4. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree Program

A Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program is a graduate research degree which shall be awarded by the University not before the completion of three years or six regular semesters and not after completion of eight years or 16 regular semesters. The main purpose of a PhD program is to train students to become independent researchers, experts in their field, and contributors to original knowledge. The Ph.D. degree is the pinnacle of academic achievement and research excellence, designed for individuals seeking to make a substantial contribution to knowledge in their chosen field. Our Ph.D. program is a rigorous and immersive experience that challenges students to explore complex concepts, engage in innovative research, and develop advanced skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, and scholarly communication.

As a Ph.D. candidate, you will embark on a journey of intellectual discovery, guided by thesis supervisor(s) and senior faculty members who are experts in their respective disciplines. The program emphasizes the development of original research that advances theoretical frameworks, practical applications, or both. Throughout the program, you will have the opportunity to work closely with your academic supervisor(s), engage in interdisciplinary collaborations, and participate in conferences and seminars that will broaden your academic and professional horizons to hone your research prowess.

IQRA University Ph.D. program is designed to equip you with the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to pursue careers in academia, research institutions, industry, and beyond. Whether your goal is to become a university professor, a thought leader in your field, or a high-impact researcher, our program provides the resources, support, and conducive environment necessary to achieve your ambitions.

With a strong emphasis on academic integrity, innovation, and societal impact, the Ph.D. program is not just a pathway to a prestigious qualification but also an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the global community through research that addresses real-world challenges.

4.1 Expected Outcomes

i. **Expertise:** Deep knowledge and expertise in a specific field.

ii. **Original contribution:** A unique contribution to the field through original research.

iii. **Research skills:** Ability to design, conduct, and present research.

iv. **Academic and professional opportunities:** Qualification for academic, research, or industry positions.

4.2 Formation of Graduate Student Evaluation Committee (GSEC)

The University is required to fill in Form PhD-A and Form PhD-B to complete the admission process of a PhD student. A Doctoral GSEC (Form PhD-1) will be formed at the earliest after the acceptance of a student into the PhD Program but not later than one month of the student's joining date in the PhD program. The GSEC will comprise of the following members:

i. Supervisor (IU approved supervisor having a PhD and other qualifying criteria as per IU/HEC policy)

ii. Co-supervisor (if appointed)

iii. Two IU Faculty members (PhD Degree holders or MS/MPhil with sufficient research experience)

iv. One expert in the relevant field from outside IU from other reputed universities/R&D organizations/ relevant industry (preferably a PhD).

The supervisor must hold a Ph.D. qualification recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and meet the minimum eligibility criteria as outlined by HEC and IU policy. The Head of the Department in consultation with the student and his/her supervisor and with the approval of the Dean will appoint the GSEC. Form PhD-2 will be used launching a petition in case of any change either in the research topic and/or GSEC members. The student's supervisor will chair the GSEC meetings which should be held at least once in six months. The proceedings of GSEC meetings will be recorded on Form PhD-3 and distributed to all concerned. If a student or supervisor is unable to arrange a Graduate Studies Examination Committee (GSEC) meeting within 8 months, it is the responsibility of the respective Dean or Head of Department (HoD) to ensure that the GSEC meeting is conducted in a timely manner.

4.3 Award of PhD Degree

The completion date of PhD degree shall be reckoned with the date of notification of the award of PhD degree. The maximum duration shall be determined from the date of student enrollment until the date of the completion notification of the PhD degree. In case a student is unable to secure a PhD degree within the prescribed timeframe and claims for extension in duration, the university may constitute appropriate authority and determine the causes for delay. In event of force majeure i.e., delay on account of circumstance beyond the control of student, the university may grant an extension in the period of award of PhD degree in accordance with the duration limiting factor(s) and shall also take corrective measures in case the delay is caused due to process or administrative reasons. On recommendations of the Directorate of Academics, Advanced Studies, and Research (DAASR) and the Dean of respective faculty and subsequent approval of Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR), the University will award the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) to the students who will satisfy the following components. Faculty/department may specify additional requirements if considered necessary.

Key Components to be followed in a PhD Journey:

The following key components must be followed step-by-step by each doctoral student in his/her PhD journey:

4.3.1 Statement of Purpose:

As part of the application for admission to PhD programs, applicants shall be required to submit a statement of purpose, which shall form an integral part of the application. The admissions committee shall use the information provided to ascertain the preparedness and interest of the candidate in pursuing doctoral studies, and whether the department has the requisite resources to train and supervise the doctoral candidate in the subspecialty in which the applicant is interested. A statement of purpose shall, at least, include the following:

i. Title of the potential research proposal

ii. Clear articulation of the current understanding of the intended field and ideas for potential research

iii. Explanation of the intended impact of the proposed research

iv. The prospective candidates shall demonstrate passion and enthusiasm for the area of research.

4.3.2 Coursework:

The students shall complete the coursework of at least 18 credit hours (preferably of 800 level) if they are from the same discipline. These 18 credit hours shall be the courses which have not been counted towards any other degree, in compliance with the HEC Quality Assurance Criteria. The courses counted towards any other degree cannot be double counted towards PhD coursework. The courses shall be offered through regular classes (i.e., classes taught on campus by full-time faculty members of the university). The PhD degree should be based on research, not only on credit hours. Please note that students may be allocated deficiency courses with the approval of the Dean of their respective faculty and they are required to pass all deficiency courses before registering in their PhD coursework. Deficiency courses will not be counted towards the calculation of CGPA of mandatory coursework. A minimum 3.00 CGPA on a scale of 4.00 is required in the coursework to qualify for the comprehensive examination.

4.3.3 Comprehensive Examination:

Following the completion of coursework with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 out of 4.0, every PhD student shall be required to pass the comprehensive examination to be granted candidacy as a PhD researcher, with the provision that the student failing to pass the comprehensive exam, shall be allowed to retake the exam once. Failure to pass in the second attempt shall disqualify the student from continuing his/her doctoral studies further.

The comprehensive examination includes both written and oral examination to assess the students' knowledge and preparation for doctoral research. The comprehensive

examination will comprise of Part-A (Written Exam) and Part-B (Oral Exam) and be conducted after the completion of all coursework requirements. The overall cumulative (Part A + Part B) percentage required to pass the Comprehensive exam is 60%.

Part A - Written Examination

The written comprehensive examination for Ph.D. candidates shall be meticulously prepared by subject specialists and will be under the supervision of the concerned Dean. The examination will cover the entire Ph.D. coursework, in addition to subjects deemed essential for the candidate's intended area of research. This examination is a critical component of the qualifying process and shall carry a weight of 70% in the overall assessment.

Part B- Oral Examination

The Head of Department (HoD), in consultation with the Dean or Campus Director, will constitute the Graduate Studies Examination Committee (GSEC). This committee shall comprise two subject specialists, the HoD, and the Dean or Campus Director. The GSEC will be responsible for the evaluation process, which constitutes 30% of the overall weight of the qualifying examination.

The Examination Department will conduct both parts of the comprehensive examination. GSEC will notify the results of the of the comprehensive examination to the Examination Department by submitting Form PhD-4.

4.3.4 Proposal Defense

After successful completion of the comprehensive examination the student shall advance to candidacy in a PhD degree program. The research topic will be mutually agreed upon by the student and the thesis supervisor, with input from the Graduate Studies Evaluation Committee (GSEC), if necessary. The chosen topic must be original and free from plagiarism. The student is required to develop a detailed research proposal in consultation with the main supervisor and other members of his/her GSEC.

