



Bahir Dar University

Guidelines for Doctoral Programs

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AC	Academic Council of College/ Faculty Institute/ School/ Academy
AUGC	Academic Unit Graduate Council
AVP	Academic Vice President
BDU	Bahir Dar University
CANG	Cumulative Average Number Grade
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CHMS	College of Medicine and Health Sciences
CP	Credit Point
Cr. Hr	Credit Hour
DC	Department Council
DEd	Doctor of Education
DSc	Doctor of Science
LLD	Doctor of Law
MoSHE	Ministry of Science and Higher Education
SGS	School of Graduate Studies
PG	Post-Graduate
PGPCO	Post-Graduate Program Coordinator
PGRCSO	Post-Graduate, Research and Community Services Coordinator
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SAC	Student Advisory Committee
SC	School Council
SANG	Semester Average Number Grade
SGPA	Semester Grade Point Average
CGS	Council of Graduate Studies

Operational Definitions

Academic Unit: College, faculty, institute, school or academy functioning under BDU.

Candidate: A person who has registered for the doctoral degree and successfully completed the course requirement, the comprehensive examination and submitted an approved research proposal.

Comprehensive examination (A-Exam): Oral comprehensive examination to evaluate the doctoral student's subject matter knowledge and his/her doctoral proposal.

Department: Part of an academic unit where doctoral programs are running.

Dissertation: A written record of a research work undertaken by a doctoral candidate for partial fulfillment (for course based studies) and fulfillment (for research based studies) of an academic degree or professional qualification.

External Examiner: Academic staff/researcher outside of BDU (preferably outside of Ethiopia) with doctoral degree and a rank of Associate Professor and above who will examine the doctoral candidate.

Final Examination (B2-Exam): It is the final examination to be taken by a PhD candidate that includes open defense of the dissertation and interrogations on subject matter know how.

Internal Examiner: Academic staff of BDU with doctoral degree and a rank of Associate Professor and above who will examine the doctoral candidate.

Joint programs: Doctoral programs which are handled by BDU and other external educational institutions. These programs are arranged to be handled by two parties when academic units of BDU or the other party do not have adequate staff profile to launch the program or to complement different expertise available in the different institutions.

Mock Viva: It is a way of having the experience of being questioned about the candidate's doctoral research project before he/she is formally examined.

School of Graduate Studies (SGS): Refers to University level graduate program coordination office that oversees activities of all the doctoral and Masters programs of BDU.

Post-Graduate Program Coordinator (PGPCO): College/ Faculty/ Institute/ School/ Academy level coordinator assigned by the AVP that oversees activities of the post-graduate programs where there are several doctoral programs.

Post-Graduate Programs: Doctoral (and Masters) programs in the various College/ Faculty/ Institute/ School/Departments of BDU.

Post-Graduate, Research and Community Services Coordinator (PGRCSO): College/ Faculty/ Institute/ School/ Academy level coordinator/vice dean that oversees post-graduate programs, research and community services.

Program: The specialization (specific field of study) running under a specific department of an academic unit where doctoral students are admitted.

Student Advisory Committee (SAC): A group of professionals, holding a doctoral degree with a minimum rank of associate professor or equivalent, supervising the doctoral candidates' research, publication and dissertation write up activities until the candidate is conferred with a doctoral degree.

Student: A person registered for the doctoral degree prior to becoming a candidate.

Supervisor: A member of the academic staff of BDU; or staff of other universities in Ethiopia or outside Ethiopia recommended by a doctoral student/candidate and approved by AUGC to guide/supervise research/ academic work of the student/candidate.

Synopsis Seminar (B1-Exam): It is an examination to be administered by the SAC where the candidate shall present results of his/her research work before the final examination.

Viva Voce: An oral exam (defense) of a dissertation.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The vision of Bahir Dar University (BDU) is to become one of the ten premier research universities in Africa by 2025. To achieve this target, studies conducted by students and their supervisors in different post-graduate programs are of paramount importance. The research achievements should be documented in the form of theses or dissertations. A dissertation is a written record of a research work undertaken by a candidate for partial fulfilment (for course based studies) and fulfilment (for research based studies) of an academic degree or professional qualification.

The School of Graduate Studies (SGS) of BDU is playing its role towards the realization of vision 2025 of the University. As an integral part of the University's academic wing, the office has launched a coordinated effort towards strengthening post-graduate programs and thereby taking a leading role in bringing the doctoral programs to their utmost quality and standards. The preparation of this guideline for doctoral studies is, therefore, believed to raise the academic standard of BDU to internationally accepted level.

According to BDU Senate Legislation, third degree education at BDU will lead to the award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of law (LLD), Doctor of Science (DSC), Doctor of Education (DEd) and so on. All the discussions hereunder as "doctoral degree" include all the above, and not limited to, third degrees. An academic unit may run joint doctoral programs in collaboration with other universities. In such cases, special procedures may be set to administer such programs in agreement with the collaborating institution.

