

Graduate Student Handbook



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Graduate Student Handbook

1. Introduction

The *Graduate School (GS)* (formerly *Office of Research & Graduate Studies (ORG)*) has prepared the *Graduate Student Handbook* document for students, faculty and staff to help define their responsibilities and to explain the policies and procedures that govern graduate study at Alfaisal University. For information about programs, curricula & study plans students, faculty and staff should access the *Graduate Catalog*. A special acknowledgement is made to the *Unified Law Organizing Graduate Studies at Saudi Universities* from the Ministry of Higher Education (MOE) (2009) as translated by the Deanship of Graduate Studies at King Saud University.

1.1 The Graduate School

As the administrative arm of the *Graduate School (GS)*, the *Research, Innovation & Graduate Council (RGC)* monitors the progress of students enrolled in different graduate programs, from the time they are admitted to Alfaisal University until they complete their degrees. This is done in coordination with the *College Graduate Offices* and the *Office of Student Affairs*. The document also describes the admission cycle and the policies that govern the application, applicant evaluation, and admission of new graduate students. Students may apply for admissions to graduate programs at Alfaisal University from any other university both within and from outside Saudi Arabia. The *Graduate School (GS)* through the *Research, Innovation & Graduate Council (RGC)* sets the minimum application requirements and has the ultimate authority to approve or deny graduate admission if the Ministry of Education (MOE) requirements are met.

The Graduate School (GS) facilitates the operation of graduate programs in all colleges and departments in the following ways:

- Through the *Research, Innovation & Graduate Council*, advises on and administers the development and approval of new graduate

programs proposed by colleges, and coordinates programs that involve more than one college as well as interdisciplinary programs.

- Facilitates the use of non-Alfaisal research laboratories for graduate students, if needed.
- The Vice President Research and Graduate Studies oversees the Graduate School. The *Research, Innovation & Graduate Council* monitors the quality for graduate studies at Alfaisal.
- The Vice President serves as an advocate for graduate education, teaching, and research, working closely with the Council in developing new policies and procedures related to graduate education.
- The *Graduate School (GS)* staff reviews appointments of graduate students to academic titles, such as Teaching Assistant (TA) and Research Assistant (RA) to ensure compliance with policies and procedures established by Academic Affairs and the *Research, Innovation & Graduate Council*. The School also monitors eligibility for fee and tuition remission.
- Ensures that applications for admission meet MOE standards.
- To send acceptance and rejection letter to all applicants after the GS and Colleges approval.

1.2 Graduate Studies Partners

The graduate experience at Alfaisal University and the work of the *Graduate School (GS)* are dependent upon the efforts of the *Research, Innovation & Graduate Council (RGC)*, *College Graduate Offices*, and the *Student Affairs Office*.

1.2.1 Research, Innovation & Graduate Council

The *Research, Innovation & Graduate Council (RGC)*, which is chaired by the Vice President for Research & Graduate Studies, is responsible for safeguarding the excellence of graduate education. The *Council* is the administrative arm of the *Graduate School* and is empowered on its behalf to enforce its regulations and policies. The Council membership will consist of the College Vice Deans for Research & Graduate Studies, the Director of the Graduate School, and the Director of Research & Innovation. The duties and functions of the *RGC* consist of the following:

- Sets the policies and standards for graduate admission, and degrees in coordination with the Colleges and Student Affairs Office.
- Reviews established degree programs and responds to issues referred to it by the Vice President, the Provost's Office, and the Deans
- Recommend internal regulations, in coordination with academic departments and Student Affairs, for the organization of graduate studies.
- Recommend graduate courses for approval, amendment, and modification, extending to programs as well.
- Endorse titles of graduate degrees in both Arabic and English on recommendation of colleges' councils.
- Recommend awarding of graduate certificates in the case of thesis option programs.
- Decide on all matters related to graduate students in the university with Student Affairs.
- Set the general framework for research plans, rules for theses writing, format for their production and templates of theses exam reports.
- Examine periodic reports submitted by the departments of the university.
- Study matters forwarded to it for consultation by the University Council, the Council of Deans or Provost Office and offer suggestions and advice.

1.2.2 Role of College Graduate Offices

- Reviews new graduate programs before submission to RGC
- Responsible for setting up *Thesis Advisory Committees* for graduate students
- In charge of thesis defenses

2. Admissions

This section describes the admission cycle and the policies that govern the application, applicant evaluation, and admission of new graduate students. Students may apply for admissions to graduate programs at Alfaisal University from any other university both within and from outside Saudi Arabia. The *Graduate School (GS)* sets the minimum application requirements and has the ultimate authority to approve or deny graduate admission.

2.1 The Admission Process

All colleges accept applicants for the fall semester; under special circumstances some colleges may also elect to consider students for spring admission.

2.1.1 Applying for Graduate Admission

All prospective graduate students must apply **online** through the Alfaisal University website. The admission process consists of the following:

1. A candidate must fill in an online application and upload all required documents.
2. The respective College will contact the applicant for an interview.
3. A letter of acceptance or rejection will be sent by email.
4. Confirmation of enrollment.

To confirm registration after receiving an email admission letter, applicants need to complete the following steps:

1. Submit a hard copy of original transcript
2. Submit a hard copy of *Certificate*
3. Transfer a seat deposit fee of SAR 5000 to Alfaisal University bank account

Applicants may apply to only one college, joint, or concurrent degree program, and they should make note of that college's application deadline and any college application requirements in addition to those set by the *Graduate School*.

2.1.2 Readmission

Students, who previously registered at Alfaisal University as a graduate student, no matter how long ago, must apply for readmission and not admission, when they wish to return. Students who withdraw from the University must submit to the Student Affairs a petition for readmission if they want to register for subsequent semesters. Whether a student is readmitted is at the discretion of the university; readmission applicants may also be in competition with applicants for admission.

2.1.3 Minimum Requirements for Admission

The minimum requirements for admission to graduate study at Alfaisal University are as follows:

1. A bachelor's degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution accepted by Ministry of Education (MOE) in related field.
2. Pre-MBA courses are a requirement for MBA candidates with a non-business background. This way students can get essential exposure to basic quantitative, accounting and finance principles.
3. A satisfactory scholastic average; a minimum grade average of "very good" in the bachelor's degree.
4. Above average GMAT, GRE score or an equivalent Graduate Quadrant Exam held by Qias Centre.
5. If the applicant comes from a country or political entity where English is not the official language, adequate proficiency in English to do graduate work, as evidenced by:

	MBA	Other Programs
IELTS	Band score of at least 6	Band score of at least 5.5
TOEFL	Band score of at least 70	Band score of at least 65

6. Applicants should provide two letters of recommendation at interview time from professors who taught them or from managers at workplace.
7. On-campus Interview.
8. The graduate study application must be accompanied by a non-refundable application fee payable to Alfaisal University.
9. No student shall be allowed enrolment in two graduate programs at Alfaisal at the same time.
10. Students must provide a statement of purpose describing their academic interests and reasons for applying at the interview time.