The student will present and defend the proposal in a public seminar. The schedule will be determined by the supervisor in coordination with GSEC members and with the approval of the HoD, Dean, or Campus Director. The HoD will oversee the examination process according to established regulations. The research area of the PhD proposal shall correspond to the community needs at regional and local levels and comply with the priority national research agenda. Moreover, it should also signify emerging areas of research that coincide preferably with sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The proposal defense examination aims to assess the student's comprehensive understanding, analytical skills, and proficiency in the specialized domain of PhD research. During the defense, the student will present their thesis research synopsis, encompassing a concise review of related literature, research objectives, detailed

methodology, anticipated outcomes, global contribution to knowledge in the field, and relevance to the country's needs. The Examination Committee will determine, through a majority vote, whether the student may proceed with doctoral research. In the event of an equal number of "Satisfactory" and "Unsatisfactory" votes, the supervisor's decision will serve as the final verdict.

GSEC will complete the Proposal Defense Evaluation Report using Form PhD-5a with their individual comments in attachments. If the student does not pass the proposal defense exam, each committee member will complete the same Form PhD-5a to outline their comments and recommendations. These comment pages, signed by the respective committee member, will be submitted to the Head of Department (HoD), who will then furnish a copy to DAASR for further action and communication. Additionally, a copy will be provided to the student to facilitate the refinement of the proposal based on the GSEC's feedback. The student will incorporate changes and resubmit the proposal to the supervisor who shall organize a meeting of GSEC to re-examine the student. After the successful Proposal Defense, GSEC will provide a PhD Proposal Defense Certificate (Form PhD-5b).

As per the HEC Graduate Education Policy, the required coursework, comprehensive examination, and proposal defense should be completed within the 1st six regular semesters of the registration into a PhD program. The responsibility in this regard rests collectively with the PhD student and the University. In case of noncompliance, the registration shall be cancelled and transcripts for completion of coursework may be issued to the student.

4.3.5 Thesis Registration and Six-Monthly Progress

Each PhD candidate is required to register in thesis every semester till the final submission of his/her thesis for internal and external evaluations. PhD thesis registration fees shall be applicable and the university reserves the right to increase the fee on annual basis.

Moreover, each PhD candidate is required to formally present his/her progress report of thesis after every six months before the GSEC members and existing PhD candidates. All candidates are required to incorporate corrections and suggestions with the consultation and approval of the respective supervisor(s). Six monthly thesis progress presentation not only encourages PhD candidates in completing the research work well before the stipulated time but also provides them with ample opportunities after every six months to improve the quality of their research work.

4.3.6 Doctoral Research

Following the approval of the research proposal, students are required to plan and conduct an original, in-depth research under the supervision of designated thesis supervisor and/or co-supervisor (if appointed). Data analysis, drawing conclusions in

light of the research objectives, and policy recommendations are the integral components of doctoral research.

4.3.7 Publication Requirements:

In addition to fulfilling the General Requirements, a PhD candidate must publish research articles in the HEC's recognized research journals and the category specified in the HJRS for the publication year. These conditions are different for different disciplines.

For award of PhD degree, a PhD candidate is required to publish research articles meeting the following criteria:

For Science Disciplines (e.g. Engineering/ Computer Science/Pharmacy, etc.)

At least one research article in W category journal or two research articles in X category journals, for Science disciplines.

For Social Sciences (e.g. Business Administration /Education /Media Science /Languages)

At least one research article in X category journal or two research articles in Y category journals, for Social Science disciplines

Notes:

i. The PhD candidate shall be the first author of these publications.

ii. The research article shall be relevant to the PhD research work of the PhD candidate.

iii. The article shall be published after approval of the research proposal.

iv. The article shall be published in a relevant HEC-recognized research journal.

v. The PhD record file of each student should contain all research publications extracted from their thesis.

4.3.8 Doctoral Dissertation:

Each PhD researcher shall write a doctoral dissertation reflecting relevance, credibility, effectiveness, and legitimacy of the research. The dissertation must be an original and innovative contribution to knowledge that contributes to solving socioeconomic problems. The dissertation must conform to the formatting guidelines of the respective faculty such as APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.

4.3.9 Evaluation of Doctoral Dissertation:

The student will provide the required number of copies of his/her doctoral dissertation as per IU examination policy to the Examination Department for all the members of the TEC. The Examination department will arrange a formal evaluation process of each doctoral dissertation by its respective Thesis Evaluation Committee

(TEC). Moreover, Form PhD-6a to Form PhD-6j shall be completed by all TEC members and be submitted to the Examination Department.

This committee will consist of members from the Graduate Studies Evaluation Committee (GSEC) and a minimum of four external evaluators including two representatives from Pakistani universities outside of IQRA University and two external (foreign) experts.

i. Two external (foreign) experts who shall be:

   a. PhD faculty member from the world top 500 universities ranked by the Times Higher Education or QS World Ranking in the year corresponding to dissertation evaluation year OR

   b. Pakistan-based Distinguished National Professors, Meritorious Professors from any national university; or professors from top universities ranked by HEC; or professors from any Pakistani University having a minimum H-Index 30 for Sciences, 15 for Social Sciences or 8 for Art & Humanities as determined by Web of Science.

OR

ii. At least one external expert qualifying any one of the conditions mentioned at 'i' above if the PhD candidate publishes dissertation research in a peer-reviewed journal that is classified by the HEC in category W for Sciences and X or above for Social Sciences.

The following general guidelines shall, at least, be observed while selecting external evaluator:

i. **Relevance of Expertise:** in the same or related fields as in the dissertation.

ii. **No Conflict of Interest:** in personal, financial, or professional stakes in a particular decision or outcome.

iii. **Objectivity:** capable of making unbiased evaluations.

iv. **Diversity:** in terms of geography, culture, professional backgrounds etc.

v. **Reputation:** must be good in the field, with a track record of fair and thorough evaluations.

vi. **Availability:** should have the time and availability to review the dissertation.

vii. **Professionalism:** capable of conducting themselves in a professional and respectful manner throughout the evaluation and defense process (if applicable).

viii. **Communication:** capable of providing clear and constructive feedback on the dissertation.

ix. **Confidentiality:** capable of maintaining confidentiality and protecting the intellectual property of the dissertation.

x. **Compatibility:** well-versed with the research methodology, approach, and theories used in the dissertation.

The Examination Department will share the detailed list of comments of TEC members with the PhD candidate. The final decision of the evaluation before public defense may be classified in one of the following terms:

i. Approved as it is

ii. Pass with minor corrections: resubmission by the candidate after incorporating minor corrections in consultation with GSEC).

iii. Pass with major corrections, resubmission (major changes are to be addressed by the student in consultation with GSEC).

iv. Fail (in exceptional circumstances and for the reasons to be recorded by TEC).

On the instruction of the Examiners' Panel, the candidate shall make changes in the thesis, if any, and submit the corrected thesis with a compliance report.

Students will only proceed with the public defense of his/her final dissertation upon satisfactory evaluation reports by all members of TEC.

4.3.10 Public Defense of Final Dissertation:

An open defense of the dissertation is required after positive evaluation of the dissertation by TEC. Form PhD-7 will be completed and signed by all members of the GSEC and TEC as well as the respective Dean of the faculty to report the details of the successful public defense.

