

# **NOORUL ISLAM CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

(Declared as Deemed-to-be-NICHE under Section 3 of the U.G.C. Act 1956)

Accredited by NAAC (Second Cycle)

**Kumaracoil - 629180, Kanyakumari District, TamilNadu, India**

**BOARD OF RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT & CONSULTANCY (BRDC)**

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## **Regulations for The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy 2023**



**Modified Guidelines (with effect from July 2023)  
Directives of University Grants Commission  
(Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of Ph.D. Degree)  
Regulations, 2022**

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# Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

## PREAMBLE

The governing regulation for the doctoral programme at Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education is leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has been formulated to incorporate the recent guidelines as notified by the Regulations-2022 of University Grants Commission (UGC), MHRD, Govt. of India dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (captioned as Minimum Standards and Procedures for Award of Ph.D. Degree)

## ABBREVIATIONS AND NOMENCLATURE

- i. “AICTE“ means the All-India Council for Technical Education, the establishment under the Act of Parliament in 1987, headquartered in New Delhi, India.
- ii. “UGC“ means the University Grants Commission, the establishment under the Act of Parliament in 1956, headquartered in New Delhi, India.
- iii. “NICHE“ means the Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education, Kumaracoil, 629 180 Tamil Nadu, India
- iv. “BOM” - Board of Management of NICHE.
- v. “AC” - Academic Council of NICHE.
- vi. “RDC” - Research Development Cell
- vii. “Programme” refers to the Doctoral Programme leading to the award of Ph.D. Degree in Engineering / Technology / Science and Humanities / Management Studies/Allied Health Sciences, etc. both Full Time and Part Time modes.
- viii. “UG/PG/Ph.D.” refers to the Undergraduate/ Postgraduate/ Doctor of Philosophy level Degree programme.
- ix. “Board of Research Development and Consultancy” refers to the Board duly constituted by the NICHE to oversee the academic, research, development and consultancy activities of the NICHE.
- x. “Faculty” refers to the Faculties of Mechanical Engineering / Electrical and Electronics Engineering / Computer and Information Engineering / Civil / Computer Science / Aeronautical and Space Technology / Science and Humanities / Technology / Marine / Management Studies / Allied Health Sciences and such other Faculties that may be constituted by the Board of Management of the NICHE from time to time.
- xi. “Credit”(c) - The weightage assigned to a course in terms of contact hours.
- xii. “Grade” - A letter assigned to a scholar on the basis of evaluation of his/her performance in a course on a ten point scale.
- xiii. “Grade Point” (g) refers to numerical equivalent of a letter grade assigned to a scholar in a ten point scale.
- i. “Semester Grade Point Average” - (SGPA):

$$SGPA = \frac{(g1 * c1) + (g2 * c2) + \dots}{\text{Total Number of Credits of Courses for Which the Student has Registered in a Semester}}$$

“Cumulative Grade Point Average” - (CGPA) means a cumulative index grade point average of a scholar calculated in the following manner:

$$CGPA = \frac{(g1 * c1) + (g2 * c2) + \dots}{\text{Total Number of Credits of Which the Student has Registered upto and Including the Semester for Which Cumulative Index is Required}}$$

ii. **“Final Grade Point Average”** (FGPA) stands for the final index attained by the scholar at the time of award of the Degree.

iii. **“Final Grade”** stands for the letter equivalent assigned to a scholar on the basis of his/her final grade point at the time of the award of the Degree. The final grade point average of a scholar in the courses is worked out on the basis of the formula indicated below:

ci = Credit of the i<sup>th</sup> course

gi = Grade point secured by the student in the i<sup>th</sup> course

n = Total number of courses for which the student has registered

$$FGPA = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n [ci * gi]}{\sum_{i=1}^n ci}$$

iv. **“Doctoral Committee”** is the Committee constituted by the BRDC for each Research Scholar to monitor the progress of his/her research work.

v. **“Research Supervisor”** refers to any faculty member of this NICHE who satisfies the requirement specified and recognised by the BRDC as supervisor to guide the research scholars.

vi. **“Research Scholar”** is any candidate admitted by the NICHE either under Full time mode or Part time mode for pursuing Doctoral Programme for the award of Ph.D. degree of the NICHE.

vii. **“Joint Supervisor”** is a Supervisor under clause (xv) who will supervise the scholar in interdisciplinary research along with the Research supervisor.

