



XIAMEN UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
廈門大學 馬來西亞分校

POSTGRADUATE STUDIES UNIT

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XIAMEN UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA POSTGRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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PREFACE

XIAMEN UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME GUIDELINES

The XMUM Postgraduate Student Handbook (hereinafter 'Handbook') shall apply to all postgraduate students of all modes of offer at Xiamen University Malaysia (XMUM). These academic regulations shall apply to the postgraduate programmes leading towards the conferment of all Master's and Ph.D. degrees which are offered by XMUM and other academic matters related thereto. All postgraduate students should comply with these rules and regulations. Rules in this Handbook shall come into force on the date approved by the Academic Board for Postgraduate Studies. XMUM reserves the right to add, amend or make any alterations to the content of this Handbook as and when necessary.

THE APPLICATION OF THE HANDBOOK

The Handbook describes the generic requirements for Master's and Ph.D. degrees at XMUM. The respective programme handbooks may contextualise the minimum requirements expressed in this Handbook to the needs of the discipline and profession. In doing so, the specific or programme handbooks shall not lower the requirements stated in this Handbook. The programme handbooks may establish higher and/ or additional requirements if the disciplinary and professional practices deem it necessary. It is expected that programme handbooks would maintain the minimum requirement set in this Handbook in the interest of consistency. As a general principle, each school/ department has the right to establish any other conditions or requirements as it deems necessary guided by this Handbook, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) Standards: Master's and Doctoral Degree, MQA programmes standards, and other good practices.



1. INTRODUCTION

XMUM aims to be a multicultural University that strives to achieve excellence in both teaching and research. It aspires to nurture young minds, helping them become responsible, steadfast members of society who will, in turn, contribute to the prosperity of the region.

Motto

“Pursuing Excellence, Striving for Perfection”

Vision

XMUM aspires to become a university with a distinct global outlook, featuring first-class teaching and research, and embracing cultural diversity.

Mission

To nurture young talents with dignity and wisdom, turning them into fine citizens of the region who will contribute to the prosperity of the people and social progress of Malaysia, China and Southeast Asia.



2. MASTER'S AND PH.D. PROGRAMMES

2.1. Academic Year

- The academic year for each XMUM postgraduate programme is divided into 2 or 3 semesters which could include study weeks, exam weeks and/ or short research projects, all of which are pre-determined by each school/ department.
- All programmes vary between either 2 long semesters or 3 semesters, depending on the school/ department conducting the programme. The specific academic calendar for each programme is available in its respective programme handbook.

2.2. Duration of Study

Table 1 serves as an overview of the study duration of postgraduate programmes at XMUM. The study duration varies according to the programme; please refer to the respective programme handbooks or Heads of Programme for detailed information.

Table 1: Study Duration of Postgraduate Programmes at XMUM.

Programme	Master's			Ph.D.	
Mode of Offer	Coursework	Mixed	Research	Mixed	Research
Minimum (Full-Time)	1.5 years	1.5 years	2 years	3 years	3 years
Minimum (Part-Time)	2 years	2 years	3 years	4 years	4 years

Note: A Mixed Mode programme refers to a postgraduate programme with at least a 50 % research component in addition to coursework.



2.3. Extension of Study

- Students who fail to complete their studies within the stipulated minimum duration of study by each programme must fill in the Extension of Study Duration Application Form three months before reaching the minimum duration of study and submit it to the school/ department for endorsement. The relevant documents will then be submitted to Postgraduate Studies Unit (PSU) for approval. The University may take up to 5 working days to complete the extension process.

2.4. Deferment of Study

- An application to defer your studies can be made on any working day of the semester. The period granted for the deferment of study must not exceed the maximum study duration for the programme.
- Students who meet the following conditions should apply for deferment of study:
 - 1) Health Problem
 - 2) Financial Problem
 - 3) Personal Reason
 - 4) Others (subject to the approval of school/ department)
- Deferment shall be regarded on a semester-basis. If the deferment period is less than one semester, it shall be counted as ONE (1) semester.
- The maximum deferment period must not exceed TWO (2) years.
- Postgraduate students who wish to defer their studies must fill in the Deferment Application Form for Postgraduates and submit it to the school/ department for endorsement. The relevant documents will then be submitted to Postgraduate Studies Unit (PSU) for approval. The University may take up to 5 working days to complete the deferment process.
- If an application for deferment is received and approved before the semester starts, the student is exempted from paying any fees for the semester.
- All outstanding fees or official charges must be settled in full before the deferment application can be approved.



- In the event that the tuition fees have not been paid within the first two weeks of the new semester, 50 % of the tuition fee will be chargeable, and thereafter, 100 % of the fee will be charged. The University reserves the right to use the refundable deposits to offset any outstanding fees owing to the University.
- If a student applies for deferment after the semester starts, the paid tuition fees will be transferred to the next semester based on the following conditions:

Submission of Written Notification to Defer	Percentage of Transfer
Within the first two weeks of the new semester	50 % of the tuition fee
After the first two weeks of the new semester	No transfer

- Students who defer due to health conditions must produce medical evidence to demonstrate that they are unfit to return to study.

2.5. Withdrawal from the University

- Withdrawal from the University means to withdraw from a study programme currently pursued at XMUM.
- Postgraduate students who wish to withdraw from the University must fill in the Withdrawal Application Form for Postgraduates and submit it to the school/ department for endorsement. The relevant documents will then be submitted to Postgraduate Studies Unit (PSU) for approval. The University may take up to 5 working days to complete the withdrawal process.
- Postgraduate students must return their student cards, library books, and any property belonging to the University upon withdrawal. The students shall be responsible for the replacement costs of any University property lost or damaged by them.
- All outstanding fees or official charges must be fully settled before the withdrawal application is approved.
- In the event that the tuition fees have not been paid within the first two weeks of the new semester, 50 % of the tuition fee will be chargeable, and thereafter, 100 % of the fee will be charged. The University reserves the right to use the refundable deposits to offset any outstanding fees owing to the University.



- Refund of the paid tuition fee is based on the following conditions:

Submission of Written Notification to Withdraw	Percentage of Refund
Within the first two weeks of the new semester	50 % of the tuition fee
After the first two weeks of the new semester	No refund

- Any amount to be refunded will be paid *via* bank transfer.

