

# UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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## ACADEMIC CIRCULAR VOL. 7/2024

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST LEVEL ASSESSMENT FOR MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY AND DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

Please be informed that the University Senate Meeting No. 10/2023/2024, dated 31st July 2024, has approved the implementation of the First Level Assessment for Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students.

2. This initiative is implemented to improve the management of the First Level Assessment for MPhil and PhD students and to increase the number of Graduate on Time (GOT) students among MPhil and PhD candidates. The enhancements to the implementation of the First Level Assessment for MPhil and PhD students include the following:

#### 2.1 Eligibility Requirements

- i. Students have completed/are currently enrolled/have received credit transfer approval for the Research Methodology Course and the University General Course during the First Level Assessment;
- ii. Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy students are allowed to submit their research proposal report for the First Level Assessment as early as the first semester.

#### 2.2 Implementation Procedure

- i. Students must submit a Notice of Proposal Submission through the GSMS/MyAims system at least one month before the First Level Assessment;
- ii. The supervisor must nominate either two (2) Examiners (academic staff who is active in research) or three (3) Examiners (if the student is a UTM staff member) through the GSMS/MyAims system, subject to the conditions of the Examination Panel for the nomination.

#### 2.3 Research Proposal Report Format

- i. The research proposal must be prepared in soft copy format unless requested otherwise by the Examiner;
- ii. The research proposal report must adhere to the guidelines and the latest version of UTM thesis format;
- iii. The research proposal report is suggested to be between 50 to 100 pages and should have a Turnitin similarity index (or other software recommended by the university) of less than 20%;

- iv. The research proposal should include discussions in Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 2 (Literature Review), and Chapter 3 (Methodology) of the thesis, and generally should encompass (but not be limited to) the following discussions:
  - a) Abstract;
  - b) Background of Problem;
  - c) Problem Statement;
  - d) Research Objectives;
  - e) Research Questions;
  - f) Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Framework;
  - g) Importance of the Study;
  - h) Operational Definitions;
  - i) Literature Review;
  - j) Research Methodology;
  - k) Scope and Delimitations of the Study;
  - l) Expected Research Findings; and
  - m) References
- v. The First Level Assessment Guidelines have been developed (refer to Appendix 1) to inform students about the First Level Assessment eligibility, research proposal report format and presentation guidelines, to ensure effective preparation and meet academic expectations.

#### **2.4 Results of the First Level Assessment**

- i. There are five (5) possible outcomes for the evaluation of the First Stage Assessment report, as follows:
  - P1) The research proposal accepted;
  - P2) The research proposal is accepted with amendments. Corrections need to be verified by Supervisor(s) within one (1) month;
  - P3) The research proposal is accepted with amendments. Corrections without presentation and need to be verified by examiners within one (1) to three (3) months;
  - P4) The research proposal is accepted with amendments. Corrections need to be verified by examiners in three (3) to six (6) months and re-presentation proposal in the following semester;
  - P5) The research proposal is rejected. The student needs to submit and present a new proposal.
- ii. Students with active status who fail to submit a research proposal within the maximum semester period will receive an Unsatisfactory (TM) grade for the particular semester. According to Item 14(d)(ii) of the Postgraduate Academic Regulations, the Research Proposal/First Level Assessment must be conducted no later than the following:
  - a. Master Programme (second semester of study);
  - b. Doctoral Programme (third semester of study).

- iii. Master's degree students who have not submitted their research proposal report for the First Level Assessment in their third active semester will obtain the Fail (KG) decision due to consecutive Unsatisfactory (TM) Decisions over two semesters.
- iv. Doctoral degree students who have not submitted their research proposal report for the First Level Assessment in their fourth active semester will obtain the Fail (KG) decision due to consecutive Unsatisfactory (TM) Decisions over two semesters.
- v. However, subject to Faculty approval based on valid reasons, the faculty may make alternative decisions, granting the student another opportunity to present in the following semester;
- vi. A doctoral student who receives a Grade P5 (the research proposal is rejected and student needs to submit and present a new proposal) twice consecutively in the First Level Assessment shall be advised by the faculty to withdraw from the programme;
- vii. If the student fails to do so (item 2.4(vi)) within one (1) month from the date of the First Level Assessment, the student shall be deemed to have failed the programme unless on reasonable grounds, considered and accepted by the faculty, justify granting the student another presentation opportunity.

3. These amendments result in revision to Item 14(1(d)) of the Postgraduate Academic Regulations 2020, Section 2.3.2.1 of the Postgraduate Research Procedures (ProPS 06) 2020, and the First Level Assessment Report Form by the Examiner (SPS/04/2023/Rev.1/2023).

