

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY INTEGRATED PhD GUIDELINES



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FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure to bring this publication of the **Tribhuvan University Integrated PhD Guidelines**. This makes an important step toward strengthening academic quality and maintaining greater uniformity in PhD programs across the institutes and faculties of TU. The guideline provides clear directions on the format of the PhD dissertation, brief outlines of the tasks to be performed by the PhD scholars, graduation requirements, qualification of supervisor and co-supervisors, criteria for evaluation of PhD dissertation, ethical issues to be followed. A sample hard-cover format of the dissertation has also been included for reference in the appendix.

The preparation of this guideline has been a collective academic effort. In this regard, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to former Rector Prof. Dr. Khadga K.C. for his invaluable and consistent leading role to bring this document into its present form.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to all the Deans of institutes and faculties of TU for providing their valuable time, expert suggestions, and unconditional cooperations throughout the preparation of this guideline. I also sincerely acknowledge Academic Council of TU for approving this guideline.

I am confident that this document will serve as a useful reference for faculties, institutes, PhD supervisors, and PhD scholars. I hope it will contribute significantly to strengthen the research culture and academic quality of PhD programs at our university.

Finally, I humbly request all concerned to implement this guideline effectively with strong sense of academic responsibility in the PhD programs of TU.

Shankar Prasad Khanal, PhD
Acting Rector
Tribhuvan University, Nepal
1st June, 2026

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1. Generic Guidelines for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Offered by Tribhuvan University

- 1.1 Intake:** Fall or spring admission can be issued by the respective Office of the Dean.
- 1.2 Disciplinary Issue:** Eligibility of students within institutes/faculties or degree that is interdisciplinary can be entertained.
- 1.3 Comprehensive Qualifying Exam:** Candidate's qualifying exam or eligibility test should be conducted in the 1st semester of the program.
- 1.4 Proposal Defense:** Detail plan of research must be presented and defended within first year and in presence of the respective Research Committee within the Institute/Faculty.
- 1.5 Advisory Committee:** An Advisory Committee shall be formed consisting a chair (Principal Supervisor) and 2-3 member advisors (Co-supervisors). All members must have PhD or equivalent. The Assistant professors, Associate professors or Professors serving at Tribhuvan University shall be eligible to be the chair (Principal Supervisor). The Co-supervisors also must have a PhD.
- 1.6 Normative Duration of the Study:** Full-time: 2.5-5 Years.
- 1.7 Time Limit of the Degree:** Maximum Duration for the final **submission of dissertation** for doctoral degree award will be 7 years or 14 semesters.
- 1.8 Word Limit:** Institute or Faculty Level decisions will apply as per their guidelines in relation to the length/word limit of the dissertation.
- 1.9 Professional Requirements:** The candidate must attend and present his/her papers based on the doctoral research work in at least two **International/National** symposium/conferences.

- 1.10 Publication Requirements:** The candidate must have at least one SJR indexed article (applicable for those from the Institutes). Those from the Faculties must meet the requirements set by the respective Faculty Board formed within the Office of the Dean.
- 1.11 External Examiners:** There must be 3 persons nominated by the Supervisor (at least one international among the three)
- 1.12 Response to the Examiners:** Keeping the quality at the center, examiners should be involved by minimizing the cost.
- 1.13 Preliminary Pages:** Refer to Appendix 1-6 in the guidelines.
*In addition to aforementioned generic guidelines, the PhD candidate must follow the specific guidelines approved by their respective Institute or Faculty.

2. Graduation Requirements

The doctoral candidates are required to complete all the tasks as outlined in this guideline for the graduation. All fees must be settled and all the dissertation related academic tasks must be completed before graduation. *Table 1* outlines the major steps that the candidate has to go through before graduation.

Table 1: Tasks to be accomplished by the PhD candidates for graduation

1.	Registration for the doctoral program
2.	Submission and presentation of seminar paper(s)
3.	Submission of literature review (at least 15000 words) guided by the supervisor(s)
4.	Presentation of a research proposal (proposal defense)
5.	Submission of progress report (first)
6.	Submission of progress report (second)
7.	Ethical approval for research work to be undertaken
8.	Field work
9.	Submission of progress report (third)
10.	Preparation of dissertation (pre-draft)
11.	Revision of the draft dissertation based on supervisor(s) feedback
12.	Submission of revised dissertation (draft)
13.	Pre-viva defense (recommended by the Advisory Committee)
14.	Revision of the dissertation addressing the feedback obtained from the Advisory Committee and preparation of a revision matrix
15.	External/Internal or Review Process (One Step at least by an International / National Reviewer)
16.	Single Viva either at the Central Department or at the Office of the Dean (as per the availability of minimum five number of Faculties (Professor / Associate Professor)
17.	Face final viva voce (dissertation defense as scheduled by the Office of the Dean)
18.	Revision and submission of the dissertation (final) with matrix
19.	Submission of plagiarism report (as well as AI use if applicable)
20.	Certification (provisional) and Original Certificate shall be available after Convocation.

