

AIR UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

POLICY ON AWARD OF THE MASTER OF SCIENCE (MS), MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (MPhil) AND MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA) DEGREES

Introduction

1. This policy deals with the award of degree of Master of Science (MS), Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) by the Air University. The degree requirements, time duration, admission & registration requirements, evaluation procedure, conditions for dismissal from Master's studies, and other related requirements are part of this policy. The policy is inline with the guidelines provided by Higher Education Commission, Pakistan. The policy finds its elaboration in current AU Academic Rules.

Award of MS/MPhil/MBA Degree

2. On the recommendations of the Faculty Board of Graduate Studies (FBGS) to Vice Chancellor through Director Academics and Registrar, the Air University will award MS/MPhil/MBA degrees to the candidates who satisfy the requirements mentioned below. Faculties and departments may specify additional requirements if considered appropriate/necessary on case to case basis, however those requirements are to be approved by FBGS. The **standard** requirements are further explained in subsequent paragraphs.

a) **Coursework.** The minimum coursework required is 24 credits of graduate level courses.

b) **Cumulative grade point average (CGPA).** Master's Students are required to maintain a CGPA of **2.50** or above on the scale of 4.00. **Revised Academic Standing for Spring – 2017 & onwards intakes is placed at Annexure A (Table A1).** ⁽¹⁾

c) **Defense of Research Proposal.** Each Master's student has to prepare, submit, and defend a thesis proposal, after carrying out a comprehensive literature review and taking guidance from his/her supervisor and GEC, and defend it successfully in not more than two attempts.

d) **Research Credits.** In addition to the class coursework, all Master's students must register for at least six Cr Hr of research work and get satisfactory grades for these credit hours.

CGPA criteria changed from 3.00 to 2.50 (applicable from Spring - 2017 and onwards intakes)

e) **Plagiarism check.** The thesis should pass a plagiarism test before sending it to external examiner, for evaluation, using specialist software.

f) **Research Publication.** Master's student must make an effort to publish at least one research paper preferably in an International Conference or HEC recognized journal

g) **Final Defense.** It is essential to successfully defend one's thesis in an open defense (in the form of a presentation) and earn its approval by a majority vote of GEC

h) **Submission of Master's Thesis.** Three copies of Master's thesis (in hard bound copies of approved color) duly signed by GEC members along with its soft copy on CD/DVD shall be submitted within 30 calendar days from the date of final defense. Director Examination & Dean Faculty (with consultation of the concerned Department Chair) may relax this period (**maximum for another one month**) if GEC asked student to incorporate significant changes/additions in the thesis, with intimation to offices of Director Examination and Director Academics.

i) **Payment of Fees.** Each Master's student has to pay full semester fees for every extended semester beyond normal duration of respective degree program. Additionally Rs 20,000/- would be charged as Thesis evaluation fee from graduate students.

Absolute Grading System

3. Absolute Grading system will be followed from Fall 2017 Semester (instead of Relative Grading System) – as placed at Annexure B (Table A2).⁽²⁾

Duration of Master's Studies

4. The normal duration of the Master's studies (**except MBA 1.5 years, MSPM and MS Mgmt Science**) shall be two academic years - an academic year consists of two regular semesters ie Fall and Spring semesters - extendable by two more semesters by Dean of the concerned Faculty on the recommendation of concerned Chair Department. Student who fails to complete the degree requirements within three academic years shall have to apply in writing with justification to the FBGS through GEC. The FBGS may recommend extension (beyond three years) to VC for max period of two regular semesters (on semester by semester basis before the expiry of previous extension, if any) provided the student has successfully defended his research proposal, has been getting satisfactory research progress reports and FBGS has reasons to believe that student will be able to finish all the academic requirements, if given extension. Offices of the Director Examination, Registrar and Director Academics will be intimated of any extension granted for record purposes. In case the student still fails to complete the degree requirements, then the case for his/her

dismissal from that program will be referred to VC through FBGS and Director Academics.

5. **Semester Leave.** A Master's student who has successfully completed his/her course work may take leave up to one semester, which includes the leave on medical grounds, with the approval of FBGS. The leave granted will not be counted towards the duration of the studies.