As a result of the mandate given by BDU to the office, SGS works towards making the doctoral programs to be well organized with strict accountability and better communication system. To further make the doctoral program effective and pertinent, the school establishes all the parameters of quality, relevance and uniform system (guideline) across all departments, schools and academic units. The guideline helps to make the doctoral students, their supervisors, the academic community at the University and the public at large, better informed about the procedures to be followed and requirements to be fulfilled for success in the post-graduate programs. It contains information on functional structures of doctoral programs; admission requirements; credit requirements and course loads; dissertation write-up and submission; evaluations procedures and graduation requirements to be known by prospective students who plan to enroll for doctoral programs. Failure to follow these

instructions may result in delay of graduation and, in worst cases, cancellation from the doctoral studies. The Academic Vice President Office is pleased to wish you a prosperous stay in BDU where we anticipate wisdom be fetched from, and success comes out of your perseverance and hard work.

1.2. Objectives

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of this guideline is to help doctoral students, their supervisors, instructors, the graduate program coordinators, the Registrar and other concerned bodies understand all the necessary procedures to follow and requirements to be fulfilled while engaging in doctoral programs at BDU.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this guideline are:

- a. To determine the ways in which doctoral studies can be integrated and run smoothly at BDU;
- b. To establish uniform working procedures pertaining to SGS across academic units in the University;
- c. To establish a sense of accountability, responsibility and transparency at all levels on issues related to SGS;
- d. To provide quick reference to the academic unit heads, staff, students and other stakeholders in general so that issues related to SGS can be easily accessed and managed.

2. Functional Structure of Doctoral Programs

The doctoral program of BDU is administered by a hierarchy of academic councils, offices and committees as per BDU legislation. This section mainly presents information about student advisory committee and advisor/coadvisors; more details about the organizational structure of doctoral programs can be found from BDU legislation.

2.1. Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

2.1.1. Members of the SAC

There shall be a SAC composed of a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of four (4) faculty members for each doctoral student to monitor the progress of research work, publication and dissertation writing. SAC shall be chaired by the supervisor for each candidate admitted to the doctoral degree. A doctoral student may suggest members of the SAC. The SAC will be

eventually approved by the department and further approved by Academic Unit Graduate Council (AUGC).

The SAC shall consist of the following members:

Supervisor of the student.....Chairperson of the Committee (the most senior in academic rank)

Co-Supervisor.....Co-chair /Secretary of the committee

One or two faculty members from the same or other programs in BDU or outside BDU..... Member(s)

In conditions where sufficient supervisors are not available, advisors (with relevant academic qualification and status) outside the department in the University or even outside BDU can be assigned. In this case, the co-adviser must be from the academic unit where the candidate is admitted. However, this must be approved by the DC and AUGC.

The SAC shall:

- a. Suggest important research techniques or assist in multi-disciplinary research or feedback that will promote student's success although close supervision of the performance of the doctoral student is the responsibility of the supervisor and co-supervisor;
- b. Review and approve dissertation research proposals submitted by doctoral students under the supervision of their academic supervisors;
- c. Ratify the research outline and recommend specific coursework for the doctoral student when deemed necessary;
- d. Advise doctoral students in a special area of expertise during the research and coordinate part of the students' research support in agreement with the supervisor and co-supervisor;
- e. Conduct comprehensive examination (A-Exam) and Synopsis Examination (B1-Exam) of the doctoral student;
- f. Continuously monitor the progress and advise on mid-course correction required, if any;
- g. Consider the requests of their doctoral students such as change of supervisor/s, committee members, extension beyond the stipulated period and so on.

Approval for the SAC members shall be made during the first year and the members are documented and endorsed by all units using an approved form of the SGS and signed by all units.

2.2. Supervisors and Co-Supervisors of Doctoral Programs

The department normally recommends the selected dissertation advisor(s) to the AUGC. The dissertation advisor(s) shall be:

- a. A Professor or Associate Professor with a doctoral degree and a member from the AU where the student is enrolled;
- b. A person outside of the University (national or international) working in the industry/research institutes or other higher learning institutes in the required area of specialization on the rank of Associate Professor (with a doctoral degree) and above or senior researcher and above with a doctoral degree who will be able to submit a letter of commitment in supervising the student can be appointed as a supervisor if recommended by the department and approved by AUGC. In such cases, it will be mandatory to have a co-supervisor from BDU;
- c. With the proposal of the doctoral student and with the consent of the supervisor, the department shall appoint, with the approval of AUGC, a co-supervisor with a rank Assistant Professor (having doctoral degree) to be a member of SAC of the doctoral student;
- d. The optimum number of students that a supervisor may supervise shall be determined by the AUGC in consultation with the SGS taking into consideration the bylaws of the University and the workload of the instructor, the number of students in the faculty, and other prevailing conditions. However, it cannot exceed ten; and
- e. During the process of advisor selection, the interest of both the advisor and the advisee shall be considered unless other force majeure.

