



Martin Luther Christian University

Nongrah, Dongkietih, Block-1, Shillong-793006, Meghalaya, India

☎ 0364-2535420, 2535437

e-mail: admin@mlcuniv.in. www.mlcuniv.in

III/DRech/Ntn-Rech/29/2017

June 9, 2023

Notification No: 31/Research/MLCU

Amendment to Rules for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) 2023

In terms of Section 22, sub section (2) of the Martin Luther Christian University Act 2005, read with Statute 6.3.1 of the Martin Luther Christian University Statutes and Rules 2016, and as recommended and approved by the Academic Council meetings held on July 29, 2015, April 20, 2016, February 14, 2017, February 16, 2018, April 20, 2019, and Board of Governors meetings held on November 26, 2020, March 2, 2021, March 25, 2022 and April 17, 2023, the amendments to the PhD Rules are hereby notified:

Preamble:

The University aspires to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in disciplines and fields that will promote the attainment of the vision and mission of the University. The research studies conducted in the University should be beneficial for the community, state, region and country and to humanity as a whole. The University believes that the primary motivation for undertaking research must come from the doctoral candidate herself/himself and that the candidate should have a passion for solving an important and specific problem. The University will play the prime role in designing the study along with the candidate and the Supervisor will guide the domain discipline course work and the implementation of the study. The following regulations for doctoral study are made under the relevant Statute of the University and are recommended to the Academic Council.

1. Degree and designation

The University shall award the PhD degree to candidates who have satisfactorily completed the requirements in this scheme of regulations. The degree certificate shall indicate the faculty/ faculties under which the degree was pursued and shall mention the title of the thesis.

2. Duration of the program

- a. The minimum duration of the program shall be three years including course work, except for candidates with an MPhil of two years and above, the minimum duration of the program may be two years.
- b. The maximum duration shall be six years, extendable up to a period of one year only in special circumstances by the Doctoral Committee.

- c. After the candidates have completed six years and any permitted extension period, the candidate who has not completed the PhD and wishes to continue will have to be re-admitted which will include the entrance test and course work and payment of the fees current at the time of the fresh application. Such candidates have to petition the Doctoral Committee for approval to re-apply.
- d. The duration of the PhD shall be counted from the date of admission i.e. announcement of the Entrance test results.
- e. Women candidates and persons with disability (more than 40% disability) may be
- f. allowed an [extension of two years for PhD. In addition, women candidates may be provided an extension of the PhD for a further 240 days. Such scholars who wish to avail of this provision will write to the Dean Research stating the reason.

3. Eligibility

- a. A master's degree (or equivalent) in the relevant subject

OR

- b. A four years Bachelor's degree with a research project should have a minimum of 75% in aggregate or its equivalent grade on a point scale wherever the grading system is followed.

OR

- c. A four years Bachelor's degree with a research project and at least three years of work experience in the relevant field of study.
- d. At least two years of experience, relevant to the study being undertaken for the doctoral work is preferable.

4. Admission to the program

- a. The candidate shall apply to the University in the prescribed form, attaching the required documents and fees. Along with the application, the candidate shall submit an essay of about 500 words on why the applicant wishes to do a PhD and a tentative research proposal of approximately 1500 words with 5-10 academic references.
- b. All candidates shall ordinarily be admitted on the basis of satisfactory performance in an entrance test and interview¹. The qualifying marks for the Entrance Test shall be 50%. Upon being declared successful in the entrance test and interview, the candidate will have to submit a research proposal to the Doctoral Committee [after completing the coursework in the prescribed format provided in the Manual for PhD scholars

