

Document Title:	AU Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures
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Abbreviations/Terminology

University/AU	Ajman University
GSR	Graduate Studies and Research
DGSR	Deanship of Graduate Studies and Research
VCAA	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
HEI	Higher Education Institute
OIPE	Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness
CGS	Council of Graduate Studies at AU
CoR	Council of Research at AU
College	Academic College at Ajman University
Dean	Dean of Academic College
CFAA	Council for Academic Affairs
GPC	Graduate Program Coordinator
TEC	Thesis Examination Committee
DEC	Dissertation Examination Committee
GA	Graduate Assistant - An individual who serves in a support role while completing his/her graduate studies at AU.
Graduate Student	A student who is studying for a degree that is higher than the one received after four years of study at a college or university
Graduate Faculty	AU faculty teaching/supervising graduate courses/students
Thesis	A compilation of research work that demonstrates that a student is knowledgeable about the information learned throughout the master's program. Thesis is a research work that marks the end of a master's program.

Dissertation A compilation of research work and the creation of new knowledge, theories, practices during doctoral studies. Dissertation is a research work that marks the end of a doctoral program.

1. Introduction

Ajman University (AU) is committed to fulfil its vision and mission in increasing the number and quality of research and scholarly output across the various disciplines in its colleges, and therefore, an important step towards this goal is the establishment of graduate programs and unified policies and procedures to manage graduate programs at Ajman University. The University ensures that appropriate structures and processes are in place to govern graduate studies at AU.

The *AU Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures* are designed to give structure and uniformity to all AU graduate programs, including master's and doctoral programs. All graduate programs offered at AU need to abide by the policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined in this document as applicable. The University expects that the graduate studies policies are adhered to by all AU faculty, staff, and graduate students. The CGS and dean ensure that information is communicated to all graduate faculty as well as graduate students.

Graduate Studies administration rests with the academic colleges, Council of Graduate Studies (CGS), Deanship of Graduate Studies and Research (DGSR), and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (VCAA).

1.1. Scope of Document

Unless specified otherwise, the policies and procedures stated in this document apply to all graduate programs offered at AU. This document provides information and guidelines related to the following:

- Role, scope and responsibilities of the DGSR in relation to AU graduate programs
- Policies and procedures governing thesis/dissertation supervision, defence examination regulation, selection of external examiner, submission of thesis/dissertation etc.
- Modification of existing graduate programs and the proposal of new graduate programs

This document doesn't cover graduate admission and registration requirements, admission criteria, student rights, plagiarism policy, student right of appeal, academic and non-academic conflict resolution, IP rights, authorship of research publications, research ethics etc. and all the other information that is available in the AU Graduate Student Catalogue, DGSR policy and procedure and other AU documentation. This document do not change any existing AU policy (e.g. IP policy, Authorship policy or any other relevant policy). The governing structure of DGSR (councils, committees etc.) is explained in DGSR by-laws.

This document applies to everyone involved with the graduate studies at AU, including faculty academicians, staff, researchers, students etc.

The VCAA has the authority to decide on all cases not provided for in this document and awarding any exceptions, if needed.

1.2. Role and Responsibilities of DGSR

Deanship of Graduate Studies and Research ensures the highest standards and quality of AU graduate programs and research conducted by its faculty members. As per DGSR By-laws, the Dean of Graduate

Studies and Research chairs *Council of Graduate Studies*, having members representing all colleges offering graduate programs at AU. The CGS members shall be Graduate Program Coordinators (GPC) in their colleges and expected to oversee all graduate programs offered in the college.

The DGSR plays a vital role in the leadership of the University as a whole by participating in strategic planning and budgeting, as well as in the creation of a conducive environment for excellent research, scholarship, and graduate education. The DGSR vision, mission, and administrative structure is defined in DGSR By-Laws and DGSR Policies and Procedures documentation.

The role and responsibilities of DGSR in relation to AU graduate programs are as follows:

- To provide strategic initiatives related to graduate education and research at AU;
- To propose new initiatives related to research and scholarly activities and promote AU graduate programs to ensure that AU graduate education and experience is on par with that of internationally recognized universities;
- To provide assistance to the Office of International Academic Affairs in fostering relationships with international academic partners to support and promote graduate studies at AU;
- To provide quality control for graduate education and encourage and maintain fair standards across all academic disciplines, as applicable, with the support from CGS;
- To provide clear and uniform guidelines in the management of thesis/dissertation defence, administration of thesis/dissertation examination and related matters and ensure uniform standards are adopted in AU;
- To encourage colleges to develop new graduate programs in line with the vision of the university;
- To advocate issues important to the success of graduate programs including research integrity, values, and ethics in graduate education and research;
- To ensure that a common framework, as possible, for the operation of all graduate degree programs (Master's and Doctoral) is adopted and to ensure common standards and due processes are in place across the university. The implementation of the graduate studies policies and procedures at AU, stipulated in this document, is a shared responsibility of the deans, DGSR and the VCAA;
- Additional rules and regulations, as necessary for the subject area or discipline, for any of the AU graduate programs may be proposed by the colleges, as appropriate. These additional rules and regulations must not contradict any part of the existing policies and procedures. Any additional rules and regulations for any graduate program, must be submitted by the Graduate Program Coordinator to the CGS, which shall submit recommendations to the VCAA for approval before their implementation;
- To review proposals for the new graduate programs and provide recommendations to the VCAA. The review process normally focuses on whether the program is competitive in its field and whether the proposal follows the standards set by AU and CAA;
- To provide graduate assistanceship to highly talented graduate students, propose sufficient budget, monitor and assess performance of Sponsored Graduate Research Assistants (SGRAs) as per Graduate Assistantship (GA) policy.

The deanship of graduate studies and research generally does not involve in the following:

- Graduate student admissions, eligibility criteria, selection of graduate faculty, student issues related to instructors, missing credit hours and any other related issues;
- Course assessments, final examination of courses, attendance related issues etc., the relevant AU/college policies and procedures are applicable in such cases;
- Academic review of existing graduate programs, the periodic review of all programs, including graduate programs, is the responsibility of college, and the CGS shall receive review reports and providing recommendations to the VCAA;
- Although the DGSR supports high level aspects of the administration of graduate studies at AU, each college/department is responsible for its academic program (including the curriculum and examinations), the selection of faculty to participate in its graduate program, the recruitment of students to the program, the monitoring of student progress, timely completion of graduate students as per study plan, maximum time to degree completion etc.
- DGSR shall monitor the progress of the overall graduate program. Individual graduate faculty/supervisors at AU bear the full responsibility for the mentoring/supervising graduate students for the timely completion of their degrees.
- All graduate students, who are enrolled in thesis/dissertation-based programs, must have their academic and research progress evaluated by their Thesis/Dissertation Advisor and co-supervisors, as applicable. The student supervisor/co-supervisor keeps a record of all such meetings/evaluations, and any situation that might negatively impact a student's timely progress to degree must be promptly reported to the Graduate Program Coordinator and the HoD/College Dean.