viii. **“Research Coordinator”** is a faculty member with Ph.D. degree who coordinates the administrative and research responsibilities of the scholar.

ix. **“Course”** refers to a theory paper of a PG programme or any other subject that is prescribed by the Doctoral Committee for the scholar to undergo as part of the programme requirement.

x. **“Selection Committee”** is a committee constituted by the Vice- Chancellor for the purpose of selecting eligible research scholars from among those who have cleared the entrance test of NICHE / NET.

xi. **“Viva-Voce Board”** means the committee of experts appointed by the University to conduct the final viva-voce on the thesis submitted by the scholar.

xii. **“External Examiner”** means an academician/researcher who is not a part of the higher educational institution where the Ph.D. scholar has registered for the Ph.D. programme.

xiii. **“Interdisciplinary Research”** means research conducted by a Ph.D. scholar in two or more academic disciplines.

xiv. **“Plagiarism”** means taking someone else’s work or idea and passing them as one’s own.

- xv. **“Prospectus”** means any document, whether in print or otherwise, issued for providing fair and transparent information relating to a higher educational institution and programmes offered.
- xvi. **“Research Proposal”** means a brief write-up outlining the proposed research work which the Ph.D. scholar shall submit along with the application for registration for Ph.D. programme.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Board of Research, Development and Consultancy (BRDC) of the NICHE shall be the apex body to monitor all research Programmes, including Doctoral Research, with due approvals from the Board of Management (BOM) of the NICHE. The NICHE offers Ph.D. programme to eligible scholars who are interested in doing research on full-time or part-time basis.
- 1.2. The BRDC governs the eligibility, duration of the programme, the selection procedure, admission, recognition and approval of research guides, Doctoral Committee, programme structure, implementation methodology, evaluation of the thesis and award of the degree etc., for the Ph.D. programmes. These regulations shall take effect from the beginning of the academic year 2023 - 24.
- 1.3. Doctoral programme leading to Ph.D. degree is offered in the following Faculties/Departments.

<b>i.</b>	Faculty of Aeronautical and Space Technology
<b>a.</b>	Department of Aeronautical Engineering
<b>ii.</b>	Faculty of Civil Engineering
<b>a.</b>	Department of Civil Engineering
<b>iii.</b>	Faculty of Mechanical Engineering
<b>a.</b>	Department of Mechanical Engineering
<b>b.</b>	Department of Automobile Engineering
<b>iv.</b>	Faculty of Electrical and Electronics Engineering
<b>a.</b>	Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering
<b>b.</b>	Department of Electronics and Instrumentation Engineering
<b>c.</b>	Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering
<b>v.</b>	Faculty of Computer and Information Engineering
<b>a.</b>	Department of Computer Science and Engineering
<b>b.</b>	Department of Information Technology
<b>c.</b>	Department of Computer Applications
<b>vi.</b>	Faculty of Technology
<b>a.</b>	Department of Bio-Medical Engineering
<b>b.</b>	Department of Nanotechnology
<b>vii.</b>	Faculty of Management Studies
<b>a.</b>	Department of Management Studies
<b>viii.</b>	Faculty of Computer Science
<b>a.</b>	Department of Computer Science
<b>b.</b>	Department of Software Engineering
<b>ix.</b>	Faculty of Science and Humanities

	a.	Departments of Mathematics
	b.	Departments of Chemistry
	c.	Departments of Physics
	d.	Departments of English
x		Faculty of Allied Health and Sciences
	a.	Department of Human Genetic and Molecular Biology

1.4. The provisions of these regulations shall be applicable to all disciplines that are introduced from time to time in addition to the above programmes.

1.5. Notwithstanding any of the clause(s) contained in the regulations, the Board of Management (BoM) shall exercise its powers to change/amend/ interpret / implement decisions and actions on all matters subject to the ratification of the Academic Council AC.

## 2. BOARD OF RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTANCY

2.1. The BRDC shall be responsible for planning, implementation and monitoring the research and consultancy activities of the NICHE.