- c. Candidates who have qualified UGC- NET (including JRF) / UGC- CSIR NET (including JRF) / GATE/ teacher fellowship holder / MPhil programme (provided that MPhil has been completed within a maximum of three years from the last date of admission) will be exempted from Entrance Test. However, they will be required to appear for the interview to present their research interest/area.
- d. Candidates already holding MPhil degree and admitted to the PhD programme or those who have already completed the course work in MPhil and have been permitted to proceed to the PhD in integrated course may be exempted/partially exempted from the PhD course work and may have to pass an additional test on research methods.
- e. Candidates with an MPhil degree who wishes to be eligible for placement in the two-year track will be expected to pursue the research study based on their previous research work completed for their MPhil degree. Such candidates must obtain approval for their research proposal within three months of admission into the programme.
- f. If a candidate does not satisfactorily complete the prescribed course work within two years he/she will have to re-appear and pass the entrance test, in order to continue the PhD study.
- g. The candidate shall not have simultaneous PhD registration with the other Universities/Institutions.

5. Fees

- a. All applicants will submit the application fee along with the filled-in application form and required documents. On being declared eligible to appear for the entrance test, the candidate will have to pay the entrance test fee.
- b. Applicants who pass the entrance test and interview shall pay the Registration fee and the first-year tuition fees together. Thereafter the annual course fees shall be payable.
- c. On submission of the research proposal, the candidate shall have to pay the Research Proposal fees.
- d. Candidates will be required to pay the examination fees along with the submission of the thesis.
- e. For the thesis requiring re-evaluation, candidates will be required to re-pay 50% of the examination fee as per the fee structure enforced at the time of submission of the re-worked thesis.

6. Course work and Competencies

- a. Each candidate will be required to take course work as may be prescribed by the Doctoral Committee. Ordinarily, the course work shall consist of
 - i. Research Methodology
 - ii. Quantitative and Qualitative Research

- iii. Education and Pedagogy
 - iv. Ethics in Research and Publication
 - v. Academic Writing Skills
 - vi. Computer Skills in Research
 - vii. Seminar
 - viii. Other course work as may be prescribed by the Doctoral Committee and/or Supervisor
- b. As part of the course work, the candidate shall write a review article, in a format suitable for publication.
 - c. Each candidate will be expected to demonstrate the competencies prescribed by the Doctoral Committee before submission of the thesis. The Supervisor will certify the attainment of these competencies in the manner prescribed by the Doctoral Committee.
 - d. The credit assigned to the MPhil or PhD course work shall be a minimum of 08 credits.
 - e. All candidates admitted to the M.Phil. and Ph.D programmes shall be required to complete the course work ordinarily in the initial one year.
 - f. An MPhil/PhD scholar has to obtain a minimum GPA of 2.20 in the course work in order to be eligible to continue in the programme and submit the thesis.
 - g. Each candidate will be provided a transcript of the course work completed.

7. Presentation and format of the thesis

a. Traditional format

- i. Written: mostly text with tables and figures
- ii. Generally 50,000 to 80,000 words
- iii. Chapterised with annexures

b. Non-traditional formats

Non-traditional formats may include a collection of published articles, a portfolio or a creative work. These may range from mixed traditional and non-traditional components to a largely non-traditional format. The doctoral thesis may be presented as a complete work in the form of digital, video, artistic, performance materials (ie no written text, chapters or references in the main body of work), accompanied by an explanatory short dissertation.

The purpose of encouraging non-traditional formats is to achieve better dissemination so that the applications and other benefits of the thesis will find a wider audience in this era of wider use and appreciation of multimedia presentations. A non-traditional thesis may

be more effective for certain disciplines and in societies where English is not the first language of the candidate or audience.

All the non-traditional formats will include or be accompanied by a short dissertation which will include an abstract, research question (s), objectives and references/bibliography. The short dissertation may not have all the chapters of a traditional thesis but must effectively elucidate and contextualize the work. The creative work and dissertation will be examined as an integrated whole.