2.2 Informing Applicants of Admission or Denial

2.2.1 Notifying Applicants who are admitted

The respective *College Graduate Office* should submit completed interview forms with their recommendations to the *Graduate School*. The College should not notify successful applicants that they have been admitted until the official email letter has been sent by *Student Affairs (GS ??)*. Colleges may, however, inform applicants that they have been recommended for admission.

2.2.2 Notifying Applicants who are Denied Admission

The *Graduate School (GS)* will notify applicants who are not recommended for admission by means of an official email letter.

3. Registration

Registration will be conducted through the Graduate School. New students should get acquainted with the courses of their colleges depending on the field of study so that their choice of courses for each semester be in their best interest and as harmonious as possible with student's capabilities. The Registration Department in the Graduate School takes the responsibility of registering fresh, newly accepted students for the first semester. After that, students can modify their schedules (add or drop) as they see fit within a certain timeframe.

Other students in all levels will take the responsibility of registering themselves in the chosen courses at the beginning of each semester and during a specified time. To make students able of registering themselves independently, they will be given access to an electronic channel called Net Classroom. Students will find choices which enable each one of them to conduct completely the registration process as he/she desires.

4. Course Work, Grading, Probation, and Dismissal

4.1 Course Work

4.1.1 Minimum & Maximum Course Loads

Students can be enrolled for a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 12 credit hours per semester. However, if in an exceptional circumstance student must take a greater course load then they must obtain approval from the respective *College Graduate Office* & the *Graduate School (GS)*.

4.1.2 Grading System

Alfaisal University uses the 4.0 grade point average system. The grades described in Table 4.1 are approved for use in Alfaisal University and are

included in the determination of the grade point average (GPA). For example, “very good” is a GPA of 3.00 out of 4.00.

1. **Cumulative Average:** Cumulative GPA should not be below a grade average of “very good”.
2. **Noncredit grades:** The following symbols are approved for use in the cases indicated, but will not be included in the determination of the grade point average (see also Table 4.1):

S/U Graduate students in good standing may take courses on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) basis with the consent of their graduate advisers. A Satisfactory grade implies work of B minus quality or better. Courses graded S/U are not included in the grade- point average. A course graded U may not be counted toward students’ degree programs. Credit for courses taken on an S/U basis is limited to one-third of the total credit hours that students have taken and passed.

Table 4.1. Grading system for graduate courses
(Approved by RGC 48th Mtg 22 Feb 2017, UC 7 March 2017 & RGC 56th Mtg 31 Jan 2018)

Letter Grade	Points (GPA)	Percentage*	Grades in English
A	4.00	95-100	Excellent
A-	3.67	90-94	Excellent
B+	3.33	86-89	Very Good
B	3.00	83-85	Very Good
B-	2.67	80-82	Very Good
C+	2.33	75-79	Good/High Good
C	2.00	70-74	Good
F	0.00	0-69	Fail
S/U	-		Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory
I	-		Incomplete
W	-		Withdrawn
WP	-		Withdrawn without penalty
AU	-		Audit
CR	-		Credit
CC	-		Continual course
NC	-		No Credit
P/F			Pass/Fail
R	-		Retake

* Flexibility recommended in conversion from percentage to letter grade due to small class sizes

I Students are doing satisfactory work but, for reasons beyond their control, they are unable to meet the full requirements of the course and as such is incomplete

“I”. Unless otherwise specified by the respective college, an “I” will be changed to the grade of “F” by the ORG. The course Instructor must submit the final grade no later than 7 weeks after the last day of final exams for the previous semester. If a student is assigned an “I”, the Instructor must notify the student in writing of the requirements for removal of the “I” and of the deadline for removal of the “I” using an extension form. The student will be required to sign the extension form. A copy of the form must be submitted to the ORG at the time the “I” is submitted.

W The student was permitted to withdraw without penalty. Any student who withdraws on or before midterm will receive a W. Withdrawals without penalty will not be permitted after the 8th week of the semester except in cases of hardship as determined by the appropriate academic dean. Students must complete the official withdrawal form provided by the Office of the Registrar and have it signed by their academic advisor or faculty advisor.

WP The student was withdrawn by the instructor without penalty. The instructor must withdraw the student no later than the 12th week of classes to ensure a withdrawal without penalty.

AU The student was given permission to audit this course. After the last day of late registration (last day of drop/add), students may not transfer from audit to credit status. Students may change from credit to audit up to the official withdrawal date.

CR The student was given credit for the course via a credit by examination program approved by the respective college’s faculty, the Curriculum Committee, and the Vice Provost of Academic Programs (AP, IB, Proficiency, etc.).

CC At Alfaisal University, this symbol designates a course that extends beyond the semester (Continued Course). The grade is not given until the course is completed. This symbol cannot be substituted for an “I” (Incomplete).

NC This symbol indicates a course that was taken by the student, but no credit was given, and no penalty is attached to the cumulative GPA. This grade may in used in transfer credit only.

R Retake of a course. A student may exercise this option for no more than two courses, totaling no more

than 6 credits. A student may use this option only once for a given course. For the course retaken, the lower grade will initially show as “R” in the transcript. Once the new grade is obtained it will replace the “R” on the transcript. Only the new grade shall be counted in the determination of the student’s grade-point average (GPA).

Repetition of courses: Graduate students may repeat courses in which they received a C, F, or U for up to a total of 6 credit hours. They must repeat courses for which they received below a C grade if a passing grade in the course is required by the college/ department as part of the degree program. Also, students could repeat courses if they received more than one C in several courses. If students repeat courses in which they received a grade of F, the credit hours are counted only once, and only the most recently earned grade and grade points are counted for a total of 6 credit hours of repeated work.

Substitution of courses: Students may substitute one course for another for which they received a F, or U only if:

- Circumstances beyond their control prevent them from retaking the course before the date they expected their degree to be conferred (e.g., the course was not offered or was renumbered, or scheduling conflicts existed between the original course and other courses required for the degree).
- The Graduate Adviser certifies that the content of the course to be substituted is equivalent to that covered in the original course. Any substitution of courses in a student’s master’s degree program requires the approval of the Graduate Adviser and the *Graduate School*. If approved, the student must follow the procedure under the “Repetition of courses” section (above) to avoid having the units counted twice by the Registrar.