2.2. The composition of BRDC shall be as under:

- |      |  |                    |
|------|--|--------------------|
| i.   | The Vice-Chancellor                              | - Chairman         |
| ii.  | Six External Experts nominated by the Chancellor | - Members          |
| iii. | Deans of Faculties                               | - Members          |
| iv.  | Registrar  | - Invitees         |
| v.   | Director Research                                | - Member Secretary |

### 2.3. The BRDC shall

- i. Plan, initiate, review, oversee and monitor the Research, Development & Consultancy activities of the NICHE.
- ii. Identify thrust areas for R&D and Consultancy within the frame work of the Vision & Mission of the NICHE.
- iii. Formulate the rules and procedures for research, development and consultancy programmes based on these Regulations.
- iv. Facilitate R&D tie-ups and consultancy with other Universities, National and International bodies and Industries.
- v. Evolve and implement multi-institutional and multi- disciplinary programmes, utilising the infrastructure and resources of the NICHE in full.

## 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

3.1. A 1-year/2-semester master's degree programme after a 4-year/8-semester bachelor's degree programme or a 2-year/4-semester master's degree programme after a 3-year bachelor's degree programme or qualifications declared equivalent to the master's degree by the corresponding statutory regulatory body AICTE/UGC recognized Institution, with at least 55% marks in aggregate or its equivalent grade 'B' in the UGC 7-point scale (or an equivalent grade in a point scale wherever grading system is followed) or an equivalent degree from a foreign accredited educational Institution by an authority established or incorporated under a law in its home country or any

other statutory authority in that country for the purpose of assessing, accrediting or assuring quality and standards of educational institutions.

- 3.2. Provided that a candidates seeking admission after a 4-year/8-semester bachelor's degree programme should have a minimum of 75% marks in UG aggregate or its equivalent grade on a point scale wherever the grading system is followed with valid GATE score or equivalent state level qualification exam.
- 3.3. Candidates who have cleared the M.Phil. course work with at least 55% marks in aggregate or its equivalent grade 'B' in the UGC 7-point scale (or an equivalent grade in a point scale wherever grading system is followed) and successfully completing the M.Phil. Degree shall be legible do doctoral research.
- 3.4. NRI candidate can apply for Ph.D. programme through online portal available in our university website. NRI candidates seeking admission need to write online entrance test conducted by the University and shall be provided admission based on the performance in written test and personal interview, other norms and procedures.
- 3.5. Any candidates applied for transfer of Ph.D. programme from other institutions (national/international) can be considered/admitted for continuing research can submit the letter of request along with the necessary documents (admission form, Course Work completion form, NoC from the organization where he/she pursuing Ph.D.) to office of R&D. The application will be scrutinized and approved by the committee constituted by the Vice-Chancellor.
- 3.6. A relaxation of 5% of marks, or an equivalent relaxation of grade, may be allowed for those belonging to SC/ST/OBC (non-creamy layer/differently abled, Economically Weaker Section and other categories of candidates as per the decision of the Commission from time to time.

#### **4. CATEGORIES OF PH. D RESEARCH SCHOLARS**

There shall be three categories of Ph.D. Research scholars: **(i)** Full-time **(ii)** Part-time (Internal) **(iii)** Part-time (External).

##### **4.1. Full-time Ph.D. Programme**

- 4.1.1. All research scholars who pursue their doctoral programme on full-time, regular basis in this NICHE are eligible under this category.
- 4.1.2. Candidates who are selected under Fellowship programmes of National or any recognized bodies and who satisfy the eligibility conditions as per the regulations of this NICHE are eligible for full-time research in the respective disciplines.

##### **4.2 Part-time Ph.D. Programme (External)**

The categories of candidates who are eligible to apply for part-time programme are,

- 4.2.1. Candidates working in the projects undertaken from State / Central / Quasi Government and totally funded through the projects in this NICHE. The principal coordinator of such programmes shall be the supervisor if he / she is recognized, under the provisions of this NICHE. The candidate should be

employed in the project for the minimum period of research programme (Clause 5). Part employments in different spells or in different projects are not permitted.

- 4.2.2. Candidates working in Industries / R & D establishments / Labs / Units of Government / Quasi Government or any other Research Laboratories and sponsored by the respective employer / Organization.
- 4.2.3. Candidates working in any Government / Aided / Self Financing College or Polytechnic Colleges, sponsored / deputed/recommended by the respective employer.
- 4.2.4. Candidates working as Teachers & Technical Assistant in Colleges & Universities / Higher Secondary School / High School, Officers & Technical Assistants in Government Departments / Industries / Research Organizations recognized by this NICHE.

#### **4.3 Part-Time Ph.D. Programme (Internal)**

All the regular faculty members of this NICHE having the requisite minimum qualifications are eligible to work on a part time basis for Ph.D. degree. They should apply in the prescribed form on or before the dates to be announced normally twice in a year.