Thesis public defense of a PhD candidate shall be scheduled and announced by the Examination Department at least two weeks prior to the public defense in consultation with GSEC, TEC and the Dean of the respective faculty. The date of the public defense shall be widely advertised across all departments and IU Campuses and also through IU website and print media for maximum participation of the wider community. The supervisor is required to attend the public defense of his/her PhD candidate preferably in person or online (only in case of approved leaves). A neutral Chair shall be invited by the Examination Department for this public defense to ensure that defense was conducted fairly and in accordance with the rules and regulations. The participation of two foreign experts will be arranged through video conferencing, if possible. A question-and-answer session shall be conducted to provide a basis for defense evaluation. The thesis should be objectively evaluated to assess the quality of the research and the researcher's ability to defend. The final decision of the TEC shall be expressed in the following terms:

i. Pass or

ii. Pass with minor amendments or

iii. Deferred for resubmission and re-defense or

iv. Fail (in exceptional circumstances and for the reasons to be recorded by TEC)

The Controller of Examination will conclude the proceedings and announce the final results at the end of the public defense following unanimous decision. The PhD candidate will incorporate all corrections / suggestions given at the end of the evaluation process and then get it approved by his/her thesis supervisor(s). Both soft and hard bound copies shall be submitted in the Examination Department as per the requirements.

4.3.11 Notification of PhD Completion:

After the successful Public Defense followed by the approval of revised dissertation (after incorporating all comments of TEC members), the Examination department will notify the results and the completion of the doctoral degree. However, the BASR shall finally approve the conferment of the award of the PhD degree to the candidate with all its privileges upon the fulfillment of all requirements for the degree program.

4.4 Withdrawal from the PhD Program

A student will be withdrawn from the PhD degree Program under following circumstances/conditions:

i. CGPA remains below 3.00 on completion of coursework even after availing three chances for improvement of grades.

ii. Fails twice in the PhD Comprehensive examination.

iii. Fails to clear the Comprehensive examination within the stipulated time, except where extension has been recommended by DAASR by clearly stating the extended duration. The duration will be counted from the date of the last paper of coursework.

iv. On consecutive three unsatisfactory academic performances graded by GSEC and Supervisor and consequent recommendation by DAASR.

v. On disciplinary grounds when recommended by the respective Disciplinary Committee of the Department/Campus and/or IU Disciplinary Committee.

vi. Students failed to submit minutes of meetings for over 60 days. Students must schedule weekly meetings with the Supervisor and record the minutes. Minutes shall be submitted regularly to the supervisor/ Dean/ DAASR

vii. Fails to complete coursework requirements in three years.

viii. Fails to complete PhD degree requirements within maximum allowed time (i.e., 8 years).

ix. A student can seek withdrawal from a PhD Program at any stage of degree on his/her own request duly recommended by the Dean of the respective Faculty.

4.5 Improving Cumulative GPA

A student may improve Cumulative GPA by repeating the course(s) in which he/she received less than 3.0 grade points but greater than or equal to 2.0, before taking the qualifying examination. Procedure for repeating is as under:

i. The candidate will apply to the Supervisor for permission to repeat a course. The case will be presented before the GSEC for deliberation/approval.

ii. The student will repeat a course which is permitted by the GSEC. On repeating the course, the student will get the earned grade. The student's transcript will show better grades and be used in the computation of CGPA.

iii. The student will have to repeat the course within the time limit given by the GSEC.

iv. A student will be allowed to repeat a maximum of three courses only during entire PhD coursework.

v. If an elective course cannot be offered for repetition due to unavoidable circumstances, a student may take an alternative elective course with the approval of GSEC and will get the earned grades. The student's transcript will show the better grade and will be used in the computation of CGPA.

4.6 Specific Requirement /Provisions

4.6.1 Co-Supervisor

There can be a situation where a student would require special tutoring in a particular research area included in the proposed research plan for which the supervisor cannot provide necessary guidance. In such cases, a co-supervisor may be appointed from within the IU faculty or from outside universities/ institutions/ R&D organizations or relevant industry. A student can also have a co-supervisor/GSEC member from a foreign University subject to the written approval of the Dean of the respective faculty.

4.6.2 Deferment of Semester(s)

A student may seek deferment for a span of one year from regular studies subject to the following:

i. Deferment will generally be requested before the start of a semester. However, in exceptional cases it may be requested by the end of 2nd week of a semester. It will be endorsed by the campus Director /Dean of the respective faculty.

ii. The student has the requisite time available to complete his/her degree within the stipulated time.

iii. New rules and academic policies including fee structure prevailing at the time of rejoining will be applicable.

iv. The deferment period will be counted in the total time of PhD i.e., eight (8) years.

4.6.3 Payment of Tuition Fee

PhD students will be charged prescribed fee as per IU rules (see IU website for details).

4.6.4 Suspension of a Semester

Upon recommendation of Campus Director /Dean of respective faculty, a PhD student may be recommended for suspension of a semester based on the following conditions:

i. Disciplinary grounds

ii. Medical grounds

iii. Prolonged absence

The suspension period will be counted in the total time of PhD i.e., eight (8) years.

4.6.5 Supervisor's Absence or leave

If a supervisor leaves the University or proceeds on a long leave (i.e., leave for more than six months) then a new supervisor shall be appointed who should be the full time faculty member at Iqra University. Accordingly, the PhD Form-2 shall be completed and dully approved by the relevant Doctoral Committee followed by its approval from the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR). The outgoing supervisor may be appointed as a co-supervisor, if required and approved by the Doctoral Committee.

If the supervisor leaves IU for more than 6 months and intends to continue as a PhD supervisor during his/her leaves, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

i. Students must have published at least one research paper from his/her PhD thesis in the required category of HEC-recognized journal. Moreover, the PhD student shall be the first author of the research paper(s) which should be published after approval of the Proposal Defense.

ii. In addition to sub-para (i) above, a meeting is to be conducted by the respective Doctoral Committee chaired by the Dean prior to the processing of long leave of the PhD supervisor. Both supervisor and student must agree to continue their research, amicably with taking the University fully into the loop.

iii. The supervisor is required to attend the public defense of his/her PhD candidate preferably in person or online (only in case of approved leaves).

The approved minutes of all Doctoral Committee meetings and respective PhD Form-2 (with all signatures) shall be forwarded to the office of DAASR within one week.

4.7 Coursework Credit Transfer Policy to PhD Program

i. Minimum 'B' Grade courses shall be allowed to be transferred provided that the transferring courses match at least 70% with the equivalent IU courses in terms of contents.

ii. Up to 100% coursework credit hours shall be allowed to transfer with the recommendation of the assigned supervisor / departmental PhD committee.

iii. In case if the applicant / prospective PhD scholar has already cleared the 'Comprehensive Examination', s(he) may be asked to appear in a challenge exam in lieu of 'Comprehensive Examination'.

4.8 Research Work Transfer Policy to PhD Program

i. The research work will only be transferred if the candidate has completed all the required coursework credits along with successful completion of comprehensive examination.

ii. Based on assessment, the supervisor /PhD doctoral committee may ask the candidate to register and complete an additional course of 3 credit hours. However, the candidate shall be allowed to study the proposed course concurrently with the research work.

iii. The candidate has to submit formal consent of the former supervisor that should:

   a. state clear permission for using research idea and research work.

   b. state that the research work claimed by the applicant is his/her own work and the supervisor has no claim on the scholarly work completed by the applicant.

   c. The candidate shall submit an indemnity to Iqra University regarding the use of research work and ensure that no publication from the research work is under review or in queue for publication at the time of transfer.

   d. For completing the PhD studies at Iqra University, the candidate has to fulfil all research publication requirements at Iqra University. However, in case if s(he) has published all the required number of publications at the previous university, the candidate will have to publish at least one publication with the affiliation of Iqra University in an HEC-recognized journal of minimum 'Y' category.

   e. At the time of conferment of PhD degree, the candidate must not show any affiliation with former supervisor(s) or institution in the dissertation as well as research publications, whereas, the previous research work should be acknowledged appropriately in the thesis, where relevant and appropriate.