The final submission must demonstrate higher-order problem-solving, the use of analytical skills, and the selection of rigorous approaches for the collection and presentation of data leading to substantiated inferences. It must be grounded in the context of existing knowledge and demonstrate the skill of communicating pertinent messages and conclusions.

i. Traditional with non-traditional elements

In this format, the thesis is largely composed of text, but may include photographs, video clips, animation, Pecha Kucha and music or other creative elements.

ii. Compilation of published articles

The candidate may present a set of published articles that are tied together by a common research question.

iii. Portfolio

A thesis by portfolio may be particularly suitable for certain disciplines such as education in which two or more elements may be included such as a new curriculum or curriculum design, teaching-learning resource material, evaluation plan, professional development design, policy brief, funding proposal, or a publishable manuscript. These elements may have audio or video components. In other disciplines such as management studies, the portfolio may be made up of two or more case studies. In computer sciences, the portfolio may include software programs or digitized learning, or other products. The portfolio may include related or unrelated pieces.

iv. Creative works and documentaries

In the creative arts disciplines or in using a documentative medium, the thesis may take the form of art, music, poetry, fiction, drama, design or other artistic expressions presented as video documentary, multimedia, exhibition or performance. The creative

work should be appropriate to the subject matter and must be original and aesthetically effective.

It should be presented in a sufficiently professional manner and should demonstrate a high standard of literary, visual, digital, musical, or performance quality. Where a portion of the thesis is presented as a public exhibition or performance, video/photographic evidence should be annexed with the dissertation.

8. Supervisor

- a. Each candidate shall work under the supervision of a Supervisor.
- b. For certain candidates, especially for multi-disciplinary topics, a Co-Supervisor (s) may be appointed.
- c. A professor with at least five research publications in refereed journals or any regular Associate/Assistant Professor of the university with a PhD degree and at least two research publications in refereed journals may be recognized as a Supervisor.
Provided that in areas/disciplines where there is no or only a limited number of refereed journals, the University may relax the above condition for recognition of a person as a Supervisor with reasons recorded in writing.
- d. A Supervisor may be from the faculty/adjunct faculty of the University provided he/she is not a faculty member of any other university or has obtained a no-objection certificate from the host institution.
- e. The Supervisors and Co-supervisors of the University shall be appointed by the Doctoral Committee. A Co-supervisor will be appointed from the MLCU faculty for all candidates with an adjunct faculty as the Supervisor.
- f. A Supervisor/Co-supervisor who is a Professor, at any given point in time, may have up to eight (8) PhD scholars under his/her supervision. An Associate Professor may supervise up to six (6) PhD scholars and an Assistant Professor may supervise up to four (4) PhD scholars. However, subject to exigencies, the Doctoral Committee may approve an increase of this number.
- g. For a candidate who is pursuing his/her research in a greenfield or in indigenous knowledge discipline, a Mentor with special knowledge in the field, may be appointed, apart from the Supervisor.
- h. For Ph.D. scholars working in Central government/ State government research institutions, the scientists in such research institutions who are equivalent to Professor/Associate Professor/Assistant Professor can be recognized as supervisors if they fulfill the above requirements.
- i. In areas/disciplines where there is no, or only a limited number of peer-reviewed or refereed journals, the condition for recognition of a faculty member as Research Supervisor shall be relaxed.

- j. In case of interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary research work, if required, a Co-Supervisor from outside the Department/School/Centre/College/University shall be appointed.

9. The Doctoral Committee

- a. The Dean of Research shall recommend the proposed members of the Doctoral Committee to the Academic Council.
- b. The Committee shall consist of at least three members, but not more than seven, who shall be senior academicians of the rank of associate professor or professor, or eminent experts in their discipline. The members of the Committee shall represent a range of disciplines i.e. humanities, sciences, fine arts, etc., and may be from within the faculty of MLCU or outside. Members shall serve for three years and may be renominated.
- c. The Dean of Research shall be the Chairperson of the Doctoral Committee and shall appoint the Secretary of the Doctoral Committee
- d. In case of the absence of the Chairperson an Acting Chairperson may be appointed by the members who are present.
- e. The Doctoral Committee shall meet at least twice a year, and there shall be a quorum of at least half the members for each meeting. The manner of conducting the meeting shall be in person/online /circulation
- f. Powers of the Doctoral Committee
 - i. To recommend the names for Supervisors/Co-supervisors and Mentors.
 - ii. To recommend policies and regulations for the doctoral program to the
 - iii. Academic Council from time to time.
 - iv. To assist the University in arranging for the evaluation of submitted theses and in conducting the examinations and public defence.
 - v. To exercise overall supervision of the doctoral program

10. Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

Each MLCU academic unit, namely, Faculty/School/Department/PhD Centre may/shall constitute a Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

a. Constitution of RAC

The RAC shall be constituted by the Head of the academic unit and will consist of the following members:

- i. Chair: Head of the unit or nominee
- ii. Members
 - Senior faculty members eligible to be a Supervisor
 - 1-3 external experts for a term of three years

- iii. Ex officio: Dean, Research, MLCU, or nominee
- iv. Secretary: A faculty member appointed by the Chair

b. Roles, functions and responsibilities of the RAC

- i. To develop a philosophy, mission, policies, priorities and procedures which are in alignment with the Doctoral Committee and UGC Regulations
- ii. To conduct course work, solely, or in addition to the course work conducted by the University
- iii. To recommend Supervisors/Co-Supervisors/Mentors
- iv. Research proposals and thesis
 - 1. To guide the research scholar in developing a research proposal
 - 2. To provisionally approve the research proposal, and recommend to the Doctoral Committee for final approval
 - 3. To periodically review and assist in the progress of the research work of the research scholar as per the milestones and procedures of the RAC and to submit consolidated reports periodically to the Doctoral Committee
 - 4. To recommend the thesis for submission to the Doctoral Committee
 - 5. To recommend examiners in consultation with the Supervisor
 - 6. To enquire into and document whether the progress of a research scholar is unsatisfactory and to suggest corrective measures. If the research scholar fails to implement these corrective measures satisfactorily, the RAC may recommend specific reasons for the cancellation of the registration of the research scholar to the Doctoral Committee.
 - 7. Other activities: the RAC may conduct other research activities and projects and may include undergraduate/ postgraduate research under its purview. It may also conduct workshops, seminars, and conferences.
 - 8. The RAC shall maintain suitable records which shall include individual, cohort, and general administrative records.

c. Review

- i. Each RAC shall submit a consolidated annual report to the Doctoral Committee at the end of the calendar year.
- ii. The Doctoral Committee shall review the annual report and provide feedback, recommendations and decisions to the RAC.

11. Research Ethics Committee (REC)

Each MLCU academic unit, namely, Faculty/School/Department/PhD Centre may/shall constitute a Research Ethics Committee (REC).

a. Constitution of REC

The REC shall be constituted by the Head of the academic unit and will consist of the following members:

- i. Chair: The Chairperson of the Committee will be appointed by the Head of the academic unit, from among the members
- ii. Members

The REC shall have a minimum of 4 members and shall be composed of persons from various walks of life such as basic medical scientist(s), social scientist(s), legal expert(s), clinician(s), academician(s), who are not from the same academic unit.

The term of office of the REC members shall be three years.

Ex officio: Dean, Research, MLCU, or nominee

Secretary: non-member and shall be appointed from among the faculty by the Head of the academic unit.

b. Roles, functions and responsibilities of the REC

- i. The REC may recommend PhD and other research projects to the UREC or may itself grant approval, with copy to UREC.
- ii. Provisionally approved research proposals may be taken up by the REC Administrative
- iii. The REC shall maintain suitable records which shall include individual, cohort and general administrative records.

12. Recognition as College/Institute for offering MPhil/PhD: Academic, administrative and infrastructure requirements to be fulfilled

- a. Collaborating colleges/institutions may be considered eligible to be recognized as MPhil/PhD study centres if they satisfy the availability of eligible Research Supervisors, required infrastructure, and supporting administrative and research promotion facilities.
- b. Collaborating colleges/institutions should have at least two PhD qualified teachers/scientists/other academic staff in the Department, eligible to be PhD Supervisors or Co-Supervisors.
- c. For science and technology disciplines, research laboratories with equipment as specified by the University with provision for adequate space per research scholar along with computer facilities and essential software, and uninterrupted power and water supply should be available.