The supervisors and co-supervisors in doctoral programs will have the following duties:

- a. The supervisor and co-supervisor will be responsible for guiding the doctoral candidate in the preparation of the research proposal of the candidate;
- b. The supervisor and co-supervisor will be responsible for reviewing the manuscript to be prepared by the doctoral candidate and will ensure that the manuscript meets the scientific standards and published in reputable journals;
- c. The supervisor and co-supervisor will supervise the doctoral student in writing the dissertation as per the rules and regulations of the dissertation guideline of BDU;

- d. The supervisor and co-supervisor will ensure that the dissertation is defended by the doctoral candidate as per the calendar set by each academic unit; and
- e. The signature of the member of the SAC on the student dissertation indicates that the committee members believe that both the research and dissertation merits approved.

2.2.1. Conflicts and Changes of Advisory Committee Members

The AUGC shall permit, if deemed fit reasons, change of SAC member for the candidate based on the request of the supervisor under extraordinary circumstances such as:

- a. A change of research topic before the provisional registration is confirmed;
- b. Committee members are away from the place of work for more than a year;
- c. Committee members are deceased; and
- d. Members are not responding to attend meetings to do comprehensive examination (A-Exam) and presentations of progress reports of the candidate.

Procedures during conflict, withdrawal of supervisors, and change and resignation of SAC members:

- a. In case where a doctoral student has a grievance against his/her supervisor for a valid reason, the student should be given the right to ask his/her supervisor be changed. However, department will try to resolve the conflict by discussion;
- b. If department cannot resolve, the AUGC, in consultation with the PGRCSO/PGPCO, will address the problem;
- c. If agreement cannot be reached through the AUGC or PGRCSO/PGPCO, the case can be referred to the SGS, and if need be, the case will be referred to the office of the AVP, where its decision on the matter will be final;
- d. Any conflict with a co-supervisor and committee members will be resolved by the supervisor who has to report the conflict to department. A supervisor or co-supervisor may only withdraw as supervisor or co-supervisor in exceptional cases, stating the reasons;
- e. The supervisor or co-supervisor will have to notify the doctoral student the other supervisors and co-supervisors, the department and the PGRCSO/PGPCO about his/her withdrawal immediately;
- f. A doctoral student may change the members of the SAC only with the approval of all the members of the newly constituted committee and the department;
- g. Any member may resign at any time from the SAC. When a chairperson resigns, in order for the student to have the opportunity to reconstitute his/her committee, the academic unit may allow the student to be registered without a chairperson for one semester only. Summer does not count as a semester for these purposes;
- h. Failure to reconstitute a committee precludes a student's further registration in the academic unit;
- i. If the doctoral student in consultation with DC is unable to find a new chairperson, the department head must report to the vice dean who will call a meeting with the AUGC members to seek for new chairperson or decide whether to remove the student from the program or not. This meeting shall occur after the student has got reasonable time to find a new chairperson; and
- j. No change may be made after passing the Comprehensive examination (A-Exam) except with the approval of the PGRCSO/PGPCO. In addition, no doctoral student

may schedule a final dissertation defense within three months of a change of committee.

3. Admission Requirements to Doctoral Programs

3.1. Academic and Supportive Requirements

- a. Applicant to any doctoral program must complete the academic requirements for the Master degree in the specific/related field(s) of study at the recognized college/university or any other recognized institution of higher learning as recommended in the respective curriculum of the doctoral program;
- b. Academic units may, for pedagogic reasons or special requirements of the field of study, set appropriate age limits subject to the approval by the senate. However, individuals with age of >45 cannot apply for any doctoral program in BDU;
- c. The applicant must produce a sponsorship letter from their sponsoring organization(s) or deposit, in cash, tuition fee for the semester they are applying prior to registration;
- d. The applicant must present two recommendations from his/her former supervisors and/or scientists who can testify about the academic competency of the candidate;
- e. The academic unit shall assure that the doctor applicant has got (at least a provisional) supervisor before admission; and
- f. The applicant must prepare a synopsis showing his/her area of interest and research competence in the subject.

3.2. Announcement and Application Procedures

- a. Respective academic units will send announcement and application procedures to the SGS eight weeks before the stipulated registration time twice a year before the beginning of each semester except for summer students. After evaluating and organizing the request, the SGS sends the same to the Registrar's admission office for central announcement and for further action;
- b. Application for admission shall be done when announcement for application is made by Registrar and/or when applicants are sent through the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE); and

3.3. Selection Procedure

- a. Eligibility to admission shall consider the academic potential, interest and fund availability;
- b. Admission will consider equity and diversity. There will be greater emphasis on gender equity, empowering communities with physical disabilities; and on attracting talented students from disadvantaged communities;
- c. The admission of the candidates assigned by MoSHE shall be jointly planned, negotiated and decided between BDU and MoSHE;
- d. MoSHE applicants may compete amongst each other in case there are fewer places than the number of applicants. All doctoral candidates applying to join BDU in the doctoral programs should pass the entrance examination prepared by AUs for the same purpose;
- e. The academic unit may include additional admission requirements in conformity with the University's rules and regulations when deemed necessary. These may be of general application or may pertain to specific programs of doctoral studies; and

- f. The selection of the doctoral applicants should be made based on the academic achievement and other related requirements which would be assessed as indicated in Table 1.
- g. Entrance examination for PhD applicants could be written or oral (based synopsis presentation) or both depending on the preference of the academic units.