4.9 General Conditions of Transfer to IU PhD Program

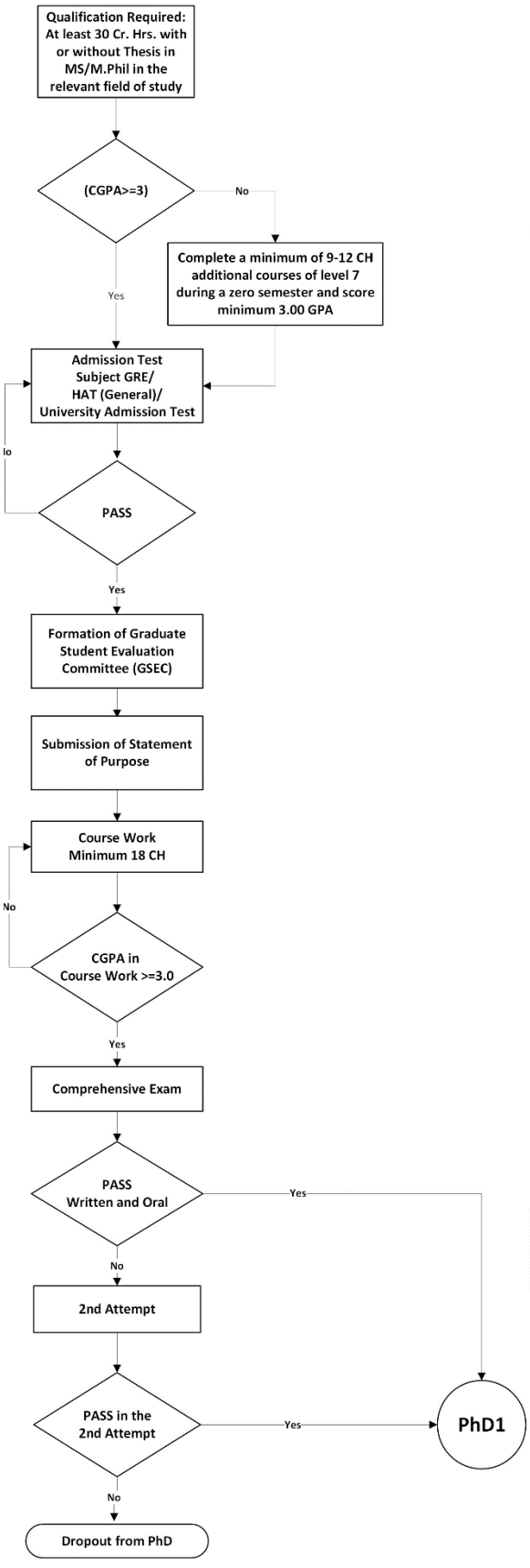
i. The candidate has to submit an undertaking stating that s(he) has got his/her admission canceled from the previous HEI / DAI.

ii. The PhD admission transfer cases will only be considered for acceptance provided the remaining duration to complete the PhD program is 3 years including one-year extension.

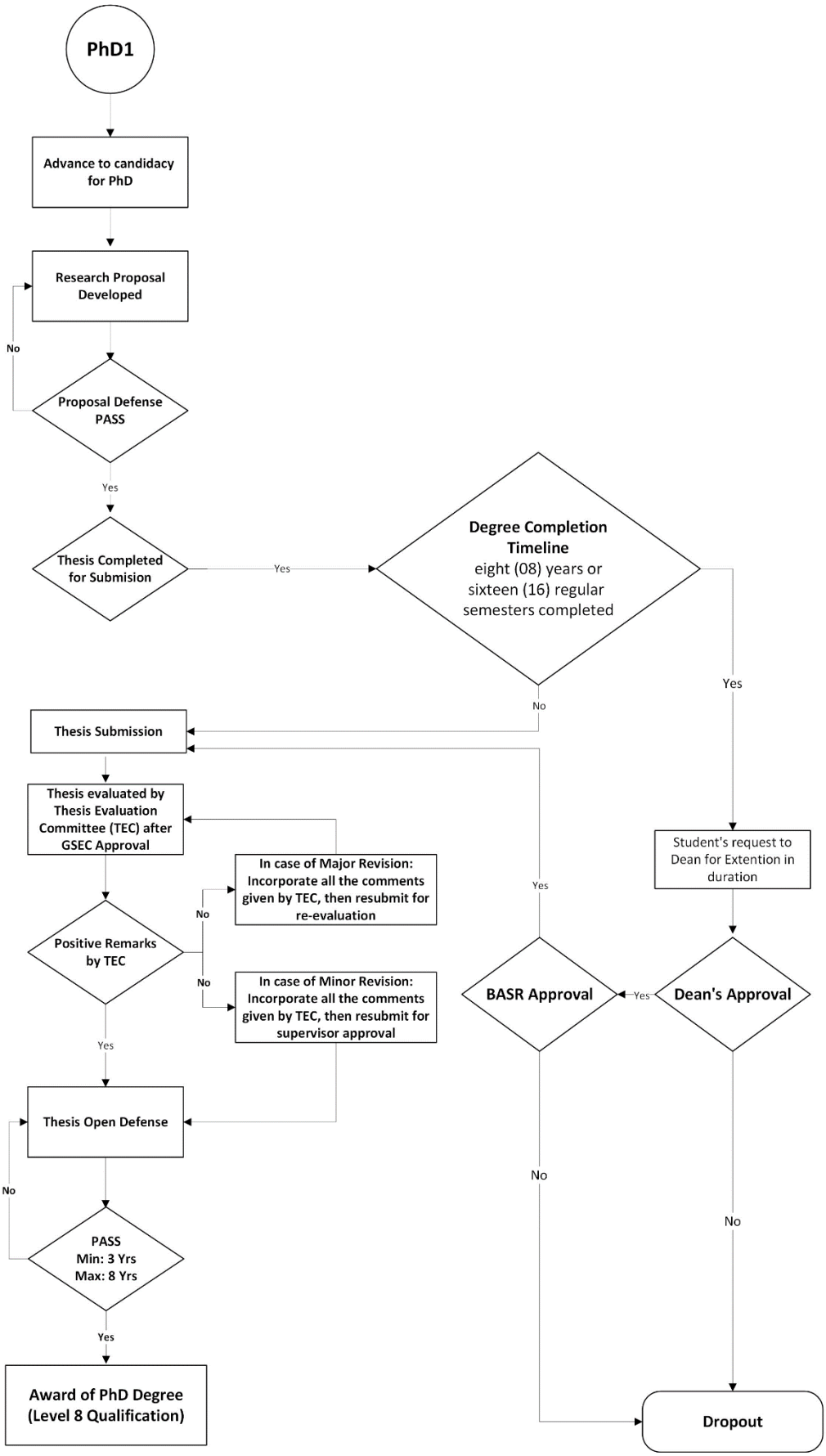
4.10 Award of Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate

A student who successfully completes coursework and passes the comprehensive examination but is unable to defend a PhD synopsis/research proposal or does not complete the required research for obtaining a PhD degree within the specified timeframe, may be granted a Graduate Level Diploma/Certificate/transcripts or another MS/MPhil upon completion of necessary requirements as per HEC policies and the university rules and regulations.

Process Flow Diagram of the PhD Program



Process Flow Diagram of the PhD Program



5. Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Master of Science (MS) Degree Programs

The MPhil /MS degrees are acknowledged as a Level 7 qualification within the Pakistan Qualification Framework (PQF), as approved by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. It represents a culmination of 18 years of formal education. Graduates of the MPhil /MS program may qualify for admission into doctoral studies, contingent upon adherence to the latest stipulations outlined in the Graduate Education Policy of HEC.