4.1.3 Academic Standing

Graduate students may be classified as in good academic standing, on some form of probation, or subject to dismissal. Students are normally in good academic standing if they:

- Are making adequate progress toward the completion of degree requirements,

- Have a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0.
- Do not have more than 2 Incomplete grades on their records, and
- Have not received warning letters from the Student Affairs/college or been placed on formal probation for academic or, in certain professional programs, clinical deficiencies.

4.1.4 College Graduate Offices & Graduate School Review of Student Progress

The respective *College Graduate Office* in coordination with the *Graduate School (GS)* are responsible for monitoring their students’ overall progress toward graduate degrees. In fairness to students and to avoid problems later, Colleges should let students know by written evaluations what the faculty considers to be satisfactory progress.

Warning letters: Whether the *College Graduate Office* through *Student Affairs* sends the student a warning letter or requests the GS to place the student on formal probation, the *Graduate Council* requires that the following information is supplied to the student:

- the nature of the problem or deficiency.
- the steps to be taken to correct the deficiency.
- a reasonable period in which to correct the problem or to show acceptable improvement.
- an approximate date on which the student’s record will next be reviewed.

4.1.5 Undergraduate Students Taking Graduate Courses

An undergraduate student who is pursuing a baccalaureate degree at Alfaisal University may be granted permission to take one or more (maximum of nine credit-hours) graduate courses if the student meets all the following conditions:

- The student must have completed at least 90 credit hours.
- The student must have an overall grade point of 3.00 or better.
- The student must have a 3.00 or better grade-point average in the major field.
- Students must obtain permission from their adviser, College Dean, the instructor of the course, and the ORG via signatures on *Form G20: Undergraduate Student Permission to take Graduate Courses* (Appendix Form G20).

An undergraduate student who is deficient in any of the above respects may not take a graduate course. Undergraduate students may not register for 600- to 800-level graduate courses.

Credit for these courses, up to a maximum of nine credits for courses where the grade received is B or above, may be applied at a later point to a graduate degree program provided that the credits were not used to satisfy baccalaureate degree requirements. Internal transfer of credits is subject to the ORG transfer credit regulations.

4.2 Academic Probation

Students will be placed on academic probation by Student Affairs at the end of any semester in which their cumulative GPA is below 3.0. Students on probation have one semester in which to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Probation will be removed at the end of any semester in which the student attains a cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students may be dismissed if they fail to remove their probation by the end of the second semester on probation. Actions involving academic probation and dismissal are entered on the student's permanent record.

Students who leave Alfaisal University not in good standing and remain out of the university for no more than two semesters may submit a written request for reinstatement to the Student Affairs and reviewed by the Graduate School. The request should outline activities since leaving Alfaisal University that contributed to the student's academic development. Courses taken at another institution during this interim period are not transferable. Students who have been out of the university for more than two semesters must submit a new application for admission to the Student Affairs. Dismissed students may also be considered for reinstatement after a one-year waiting period. Students requiring additional time to complete a degree will be required to appeal for an extension through the respective *College Graduate Office*. The student must notify the *College Graduate Office* in writing of the necessity to extend enrollment for purposes of graduation and cite reasons for the need. (Notification will be hand delivered and sent by email.)

Students on probationary status may register and enroll, but they may not hold academic appointments (i.e., TA, RA), receive graduate scholarships, or be awarded advanced degrees.

Student Affairs/Colleges may recommend probation and dismissal based on a written evaluation of the student's progress. However, only the GS has the authority to place a student on probation, to remove probationary status, and, if necessary, to dismiss a student from graduate standing. Some colleges/ departments may choose to issue warning letters to apprise students that they are not making satisfactory progress rather than request formal probation for a student. Special requests for probation and dismissal should be addressed to the VP Graduate Studies.

4.3 Dismissal

There are generally two reasons a graduate student may be dismissed: for disciplinary reasons due to violations of the *Code of Student Conduct*, and for academic deficiencies. The former is determined by the Dean/Vice Dean of Student Affairs and with the concurrence of the VP of Research & Graduate Studies. Dismissal for academic reasons is entirely under the purview of the VP of Research & Graduate Studies.

4.3.1 Academic Dismissal

A student is subject to academic dismissal for the following reasons:

- the student's academic deficiencies as determined by Student Affairs/ *College Graduate Office* and the *GS* were not corrected after a reasonable, established period of probation, or
- the student failed to meet the necessary clinical standards in a professional program.

4.3.2 When a Student is dismissed

After the student's record and the Student Affairs/ respective college Dean's recommendations, if applicable, are reviewed by the GS, the VP of RG approves a dismissal letter to be sent by Student Affairs to the student and so informs the college. The Student Affairs Office blocks the student from further registration. Students are ineligible to apply for readmission to the program from which they have been academically dismissed. However, the students are not excluded from applying to another academic

program; this program has the right to review the student's academic records to inform its decision on whether to admit the student.

4.4 Graduate Student Appeal Procedure

The *Graduate Student Appeal Procedure* is to be used by graduate students with complaints about dismissal from graduate standing, placement on probationary status, denial of readmission, and other administrative or academic decisions that terminate or otherwise impede progress toward academic or professional degree goals. For graduate students, this procedure may also be used to resolve disputes over joint authorship of research in accordance with joint authorship policies of campus departments or units. Through the *Graduate Student Appeal Procedure*, students have the right to appeal academic or administrative decisions that have resulted in termination or have interfered with their progress toward a degree if the decision is alleged to have been based on the following criteria:

- Procedural error or violation of official policy by academic or administrative personnel.
- Judgments improperly based upon nonacademic criteria including, but not limited to, discrimination or harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, medical condition (cancer related), ancestry, marital status, or citizenship.
- Special mitigating circumstances beyond the student's control not properly considered in a decision affecting the student's academic progress.

5. Drop, Postponement, Withdrawal, Interruption, and Termination of Enrolment

5.1 Drop of a Semester

The student may (after registering) drop all courses in a semester according to the following regulations:

- Apply to the Head of the Department at least five weeks before the final exam period.

- Receive approval of Department Council and Deans of both College and Graduate Studies.
- Semester should not be part of the Additional Opportunity period.
- Semester counts as part of Postponement Period.
- Students shall be considered as having failed all courses they registered in (in the dropped semester) if not abiding by the above rules of dropping.

5.2 Admission Postponement

Student Affairs, the respective College Graduate Office and the GS may approve postponement of students' admission into a program for a maximum period of two semesters; the period will not be counted within the time limit for obtaining the degree.