Table 1. Selection criteria for a doctoral student

No	Selection Criteria	Point (%)	Remark
1	Bachelor's degree CGPA	15	GPA x 3.75
2	Master's degree CGPA	20	GPA x 5
3	Entrance Examination	50	
4	Relevance of the previous training to the selected field		
	4.1. Major field of specialization	8	
	4.2. Minor field of specialization	4	
	4.2 Short term training in the field (duration \geq 3 months)	2	
5	Publication in reputable journals	7	1 article = 4 point; \geq 2 articles = 7 points;
6	Gender and/or special need	5 (bonus)	
Total		100	

Note: An applicant should get a minimum of 50% in entrance examination in order to compete for admission into the doctoral program. Eligibility for admission depends on the number of space and resources available for the program. The minimum and maximum number of students in a given specialization shall be determined by the respective AUGC as stipulated in BDU Senate Legislation.

3.4. Placement Guidelines

- a. A minimum of two students should be admitted in any one year in order to run a doctoral program of the University. However, the optimum number of students in different doctoral programs shall be determined by the respective AU's taking into consideration the number of staff, availability of space and demand for training;
- b. Admission to regular doctoral programs is processed by the registrar and granted by the respective AUs based on the requirements mentioned under Articles 3.1 and 3.3;
- c. Given the availability of space and availability of supervisor(s), admission to a doctoral program shall be on a competitive basis in line with the admission requirements of the specific curriculum of the specializations;
- d. Admission is processed for programs with approved curriculum by the BDU Senate;
- e. Every doctoral student must register at the beginning of each semester until the submission of dissertation in order to keep enrollment active. A doctoral student who fails to maintain continuous registration without officially withdrawing from the program shall be considered to have dropped out;

- f. In exceptional cases, CGS/AVP/president may, in consultation with the Registrar, allow registration after the closure of the deadline for registration without prejudice to the quality of academic programs;
- g. All new doctoral entrants may be required to attend critical thinking, academic/scientific writing; and communication courses which aim to help them get connected to study in doctoral programs, do research and accomplish writing scientific papers.

3.5. Special Admissions

1. Students admitted to a program from a field of specialization other than the intended area of specialization will be required to take bridge courses which will be determined by the DC and approved AC;
2. The duration of the student's stay in the University as a special student shall be determined by the department/academic unit concerned, but shall not exceed one academic year;
3. A student given provisional admission has to complete the prescribed courses before being formally accepted as a regular graduate student;
4. The performance of the student in the prescribed undergraduate/graduate courses will not be considered for SANG/SGPA and/or CANG/CGPA calculation in his/her graduate studies. The student shall claim for grade report;
5. The registrar office shall record separately the results of the examinations in the prescribed undergraduate/graduate courses;
6. Such a student must obtain a CGPA of 3.00 and no grade below B for each post graduate course taken to qualify for the PhD program;
7. A special student who has satisfactorily completed the prescribed undergraduate/graduate courses shall be granted regular graduate student status.

3.6. Transfer of Doctoral Students between Colleges/ Universities

According to BDU Senate Legislation, students' transfer from other universities shall be allowed when:

- a. The curriculum is the same;
- b. The admission criteria are fulfilled;
- c. They have promoted status with removed (if any) NG, I, F, D, C- or any other grade below pass mark;
- d. There is a space in the requested field of study;
- e. There is a request letter from the other universities;
- f. The course load taken is not more than 1/3rd of the total load; and
- g. There is availability of a supervisor to accept the student.

A doctoral student registered in one doctoral program within the University may be allowed to transfer to another doctoral program provided that the following requirements are fulfilled (BDU legislation):

- a. The doctoral candidate must present a letter in support of the desired transfer from a sponsor where applicable; and
- b. The doctoral candidate must present an application stating convincing reason(s) for requesting the transfer; and
- c. The course load taken is not more than 1/3rd of the total load.

Without prejudice to other rules and regulations of the University applying to cases of transfer, a doctoral student registered in one doctoral program may be allowed to transfer to another program within the University provided that the following requirements should also be fulfilled:

- a. The candidate must satisfy the academic requirements for admission into the doctoral program to which transfer is sought;
- b. The candidate must have attended not more than one semester in the originally joined doctoral program;
- c. The approval of the concerned academic units and ACs must be obtained;
- d. A doctoral student who faced dismissal shall not be allowed to transfer; and
- e. Transfer of credits will be determined by the department receiving the candidate.