1.3. Role and Responsibilities of the College/Dean

The dean of each academic college offering graduate program(s) shall appoint a Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) for each graduate program offered in the college and a representative of graduate programs in the Council of Graduate Studies (CGS).

The dean of each academic college designates a faculty liaison to serve as the principal channel for communication between the DGSR and college. This faculty liaison is a member of the Council of Graduate Studies, headed by the Dean of GSR, and is typically GPC for graduate program. If the college is offering more than one graduate program, one GPC serves as member of council of graduate studies who is also expected to oversee all graduate programs offered in his/her college.

The college should make every effort to support graduate students during their graduate studies with careful consideration for facilitating an optimal time to graduation and should provide adequate supervision and training so that they can be successful in fulfilling their degree requirements. Graduate students could get partial scholarship (i.e. tuition waiver) as per AU scholarship and fee waiver policies and procedures.

The college dean makes sure that all necessary support and resources, e.g. appropriate classrooms, laboratories (as applicable), clinical resources (as applicable), IT hardware and software, library resources etc. are available. The college ensures support is available to graduate program coordinator(s) of graduate programs within the college and facilitates them to ensure the completion of their tasks. The college needs

to enforce policy of limiting class sizes for graduate courses to ensure effective learning at a graduate level as per CAA current standards and AU class-size policy.

If a graduate student is offered graduate assistantship, the GPC and dean are responsible to ensure that the student is fulfilling its responsibilities and the requirements of the GA. If the student did not meet these requirements, the scholarship or the assistantship may be terminated as per graduate assistantship policy. For those students who encounter performance difficulties, the program coordinator and/or the supervisor may recommend termination of an assistantship to the dean. Possible reasons may include continual deficient performance or misconduct while performing the duties of the assistantship, or violation of academic integrity or conduct. The college dean shall inform such cases to the Dean of GSR immediately. In such case, the student must be informed in writing by the college dean, with specific reasons, of the termination of the assistantship or the termination from the program in case of serious violations.

1.4. Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) / Member of CGS

Each graduate program must have a faculty member, as a Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC), who is responsible for the daily operations of the programs including all issues related to the graduate students in that particular program and report to college Dean. GPC serves as a resource and contact person about rules, regulations and procedures related with the graduate program.

The general role and responsibilities of a graduate program coordinator are as follows:

- Prepare (or assist in the preparation of) timetable for all courses offered throughout the academic year in consultation with the Dean or Head of Department (HoD);
- Assess program(s)' needs for databases, software, subscription etc.
- Provide assistance in students' registration, following up registration related issues and academic advising;
- Manage all types of students' complaints related to courses, teaching methods, training and/or any other related matter;
- Work with graduate faculty to monitor the progress of students throughout the academic year;
- Help graduate students and providing right information on their program;
- Ensure the completion of course files by the end of each semester. The coordinator's responsibility is to follow up with graduate faculty for the completion of the course file including part-time lecturers;
- Provide recommendations for the selection of part-time faculty, if needed, and make a request to college dean;
- Maintain and manage an advisory board for graduate studies.
- Ensure that all thesis/dissertation students have appropriate supervision and follow up on the issues related to the thesis/dissertation supervision, completion and examination, as applicable;
- As per approved procedures, provide all required assistance in the thesis/dissertation examinations as outlined in this document.
- Manage and coordinate the workload thesis/dissertation for supervisors, committee chairs, committee members and provide aggregated/tabulated figures to the dean and HOD's for consideration of teaching load.
- Assist in establishment of alumni data base for future needs in cooperation with the university alumni office;

- Understand and apply the program's most recent regulations and ensure that any graduate program information in public documents (website, brochures, etc.) is up to date and consistent with approved regulations and information;
- Ensure that all graduate admission conditions are fulfilled;
- Mediate student-supervisor conflicts (in case of conflicts between the supervisor and his/her own students, should direct the student to the Dean);
- Provide all necessary assistance in the renewal of accreditation for the program in coordination with the other departments in the college;
- Prepare and submit an annual comprehensive report of the program to DGSR;
- Provide overall coordination of graduate activities within the program;
- Make sure that all graduate programs are periodically reviewed in the college. These program reviews are led by the graduate faculty involved in the program and must be student-focused, evidence-based and should be in line with the goals and objectives of AU and the respective college. The review should lead to an action plan towards identifying the weaknesses and the strengths of the program and remedies to overcome any difficulties that the program may be facing.
- Establish and manage relationships with the profession and government agencies to promote the program and explore international collaboration opportunities.
- Represent the college in CAA meetings and communications pertaining to his program(s).
- At the Dean's discretion, the Graduate Program Coordinator is entitled to receive administrative support in terms of full-time employees and/or part-time work study.

1.5. Classification of Graduate Programs

The definitions of full time and part time graduate students are defined in AU Policies and Procedures.

Thesis or Dissertation based Graduate Programs: Graduate Students who are admitted in a graduate program at AU, where thesis/dissertation is a requirement as part of degree completion. The thesis option graduate students are required to complete and successfully defend a thesis with an original research work in front of a Thesis or Dissertation Examining Committee.

Non-thesis based master's programs / Professional masters programs: Graduate Students who are admitted in a graduate master's program at AU, where thesis is not a requirement as part of degree completion e.g. MBA.

2. Master's Degree at Ajman University

The master's degree programs, generally require the equivalent of at least one year of advanced graduate study and at least 30 credit hours of study beyond the bachelor's level, training in research skills and methodology, and most commonly a research thesis. It recognizes increased expertise in an academic discipline or professional field of study, gained through intensive course work and significant research component such as thesis. Most of master's degree programs are research-oriented (i.e. thesis option master's programs), while some master's degree programs are considered professional degrees. In non-thesis option professional degrees, the program should include some mechanism to assess the student's integrative and comprehensive understanding of the discipline (i.e. special project, internship, examination, etc.), while in the thesis-based program, there must be a thesis and thesis defense.

