

Master's Thesis Progression and Completion Guidelines

❖ Appointment of Research Supervisory Committee

A Research Supervisory Committee (RSC) typically consists of the student's Main Advisor, Co-Advisor(s) and two additional full-time KU faculty members who are familiar with the student's area of study. While the Advisors assume primary responsibility for monitoring and directing the student's research, the role of the RSC is to evaluate the student's progress, provide comments and finally, decide on the recommendation to award the graduate degree. The student should meet with RSC members regularly to present his/her progress, discuss any research problems and receive feedback.

RSC members are recommended by the student's Main Advisor and appointed by the relevant Department Chair and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. The Dean of Graduate Studies approves the appointment of all RSCs. The following guidelines apply to MSc students:

- The RSC should be formed within a month of the confirmed research project allocation.
- The student's Main Advisor serves as the Chair of the RSC and he/she is responsible for leading meetings of the RSC.
- One of the two additional RSC members must be KU faculty from the student's home department.

Students must register for the Master's Thesis course for each semester, including the semester in which the final thesis presentation occurs, until the research is completed and approved.

❖ Thesis Registration

In order to fulfill the research component requirement, students must undertake an independent investigation in their field of study and register for research credit hours appropriate to the level and discipline of their program: Master's Thesis (XXXX 699). Thesis registration is mandatory in every regular semester following research project allocation and until the student's successful final defense (subject to good academic standing).

All full-time students holding a Khalifa University scholarship must also register for thesis in the Summer Term. Failure to register for thesis in the Summer Term may result in the loss or suspension of the student's scholarship.

❖ Thesis Proposal and Presentation

By the end of the second semester of study, full-time students must submit and defend a Thesis Proposal. Part-time students must submit and defend a Thesis Proposal no later than the end of the fourth semester. The Thesis Proposal consists of the following:

- The main research problem that the student intends to work on and why it is important.
- A review of the principal literature relevant to the thesis research topic.
- Results the student expects to achieve, and why they would be of significant value in the area of research.
- The general strategy that the student intends to pursue in dealing with the research problem, together with a work-plan for the stages of the work.

The proposal should be submitted to the Main Advisor and Co-Advisor(s) for approval, before being circulated to RSC members. The Main Advisor will arrange for a presentation typically within two weeks of receipt of the Thesis Proposal. The presentation will normally take 30 minutes (20 minutes for student's presentation and 10 minutes for questions). In his/her written proposal and during the presentation, the student is required to:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the research problem;
- Defend the general strategy that he/she intends to pursue in dealing with the research problem;
- Write clearly, accurately, cogently, and in a style appropriate to purpose;
- Construct coherent arguments and articulate ideas clearly; and
- Present a plan to execute the entire work.

RSC members will evaluate the student's Thesis Proposal and presentation. Any comments made by the RSC should be taken into account by the student and his/her Advisor(s) during the execution of the thesis work.

Following the conclusion of the presentation, the Main Advisor must forward a copy of the student's Thesis Proposal and the completed Research Proposal Evaluation Report to the Department Chair (or designee), Associate Dean for Graduate Studies at the relevant College and the Graduate Studies Office.

❖ Thesis Progress Report and Presentation

By the end of the third semester of study, full-time students must write and present a Thesis Progress Report. Part-time students must write and present a Thesis Progress Report no later than the end of the fifth semester. The Progress Report should include:

- A summary of the main research problem, its importance, and the general strategy that the student is pursuing in dealing with the problem;
- A critical review of the principal literature relevant to the thesis topic placing the student's contribution in context, accompanied by a full bibliography of relevant sources;
- An outline of work that the student has already carried out in the area and a discussion of results;
- A review of the status of each task and sub-task of the work and, if applicable, a revised work-plan;
- A provisional table of contents for the thesis.

The Thesis Progress Report should be submitted to the Main Advisor and Co-Advisor(s) for approval, before being circulated to RSC members. The Main Advisor will arrange for a presentation typically within two weeks of receipt of the report. The presentation will normally take 30 minutes (20 minutes for student's presentation and 10 minutes for questions). In his/her written report and during the presentation, the student is required to:

- Show awareness of pertinent background literature and current efforts in the thesis area of interest;
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the research problem;
- Achieve some initial progress towards solving the research problem and constructively defend his/her results;
- Write clearly, accurately, cogently, and in a style appropriate to purpose;
- Construct coherent arguments and articulate ideas clearly;
- Demonstrate that he/she is following a plan to execute the entire work.

Following the conclusion of the presentation, the Main Advisor must forward a copy of the Thesis Progress Report and Research Progress Evaluation Report to the Department Chair (or designee), Associate Dean for Graduate Studies at the relevant College and the Graduate Studies Office.