5.3 Registration Postponement

The *Graduate School (GS)* may approve postponement of students' registration under the following conditions:

- The student must have successfully completed at least one semester in the program or covered a substantial part of the thesis.
- The time limit of postponement should not exceed four semesters (two years of study).
- Requests for postponement should be submitted at least two weeks before the start of the semester.
- Postponement Period will not be counted within the maximum time limit for obtaining the degree.

5.4 Withdrawal and Interruption

5.4.1 Withdrawal

Students who voluntarily withdraw from a master program will be treated as new applicants on deciding to rejoin. All updates of conditions will be applied to their cases. Withdrawal becomes effective when accorded with the following regulations:

- The student should apply (for withdrawal) through the respective *College Graduate Office* to the *GS* before commencement of final exams.
- The *GS* will notify the *Office of Student Affairs* of a student's withdrawal.

5.4.2 Interruption of Study

Students shall be considered as dropouts and their records as closed in the following cases:

- If accepted in the program and did not register on time.
- If registered in the courses and did not attend them.

5.5 Termination of Enrolment

Student's enrolment in a graduate program will be terminated by a decision of the *GS* in the following cases:

- If accepted in the program and did not register during regular registration period.
- If failed to pass supplementary courses in accordance with the required conditions

The respective College Graduate Office may stipulate that students applying for a master program ought to complete several supplementary courses from the previous level. The time limit allotted to such courses should not exceed two semesters.

The following conditions should also be considered:

- A student should pass each supplementary course at first sitting with a minimum grade of "Good."
- The cumulative grade average of total number of supplementary courses should be a minimum of "Very Good."
- Registration in the graduate program becomes possible after proper completion of supplementary courses; *College Graduate Offices* may permit registration in some graduate courses hand in hand with one or two of the supplementary courses towards the end of this preliminary stage.
- Time spent in supplementary courses is not counted within the time limit for obtaining the degree.
- The grades of the supplementary courses are not included in the computation of the cumulative grade average of the graduate courses.)
- If dropping courses for a whole semester or withdrawing from the program without an acceptable excuse.

- If proving not to be serious in study or neglecting academic obligations as stated in Item 5.4.2 of this document.
- If cumulative average drops below "Very Good" in two consecutive semesters.
- If using up all permissible postponement periods, identified in Item 5.3 without completing the degree.
- If breaching ethics during course work or thesis writing, or breaking university rules or regulations.
- If the thesis examination committee finds it not discussable before or unacceptable after the defense.
- If not obtaining the degree within maximum time limit specified in the following:
 - The duration for obtaining a master's degree is a minimum of four semesters and a maximum of eight; summer sessions are not counted within this period

5.6 Resuming Study

A dropout or a terminated student who was impeded by personal obstacles, that the respective *College Graduate Office* excuses, may resume studying in a program on the subsequent recommendation of the *GS* and the final approval of the University Council. However, the following conditions should also be considered:

- On the lapse of more than six semesters, a terminated student shall be treated as a new student regardless of the number of semesters completed in the program.
- On return after six semesters or less, a terminated student may be asked to repeat some of the courses already covered. Courses should be specified by the *College Graduate Office* and approved by the *GS*; the courses studied earlier are to be counted within the cumulative grade average after resuming study; the period spent in the program before termination is also to be counted within the maximum time limit for obtaining the degree.

Credit transfer will be granted to approve courses and students will be assisted to register in next courses at Alfaisal. Also, students who take courses in summer semester (after taking approvals from the Dean of

Admission & Registration) will have their courses credited (if they maintain proper GPA in each course) and will be assisted to register in the courses.

A student should be familiar with the registration policies and guidelines. Understanding fully all registration aspects will help avoiding any mistakes or confusing which might cause aggravating results.

For Registration dates and timelines regularly each semester, students can visit this link- in the Alfaisal university [academic calendar](#).

A student should be familiar with the course descriptions and study plans by having a copy of the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Registration Staff will make sure that all current students are registered appropriately as per regulations and policies. Students on the other hand should communicate with designated staff when facing problems regarding registration.

6. Degrees

6.1 Academic Degree

On recommendations of Departments and College Councils and endorsement of the Research & Graduate Council, the University Council/BOT grants the following degrees:

- Master's Degrees (global)

6.2 Master's Degrees

The study for a master's degree can follow two modes or options as per *Article 33 of the Unified Law Organizing Graduate Studies in Saudi Universities (2009)*:

- *Thesis option*: masters' students must take at least 24 credit hours of courses plus a thesis.
- *Course-only option*: master's students must take at least 42 credit hours of courses inclusive of a capstone/research project.

The duration for obtaining a master's degree is a minimum of four semesters (i.e., 2 years) and a maximum of eight semesters (i.e., 4 years) (*Article 36 of Unified Law*). The academic year has two semesters of at least fifteen weeks each. A summer session is

minimally eight weeks (*Article 35 of Unified Law*). A graduate student at Alfaisal University must take at least 70% of the program's credit hours at the University (*Article 38 of Unified Law*). The same course work cannot be used toward two different master's degrees unless it is part of an approved concurrent master's program. Colleges/departments set their own subject requirements for degrees. If colleges/ departments change requirements, they must obtain approval from the *Research & Graduate Council (RGC)*. All affected students must be informed in writing. Colleges/departments also must permit students who entered under the former requirements to elect to follow either the new or old rule

6.2.1 Thesis Option

6.2.1.1 Committee Roles and Responsibilities:

A *Thesis Advisory Committee* will be formed by the Program Coordinator/ Director for each student. The committee will consist of three members with a faculty member as the main academic advisor/supervisor and Chair. The Chair of the Committee must have research and graduate student advising experience and should be an Associate or full Professor as per Article 45 of the *Unified Laws Organizing Graduate at Saudi Universities*. Assistant Professors holding this rank for two years, may supervise masters' theses only on having published two research papers in student's area of specialization in a refereed academic journal. The Committee as per Article 42 of the *Unified Laws* will assist the student in the formulation and approval of the *Thesis Proposal* (see FORM G10 *Structure of Thesis Research Proposal*), and later advise the student in the execution of the research, the Thesis write-up, and help the student to prepare for the oral defense.

After writing a draft of the research proposal, the student must present it to the Thesis Advisory Committee for feedback & comments. The presentation should last about 15 minutes and may be in person or virtual after which the Committee will ask questions. The student should submit the proposal to the committee at least seven days before the scheduled presentation date. Based on the feedback the student will revise the thesis research proposal, if necessary. Once the proposal is approved by the Thesis Advisory Committee, then the main supervisor

must submit the proposal along with a completed Form G10. to the program coordinator with copy to College Graduate Office & Graduate School (GS).