The remainder of this section provides policies and procedures related with thesis based graduate programs only.

2.1. Research and Thesis

Graduate students pursuing master's research degree track are expected, under the guidance of their thesis supervisor, to present a thesis based on their own research. The total number of credits allotted to the thesis in any master's program may range from 6 to 9 credits, or as stated in the approved study plan. The master's degree thesis should reflect awareness with earlier work in the field and must reveal the capacity to carry out research and to arrange results. The final outcome (thesis) is expected to be presented according to AU guidelines for the thesis.

2.2. Thesis Supervisor / Co-Supervisor(s)

Prior to thesis registration, the graduate program coordinator in consultation with the student, must identify and nominate supervisor(s) (including co-supervisors, if needed) for each student enrolled in the program and send to college dean for approval.

The student's principal supervisor for a thesis-based degree must be a full-time AU graduate research active faculty member (as per CAA guidelines) and has the primary obligation for oversight of the student's progress during his/her studies. For non-thesis based graduate programs, the supervisor(s) can be any full-time graduate faculty in the college.

Normally, an AU faculty member may supervise a maximum of 5 master's theses at any one point in time as a principal thesis supervisor. However, in certain cases this number may increase to a higher number subject to VCAA approval.

It is imperative to avoid situations which may constitute as a conflict of interest when forming a supervisory team. In case of any conflict, the GPC and college dean shall resolve the dispute otherwise pass all details to the dean of GSR. The dean of GSR has the authority to replace a supervisor, after consultation with the GPC, the College Dean, and the VCAA as required, when it is in the best interest of the student and the program.

Co-supervisors, if applicable, must meet regularly, at least once per semester, to advise on the student's progress in his/her research thesis, identify any potential concern/problems and provide possible solutions to circumvent such difficulties that the student may be facing. Student and his/her supervisor(s)

must keep a record (document and copy of emails) of all such meetings, discussions (e.g. minutes of meetings) and be able to provide this information on a request.

Adjunct AU faculty members who are participating as graduate faculty within a program may serve as co-supervisors.

2.3. Thesis Proposal

A thesis proposal is required for all students enrolled in a thesis based graduate program. The thesis proposal intends to identify a research problem, describe the research approach, and define the required resources and time to complete the study. Students are expected to submit thesis proposal by the end of semester in which they registered for the thesis to Thesis Examination Committee (TEC) through their principal supervisor and get it approved.

2.4. Thesis Examination Committee (TEC)

The TEC should be formulated as soon as the student registers for the thesis, nominated by the supervisor to the GPC, who forwards nomination with his/her endorsement to college Dean for final approval. The composition of master's TEC is as follows:

- Student's principal supervisor and co-supervisor(s) (if applicable); and,
- One internationally recognized external examiner (can be appointed later before the thesis defense).
- One committee member selected from the following:
 - any full-time faculty member within the student's programs of study, or,
 - any full-time faculty member from within or outside the student's program of study (i.e. from another graduate program at AU), or,
 - an AU adjunct faculty or from another affiliated institution whose expertise is particularly important to the topic of the student's research.

More than one examiner may be selected if needed. Before the thesis defense is scheduled, the student must submit a computer typed complete draft copy of thesis in the format approved by the DGSR to TEC. The student's TEC members should read the thesis and provide feedback to the student and provide their acceptance that thesis is in good shape and student is ready to proceed for the thesis defense.

The external examiner(s) are selected upon the recommendation from the supervisor to graduate program coordinator, who forwards these nominations to college dean for the final approval. The external examiner(s) must not have any conflict of interest with the student research (i.e. not engaged with the student master's research or have any joint publication with the student, not student ex-supervisor or teacher etc.). It is preferable that the external examiner holds the rank of full Professor at an internationally recognized (ranked) university and has a successful record of thesis supervision with no AU affiliation.

The TEC submits to the graduate program coordinator a report regarding the thesis evaluation, so that the relevant recommendations can be submitted to the dean for approval.

2.5. Research Publications Requirements

The graduate student is expected to publish or have prepared and submitted at least a draft version of one research paper to his/her supervisor prior to the thesis defense. This paper (or papers) are made available along with the dissertation to the TEC, who take the scholarly quality and the formal rigor of the paper(s) into account when they evaluate the overall quality of the thesis.

Such requirements are relax for master's students preparing theses in Arabic, they are expected to submit a comprehensive summary (e.g. 4-5 single space A4 pages) written in Arabic and English before the thesis defence.

2.6. Final Master's Thesis Defense / Examination

2.6.1. Policy Statement

- A thesis defense is required for all master's candidates enrolled in a thesis based graduate program. This examination or defense is intended to test the candidate's knowledge in the discipline or the field of study and has the ability to critically understand and evaluate important topics in the program with emphasis on the work presented in the thesis.
- During thesis defense, the student must publicly defend his/her thesis (through a short presentation), followed by a closed-door oral thesis defense. The closed-door thesis defense will be administered by thesis examining committee. the student supervisor or the college may decide to have an open-door defense examination.
- For all students, the thesis defense shall be held during regular working hours at AU.
- The student, supervisor, graduate program coordinator, college dean, or any TEC member may request DGSR to provide an independent observer to be present in any thesis defense.
- All thesis re-examination defences must have such an independent, outside representative, who serves as an impartial representative of the academic standards in the exam. During the scheduling process, the college dean notifies the student, TEC, and the program coordinator, that a Graduate Studies liaison has been assigned for the final examination or the thesis defense.

2.6.2. Related Procedure

- As soon as a student is ready for a thesis defense, the student shall submit a draft version of thesis to TEC (excluding external examiner) and seek their approval.
- The supervisor provides suggestion for external examiner(s), and submits this request to appoint external examiner(s) to the graduate program coordinator.
- The graduate program coordinator forwards this request to college dean for approval with his/her endorsement.
- The Dean of GSR shall be notified with the examination arrangements, names/designation of TEC, external examiner details by the GPC of the college. An extra member could be appointed by the Dean of GSR to serve as a liaison regarding the examination process, especially for repeat examination/defense.
- The graduate program coordinator invites the external examiner, communicates to the TEC and informs student, supervisor and DGSR about the final arrangements of the examination.
- The thesis supervisor sends an electronic copy of the student's thesis to the TEC members at least 3-4 weeks prior to the thesis defense.