Admission in Master's Program

6. Eligibility and other matters related to admission are as follows:-

a) **Eligibility Criteria.** The applicant has to meet following minimum eligibility requirements.

(i) Four year BS degree/equivalent degree in the relevant field with at least 124 Cr Hrs beyond 12 years of schooling with a CGPA of at least **2.00⁽³⁾**(on the scale of 4.00) OR equivalent ie First Division under annual system.

(ii) **GRE (International) or GAT General, with at least 50% score in relevant discipline. In case of non-availability of GRE/GAT General due to any reason, concerned Department may arrange an equivalent test under the auspices of Air University. The applicant has to score 60% in this test for becoming eligible for admission.⁽⁴⁾**

b) **Rejection and Transfer Cases.** In case of rejection of application, applicant may apply again after removing the observations of concerned Department or Admission Office. An applicant, who is already pursuing a Master's program elsewhere, can get transferred to Air University provided he/she meets all the admission requirements of AU.

Registration Requirement of Master's Student

7. A Master's student has to maintain his/her registration and pay the applicable fee for coursework as well as for the research work, throughout the duration of Master's studies. If a student fails to register in any semester, he/she shall cease to be a student of the Air University. In case the student applies for reinstatement of his/her status to the Registrar, he/she shall have to clear all dues, deposit re-admission fee and fine as applicable, within 45 days of start of the semester.

8. Master's students are required to register for nine Cr Hrs of coursework in each semester, in the first two regular semesters. Dean of faculty, on the recommendations

of Chair Department, may allow registration of minimum of six Cr Hrs instead of nine. From second year of the program onwards in which student has registered, a Master's student may register for research Cr Hrs in addition to courses as per existing policy and procedure of registration and fee payment, provided he/she has completed 18 Cr Hrs of coursework with CGPA not less than **2.50/4.00**. Master's student may register for courses during summer semester, if offered, for maximum of two courses, to complete his/her coursework requirements or repeat one/two courses for improving his/her CGPA.

Supervisor, Guidance and Evaluation Committee (GEC) and External Thesis Examiners

9. By end of second semester, a supervisor will be appointed by concerned Chair Department duly approved by FBGS. The supervisor will preferably be regular PhD qualified faculty member of AU. A GEC will be formed by Department Chair within four weeks of the appointment of the Supervisor, with the approval of FBGS. GEC will consist of at least three members; depending upon any specific requirement. Department Chair may appoint a larger GEC. GEC will be chaired by the Supervisor of the Master's student and must have at least one faculty member of AU in addition to the Supervisor (preferably holding PhD degree) and one external member (holding PhD degree), who is a researcher/faculty member of public or private sector HEI other than AU. **Members of GEC should not be relatives of the supervisor and/or the student.** The VC will also appoint one external examiner, **as part of GEC**, on the recommendation of FBGS through Dir Academics. Each Department will recommend two names, as external thesis examiner, to FBGS for each Master's student.

Research Progress

10. After successful defense of Research Proposal, quarterly research progress reports by the Master's student duly signed by the Supervisor are to be submitted to GEC, Chair Department and the office of the Dir Examinations **for posting of awarded "S" and "U" interim grades within 30 days of the end of quarter.⁽⁵⁾** **Postgraduate program coordinator is to update the progress on thesis tracking module as well.**

Plagiarism Check

11. Before sending the thesis for evaluation by external examiner(s), the supervisor is required to conduct plagiarism check of the Master's thesis using software approved by AU. The similarity index of the test should be less than 19% before sending it for evaluation. A certificate to this effect duly signed by supervisor and countersigned by Department Chair is to be forwarded to Registrar and Dir Exam. This certificate shall also be attached with the final hardbound copies of the Master's thesis.

If Plagiarism is established in the thesis of MS/MPhil/PhD scholar (at a later stage on a complaint received), then the Supervisor will also be held responsible for this act and will be blacklisted for five (05) years. A disciplinary action against such supervisor may also be initiated by the University. However, if the complaint is proved to be false, then the complainant of false allegation of plagiarism may be blacklisted for five (05) years.⁽⁶⁾

Evaluation of Master's Thesis

12. In addition to the evaluation of the thesis by GEC and plagiarism test, submission of finalized thesis (second Draft) to GEC/expert for evaluation shall be done within two years from the date of admission, otherwise the student will have to apply for extension. After receiving positive evaluation reports by the external examiner and Supervisor, the student shall apply for final defense of his/her thesis. The correspondence with the external examiners shall be done through the office of the Director Examination.