According to Article 48 of the *Unified Law*, a faculty member may supervise a maximum of four (4) theses at a time; the number of theses may in urgent cases (on the recommendation of relevant Department Head and the consent of both College and Graduate Councils) be increased to five (5). Theses supervision as the main adviser counts as 0.33 credit hour each in faculty members teaching loads.

On completion of the student's thesis and approval by the *Thesis Advisory Committee* (see FORM G11: *Thesis Submission for Defense*), the GS upon the recommendation of the respective *College Graduate Office* sends the manuscript to an *External Evaluator* (FORM G13: *External Evaluator's Report*) who has two weeks to review it. Once the *External Evaluator* approves the thesis then the GS informs the respective *College Graduate Office* to set a date for the thesis defense. The Program Coordinator may recommend the names of the proposed voting members of the *Thesis Examination Committee* to the College Graduate Council for approval as per Article 51 of the *Unified Laws*.

The *Thesis Examination Committee* will consist of at least four members: a non-voting chair appointed by the respective College Graduate Office and three voting members recommended by the same Office. One of Committee members should be the Major Advisor, and another may be the *External Evaluator* from an outside university. Proposed committee members from outside the university must submit their CV to the GS before the advisory committee approval. The main advisor should always be consulted before asking someone to be on a thesis advisory committee. The thesis process flowsheet indicating the responsibilities of Program Director/Coordinator, Thesis Advisory Committee, External Evaluator, College Graduate Office, and the Graduate School is described in Figure 6.1. All associated forms are found in Table 6.1 and Appendix A.

6.2.1.2 Thesis Registration Process and Milestones

In the third semester of a master's program (i.e., second yr, first semester) a student must register for *Thesis A* (9 cr) in the online system. During this semester the student should submit and pass a Thesis

Research Proposal (FORM G10). In the fourth semester (i.e., 2nd yr second semester) the student must register for *Thesis B* (9 cr) in the system. The student should write up & defend the thesis in this period. If a thesis is incomplete at the end of the second year, then the student must register for *Thesis C* (0 cr) to indicate a continuation. There are no credits attached to *Thesis C*. The thesis registration process flowsheet is described in Figure 6.2. The process for completing a master's degree is a minimum of four semesters (i.e., 2 years) and a maximum of eight semesters (i.e., 4 years) (Article 36 of *Unified Law*). (see section 6.2.6 Time in Candidacy).

6.2.1.3 Compensation for Examination Committee Members:

The External Evaluator is paid one thousand Riyals for review & assessment of a master's thesis (FORM G12: PAYMENT TO EXTERNAL EVALUATOR).

6.2.1.4 Thesis Defense:

Once the thesis has been approved by the *Advisory Committee* (see Form G11: *THESIS SUBMISSION FOR DEFENSE*) and the External Evaluator (FORM G13: *EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT*), the College Graduate Office or the Program Coordinator/Director will convene the *Thesis Examination Committee*.

At the defense, the Chair is non-voting and is present to ensure that proper procedures are followed. The initial part of the defense is open to the public including a brief question period. Thesis presentation suggested being 15- 20 minutes followed by 5-10 minutes of questions from audience. After this the public will be asked to leave by the Chairperson. The *Thesis Examination Committee* will continue asking questions for up to 30 minutes. The candidate is then asked to leave the room by the Chair. The Committee after deliberation decides by majority vote on one of four decisions: Pass, Pass with Minor Revisions (corrections to be confirmed by the Chair/Supervisor), Pass Pending Major Revisions (corrections to be confirmed by the Advisor & the Chair), Not Passed. Decisions will be based on a majority (i.e., at least 2/3) vote as per Article 55 of the *Unified Law Organizing Graduate Studies in Saudi Universities* from the Ministry of Higher Education (MOE).

Figure 6.1.

1. Program Director/Coordinator assigns a *Thesis Advisory Committee* to student

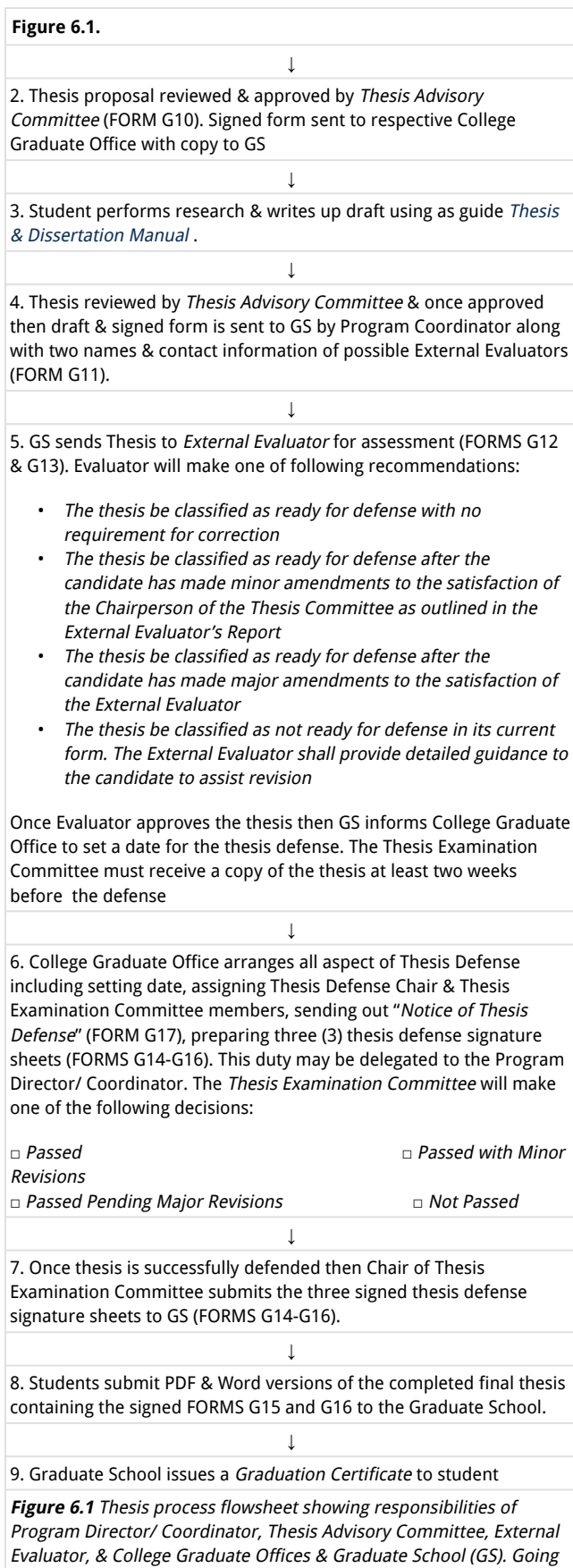
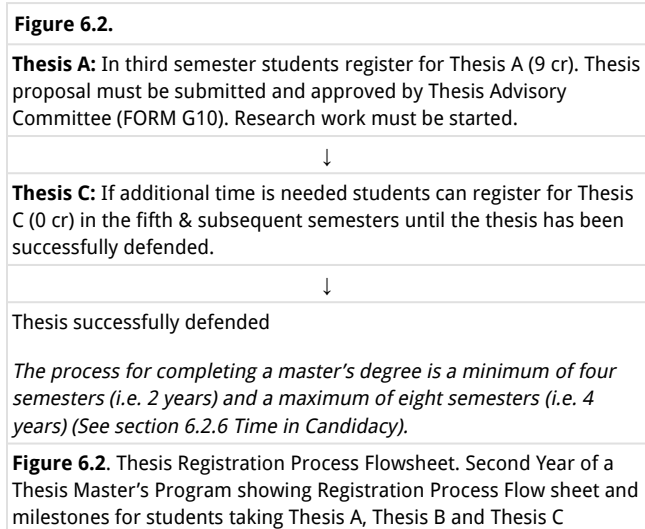


