

प्रज्ञिक परिषदको मिति २०७९/१०/२९ गतेको बैठकबाट स्वीकृत

Nepal Open University

Faculty of Social Sciences and Education

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Education Guidelines
2023

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PhD Programme

The *PhD in Education* programme in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education at Nepal Open University (NOU) intends to prepare students for careers as educational researchers, scholars, education leaders and practitioners in various fields and sub-fields of education (e.g., English Education, Linguistics, Nepali Education, ICT in Education/E-learning, language and literacy, educational management, educational leadership, health education, Indigenous knowledge, inclusive education) by equipping them with the body of knowledge and research skills that enables them to address current and emerging complex problems in the education sector. It is a programme of advanced professional study that facilitates the development of scholarship and leadership within the chosen field(s) of education.

The programme focuses on the development of knowledge and skills in education-related professions through a strong foundation of theoretical knowledge and research skills. The programme provides the scholars with a high level of professional integrity and expertise in the concerned field and a lifelong commitment to learning that can help them fulfil their professional goals and utilize their knowledge and skills in the service of humankind.

This document is designed to introduce the programme, including the rationale and objectives of the programme, entry requirements and procedures, teaching-learning strategies, assessment, and evaluation, and provides directives on the PhD programme.

1.2 Programme Rationale

The programme has been developed to cater to the needs of education scholars, thinkers and practitioners who wish to expand their horizon of knowledge in various fields and sub-fields of education through rigorous theoretical and research work. Research is integral to addressing complex problems of education that cut across knowledge boundaries. The programme provides a holistic approach to understanding education and develops perspectives on national regional and global education issues

and challenges. Pursuing a PhD in Education at NOU can also avail research students of the opportunity to take advantage of theory, research, and practice through both online and face-to-face modes of learning with the utmost use of modern pedagogical approaches and technologies.

1.3 Programme Objectives

The programme of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Education is intended primarily for those who wish to prepare for careers in teaching and research in the rapidly changing field of education.

The PhD students are expected to achieve high standards of academic and research excellence and contribute to theory and/or practice in the education sector through independent and original research work.

1.4 Programme Modality

Selected PhD candidates shall work under the designated supervisor(s) face-to-face (in-person/physical) and/or in other supplementary modes.

1.5 Learning Sessions and Seminars

The FDSSSED can organise learning sessions and seminars as required by the PhD research work of its candidates. It can include classes and workshops on advanced research methodology in education as per the requirement.

SECTION 2

ADMISSION PROCESS AND PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Entry Requirements

For direct enrolment to the PhD programme, the applicant should:

- a. have at least a second division or a CGPA of 2.7 at the Masters level with a minimum of three years of teaching experience at campuses of recognised Universities or equivalent professional experience,
- b. have an MPhil degree from Nepal Open University or any other recognised University with at least second class of a CGPA of 3.3 at the MPhil level with a minimum of three years of teaching experience at campuses of recognised University or equivalent professional experience, and
- c. have a paper published as the principal author in journals of at least the national level on Nepjol, or those recognised by the UGC Nepal.

The PhD enrolment shall be subject to entrance/admission tests and successful defence of the research purpose and interview in addition to the above criteria.

2.2 Admission Criteria and Rules

- a. Applicants who wish to be enrolled in the PhD shall apply to the Dean of the FOSSED in the prescribed form of application stating their qualifications and areas of their research interest along with a “Statement of Research Purpose/Intention”.
 - i. The proposed Statement of Research Purpose/Intention should be handwritten and contain not less than 2000 words.
 - ii. It must include:
 - The area of the proposed research/topic
 - The research problem
 - Rationale/practical justification of the proposed research, and
 - A preliminary approach to or pathway for conducting the proposed research.
 - iii. The Statement of Research Purpose/intention shall carry 25 per cent marks in the evaluation of the applicant.