The RSC may at their discretion request a progress report every semester following the first Thesis Progress Report. This is encouraged particularly for students who stay in the program longer than the normal study period.

❖ Thesis Oral Defense and Final Submission

A Graduation Timeline is provided to students nearing the completion of their studies. The timeline provides a guide to processes students and faculty must complete leading up to the final thesis submission and defense, including the thesis formatting guidelines. Graduate students are required to follow this timeline and adhere to the specified deadlines during their final semester of study in order to graduate on time. A student must be in good academic standing and registered for thesis credits during the semester he/she intends to defend.

The Department Chair (or nominee) appoints a full-time KU faculty member as the Thesis Defense Coordinator and informs the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies at the relevant College and the Dean of Graduate Studies on the nomination. The primary responsibilities of the Defense Coordinator are:

- Schedule the final thesis defense in consultation with all RSC members, make the relevant logistical arrangements and inform the student about the date and time.
- Attend the final thesis defense and the private RSC meeting to ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with all relevant KU academic policies and procedures. The Defense Coordinator has a non-voting role in the defense process.
- Report the examination result to the Graduate Studies Office and confirm that the correct examination process was followed.

The student must submit an initial thesis draft to the Main Advisor and Co-Advisor(s), who will work with the student on the necessary revisions. Upon receiving the approval of the advisors, the revised thesis is submitted to all RSC members and the Defense Coordinator for examination. The student must submit his/her thesis to the RSC by the deadline published in the Graduation Timeline for the relevant semester.

The final thesis defense consists of two parts: a public presentation and a private examination. In the first part, the student delivers a thesis presentation open to the public (normally 30 minutes), followed by questions (normally 10-15 minutes). The second part is a private examination with a nominal duration of 60 minutes, attended by the RSC members, the Defense Coordinator and any relevant ex-officio members. During the private examination, the committee will interview the student, ask more detailed questions and examine a demonstration of the completed work, if applicable. The committee will also convey to the student any changes that he/she is required to make before the final submission of the thesis.

During the final thesis presentation and defense, the student is required to:

- Demonstrate a high level of understanding and specialization in the thesis area;
- Show evidence that he/she has conducted an independent investigation with rigor and discrimination;
- Demonstrate the acquisition and collation of information through the effective use of appropriate sources and equipment;
- Appreciate the relationship of the area of his/her thesis to a wider field of knowledge;
- Demonstrate a critical appreciation of the literature in his/her thesis area;
- Demonstrate an ability to appraise critically his/her contribution in the context of his/her overall investigation;
- Constructively defend his/her thesis outcomes;
- Make reference to the thesis that has been written clearly, accurately, cogently, and in a style appropriate to purpose; and
- Construct coherent arguments and articulate ideas clearly.

Following the examination, the RSC members and the Defense Coordinator will meet privately to decide on whether the student has successfully defended the thesis. The advisor(s) decision is divided equally among the Main Advisor and Co-Advisor(s) such that each may decide independently but the total advisor(s) decision equals one. The other RSC members have one decision each, with the exception of any external members who don't

have a role in the final decision. However, feedback from external members on the thesis and any suggested improvements should be recorded in the examination report.

The final decision on the outcome of the thesis defense will be the lowest thesis defense outcome reported by the RSC committee members. The Thesis Defense Coordinator communicates this decision to student, RSC members, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The following RSC recommendations are possible:

Pass	That the candidate be recommended for the award of Master's degree. No further revisions are required for the thesis.
Pass with Minor Corrections	That the candidate be recommended for the award of Master's degree, subject to the satisfactory completion of such minor corrections as may be required by the RSC. Minor corrections shall normally be completed within a period of two weeks of the decision of the RSC. The RSC may stipulate that the minor corrections made shall be scrutinized by the RSC as a whole or by the Main Advisor prior to the award process being initiated.
Fail with Revise and resubmit	The thesis should be referred back for major revisions. This normally means there are some major conceptual issues with the thesis and/or the student's performance during the oral examination does not meet the required standards. The student is failed in the thesis evaluation in the semester in which the thesis examination is conducted. However, the revised thesis may be re-submitted for a second and final attempt at passing the examination subject to the conditions specified by the examination committee. The re-submission shall normally take place within a period not exceeding 12 weeks from the date of the decision of the RSC. The RSC must specify in the examination report whether they require (a) re-submission of the revised thesis without oral examination or (b) full-re-examination of the revised thesis including the oral defense.
Fail	That the candidate be not recommended for the award of Master's degree and no further submission is permitted. The candidate must then be terminated from the Master's program.

The final, corrected copy of the thesis post-examination and endorsement of the student's Main Advisor, Co-Advisor(s) and RSC members must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies at the relevant College and subsequently to the Dean of Graduate Studies for approval.