4. The complete document of the First Level Assessment Guidelines is enclosed. The implementation of the First Level Assessment and these guidelines will commence with MPhil and PhD students admitted in Semester 1, Session 2024/2025.

Thank you for your attention.

**"MALAYSIA MADANI"**

**"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA KERANA ALLAH"**

I, who uphold trust,



**(PROF. DR. MOHD SHAFRY BIN MOHD RAHIM)**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & International)  
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- c.c - Vice Chancellor
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Student Affairs)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic & International)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor (Development)
- Pro-Vice Chancellor (Campus UTM Kuala Lumpur)
- Registrar
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- Dean
  - Faculty of Architecture and Surveying (FABU)
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  - Language Academy (AB)
  
- Director
  - Center for Advancement in Digital and Flexible Education (UTMCDex)
  - Digital Services Department (UTMDigital)
  
- Deputy Registrar
  - Office of Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic & International), UTMJB
  
- Senior Deputy Registrar
  - Academic Management Division, Department of Registrar, UTM JB
  
- Deputy Registrar
  - Office of Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic & International), UTMKL

## GUIDELINES OF THE FIRST LEVEL ASSESSMENT

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### 1) The Purpose of the First Level Assessment Guideline

The purpose of the First Level Assessment Guideline is to explain the purpose of the First Level Assessment, the eligibility for presenting the research proposal, and the document and presentation format.

### 2) Eligibility requirements for the First Level Assessment

- a) Students have completed/are currently enrolled/have received credit transfer approval for the Research Methodology Course and the University General Course during the First Level Assessment;
- b) The supervisor needs to nominate either two (2) Examiners (academic staff active in research) or three (3) Examiners (if the student is a UTM staff) via the GSMS/MyAims System;
- c) Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy students are allowed to submit their research proposal report for the First Level Assessment as early as the first semester.

### 3) Research Proposal Report Format

- a) The research proposal must be prepared in soft copy format unless requested otherwise by the Examiner;
- b) The research proposal report must adhere to the guidelines and the latest version of UTM thesis format;
- c) The research proposal report is suggested to be between 50 to 100 pages and should have a Turnitin similarity index (or other software recommended by the university) of less than 20%;
- d) The research proposal should include discussions in Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 2 (Literature Review), and Chapter 3 (Methodology) of the thesis, and generally should encompass (but not be limited to) the following discussions:
  - i. Abstract;
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  - iii. Problem Statement;
  - iv. Objectives of Study;
  - v. Research Questions;
  - vi. Conceptual Framework/Theoretical Framework;
  - vii. Importance of the Study;
  - viii. Operational Definitions;
  - ix. Literature Review;
  - x. Research Methodology;
  - xi. Scope and Delimitations of the Study;
  - xii. Expected Research Findings; and
  - xiii. References

**4) Research Proposal Presentation**

The research proposal presentation involves a concise 20-minute overview of the research. Students must adhere to the time limit by summarizing the key aspects of the research.

**5) Results of the First Level Assessment**

Results of the First Level Assessment are as follows:

<b>Result</b>	<b>Description</b>
P1	The research proposal is accepted.
P2	The research proposal is accepted with amendments. Corrections need to be verified by Supervisor(s) within one (1) month.
P3	The research proposal is accepted with amendments. Corrections without presentation and need to be verified by examiners within one (1) to three (3) months.
P4	The research proposal is accepted with amendments. Corrections need to be verified by examiners in three (3) to six (6) months and re-presentation proposal in the following semester.
P5	The research proposal is rejected. The student needs to submit and present a new proposal.

**6) Academic Regulations related to the Submission and Presentation of the First Level Assessment**

- a) Master's degree students who have not submitted their research proposal report for the First Level Assessment presentation in their third active semester will obtain the Fail (KG) decision due to consecutive Unsatisfactory (TM) Decisions over two semesters.
- b) Doctoral degree students who have not submitted their research proposal report for the First Level Assessment presentation in their fourth active semester will obtain the Fail (KG) decision due to consecutive Unsatisfactory (TM) Decisions over two semesters.
- c) A doctoral student who receives a Grade P5 (the research proposal is rejected and student needs to submit and present a new proposal) twice consecutively in the First Level Assessment shall be advised by the faculty to withdraw from the programme.
- d) If the student fails to do so within one (1) month from the date of the First Level Assessment, the student shall be deemed to have failed the programme unless reasonable grounds, considered and accepted by the faculty, justify granting the student another presentation opportunity.