- b. The applicant shall successfully complete all the tests administered by the FOSSED.
- c. The Faculty Research Committee (FRC) shall conduct an entrance test of the applicant to assess his/her knowledge and skills in the field of his/her PhD study.
- d. The ERC may require an applicant to demonstrate his/her qualifications and preparedness for admission by satisfactorily carrying out such work and/or sitting for such examinations that the FRC shall determine.
- e. The FRC shall also ensure that the subject being offered to the applicant is one which can be effectively studied within the FOSSED.
- f. The FRC after the preliminary scrutiny shall enrol the selected applicants in the PhD programme.
- g. For the enrolment, the applicant shall complete all the prescribed requirements with defined results.
- h. The FRC shall determine the admission quote for the PhD programme depending on the availability of resources.

2.3 Comprehensive Entrance Exams (CEE)

- a. The FOSSED's evaluation of PhD applicants shall consist of 150 marks. The PhD entrance exams shall comprise the three evaluation components:
 - i. Admission Test: A 3-hour entrance exam carrying 100 shall be administered to the PhD applicants as stated hereunder:

a. Objective questions	1. Verbal ability 2. General awareness and logical reasoning (Multiple choice questions)	25 marks 25 marks
b. Subjective questions	1. Research methodology 2. General content of education	25 marks 25 marks

- ii. Evaluation of “Statement of Research Purpose/Intention”: The proposed research purpose/intention submitted during the application process will be evaluated by at least two experts based on the evaluation criteria in Appendix I. The Statement of Research Purpose/Intention shall carry 25 marks in the evaluation of the applicant.
 - iii. Defence and Interview: The defence of Statement of Research Purpose/Intention and interview shall be conducted for those candidates who have passed the written test and evaluation of the 'Statement of Research Purpose/Intention. The evaluation shall be based on the applicant's knowledge of content and research methods, skills, attitude, and commitment to the- PhD research it shall carry 25 marks in the evaluation of the applicant.
- c. Result Publication: Based on the number of seats announced by the FOSSED Dean office, a merit-based list of eligible candidates (preferably with 25% on the waiting list) will be published.

2.4 Course-work Requirement

The PhD programme shall not require any coursework, as it is offered only to those who have already got an MPhil degree as required and provided in 2.1 above.

2.5 Proposal Development

In line with the approved area of the Statement of Research Purpose, the candidate shall prepare a PhD research proposal (a plan of work for the proposed PhD research) under the guidance of his/her supervisor(s) [or a Supervisory Panel, if any) and submit the same duly signed by his/her supervisor(s) [or a Supervisory Panel, if any) to the FRC within six months of the date of his/her enrolment. The research proposal should be a comprehensive write-up comprising a clear roadmap for undertaking the research on the proposed topic and contain the basic components of a research problem statement, research objectives and hypotheses, literature review, research framework and research methodology along with references in the format stipulated by the NOU.

2.7 Duration of the programme

The duration of the PhD programme is 3 to 6 years. Generally, a PhD candidate would be expected to submit his/her thesis after the completion three years from the

date of enrolment/registration. The maximum period allowed to complete the PhD work is six years. If they are unable to submit their final thesis draft within a maximum period of six years of enrolment/registration, his/her registration/admission shall be deemed cancelled, and they have to get re-registered by fulfilling all the PhD registration procedures stipulated above.

2.6. Ethics Approval

A PhD candidate should apply for research ethics approval in the FRC and obtain written consent from the FRC. The candidate should submit a research proposal, complete SSERHE form, information sheet and consent form for participants of the research project. The candidate should abide by the *Principles and Guidelines of Social Science and Educational Research Human Ethics* (SSERHE) of FRC.

SECTION 3

SUPERVISION AND PROGRESS REPORT SUBMISSION

3.1 Appointment of Supervisors

The FRC shall appoint a supervisor(s) or a Supervisory Panel to guide the research work of the PhD candidates. The Supervisory Panel shall comprise a main supervisor and co-supervisors from the allied fields of the proposed research topic of the candidate.