5.1 Award of MPhil /MS Degree

The MPhil /MS degree of Iqra University is approved by its Academic Council and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan. The MS/MPhil degree shall be awarded not before the completion of 1.5 years or three (03) regular semesters and not after completion of four (04) years or eight (08) regular semesters. In case a student is unable to secure an MS/MPhil within the prescribed timeframe and claims for extension in duration, the university will constitute an appropriate authority to determine the causes of delay. In the event of force majeure (i.e., delay on account of circumstance beyond the control of student), the university may grant an extension in the period of award of MS/MPhil degree in accordance with the duration limiting factor(s). An MPhil /MS degree will be awarded if the student completes all requirements of the program and finally maintains at least a CGPA of 2.5 (on a scale of 4.0).

An MPhil degree requires students to complete a total of 30 credit hours within stipulated time set by the University /HEC. It will comprise of a total of 24 credit hours of coursework and 6 credit hours of research.

An MS degree requires students to complete a total of 30 credit hours either by coursework or 24 credit hours of coursework and 6 credit hours of research.

In case if a student is unable to proceed with the research, his/her research-based program may be converted to coursework-based program after seeking a written approval either from the HoD or Campus Director, or the Dean of the faculty. The Thesis is not graded and counted towards the calculation of CGPA for all MS / MPhil Programs.

5.2 Brief Description of MPhil Thesis / MS – Research Project (RP)

An MPhil Thesis / MS – Research Project (RP) is of 6 credit hours which will be conducted in two components: Thesis-I or RP-I of 3 credit hours in one regular semester and the second component i.e., Thesis-II or RP-II of 3 credit hours in another regular semester. A student must pass Thesis-I or RP-I (introduction, literature review, and research methodology followed by its oral examination) before entering Thesis-II or RP-II (data collection, data analysis, discussion, conclusion, and recommendations) followed by Thesis / RP Defense.

5.2.1 Process of Thesis-I or RP-I

i. Students are required to register in Thesis-I or RP-I course corresponding to the ‘specialization’ of their MPhil /MS program.

ii. Students cannot opt Thesis-I or RP-I in the first semester. This may commence from the second semester onwards.

iii. Students will select the topic/ research area and discuss it with the designated supervisor. The supervisor will approve the topic within two weeks after the commencement of the regular semester (Form M-1).

iv. Students are responsible to meet their supervisor weekly and record the progress and outcome of each meeting.

v. Students will write a detailed Research Proposal including Introduction, Literature Review, Research Methodology, expected outcome of research.

vi. The student will defend his/her proposal at the end of Thesis-I /RP-I semester.

vii. In case if the student receives Major Corrections by the evaluator(s), he/she will have one more chance to defend the proposal in the same semester after incorporating the evaluators' comments within two weeks of the regular semester. A student will pass Thesis -I or RP-I once the corrections are approved by the supervisor and the evaluators. A 'Fail' grade will be awarded in case the student fails to satisfactorily incorporate the evaluators' comments. Consequently, the thesis student will need to re-register in Thesis-I /RP-I.

viii. In case if the student receives Minor Corrections by the evaluator(s), he/she will incorporate suggestions and submit it to the supervisor within one week of the regular semester for the final approval.

5.2.2 Process of Thesis-II or RP-II

i. After successful completion of Thesis-I or RP-I, the student can register in Thesis-II or RP-II in the next semester.

ii. Students are responsible to meet their supervisor weekly and record the outcome of each meeting.

iii. Final thesis must be submitted within the stipulated time.

iv. The final thesis will be submitted by the student to the supervisor for initial review, feedback, and producing the Similarity Index and GenAI reports (refer to Section 10.3.6 for further details). In both the cases (Thesis or RP), the final submission must comprise of the complete contents of Thesis I and II or RP-I and RP-II. The submission must adhere to the APA style format or any other format admissible by the University.

v. The Thesis student / RP group will defend his/her final thesis / RP at the end of Thesis-II /RP-II semester.

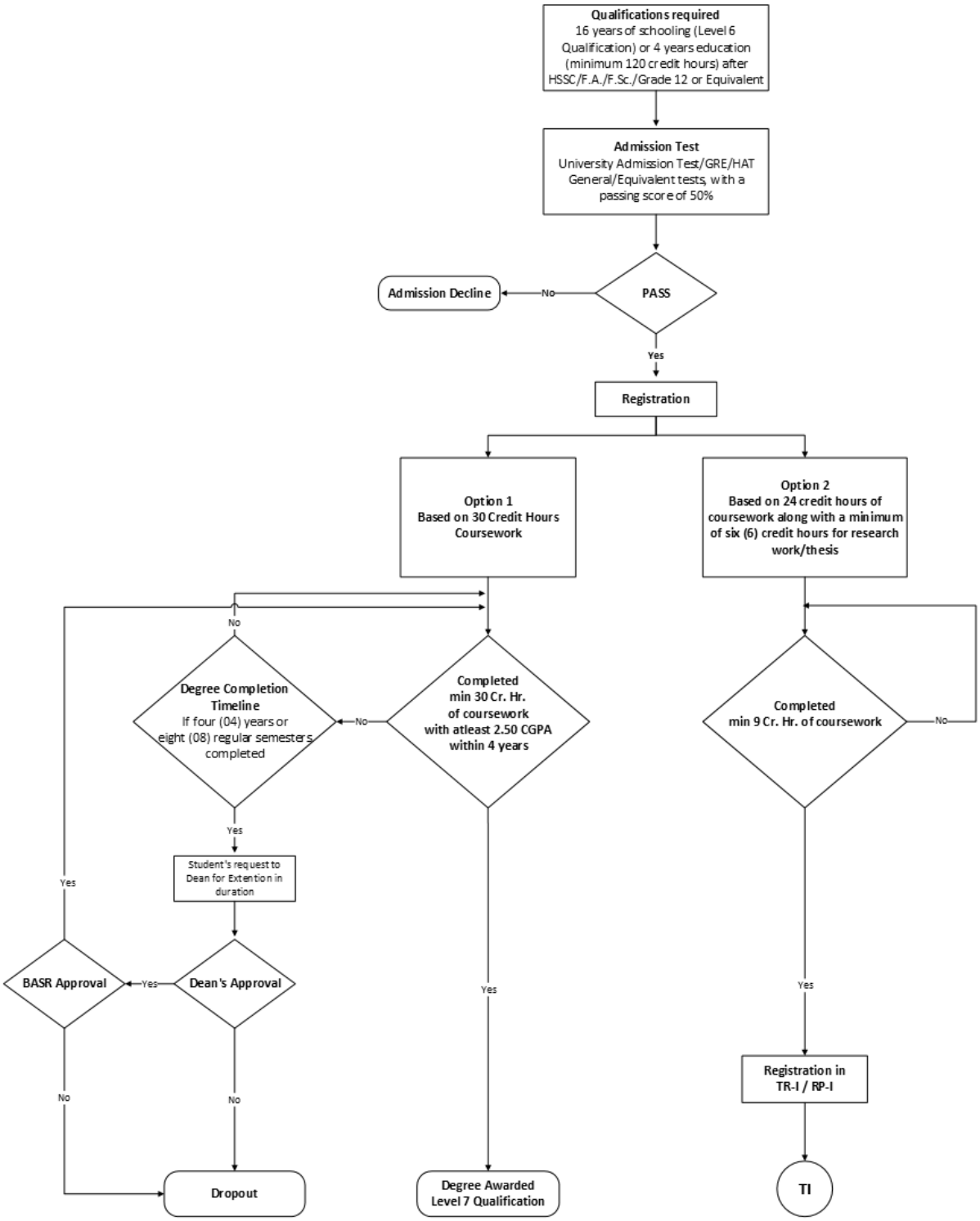
vi. In case if the student receives Major Corrections by the evaluator(s), he/she will have one more chance to defend the proposal in the same semester after

incorporating the evaluators' comments within two weeks of the regular semester. Students will pass Thesis -I or RP-I once the corrections are approved by the supervisor and the evaluators. A 'Fail' grade will be awarded in case the student /group fails to satisfactorily incorporate the evaluators' comments. Consequently, the thesis student /group will need to re-register in Thesis-II /RP-II.

