

Procedures for the Conferral of Doctoral Degree in the Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies

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1. Definition of a Doctoral Degree at APU

The Doctoral or Ph.D. Degree is primarily a research degree incorporating original research on a topic of the candidate's choice, and is conferred on those who satisfy the requirements for graduation from the APU Graduate School (Standard Program).

*A Ph.D. Candidate is one who has fulfilled the necessary credits requirements: (acquisition of 24 credits), including the submission of 2 Research Papers, and has successfully passed screening for degree candidacy.

2. The Key Requirements for a Doctorate Degree at APU

- 2.1. A distinct contribution to a body of knowledge through an original investigation or testing of ideas, worthy at least in part of publication.
- 2.2. Competence in research processes (techniques and reporting).
- 2.3. Mastery of a body of knowledge, including previous works, and keen understanding of their relationship to wider fields.

3. The Dissertation Committee

- 3.1. The Dissertation Committee within GSA administers the procedures for doctoral dissertations including approval of the theme, examination, and evaluation.
- 3.2. The Dissertation Committee will consist of a chair person and two members who will be appointed by the GSA Faculty Council based on the recommendations of the Dean of the Graduate School. The term of appointment is one (1) year and members can be reappointed.

4. Supervision

- 4.1. It is essential that intending candidates clarify their topic for research and seek a faculty member who can provide the needed supervision. A research plan must be provided upon enrollment in the GSA doctoral course. Based on this plan, a potential supervisor is designated by the Dean after discussion with the concerned faculty members who have the appropriate expertise. Upon successful enrollment, the principal supervisor for each student shall be officially designated. If a student wishes to be supervised by someone other than the supervisor designated by the Dean, he/she must apply for a change of supervisor to the Dissertation Committee no later than the end of the semester of enrollment. The change may be approved by the Dissertation Committee upon consultation with concerned parties and formal endorsement by the Dean.

- 4.2. Once the principal supervisor is officially designated, the student shall begin research leading to the doctoral degree under his/her supervision.

5. Registration for the Award of a Ph.D. Degree

- 5.1. Upon satisfactory completion of an agreed research program (including the submission of two research papers, one of which may consist of a revised research plan for the degree with appropriate methodology), a student shall apply to the Dissertation Committee to be registered as a candidate for the award of a Ph.D. degree. Students shall, in principle, apply to the Dissertation Committee to be registered as a candidate for the award of a Ph.D. degree, up to 3 months before the deadline for the submission of a dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the award of a Ph.D. (a total of 9 months before scheduled program completion).

6. Writing the Ph.D. Dissertation

- 6.1. There is no prescribed length for a dissertation, as this will vary with the research topic and the form of presentation. However, it is generally recognized that such a dissertation is a major piece of original work and its length will normally be between 60,000 and 80,000 words (English) or 120,000 and 160,000 characters (Japanese), exclusive of tables, charts, bibliographies, and appendices, but inclusive of footnotes.
- 6.2. Normally, dissertations should be presented in English and, as a general rule, each submitted dissertation must include a short summary in English.
- 6.3. Under certain circumstances, a candidate may be allowed to present his or her dissertation in Japanese, as in the situation of a field in which primary data and the existing literature are in Japanese, and if such is acceptable to the Dean and the Dissertation Committee. In such cases, a long summary (about ten percent the length of the Japanese manuscript) must be provided in English.
- 6.4. The format of the dissertation should follow the guidelines noted separately from this document.

7. Application for Conferral of the Doctoral Degree

- 7.1 All candidates must apply for the conferral of the Ph.D. degree using the appropriate application form, accompanied by the appropriate Screening Fee. Three copies of the dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the award of a Ph.D. must be submitted within three months after application. Electronic copies may be required to facilitate the assessment of the candidate's academic achievement.

- 7.2. In principle, the dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the award of a Ph.D. shall be submitted 6 months before the scheduled program completion date. The degree may be formally conferred during either of the two graduation ceremonies (Spring or Fall) every year.
- 7.3. The Dissertation Committee will screen the format, etc. of the dissertation submitted as partial fulfillment of a Ph.D. and decide whether to accept the dissertation for screening. Candidates will be informed of the decision of the Dissertation Committee.