- The student's TEC is responsible for approving all aspects of the final thesis before the formal thesis defense. The supervisor provides TEC a thesis acceptance form, which must be signed and returned by all TEC members to the supervisor before the thesis defense can be scheduled.
- The supervisor makes all necessary thesis defense arrangements e.g. room booking, informs all TEC members about the arrangements, inform students and explains the format etc. and serves as chair of TEC.

2.7. Examination Outcomes

2.7.1. Policy Statement

- The possible examination/ defense outcomes are as follows:
 - **Pass:** a successful candidate must receive affirmative votes from a majority of the members of the committee to pass the final examination or the thesis defence.
 - **Pass with minor or major modifications:** The TEC may also choose to recommend passing the student following either minor or major modifications to the thesis or the project. In this case, the student is given some time to implement the corrections to the thesis. If minor modifications are required, the TEC may leave it to the supervisor to ensure that the changes are incorporated. If major modifications are required, the TEC may request that the student make another presentation to the TEC to ensure that the modifications made are to their satisfaction.
 - **Fail:** if a student fails to demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the literature in his/her core research area or fails to articulate the motivation and design of the research in either the written part (project or thesis) or during the oral examination, he/she is allowed to retake the exam only one more time.
- A student who fails the oral thesis examination may be permitted a re-examination (max. one more time) upon the request of the TEC and the approval of the DGSR. A re-examination, if permitted, must be in the following semester.
- For re-examination, the University may charge appropriate amount of money for student to re-examine the thesis.
- The DGSR appoints a liaison (observer) for the re-examination of thesis. A student who fails two final examinations is dismissed from the graduate program at AU. However, should there be procedural irregularities or extenuating circumstance during the first or the second examination, the student has the right to appeal to the DGSR and submit an application directly to the Dean of GSR.
- Passing the oral examination of the thesis doesn't imply that the thesis is acceptable as defended. The thesis is approved after all corrections stipulated by the examining committee are incorporated in the thesis. The student advisor or the chair of the committee must certify that the corrections have been made.

2.7.2. Procedure

- Within 5 days of passing the thesis examination (after all corrections are made and the supervisor confirms submission of the thesis), the student must submit final approved thesis at least 14 days before the end of semester to be considered for graduating that semester.
- The supervisor must complete and submit an oral thesis defense report, a similarity index approval form and final thesis copy to the GPC.

- The student submits four printed and bound copies and an electronic copy of the thesis to the college secretary. The college may request additional or less bounded copies from the students.
- The college secretary distributes copies to AU Library, College, Supervisor, and DGSR.
- Following this, the college dean recommends the student for master's degree to the AU/Registrar.

3. Doctorate Degrees at Ajman University

This section outlines the general framework and applies to all the PhD and professional doctorate (e.g. DBA) degrees at AU. A doctoral degree (e.g. Doctor of Philosophy) program generally requires an equivalent of at least three years of advanced level study, with at least 54 credit hours or equivalent of study, which includes a minimum of 24 credits or equivalent of advanced courses that are distinctly more challenging than master's-level courses in the same discipline; training in research skills and methodology; and a research dissertation appropriate to the field. A professional doctorate requires a minimum of one year of coursework beyond the master's degree and independent research. The emphasis of the degree is on research skills and advanced professional knowledge in an applied field of specialization.

A Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is a research degree that is awarded in recognition of mastery of research methods and academic research that is assessed by submission and defense of a dissertation and ideally publishable research in peer-reviewed international journals. In professional doctorate degrees, the students may not be engaged primarily in scholarly research, but rather in a profession such as dentistry, business administration, medicine etc.

The doctoral program also requires the passing of a comprehensive exam at the end of formal coursework, which includes a comprehensive assessment of coursework taken, and a defence of the doctoral research proposal and the completed dissertation. The dissertation must be of a publishable standard and represent an original contribution to knowledge in the relevant field. A dissertation defence must be conducted by at least two doctorly-qualified experts in the field, one of whom must be independent of the Higher Education Institute (HEI).

The PhD/Doctorate program coordinator is also a graduate program coordinator and works closely with the Dean of GSR. A faculty member who serves as doctorate program coordinator is expected to demonstrate active scholarship within his or her discipline through a record of recent and substantial publications and presentations, research projects, contributions to professional organizations, and/or membership on editorial or supervisory boards of reputable scholarly journals.

3.1. Research and Dissertation

Graduate students pursuing PhD or professional doctorate degree are expected, under the guidance of their supervisor, to present a dissertation based on their own research. The total number of credits allotted to the doctoral thesis and relevant details are stated in the approved study plan. The final outcome (dissertation) is expected to be presented according to AU guidelines for the Dissertation.

Doctoral students must pass three exams: Comprehensive examination, candidacy examination and dissertation defense examination, if its part of their degree requirements.

3.2. Dissertation Supervisor/Co-Supervisor(s)

Prior to dissertation registration, the GPC in consultation with the doctoral student, should identify and nominate to college Dean for approval, a dissertation principal supervisor and co-supervisors (if needed) for the student.

The name of the supervisor(s) is to be approved by the dean and notified by the dean to the dean of GSR. Any change in the doctoral supervisors is to be notified to the DGSR as soon as possible by the GPC.

Normally, a full time AU faculty member may supervise a maximum of 3 dissertations at any one point in time as a principal supervisor. However, in certain cases this number may increase to a higher number subject to VCAA approval.

It is imperative to avoid situations which may constitute as a conflict of interest when forming a supervisory team. In case of any conflict raised by student supervisor(s), the GPC and college dean shall resolve the dispute otherwise pass all details to the dean of GSR. The dean of GSR has the authority to replace a supervisor, after consultation with the GPC, the College Dean, and the VCAA as required, when it is in the best interest of the student and the program.

Co-supervisors, if applicable, must meet regularly with student to advise on the student's progress in his/her research thesis, identify any potential concern/problems and provide possible solutions to circumvent such difficulties that the student may be facing. Student and his/her supervisor(s) must keep a record (document and copy of emails) of all such meetings, discussions (e.g. minutes of meetings) and be able to provide this information on a request.

Adjunct AU faculty members who are participating as graduate faculty within a program may serve as co-supervisors.

