

## **Guidelines for Research Seminars** presented as part of **Postgraduate Degrees by Research (MPhil and PhD)**

These Departmental Guidelines should be read in conjunction with relevant regulations on program requirements on the website of the School for Graduate Studies and Research.

### **Purpose of the Research Seminar**

The purpose of the Research Seminar is for students to share aspects of their research as it develops with their advisors and other interested academics and students. As such, it serves to encourage students to synthesize the evidence they have gathered thus far, thereby helping them to marshal their materials into manageable form as their research proceeds. Further, students will receive feedback from others interested in their area of study, assisting them in considering aspects they might not otherwise have addressed. Sharing material with others in the Department also spreads the research: if staff and other students are aware of what graduates are researching, they can refer relevant material to them as they come across it. The Seminar also serves as a training space for preparation and presentation of papers at academic conferences.

### **When to present the Research Seminars**

- Assuming the student is required to spend the first year doing the common core of taught courses, the following calendars are recommended for fulfilling the Research Seminar requirement (the durations assume programs must be completed in the funding periods established by government):

**Full-time MPhil student (2-year program, reqd. to do 2 seminars):** Two seminars between semester two of year one (earliest) and semester two of year two (latest).

**Part-time MPhil student (3-year program, reqd. to do 2 seminars):** Two seminars between semester two of year one (earliest) and semester two of year three (latest).

**Full-time PhD student (3-year program reqd. to do 3 seminars):** One seminar per year, preferably starting semester two of year one and ending semester one of year three.

**Part-time PhD student (4-year program reqd. to do 3 seminars):** One seminar each in years two, three and four (semester one).

Alternative calendars may be established, but both student and supervisor should ensure that each Seminar scheduled offers adequate preparation time so that it reports on a substantive phase of research, thereby ensuring that the content does not substantially overlap with that of previous presentations.

### **Preparing to Present**

- The student and supervisor should jointly decide on a schedule for preparing each Research Seminar presentation. In the semester in which the given presentation is nearing completion, the student will sign up for a slot on the schedule distributed by the Graduate Coordinator, who shall distribute said schedule no later than the beginning of week three of each semester. **The student must consult their supervisor before signing up;** the LLL Graduate Coordinator will check with all supervisors before confirming the schedule of seminars.

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- Given the above, student and supervisor should begin discussing the first seminar presentation in May/June, immediately after taught courses are completed, if the intention is to present in the first semester of the following year. For seminars to be presented early in semester two, consultation should begin no later than mid-way through semester one.
- It is assumed that the student will submit successive drafts of the paper to be presented to the supervisor, who will ensure that progress is consistent with producing a paper of appropriate rigour and substance. In any event, the student will submit to the supervisor a **full draft** of the paper to be presented at the Seminar **no later than two weeks before the presentation date**.
- The student may submit to the LLL Postgraduate Administrative Assistant ([angela.trotman@cavehill.uwi.edu](mailto:angela.trotman@cavehill.uwi.edu)) for copying the full text of the paper to be presented **no later than one week before the presentation date**. Alternatively, students may make their own copies (typically around ten) to distribute at the seminar.

**Attendance**

- The Seminar should preferably be attended by all members of the student's Committee of Advisors and by the Discipline Coordinator, who will normally act as Chair. The minimum staff presence shall be: the Supervisor; one other member of the Committee of Advisors/Discipline acting as Independent Assessor; and one other member of the Discipline/Department. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that this minimum requirement is met. If appropriate, the Chair may be other than the Discipline Coordinator.
- Notice of each individual Seminar shall be circulated by the Postgraduate Administrative Assistant to all staff and graduate students of LLL with as reasonable notice as possible, and as many members as possible of the Department, and particularly of the Discipline in question, shall be encouraged to attend.

**Format**

- The written paper should be 10-15 pages long, appropriately formatted and referenced in MLA style.
- The reading of the paper should take 30-45 minutes. There will be at least 15 minutes scheduled for questions, feedback and discussion.
- In accordance with the School for Graduate Studies' preference for an examining committee, and to ensure a minimum standard for seminars, each member of the discipline in attendance (other than the Chair) will be provided by the Chair with a feedback form on which to record their comments and assessment of the

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presentation. These are to be given to the Supervisor to assist him/her in offering guidance to the student after the seminar, and in deciding whether it merits being counted towards the degree requirements. Others may also offer written feedback on the forms provided, which may be taken into account at the supervisor's discretion.