In line with the approved area of the Statement of Research Purpose, the candidate shall prepare a PhD research proposal (a plan of work for the proposed PhD research) under the guidance of his/her supervisor(s) [or a Supervisory Panel. Many) and submit the same duly signed by his/her supervisor(s) [or a Supervisory Panel If any) to the FRC within six months of the date of his/her enrolment.

3.2 Qualifications of supervisors

A supervisor will be assigned to guide/support the candidate in the PhD research works. To be appointed as a supervisor, one must fulfil the following qualifications:

- i. He/she has a PhD degree (preferably in the subject area of the PhD candidate) and evidence of successfully supervising at least 5 Masters/MPhil students in recognised universities.
- ii. He/She is a professor or Reader (Associate Professor).
- iii. He/she has at least five papers published in national journals (NepJol listed) and at least two papers published in SCimago Journals.
- iv. Other additional qualifications of supervisors will be according to articles 3.1 and 3.2 stated in *Minimum Standard and Working Procedure for PhD Degree, 2073* issued by University Grants Commission, Nepal.
- v. On an exceptional basis and the basis of demonstrated academic excellence such as journal articles published in SCimago-indexed journals, an Assistant Professor can be a supervisor.
- vi. To be appointed as a co-supervisor, he/she has a PhD (preferably in the subject area of the PhD candidate), is a lecturer (Assistant Professor), and published 2

research articles in a listed journal or a journal recognized by the University Grants Commission, Nepal.

3.3 Supervision of the Research Work

- a. A candidate shall pursue his/her research work on a topic approved by the FRC for three years from the date of his/her enrolment.
- b. A candidate shall undertake research for the PhD degree under the guidance of the supervisor(s) [or Supervisory Panel, approved by the FRC. The responsibility of the supervisor(s) [of Supervisory Panel] shall be to guide the candidate in his/her research work and certify that the thesis meets the quality and related requirements specified.
- c. The FRC may invite or approve senior faculty members with proven research history as supervisor(s) from inside or outside the country to guide the research work if deemed necessary.
- d. The candidate is generally expected to be in regular contact with the concerned supervisor(s) (or Supervisory Panel] and pursue the research work under the supervisory guidance.
- e. The candidate should keep records of progress reports and comments and feedback received from the supervisors, mentors and other experts, and submit their xerox or electronic copies to the PhD programme coordinator.
- f. A candidate shall report in writing, at the end of every six months, to the supervisor(s) [or Supervisory Panel] about the work done by him/her during the reported period. The supervisor(s) [or Supervisory Panel) shall take appropriate action on the report depending on the circumstances of the case.
- g. If the supervisor(s) [or Supervisory Panel] gives an unsatisfactory report on the work of the candidate, the FRC shall decide whether or not the candidate should be allowed to continue his/her research for the PhD degree.
- h. In the case of a difference arising between a candidate and his/her supervisor(s) [or Supervisory Panel], the matter shall be referred to the FRC for making a decision.
- i. The FRC may allow appropriate alterations on the registered topic of the candidate on the recommendation of the supervisor(s) [or Supervisory Panel].

Upon the completion of the thesis draft, the candidate, on the advice of his/her supervisor(s) [or Supervisory Panel] shall give a pre-submission seminar to the faculty as scheduled by the Dean.

3.4 Progress reports and seminars

- a. The enrolled PhD candidates shall submit their formal progress report duly signed by the candidates and their concerned supervisor(s) every six months (calculated from the date of enrolment/registration) to the PhD coordinator or the Dean's Office in both the softcopy and hard copy.
- b. Should the PhD candidate fail to demonstrate adequate and reasonable progress, he or she will be given an opportunity to present the clarification of his/her position and circumstances; and the FRC shall decide on the further step to be taken.
- c. The enrolled PhD candidates shall organise a seminar every six months (calculated from the date of enrolment/registration) to present his/her progress work for which he/she shall consult and coordinate with the PhD coordinator or FOSSED Dean. The Dean, PhD coordinator the concerned supervisor(s), and at least a member of the FRC should be invited to the seminar for obtaining comments and mentoring suggestions. The candidate can also opt to invite senior NOU professors and fellow PhD candidates to the seminar.
- d. The PhD candidate shall submit the revised works within a month to the Dean's Office/PhD coordinator by incorporating the comments and suggestions provided in the seminar.
- e. The PhD candidates are encouraged to participate in and present research papers at international and national conferences, and report their achievements and activities to the PhD programme coordinator on time.