Final Defense

13. Master's student will be eligible for the defense, and will formally apply for it, provided he/she has met conditions as mentioned in para 2 and 4 above. The final defense must be an open defense (in the form of presentation) attended by entire GEC, all available faculty, AU MS & PhD students, Department Chair and preferably Dean. **For this purpose, Director Exams or his representative will also attend the final defense.** Master's thesis will be awarded a Letter Grade by the GEC after the final defense. Once the letter grade has been awarded to the thesis, it shall stand as final grade of thesis. After the final defense GEC will make one of the following recommendations to the VC through FBGS:-

- a) Pass without any observation.
- b) Pass with minor changes.
- c) Major changes required (second final defense, if needed).
- d) Failure.

Note: In case GEC recommends "Pass with minor changes", the student will incorporate these changes in the thesis within 30 days and the Supervisor will certify accordingly.⁽⁷⁾

14. In case GEC is of the opinion that a second final defense by the student is needed, GEC will recommend the time of next defense also and shall not award any letter grade to the thesis.

15. Master's students securing positions in their departments may be awarded medals as per University Medal Award Policies.

Final Submission of MS/MPhil/MBA Thesis

16. After successful final defense, the student will submit final hard bound copies (in required numbers) duly signed by all concerned & soft copy to the following offices:-

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| a) Concerned Department | 01 Copy |
| b) Registrar | 01 Copy (Registrar will send this copy to Library) |
| c) Director Exams | 01 Copy |

Dismissal from Master's Program

17. A student shall be dismissed from the Master's Degree program if:-

- CGPA remains below **2.50** on completion of his/her course work even after availing all chances for improvement of grades.
- CGPA is below **2.50** in two consecutive semesters (irrespective of courses taken in each semester).
- SGPA is below 2.00 in first semester**
- Fails twice in the defense of research proposal.
- Declared fail in final defense.
- Fails to complete all the degree requirements within the maximum time allowed including the extensions.
- On account of plagiarism or falsification of research data.
- Fails to pay fee for every extended semester, beyond normal duration of respective program, and the Thesis Evaluation fee.**

18. After dismissal from a Master's program, student shall not join any Master's program offered by the Air University

Award of MBA 1.5 Degree

19. On the recommendations of the Faculty Board of Graduate Studies (FBGS) to Vice Chancellor, the Air University will award MBA 1.5 degree to the candidates who satisfy the requirements mentioned below:

- Minimum Duration of MBA 1.5 Program.** The minimum duration for award of MBA degree is 1.5 years.
- Course work.** The minimum course work required for award of MBA 1.5 degree is 30 credits of graduate level courses.

c) **Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA).** MBA 1.5 students are required to obtain a CGPA of **2.50** or above on the scale of 4.00 on completion of academic requirements.

d) **Project/Thesis Credit Hours.** In addition to coursework, all MBA 1.5 students must register for at least six Cr Hrs of a business Capstone Project or thesis work and get satisfactory grades for these credit hours.

MBA 1.5 Thesis. The MBA 1.5 program at Air University also provides an option by thesis track for students who opt for a more academic approach to research. The rules for submitting and evaluating the MBA 1.5 thesis shall be the same as the MS and MPhil thesis which have been expounded in the following sections.

e) **Plagiarism Check.** The thesis should pass a plagiarism test before sending it to external examiner for evaluation, using specialist software.

f) **Final Defense of Thesis.** For MBA 1.5 student with Thesis option, it is essential to successfully defend one's thesis in an open defense (in the form of a presentation) and earn its approval by a majority vote of GEC.

g) **Final presentation for Capstone Project.** For MBA 1.5 students with project option, successful open defense (in the form of a presentation) of the Capstone Project and approval by a majority vote of Capstone Project Evaluation Committee (CPEC) is required.

(h) **Submission of Capstone Project.** Three copies of the MBA 1.5 Capstone project in hard bound copies of approved color (duly signed by all CPEC members) along with its soft copy on CD/DVD shall be submitted within 15 calendar days from the date of final presentation/defense for the intakes of Fall 2017 Semester and onwards. Students of the previous intake/batches will continue to be governed by previous policy on the subject.