4. Credit Requirements and Course Load

The doctoral program aims to develop highly capable professionals either by providing core professional courses and sound research methods or by research only with profound theories and practical techniques to build a solid and broad understanding in the area of natural science, social science, humanities, health science, medicine, engineering and so on disciplines.

4.1. Course Credits to be completed

- a. Each doctoral student, admitted to study in the doctoral program with course and research in any of the programs shall be required to complete course work included in the curriculum to enhance depth and breadth in the discipline;
- b. The course work will be part of the requirement for the award of the doctoral degree;
- c. The total course credit hours in doctoral programs requiring coursework shall be 12 to 24 credit hours or 35 to 70 CP;
- d. A total of 12 credit hours or 100 to 120 CP shall be allotted to doctoral dissertation unless and otherwise prescribed in the course catalogue;
- e. It is compulsory to all doctoral students to register for 'Doctoral Dissertation' with 12 credit hours in each semester after completing course work and the credit of which is transferred until the submission of the dissertation; and
- f. A total of 6 to 12 credit hours or 30-35 CP per semester shall normally be regarded as full load for a full time doctoral candidate.
- g. The instructor assigned to deliver courses should have a doctoral degree and minimum rank of Associate Professor. However, when there is shortage of instructors, with special decision of the AU, Assistant Professors with a doctoral degree and published one article as sole/first author since last promotion may deliver a course;

4.2. Course Work Assessments

- a. Each of the course work during the program will be evaluated based on examinations, reports, project work and presentation conducted at the end of each semester as per BDU academic calendar;
- b. The written examinations are related to the course works that focus on doctoral students' mastery of the knowledge and skill in the subject. The presentation assesses integration of technical competencies in assignments, semester projects that will be assessed through formal presentation;
- c. Every semester, the doctoral student should show the required progress and the semester evaluation result that will determine his/her status;
- d. To complete the course work in the program, a doctoral student must complete the required credits with a minimum grade of 'B' or more for each course. The minimum required SGPA/CGPA of the student on all courses is 3.00;
- e. At the end of each semester, the SAC shall examine the case of each doctoral candidate who has failed to maintain the minimum requirement of 3.00. The inquiry shall attempt to determine why the student failed, and whether there is a reason to believe the student will meet the required academic standards in the future. If for any reason the student fails to fulfill what is required, the SAC will consult the supervisors and thereafter make recommendations to department about what necessary measures to be taken;
- f. A doctoral student with 'F' grades shall be allowed to repeat the courses. However, a student with a grade of 'C' may be allowed to sit for re-examination instead of repeating the course. The maximum grade to be scored by re-examinations shall be "B". The final grade for repeated course or re-examination shall be used for computation of CGPA/SGPA;
- g. A doctoral student is subject to dismissal without first being put on academic warning, if the SGPA is below 2.75 at the end of any semester;
- h. A student will terminate the program if the CGPA is below 3.00 and not clearing 'C' or 'F' grade after academic warning. There will not be probation in any case; and
- i. Examinations for all doctoral programs and all type of curriculum (conventional/ Harmonized/ modular), except College of Medicine and Health Sciences, are graded as stipulated in Table 2.

Table 2. Grading scales of a doctoral program

Raw nark	Letter grade	Grade points
90-100	A +	4.00
85 - <90	A	4.00
80 - <85	A -	3.75
75 - <80	B+	3.50
70 - <75	B	3.00
65 - <70	B -	2.75
58 - <65	C+	2.50
50 - <58	C	2.00
40 - <50	D	1.00
< 40	F	0.00

Source: Adapted from Article 199 of BDU Senate Legislation, May 2019

- j. Doctoral degree grading scale for all College of Medicine and Health Sciences shall be governed by its specific grading scale.

4.3. Comprehensive Examination (A-Exam)

Depending on the curriculum of each doctoral program, a comprehensive examination (A-Exam) shall be given. A-Exam is a comprehensive oral examination of students' courses knowledge and research proposal (with preliminary analysis) or portfolio defense in front of SAC. External evaluators who have the expertise in the field also can be invited to examine so that it is possible to develop high quality proposal.

The procedures of conducting the examination will be as follows:

- a. The doctoral student will have to appear for a comprehensive exam on the successful completion of the prescribed course work and not exceeding three semesters after joining the doctoral program;
- b. The A-exam will cover the topics in the respective discipline and allied areas. In addition, the candidate is evaluated for the proposal on the basis of research proposal quality, originality and feasibility;
- c. The SAC will make a report to department, based on the performance in the comprehensive examination with grades from 1 to 4 during oral examination and an average of 2 is a pass grade suggesting the doctoral student become candidate and can continue;
- d. Provisional title to the research proposal will be given during the A-Exam;
- e. After incorporating the feedbacks and recommendation given by SAC members, three copy of a research proposal shall be submitted to AUGC within a week. The AUGC shall forward the proposal to PGRCSO/PGPCO for final approval. A doctoral student must complete research proposal within six months after completion of the course work with a maximum of six months extension to be approved by PGRCSO/PGPCO;
- f. If the doctoral student in the first attempt is not successful, one more A-exam will be conducted after a reasonable time, but not exceeding six months after failing in the first attempt. This will be decided by the SAC with the concurrence of AUGC and approval of the PGRCSO/PGPCO; and
- g. If the student fails for the second time, he/she shall be terminated from the doctoral program.

