postgraduate Appeals Committee

regarding their academic status. The committee then studies the case and makes the appropriate decision which, once approved by the Vice Chancellor, shall be final.

the committee consist of:

- A. Dupty Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- B. Dean
- C. Two colleges dean, one from science-based colleges and the other from humanities-based colleges.
- D. Director of the Legal Affairs Department or Delegate.

16 Graduation

16.1 Doctoral Program

- A. Completion of all degree requirements.
- B. Enrollment in the program for not less than three academic years.
- C. Publishing a paper, or receiving acceptance for publication, in a specialized, peer-reviewed journal.
- D. Presenting a paper at an international scientific conference for the doctoral program by thesis.
- E. Submitting the final approved version of the thesis along with the required copies.
- F. Obtaining clearance of all debts to the university.
- G. A master's degree in the same specialization may be awarded to a student who withdraws from the doctorate by coursework and thesis program, after completion of 36 credits with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00.

16.2 Master's Program

- A. Completion of all degree requirements.
- B. Enrollment in the program for no less than two academic semesters.
- C. Achieving graduation GPA of not less than 3.00 in all courses.
- D. Achieving a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 in graduation GPA.
- E. Submitting the final approved version of the thesis along with the required copies (if this is required by the program).
- F. Passing the comprehensive examination (if this is required by the program).
- G. Obtaining clearance of all debts to the university.

H. A postgraduate diploma may be awarded to anyone who withdraws from the master's program after completion of 21 credits with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75.

16.3 Postgraduate Diploma

- A. Completion of 21 credits of the degree's coursework.
- B. Achieving a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75.

17 Degree Conferral

Degrees will be conferred by the university upon the candidate's completion of all degree requirements. Neither grades nor GPA will be recorded on the certificates. The certificate for the postgraduate diploma may be conferred in a period not exceeding two years from the date of completion of degree requirements.

18 Off-Campus Residency

The maximum off-campus residency allowed for a master's or doctoral degree is 50% of the duration of the program. This is intended to help students achieve degree objectives and to enable them to undertake research work with a co-supervisor and possibly take courses at other universities. Joint degrees are a form of collaboration by two institutions (the home and the host institution) that jointly award the degree under a formal agreement.

18.1 Home Institution

This is the university where the student registers, pays fees and receives primary supervision. The home institution manages the final examination, thesis defense, and degree conferral.

18.2 Host Institution

The host institution recognizes the admission of the student to the home program, provides a co-supervisor, makes its resources available to the candidate, hosts the candidate for one or more visits, and recognizes the final examination/defense and degree conferred by the home institution.

18.3 Students' Academic Visits

Student academic visits are when the student spends a short research visit of up to one semester, and not exceeding half of the program's duration for a long visit, with a co-supervisor at the host institution. No formal agreement is required, only the approval of the college deans in both institutions is required in addition to the approval of the Dean where SQU is the home institution. The student only registers and pays fees at the home institution. A student may register for classes at the host institution only if these courses have been specified by the program coordinator or the Thesis Committee. The courses can be transferred in accordance with SQU's credit transfer rules.

18.4 Joint Degree

Joint degrees are governed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or a Letter of Understanding (LoU) between two institutions. The student registers at both institutions and pays fees at the home institution or as specified in the agreement (MoU/LoU - Joint-Badging degree). Students should spend a significant amount of time at the host institution and at least half of the program's duration at the home institution. The degree is jointly conferred.

18.4.1 Supervision

Where SQU is the home institution, the Thesis Committee should select a co-supervisor in the host institution, suggest the name to the department in the home institution, and obtain the approval of the college Assistant Dean and the Dean at SQU, and of all relevant bodies at the host institution. A co-supervisor at the host institution is not intended to replace the supervisor at SQU. It is the responsibility of the supervisor at SQU to ensure that the co-supervisor at the host institution functions as a full member of the Thesis Committee and that the research takes the form of collaboration between the two institutions. The responsibilities of the co-supervisor at the host institution include the following:

- A. Participating in the supervision of drafting and approving the thesis proposal.
- B. Hosting the student and providing research support.
- C. Providing advice and supervision throughout the study.
- D. Approving thesis readiness for defense.
- E. Attending the thesis defense, when possible.

18.4.2 Graduation

The degree is jointly awarded. The student attends graduation at the home institution, unless the MoU/LoU ratified by both institutions specifies otherwise.

18.4.3 Appeal/Code of Conduct/Withdrawal

The student is subject to the rules of the home institution at all times and to the rules of the host institution while there. Failure to abide by these rules and breaches of conduct may result in the cancellation of registration and dismissal of the student from the program. Appeals against any disciplinary action should be addressed to the Postgraduate Appeals Committee at the university level where SQU is the home institution. Where students have registered at the host institution, they may submit an appeal concerning any issue to the host institution directly. When they encounter any problems at the host institution, the home institution should be informed.