### **5. DURATION**

- 5.1. The duration of the Ph.D. programme and the time limit for submission of thesis takes effect from the date of provisional registration vide clause 7.
- 5.2. All full-time Ph.D. programmes shall be for a minimum duration of three years including course work, upto a maximum of five years, and for part-time (Internal/External) Ph.D. programmes, it is four years and six years respectively.
- 5.3. A full-time research scholar in the event of getting any employment, may change the category from Full - time to Part – time and vice-versa, provided the scholar submits a requisition letter to the Director Research through the supervisor, subject to the approval from the Vice Chancellor. In such cases, the duration of the programme shall be pro-rated by the Office of Research. Change of category from full-time to part-time is possible only after six months from the date of registration, to be ratified by the BRDC.
- 5.4. A candidate will be permitted only once during the period of research to convert from Full-time to Part-time and vice-versa.
- 5.5. The entire period spent under full-time will be considered while changing from full-time to part-time, but only 60% of the part-time period will be considered as equivalent to full time.
- 5.6. If a candidate registered in part-time category is selected under a Scholarship/ Stipend/Fellowship programme/ scheme, including Faculty Development Programme of UGC, he/she shall be permitted to continue the research as a full-time research scholar in the department/research center where the supervisor works.
- 5.7. All full-time scholars shall mark their attendance in the register maintained by the NICHE on working days.



- 5.6** Candidates joining after B.E./B. Tech. for direct Ph. D. or Integrated Ph. D. will have the minimum duration of four years to complete his/her Ph. D. degree, including course work, and a maximum duration of six (6) years from the date of admission to the Ph.D. programme.

## **6. SELECTION PROCEDURE**

- 6.1.** The research scholars desirous of joining the Ph.D. programme shall apply in the prescribed application form, through proper channel wherever applicable, before the due date as indicated in the notification issued from time to time. Advertisement for Ph.D. qualifying examination will be given in Newspapers / NICHE Website twice a year and the admission will be in January and July of every calendar year.
- 6.2.** UGC-NET (JRF) /UGC-CSIR (JRF) examination / SLET/ GATE qualified candidates, Teacher Fellowship holders, CEED and similar National level tests are also exempted from the Entrance Examination.
- 6.3.** All other eligible applicants seeking admission for full – time, part-time will be admitted through a Common Entrance Examination for each discipline, followed by an interview. The Department Selection Committee (DSC) shall admit candidates by a two-stage process through entrance examination and interview conducted by the NICHE Research Section in the NICHE premises.
- 6.4.** The Entrance Examination (entrance exam syllabus shall consist of research methodology, and subject specific) will comprise 100 multiple choice questions with 4 options (A, B, C & D) for 100 (100 x 1 = 100) marks with a maximum time limit of 90 minutes and as per the syllabus approved by department and the same shall be notified in the Website of the NICHE. The question papers for the entrance examination shall be set by the Head of the Department and a senior faculty member.
- 6.5.** Candidates who have secured minimum of 50 % marks in the entrance exam are eligible to be called for the interview, interview when the candidates are expected to interact in their research interest/area on their competence for the proposed research topic. For the candidates of any particular discipline, the DSC shall consist of the respective Dean/nominee of the Vice-Chancellor, Head of the Department and a senior most representative from concerned/allied department in that discipline nominated by the Vice-Chancellor.
- 6.6.** The allocation of Research Supervisor for a selected research scholar shall be decided by the DSC concerned, depending on the availability of Research Supervisor, the available specialization among the Supervisors and research interests of the scholars as indicated by them at the time of interview/presentation.
- 6.7.** The respective DSC will forward the list of selected candidates along with the applications of all the candidates to the Director Research through the Dean of the respective faculty.
- 6.8.** The Director Research will seek the approval of the Vice-Chancellor for the provisional registration of the selected candidates through the Registrar.

- 6.9. The short- listed research scholars on the basis of their performance in the interview shall be forwarded to the BRDC for ratification. The BRDC shall follow the state/national reservation policy for the admission of Ph.D. programme.
- 6.10. The candidates whose registration has been approved by the Vice Chancellor shall be provisionally admitted to the Ph.D. Programme by the Director Research with intimation to the concerned Faculty Dean, HOD, Supervisor, the Candidate, and the sponsoring institution, if any.
- 6.11. On receipt of the Provisional registration of the candidates, the supervisors of the scholars shall recommend a panel of THREE names to the Doctoral Committee for their respective scholars and send the same to the respective Faculty Dean through the respective Heads of the Departments. The Director Research shall form the Doctoral Committee as in Claus 10 below, get the approval of the Vice-Chancellor and then communicate the same to the Director Research for record and to the respective Supervisors through the respective Heads of the departments for further action.