2.6. Termination of Study

- The University reserves the right to terminate students who provided false information to the University in their application.
- Students can be terminated by the University due to the following reasons:
 - 1) Violating the rules and regulations of the University;
 - 2) Exceeding the maximum study duration or approved extended period of the programme;
 - 3) Outstanding tuition fees after the maximum set period;
 - 4) Failing to apply for extension of study duration more than three months from the minimum study duration;
 - 5) Failing to obtain CGPA of 3.00 within maximum study duration;
 - 6) Failing to attend classes for two consecutive semesters without approval;
 - 7) Demonstrating insufficient research capability and failed the mid-term assessment twice (applicable for Ph.D. students).
 - 8) Involving cases of plagiarism, cheating in assessments or examinations, falsification of data, or other serious breaches of academic integrity, as determined by the school/department. Depending on the severity of the offence, the student may be terminated or receive alternative disciplinary actions in accordance with university regulations.
- Students who are terminated by the University should complete the withdrawal procedures and leave the school within the time limit stipulated by the University.



3. CHANGE OF RESEARCH AREA, MODE OF STUDY, PROGRAMME, AND LEVEL OF STUDY

3.1. Change of Research Area

- Postgraduate students who intend to apply for a change of research area must fill in the prescribed form and submit it to the respective school/ department for endorsement. The recommendation for the change should then be forwarded to the PSU for record.

3.2. Change of Mode of Study (Full-Time/ Part-Time)

- Postgraduate students who intend to apply for a change of mode of study must fill in the General Application Form for Current Postgraduates and submit it to the respective school/ department for endorsement. The recommendation of the change should then be forwarded to the PSU for record.

3.3. Programme Transfer

- Postgraduate students are eligible to apply for a transfer to another postgraduate programme, subject to the entry requirements of different programmes, except for those who:
 - 1) Enrolled for less than one semester
 - 2) Applying during the year of maximum study duration
 - 3) Applying for a second programme transfer
 - 4) Currently in deferred status
- Students are required to submit the completed Programme Transfer Application Form for Postgraduates and related documents to the main supervisor and the school/ department of current programme for approval, then submit to the school/ department of applied programme.
- The school/ department of applied programme shall decide whether to assess the students' knowledge through both a written test and an interview. The results of the



assessment will be included with the application form and then be forwarded to PSU for approval.

- Students transferring to the applied programme will be charged tuition fees based on the rates of that programme.
- Students must adhere to the programme structures of the applied programme and complete all compulsory courses and credit hours. Course exemptions may be requested by the students, which supported by their school/ department, and are subject to the approval of PSU.

3.4. Conversion from Master's Degree Programme to Ph.D. Degree Programme

- Students in a Master's degree programme (Research Mode) that meet the University's conditions and requirements may apply to convert themselves into a Ph.D. degree programme (Research Mode) candidate subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) Within 9-12 months of the full time Master's programme
 - 2) Having shown competency and capability in conducting research at the doctoral level through rigorous internal evaluation
 - 3) Subject to the approval of the main supervisor, Head of Programme/ Head of Department and Postgraduate Studies Unit (PSU)
- After successful conversion from Master's to Ph.D. programme, the minimum duration for the student to complete the doctoral programme is counted from the conversion date, not from the Master's programme enrolment date.
- The proposed main Ph.D. supervisor should be at least associate professor from XMUM or XMU. The co-supervisors can be from XMUM, XMU or other institutions. If the lecturers, senior lecturers and assistant professors are awarded a grant that requires them to be the main supervisor of the Ph.D. student to fulfil the key performance indicator (KPI) of the grant, this case is subject to the approval from the top management.
- A Ph.D. conversion defence is required for the application. The student will present the summary of their Master's programme study and/or research, and Ph.D. proposal



during the defence.

- The student will be evaluated based on their academic performance and research achievements. Each postgraduate programme shall decide on the evaluation criteria using a 100 % marking scale. There should be no conflict of interest between the student and the panel of the defence. Whether the student's supervisor should join the panel of the defence shall be determined by the school/ department.
- The Ph.D. conversion defence will be recorded, and all the documents need to be well-documented and submitted to PSU for final confirmation and approval.

Table 2: Requirements for Panel of Ph.D. Conversion Defence.

Panel of Ph.D. Conversion Defence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A minimum of THREE (3) panel members• Must including only Head of School/ Department/ Programme (Master/ Ph.D. programme only), associate professor(s) and/ or professor(s)



4. ASSESSMENT AND COMPULSORY COURSES

4.1. Assessment Process

- An assessment is an evaluation of the student's performance through examinations and coursework. Methods of assessment include continuous assessment (assignment, laboratory work, presentation, *etc.*) and final assessment (final examination, final assignment, *etc.*).
- Students registered for courses shall be evaluated according to the course syllabus and its intended learning outcomes.
- Students are required to pay all the tuition fees for the semester before the examination weeks. Otherwise, they may not be allowed to take their final examination.
- Students who have retained less than 80 % attendance at lecture and tutorial classes are not allowed to take the final examination.
- Students who fail to attend the examination without valid reasons shall be given the Fail grade.
- Students may be allowed to sit for a replacement examination if they provide valid reasons and documentation for non-attendance.
- Students with academic misconduct during examinations shall be subjected to penalties mentioned in item 8.5.



4.2. Postgraduate Grading System

- Effective from September 2023 intake and onwards, the Total Marks, Grades, and corresponding Grade Points for XMUM postgraduate programmes are defined as:

Marks	Grade	Grade Points	Description
80 - 100	A	4.00	Distinction
75 - 79	A-	3.70	Distinction
70 - 74	B+	3.30	Pass
65 - 69	B	3.00	Pass
60 - 64	B-	2.70	Conditional Pass
55 - 59	C+	2.30	Conditional Pass
50 - 54	C	2.00	Fail
45 - 49	C-	1.70	Fail
40 - 44	D+	1.30	Fail
35 - 39	D	1.00	Fail
0 - 34	F	0.00	Fail
-	P	-	Pass



Table 3: Abbreviations Found in the XMUM Academic Transcript.

GRADE	DEFINITION	DESCRIPTION
AU	Audit	Student attends lectures and examinations without earning academic credit (not included in the calculation of CGPA).
IN	Incomplete	An interim grade is given for a subject where a student has not completed certain requirements with a valid reason, or it is not possible to finalise the grade by the published deadline.
IP	In-Progress	An interim notation is used for a project paper that is continued for more than one semester. An “IP” grade carries no credit or grade until a regular grade is assigned.
F	Fail	Unsatisfactory completion of the course.
P	Pass	Satisfactory completion of the course.
EX	Exempted	Credit transfer of a course exempted by the University to the current postgraduate programme.