- d. Library resources including books, Indian and international journals, e-journals, extended working hours, and adequate space for research scholars in the library for reading, writing and storing study and research materials should be available.
- e. Collaborating colleges/institutions may access the facilities of neighbouring institutions.

13. Ph.D. through Part-time Mode

- a. Ph.D programmes through part-time mode will be permitted, provided all the conditions stipulated in these Regulations are fulfilled.
- b. The University shall obtain a “No Objection Certificate” through the candidate for a part-time Ph.D. programme from the appropriate authority in the organization where the candidate is employed, clearly stating that:
 - i. The candidate is permitted to pursue studies on a part-time basis.
 - ii. His/her official duties permit him/her to devote sufficient time to research.
 - iii. If required, he/she will be relieved from the duty to complete the course work

14. Progress of the candidate

- a. Upon satisfactory completion of course work and issuing of the transcript the Ph.D. scholar shall be required to submit a research proposal.
- b. The research proposal should generally be submitted to the Doctoral Committee within one year of admission and having completed the prescribed coursework.
- c. Scholars are required to submit the research proposal within two years in the prescribed style and format duly signed and approved by the Supervisor and Co-supervisor (s) after AI (Artificial Intelligence) review and plagiarism check to the Department of Doctoral Studies and Research.
- d. Research Proposal is submitted to Research Advisory Committee (RAC) for review and approval followed by ratification of the same at the Doctoral Committee.
- e. If a candidate has not completed the course work and has not received approval for his/her research proposal from the Doctoral Committee within two years of admission, his/her candidature will be terminated.
- f. Upon approval of the research proposal by the Doctoral Committee, the topic of the thesis and the research study design shall be considered to be finalized. Any major change of the topic or major modification, recommended by the Supervisor, shall have to be approved by the Doctoral Committee.
- g. After obtaining the approval of the research proposal by the Doctoral Committee, the candidate shall obtain the approval of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). The research work may commence only after the approval of the UREC.

- h. A yearly progress report (written and presentation), approved by the Supervisor and Co-supervisor, shall be submitted by the candidate to the Doctoral Committee.
- i. Scholars are to present and submit an annual progress report of their research work to the Research Advisory Committee once in a year. The presentation will be carried out on a date as decided by RAC. A report of the same will be submitted to Doctoral Committee for record.
- j. Each candidate is expected to present his/her work, or part thereof, at an appropriate academic conference, preferably national or international, and/or submit or publish the research work in a peer-reviewed journal with the prior approval of the Supervisor and Co-supervisor. The names of the Supervisor and Co-supervisor shall be included in all presentations and publications that are part of the thesis.
- k. A pre-submission presentation, approved by the Supervisor and Co-supervisor, shall be made upon completion of the main part of the research work.
- l. Scholars are required to submit the thesis for pre-submission in the prescribed style and format duly signed and approved by the Supervisor and Co-supervisor (s) after AI review to the Department of Doctoral Studies and Research.
- m. The date and venue of the presentation are announced in advance to the scholar. During the presentation, Dean Research, Secretary, Doctoral Committee, Supervisor and Co-supervisor(s) if any and subject experts (internal/external), are invited to evaluate the pre-submission presentation to provide suggestions and recommendations to the scholar for further improvement on the thesis.
- n. The recommendations of the experts are conveyed to the scholar, Supervisor and Co-supervisor(s) via an email report. The Supervisor and Co-supervisor(s) ensure the compliance of the scholar with the recommendations or provide adequate justification for non-compliance or partial compliance.
- o. The candidates on submission of the final thesis, has to report the findings to the community in a suitable manner from which the data has been collected. The scholar shall submit a report to the Secretary, Doctoral Committee before the public defence.