## **7. REGISTRATION**

- 7.1. The date of provisional registration shall be from 1<sup>st</sup> of July or 2<sup>nd</sup> of January of each year.
- 7.2. Incomplete applications in any respect shall be summarily rejected without any intimation to the candidate.
- 7.3. Selected research scholars shall register for the Ph.D. programme after the payment of the prescribed fees. The research scholar should also pay fees every subsequent year as prescribed by the NICHE, failing which, registration is liable to be cancelled.
- 7.4. The NICHE shall maintain the list of all the Ph.D. registered scholars on its website on year-wise basis. The list shall include the name of the registered candidate, topic of his/her research, name of his/her supervisor/co-supervisor, date of enrolment/registration.

## **8. RECOGNIZED RESEARCH SUPERVISORS AND NUMBER OF CANDIDATES**

### **8.1. Recognition of Research Supervisors**

- 8.1.1. Any regular Professor of the NICHE with a Ph.D. degree with at least five research publications in refereed journals (indexed by SCOPUS/Thomson Reuters/Web of Science) and any regular Associate/Assistant Professor of the NICHE with a Ph.D. degree with at least two research publications in refereed journals (indexed by SCOPUS/Thomson Reuters/Web of Science) at the time of submitting his / her application will be recognized as Research Supervisor. All publications must be in list of approved journal's list available in the NICHE website, which will be updated.
- 8.1.2. Recognition as supervisor for guiding research work shall be accorded by the Vice-Chancellor on the recommendation of the BRDC.

- 8.1.3. The recognized supervisors working in industrial organizations shall function as Joint supervisors provided the respective industry/organization is a “Recognized Research Centre” of this NICHE.
- 8.1.4. Joint-supervisor shall be recommended by the respective DRCC/DC wherever absolutely necessary, for research area that requires more than one expert from other departments of the same institute or from other related institutions with the approval of the Vice Chancellor.
- 8.1.5. In case of interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary research work, if required, a Co Supervisor from outside the Department/ School/ Centre/ College /University may be appointed.
- 8.1.6. In case of relocation of a female Ph.D. scholar due to marriage or otherwise, the research data shall be allowed to be transferred to the any other higher educational institution to which the scholar intends to relocate, provided all the other conditions in these regulations are followed, and the research work does not pertain to a project sanctioned to the parent institution/supervisor by any funding agency. Such scholar shall, however, give due credit to the parent institution and the supervisor for the part of research already undertaken
- 8.1.7. Faculty members with less than three years of service before superannuation shall not be allowed to take new research scholars under their supervision. However, such faculty members can continue to supervise Ph.D. scholars who are already registered until superannuation and as a co-supervisor after superannuation, but not after attaining the age of 70 years.

## **8.2. Limit for Supervision**

- 8.2.1. A Research Supervisor who is a Professor, at any given point of time, can guide a maximum of eight Ph.D. scholars (both full time and part time put together).
- 8.2.3 A Research Supervisor who is an Associate Professor can guide up to a maximum of six Ph.D. scholars (both full time and part time put together).
- 8.2.4. A Research Supervisor who is an Assistant Professor can guide up to a maximum of four Ph.D. scholars (both full time and part time put together).

## **8.3. Change of Supervisor**

- 8.3.1. Under normal circumstances, change of supervisor is not encouraged. However, under extraordinary circumstances like superannuation, leaving the service, supervisor away on other assignments etc, the change is permitted.
- 8.3.2. Change of Supervisor for a research scholar could be possible on valid reasons with the consent of both the present and proposed Supervisors. In case, the scholar requests for change of Supervisor without the consent of the Supervisor, the request may be considered based on the recommendation of the Committee constituted by the Vice-Chancellor. If change of Supervisor is approved, the scholar has to work for a minimum of one year with the new Supervisor and Synopsis shall be accepted only when

the scholar has published at least one paper in a refereed journal (as applicable) with new Supervisor.

