Postgraduate Institute of Science (PGIS)
Guidelines for PhD Qualifier Review

1. Introduction/Background:

It has been noted that the PGIS remains the only Postgraduate Institute under the University of Peradeniya that currently does not allow direct registration into its PhD programmes for candidates holding SLQF Level 6 or equivalent qualifications with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Instead, such candidates are initially registered for the MPhil programme and are later upgraded to the PhD programme upon demonstrating satisfactory progress.

This policy was originally adopted to ensure academic rigor and to provide sufficient mentorship before candidates undertake full doctoral-level research. However, the matter was re-examined at the following Coordinating Committee Meeting (CCM) and the Board of Management (BoM) meeting, where the respective decisions were recorded:

a) **172.18.3 – Direct Registration for PhD Programmes:**
   The Director noted that the provision for direct PhD admission has already been incorporated into the PGIS Handbook. Applications will be considered on a **case-by-case basis**, subject to relevant approvals.

b) **185.11 – Confirmation of Existing Practice:**
   The Board recommended maintaining the current practice of registering students for the MPhil programme, with the possibility of upgrading to a PhD after one year, subject to satisfactory progress.

2. Justification:

a) **Handbook Provisions:** Section D7.3.2 of the PGIS Handbook (2025) allows for direct PhD admission.

b) **Eligibility:** Candidates holding a **BSc Honours Degree or equivalent (SLQF Level 6)** with a **GPA ≥ 3.0** and an **independent study/research component** are eligible for consideration.

c) **Institutional Alignment:** Direct admission aligns PGIS with national and international practices, **making it more attractive to high-performing students.**

d) **Quality Assurance:** All admissions will be subject to strict academic scrutiny on a **case-by-case basis**, ensuring consistency and high standards.

3. Eligibility for PhD Qualifier Review

A PhD Qualifier Review is mandatory for:

a) Candidates registered for the PhD programme on a conditional basis with a **BSc Honours Degree or equivalent (SLQF Level 6 or equivalent, GPA ≥ 3.0)**.

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b) Candidates with an **MSc (SLQF Level 10)** initially placed in a conditional PhD pathway.

4. Timing of the Qualifier Review

    a) The Qualifier Review shall take place **after one year and before 1.5 years** from **the date of conditional registration**.

    b) The schedule must be approved by the **Board of Study** on the recommendation of the **Coordinating Committee**.

5. Minimum and Maximum Duration for PhD Programme

Part Time Registration					
Pathway	**Entry Requirements**	**Minimum Duration**	**Upgrade Conditions**	**Min. PhD Research Duration**	**Max. Duration**
I. Direct Registration (BSc Honours Degree or equivalent (SLQF Level 6, GPA ≥ 3.0).	4.5 years from date of PhD registration	-	Minimum of 3.5 years (Post-Qualifier)	I. Direct Registration (BSc Honours Degree or equivalent (SLQF Level 6, GPA ≥ 3.0).	9 years
II. Masters (SLQF Level 9) → MPhil (Initial Registration/ New application) → PhD	4.5 years from date of initial registration for MPhil	Upgrade possible after 1.5 years of MPhil research; must upgrade within 2 years	Minimum of 3.5 years PhD research after upgrade	II. Masters (SLQF Level 9) → MPhil (Initial Registration/ New application) → PhD	
III. MSc (SLQF Level 10) → New application PhD	4.5 years from date of commencement of SLQF10	-	Minimum of 3.5 years PhD research after upgrade	III. MSc (SLQF Level 10) → PhD	

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Full-Time Registration					
Pathway	**Entry Requirements**	**Minimum Duration**	**Upgrade Conditions**	**Min. PhD Research Duration**	**Max. Duration**
I. Direct Registration (BSc Honours Degree or equivalent (SLQF Level 6, GPA ≥ 3.0).	Bachelor's Honors or equivalent Degree (SLQF 6) with GPA ≥ 3.0	3 years from date of PhD registration	-	Minimum of 2 years (Post-Qualifier)	6 years
II. Masters (SLQF Level 9) → MPhil (Initial Registration) → PhD	Completed Master's Degree (SLQF 9) in a relevant field	3 years from date of initial registration for MPhil	Upgrade possible after 1 year of MPhil research; must upgrade within 1.5 years	Minimum of 2 years PhD research after upgrade	
III. MSc (SLQF Level 10) → PhD	Completed MSc Degree (SLQF 10) in a relevant field	3 years from date of commencement of SLQF10	-	Minimum of 2 years	
IV. Upgrade from MSc (SLQF Level 10)	Full-time MSc candidate may request an upgrade to PhD after the mid-year progress review.	3 years from date of initial registration for MPhil	Eligible for upgrade after 1 year; must upgrade within 1.5 years	Minimum of 2 years from date of upgrade application	
V. Upgrade from MPhil (SLQF Level 11)	Full-time MPhil candidate may request an upgrade to PhD after the mid-year progress review.	3 years from date of initial registration for MPhil	Eligible for upgrade after 1 year; must upgrade within 1.5 years	Minimum of 2 years from date of upgrade application	

6. Components of the Qualifier Review

The PhD Qualifier Review comprises the following components:

a) Submission of a Qualifier Report: The candidate must submit a detailed report (approximately 15–25 pages) including.

   I. Title
  II. Background and rationale of the research
 III. Objectives and research questions/hypotheses
 IV. Literature review

V. Preliminary methodology

VI. Results and publications, if any

VII. Timeline and work plan for the remaining duration

VIII. Ethical considerations (if applicable)

b) Oral Presentation

I. The candidate must deliver a **30-minute oral presentation** summarizing the above components before a Qualifier Review Panel.