4.4. Doctoral programs without course work

Some academic units may have doctoral programs without a course work. This is a program based on research and publication. Modalities for such programs are the following.

- a. Doctoral degree without course work means that the doctoral student has sufficient knowledge and research experience on the subject matter he/she is going to do his/her doctoral research and has no requirement to take courses;
- b. A doctoral student should demonstrate a strong academic and research background i.e. having at least 2 publications as sole or first author during admission;
- c. A doctoral student must complete research proposal the latest within 12 months (2 semesters) from the date of joining the program with a maximum of six months extension to be approved by PGRCSO/PGPCO;

- d. A doctoral student, after 2 semesters, must sit for A-Exam which is a comprehensive oral examination of review of literature and the research proposal in front of SAC;
- e. If a doctoral student fails to pass the A-Exam, he/she could be required to take selected courses to be selected by the supervisors and he/she will be allowed to sit again for the same examination. If he/she fails for the second time, the candidate will be transferred to course based doctoral program. If this program does not exist, the student will be terminated from the study; and
- f. All rules stated here for doctoral programs with course are applicable unless it is stated differently.

4.5. Progress Report

- a. Supervisor of the doctoral students shall arrange a progress report presentation every semester on his/her yearly work progress to the PGRCSO/PGPCO. The presentation will be open to all doctoral students and faculty members;
- b. Doctoral students cannot register without submitting the progress report to the department;
- c. Each doctoral candidate will be asked to submit a progress report (hard copy or through Website) as per the standard format prepared by SGS/CGS at the end of each semester through his/her supervisor(s);
- d. The academic/research progress of each doctoral candidate will be monitored by SAC and subsequently approved by department and PGRCSO/PGPCO;
- e. A doctoral candidate should attend every Friday seminar and present at least one seminar per semester starting from second year on the progress of his/her research work or any topic relevant to his/her field of study;
- f. Following the progress report or seminar, the doctoral candidate will be graded by his/her SAC as follows: 4 = Excellent; 3 = Very Good; 2 = Good; 1 = Unsatisfactory. The passing mark is 2 (Good);
- g. 'Pass' grade is to be awarded at the end of the year if the progress is 'Good' and above during the year;
- h. If the progress is 'Unsatisfactory', the student will be warned and the following appropriate action will be taken;
 - i. For the first appearance of 'Unsatisfactory' grade, a warning would be issued to the candidate;
 - ii. If the doctoral candidate gets two consecutive 'Unsatisfactory' grades, he/she will be forced to withdraw from the program;
 - iii. The doctoral candidate can appeal on the decision to DC and the DC may forward the case to PGRCSO/PGPCO; and PGRCSO/PGPCO may forward it to AUGC; If AUGC cannot resolve, CGS will be involved.
- i. On receipt of the progress report, the supervisor(s) will forward the evaluation report in the prescribed format to DC for a review.

4.6. Synopsis Seminar (B1-Exam, Mock Viva)

- a. On the completion of the research work for the doctoral degree, the supervisor shall organize a synopsis open seminar (named as synopsis seminar/mock defense) where the doctoral candidate shall present results of his/her research work;

- b. The synopsis seminar will be based on the published articles in peer reviewed reputable journals for doctoral programs with course-based programs. The number of publications can vary based on each curriculum. However, publishing at least one article in a reputable journal as first author for course based doctoral programs is mandatory. For programs with no course, at least two published articles in reputable journals as first author should be presented;
- c. Reputable journals should be indexed in Scopus owned by Elsevier company (<https://www.scopus.com/sources.uri>) or ISI Web of Science previously owned by Thomson Reuters and currently by Clarivate Analytics (<http://mjl.clarivate.com/cgi-bin/jrnlst/jloptions.cgi?PC=master>), or PubMed (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/advanced/>). Candidates can also publish on journals recommended/accredited by MoSHE for promotion of staff;
- d. The doctoral candidate can not appear for synopsis presentation while having ‘Unsatisfactory’ grade in his/her previous semester progress report;
- e. The synopsis presentation is a short summary of the entire research work with limited number of PowerPoint slides (not more than 30 slides) that will be presented at the date of synopsis seminar;
- f. Even though provisional title is given to the research proposal during the A-exam, the exact title of the dissertation shall be as approved by the SAC after the synopsis seminar;
- g. If the SAC is satisfied with the synopsis seminar of the doctoral candidate, the Chairperson of the SAC will allow the candidate to submit the dissertation for defense;
- h. If the SAC is not satisfied with the seminar, the committee assesses the work again, and if it is not satisfied with the quality of the work, the doctoral candidate shall be advised to do further work and deliver afresh seminar after three months;
- i. If the doctoral candidate has complaints on the matter or the failed result on the second time synopsis, he/she can apply to DC and the case may be forwarded to PGRCSO/PGPCO; and PGRCSO/PGPCO may forward it to AUGC;
- j. The B1-Exam will be rated using values from 1-4 (4= Excellent, 3 = Very Good, 2 = Good, 1 = Unsatisfactory) where 2 is a passing mark.