(i) After successful final defense, the student will submit final hardbound copies (in required number) duly signed by all concerned to the following offices:-

- | | | |
|------|------------------------|--|
| i. | Concerned Department | 01 Copy |
| ii. | Registrar | 01 Copy (Registrar will send this copy to Library) |
| iii. | Examination Department | 01 Copy |

20. MS Mgmt Science & MS Project Mgmt Programs : MS Mgmt Science and MSPM are of 1.5 years whereas Master's in Engg Programs is of 2 years duration, however, Credit Hours for these are the same as 30 CHs (24 CHs for Course work and 06 CHs for thesis). MS Mgmt Science & MSPM programs consist of two (02) Semesters course work only.

21. This policy shall be applicable to all MS/MPhil/MBA programs wef Fall – 2017 unless stated otherwise in the preceding pages. Academic Regulations may also be consulted for details of any relevant points.

22. The policy shall be reviewed as and when required.



(FAAIZ AMIR)
Air Vice Marshal (R)
Vice Chancellor

No. IBD/AU/202/2/ACAD dated: 02 March, 2018

References

1. Grading Table Associated with Min CGPA (2.5/4.0) For Passing MS/MPhil/MBA Programs (page 1)
Agenda Item No. 2, para 13 : *Minutes of, University Functional Committee, Meeting issued on 28 April, 2017.*
2. Absolute Grading Scheme (page 2)
Agenda Item No. 2 : *Minutes of, 151 University Functional Committee, Meeting issued on 18 Aug, 2017*
3. Eligibility Criteria Grades for PG Studies (page 3)
Agenda Item No. 3 Sub Item - 3, para 25 : *Minutes of, University Functional Committee, Meeting issued on 31 Jan, 2018*
4. Constitution of Committee to Prepare/Conduct the Test at Par with GRE (General), GRE (Subject) for Admission in MS/MPhil & PhD or Equivalent Programs (page 3).
HEC Letter No. 1- 3 /AD-QA/HEC/(NQAC)(21)/2016)/52 dated 18 Mar, 2016
5. Research Progress Reports for MS/MPhil/MBA Students (page 4).
Agenda Item No. 2, para 15 : *Minutes of, University Functional Committee, Meeting issued on 28 April, 2017.*
6. Responsibility on Supervisor of Plagiarized PhD/MS/MPhil Thesis (page 5).
HEC letter no. 1-22(NQAC)/QAD/2017/HEC/07-364 and 08-365 both dated 24 March, 2017
7. Amendments to MS & PhD Policy of Air University (page 5).
Para 1(f) of Letter No. IBD/AU/207/Acad dated 29 Dec, 2015

Note : Highlighted Bold font in the document indicates amendments

***Table A1**

Academic Standings applicable for MS/MPhil/MBA Intake of Spring – 2017 and onwards intakes

S No	CGPA	Academic Standing
1.	$3.75 \leq \text{CGPA} \leq 4.00$	Honor
2.	$3.50 \leq \text{CGPA} < 3.75$	Very Good
3.	$3.00 \leq \text{CGPA} < 3.50$	Good
4.	$2.50 \leq \text{CGPA} < 3.00$	Satisfactory
5.	<2.50 in a semester	Probation (Repeat Course(s) to improve CGPA)
6.	<2.50 in second consecutive semester or <2.00 in 1st semester	Dismissed

Note : Intakes / students enrolled before Spring – 2017 Semester would continue to be governed by CGPA limit of > 3.0, on the scale of 4.0, and related Academic Standing.

Annexure B

****Table A2**

**Absolute Grading Scheme, applicable from Fall – 2017 Semester for
MS/MPhil/MBA/PhD Programs**

S No	Marks in %age	Grades	GPA
1.	80 - 100	A	4.00
2.	75 - 79.99	A-	3.67
3.	70 - 74.99	B+	3.33
4.	65 - 69.99	B	3.00
5.	60 - 64.99	B-	2.67
6.	55 - 59.99	C+	2.33
7.	50 - 54.99	C	2.00
8.	Below 50	F	0.00