3. Qualification for PhD Supervisor

The qualification for being appointed as PhD supervisor shall be as follows:

- PhD supervisor should be a permanent faculty member of Tribhuvan University (TU) with a PhD Degree.
- The supervisor should be working as Professor, Associate Professor or Assistant Professor in the concerned Central Departments, Constituent Campuses or Schools of TU and must have earned PhD degree at least three years before supervision.
- The supervisor must have a minimum of 5 publications (*SCImago-listed* or *NepJol star-rated* Journals) of which at least two should have been published in SCImago- listed journal(s). The Faculty Board of respective Office of the Dean may decide the minimum requirements of the supervisor in case of the subjects related to national languages and culture. The publications listed in predatory journals (or publishers) will not be considered. (The decision regarding predatory journals/publishers will be based on the data available from Tribhuvan University Service Commission). This consideration is a part of the disciplinary requirement at TU)
- The supervisors should have at least 5 years of working experiences as teaching faculties or researchers at TU or any other universities, institutes, faculties, research centers, academies, etc. recognized by TU. The recognition can be obtained (or approved) by the concerned Subject Committee or Faculty Board of the concerned Dean office. In addition, the supervisor should have experience of two co-supervisions or experiences for being appointed/nominated as the Principal Supervisor (also termed as ‘supervisor’).
- Those supervisors who do not meet the above-mentioned criteria but have been supervising PhD candidates can

continue their previous supervision responsibility. The criteria outlined in the guidelines shall apply for the appointment of new PhD supervisors.

- A supervisor can supervise a fixed number of PhD candidates at a time as follows:
 - Professor – 5 supervisions
 - Associate Professor- 4 supervisions
 - Assistant Professor- 3 supervisions
- A PhD supervisor with joint supervision can be accepted as per Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with concerned universities, research centers, faculties/institutes and academies. The MOU should be signed for **dual** or **double degree** programs. In any case, the supervisor from TU is considered as the principal supervisor and candidate should strictly obey rules and regulation of PhD program of TU, while also adhering to the guidelines issued by the partner university (if applicable).

4. Qualification for PhD Co-Supervisor/Member of the Advisory Committee Member's Qualification

The following are the desired qualifications for being appointed as co-supervisor for a PhD supervision.

- The PhD co-supervisor should have earned PhD degree and should be a faculty member in any central department, constituent campus or research center of TU or any other university/institution (including university/institution from abroad).
- Technical experts, scientists of the relevant discipline working in the government sectors, public sectors, private sectors, hospitals, industry, research centers, academies, laboratories, etc. or a retired professor of TU can be co-supervisor / member of advisory committee.
- A co-supervisor must have a minimum of 2 publications (*SCImago-listed* or *NepJol star-rated* Journals) of which at least one should have been published in Scimago-listed journal. The Faculty Board of respective Dean office may decide the minimum requirements of the co-supervisor in case of the subjects related to national language and culture. The publications listed in predatory journals (or publishers) will not be counted.
- A co-supervisor should have at least one-year working experience as a teaching faculty or researcher in TU or any other university, institute, research center, academic institution, etc. recognized by TU or in government sector, public sector, private sector, etc. The recognition can be obtained from or approved by the concerned Subject Committee or Faculty Board within the concerned Dean office.
- At a time, an expert can co-supervise a maximum of three PhD candidates.

5. Evaluation of Dissertation

The following are the key criteria for the evaluation of the doctoral dissertation.

- Candidate should obtain plagiarism clearance certificate before the submission of PhD dissertation to the Department/Graduate School/Dean Office, whichever is applicable. The plagiarism level of PhD dissertation should be within the limit as set by the TU Anti-Plagiarism(bylaw) 2025 (updated Version).
- The Research committee shall ask the supervisor to submit a minimum of five names of experts in the related subject or discipline as a panel of dissertation examiners. Among them, one examiner must be from overseas, one from SAARC countries (excluding Nepal) and two from Nepal. The eligibility criteria for External examiner are as follows:
 - Should be Professor at a recognized university having a PhD degree.
 - Should have at least five publications in the SCImago listed journals, or should have carried out a couple of policy researches with appropriate publications. The Dean of the respective Faculty/ Institute shall determine the reliability of the publications or the research carried out by the potential external examiner(s).
- The dissertation shall be sent to three external examiners, including at least one examiner from overseas, one from SAARC nations (excluding Nepal) and the other from Nepal. The Nepal expert may be affiliated with universities (either working or retired Professor/Associate Professor), academies, governmental and non-governmental research centers or institutions.