Dissertation Supervisor Selection Guidelines

- The doctoral student's principal supervisor must be a full-time AU graduate faculty member with minimum academic rank of Associate Professor and has the primary obligation for oversight of the student's progress during his/her studies.
- Adjunct AU faculty who are participating as graduate faculty within the same program may serve only as co-supervisors. In cases, where an adjunct will not continue with the University, he/she can still serve DEC as an external supervisor.
- Faculty members who serve as dissertation supervisors are expected to obtain visibility and recognition within their discipline, demonstrated by substantial or sustained research, and/or recent publications at the highest levels of their discipline.
- Doctoral supervisors are expected to be able to direct the independent research of the student.
- Doctoral supervisors must have a terminal degree in the discipline in which the research is conducted, a strong record of research and scholarly activity, and prior supervisory experience, which may include supervision of a completed master's thesis or being a co-supervisor of a completed doctoral dissertation. In some cases, faculty members at the rank of Associate or Full Professor with significant research experience may supervise doctorate students even in the absence of prior supervisory experience. Prior approval from VCAA with justification is required in such cases.

Change of Supervision

- The request to change of dissertation supervisor can be submitted either by a student or a supervisor and such a request shall be submitted to GPC, who will forward this to the college Dean for final approval. The dean of GSR must be notified by email.
- The change of dissertation principal supervisor shall be avoided at all cost after the student has begun his/her dissertation research, and after the research proposal has been approved. If this is unavoidable e.g. faculty left the University, than GPC and college Dean shall arrange a meeting with leaving supervisor, student and supervisory team and discuss issues related to authorship, publication, Intellectual Property (IP) rights etc. In case of any dispute, the case with all details shall be forwarded to dean of GSR for a resolution.
- If supervisor leaves the institute, then possibility of him/her continuing as a co-supervisor should be explored. If such an arrangement is not possible or fails for any reason, the students can use the existing work in the thesis.
- Other cases not covered under these broad guidelines, any exceptions to these guidelines, or disputes shall be forwarded to the dean of GSR with GPC and college Dean recommendations for a final decision.
- The student must be informed throughout the process by the GPC.

Dissertation Supervisor(s) General Responsibilities

Dissertation supervisor(s) are expected:

- To make sure students are familiarised, and abide by, the relevant AU regulations and any additional regulations that may affect the student's registration, learning and progress to the completion of degree;
- To discuss all AU relevant policies and procedures at the start of research e.g. authorship policy with graduate students in advance of entering into collaborative projects;
- To meet regularly with students to discuss their work, research, training and development needs and academic progress;
- To ensure that students are using written logs to record meetings, submission deadlines, posts and comments on written work;
- To ensure the orientation of new research students is effectively implemented;
- To interact with students in a professional and civil manner consistent with university policies;
- To encourage students to learn creatively and independently;
- To develop clear understanding about specific research expectations and responsibilities, including timelines for completion of dissertations;
- To provide feedback on student's research work and progress toward degree in a timely manner;
- To acknowledge student contributions to research presented at conferences, in publications, and in applications for copyright and patents.

Co-supervisors, if applicable, must meet regularly with student to advise on the student's progress in his/her research thesis, identify any potential concern/problems and provide possible solutions to circumvent such difficulties that the student may be facing. Student and his/her supervisor(s) must keep a record (document and copy of emails) of all such meetings, discussions (e.g. minutes of meetings) and be able to provide this information on a request. Adjunct AU faculty members who are participating as graduate faculty within a program may serve as co-supervisors.

3.3. Dissertation Examination Committee (DEC)

The DEC should be formulated as soon as the student registers for the dissertation, nominated by the principal supervisor to the GPC, who forwards nomination with his/her endorsement to college Dean for approval. The composition of DEC is as follows:

- Student's principal supervisor and co-supervisor(s) (if applicable); and,
- At least one internationally recognized external examiner (can be appointed later before the dissertation defense)
- At least one committee member selected from the following:
 - any full-time faculty member within the student's programs of study, or,
 - any full-time faculty member from within or outside the student's program of study (i.e. from another graduate program at AU), or,
 - an AU adjunct faculty or from another affiliated institution whose expertise is particularly important to the topic of the student's research, or
 - any faculty member who is an expert in applicable research methods in the field (if applicable).

An independent liaison may also be appointed by the Dean of GSR, who serves as an impartial representative of the academic standards. This is a requirement for re-examinations (appointed only for Dissertation Defense).

More than one external examiner may be appointed, if needed. The DEC approves the research proposal, and dissertation before a dissertation defense is scheduled. The student's DEC members should read the dissertation and provide feedback to the student and provide their acceptance that thesis is in good shape and student is ready to proceed for the thesis defense.

A doctoral candidate must pass the dissertation defense as part of the degree requirements within 7 or less number of years of first registering in the program as per program requirements. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

It is imperative to avoid situations which may constitute as a conflict of interest when forming a graduate student's DEC. In case of any conflict, it is the responsibility of the college dean to resolve the dispute or otherwise pass all details to the DGSR. The DGSR has the authority to replace/remove a faculty member from DEC, after consultation with the PhD/Doctorate program coordinator, the college Dean, and the VCAA as necessary, when it is in the best interest of the student.

3.4. Course Exemption for Doctoral Students

Doctoral students may be exempted from taking a number of the required graduate-level doctoral courses if the student has already taken the same or similar course (with the same or similar course description) earlier as a graduate (e.g. master's) student at AU or in another institution and has earned a minimum equivalent grade of "B". These students would instead need to register for extra credit hours to make up the total required credit hours for the degree completion. The credit hours of these exempted courses are not calculated in the CGPA. The course exemption must be consistent with AU prior learning policy.

For exemption from any of the graduate courses, the following general guidelines may apply.

- If a student has a Bachelor's degree, no exemptions from any course can be awarded.
- If a student has a master's or equivalent, if the degree is awarded from AU and the student is registered in the same program for doctoral qualification, then the student can be exempted from all AU and program compulsory courses; however, the student should take any new AU or program compulsory courses and may have to take some electives courses.
- If the degree is awarded from AU and the student is registered in a different program for doctoral degree, then the student can be exempted only from the AU compulsory courses.
- If the degree is from a university other than AU, then the program where the student is enrolled in should carefully look into the student's official transcripts and decide if he/she should be exempted from any of the AU or program compulsory courses. In such a case, the student can be exempted for a maximum of 9 credit hours of courses, however, he/she would need to register for extra credit hours to make up the total required credit hours towards the total credit hour requirement of the degree.
- The student is responsible for submitting a request of course exemptions to the college dean for approval.
- The grade for any exempted course cannot be less than "B" or equivalent.