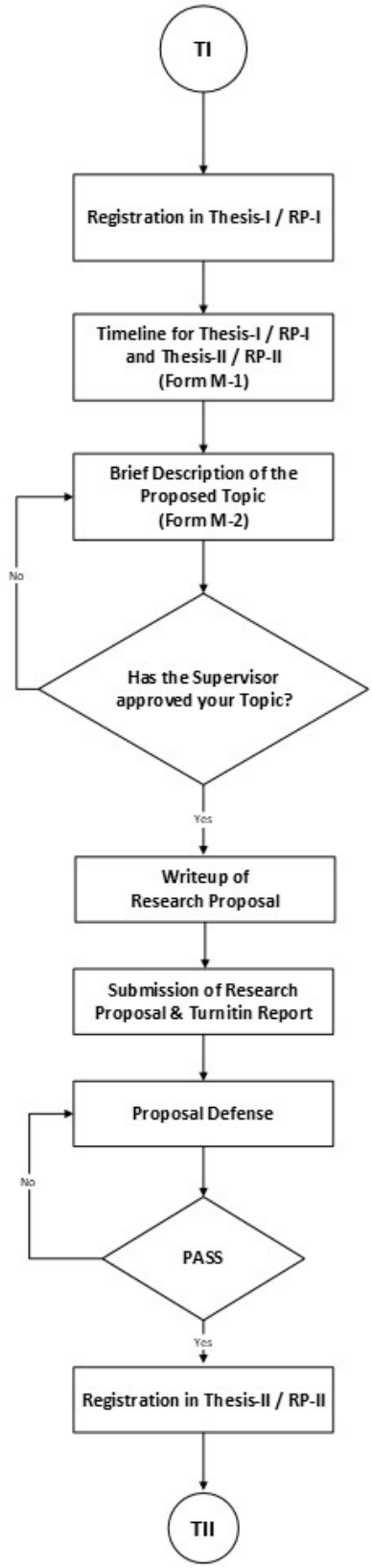
vii. In case if the student receives Minor Corrections by the evaluator(s), he/she will incorporate suggestions and submit it to the supervisor within one week of the regular semester for the final approval.

viii. The final thesis /RP results shall be communicated by the respective faculty (e.g., Faculty of Business Administration) to the Examination Department.

MPhil /MS Degree Program: Admission and Registration Process



Step-by-Step Processes of Thesis-I or Research Project-I



Step-by-Step Processes of Thesis-II or Research Project-II

6. Master in Business Administration (MBA)

The Master of Business Administration (MBA) is acknowledged as a Level 7 qualification within the Pakistan Qualification Framework (PQF), as approved by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. It represents a culmination of 18 years of formal education, positioning the MBA on par with other master's programs, including the Master of Science (MS) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil). Graduates of the MBA program may qualify for admission into doctoral studies, contingent upon adherence to the latest stipulations outlined in the Graduate Education Policy of HEC.

The MBA program is meticulously designed to cultivate not only communication and technical proficiency but also essential cognitive and creative skills in students. By aligning the curriculum with the evolving demands of both industry and academia, the program ensures that graduates are well-prepared for contemporary challenges. Elective courses, often delivered by seasoned industry professionals, facilitate a deeper exploration of specialized domains. Meanwhile, our distinguished faculty members provide a robust theoretical foundation, enabling students to enhance their technical, interpersonal, and analytical abilities through practical experiences such as field research, case studies, seminars, and workshops. Ultimately, the MBA program aims to produce graduates capable of applying advanced knowledge across diverse contexts, fostering both research and lifelong learning.

6.1 Award of an MBA Degree

The MBA degree of Iqra University is approved by its Academic Council and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan. The University offers the MBA qualification in two different streams:

i. MBA program with 36 credit hours for those who are joining the MBA program from a relevant academic background e.g., a four-year BBA program, BS (Accounting and Finance), etc.

ii. MBA program with 72 credit hours for students having non-relevant academic backgrounds e.g., BE, BS-CS, MS, MA, etc.

The eligibility criteria for an MBA award under each stream is described below:

Students with relevant academic backgrounds must have:

i. completed a total 36 credit hours of the program including six core courses in addition to four elective courses from one specific specialization domain as offered by the Faculty of Business Administration; and

ii. completed 6 credit hours of Thesis or Industrial Project (IP) or two more elective courses from the same specialization in lieu of Thesis / Industrial Project; and

iii. obtained a minimum CGPA of 2.50.

Students with non-relevant academic background must have:

i. completed a total 72 credit hours of the program including eighteen core courses in addition to four elective courses from one specific specialization domain as offered by the Faculty of Business Administration; and

ii. completed 6 credit hours of Thesis or Industrial Project (IP) or 2 more elective courses from the same specialization in lieu of Thesis / Industrial Project; and

iii. obtained a minimum CGPA of 2.50 (on a scale of 4.0).

6.2 Specializations offered in MBA Degree Program

The following specializations are offered in the MBA degree program. Different elective courses are offered every semester within each specialization:

i. Human Resource Management

ii. Marketing

iii. Finance

iv. Supply Chain Management

v. Entrepreneurship

vi. Islamic Banking and Finance

vii. Project Management

viii. Hospitality and Tourism

ix. Healthcare Management

x. Management Information System

xi. Any other discipline

6.3 MBA Program Options

The MBA program may be completed by choosing any one of the three pathways:

i. MBA Program with coursework only

ii. MBA Program with coursework and a research thesis

iii. MBA Program with coursework and an industrial project

6.3.1 MBA Program with Coursework Only

Students may obtain an MBA degree exclusively through coursework upon fulfilling the requisite credit hours, specifically 36 or 72, depending on their designated stream. Those who initially intended to complete their MBA through a thesis or industrial project have the option to transition to the 'MBA with coursework only' pathway, contingent upon obtaining written consent from the Campus Director or the Dean of the Faculty of Business Administration. In this case, students must complete a total of

six elective courses—comprising four elective courses and two additional electives within the same specialization—to meet their credit hour requirements.

6.3.2 MBA Program with Coursework and a Research Thesis

This pathway includes both coursework and a research thesis. A thesis student is required to work individually under the supervision of an assigned thesis supervisor to complete a total of six credit hours in two regular semesters (called Thesis -I and Thesis -II). A thesis student will only receive either a 'Pass' or 'Fail' grade which does not count towards the calculation of CGPA. In case of the 'Fail' grade, the student will re-register in the failed component (Thesis -I or Thesis -II) to complete his/her remaining thesis work. The 'Quantitative Research Methods' is the pre-requisite course for Thesis -I. Similarly, Thesis -I is the pre-requisite course for Thesis -II.

The main purpose of an MBA research thesis is to:

i. showcase advanced knowledge and understanding of a specific business topic or issue highlighted in an existing literature.

ii. Learn and apply scientific methods and techniques to investigate a theoretical / business problem or opportunity.

iii. add original insights and perspectives to the existing body of (business) knowledge.

iv. critically analyze complex issues and develop well-supported arguments.

v. recommend cost-effective and/or innovative solutions to bridge the knowledge gap(s).

vi. effectively communicate research findings and insights to both academic and professional audiences.

vii. increase marketability and career advancement opportunities with a prestigious research-based degree.

viii. collaborate with academics, industry experts, and peers, expanding professional networks, whenever needed.

ix. accomplish a significant academic milestone, demonstrating perseverance and dedication.