Figure 6.1.

from thesis proposal approval, to review by external examiner, to thesis defense & submission of the completed & signed thesis to the Graduate School.

Table 6.1. Forms Associated with Thesis Masters and Graduate Courses

FORM G10: APPROVAL OF THESIS RESEARCH PROPOSAL
FORM G11: THESIS SUBMISSION FOR DEFENSE
FORM G12: PAYMENT TO EXTERNAL EVALUATOR
FORM G13: EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT
FORM G14: CHAIR'S REPORT ON THESIS DEFENSE
FORM G15: THESIS DEFENSE SIGNATURE SHEET
FORM G16: THESIS, PROJECT, DISSERTATION RELEASE FOR LIBRARY
FORM G17: NOTICE OF THESIS DEFENCE
FORM G20: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PERMISSION TO TAKE GRADUATE COURSES



All Thesis Examination Committee Members sign two report sheets (see *FORM G15: THESIS DEFENSE SIGNATURE SHEET* and *FORM G14: CHAIR'S REPORT ON THESIS DEFENSE*). The candidate is then asked to come back into the room and is informed of the decision. The

Chair will submit the reports to GS. The Chair may add a page of comments, if necessary.

Students must submit a PDF version online of the completed thesis containing the signed FORMS G15 and G16 to the University Library using the link (TBD).

Once this is done then GS will inform Student Affairs that the student has passed the defense & that a Graduate Certificate can be issued

Students whose Theses are *Not Passed* may repeat the defense one more time but not earlier than two months after the first defense.

6.2.2 Courses-only Option

This option is ideally suited to, for example, people holding full time jobs in the public or private sectors who want to enhance their careers through continuing education. Students in this track will have a Graduate Advisor appointed by the respective *College Graduate Office*. Master's students must take at least 42 credit hours of courses inclusive of a capstone/research project

6.2.3 Transfers of Credit toward the Master's Degree

A master's student may transfer up to 6 semester credit hours or 6 quarter credit hours of course work completed as a graduate student at another institution. The units must be equivalent to courses in the student's graduate program at Alfaisal University, and the student must have received at least a B in the course(s). However, students cannot use units from another institution to satisfy the minimum requirement courses or the minimum academic residence requirement. In addition, they may not present course work previously used to satisfy requirements for another degree program at Alfaisal University or at another in another institution.

6.2.4 Changes in Thesis Advisory Committee Membership

Before planning to file their theses, students who wish to change the membership of their Thesis Advisory Committee must be sure that such a change has been approved by the *College Graduate Office* and the *Graduate School (GS)*. A student may request a change in committee by submitting a written request to their Graduate Adviser. The Graduate Adviser should consult with any faculty members as appropriate to assure that they are aware of membership changes. However, the Graduate Adviser, rather than any committee member, has the final authority to recommend approval of the changes.

6.2.5 Completion of Courses for the Degree

Master's students must finish all courses required for the degree by the last day of the semester in which they expect the degree to be conferred. If students have Incompletes, No Reports, or In Progress grades, the college/ department must indicate on the list of courses-only master's candidates whether the courses are required for the degree. After completion of requirements for the degree for which they were admitted, students may not register and enroll for a subsequent semester unless they have been previously approved for a new degree goal or a new major.

6.2.6 Time in Candidacy

The duration for obtaining a master's degree is a minimum of four semesters (i.e. 2 years) and a maximum of eight semesters (i.e. 4 years) (*Article 36 of Unified Law*). If they do not finish in that period, their candidacy will lapse unless the Major Adviser/ Supervisor requests an extension of time from the *Graduate Council (GC)*.

6.3 Policies Affecting Graduate Students

6.3.1 Preparing and Submitting the Thesis Manuscript

Students are responsible for preparing the manuscript in the proper form, including formatting, pagination, margins, and paper type. All the requirements are provided in the *Instructions for Preparing and Filing Your Thesis or Dissertation*.

6.3.2 Use of Human and Animal Subjects

Students who plan research or development activities that involve human and animal subjects must also have their work reviewed and approved by the Alfaisal University *Institutional Review Board (IRB)* before they begin their research. The *Graduate School* will not accept dissertations or theses that include human, or animal subject materials obtained or produced without *IRB* authorization.

6.3.3 Withholding a Thesis

Sometimes there are extraordinary situations under which a student may prefer that the manuscript not be published. These circumstances may involve the disclosure of patentable rights in the work before a

patent can be granted, similar disclosure detrimental to the rights of the author, or disclosure of facts about persons or institutions before professional ethics would permit such disclosure. The VP of the Office of Research & Graduate Studies may permit with a supportive explanatory letter from the *Thesis Examination Committee* chair, the manuscript to be withheld from public access for a specified and limited period.

6.3.4 Copyright

The University does not provide a copyright service. Students may copyright their work independently.

6.3.5 Time Limits on Use of Courses for Degrees

Sometimes students return to the University after an absence and request to use courses that they completed in the past. A time limit of 4 years has been established for use of these courses.

6.3.6 Change or Add a Major or Degree Goal

Graduate students may petition to change majors, degree goals, or designated emphases or to add them. However, these students should be ranked with other applicants to ensure that available slots in the program are not taken up by relatively weak continuing students to the detriment of stronger new applicants.

7. References

- The University of California, Berkeley
- *The Graduate Policies* from the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM).
- *The Unified Law Organizing Graduate Studies at Saudi Universities* from the Ministry of Higher Education (MOE) (2009) as translated by the Deanship of Graduate Studies at King Saud University

8. Glossary of Terms

This section explains commonly used terms in graduate studies.