3.5. Comprehensive Examination

Doctoral students are required to pass a comprehensive examination designed to assess the student's cumulative knowledge in the subject areas as well as their research skills. The comprehensive exam shall be arranged at the end of formal coursework, which includes a comprehensive assessment of the coursework taken during the program. All doctoral students must pass a comprehensive exam designed to evaluate the breadth and depth of the student's knowledge of his/her discipline, as well as the student's scholarly potential, as applicable. The comprehensive exam is non-credit rated, while a Pass or Fail result for each attempt is recorded on the student's academic transcript.

Each College may set its own timing for the comprehensive exam, normally at the end of formal coursework, but it is in no case to be taken any later than the beginning of the student's fifth semester. Students taking the comprehensive exam must be in good academic standing after completion of the required course work.

The format and conduct of the comprehensive exam are the responsibility of the doctoral program in the college in which the student is enrolled. It may consist of individual examinations in several appropriate areas, or of a single combined examination. Where both written and oral examinations are given, the written examination normally precedes the oral examination. The college's council and dean must approve the rules and regulations for the comprehensive examination in each college, keep a written record and clearly communicate this information to all doctoral candidates and their supervisors. The college must provide each doctoral student a copy of the rules and regulations for the comprehensive exam during orientation held early in the student's first semester in the program.

The rules and regulations for the comprehensive exam outline the nature of the examination, explain the logistics of the exam's administration, and define the passing score. Each department or college must moreover provide appropriate grading rubrics for each comprehensive exam.

The comprehensive exam may be repeated only once, no later than the end of the student's fifth or sixth semester. A second unsuccessful attempt leads to immediate termination of the student's enrolment in the doctoral program.

In either case, any change in the student's enrolment status must be recommended by the GPC and approved by the college dean and then the dean of the GSR.

3.6. Research Proposal Defense / Candidacy Examination

Upon passing the comprehensive exam, as applicable, doctoral students are required to pass the proposal defense or candidacy examination. A primary goal of the candidacy exam is to provide direction and feedback early on regarding the student's research from the dissertation supervisory committee and to assess student's ability to complete a dissertation.

The proposal should be defended by the fourth semester, but no later than fifth semester following enrolment in the graduate program.

Students are allowed a maximum of two attempts to pass the Candidacy examination. A student who fails both attempts is academically dismissed from the candidacy program.

The student prepares and submits a concise and complete research proposal to DEC through their principal supervisor. The proposal shall clearly define the research problem and objectives and outline the research methodology that the student plans to follow.

Each college must provide the logistics for submission and approval of research proposals to its doctoral students. Furthermore, students who plan to perform research for their dissertation on human or animal subjects at AU or elsewhere must obtain ethical approval from the University or the Ministry in advance, as per AU research ethics guidelines.

3.6.1. Research Proposal (Written Component)

As part of research proposal defense, the student must write and submit a structured proposal. This proposal should be no less than 10 pages and broadly cover the following:

- Abstract of the Proposed Work/Project Summary (no more than one page)
- Introduction (a complete literature survey on the topic)
- Aims and Objective
- Proposed Experiments and the Methodology for accomplishing them (including potential caveats and alternative approaches)
- Preliminary Results, if any
- References

The research proposal should be sent to the members of the DEC by the supervisor at least one week before the oral presentation.

3.6.2. Research Proposal (Oral Component)

For research proposal oral defense, the student must prepare a presentation on the written research proposal, and present/defend the proposal in front of the DEC. The oral examination must include a

discussion of the research presented by the student and probes the student's knowledge of the current and historical literature relating to the proposed research and the student's overall understanding of the proposal. It could also include questions from the DEC members on any other topic in the broader field of the study of the student or the program he/she is enrolled in.

There are two possible outcomes for the candidacy/comprehensive examination:

- **Pass:** a successful candidate must receive affirmative votes from a majority of the members of the committee to pass the examination in order to become a doctoral candidate.
- **Fail:** if a student fails to demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the literature in his/her core research area or fails to articulate the motivation and design of the research in either the written proposal or during the oral examination, he/she is allowed to retake the exam only one more time after one semester. The student is dismissed from the program if he/she fails the retake candidacy exam.

The outcome of candidacy exam is not subject to petition.

The DEC shall notify the student the outcome of proposal defense, provide comprehensive feedback to improve his/her research work and submit a detailed assessment report to the supervisor. The supervisor forwards this report to the GPC, and college Dean.

3.7. Admission to Candidacy

When a student has passed the comprehensive exam, has completed coursework, has had his/her research proposal defense passed, and is in good academic standing, the GPC recommends the student to advance to candidacy to the college Dean. The Dean of the College must approve the recommendation and communicate the decision to advance the student to candidacy to the Office of Admission & Registration. At this stage, the student is allowed to register for dissertation credit hours. Following the candidacy of the doctoral student, he/she would continue to work on the proposed research towards a dissertation.

3.8. Research Publications Requirements

Doctoral students must publish (or have confirmation of final acceptance of) at least one research article in a peer-reviewed journal, recognised by AU, prior to submitting a request for Dissertation defense.

The paper(s) should be made available along with the dissertation to the DEC, who take the scholarly quality and the formal rigor of the paper(s) into account when they evaluate the overall quality of the dissertation.

3.9. Dissertation Defense

The chair of DEC must be appointed by DGSR, who is generally a senior (associate professor and above) full time faculty member at AU. The chair of the committee act as a liaison with the committee members, chairs the dissertation defense and communicates the final outcome to doctoral student and other relevant personnel.

3.9.1. Selection of External Examiner(s)

At least one internationally recognized external examiner must be appointed in the DEC at this stage, if not appointed before. The principal supervisor can nominate few suitable external examiners to the GPC, who forwards nomination with his/her endorsement to college Dean for approval.