8. Evaluation of the Dissertation

(Examination Structure)

- 8.1. Doctoral dissertation screening and examination must be completed within 1 year of the date the dissertation was accepted by the University for screening. However, under certain circumstances, screening may be extended upon approval of the Dissertation Committee and GSA Faculty Committee.
- 8.2. Upon receipt of an application, a Screening Committee for each dissertation shall be formed. In principle, the Screening Committee shall consist of the principal supervisor, one internal and one external examiner.
 - 8.2-1. As a rule, those appointed as an internal examiner (other than the main supervisor) should hold doctoral-level supervising qualification status (D+). However, if deemed necessary based on the content of the dissertation, those faculty who do not fit this profile (those with only assistant-supervisor (D) status, Associate Professors, etc.) may be appointed. In this case, the Dissertation Committee shall review the proposed faculty's CV or research accomplishments and decide on the appropriateness of the selection accordingly.
 - 8.2-2. If it is deemed necessary by the Dissertation Committee the number of examiners may be increased.
 - 8.2-3. The examiners will be appointed by the Dissertation Committee.

(Examination Criteria)

- 8.3. Doctoral dissertation should achieve or exceed the quality of PhD research of peers working in the same field at the PhD level. The research project is assessed based on the following criteria, among others
 - 8-3-1. Originality:

The dissertation provides original and important knowledge for academics, practitioners, or society.
 - 8-3-2. Research Question/Topic:

The research question/topic is appropriate and is defined within the current paradigm and context of disciplinary academic literature.

8-3-3. Literature Review:

The literature referenced in the dissertation is both extensive and deep encompassing a broad range of sources and context to fully cover the necessary academic and other material to define and defend the research project's originality and significance.

8-3-4. Methodology:

The dissertation is grounded in appropriate theory and uses appropriate methodologies to determine results.

8-3-5. Structure:

The structure of the dissertation allows for clear and logical communication of information to the audience.

8-3-6. Analysis:

The dissertation provides sufficient data and reasons that lead to the findings and conclusions.

8-3-7. Implication:

The thesis has implications for academics, practitioners or society.

8-3-8. Writing:

The text is clear and concise without unnecessary repetition and is written in the format of an argument with substantial evidence and claims. The writing adheres to standard research practices of citations and works cited without instance of plagiarism.

8-3-9. Publication:

At least one part of the thesis has the potential to be published in a reputable academic journal in the relevant field.

(Examination Process)

8.4. Each examiner shall make a separate report to the Dissertation Committee with one of the following recommendations:

Pass (The dissertation is accepted as satisfactory);

Minor Rewrite (Subject to specified minor revisions and corrections, the dissertation is accepted as satisfactory);

Major Rewrite (One or more sections of the dissertation is to be rewritten prior to the re-submission of the dissertation for re-examination);

Fail (The dissertation is rejected).

8.5. Candidate shall receive copies of examiners' reports.

- 8.6. In the event that the screening result is “Pass” or “Minor Rewrite”, an oral examination on the student’s knowledge of the contents of the dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the award of a Ph.D. and the connected field shall be held.
- 8.7. In case of conflicting examiners’ evaluation, that is, if contradictory revisions are recommended, the Dissertation Committee will resolve the conflict. The Committee's comments will be forwarded to the examiners.
- 8.8. When a candidate is required by the Dissertation Committee to revise a dissertation, the principal supervisor will be expected to coordinate the process, unless the Dean and/or the Chair of the Dissertation Committee requires another person(s) to assist in the coordination of the re submission.
- 8.9. If a candidate is required to undertake a Major rewrite, the examiners will be invited to re-examine the dissertation upon re-submission by the candidate. In case of a Minor rewrite, the Dissertation Committee will examine and may certify that the recommended changes have been made.
- 8.10. If an examiner chooses not to re-examine, the decision of the remaining examiners will hold. If all the examiners refuse to re-examine the re-submission, a new set of examiners shall be appointed by the Dissertation Committee.
- 8.12. After rewriting, the Dissertation Committee shall make a final decision on the dissertation on the basis of the examiners' recommendations.
- 8.13. The administration of unsatisfactory results shall be the responsibility of the Dissertation Committee and the Dean.
- 8.14. An Appeal Procedure shall be instituted with the following conditions:
 - a) If the final decision of the Dissertation Committee is “Fail”, but one of the three examiners judged it “Pass”, an appeal may be allowed by the Dissertation Committee.
 - b) If a candidate wishes to appeal a decision, notice of an intention to appeal shall be forwarded in writing to the Dissertation Committee within one month of the date of the written notification of the result. If a written defense is pursued, a detailed written case must be provided to the Dissertation Committee within three months of the date of written notification. If an oral defense is pursued, this shall be conducted within four weeks of the notification of intent to defend.
 - c) In the event of an appeal, a special committee to decide on the merits of the case shall be established consisting of the Dean, one member of the Dissertation Committee and another faculty member who has expertise in the area of the candidate’s dissertation, but who has neither examined, nor supervised the conduct of dissertation.

