L.N. 214 of 2008

EDUCATION ACT
(CAP. 327)

Bye-Laws for the Degrees of Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D. - and Master of Philosophy - M.Phil. - in the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology, 2008

IN exercise of the powers conferred upon him by sections 74(5) and 75(6) of the Education Act (Cap. 327), the Chancellor of the University of Malta has promulgated the following bye-laws made by the Board of the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology in virtue of the powers conferred upon it by section 81(1) of the said Act and which have been approved by the Senate of the University of Malta as required by section 81(2) of the said Act:

Citation and Interpretation

1. (1) These bye-laws may be cited as the Bye-Laws for the Degrees of Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D. - and Master of Philosophy - M.Phil. - in the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology, 2008.

(2) In these bye-laws, unless the context otherwise requires -

"the Board" means the Board of the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology;

"the Degrees" means the Degrees of Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D. - and Master of Philosophy - M.Phil.;

"the Faculty" means the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology;

"the M.Phil. / Ph.D. Committee" means the Committee appointed by Senate as prescribed in regulation 4 of the Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D. - and Master of Philosophy - M.Phil. - Degrees Course Regulations, 1998; and

"the Regulations" means the Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D. - and Master of Philosophy - M.Phil. - Degrees Course Regulations, 1998.

Applicability

2. These bye-laws shall be applicable from 1 May 2008 onwards.

Award of Ph.D. Degree

3. Further to regulation 3 of the Regulations, a thesis for the Ph.D. degree shall report the discovery of new facts and/or demonstrate that the student has exercised independent critical power in reaching the reported conclusions. In both respects, the student shall indicate clearly the extent to which the thesis embodies the results of his own research and observations, and to what extent the investigation advances the study of the subject.

Registration for the Degrees

4. (1) The M.Phil. degree is open to graduates who have obtained a good Honours degree (normally not below Second Class Upper Division) in:

(a) Computer Information Systems, Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, Engineering, Information and Communication Technology, or Mathematics; or

(b) an equivalent degree qualification as approved by Senate on the recommendation of the Board.

(2) The M.Phil. degree is normally open to graduates who have obtained the qualifications specified in paragraph (1) of this bye-law:

(a) within the last ten years before applying for registration for the M.Phil. degree; or

(b) if the qualification is older than ten years, if they produce sufficient proof of their competence to carry out such a research degree, subject to approval by Senate on the advice of the Board.

5. Where the Senate, on the recommendation of the Board, deems it necessary, it may require applicants to successfully complete a number of study-units under those conditions it may impose.

6. All successful applicants shall normally be required to register as M.Phil. candidates in the first instance, with the possibility of transfer of registration to PhD candidates after the lapse of not less than 15 months.

Transfer of Registration

7. Further to regulation 9 of the Regulations, the student shall submit a written application requesting the transfer to the Ph.D. degree, together with a summary of the work carried out by him/her, preferably in the form of a technical report. The Board would give favourable consideration to work published or accepted for publication in refereed technical journals and conferences. The report shall also include a research proposal for the Ph.D. degree which shall indicate clearly the research questions in the field to be addressed, the hypotheses to be tested, and the methodology to be adopted in dealing with the research issues.

Where necessary, the student may be required to demonstrate competence in those skills required by the nature of the investigation.

Research Seminars

8. Students shall therefore be required to participate fully in the research seminars of the Faculty and present at least one seminar during the course of their studies.

Change in Title

9. Any changes to the title of the thesis or dissertation shall be approved by Senate, acting on the advice of the Board, and following a written recommendation by the student's supervisor.

Submission of Thesis / Dissertation for Examination

10. When submitting a thesis or dissertation for examination in terms of regulation 10 of the Regulations, students shall submit five spiral-bound copies, according to the format indicated in bye-laws 16 and 17 (except for the hard binding requirement) to the Faculty Officer. The Faculty Officer shall endorse the copies submitted and issue a dated receipt.

Procedures of the Board of Examiners

11. (1) The Board of Examiners shall meet following the receipt of a preliminary report by the external examiner, who is not required to be present for this meeting. Due consideration shall be given to the preliminary report of the external examiner.

(2) If, during the meeting referred to in paragraph (1) of this bye-law, the Board of Examiners considers that the thesis/dissertation is of the necessary level to allow the student to proceed to the oral examination, it shall inform the student in writing of the date for the oral examination, not later than two weeks before the oral examination is due to take place.

(3) If, during the meeting referred to in paragraph (1) of this bye-law, the Board of Examiners considers that the thesis/dissertation clearly does not satisfy the requirements for the degree registered for, it shall refer it back to the student for revision according to the provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2) of regulation 12 of the Regulations and shall submit a report to the Board.

12. In assessing the student for the award of the degree concerned, the Board of Examiners shall take into account both the thesis/dissertation and the performance of the student during the oral examination. A detailed written report shall be submitted to the Senate through the Board.

13. In the report specified in bye-law 12, the Board of Examiners shall recommend one of the following outcomes:

(a) that the thesis/dissertation is judged to be satisfactory, possibly subject to the correction of typographical or spelling errors, which do not require approval of the supervisor; or

(b) that the thesis/dissertation is judged to be satisfactory subject to revisions that are editorial in nature or that affect the presentation of the material. Such revisions shall require the approval of the supervisor only, who shall inform the Board of Examiners in writing that the revisions have been done according to the recommendations of the Board of Examiners by not later than one month following the student's oral examination; or

(c) that the thesis/dissertation is unsatisfactory in its current form, and major rethinking and/or research are required; or

(d) that the thesis/dissertation has not reached the required standard for the award of the degree, and that re-examination on the same research is not permitted.

14. In the case of a Ph.D. thesis that has not been approved in terms of paragraph (d) of bye-law 13, the Board of Examiners may recommend to Senate the award of the M.Phil. degree.

Procedure during Oral Examination

15. During the oral examination, the student is expected to present a synopsis of the thesis / dissertation of about 20 minutes, and then to answer questions posed by the members of the Board of Examiners. The supervisor shall ensure that the student is aware of the procedure to be followed.

Thesis Format and Presentation

16. (1) Ph.D. theses shall not normally exceed 60,000 words, exclusive of appendices, bibliographies, glossaries and footnotes.

(2) M.Phil. dissertations shall not normally exceed 50,000 words, exclusive of appendices, bibliographies, glossaries and footnotes.

17. (1) Theses/dissertations shall be presented in the following format:

(a) typewritten or printed, using a 12 point font, on good quality white A4 paper, on one side only; the text to be in double line spacing;

(b) the margins shall be at least 20 mm top, bottom and right and 40 mm to the left;

(c) the binding shall be in cloth (preferably black), with stiff boards and good quality end papers, with lettering (preferably in gold) on the front and the spine showing:

the name of the student;
the title or short title of the thesis/dissertation;
the degree for which the thesis/dissertation is submitted;
the year of submission; and

(d) maps, diagrams, graphs, printed material, diskettes, etc. shall be bound with the thesis/dissertation, but if this is not possible they shall be presented separately in special folders or volumes and numbered.

(2) A short abstract of the thesis/dissertation, of not more than 500 words, shall be bound with each copy submitted to the University.

(3) The structure of the thesis/dissertation shall be according to the guidelines issued for the purpose by the Board.

18. Students shall be required to submit a copy of the final version of their thesis/dissertation, within six weeks from the publication of the result, to each member of the Board of Examiners, as well as two copies to the Faculty Officer, one of which shall be retained in the University Library and another one in the custody of the department concerned. The latter two copies and the supervisor's copy shall be hard-bound as indicated in bye-law 17.

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