Glossary of Terms

This section explains commonly used terms in graduate studies.

Academic Standing: Students are normally in good academic standing if they are making adequate progress toward the completion of degree requirements; have a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.0; and do not have an excessive number of incomplete grades on their records.

Appointments: Graduate Appointments on the Alfaisal University campus are assigned the following titles: Graduate Student Teaching Assistant (TA) and Graduate Student Research Assistant (RA).

Concurrent Program: A concurrent program is the combination of two master's degree programs, normally on the same campus, in which a limited number of units may be used in common to reduce the time needed to earn both degrees.

Designated Emphasis: A designated emphasis is a specialization, such as a new method of inquiry or an important field of application, which is relevant to two or more existing doctoral degree programs. Faculty members who wish to offer a designated emphasis must form a Graduate Group to administer the program. Approval by the Graduate Council is required.

Graduate Adviser: Graduate Advisers are nominated by College Deans or Department Chairs and appointed by the VP of the Office of Research & Graduate Studies, who acts on behalf of the Research & Graduate Studies Council. They provide guidance for entering and continuing students concerning the various steps necessary to earn their degrees.

Graduate Council: The Graduate Council is the administrative arm of the Graduate School. It is a committee consisting of Alfaisal University faculty. Composed of faculty members, the Council is responsible for all academic matters related to graduate education on campus. One of the major duties of the Council is to conduct periodic reviews of all graduate programs to make sure they are functioning at the highest possible level, and to plan for the future.

Graduate Group: A graduate group is an academic unit, comprised of a core faculty from two or more

existing colleges/departments, which offers a doctoral degree in a new method of inquiry or new field of study that has been approved by the Graduate Council. An established college/department is designated to host the graduate group since the group has no funding of its own or administrative support.

Graduate School: The Graduate School oversees graduate students' progress from admission to completion of their degree programs. The School monitors student's administration and regulations to guide students through the various steps required for the degree.

Major Adviser: Also called Thesis or Dissertation Adviser, a Major Adviser is usually chosen by the student in consultation with the Graduate Adviser. The Major Adviser guides a student's thesis or dissertation research and writing.

Master's/Thesis Advisory Committee: The Master's/Thesis Advisory Committee, selected by the student in conjunction with the Graduate Adviser, guides the research and writing of the master's thesis. The committee is made up of three faculty members, at least two of whom must be from the student's home college/department. Typically, the committee chair is the student's research adviser.

Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC): The Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization is responsible for all aspects of internal & external funding including post award management and commercialization of intellectual property (IP) created by faculty & students. The Office is responsible for the core research laboratories at the University.

Probation: Students who are not in good academic standing are considered to be on academic probation or subject to dismissal. Students may also be placed on probation for not meeting Student Affairs requirements or expectations. Probation is intended to provide students whose performance is less than satisfactory with a period of time in which to correct the deficiencies and to raise their performance to a level consistent with the minimum standards set by the Student Affairs/Office of Graduate Studies. Students on probationary status may register, but they may not hold academic appointments, receive graduate scholarships, or be awarded advanced degrees.

Program (also known as a track or plan): A program is a sequence of course work and supervised study leading to a degree, normally within a department of instruction. The term is used synonymously with field or subfield and also to refer to a subspecialty in which undergraduates or graduates may concentrate their study.

Public Seminar: Toward the end of the Master's Thesis or Doctoral Dissertation and just before the Oral Defense, a student gives a public seminar on the study.

Researcher Assistant (RA): A Research Assistant (RA) is a graduate student at Alfaisal University who is engaged in research projects related to their dissertation under faculty supervision. There are no specific eligibility requirements regarding level of skills or previous experience, which permits colleges/ departments and organized research units to make RA appointments at levels appropriate to resources and recruitment needs.

Student Affairs/College: Student Affairs/college is an administrative unit with space and resources. also includes budgeted faculty members who offer instruction in a titled, specialized discipline. At the graduate level, programs of study lead to the M.Sc., EMBA, and doctoral degrees. For a list of graduate programs at Alfaisal University, consult the Graduate School as well as individual colleges.

Teaching Assistant (TA): A TA must have fulfilled the necessary academic, spoken English language proficiency, and registration and enrollment requirements for appointment. Chosen for excellent scholarship and promise as a teacher, a TA serves as an apprentice under the active supervision of the instructor in charge of the course. An appointment as a TA is for one academic year or less. TA appointments may not exceed half time.

Thesis: Students completing a Thesis Option master's degree are expected to write a report, referred to as a thesis, on the results of an original investigation, in conjunction with the Master's/Thesis Advisory Committee. Length and style of the thesis vary by college. All theses are filed with the Graduate School though the Library.

Thesis Examination Committee: This master's level examination committee will consist of four members:

a non-voting Chair, and three other members, who may be from the Master's Advisory Committee and one may be the External Evaluator.

Tutor: A tutor provides training to individuals or small groups of students who require additional teaching help. Tutors at Alfaisal University work under the direct supervision of a faculty member holding an appropriate instructional title.

9. Appendix A FORMS G10-G20

FORM G10: APPROVAL OF THESIS RESEARCH PROPOSAL

FORM G10: APPROVAL OF THESIS RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Student Name: -----

Student ID no.: -----

Program/track: _____

Thesis Title : -----

Date (d/m/y): -----

Approved by:

Main Supervisor Name

Signature

1st Advisory Committee Member Name

Signature

2nd Advisory Committee Member Name

Signature

1. **Introduction section** of the proposal must clearly address the following:
 - The context of the chosen topic.
 - The purpose of the study.
 - The significance and relevance of the study.
- A summary of the methods that will be used for conducting the study
2. **Literature Review section** should critically assess recent and relevant scholarly articles.
3. **Aims or Goals of the Study** may include a set of preliminary research questions or hypotheses that focus on what the student aims to answer in the investigation.
4. **Methodology segment** should include the following:
 - Description of the methods that will be used to conduct the *study*.
 - Justification for the chosen methods.
 - The sampling techniques (if applicable).
 - Description of the execution process of the study in addition to mentioning the analysis tools the student will employ.
 - A brief description of the limitations of the chosen methods and possible risks.

5. **References section:** At this stage this does not need to be complete. Its purpose is to give the Thesis Advisory Committee an indication of the quality of sources available, and it enables the members to suggest additional sources that may have been overlooked

Please note that a Thesis title must not be changed without the approvals of the Thesis Advisory Committee, the Program coordinator, and the Graduate School.