- Grade Point Average (GPA) and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) will be calculated at the end of every semester based on the assessments stipulated in the course syllabi, representing a student’s academic achievement.
- The formulas used for the calculations of the Grade Point Average (GPA) and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) are as follows:

$$\text{GPA} = \frac{\sum (\text{Credits attempted for each course} \times \text{Grade point awarded for the course})}{\text{(The total credits attempted in a semester)}}$$

$$\text{CGPA} = \frac{\sum (\text{Credits earned for each course} \times \text{Grade point awarded for the course})}{\text{(The cumulative credits earned over all semesters)}}$$



- A Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.00 and above is required for students to remain in good academic standing and meet the programme's graduation requirements. In accordance with the respective programme, students with a CGPA of less than 3.00 are required to retake any (not necessarily all) course(s) with a “Conditional Pass” until a passing grade is achieved within the maximum study duration.
- Effective from 01 January 2024, for Coursework Mode and Mixed Mode programmes, course retakes will be imposed a fee of RM 550.00 and RM 500.00 per credit for “Science and Technology” and “Arts and Business” courses, respectively.

4.3. Postgraduate Compulsory Courses and the Exemption Regulations

- Postgraduate students (excluding those enrolled under the Master of Arts in Chinese Studies and Doctor of Philosophy (Chinese Studies) programmes) must undertake and pass the compulsory course(s) as part of the graduate requirements.
- Students who intend to apply for exemption from the course(s) must fill in the Postgraduate Course Exemption Application Form and submit it to the respective school/ department for review. The exemption recommendation should then be forwarded to the PSU for approval.
- Refer to the table below for detailed information and exemption requirements.



Table 4: Details of the Compulsory Courses and Exemption Requirements.

Compulsory Courses	Exemption Requirements
Chinese I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained at least a score of 270 in the new HSK Level 5 test; or • Received a pass for a Chinese language course/ subject in a nationally or internationally recognised examination, including UPSR/ STPM/ UEC/ A-Levels/ Foundation/ Matriculation/ Diploma/ SPM/ O-Levels, <i>etc.</i>; or • Able to provide official evidence of graduation from a Chinese school with Mandarin as the medium of instruction; or • Took PG102 Chinese I during Master’s degree in XMUM; or • Other equivalent qualifications, with which the approval of exemption will be considered on a case-by-case basis
Selected Topics on China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtained any academic degrees (Bachelor’s, or Master’s, or Ph.D.) in China; or • Took PG101 Selected Topics on China during Master’s degree in XMUM

4.4. Release of Official Results and Official Result Slip

- Official results will be released to students *via* student email within three weeks after the end of the final examination week.
- Students must check their results. Students may appeal for a review of course grades to the school/ department within the stipulated period. Please refer to section 8 in the Handbook for more details.
- The University reserves the right to retain the Official Results Slip if a student fails to abide by the rules and regulations of the University as stated in the Handbook and other relevant documents.



5. POSTGRADUATE SUPERVISION

5.1. Appointment of Supervisor and Co-supervisor

- Students shall be assigned a main supervisor and co-supervisor(s) (if applicable) for their postgraduate studies.

5.2. Supervisor Qualification Requirements

- The main supervisor for a Ph.D. student must be at least of the academic rank of associate professor. If a lecturer, senior lecturer, or assistant professor is awarded a grant that requires them to be the main supervisor of the Ph.D. student to fulfil/achieve the key performance indicator (KPI) of the grant, special approval should be sought from the top management of the University.
- All the supervisors of Master’s and Ph.D. degree students by Coursework, Research, or Mixed Modes, must go through structured supervisor training.

Table 5: Detailed Qualification and Experience Requirements of Supervisor(s).

Master’s Degree by Research	
Main supervisor	Co-supervisor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Must have a doctoral degree; or ii. If the main supervisor has a Master’s degree in the field, the main supervisor must have at least 5 years of experience in teaching and research; AND has co-supervised a Master’s candidate; iii. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Must have a doctoral degree; or ii. If the co-supervisor has only a Master’s degree in the field, the co-supervisor must have at least 1 year of experience in teaching AND research; or iii. A co-supervisor from the industry or practitioner who must have at least a Bachelor’s degree and 5 years of experience in the field at a



	<p>level appropriate for the dissertation;</p> <p>iv. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training.</p>
Ph.D. Degree by Research	
Main supervisor	Co-supervisor
<p>i. Must have a doctoral degree; and</p> <p>ii. Must be at least an Associate Professor except for special case for other faculty positions that meet the approval requirement of the University; and</p> <p>iii. Must have at least 2 years of teaching and research experience; AND has supervised a Master's or Ph.D. research candidate to completion;</p> <p>iv. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training.</p>	<p>i. Must have a doctoral degree; or</p> <p>ii. If the co-supervisor has only a Master's degree, extensive experience in research is required and subject to approval by the Academic Board for Postgraduate Studies; or</p> <p>iii. A co-supervisor from the industry or practitioner who must have at least a Master's degree and 10 years of experience in the field at a level appropriate for the thesis;</p> <p>iv. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training.</p>
Master's Degree by Mixed Mode	
Main supervisor	Co-supervisor
<p>i. Must have a doctoral degree; or</p> <p>ii. If the main supervisor has a Master's degree in the field, the main supervisor must have at least 5 years' experience in teaching and research; AND has co-supervised a Master's candidate;</p>	<p>i. Must have a doctoral degree; or</p> <p>ii. If the co-supervisor has only a Master's degree in the field, the co-supervisor must have at least 1 year of experience in teaching AND research; or</p>



<p>iii. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training.</p>	<p>iii. A co-supervisor from the industry or practitioner who must have at least a Bachelor's degree and 5 years of experience in the field at a level appropriate for the dissertation;</p> <p>iv. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training.</p>
<p>Master's Degree by Coursework Mode</p>	
<p>Main supervisor</p>	
<p>i. Must have a doctoral degree; or</p> <p>ii. If the supervisor has a Master's degree in the field, the supervisor must have at least 5 years of experience in teaching;</p> <p>iii. Supervisor from the industry or practitioner must have a Bachelor's degree and at least 5 years of experience in the field at a level appropriate for the dissertation AND be appointed only as a co-supervisor;</p> <p>iv. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training.</p>	
<p>Ph.D. Degree by Mixed Mode</p>	
<p>Main supervisor</p>	<p>Co-supervisor</p>
<p>i. Must have a doctoral degree; and</p> <p>ii. Must be at least an Associate Professor, except for special cases that meet the approval of the University; and</p> <p>iii. Must have at least 2 years of teaching experience and research; AND has supervised a Master's or Ph.D. research candidate to completion;</p>	<p>i. Must have a doctoral degree and at least 2 years of experience in teaching AND research; or</p> <p>ii. If a co-supervisor has only a Master's degree, extensive experience in research is required and is subject to the approval of the Academic Board for Postgraduate Studies; or</p> <p>iii. A co-supervisor from the industry or practitioner who must have at least</p>