- 8.3.3. When a Supervisor of a scholar happens to be away from the NICHE for more than one year, an alternate Supervisor shall be nominated by the Director (Research) based on the request of the Supervisor and / or the recommendation of the Head of the Department of the Supervisor.
- 8.3.4. When a Supervisor retires from service on superannuation or demits office, an alternate supervisor will be allocated by the respective HOD in consultation with the doctoral committee.
- 8.4. If the Supervisor is terminated from service, his recognition as supervisor stands cancelled.
- 8.5. When a Supervisor resigns from the NICHE, he/she shall forfeit his/her claim as a research supervisor unless otherwise recommended by Director Research under justifying circumstances.
- 8.6. All recognized Supervisors shall comply with the NICHE Code of Conduct for Supervisors and shall submit an undertaking to that effect.

## **9. RECOGNITION OF RESEARCH CENTRES**

- 9.1. Various National and Regional Laboratories / Institutions / Organizations / Industrial Establishments/ Industries recognized by CSIR are eligible to admit candidates for Ph.D. under this NICHE, provided they are recognized by the NICHE. Other Institutions desirous of getting recognition, must apply to the NICHE for securing recognition as Centers of Research. The NICHE will get these institutions assessed through a committee before according the recognition, wherever necessary as per the guidelines approved by the Doctoral Committee.
- 9.2. Scientists working in Research Institutions / Organizations who entered MoU with the NICHE/involved in collaborative sponsored research projects, for a minimum of 3 years, shall function as Joint Supervisor for the particular research scholar working in such collaborative project, provided they fulfill the norms of Supervisor recognition of the NICHE and the recommendation of the Doctoral Committee.

## **10. DOCTORAL COMMITTEE**

Separate Doctoral Committee shall be constituted for each research scholar to prescribe the course work to be undergone by the research scholar, to continuously monitor the progress of the research scholar and to advise midcourse corrections wherever needed.

### **10.1. Doctoral Committee Structure**

- 10.1.1 For every research scholar, the research supervisor shall furnish a panel of three experts with doctoral qualification in the field of proposed research, from among the members of the faculty of the other Universities / Affiliated Government, Aided, Autonomous and Self Financing Institutions / Experts from R&D Organizations / National Laboratories / any other Research Laboratories, from which one shall be nominated by the Vice Chancellor.

- 10.1.2.**Normally, the internal research supervisor shall be the convener of the Doctoral Committee.
- 10.1.3.**In the event of the research supervisor leaving the NICHE temporarily or permanently the Joint-Supervisor/Research Coordinator shall be the Convener of the Doctoral Committee.
- 10.1.4.**An internal expert in the allied areas of research from the NICHE/Department.
- 10.1.5** Deans of the Faculty Concerned / Senior Most Professor in the Department shall be the Chairman.
- 10.1.6.**The Head of the Department of the research scholar shall be an ex-officio member of the committee.
- 10.1.7.**The Doctoral Committee shall normally meet within one month of its constitution and thereafter at least once in every sixth months.
- 10.1.8.**In case the research scholar is unable to appear before the Doctoral Committee for genuine & valid reasons in spite of sufficient notice, the expenditure for holding the meeting shall be recovered from the research scholar. However, the research scholar has to attend the Doctoral Committee meeting convened subsequently. If the research scholar fails to attend the subsequent meeting also, his/her registration shall be cancelled.

**10.1.9.**The following shall be the composition of a doctoral committee:

<b>Sl.</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>1.</b>	Dean of the Faculty / Senior most Professor of the	Chairman **
<b>2.</b>	Research Supervisor	Convenor
<b>3.</b>	Joint Supervisor, if any	Member
<b>4.</b>	External Expert	Member
<b>5.</b>	Internal Expert	Member
<b>6.</b>	Head of the Department	Ex-Officio
<b>7.</b>	Research Co-ordinator, if any	Invitee

\*\*To be decided by the Vice Chancellor

**10.2** This Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

**10.2.1.**To periodically review the research proposal.

**10.2.2.**To guide the research scholar in order to develop the study design and methodology of research and identify the course(s) that he/she may have to do.

**10.2.3.**To periodically review and assist in the progress of the research work.

**10.3. Provision for Changes**

**10.3.1** The supervisor shall request for an alternate member for the doctoral committee from the panel of experts submitted as per clause 10, in case of:

- i.** Change of Supervisor.
- ii.** Change of research topic changed before confirmation of the Provisional Registration.
- iii.** The Doctoral Committee member away from the place of work for more than one years.
- iv.** Doctoral Committee member passing away.
- v.** The member not responding to attend Doctoral Committee meetings.

