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Circular No: 02/Evaluation/MLCU

Scheme for PhD Course Work
(In compliance with the UGC Regulations and the MLCU PhD Rules)

July 16, 2018

Purpose and Content
(The following paragraph is from the PhD Rules of the University)

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 general guide the domain discipline course work and the implementation of the study.

Coursework and Competencies

a. Each candidate will be required to take coursework as may be prescribed by the Doctoral Committee. Ordinarily the coursework shall consist of
   i. Research methods
   ii. Computer applications eg research tools and online literature search
   iii. Theoretical framework of the discipline in the context of the research study. This component of the coursework shall be undertaken under the supervision of the Supervisor, who shall certify its completion.
iv. Other course work as may be prescribed by the Doctoral Committee and/or Supervisor

b. As part of the coursework, the candidate will 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. See below.
d. The Supervisor will certify the attainment of these competencies in the manner prescribed by the Doctoral Committee.

d. All course work shall be completed within the first two semesters after admission of the candidate

e. MPhil holders may be exempted, partially or fully, from the coursework
f. MPhil/PhD level course work taken at any other university may be awarded equivalent credit

g. Each candidate will be provided a transcript of the coursework completed.

**Tabular scheme for course work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Credits*</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Prescribed by</th>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Certification/ Transcript</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Research methods</td>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>Quantitative methods</td>
<td>Doctoral Committee and/or</td>
<td>University/ Department Supervisor and/or Department Supervisor</td>
<td>Methods: Formative and summative Tools: CFE**, exams, assignments, presentations</td>
<td>University on the report of the Doctoral Committee and/or Department and/or Supervisor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Grading and transcripts

1. Grades will be awarded by the faculty conducting the courses or by the Supervisor.
2. Grades for online courses or prescribed self-study by the Supervisor shall be awarded by the Supervisor.
3. A transcript for the course work shall be issued by the University.

Queries and final authority

1. All queries are to be referred to the Secretary, Doctoral Committee.
2. Final decisions on any matter pertaining to the course work shall lie with the Doctoral Committee, which is subject only to the authority of the Academic Council.

Competencies for PhD Scholars

A primary purpose of the PhD is to acquire the skills to conduct independent research in the discipline. The following specific competencies may be taken as the sub components of the skills required to become an independent researcher.

*1 Credit = 18 hours

** CFE: continuous formative evaluation
1. Framing a Problem Statement and Formulation of a Research Question A:
   a. Demonstrate the skills to articulate a structured description of a problem to be taken up for research and to argue its importance, need and translational application.
   b. Demonstrate skills to formulate personal experiences and ideas such that a literature review can be executed (as detailed below) to further explore these experiences and ideas.
   c. Based on the above, formulate answerable research questions.
   d. Apply the rules of logical reasoning to develop hypotheses. This need not imply taking a logical positivist position. It implies instead the ability to develop coherent, logically sound arguments.
   e. Demonstrate the skills to define the scope and to frame objectives for the research study.

2. Conducting and Formulating a Literature Review:
   a. Be aware of all relevant sources relevant to review being conducted: e.g., through electronic data bases, journals, books, periodicals, reports, maps, videos, unpublished material and any sources specifically relevant to the review being conducted.
   b. Demonstrate skills to access these sources and collate information for the literature review: e.g., skills to access and extract information from electronic data bases, download information from the internet, identify the relevant material (journals, books) in hard copy form.
   c. Demonstrate skills to read and comprehend the reference.
   d. Demonstrate skills to identify in the literature, the existing ideas, current knowledge, substantive findings, theoretical and methodological with regard to the topic under review.
   e. Demonstrate the competency of being able to assess a reference for its reliability.
   f. Demonstrate skills to be able to identify gaps in the literature and critique the literature.
g. Demonstrate skills to be able to weave the material collected into a coherent story that presents an argument around the research questions formulated, rather than merely providing a list like reporting of the material collated.

h. Demonstrate skills to combine and blend the different studies found in the literature search so that one idea flows from the other.

i. Demonstrate skills to locate the research at hand into the existing body of literature; provide a conceptual context of the research; provide justification, rationale and support for every aspect of the research being conducted.