<p>iv. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training.</p>	<p>a Master's degree AND 10 years of experience in the field at a level appropriate for the thesis;</p> <p>iv. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training.</p>
<p>Ph.D. Degree by Coursework</p>	
<p>Main supervisor</p>	
<p>i. Must have a doctoral degree; and</p> <p>ii. Must be at least an Associate Professor, except for special cases that meet the approval of the University; and</p> <p>iii. Must have at least 2 years of teaching and research experience; AND has supervised a Master's or Ph.D. research candidate to completion;</p> <p>iv. The supervisors must go through structured supervisor training.</p>	

5.3. Change/ Addition of Supervisor(s)

- Students who intend to change or add supervisor(s) must fill in the General Application Form for Current Postgraduates and submit it to the school/ department for approval. The relevant documents will then be submitted to PSU for record.



6. POSTGRADUATE EVALUATIONS & EXAMINATIONS

The timeline and sequence of all evaluations and examinations shall be decided by the respective school/ department, with the viva voce serving as the final assessment.

6.1. Proposal Defence

- Students are required to adhere to the Proposal Defence timeline set by the respective school/ department.
- The detailed implementation of the proposal defence will be determined by the respective school/ department. The proposal defence typically comprises the evaluation of the written proposal and an oral presentation (with Q&A session).
- Those failed the first proposal defence can apply for a second proposal defence after three months of revision.

Table 6: Requirements for Panel of Proposal Defence.

Panel of Proposal Defence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of THREE (3) panel members • Must include the student's supervisors, as well as supervisors of the other postgraduate students.

6.2. Mid-term Assessment for Ph.D. Students

- Mid-term assessment of Ph.D. students is an important means of comprehensively assessing the research capabilities and developing the potential of Ph.D. students. It is intended to standardise the Ph.D. student training process and ensure continuous improvement of training quality.
- Mid-term assessment of Ph.D. students is conducted at the school/ departmental level and shall be integrated with all training steps for Ph.D. students. Mid-term assessment shall generally be conducted:
 - 1) 3 years programme – Year 1 semester 2 OR Year 2 semester 1



- 2) 4 years programme – within Year 2
 - 3) 5 years programme – within Year 3
- All schools/ departments shall specify mid-term assessment schedules in their detailed work rules and comply with them. Whether to combine or separate mid-term assessment and proposal assessment shall be determined by the school/ department.
 - The contents, specific requirements, evaluation criteria, and weights of mid-term assessment of Ph.D. students will be determined by the school/ department. The assessment method generally includes a written assessment and a presentation (with Q&A session). Course examination results may be included in the mid-term assessment, but their weight shall not exceed 30 %.
 - The result of the mid-term assessment of a Ph.D. student is graded as “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory”. The school/ department shall notify the student of the assessment result (including scores and detailed comments and suggestions made by the assessment work group) within a week after the assessment is completed and shall ensure that the student strives to eliminate weaknesses identified in the assessment.
 - Ph.D. students achieving satisfactory grades are permitted to continue working on their Ph.D. degrees. Ph.D. students achieving an unsatisfactory grade will be given a second chance within 3 to 12 months.
 - Should the Ph.D. students fail to achieve a satisfactory grade during the second attempt, due to lacking in research abilities and unsuitable to continue their studies, the student can be subjected to the termination of study.
 - Each school or department shall inform its Ph.D. students of the detailed implementation rules for mid-term assessments at least three months prior to the assessment date.



Table 7: Requirements for Mid-term Assessment Work Group.

Mid-term Assessment Work Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A minimum of THREE (3) internal and/ or external examiners• Must be at least an academic staff who is/was the main supervisor of Ph.D. student(s).• Including ONE (1) Chairperson (must be a professor who is a Ph.D. supervisor)

Note: Whether the student's supervisor OR supervisor's co-researcher should join the mid-term assessment work group shall be determined by the school/ department.

6.3. Doctoral Thesis Pre-Viva Voce

- Ph.D. students are compulsory to participate in the pre-viva voce. The school/ department can only organize the thesis review and viva voce after the students have successfully passed their pre-viva voce. The pre-viva voce is usually being scheduled three months before the viva voce.
- The pre-viva voce committee shall evaluate the thesis's academic level, innovation and quality in an objective and impartial manner, providing an assessment on whether the pre-viva voce has been successfully passed.
- The pre-viva voce should be conducted publicly. The school/ department shall formulate detailed rules and regulations, as well as the working procedures that tailored to the nature of each programme.
- Students who fail the pre-viva voce can only reapply after two months of revision.



Table 8: Requirements for Doctoral Thesis Pre-Viva Voce Committee.

Doctoral Thesis Pre-Viva Voce Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of FIVE (5) committee members • Must be at least an academic staff who is/was the main supervisor of Ph.D. student(s).

Note: The students' supervisors shall not participate in the pre-viva voce committee.

6.4. Doctoral Thesis Quality Evaluation

- To ensure the quality of the doctoral thesis, all submissions will usually undergo an external quality evaluation before proceeding to the formal thesis review.
- In principle, the thesis quality evaluation shall be conducted offline and the process shall adopt a double-blind method. The school/ department shall decide to conduct the thesis quality evaluation by submitting the redacted version of the thesis to either:
 - 1) The respective school at the main campus; or
 - 2) Postgraduate Studies Unit (PSU). The school/department is required to provide a list of panels for random selection.

Table 9: Requirements for Panel of Doctoral Thesis Quality Evaluation.

Panel of Doctoral Thesis Quality Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of THREE (3) external panels • Must be at least an academic staff who is/was the main supervisor of Ph.D. student(s).

- Theses will be sent out in batches for external quality evaluation. The external examiners will assess whether each thesis meets the standards of a doctoral-level thesis. A portion of the theses (generally not less than 20%) will be rated as “low quality”, with comments provided.



- Ph.D. students whose theses receive a “low quality” rating must revise their work based on the comments received before they may apply for formal thesis review. For theses not rated as “low quality”, the school/ department shall proceed directly to the thesis review.