15. Submission of Thesis and Public Defence

- a. The candidate shall submit the thesis, in the prescribed style and format, in five copies along with a soft copy, duly attested and approved by the Supervisor and Co-supervisor, if any, to the University, not earlier than six months before the prescribed minimum period.
- b. The scholars are to submit the final thesis after incorporating the recommendations in the pre-submission presentation, approved by the Supervisor and Co-supervisor (s) to the Department of Doctoral Studies and Research. Prior to sending the thesis to the examiner, a screening of the thesis on content, format, grammar, plagiarism and the general

standards expected of a PhD thesis shall be conducted by the Department of Doctoral Studies and Research

- c. A thesis which has been submitted at the final submission after the pre-submission presentation may be subjected to an internal review as per Internal review of a thesis policy.
- d. The Chairperson of the Doctoral Committee, in consultation with the Supervisor and Co-supervisor(s) if any, recommend at least three suitable examiners who are experts in the field. Each examiner submits, within the stipulated period, a critical evaluation of the thesis to the University.
- e. Based on the evaluation of the examiners, the candidate revises the thesis if necessary, on the advice of the Supervisor and Co-supervisor(s), if any and resubmit the thesis in five copies, along with a soft copy of the thesis.
- f. After approval of the thesis by at least two of the examiners, out of which at least one shall ordinarily be from outside the State a public defence will be conducted.
- g. Scholars are to give a public defence presentation after incorporating changes recommended by examiners after consulting the Supervisor and Co-supervisor. The date and venue of the public defence is announced in advance, so that scholars and interested members of the public may attend. Any member of the audience can pose questions to the candidate, pertaining to the research project or its general field.
- h. The performance of the candidate at the public defence is evaluated by the members of the Doctoral Committee who are present, and the recommendation to be made to the Doctoral Committee may be announced by the Chairperson of the Doctoral Committee at the end of the public defence.
- i. Ordinarily, the process of evaluation and public defence should be completed within six months of the submission of the thesis.
- j. In case any form of plagiarism is found, the University Policy on Plagiarism will be applicable for all doctoral candidates.

16. Results and Award of Degree

- a. The Chairperson of the Doctoral Committee shall declare the eligibility of the candidate to be awarded the PhD degree or otherwise, immediately upon the conclusion of the public defence, and convey the recommendation to the University.
- b. The Doctoral Committee shall ratify the eligibility of the candidates for the award for the Doctoral degree and forward the names to the Academic Council.
- c. The candidates should have fulfilled all obligations to the University before the award of the degree.

- d. Successful candidates will be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, under the seal of the University and signature of the Vice-Chancellor. Along with the degree certificate, a Provisional Certificate may be issued certifying that the degree has been awarded in accordance with the provisions to these regulations of the UGC.
- e. A copy of the successful thesis shall be kept in the University library and disseminated appropriately to the academic community.
- f. The copyright of the unpublished thesis rests with the researcher, the University and the community from which the data has been collected. A declaration of copyright claim will be included as part of the thesis.
- g. Announcement of the PhD degrees awarded and synopsis shall be sent to University News, Association of Indian Universities and the University Grants Commission.
- h. Candidates who have submitted the PhD thesis, but have not attained the required minimum standards may be recommended for the award of an MPhil degree by the Doctoral Committee.

17. PhD Discontinuation Policy

Registration in the PhD degree may be cancelled by the scholar concerned by applying to the Secretary, Doctoral Committee. At the time of application, he/she should have paid all the tuition and other fees and should enclose No Dues Certificates from the Library, Accounts Department and Department of Research and Doctoral Studies. The application shall be signed by his/her research Supervisor. Consideration and approval of the application for discontinuation shall be done by the Dean, Research Studies. Cancellation of the registration shall be effective from the date the student completes all the required formalities.

Discontinuation of registration may be recommended by the Supervisor on the basis of unsatisfactory progress. The Dean, Research shall consider the recommendation and make a decision after due process.

Registration in the PhD degree may be cancelled by the Dean, Research at any time in case of misconduct on the part of a student, after due process.

The Doctoral Committee shall be informed of the discontinuation or termination of the registration of any scholar.



**Dr Larilin Kharpuri,
Dean, Research**