6.3.3 MBA Program with Coursework and an Industrial Project (IP)

An Industrial Project (IP) provides students with an opportunity and a platform to enhance their interpersonal and professional skills and equip them to tackle forthcoming challenges of businesses effectively and efficiently. It not only serves as a means to assess students' comprehension and proficiency within a specific field of study but also simultaneously offers them several opportunities to broaden their understanding of applied business processes through rigorous research endeavors. In

contrast to a research thesis, an Industrial Project (IP) allows students to work in a group formation (usually up to a maximum of four students per group). Similar to a research thesis, an IP student is also required to work under the supervision of an assigned supervisor to complete a total of six credit hours in two regular semesters (called IP-I and IP-II). An IP student will only receive either a 'Pass' or 'Fail' grade which does not count towards the calculation of his/her CGPA. In case if a group is given a 'Fail' grade, all members of the group will re-register in the failed component (IP-I or IP-II) in the upcoming semester. Similarly, if one or more members of the group are given a 'Fail' grade, only those members will re-register in the failed component (IP-I or IP-II) in the upcoming semester. The 'Quantitative Research Methods' is the pre-requisite course for IP-I. Similarly, IP-I is the pre-requisite course for IP-II.

An IP group is responsible to visit a public or private or semi-government organization within their chosen industry or even non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and identify a real-life business problem after consulting with the focal person of the company. Alternatively, an IP group may prefer to choose an entire industry such as textile industry, FMCG, cement industry, pharmaceutical sector, or banking industry, etc. for the identification of real-life business problem. The central aim of an industrial project is to help business managers in avoiding, resolving, or minimizing their business problems. IP students may seek additional advices and guidelines from their designated supervisor to explore other appropriate ways of conducting an industrial project within stipulated time frame. It is important to note that an IP group bears the full responsibility of securing and submitting a signed consent form from the focal person of the industry to their respective supervisor before commencing research work. This involves obtaining explicit written permission either from the Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the University or the campus-based research ethics committee to access and utilize information gathered during the entire research process. Such consent ensures ethical adherence and respects the confidentiality and anonymity of all stakeholders involved in the applied research.

6.4 Brief Description of MBA Thesis / Industrial Project

An MBA thesis or industrial project is of 6 credit hours which will be conducted in two components: Thesis-I or IP-I of 3 credit hours in one regular semester and the second component i.e., Thesis-II or IP-II of 3 credit hours in another regular semester. A student must pass Thesis-I or IP-I (introduction, literature review, and research methodology followed by its oral examination) before entering Thesis-II or IP-II (data collection, data analysis, discussion, conclusion, and recommendations) followed by Thesis / IP Defense.

6.4.1 Process of Thesis-I or IP-I

i. Students are required to register in Thesis-I or IP-I course corresponding to the 'specialization' of their MBA program.

ii. Students cannot opt Thesis-I or IP-I in the first semester. This may commence

from the second semester onwards.

iii. Students will select the topic/ research area and discuss it with the designated supervisor. The supervisor will approve the topic within two weeks after the commencement of the regular semester (Form M-1).

iv. Students are responsible to meet their supervisor weekly and record the progress and outcome of each meeting.

v. Students will write a detailed Research Proposal including Introduction, Literature Review, Research Methodology, expected outcome of research.

vi. The student will defend his/her proposal at the end of Thesis-I /IP-I semester.

vii. In case if the student receives Major Corrections by the evaluator(s), he/she will have one more chance to defend the proposal in the same semester after incorporating the evaluators' comments within two weeks of the regular semester. Students will pass Thesis -I or IP-I once the corrections are approved by the supervisor and the evaluators. A 'Fail' grade will be awarded in case the student /group fails to satisfactorily incorporate the evaluators' comments. Consequently, the thesis student /group will need to re-register in Thesis-I /IP-I.

viii. In case if the student receives Minor Corrections by the evaluator(s), he/she will incorporate suggestions and submit it to the supervisor within one week of the regular semester for the final approval.

6.4.2 Process of Thesis-II or IP-II

i. After successful completion of Thesis-I or IP-I, the student can register in Thesis-II or IP-II in the next semester.

ii. The supervisor will monitor the progress of the students against the timeline submitted by the student (Form M-1).

iii. Students are responsible to meet their supervisor weekly and record the outcome of each meeting.

iv. Final thesis must be submitted within the stipulated time.

v. The final thesis will be submitted by the student to the supervisor for initial review, feedback, and producing the Similarity Index and GenAI reports (refer to Section 10.3.6 for further details). In case of the industrial project, only the group leader will submit the IP report to the supervisor on behalf of the group. In both the cases (Thesis or IP), the final submission must comprise of the complete contents of Thesis I and II or IP-I and IP-II. The submission must adhere to the APA style format or any other format admissible by the University.

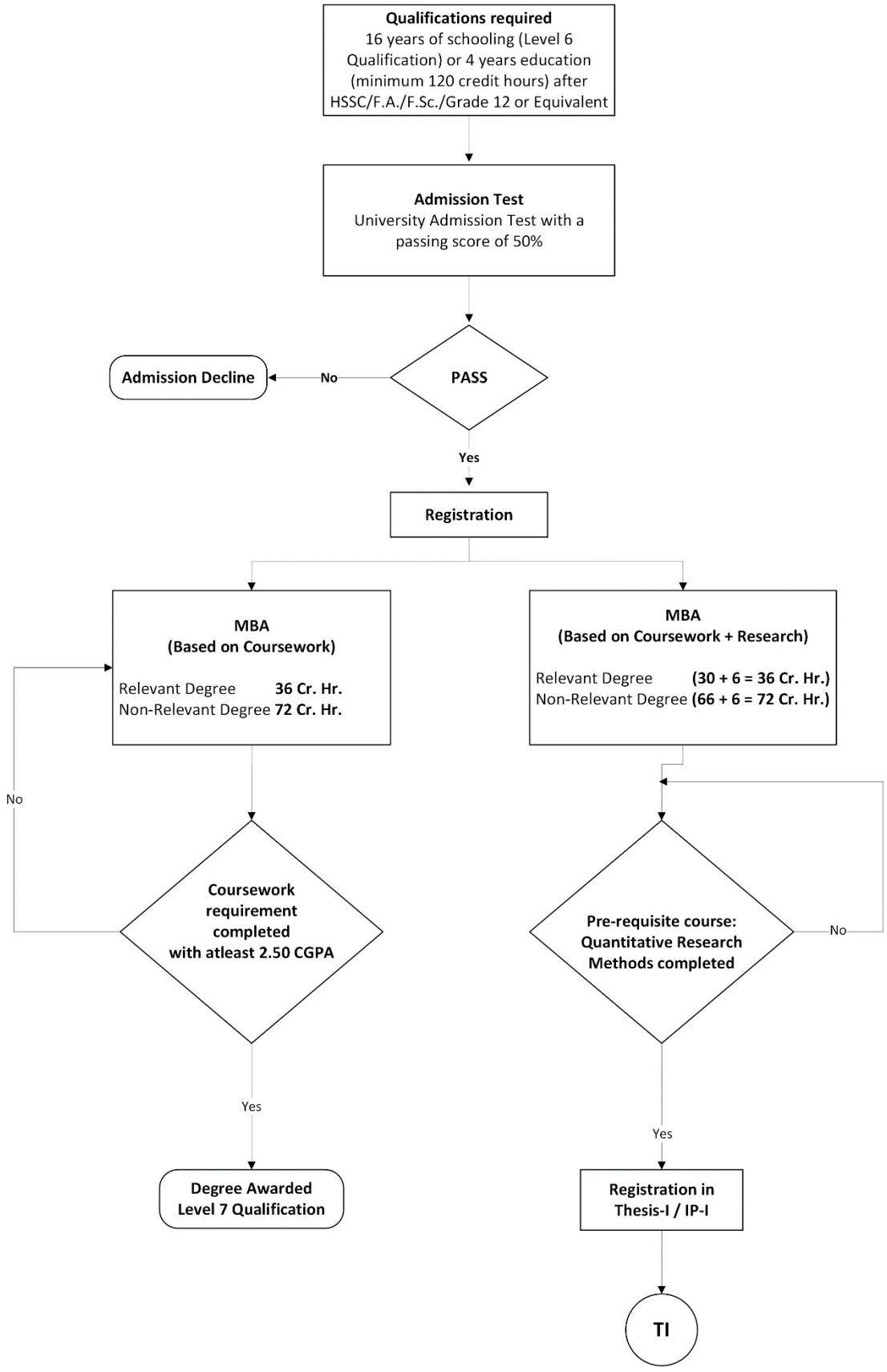
vi. The Thesis student / IP group will defend their final thesis / project at the end of Thesis-II /IP-II semester.