6.5. Submission of Dissertation/ Thesis for Examination

- Postgraduate students must submit their intent to submit a dissertation/ thesis form by giving three months of notice.
- Students must submit an electronic copy of the dissertation/ thesis (following the dissertation/ thesis format guideline) to the school/ department for review after the appointment of the Dissertation/ Thesis Examination Committee has been endorsed.

6.6. Dissertation/ Thesis Review and Viva Voce

- After the submission of the intent to submit a dissertation/ thesis form, the supervisor must fill in the prescribed nomination of internal and external examiners for the dissertation/ thesis form and submit it to the school/ department. The school/ department can appoint the same examiners for both dissertation/ thesis reviewers and viva voce committee. The supervisor shall not be the internal examiner for their student’s dissertation/ thesis except for Master’s programme by coursework mode.
- An examiner must have a minimum qualification of no less than the supervisor. Where an examiner is without the required qualification, there must be sufficient experience in the relevant field, and the appointment must be subjected to the approval of the University.
- An external examiner appointed must be from a field related to the research made to ensure the quality of research. The requirements of examiners may vary according to the standards of each postgraduate programme.



Table 10: Requirements for Dissertation/ Thesis Reviewer Committee.

Master's	Ph.D.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of TWO (2) external reviewers • <i>Exception: Programme by coursework mode should include student's supervisor as reviewer</i> • Must be at least an academic staff who is/ was main supervisor of other Master's student (must provide proof of supervision) OR equivalent professional expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of THREE (3) external reviewers • Must be at least an academic staff who is/ was the main supervisor of other Ph.D. student OR equivalent professional expert with experience supervising Ph.D. student (must provide proof of supervision)

Note: Proof of supervision can be either supervisor appointment form/letter or dissertation/thesis cover page with main supervisor's name shown.

- The doctoral thesis review must be conducted using a “double-blind” approach, coordinated by PSU, For Master's dissertations, the school/ department shall decide whether to adopt a normal review or a “double-blind” review, with general requirement that more than 50% of Master's dissertations be reviewed under the “double-blind” approach.
- Examiners shall write detailed academic comments on the dissertation/ thesis and assign a score on a 100-point scale for reference by the viva voce committee. Examiners may assess the quality of the dissertation/ thesis in the following aspects:
 - 1) the theoretical significance and practical value of the research results;
 - 2) the relevance of the views and conclusions of the dissertation/ thesis and the adequacy and reliability of the argument;
 - 3) the academic standard and originality of the dissertation/ thesis;
 - 4) the chief merits of the dissertation/ thesis (including research methods, writing skills and logic); and
 - 5) the deficiencies of the dissertation/ thesis.



- Examiners' names and academic comments shall be kept confidential from the postgraduate students prior to the viva voce.
- For the dissertation/ thesis review process:
 - 1) If all examiners deem the dissertation/ thesis as meeting the degree standard (score ≥ 70), the student may proceed to the viva voce.
 - 2) If two or more examiners deem the dissertation/ thesis as below the degree standard (score < 70), the student may not proceed to the viva voce.
 - 3) If one of the examiners deem the dissertation/ thesis as below the degree standard (score < 70), two additional examiners will be appointed to review the dissertations/ thesis. The student may proceed to the viva voce only if both additional examiners deem the dissertation/ thesis as meeting the degree standard (score ≥ 70). If not, the student will be given a month to revise the dissertation/ thesis, with the revision period commencing from the date the comments are received. Should the dissertation/ thesis still not meet the required standard after this initial revision period, the student will be given an additional three months for further revision. If the student continues to fall short of the required standard, the school/ department will decide whether to submit the dissertation/ thesis for further review.



Table 11: Requirements for the Viva Voce Committee.

Master's	Ph.D.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least THREE (3) panel members, which cannot include the student's own supervisor(s) • <i>Exception: Programme by coursework mode should include student's supervisor as panel member</i> • Must be at least an academic staff who is/ was main supervisor of other Master's students (must provide proof of supervision) OR equivalent professional expert • <i>Programme by research mode is required to have external examiner for viva voce</i> • Including ONE (1) Chairperson (at least Associate Professor) • ONE (1) secretary • Viva voce must be documented and recorded • 1-1.5 hours/ dissertation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least FIVE (5) panel members, with at least TWO (2) externals to the University, which cannot include the student's own supervisor(s) • Must be at least an academic staff who is/ was the main supervisor of other Ph.D. students OR equivalent professional expert with experience supervising Ph.D. student (must provide proof of supervision) • Including ONE (1) Chairperson (must be Professor) • ONE (1) secretary • Viva voce must be documented and recorded • 2-4 hours/ thesis

Note: The number of panel members in the viva voce committee shall be in odd number.

- The viva voce shall take place publicly and physically (except in circumstances where confidentiality is required), with the viva voce poster circulated within the school at least one week ahead. In the case where some of the panel members are not able to attend physically, they are permitted to join online, and the rest shall still be attending



physically. Online viva voce session may be permitted with submission of a justification letter.

- In general, the process of viva voce is as follows:
 - 1) The Chairperson announces the start of the proceedings;
 - 2) The supervisor(s) or the viva voce secretary introduces the applicant's academic performance and dissertation/ thesis work;
 - 3) The applicant delivers a presentation on the main contents of his dissertation/ thesis (a minimum of 30 minutes for a Ph.D. thesis);
 - 4) The applicant responds to questions raised by the committee members after an optional preparation break of 15 to 20 minutes;
 - 5) An intermission follows; the applicant and supervisor(s) shall be required to leave the meeting. The committee members hold a meeting, during which the committee (including the Chairperson) votes on whether to pass the applicants on the viva voce and whether they should be recommended for the conferment of a degree. A two-thirds majority of the committee is required for the applicants to pass the viva voce and whether they should be recommended for the conferment of degree; and
 - 6) The Chairperson announces the comments of the viva voce committee on the dissertation/ thesis, the score of the dissertation/ thesis, and the result of the vote.
- Apart from the introduction of the applicant's academic performance and dissertation/ thesis work, or any requirements raised by the Chairperson of the viva voce committee, the applicant's supervisor(s) shall not participate in the voting of viva voce result, except for the students from programme by coursework.
- The viva voce committee shall operate in strict accordance with the academic standards and principles of professionalism. The list of viva voce committee members will be attached as an appendix to the dissertation or thesis for those who pass their viva voce.



- If students fail their dissertation/thesis viva voce, the committee may, subject to the approval of two-thirds majority of its members may allow the students to revise their thesis/dissertation. The revision period shall be no less than three months (Master's) and six months (Ph.D.), and the students may undertake another viva voce within a year (Master's) and two years (Ph.D).
- The school/ department shall organize the second viva voce within a month of the students' application. Students who fail again will not be permitted to apply for another viva voce. Students who do not apply for the viva voce within the stipulated period will automatically forfeit their right to apply.