8.14. The decision of the Dissertation Committee shall be presented for approval to the GSA Faculty Committee. In addition, the decision shall undergo deliberation by the Higher Degrees Committee and finally decided upon by the University President.

9. Cancellation/Disqualification from the Conferral of Degree

9.1. If the candidate is found to have gained the degree through improper means or to have done anything to damage the University's good reputation, the President of the University may, after thorough screening by the GSA Faculty Committee and the Higher Degrees Committee, rescind that Degree.

9.2 At the APU Graduate School, Ph.D. students are required to observe the highest standard of integrity in research. Copying, translating, or close paraphrasing of another person's work constitutes plagiarism and is deemed a serious offense, equated with cheating in examinations. The fabrication or falsification of data and use of another person's ideas without proper acknowledgement are examples of other forms of unethical research conduct.

9.3. A dissertation involving plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data may be failed outright.

10. Archiving Dissertations and Making Dissertations Publicly Available Online

10.1. Candidates to who conferral of a doctoral degree is confirmed are required to submit a soft copy of the dissertation upon which the degree is being conferred and an abstract of said dissertation by the date of completion of the Doctoral Program. The abstract outlining the content of the dissertation and a summary of the doctoral dissertation screening results shall be made publicly available online within three months of the conferral of the Doctoral degree.

10.2. The dissertation in its entirety will be permanently bound and archived at the APU Library. A soft copy of the dissertation shall be uploaded to the university online repository within one year of conferral of the doctoral degree and made publically available for viewing online via the National Diet Library.

10.3. In the case that any of the reasons stipulated below disallow the dissertation from being made publicly available online for more than a year from the date of the conferral of the Doctoral degree, it will be possible to submit a concise summary of the content in place of the entire dissertation upon the approval of the Dissertation Committee and GSA Faculty Committee. However, in the case that the reasons stipulated below cease to apply, the entire dissertation shall be made publicly

available online.

a) The doctoral dissertation cannot be made publicly available online for more than a year from the date of degree conferral due to copyright or the protection of personal information.

b) The doctoral dissertation cannot be made publicly available for more than a year from the date of degree conferral because it would clearly be disadvantageous to the graduate as they are planning to publish their dissertation or part of which, and making it publicly available online may infringe Academic Journal publication rules against multiple publications, or due to applications for patents pending approval. If the application is approved the graduate may be granted an exemption from their dissertation being made publicly available online for a period of up to 5 years from the date of degree deferral. After which time, if there are no other circumstances impeding the dissertation being made publicly available online then the dissertation will be automatically made publicly available online.

c) Making the doctoral dissertation publicly available online for more than a year from the date of degree conferral would clearly be disadvantageous to graduates who have published their dissertation or part of which, and making it publicly available online infringes Academic Journal publication rules against multiple publications or due to patents.

d) The doctoral dissertation cannot be made publicly available online because it includes material that is in a three-dimensional format.

10.4. In line with the regulations stipulated in articles 10-2 and 10-3, candidates must confirm (using the prescribed form) to the Dissertation Committee upon application for conferral of the doctoral degree that there are no problems with regards to copyright, patents, confidential information or personal information which impedes making the dissertation public. Supervisors (or other faculty involved in the degree applicant's instruction) shall coordinate and assist during the process of confirmation.

10.5. The examiners will confirm in writing whether it is appropriate for the entire dissertation to be made publicly available online. The Dissertation Committee and GSA Faculty Committee will deliberate on the documents submitted by the candidate and examiners regarding the doctoral dissertation being made publicly available online and determine the process to be followed for each dissertation.