II. The presentation will be followed by a **Q&A session**.

7. Composition of the Qualifier Review Panel

a) Two Reviewers with relevant expertise (appointed by the Board of Study)

b) A representative from the Board of Study (Chairperson)

c) Supervisor(s)

8. Evaluation Criteria

The candidate will be assessed on:

a) Clarity and feasibility of research objectives

b) Understanding of the relevant literature

c) Appropriateness of the methodology

d) Communication skills during the presentation

e) Potential for successful completion of the PhD

9. Outcomes of the Review

The PhD Qualifier Review Panel may recommend one of the following outcomes:

1. **Confirmation of PhD Registration**
   The candidate may continue unconditionally in the PhD programme based on satisfactory performance.

2. **Conditional Continuation**
   The candidate may continue in the PhD programme subject to fulfilling specified conditions (e.g., additional coursework, revision of the research plan, research/title change, supervisor change, registration status change (Full-time to part-time or vice versa)]

3. **Nested Qualification-PhD Programme**
   I. Direct Registration (SLQF Level 6 or Equivalent)

a. **Entry Requirement:**
   Bachelor's Honors Degree (SLQF 6) or equivalent with GPA ≥ 3.0.

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b. **Voluntary Early Exit Qualification:**
Postgraduate Diploma in Research Studies (PGDipRS – SLQF 8) may be awarded upon:

c. Completion of 25 Credits:
- 10 Credits coursework
- Satisfactory proposal defense
- 15 Credits Independent Study

d. **Fall-Back Qualification (After Maximum Duration):**
PGDipRS (SLQF 8) may be awarded if the candidate reaches the maximum PhD duration without completing the degree, provided the same 25 Credits and satisfactory performance are achieved.

e. **Eligibility / Restrictions:**
Must complete the minimum 25 Credits and maintain satisfactory progress reports.

f. **Notes / QA Compliance:**
- Early exit is **optional**.
- Fall-back applies **only after the maximum duration** as per UGC Circular 02/2024.

II. MSc (SLQF Level 10) Entry

a. **Entry Requirement:**
Completed MSc Degree (SLQF 10) in a relevant field.

b. **Voluntary Early Exit Qualification:**
MPhil (SLQF 11) may be awarded if the candidate voluntarily exits after:
   a. Completing 70 Credits:
      - 10 Credits coursework
      - 60 Credits research + MPhil thesis
   b. Maintaining satisfactory progress reports.

c. **Fall-Back Qualification (After Maximum Duration):**
MPhil (SLQF 11) may be awarded if the maximum duration lapses without PhD completion, provided the 70 Credits and satisfactory progress are achieved.

d. **Eligibility / Restrictions:**
Satisfactory progress reports must be maintained throughout the study period.

e. **Notes / QA Compliance:**
Ensures transparent progression and full compliance with SLQF and QA requirements for transfer and exit pathways.

III. Upgrade from MSc (SLQF Level 10)

a. **Entry Requirement:**
Full-time MSc candidate may apply for an upgrade to PhD after the mid-year progress review.

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b. **Voluntary Early Exit Qualification:**
MSc (SLQF 10) may be awarded if the candidate exits prior to MPhil confirmation, upon completion of:
   a. 40 Credits:
      • 10 Credits coursework
      • 30 Credits research training and Research Report
   b. Satisfactory proposal defense.

c. **Fall-Back Qualification (After Maximum Duration):**
MSc (SLQF 10) may be awarded if maximum PhD duration lapses, provided the above 40 Credits and satisfactory proposal defense are completed.

d. **Eligibility / Restrictions:**
   a. Only **full-time MSc** candidates are eligible for upgrade.
   b. Satisfactory progress reports must be maintained.

e. **Notes / QA Compliance:**
   a. Aligns with QA and progression policies.
   b. Ensures clearly defined transition and exit routes consistent with SLQF and UGC guidelines.

4. **Termination of Registration**
In cases of unsatisfactory performance, and where neither PhD nor MPhil registration is deemed appropriate, the panel may recommend termination of the candidate's registration.

10. Documentation and Reporting

The panel's recommendation shall be documented in a formal report submitted to the **Board of Study**, and subsequently to the **CCM** and **Board of Management** for approval.

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PhD Qualifier Review – Evaluation Sheet

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Candidate Name:

Registration No.:

Board of Study:

Date of Review:

Title of Research:

Evaluation Criteria

Please select one cell corresponding to each item

Criteria	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Needs Improvement (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)	Score
1. Background and rationale of the study						
2. Clarity of objectives and research questions						
3.Understanding of relevant literature						
4.Appropriateness and feasibility of methodology						
5. Preliminary work and/or pilot results						
6. Quality of written report						
7. Oral presentation – clarity and structure						
8. Time management and organization during review						
9. Oral presentation – response to						

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questions						
10. Overall potential for PhD-level research						
Total						

Total Score: ___ / 50

(*Minimum of 30/50 and no "Unsatisfactory" rating to pass.*)

Panel Recommendation

☐ Confirm PhD Registration

☐ Conditional continuation (with recommendations below)

☐ Transfer to MPhil

☐ Termination of registration

Comments and Recommendations (if any):

Panel Members

Name	**Affiliation Signature**

Chair (BoS Representative)

Reviewer 1

Reviewer 2

Supervisor(s)