6.7. Publication Requirement

- The school/ department can set its standards on the publication of the research output to reflect the competencies that the Master's and Ph.D. students should have upon completion of the respective Postgraduate Degree Programmes.
- Students are advised to discuss with their respective supervisory committee members the choice of journals/ publishers before submitting manuscripts for publication. If a manuscript is submitted to a black-listed journal/ publisher, any resulting publication with that journal/ publisher will not be considered to fulfil the graduation publication requirement.



7. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

7.1. Plagiarism

- All the coursework students submit for assessment must be the outcome of their effort. This includes avoiding the use of materials generated by AI tools, such as direct copying and pasting of text or paraphrasing. If students are found to have copied the work of another person without proper acknowledgement or cooperated with other people in preparing and writing their work, students will be considered guilty of plagiarism.
- Plagiarism is a serious offence that will be penalised by being given a zero mark for the entire assignment. Therefore, it is important for students to always come up with their ideas and write using their own words. If students quote a piece of published or unpublished work that does not belong to them, they must acknowledge the source of the information.

7.2. Plagiarism Checking

XMUM subscribes to Turnitin, an Internet-based Plagiarism-prevention commercial service that checks for the originality of submitted materials. To verify the level of originality of the content in the dissertation/ thesis or other publication, students must submit their dissertation/ thesis or publication to Turnitin for originality check before formally submitting their works for assessment or publication. Students are advised to read and understand the guidelines provided by the IT Office to generate an originality report. The maximum amount of similarity permitted shall generally be 10 % (excluding the candidate's first author paper publication), unless specified by the school/department with proof of permitted similarity in the respective school in main campus.



8. APPEALS

8.1. Appeal for Reviewing the Final Assessment Result

- Students are allowed to appeal against assessment results. The process requires re-marking the student's final assessment answer script for the said course. The appeals are only applicable for that semester and within the stipulated time set by the University. Backdated appeals will not be accepted.
- All appeals must be submitted within the first week of the new semester. Late appeals, without good reasons, will not be entertained.

8.2. Appeal Rules and Regulations

- An appeal that questions the academic judgment of examiners will not be allowed.
- The students may submit an appeal only on their behalf. An appeal submitted by a third party will not be accepted unless enclosed with written authorisation from the candidate.
- A candidate who wishes to appeal should discuss it with the lecturer in advance. A formal appeal should only be submitted if a candidate remains dissatisfied after discussing it with the respective course lecturer.
- An appeal is only possible for courses with a final assessment.
- Appeal can only be made to review the final assessment result. Marks obtained in tests, quizzes, mid-term tests, assignments or other course components will not be entertained.
- Students are reminded that the appeal does not in any way mean that the marks will be adjusted upwards. There may be instances where the second examiner may downgrade the marks if proven that the marks had been incorrectly given.



8.3. Appeal Procedures for Reviewing the Final Assessment Result

- An application for a review of marks and grades should be made by the postgraduate student on the Postgraduate Student Appeal Form and submitted to the PSU.
- The PSU will submit the duly completed form to the Finance Office to invoice an appeal fee. RM 50.00 will be charged for each appeal. After receiving the invoice, payment must be made by the student *via* e-payment or at the Finance Office.
- Students are then required to submit the receipt of payment to the PSU.
- When the student has submitted all appeal documents, corresponding actions will be taken. The PSU will refer the case to the respective school/ department, which will then authorise an investigation, and the opinion of the relevant committee is then to be sought.
- The appeal and subsequent results are then forwarded to the Board of Examination for Postgraduate Studies for consideration and recommendation.
- The case outcome will be conveyed to the student in writing within two weeks after the appeal period ends. The student will be informed of the reasons for the decision.
- The outcome of the appeal is final and further appeals will not be entertained.
- An appeal is considered successful if the new awarded mark is higher than the previous one given, and the payment made for the appeal will be returned to the student.

8.4. Appeal against Decision Made on Academic Misconduct/ Disciplinary Matters

- Student Disciplinary and Behaviour Committee (SDBC) is a committee to deal with any academic disciplinary-related matters. Members of SDBC include the Dean, Head of Department, Head of Programme, representative of the school/department and the top management of the University.
- Students charged with committing academic misconduct will be given a chance to meet the panel members to express their personal opinion before any decision is made.
- Students have the right to appeal against formal warnings or unfair treatment.



- All appeals against the decision on disciplinary matters shall be made within 14 working days from the date of the decision to the SDBC.
- Appeals will be allowed on grounds such as the following:
 - 1) Students who consider that they have been unfairly judged.
 - 2) There was a major administrative mistake that affected the student's academic records.
- An appeal can be made by students on the prescribed form and submitted to the SDBC, together with a letter stating the reason(s) for the appeal.
- The prescribed form "Appeal against Disciplinary Matters" is available at the SDBC.
- The appeal letter and the duly completed appeal form will be forwarded to the SDBC for consideration before submission to the Registrar for endorsement.
- The SDBC has the following authority:
 - 1) To accept or reject an appeal
 - 2) To make decisions for any appeal considered
 - 3) To validate any appeal which is not eligible for consideration
- The outcome of the case will be conveyed to the student in writing within two weeks of filing the appeal.
- Every decision made by the SDBC that the Registrar endorsed is final, and any subsequent appeal will not be entertained.
- If the appeal has been made in good faith, students will not be disadvantaged in any way because of making an appeal, whatever the outcome is.

8.5. Penalties Available to the Academic Misconduct Committee

- If students are found to have committed assessment misconduct, they can be imposed with any of the following penalties:
 - 1) Given a mark of zero for the specific assessment paper of the academic misconduct
 - 2) Given a mark of zero for all the assessments in which the academic misconduct occurred, and suspension for one semester



- 3) Required to retake (as they were given zero marks) the next time the relevant course(s) is/ are being offered
 - 4) Expulsion from the University (If the respective student has a previous case of Academic Misconduct on their record)
- The Academic Misconduct Committee has the right to apply one or more of the above penalties.



9. DEGREE CONFERMENT AND GRADUATION

- The Academic Degrees Committee of Xiamen University holds two routine meetings on degree conferment every year in June and December.