5. Submission and Evaluation of Doctoral Dissertation

5.1. Procedures for submission of the dissertation

Based on Article 208 and 209 of BDU Legislation, the doctoral candidates should follow the following dissertation submission procedures.

- a. When a doctoral candidate, after conferring with the advisor, gives notice of readiness to submit the dissertation, the dissertation will be submitted to the department;
- b. A doctoral dissertation shall be submitted to the department at least two months before the date of defense. The external examiner should be decided in a reasonable time and obtain a copy of the dissertation of the candidate at least six weeks before the date set for the defense;
- c. Dissertation submission and defense sessions shall be included in the academic calendar of the University;

- d. The number of hard copies of the dissertation to be submitted for defense to the office of the department head shall be at least four (one for the external examiner, one for the internal examiner, one for the chair person and one for the major supervisor); and
- e. The doctoral candidate shall submit soft copy of the dissertation to the department head.

5.2. Selection of board of Examiners

Based on article 210 of BDU Legislation, the following procedures should be followed in appointing the Board of Examiners.

- a. The Board of Examiners shall have a minimum of three and a maximum of five members;
- b. The department will propose list of potential examiners to the office of the SGS through the academic unit's PGR CSC/PGPC. It is preferable to nominate double the number of internal and external adjudicators. The SGS will select and approve the adjudicators and sent approval letter back to PGR CSC/PGPC. Once the examiners are known, the dissertation will be sent to the appointed members of the examining Board by the department;
- c. At least one of the external examiners should be from universities and research institutions outside of Ethiopia. If this is not possible, external examiners from Ethiopia outside of BDU can be appointed with the approval of SGS. The purpose of having external examiners is to ensure that degrees awarded in similar subjects at the University are comparable in standard with those awarded by other universities, though their content does, of course, vary; and secondly, that the assessment system is fair;
- d. At least one external examiner is required for each student dissertation and one external examiner should not be assigned per program for more than two doctoral dissertations at a time.
- e. Call of examiners shall be made by the head of the department and approval by both the AUGC and the SGS;
- f. In appointing examiners, the department head shall ascertain the following:
 - i. Only persons of seniority and experience who are able to command authority are appointed and in all cases must have an academic rank of at least Associate Professor (or equivalent);
 - ii. An external examiner in general must be external to the University; and
 - iii. Former staff members can be invited to become external examiners unless the termination of service was due to discipline problem;
- g. External examiners from outside the higher education system, for example from industry, research institutions, etc. may be selected when deemed necessary. In this case, the examiners should be with the rank of senior researcher and above.
- h. An internal examiner, as members of the Examining Board, shall be drawn from among instructors of Bahir Dar University with the rank of Associate Professor and above.
- i. Chairperson, as members of the Examining Board, shall be drawn from instructors of Bahir Dar University with the rank of Assistant Professor (having a doctoral degree) and above. Department heads or school directors may serve as Chairperson of the

Examination Board provided that they have the rank of Assistant Professor and a doctoral degree.

5.3. Dissertation Evaluation by Examiners

- a. The examiners are expected to submit their evaluation of the dissertation document within one month;
- b. To arrange final examination ((B2-Exam, *Viva Voce*), at least two third of the examiners should accept the document and recommend final examination (B2-Exam, *Viva Voce*);
- c. If it is rejected by more than two third of the examiners due to low scientific standard, the candidate can improve the dissertation, and it could be resubmitted for another examination process after the approval of the supervisor;
- d. If rejection is due to plagiarism (similarity index greater than 20% is not allowed) or other non-ethical reasons, the AC shall decide on the dismissal or suspension of a candidate.

5.4. Final Examination (B2-Exam, *Viva Voce*)

5.3.1. Defence and Evaluation

- a. The process of the dissertation defense shall, unless otherwise required by justifiable circumstances, be open and public.
- b. Doctoral defense may be conducted face to face or through electronic media. If the defense is to be administered face to face, the date of examination should be posted on BDU website and a banner should be posted at the gate of the respective academic unit at least one week before the date of the defense.
- c. The cumulative assessment result of all examiners shall be taken on the evaluation/rating of a particular dissertation.
- d. The views of an external examiner are particularly decisive in the case of disagreement on the evaluation/rating of a particular unit of assessment.
- e. All members of the examining Board will comment on all aspects of the dissertation.