**Follow-up and Reporting**

- The Independent Assessor will send a report in writing to the Supervisor, copied to the Departmental Post Graduate Coordinator, within one week of the seminar being presented. The report will state clearly whether the standard of the seminar is deemed by the Assessor to be appropriate, both to the level of the student's program generally and to the progress to be expected of the student at the specific time at which the seminar is presented. If it is judged to be sub-standard, the Independent Assessor will clearly state the reasons for this judgment. The Independent Assessor will also offer any relevant constructive advice in the report to the Supervisor.
- The supervisor will collect all other written responses at the end of the session and, within one month, meet with the student to discuss the Seminar presentation and to share relevant feedback. This may be done by e-mail where appropriate. The supervisor will include a brief report on the Seminar presentation and follow-up communication with the student in their Progress Report on the student for the semester (this is required by the School for Graduate Studies and Research).

**Conference Presentation in lieu of Research Seminar**

- The student may present a paper at an approved Graduate or other academic conference in lieu of the Research Seminar. The student will submit the conference details and specifications for papers provided by the conference organizers, including time allotted per speaker, as soon as possible, so that the supervisor, in consultation with the Committee of Advisors where relevant, can confirm in writing to the LLL Graduate Coordinator that the presentation will be of sufficient length and substance to be considered equivalent to the Research Seminar.
- The student will subsequently provide the supervisor with the specific details of his or her presentation (date and time, panel name) or simply provide a link to the conference program showing his or her scheduled participation.
- The student will submit drafts of the paper to the supervisor in the normal fashion and the supervisor will ensure that the paper is of equivalent rigour and substance to that of a Research Seminar presentation.
- Where the supervisor cannot be present at the conference presentation, the student will present documentary evidence to the supervisor that the paper was presented

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(conference organizers are generally willing to provide this on request) and will submit to the supervisor a brief account of any feedback received from the floor and/or new information or understanding acquired from the other panel presentations or from other presentations at the conference. The student's report may be quoted by the supervisor in the latter's end-of-semester Progress Report to be submitted to the School.

**Compendium of Regulations relating to the Research Seminar**  
**(includes info. on the MPhil > PhD Upgrade Seminar)**

**Manual of Procedures, p.7**

**Appointment of an Advisory Committee**

61. By the end of the first semester of registration, an Advisory Committee must be nominated by the Head of Department and appointed by the Campus Committee for each student reading for an MPhil, PhD or MD degree. The Committee shall consist of a minimum of three persons, including the Supervisor(s). with no more than one person typically being from outside the University.

**Manual of Procedures, p.5:**

**Seminars for Research Degrees**

38. All candidates for research degrees are required to present candidates must present a minimum of two seminars during and MD candidates a minimum of three seminars. The reported to the Campus Committee in the Supervisor's documented on the student's final transcript.

**RESEARCH SEMINARS**

73. Students enrolled for an MPhil degree must satisfactorily complete at least two research seminars, to be convened by the relevant Head of Department, prior to the submission of the MPhil thesis. Students enrolled for a PhD or MD degree must satisfactorily complete three such seminars. Assessment of the students' seminars must be included in their Progress Reports.

**Thesis Guide, p.16**

6 Members of the Advisory Committee will serve as evaluators of all Graduate Research Seminar(s) given by the student and in any upgrading of the Registration (M.Phil. to Ph.D.) exercise.

**Faculty/LLL Website** (<http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/fhe/LLL/PG/RegulationsMPhil.htm>)

**Compulsory Seminar Presentations:** candidates must also make two (2) seminar presentations before a panel consisting of members of the Department and other interested parties. For each Seminar, candidates are required to write and present a paper (to be photocopied and distributed before hand) on a topic arising out of their research as well as to field questions put to them afterwards.