9.1. Conferment of Degree (by Research)

- Students will be awarded a Master's or Doctor of Philosophy degree if they have:
 - 1) Passed dissertation/ thesis
 - 2) Passed all courses required by the respective programmes
 - 3) Fulfilled publication requirement
 - 4) Paid all the outstanding fees to the University
 - 5) Fulfilled all other University requirements (if applicable)

9.2. Conferment of Degree (by Coursework, Mixed Mode)

- Students will be awarded a Master's or Doctor of Philosophy degree if they have:
 - 1) Passed dissertation/ thesis
 - 2) Passed all courses as required by the respective programmes
 - 3) Attained a minimum CGPA of 3.00 for the programme
 - 4) Fulfilled the minimum total credit hours for graduation from a programme
 - 5) Paid all the outstanding fees to the University
 - 6) Fulfilled all other requirements by the University (if applicable)

9.3. Endorsement of Viva Voce Results and Programme Completion

- Once students pass their viva voce, the results of review & viva voce will be endorsed at the Board of Examination Meeting by their Head of Programmes.
- Students will only be considered as having completed their studies once their programme completion status is endorsed at the Academic Board Meeting. The documents listed below must be submitted to PSU before the programme completion is endorsed:



For Master's Degrees:

- 1) Dissertation Defence Application Form
- 2) Dissertation Review Sheet
- 3) Dissertation Defence Review and Approval Form
- 4) Dissertation Defence Evaluation Form
- 5) Dissertation Defence Record
- 6) Dissertation Defence Decision
- 7) Degree Application Form
- 8) Research Output Summary Sheet
- 9) Two (2) hard copies of the dissertation, an electronic copy, and a CD-ROM containing the full text of the dissertation

For Ph.D. Degrees:

- 1) Thesis Defence Application Form
- 2) Thesis Review Sheet
- 3) Thesis Defence Review and Approval Form
- 4) Thesis Defence Evaluation Form
- 5) Thesis Defence Record
- 6) Thesis Defence Decision
- 7) Degree Application Form
- 8) Research Output Summary Sheet
- 9) Four (4) hard copies of the thesis, an electronic copy, and a CD-ROM containing the full text of the thesis
- 10) Abstract of the thesis in both Chinese and English on a CD-ROM (limited to 500 characters for the Chinese version and 4000 characters for the English version)



- The Academic Board members are required to vote by secret ballot to approve the conferment of degrees to the respective students during the endorsement of the completion of study. At least two-thirds of the Academic Board members must be present at the meeting, and the number of members voting in favour must exceed half of the total number of members.
- PSU can issue the Letter of Completion upon request, but only after the endorsement of completion of study for the respective students.
- For PhD programmes with a minimum study duration of three (3) years, the following regulations apply:
 1. A PhD student who has fulfilled all academic requirements of the programme, including thesis submission, viva voce, completion of required revisions, and any additional academic obligations, will be issued a Letter of Completion by PSU upon reaching the end of the third (3rd) year of study, subject to verification and approval by the relevant academic units.
 2. The PhD degree certificate will be issued upon completion of the fourth (4th) year of study, in accordance with the University's degree conferral procedures and the schedule of the Degree Awarding Committee.

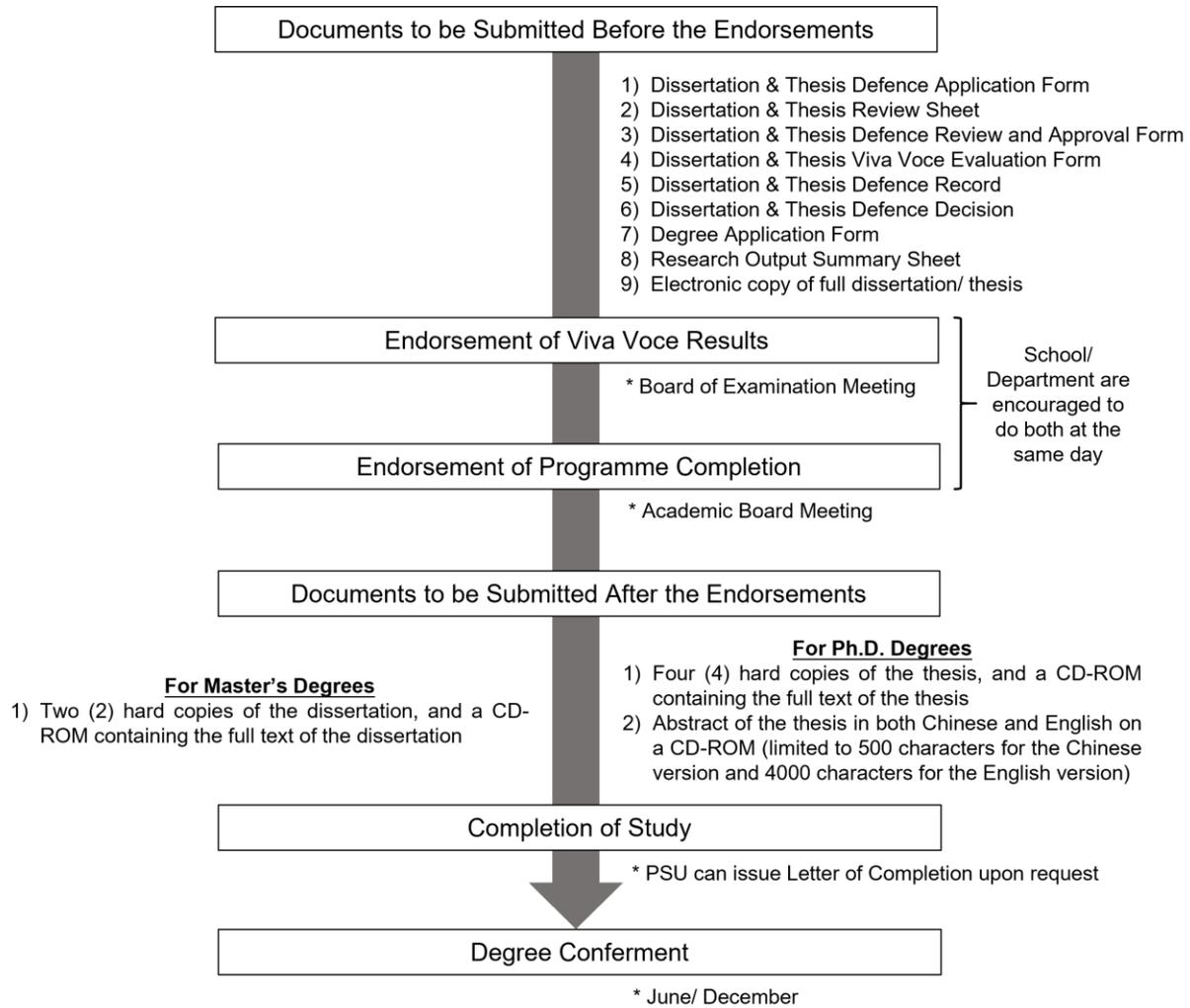


Figure 2: Flow of Endorsement of Viva Voce results & Programme Completion.