SECTION 4

PhD THESIS SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION SYSTEM

4.1 Submission of the PhD Thesis

- The FRC, on the recommendation of the supervisors (or Supervisory Panel), for reasons to be recorded, may grant an exemption for a period not exceeding one year and allow the PhD candidate to submit his/her thesis (only after three years from the date of his/her enrolment for the PhD programme).
- A candidate who is unable to submit his/her thesis within four years from the date of his/her enrolment may apply through his/her supervisors (or Supervisory Panel) for a grant of an extension.
- An extension may be granted by the FRC for up to a maximum of two years. The extension shall not be granted for more than a year at a time. The candidate must submit his/her thesis before the expiry of a total of 6 years from the date of his/her enrolment.
- If a candidate fails to submit his/her thesis within the allowed period of 6 years, his/her admission shall be deemed cancelled. He/she may, however, be allowed to register himself/herself again with the same topic or a new topic.
- A candidate shall submit neatly printed or typewritten copies of his/her thesis and its executive summary to the Dean accompanied by a certificate from his/her supervisors (or Supervisory Panel) of his/her having completed his/her work indicating the period for which the candidate has done research work and whether the thesis is worthy of consideration for the award of PhD degree.
- A candidate shall submit a declaration in writing through the supervisors (or Supervisory Panel) to the effect that:
 - i. He/she has not submitted or does not intend to submit the thesis to any other institutes,
 - or
 - ii. The thesis submitted by the candidate is the original work of his/her own undertaken as part of his/her PhD programme at NOU.
- The thesis submitted for examination shall satisfy the following requirements:
 - i. The thesis must render some substantial contribution to knowledge and show evidence of originality through the discovery of new knowledge of

the exercise of independence and critical power in the interpretation of facts and theories and must state the material published or unpublished used by the candidate.

- ii. It must also be satisfactory in terms of its language and presentation.
 - iii. The medium of the thesis shall be English.
- No conjoint research with the supervisors (or Supervisory Panel) or anyone else is permissible concerning the exact topic of the thesis. The thesis must contain the candidate's work which must be his/her personal achievement, provided however that a candidate may submit, as a subsidiary matter in support of his/her thesis, any contribution for the advancement of his/her subject which may be published conjointly or independently. Where a such subsidiary matter is submitted, a candidate shall indicate specifically his/her personal contribution to such conjoint work duly attested by the supervisors (or Supervisory Panel).

4.2 Examination of Thesis

- The thesis shall be referred to two external examiners appointed by the FRC: examiners may be from Nepal or a foreign country. The examiners may recommend that the thesis be accepted for the award of PhD degree subject to the report of the oral (viva-voce) examiners or that the thesis is rejected or that the thesis is allowed to be resubmitted with improvement and for this purpose may make such suggestions as they deem necessary.
- The candidate is required to revise his/her thesis by incorporating comments and feedback into his/her report and must submit the revised thesis work within a maximum of three months from the date of supply of examiner comments to him/her. Only if the revision requires substantial work including additional data collection and/or analysis, the FRC can grant a maximum of one year.
- If there is a difference of opinion between the two examiners regarding the acceptance of the thesis, it shall be referred to a third examiner for the decision.
- If a thesis is accepted, the candidate shall be required to take an oral examination (viva-voce) which will be conducted by the FRC with experts, the

supervisor (or Supervisory Panel if any), and one of the examiners appointed by the FRC. In case, the external examiner appointed to conduct the oral examination is not available, the FRC may appoint another examiner to conduct the oral examination with the permission of the Faculty Dean

- A thesis shall be resubmitted if so recommended by the examiner(s) only once, and it shall be examined by the original examiner(s).
- A revised thesis must be resubmitted by the candidate within one year from the date of intimation of the decision of the FRC to him/her. The revised thesis shall reach the Dean's Office accompanied by a full amount of examination fee within one month of the time allowed for the submission of the thesis.