The college shall cover the external examiner(s) travel (normally in economy class), local accommodation, and an honorarium as per AU policies and procedures. The external examiner is expected to review the dissertation on its completion, and to attend the dissertation defense at the AU. Following are the guidelines for the selection of external examiner(s),

- The external examiner(s) must hold a terminal degree and have expertise in an area related to the dissertation.
- The external examiner(s) should not have a conflict of interest with the candidate and/or with the institution.
- The external examiner must hold or have previously held a senior-level faculty appointment (preferably a full Professor) at a peer level or higher QS ranked institution;
- It is required that the external examiner has a successful record of dissertation examinations and/or supervision;

3.9.2. Policy Statements

- The final dissertation defense examination takes the form of an oral presentation followed by defense of the dissertation to the DEC.
- The oral defense (presentation) shall be open to all interested parties, is publicized on campus by the college and takes place at least twenty (20) working days before the end of the semester of graduation.
- All doctoral dissertation defense shall have a public presentation session, where all interested faculty members regardless of discipline, are invited to attend.
- The oral defense is followed by a closed-door dissertation defense. The student supervisor or the college may decide to have an open-door dissertation defense examination.
- The closed-door dissertation defense is administered by the chair appointed by DGSR.
- The dissertation defense shall be held during the regular working hours at AU.
- The candidate must have an active registration during the semester in which the dissertation examination is taken.
- The DEC, should read the dissertation and provide feedback, if any, and approve the dissertation before scheduling dissertation examination.
- The student, supervisor, graduate program coordinator, college dean, or any DEC member may request DGSR to provide an independent observer to be present in any dissertation defense.
- All repeat examinations or dissertation defenses must have an independent representative appointed by DGSR. During the scheduling process, the college dean notifies the student, DEC, and the Program Coordinator, that a Graduate Studies liaison has been assigned for the final examination or the dissertation defense. However, should there be procedural irregularities or extenuating circumstance during the first or the second examination, the student has the right to appeal to the DGSR.
- The format of the dissertation and the examination timelines shall be determined by the program coordinator of the college.

Examination Outcomes:

- The recommendation concerning the dissertation defense is made by a majority vote of the DEC members (excluding supervisor/co-supervisors) and show one of the following:
 - Recommendation to approve the dissertation as presented; or
 - Recommendation to approve the dissertation after minor modification and verification by the student's supervisor. Student must submit modified dissertation to the supervisor within two (2) weeks of being informed of the decision; or
 - Major revision of the dissertation according to stated guidance, and resubmission for review to the DEC within a period of not less than three months and no longer than one year; or
 - Rejection of the dissertation and academic dismissal of the student from the Doctoral Program. The student may file a written appeal to the dean within five (5) working days from the date of being informed of the decision.
- In cases where major revision and resubmission is required, a second and final oral examination is scheduled and conducted by an examination committee, which should consist of at least two-thirds of the original members of the previous committee, including the student's supervisor. The committee's recommendation after the second oral examination can only be either to approve the dissertation as presented or to reject it.
- Students can request to delay making their dissertation public for up to two years from their defense semester by requesting to place a delay on releasing their dissertation to the University library for public access at the time of submitting the bound dissertation to the college. Such requests require the approval of the Dean.

3.9.3. Related Procedures

- As soon as a student is ready for a dissertation defense, the student shall submit a draft version of dissertation to DEC and seek their approval. The student's DEC is responsible for approving all aspects of the final dissertation before student's final dissertation defense is scheduled.
- The dissertation defense can only be scheduled if DEC sign the dissertation acceptance/examination scheduling form.
- Once DEC approval is obtained, dissertation supervisor, closer in expertise to the dissertation topic, makes initial recommendation for the external examiner(s) and sends recommendations to the GPC. Doctoral students may propose potential external examiners to their supervisors. Students do not have anything to do with the final decision and nomination, but putting together a list of suggestions can be helpful for thinking critically about their own work—and also helpful to those who are involved in the selection of examiners.
- The graduate program coordinator forwards DEC recommendations to college dean for approval.
- After approval of DEC, the program coordinator informs the Dean of GSR all examination arrangements, names/designations of DEC, external examiner details, rationale for the selection of examiner(s) etc.
- The Dean of GSR appoints a chair for the committee, an extra member could also be appointed by the Dean of GSR to serve as a liaison regarding the examination process, this is a requirement for repeat examination/defense, and communicate this information back to the GPC and college Dean.

- Once external examiner(s) are approved and a chair is decided by the DGSR, the Graduate program coordinator makes examination arrangements, invites external examiner, communicates to the DEC and informs student supervisor the final DEC for the examination. The graduate program coordinator of the concerned college schedules the final examination in consultation with the dean.
- A copy of the student's dissertation (ideally electronic copy by email) must be sent to all members of DEC (including chair) at least 4 weeks prior to the dissertation defense by the supervisor.
- Before the final dissertation exam, the supervisor provides DEC an acceptance form, which must be signed and returned by all DEC members to the supervisor before the thesis defense can be scheduled.
- Then, the supervisor makes all necessary thesis defense arrangements e.g. room booking, informs all DEC members about the arrangements, informs students and explains the format etc.
- Immediately after the dissertation defense, the committee convenes in a closed meeting to deliberate the student's dissertation and overall performance and reach to a decision (one of the four options mentioned in policy part of this section). The student is requested to leave room for some time.
- The chair of the DEC communicates verbal decision to the student at the same time.
- The chair of DEC prepares and submits, on a form provided by the college, a report stating the outcome of the examination, to the GPC, who in turn submits copies of the report to the Dean and to the Dean of the GSR.
- The chair of DEC communicates final decision to the doctoral student with all details of all required changes, and the next steps, to the doctoral student within a period of not more than three days (copying to the supervisor and college dean).
- Within three (3) working days of the dissertation defense, the chair of the examination committee notifies the student in writing of the committee's recommendations and next steps, and any reason/s for rejection of the dissertation, as applicable (copying to the supervisor, GPC and college dean).
- Once the student submits final dissertation after all corrections/modifications, the chair of the committee sends final recommendations/grade to the program coordinator who submits the grade to the college Dean and DGSR.
- After the student successfully passes the dissertation defense exam, the student submits one error-free, unbound copy of the dissertation to the supervisor for approval. This copy is examined carefully, and the supervisor/college reserves the right to require changes to bring the document up to the standards. After making all changes, the student must submit an electronic version along with other documents as well as the required number of copies of the approved dissertation.
- The signed and bound copies of the dissertation is distributed as follows:
 - One copy for the student;
 - One copy to the student's Supervisor;
 - One copy to the student's Department or College;
 - Two copies to the university library;
 - Electronic copy to the DGSR and
 - Additional copies if required by the student's college.
- Following this, the DGSR recommends the student for doctoral degree.
- Candidates must be in good academic standing to graduate, with no temporary grades (Incomplete) for courses required for the degree on their transcripts.