- The PhD candidate is required to incorporate all comments suggested by the examiners. The revised version must be submitted by the candidate through the supervisor.
- A form will be developed/sent by dean office to external examiners for recording their evaluation of the dissertation. It will contain options like (i) accept as it is (ii) revise with minor changes (iii) revise with major changes, and (iv) Rework and Resubmit.
- If there is a difference in opinions among the examiners in regard to the acceptance of the dissertation, the following arrangements shall be made for the final decision.
 - The dissertation will be rejected, if two out of three external examiners reject the dissertation.
 - If one external examiner rejects the dissertation, it will be referred to a new examiner, for final decision.
 - In case any one of the examiners suggests that the dissertation be allowed to be resubmitted with improvements or major revision, the candidate will be asked to make the necessary improvements and revisions according to the suggestions made by the examiner(s). Revision should be completed within 6 months and verified by the examiner and/or supervisor prior to final submission.
 - The dissertation must be resubmitted to the Research Committee after addressing the comments and feedback, if that was recommended by the external examiner(s).
 - A revised dissertation must be resubmitted by the candidate within given time frame from the date of the decision made by the Research Committee to the candidate.

- If the dissertation is accepted, the candidate shall have to take an open oral examination (viva voce), which will be conducted by the external examiner appointed by the Research Committee in the presence of the Dean, Research Committee, Head of the concerned department, members of the advisory committee (supervisor / co-supervisor (s) and other interested persons who register for the participation in the oral examination. In case the external examiner appointed to conduct the open oral examination (viva voce) is not available, the Research Committee may appoint another examiner to conduct the open oral examination (viva voce) as per the schedule. The external examiner of the viva voce examination will represent all the external examiners and ask questions/ comments incorporating all of the comments made by other examiners.
- If any of the external examiners have recommended, in their written comments, a revision of the title of the PhD dissertation, the PhD candidate is required to address this issue in consultation with the supervisor and other members of the advisory committee (the co-supervisors). Further discussion on this matter may take place during the viva voce examination. Based on the discussions, the Research Committee meeting may suggest revision of the title of the PhD dissertation. This will be officially announced, either during the viva voce or through electronic communication to the candidate and his/her supervisor(s).
- The evaluation reports of the examiners on the dissertation as well as the examiner conducting oral examination (viva voce) shall be finally considered by the Research Committee. It should be forwarded to the concerned authority for the PhD award.
- In case of successful defense by the candidate, based on the opinion from the external examiner, the Dean shall

notify the result in accordance with the decision of the Research Committee and officially publish the result (if necessary, it can also be communicated to the news media). The Dean shall forward the result of the PhD examination to the concerned authority for conferring the PhD award.

6. Ethical Issues

Adherence to ethical concerns shall be the responsibility of all the persons involved in the PhD process. It shall apply to the candidate, the supervisors, members of the research committee, examiners and administrative officials of the concerned Department/Office of the Dean. More specifically, the PhD candidate should maintain all the ethical issues pertinent to research. He/she is required to get permission from the concerned department/faculty/institute/university or ethical review committee or council or community or individual as per the nature of the research. The PhD candidate will conduct all the research activities complying with the existing laws, and rules/regulations of the country. The main reference for the ethical conduct in carrying out the study will be the Research Ethics Guidelines issued by the Office of the Rector of Tribhuvan University. TU will not be responsible for any consequences in failing to do so by the candidate.

7. APPENDIX 1

Hard Cover Page Template (as an Example)

CLIMATE DIPLOMACY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEPAL



RAM SHYAM SHARMA

MONTH, YEAR

8. APPENDIX 2

First Page of the Dissertation

CLIMATE DIPLOMACY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEPAL

RAM SHYAM SHARMA

**DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE
INSTITUTE/FACULTY NAME
TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
KATHMANDU, NEPAL**

**IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
(.....)**

MONTH, YEAR

9. APPENDIX 3

Declaration Certificate for Similarity

DECLARATION

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “.....” submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in.....** at, Institute/faculty is a record of original research carried out by **Mr./Ms.....**, **TU Registration Number**, under our supervision, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree.

The **similarity index**¹ of the **Dissertation** text was on the day of submission.

(Name)
Chairman, Advisory Committee

(Name)
Co-supervisor or Member
of Advisory Committee

Date:

Date:

1 The similarity will be checked and verified by TU Central Library and provided as an evidence to the research committee before the viva voce.

10. APPENDIX 4

Award Certificate

CERTIFICATE

The dissertation attached hereto, entitled “.....” prepared and submitted by **Mr./Ms. ABC SH.....**, **Id. No.** in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in**, is hereby accepted.

.....
(Name) (Name) (Name)
Date Date Date
Members, Advisory Committee

.....
(Name)
Chairman, Advisory Committee
Date:

Accepted as fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in.....**

.....
(Name)
Assistant Dean (Academics/Research)
Institute/Faculty Name
Date:

.....
(Name)
Dean
Institute/Faculty Name
Tribhuvan University
Result date:

11. APPENDIX 5

Abstract in English

ABSTRACT

Name:

Id. No.:

Date of first registration: yyyy-mm-dd

Degree:

Major Subject:.....

Principal Supervisor: ...

(Name)
Principal Advisor

(Name)
Researcher

12. APPENDIX 6

Abstract in Nepali

शोध-सार

नाम : रोल नं :

सुरु दर्ता मिति : उपाधि :

मुख्य विषय : विभाग :

(नाम)
प्रमुख शोधनिर्देशक

(नाम)
शोधकर्ता