4.3 Award of the Degree

- The evaluation report of both the examiners on the thesis, as well as of the board conducting oral examination shall be assessed by the FRC regarding the award of the PhD degree and publication of the thesis.
- The Dean shall notify the result following the decision of the FRC.
- If the candidate is adjudicated as successful, the FOSSED Dean shall arrange to confer a PhD degree on him/her at the next convocation held for the conferring of degrees. A provisional certificate may be issued to the successful PhD candidate.

SECTION 5

MISCELLANEOUS

5.1 Publication of PhD research

The candidate shall need to publish two papers from his/her PhD research work at least one in a SCimago-ranked journal. The successful PhD candidate is encouraged to publish more papers in academic journals. The candidate may publish articles in joint authorship with his supervisors.

5.2 Modus operandi

To maintain the quality of the PhD programmes, the FRC of FOSSED shall initiate any relevant actions relating to the modus operandi of the programme through the FRC.

5.3 Contact Hours

During the PhD work at the NOU, the PhD candidate must attend the specified contact sessions with his/her supervisor(s) and also participate in the seminars, guest lectures, workshops, counselling sessions and other assignments given by the FOSSED/NOU.

5.4 Coverage of the PhD guidelines

This document of PhD guidelines governs the PhD in Education. A separate document of PhD guidelines shall be prepared for administering the PhD research in social sciences under the FOSSED/NOU.

Appendix I

Nepal Open University

Faculty of Social Sciences and Education

Evaluation of Statement of Research Purpose/Intent/Proposal

Title:

Name of the research student:

Programme of the study:

University Roll No.: Date of evaluation:

Criteria	Excellent (Outstanding)	Very good	Satisfactory (Acceptable)	Hardly Satisfactory (May be satisfactory with substantial revision)	Not satisfactory at all (Not acceptable)	Final score	Remarks
Originality of research problem							
Problem statement and research objectives							
Quality of literature review							
Methodological approach							
Organisation of proposal							
Language and coherence							
Overall impression							
Based on the above evaluation, the following decision has been made (Tick one of the following).							
The evaluation committee accepts the proposal without any changes/corrections.							
The evaluation committee accepts the proposal with minor corrections.							
The evaluation committee suggests major corrections/substantial revisions in the proposal. Major corrections mean that the PhD student should rewrite the proposal under the supervision of supervisor(s) and resubmit it. Then, the evaluation committee accepts the proposal if the corrections are addressed.							
The evaluation committee rejects the proposal with an explanation of the reasons. (Provide a detailed report for the rejection.)							

Examiner 1

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Examiner 2

Name:

Signature:

Date:

FRC Chair

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix II

Nepal Open University
Faculty of Social Sciences and Education
Faculty Evaluation of PhD Thesis

Title:

Name of the research student:

Programme of the study:

University Roll No.: Date of evaluation:

Criteria	Excellent (Outstanding)	Very good	Satisfactory (Acceptable)	Hardly Satisfactor y (May be satisfactor y with substantial revision)	Not satisfactory at all (Not acceptable)	Final score	Remarks
Originality							
Contribution to the body of knowledge							
Quality of literature review, problem statement, and theoretical framework							
Methodological appropriateness							
Organisation and presentation including language and cohenrence							
Data analysis/discussion, key findings and conclusion with clear implications for policy, practice and further study							
Citations and referencing							
Overall quality of thesis							

Based on the above evaluation, the following decision has been made (Tick one of the following).

The evaluation committee awards a PhD degree upon acceptance of the thesis without the need for any changes/corrections.

The evaluation committee awards a PhD degree upon acceptance of the thesis with the suggestion for resubmission with minor corrections or revisions.