9.4. Early Graduation

- Students who fulfil the below requirements are eligible to apply for early graduation only once.
- For Master's students who have:
 - 1) Completed a minimum of 1.5-years study duration for a 2-years programme and at least 2-years study duration for a programme that is more than 2.5-years.
 - 2) Completed the required credits and courses as outlined in the programme structure, demonstrated excellent academic performance, and maintained an average CGPA of 3.7 or above across all courses.
 - 3) Completed the dissertations writing requirements.
 - 4) Paid all the outstanding fees to the University
- For Ph.D. students who have:
 - 1) Completed a minimum of 3-years study duration for both Ph.D. students and those entering the Ph.D. programme without a Master's degree, and at least 4-years study duration for Ph.D. students who converted from Master's programmes since their admission to the Master's degree
 - 2) Completed the required credits and courses as outlined in the programme structure, demonstrated excellent academic performance, and produced outstanding research outputs
 - 3) Completed the thesis writing requirements, with a minimum of 28,000 words (or 50,000 characters for theses written in Chinese)
 - 4) Passed the pre-viva voce for their theses
 - 5) Paid all the outstanding fees to the University
- Students are required to submit the filled Postgraduate Early Graduation Application Form, together with the dissertation/ thesis, academic transcript, and research output summary.
- The school/ department will first review the application materials. Once the application is approved by the supervisor and school/ department, the application materials of Master's students will be submitted to PSU for approval. For Ph.D. students, pre-viva



voce will be organized once the application is approved by the supervisor and the school/ department. After the Ph.D. student passed the pre-viva voce, the application form and pre-viva voce materials will be submitted to PSU for approval.

- During the pre-viva voce, the panel members will vote by secret ballot on whether the Ph.D. student has passed, and whether the student is approved for early graduation, which requires the agreement of more than two-thirds of members.
- If the application is not approved by PSU, the school/ department is not permitted to proceed for dissertation/ thesis examinations.
- If students fail either dissertation/ thesis review or viva voce, their early graduation application will be rendered void.
- For students wishing to confer their degree in June, the school/ department must submit all the application and filling materials listed in 9.3 before 15 February. For those wishing to confer their degree in December, the submission must be made before 15 August.

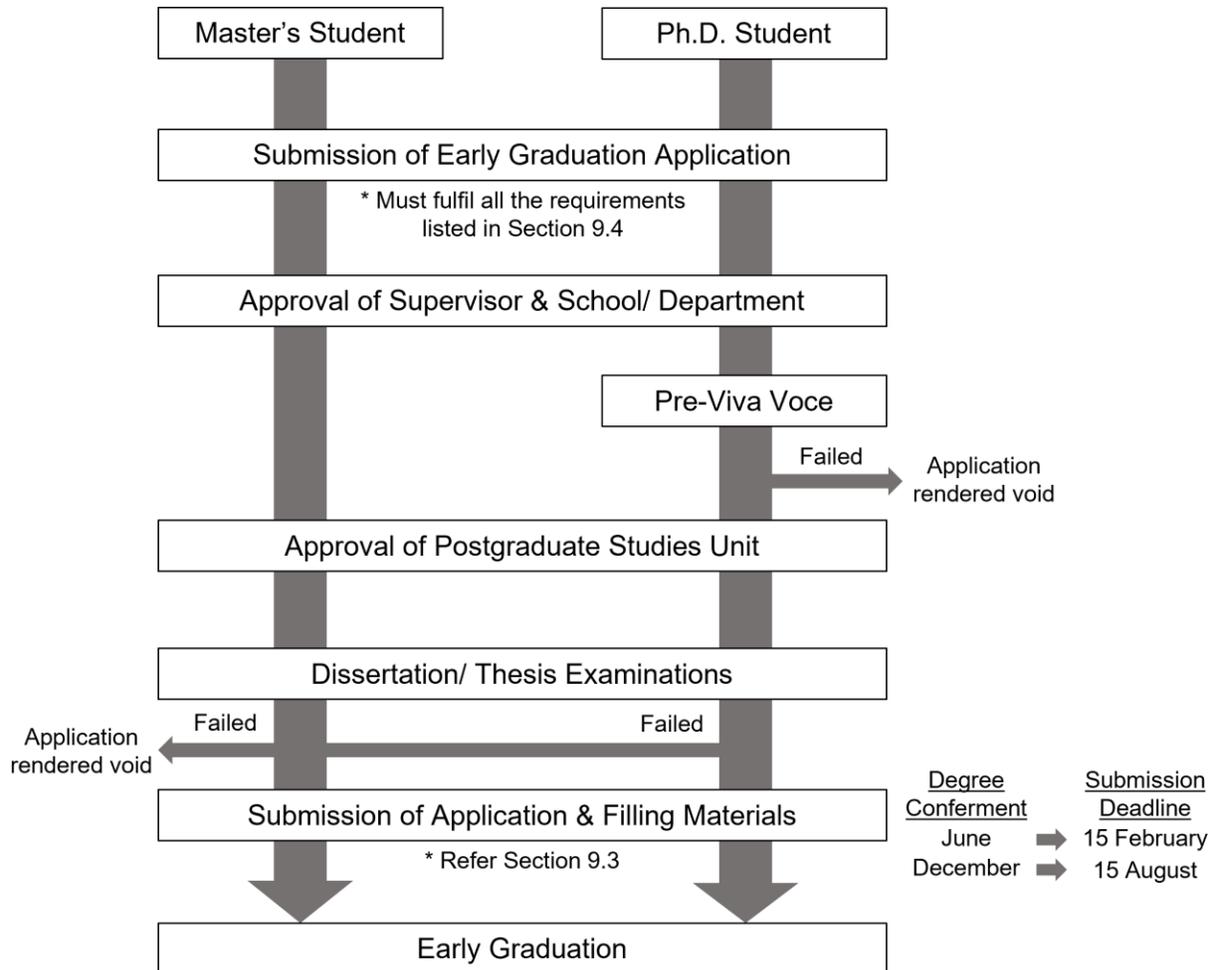


Figure 3: Flow of Early Graduation Process.