**Upgrade Seminars**

**Manual of Procedures, p.5**

**Upgrading of Registration**

39. A student who is registered full-time for an MPhil degree may apply, after a period of one year from the date of initial registration and at any time thereafter within a period of three years from the date of initial registration, for upgrading of registration to a PhD. The time period for parttime students will be at the discretion of the Campus Committee. The procedures to be followed for upgrading from the MPhil to the PhD are:

40. The student shall consult with the Supervisor who shall inform the Head of Department of the intention to upgrade.

41. The Head of Department shall inform the Campus Committee of the decision to seek the upgrade.

42. The Head of Department shall appoint an Upgrading Assessment Committee and name its Chairperson, in consultation with the Faculty Committee on Graduate Studies and Research, the student's Advisory Committee, and other Departmental colleagues as deemed appropriate.

**43.** The Upgrading Assessment Committee shall be comprised of the Supervisor(s), two independent Assessors and the Chairperson, all normally chosen from the academic staff of the University.

**44.** The Chairperson shall request from the student a report on the work done and accomplishments to date as an MPhil candidate, and a proposal for the work to be pursued as a PhD candidate.

**45.** The student shall make an oral presentation of work done and work proposed, and shall respond to questions posed by the Upgrading Assessment Committee. On completion of the oral presentation, the Chairperson will meet with the Assessors and will prepare a joint report on the presentation, signed by the Chairperson and Assessors, with a single clear recommendation about the upgrade. If a consensus can not be reached by the Assessment Committee, independent written reports must be prepared by the Chairperson and the Assessors, each with a clear recommendation about the upgrade.

**46.** The student's written report and research proposal, and the report(s) of the Chairperson and Assessors, will be forwarded to the Campus Committee for consideration. The Campus Committee will inform the Chairperson of the Upgrading Assessment Committee of the outcome of the upgrade application.

## **Regulations for Grad Diplomas and Degrees, 16-17.**

### **Transfer and Upgrading of Registration**

45. A candidate who is registered for the MPhil degree may apply, after a period of one year from the date of initial registration and at any time thereafter within a total period of three years from the date of initial registration, for upgrading of registration to the PhD if, in the opinion of the relevant Head of Department, the candidate has given evidence of having the qualifications necessary for writing a thesis for the PhD.

46. A candidate who is registered for a taught Master's degree may apply after a period of one Semester for transfer of registration to the MPhil if, in the opinion of the Head of Department, the candidate has given evidence of having the qualifications necessary for writing the thesis for the MPhil.

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47. The procedure to be followed by Heads of Departments in the upgrading and transfer of registrations under Regulations 45 and 46, shall be as prescribed by the Board for Graduate Studies and Research in the Manual of Procedures for Graduate Diplomas and Degrees.

48. A candidate whose application for upgrading or transfer of registration under Regulations 45 and 46 has been approved will be granted retroactive registration to the initial date of registration under these Regulations.

### **Thesis Guide, p.6-8**

5. The following are the procedural guidelines which students, supervisors and Departments/Institutes/Centres should follow in seeking the upgrading of registration status from the M.Phil to Ph.D.

(i) The student should consult with the Supervisor on this matter.

(ii) The student through the Supervisor and the Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre should apply to the School for Graduate Studies and Research formally seeking upgrading of his/her registration.

(iii) The Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre should consult with the Student Advisory Committee, and if he/she is in agreement establishes an Upgrading Assessment Committee. If the Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre is not in agreement, he/she should submit his/her comments to the Senior Assistant Registrar on the matter, copying his/her letter to the Supervisor. Campus Committee for Graduate Studies and Research will deliberate and recommend in such instances.

(iv) If the Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre is a supervisor in an upgrading matter, he/she must delegate his/ her responsibilities as Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre in such a matter to a Senior academic colleague in the Department/Institute/Centre. (v) The Head of Department/Director of Institute or Centre will appoint an Upgrading Assessment Committee including an independent Chairman, after discussions with the Student Advisory Committee and other Departmental colleagues. He/she will consult also with the Chairman of the appropriate Faculty Committee (where applicable) and the Chairman of the Campus Committee on this matter.