The evaluation committee requires significant revisions to the thesis, requiring the PhD student to revise and resubmit the thesis under the supervision of their advisor(s). Upon acceptance of the revised thesis, the committee awards the PhD degree.

In this case, the evaluation committee does not consider the thesis to meet the standards for a PhD degree and provides a detailed report outlining the reasons for rejection. The report would likely include specific criticisms and suggestions for improvement, which the PhD student must address before resubmitting their thesis. The evaluation committee may also offer guidance on how to revise the thesis to meet the necessary criteria for acceptance.

Examiner 1

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Examiner 2

Name:

Signature:

Date:

FRC Chair

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix III

Nepal Open University
Faculty of Social Sciences and Education
Final Evaluation of PhD Thesis

Title:

Name of the research student:

Programme of the study:

University Roll No.: Date of evaluation:

Criteria	Excellent (Outstanding)	Very good	Satisfactory (Acceptable)	Hardly Satisfactory (May be satisfactory with substantial revision)	Not satisfactory at all (Not acceptable)	Final score	Remarks
Originality							
Contribution to the body of knowledge							
Quality of literature review, problem statement, and theoretical framework							
Methodological appropriateness							
Organisation and presentation including language and cohenrence							
Data analysis/discussion, key findings and conclusion with clear implications for policy, practice and further study							
Citations and referencing							
Overall quality of thesis							

Based on the above evaluation, the following decision has been made (Tick one of the following).

The evaluation committee awards a PhD degree upon acceptance of the thesis without the need for any changes/corrections.

The evaluation committee awards a PhD degree upon acceptance of the thesis with the suggestion for resubmission with minor corrections or revisions.

The evaluation committee requires significant revisions to the thesis, requiring the PhD student to revise and resubmit the thesis under the supervision of their advisor(s). Upon acceptance of the revised thesis, the committee awards the PhD degree.

In this case, the evaluation committee does not consider the thesis to meet the standards for a PhD degree and provides a detailed report outlining the reasons for rejection. The report would likely include specific criticisms and suggestions for improvement, which the PhD student must address before resubmitting their thesis. The evaluation committee may also offer guidance on how to revise the thesis to meet the necessary criteria for acceptance.

Examiner 1

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Examiner 2

Name:

Signature:

Date:

FRC Representative

Name:

Signature:

Date:

FRC Chair

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Supplementary Guidelines

1. This document of PhD guidelines forms a supplementary part of the PhD in Education Guidelines-2023 of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education, Nepal Open University.
2. This document of PhD guidelines specifically governs the PhD research works undertaken with the NORHED project administered by Nepal Open University in collaboration with NLA University College, Norway. The project is titled "Establish Research-Based Basic Teacher Education Programmes in Nepal 2021-2026". The purpose of the collaboration is to promote research-based basic teacher education programmes.
3. For admission into the PhD research programme under the NORHED project, priority will be given to full-time faculty members of Nepal Open University who meet the eligibility requirements. If no NOU faculty member applies or meets the eligibility criteria for the scholarship, it will then be made available to eligible graduates of NOU. If neither NOU faculties nor graduates of the university are eligible or apply, it will then be made available to other eligible candidates who are Nepali citizens.
4. The qualifications for supervising PhD candidates are outlined in the 2023 PhD in Education Guidelines of the FOSSED NOU. However, for the PhD research programme under the NORHED project, NOU lecturers (Assistant Professors) with a PhD degree from a recognized university and at least 3 publications in Scopus-indexed journals, in addition to the requirements outlined in section 3.2 of the 2023 PhD in Education Guidelines of FOSSED, may be appointed as co-supervisors. The co-supervisor will be selected based on the relevance of their specialization to the PhD research topic. This provision is included to promote a collaborative supervisory system within the NORHED-sponsored PhD research.
5. The funding and remuneration for PhD scholarship recipients, supervisors, experts, and other resource personnel will be following the provisions of the NORHED project.