3. Reference Management:
   a. Develop a personal data base of references.
   b. Demonstrate skills for managing references, either manually or through relevant software (e.g. EndNote, Mendeley, Zotero etc.).

4. Design the Research Study:
   a. Articulate what research design means and why it is required.
   b. Explain different kinds of research designs and their rationale.
   c. Identify the most suitable design to answer the questions to be examined by the study.
   d. Formulate and provide the rationale for the design/s chosen.
   e. Demonstrate the ability to formulate a design based on the nature of the question rather than a research method that the researcher is comfortable with. This implies fluency with a mixed methods approach to designing a study.

5. Execute the Study:
   a. Demonstrate the ability to follow the design of the study for all its components, including: sampling, data collection and data management.
   b. Demonstrate the ability to make course corrections if required by unexpected field realities, including sampling, data collection and data management. This may also include the skills of making changes in the research design as indicated by field realities and providing a coherent argument for the change.
6. Interpret the Study:
   a. Demonstrate the ability for analyzing the data either manually (particularly for qualitative analyses) or using the relevant software (e.g., Excel, SPSS, Stata, software for qualitative analysis etc.).
   b. Demonstrate the ability to identify trends in the data.
   c. Demonstrate the ability to look for relationships both within and across variables.
   d. Demonstrate the ability to use the data to answer the research questions/test the hypotheses.
   e. Demonstrate the ability to explain and articulate the findings in a simple, succinct and understandable manner.
   f. Demonstrate the ability to conduct another literature review with a view to explaining fresh information thrown up by the data and use this to compose the discussion section of the study.

7. Communication: The Mechanics of Academic Writing
   a. Demonstrate skills for citation: knowing when to cite and when a citation is not necessary; knowing the format for citation (APA6, Harvard etc.) as required by the publisher for which the writing is being developed.
   b. Be aware of what plagiarism (also self-plagiarism) is and why it is banned from all forms of academic writing.
   c. Demonstrate skills to identify the formatting and writing style required by the publisher.
   d. Demonstrate the skill of following the style and manuscript structure stipulated by the publisher.
   e. Demonstrate an adequate level of fluency in English (or the language in which the writing is executed).

8. Communication: Written Documents (e.g., papers, reports) through Academic Writing
   a. Demonstrate a sense of audience and the intention to communicate to a reader.
   b. Demonstrate the skills of writing an abstract of the paper.
   c. Demonstrating the skill of selecting the appropriate publication.
d. Evidence of clarity of concepts

e. Evidence of critical thinking, organization, and composition

f. Evidence of exploration and interpretation

g. Development of an argument and drawing it to an evidence-based conclusion: run a golden thread through the writing that links concepts and develops the argument.

h. Evidence of originality

i. Demonstrate rational links between the components of the writing: aim for intellectual wholeness in the writing.

j. Rigorously apply the principles of parsimony: be economic without unnecessary duplication.

9. Communication: Making Oral Presentations

a. Demonstrate the ability to develop an abstract to be submitted to a conference/symposium

b. Demonstrate the ability to select a section of the research that is to be presented keeping in mind the theme of the conference

c. Demonstrate the ability to orally present the selected section with clarity, within the stipulated period of time, using an appropriate amount of data.

d. Demonstrate fluency with presentation devices (e.g., power point, flip chart, black board etc.).

e. Demonstrate oral communication skills: speed of speech, articulation, volume etc.

10. Advancing the Field:

a. Demonstrate toward the end of the PhD, the ability to advance the field by making modifications to methods, raising new questions and making recommendations, in the form of models, propositions and fresh questions.

b. Demonstrate objectivity toward one’s own findings and be aware of the fallacy of generalization beyond the evidence base that has been generated.

c. Demonstrate the ability to teach and train others.
Competencies compiled by Gideon Arulmani PhD
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Adopted with modifications by the Doctoral Committee on June 21, 2013

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Controller, Evaluation & Examination