FORM G11: THESIS SUBMISSION FOR DEFENSE

This is to certify that the thesis has been reviewed and approved by the Candidate's Advisory Committee and can now be sent to the External Evaluator as per the Graduate Student Handbook at Alfaisal University.

Student Name:

Student ID no.:

Thesis Title :
.....
.....

Program Name (MBS, MEM, MNT, MPH, MRS):

External Reviewer's details S

Submit two (2) names. University Graduate Office will choose one

	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2
Name:		
E-mail:		
Cell phone:		
Institution:		
Department:		

Candidate's Advisory Committee Members:

1. Supervisor Name: Signature:

2. Member Name: Signature:

3. Member Name: Signature:

Date (d/m/y):

Please attach one copy (soft) of the approved Thesis along with this form.

FORM G12: PAYMENT TO EXTERNAL EVALUATOR

NAME		
ADDRESS		
COUNTRY	CITY	
CONTACT DETAILS		
PHONE		
EMAIL		
ACCOUNT TRANSFER DETAILS		
BANK NAME		
IBAN AND/OR SWIFT NUMBER		
ACCOUNT NUMBER		
I CONFIRM THE ABOVE DETAILS ARE COMPLETE AND CORRECT		
NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

FORM G13: EXTERNAL EVALUATOR'S REPORT

Examiner Name:	
Candidate Name:	
Degree:	
Thesis Title:	

Recommendation: Please select (X) only one of the recommendations below.

<input type="checkbox"/>	The thesis be classified as ready for defense with no requirement for correction
<input type="checkbox"/>	The thesis be classified as ready for defense after the candidate has made minor amendments to the satisfaction of the Chairperson of the Thesis Committee as outlined in the External Evaluator's Report
<input type="checkbox"/>	The thesis be classified as ready for defense after the candidate has made major amendments to the satisfaction of the External Evaluator
<input type="checkbox"/>	The thesis be classified as <u>not</u> ready for defense in its current form. The External Evaluator shall provide detailed guidance to the candidate to assist revision

Signature of the Evaluator: ----- Date: -----

Please attach a detailed report of 1-2 pages and a marked copy of the thesis, if applicable

FORM G14: CHAIR'S REPORT ON THESIS DEFENSE

Thesis title:

Student Name & ID#:

Program & Track (if applicable) (i.e., MBS, MPH, MEM, MRS, MNT):

Date of Defense:

Decision of Thesis Examination Committee: (please check one)

- Passed Passed with Minor Revisions
 Passed Pending Major Revisions Not Passed

Members of Thesis Examination Committee (signatures)

Name Chairperson

Name Major Advisor (Supervisor)

Name Member of Committee

Name Member of Committee

Name Member of Committee

At the end of the thesis defense the members will sign the Report sheet and then the Chair will submit the report to the Office of the VP for Research & Graduate Studies. The Chair may add an additional sheet with comments, if necessary.

Guidelines to Chairperson Conducting the Thesis Defense

- The Chair is non-voting and is present to ensure that proper procedures are followed during the defense.
- The initial part of the defense is open to the public including a brief question period. Thesis presentation suggested to be 15- 20 minutes followed by 5-10 minutes of questions from audience. After this the public will be asked to leave by the Chairperson
- The Thesis Examination Committee will continue asking questions for up to 30 minutes
- Candidate is then asked to leave the room by the Chair.

- Committee after deliberation decides by majority vote on one of four decisions:
 - Pass
 - Pass with Minor Revisions (corrections to be confirmed by the Chair)
 - Pass Pending Major Revisions (corrections to be confirmed by the Advisor & the Chair)
 - Not Passed
- All Thesis Examination Committee Members sign the Report Sheet Form: ORGCR01.
- The candidate is then asked to come back into the room and is informed of the decision.
- The Chair will submit the report to the Office of the VP for Research & Graduate Studies
- Chair may add a page of comments, if necessary

FORM G15: THESIS DEFENSE SIGNATURE SHEET

THESIS TITLE

By

STUDENT NAME

Approved by:

Name Chair Thesis Examination Committee

Name Member Thesis Examination Committee

Name Member Thesis Examination Committee

Name Member Thesis Examination Committee

Date of thesis defense (d/m/y)

FORM G16: THESIS, PROJECT, DISSERTATION RELEASE FOR LIBRARY LIBRARY RELEASE FORM

Student Name: _____

Last

First

Middle

Please check one (v)

Master's Thesis

Master's Project

Please check one (v)

I authorize Alfaisal University to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

I authorize Alfaisal University, **three years after the date of submitting my thesis or project**, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

Student Signature

Date

This form is signed when submitting the thesis, dissertation, or project to the University Library

FORM G17: NOTICE OF THESIS DEFENSE

THESIS DEFENSE
STUDENT NAME
<i>Candidate for Master of XXXXXX</i>
<i>Track (if applicable)</i>
<i>College of XXXX</i>

THESIS TITLE
Time, Day & Date, Alfaisal University
<i>Note: currently virtual thesis defenses are not open to the public</i>

Abstract: XXXXXXXXX.

FORM G20: UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PERMISSION TO TAKE GRADUATE COURSES

Approved by COSGS Jan 2017

Approved by RGC 15 Feb 2017

Approved by President 15 Feb 2017

Regulations

An undergraduate student who is pursuing a baccalaureate degree at Alfaisal University may be granted permission to take one or more (maximum of nine credit-hours) graduate courses if the student meets all the following conditions:

1. The student must have completed at least 90 credit hours.
2. The student must have an overall grade point of 3.00 or better.
3. The student must have a 3.00 or better grade-point average in the major field.
4. Students must obtain permission from their adviser, college Dean, the instructor of the course, and the University Graduate Office via signatures on *FORM G20 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PERMISSION TO TAKE GRADUATE COURSES*

An undergraduate student who is deficient in any of the above respects may not take a graduate course. Undergraduate students may not register for 600- to 800-level graduate courses.

Credit for these courses, up to a maximum of nine credits for courses where the grade received is B or above, may be applied at a later point to a graduate degree program provided that the credits were not used to satisfy baccalaureate degree requirements. Internal transfer of credits is subject to the *University Graduate Office* transfer credit regulations.

FORM G20 must be on file in the Office of Admission & Registration, Student Affairs before the beginning of the First week of classes of the term you are registering for the course.

Name _____ Alfaisal ID No. _____

Degree/Major Area _____ Total credits earned to date: ____ GPA _____

Course Title/Number/Section _____

Reason for taking graduate course: _____

Date (d/m/y) ____/____/____

Signatures:

Student Date

Advisor Date

College Dean Date

Instructor of the Course Date

University Graduate Office Date