vii. In case if the student receives Major Corrections by the evaluator(s), he/she will have one more chance to defend the proposal in the same semester after incorporating the evaluators' comments within two weeks of the regular semester. Students will pass Thesis -I or IP-I once the corrections are approved by the supervisor and the evaluators. A 'Fail' grade will be awarded in case the student /group fails to satisfactorily incorporate the evaluators' comments. Consequently, the thesis student /group will need to re-register in Thesis-II /IP-II.

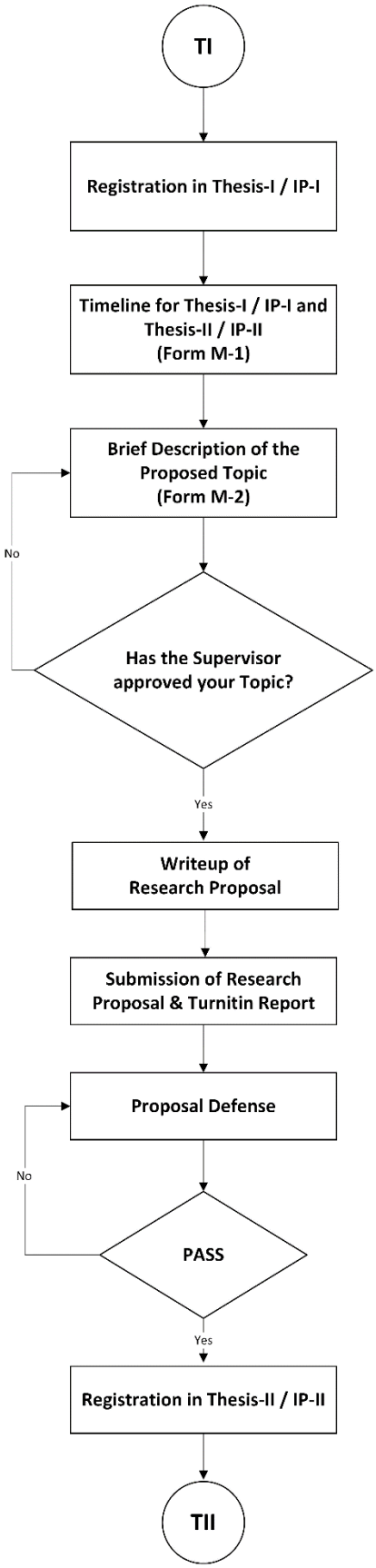
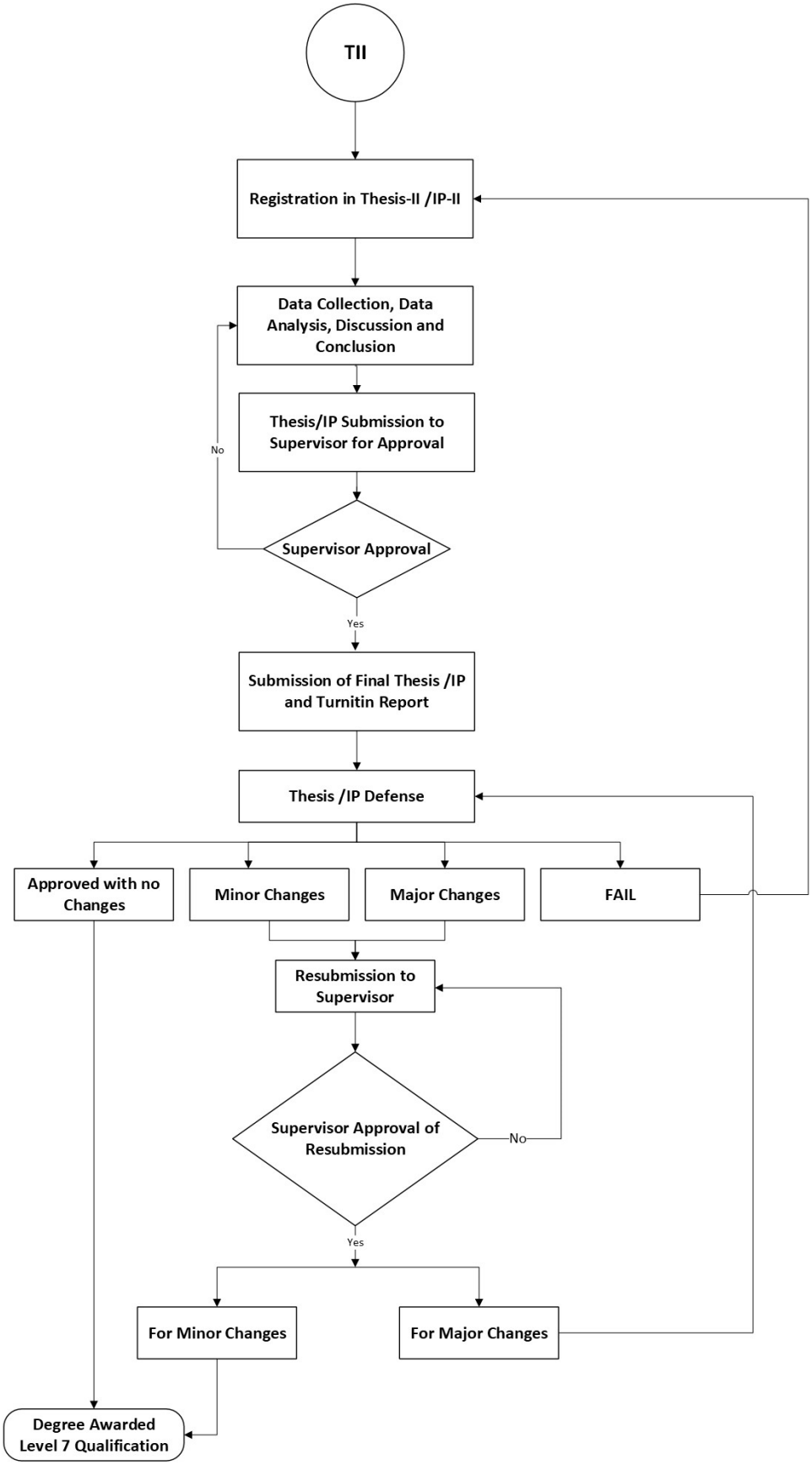
viii. In case if the student receives Minor Corrections by the evaluator(s), he/she will incorporate suggestions and submit it to the supervisor within one week of the regular semester for the final approval.

ix. The final thesis / IP results shall be communicated by the respective faculty (e.g., Faculty of Business Administration) to the Examination Department.

MBA Degree Program: Admission and Registration Process



Step-by-Step Processes of MBA Thesis -I or IP-I



Step-by-Step Processes of MBA Degree Thesis -II or IP-II