(vi) The Upgrading Assessment Committee should comprise the Supervisor(s), plus at least two independent Assessors normally chosen from the academic staff of the University, together with the Chairman. In the case of students for whom a Supervisory Committee has been appointed, such a Committee plus the independent Chairman should constitute the Upgrading Assessment Committee.

(vii) Assessors should be chosen on the basis of their knowledge and experience at the appropriate level in the area of the student's research. One of the assessors may be drawn from outside the University community in the appropriate circumstances.

(viii) The designated Chairman should request from the student a copy of his/her Upgrading Proposal for each of the Assessors and a mutually agreed date should be set for the oral presentation by the student of his/her:

- report on the work done and accomplishments to date under the M.Phil. registration;
- research proposal to upgrade the work to the Ph.D. beyond the M.Phil. level. Students and Supervisors must note that the Upgrading Assessment Committee will make a rigorous review of the student's past performance and future prospects, so as to evaluate both the student's capacity for independent research at the Ph.D. level and the scope and quality of the expected Ph.D. research.

(ix) The oral presentation by the student of the upgrading proposal should be conducted by the Chairman, and questions posed to the student by the Assessors. The Chairman will meet with the Assessors after the oral presentation and will receive from them either a joint report or individual reports on the presentation with a recommendation concerning the upgrading and any other relevant issues.

(x) Such reports together with that of the Chairman's should be forwarded to the Senior Assistant Registrar for the deliberations of the Campus Committee for Graduate Studies and Research. Campus Committee then submits a recommendation to the Chairman, Board for Graduate Studies and Research, and the Supervisor and student would be informed by the Senior Assistant Registrar of the decision.

## **GUIDELINES FOR UPGRADING MPhil TO PHD (pdf on School site)**

**The Upgrade Seminar documents should contain the following:**

### **1. Abstract**

**2. Introduction:** This outlines the objectives and rationale for the work.

**3. Literature Survey:** This should be a brief summary of very current work in the area. This should be no more than 5 pages.

**4. Theory:** If this applies the student should present any hypotheses or any modifications to existing theories that are proposed. The student should also indicate how this work would be of such substance as to warrant being regarded as worthy of consideration for the upgrade to PhD. What new knowledge should also be emphasized as far as the models or theories are concerned.

**5. Methodologies:** The student should outline the proposed methods being used and or any alteration to existing methodologies.

**6. Results & Analyses:** The student should outline the major findings to date. This should indicate that substantial progress has been made and is worthy of being considered at least close to being of MPhil standard. The data collected and analysed should therefore be reasonably substantial. Some indication should be given as to the contribution of the current work to the body of knowledge and any differences or similarities with what is now known.

**7. Future work:** The student in the report should advise of the implication of the results so far and the proposed work programme required to bring the research up to that of a PhD.

**8. Length of Document:** Documents presented should be thirty (30) pages of text

including tables and appendices.

**Faculty/LLL Website**(<http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/fhe/LLL/PG/RegulationsMPhil.htm>)

#### **MPHIL / PHD UPGRADE SEMINAR**

Candidates for the MPhil degree who have

- achieved a grade of at least 60% in the required Research Field,
- successfully defended a Thesis Proposal of a scope and depth deemed worthy of an upgrade, and
- consistently produced work of a standard, in the opinion of their Director, to merit an upgrade,
- may be allowed to transfer to the PhD programme.

To this end, candidates must present an Upgrade Seminar before a panel consisting of members of the Department and other interested parties. For the Seminar, candidates are required to write and present a paper (to be photocopied and distributed before hand) on a topic arising out of their research as well as to field questions put to them afterwards.

The presentation must include the following:

- a Written Paper (10 - 15 pages in length, approximately 30 to 45 minutes speaking time) representing an aspect of one's research (it may, for example, be part of a chapter of the proposed thesis or derived from previous course work);
- a Descriptive Abstract of the thesis (about 1000 words) indicating the specific methodology and the theoretical approach to be employed, the primary material to be addressed, and a detailed overview of the argument to be advanced in the form of chapter synopses;
- a Table of Contents for the proposed thesis;
- a Bibliography of key primary and secondary texts (author and title only). This is subject to suggested additional entries based upon the panel's perception of the adequacy (or otherwise) of the list for covering the proposed area(s) of research.