Based on the results of the open defense and assessment of the dissertation by each member of the Board of Examiners, the dissertation that is defended shall be evaluated as par the Article 211 of BDU Senate Legislation (May 2019).

a. Accepted

The dissertation is:

- a. Accepted with no or minor changes to be made to the satisfaction of the supervisor, or
- b. If a dissertation requires major changes in substance (content), which is to be made to the satisfaction of the members of the Examining Board or its designate, the examining Board's report shall include a brief outline of the nature of the changes required and indicate the time frame by which the changes are to be completed.

b. Rejected

A dissertation shall be rejected if:

- a. The work does not meet the required standards; or
- b. The work did not pass the plagiarism checker at University level; or
- c. The work is plagiarized as judged by the Examining Board; or
- d. The work has been already used to confer a degree from this or another University.

However, this shall not preclude the candidate from resubmitting such work provided enough extra work has been done to expand the scope and depth of the subject. The AC shall decide on the dismissal or suspension of a candidate whose dissertation has been rejected due to plagiarism or may impose other disciplinary measures.

5.3.2. Dissertation Grading

- a. A doctoral dissertation that is defended and accepted may be rated "Excellent", "Very Good", "Good" or "Satisfactory" which may appear on the transcript but will not be used for calculation of the CGPA of the student.
- b. A rejected dissertation shall be rated "Fail".
- c. The Grading scales of each rank are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Grading scale of the final exam

Evaluation result	(%)*
Excellent	≥ 85
Very Good	75 - <85
Good	60 - <75
Satisfactory	50 - <60
Fail	<50

* Evaluation weight (%) = 0.5 x External examiner's + 0.35 x Internal examiner's + 0.15 x Chairperson

5.5. Doctoral Final Examination Report

- a. Examiners shall submit written confidential reports about the dissertation to the department immediately after the defense;
- b. External examiners may make written confidential reports to the academic unit head at the end of their visits;
- c. The signature of the members of the Board of Examiners shall be required as evidence of their decision on the student's dissertation work; and
- d. The head, in consultation with the major supervisor, has the responsibility to see if the recommendations are considered and the proper measures are taken.

5.6. Final Dissertation Submission

- a. The doctoral candidate should correct the dissertation in accordance with the decision of the Board of Examiners and submit it to the department;
- b. The DC should delegate the internal examiner and the advisor to deliberate on the dissertation, who then shall submit their recommendations to the department head;
- c. The DC should deliberate on the dissertation and submit its recommendations to the AUGC. Then the academic unit will accept five copies of the typed final dissertation, both in electronic and hard copy, from the doctoral candidate and it will be verified by AUGC;
- d. An original copy accompanied by sheets of approval signed by all members of the Examining Board and four hard copies of the original along with a soft copy shall be submitted to the department within the time limit set by the Examining Board;
- e. All the copies shall remain property of the University; and

- f. It is recommended that the final dissertation submitted not later than six months from the date of the defense. However, the period of resubmission shall be determined by the Board of Examiners.

6. Graduation and Award of Credentials

- a. A doctoral candidate who fulfills the requirements laid down in BDU Senate Legislation and the curriculum of the doctoral program shall be recommended by the head of the academic unit on behalf of AC to the University Senate, through the Office of the Registrar, for the award of the appropriate credential;
- b. The academic units may provide safe exit points to doctoral candidates who are unable to pass their dissertation research projects through awarding MPhil. To this end, all doctoral programs are required to develop additional curricula for the MPhil situations;
- c. To complete a program and be graduated, a doctoral candidate needs to obtain a minimum CGPA of 3.00 and no less than “B” grade in any subject;
- d. Doctoral Candidates are required to present part of their research results in at least one national/international conference;
- e. Doctoral Candidates who registered for course based doctoral programs and wish to submit their dissertations as a monograph shall not be graduated without publishing at least one article as first author (with his/her supervisor/s as co-author/s) in a reputable journal;
- f. Doctoral Candidates who registered for non-course based doctoral programs and wish to submit their dissertations as a monograph shall not graduate without publishing at least two article as first author (with his/her supervisor/s as co-author/s) in reputable journals;
- g. Doctoral Candidates who want to write article based dissertations are required to publish at least three articles as first author (with his/her supervisor/s as co-author/s) in reputable journals.

7. Grievance Hearing and Handling Mechanisms

- a. Upon rejection of their application to a doctoral program, students have the right to lodge a complaint;
- b. For complaints regarding the rejection of applications for approval of course works or other parts of the organized academic training program, the applicable law is the BDU Senate Legislation;
- c. Complaints against the grading of specific examinations or other student assessments are lodged in accordance with the Senate Legislation; and
- d. Complaints regarding rejected applications for dissertation evaluation, and non-approval of the dissertation, or blocked public defense that are not solved by AUs can be made to BDU SGS;
- e. Complaints not solved by SGS can be forwarded to BDU AVP or to BDU Senate for a final ruling.

8. Revision

This guideline can be revised any time by SGS in consultation with concerned AUs and CGS.