- Accordingly, the college Dean approves the recommendation and informs the Admission and Registration Department.
- The Office of Admission and Registration verifies that the student has met all degree requirements and proceeds with the procedure to clear and approve the student for the award of the doctoral degree.

4. Graduate Faculty Members

4.1. Requirements

Faculty members who participate in a graduate program (teaching graduate level courses or supervising/co-supervising graduate students) are considered as “Graduate Faculty Members” of that program.

Graduate faculty members must hold a terminal degree earned from an internationally recognized institution of higher education and show a strong record of active engagement in research and scholarship, including recent publications, or have significant professional experience in applied fields as practitioners.

To be appointed as a principal supervisor of graduate student research thesis/dissertation, full-time graduate faculty members must be research-active in their fields and have prior supervisory experience at graduate level. The graduate faculty member teaching and supervising theses/dissertations in doctoral programs must have an extensive record of research and have experience in supervising graduate theses/dissertations. It is important that the qualifications of faculty members to participate in graduate education and, more importantly, the supervision of doctoral students, are monitored and assessed thoroughly and regularly.

It is recommended that junior research-active faculty members or those with no prior graduate student supervision experience participate in TEC/DEC or as Co-supervisors before they take the responsibility of becoming the main supervisor of a graduate student.

It is the responsibility of the dean of colleges offering the respective degrees to ensure these requirements of graduate faculty are met. Professionals who are not AU faculty (e.g., scholars, scientists, and professionals from government, clinical researchers from hospitals; researchers from national laboratories, etc.) may also participate in AU graduate programs (i.e. teaching graduate courses) or on student Dissertation/Dissertation Advisory Committees, if they are first approved as an AU adjunct faculty member. Qualifications and limits for participation of adjunct faculty must be clearly defined and approved as graduate faculty of the program according to the AU Policies and Procedures.

The AU college deans should be advocates for the hiring of research-active faculty members that can also contribute to the strategic development of both undergraduate as well as graduate programs at AU.

5. New Graduate Programs and Review of Existing Graduate Programs

5.1. New Graduate Programs

New graduate program proposals should be conceived and reviewed within the context of the strategic plans of AU and its colleges. All new AU graduate program should prescribe to the minimum AU requirements and the approval process set by OIPE.

All new graduate program proposals should include the degree title, the offering college, the description of the program (including program objective and learning outcomes, rationale, etc.), the curriculum, as well as the resources needed and the business plan. In addition, the requirements for establishing a new graduate program include:

- a feasibility study of the program to ensure that there is a need of the program and that there are available resources to ensure that the program is viable and of high quality
- critical mass of students pursuing the graduate degree
- sufficient laboratories/ research facilities for research-based programs and resources are available
- critical mass of faculty members, who can also participate in graduate teaching, engaged in research and scholarly productivity towards that discipline.
- opportunity for graduate students to teach and conduct research with graduate faculty

All new graduate programs at AU need to be initiated by the concerned department/college, and then forwarded as per following sequence:

1. Recommended and forwarded to CGS by the college dean with recommendations,
2. Discussed and recommended by AU Council of Graduate Studies and forwarded to VCAA with recommendations,
3. Approved by the CFAA, college prepare Self Study Report (SST) and course syllabi
4. Submit all documentation to UAE Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA).

5.2. Review of Existing Graduate Programs

All changes to existing graduate programs are categorized as minor curricular changes (such as changes in individual courses) or major curricular changes (such as offering a degree at another location, substantial changes in the curricula, change in name of programs or degrees, change of graduation requirements, etc.). Major changes to existing graduate programs are normally initiated from the GPC in consultation with the college Dean, submitted to CGS and the Council forwards recommendations to the VCAA. The VCAA endorses recommendations and through OIPE sends to the CAA for final approval, as per OIPE procedures. Minor changes are initiated by faculty members in the program and would need to be approved by the respective college council as well as the college Dean.

A given AU graduate program may be discontinued for strategic, operational, or academic reason. AU would ensure that this process is carried out with sufficient notice and without affecting the progress of the currently enrolled students in that program. Discontinuation of a program may occur as either the suspension of the program or its termination. In either case, clear evidence that the program is no longer contributing to the mission of the University, or is no longer sustainable, would need to be presented. Discontinuation of any graduate program would need to be initiated by the GPC or the College Dean and submitted to CGS. The council forwards such requests to the VCAA for final decision. The VCAA shall decide and follow this up with the CAA through the OIPE.

6. Degree Completion Time and Change of Major

It is important that students work closely with their supervisor/advisor, dissertation advisory committee members, and their program coordinator to develop a timeline for completion of the program requirements.

- **Master's Degrees:** Most full-time students enrolled in master's degree programs at AU require 2-3 years for completion of their program. The maximum time allowed for completion of a master's degree for these students is 4-5 years from the start date of enrolment. The typical time for degree completion of non-thesis based master's students is 2 years and maximum time allowed is 4 years from the start date of enrolment. In certain circumstances, this time limit for both thesis and non-thesis-based master's students may be extended for an additional one year by VCAA. Any extension in degree completion time is subject to applicable policies set by the CAA.
- **Doctoral Degrees:** Most students enrolled in doctoral degree programs at AU require 4-5 years for completion of their program. The maximum time allowed for completion of a doctoral degree is 7 years from the start date of enrolment. In certain circumstances, this time limit may be extended for an additional one year by the VCAA. Any extension in degree completion time is subject to applicable policies set by the CAA.

For an extension, a student must submit a petition to the registrar. The registrar shall forward this request to DGSR with all necessary details. The Dean of GSR shall forward this request to the VCAA with his/her recommendations. The VCAA makes final decision and informs DGSR and respective college Dean.

6.1. Change of Major

A student may be permitted to switch from one graduate program to another with the following conditions:

- Change is permitted if the two (current and requested) majors are in the same college and the student meets all admission requirements of the desired program.
- If the requested major is in another college, then the student must submit a new application for admission into the desired program.
- Change of major in the PhD program may be permitted only before the student sits for the comprehensive examination.
- All change of major requests must be supported by the student's supervisor (if applicable) in the current program, and the coordinators of the two respective programs and approved by college Dean. The college dean also approves requests from PhD students.
- Upon the final approval of a change of major request, all credits earned in the first program that are applicable to the second program count in the student's second program degree.

7. Graduate Assistant (GA) Policy

The approved graduate assistant policy is available in *DGSR Policies and Procedures Manual*.