- 10.3.2. In all the above cases or any other compelling reasons, the Director Research shall nominate an alternate Doctoral Committee member from the panel furnished by the Supervisor.
- 10.4. The Doctoral Committee members will be paid Honorarium as per the norms of the NICHE for attending the meetings of the Doctoral Committee.
- 10.5. If there is a change in external member or if any internal member has left the institution, the reconstitution of the DC shall be made by the office of the Director (R&D) after receiving the request for reconstitution from supervisor through the DC chairman (Dean). The reason for reconstitution shall also be recorded in DC meeting held prior to the request.

## 11. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

### 11.1. Course Work

- 11.1.1. The Doctoral Committee of a research scholar shall meet within a month from the date of communication of his/her registration to finalize the Course Works.
- 11.1.2. It is mandatory for the research scholars to successfully complete the courses prescribed by the Doctoral Committee within two semesters for full-time and three semesters for part-time from the date of registration of the programme.
- 11.1.3. The Credit requirement for the Ph.D. coursework (other than direct Ph.D. and integrated Ph.D. candidates) is a minimum of 16 credits, including a “Research and Publication Ethics” course as notified by UGC vide D.O. No. F.1-1/2018(Journal/CARE) in 2019 and a research methodology course. The DC Committee can also recommend UGC recognized online courses as part of the credit requirements for the Ph.D. programme
- 11.1.4. A minimum of five credits shall be assigned to Research Methodology which could cover areas such as quantitative methods, computer applications, research ethics and review of published research in the relevant field, training, field work, etc.
- 11.1.5. The courses shall be (i) Research Methodology for the subject (ii) A background subject related to his/her Ph.D. research (iii) An advanced subjects in the area of research.
- 11.1.6. Candidates with M. Phil. degree are exempted from the course work on Research Methodology with the recommendation of Doctoral Committee.
- 11.1.7. Course work subjects may be taken from Research or Advanced Level subjects not offered at PG level /subjects available in the R&D with the recommendation of Doctoral Committee.
- 11.1.8. If any course, specific to the area of research has to be newly designed, then such course shall be formulated as a Directed course to be covered in not less than 60 contact periods of instruction and the course syllabus shall be designed by the Supervisor, recommended by the Doctoral Committee and shall be approved by the appropriate Board of Studies/ Academic Council. A scholar shall be permitted to undertake **only one such Directed Course** based on the recommendations by the Board of

Research. The Directed course is done under the guidance of the Supervisor.

- 11.1.9. All the course work of the scholar are to be undertaken as per the academic norms and shall be evaluated by the norms of this NICHE.
- 11.1.10 Under extraordinary circumstances if the candidate fails to complete the courses within the prescribed time, further extension may be granted by the Vice Chancellor, on the recommendations of the Doctoral Committee and Director Research.
- 11.1.11. No change in the course work prescribed shall be made without the approval of the Doctoral Committee.
- 11.1.15. Ph.D. scholar has to obtain a minimum of 55 % of marks or its equivalent grade in the UGC 7-point scale (or an equivalent grade/CGPA in a point scale wherever grading system is followed) in the course work in order to be eligible to continue in the programme and submit the thesis. A scholar who gets less than C grade in a course work has to repeat the course. The Controller of Examinations shall issue the grade card to the scholars upon successful completion of the coursework.
- 11.1.16. All Ph.D. scholars, irrespective of discipline, shall be trained in teaching / pedagogy/ writing related to their chosen Ph.D. topic during their doctoral period. Full time Ph.D. scholars may also be assigned 4-6 hours per week of teaching/research assistantship for conducting tutorial or laboratory work and evaluations.

## **11.2. Evaluation**

- 11.2.1. The Evaluation Pattern and Scheme for each prescribed course will have a Continuous Internal Assessment (CIA) for 40 marks and End Semester Assessment (ESA) by the NICHE for 60 marks. A minimum of 55% mark is required for both CIA and ESA to pass the course work. If a research scholar scores below 55% in CIA or ESA or both, he / she should repeat the same in the next semester / can do another course with the approval of the doctoral committee.
- 11.2.2. For Continuous Internal Assessment (CIA), two tests each carrying 50 marks of 1 ½ hrs duration and one model examination covering the full syllabus carrying 100 marks of 3 hrs duration shall be conducted. The marks obtained from the better of the two tests and model examination put together out of 100 marks shall be reduced for 20 marks. Two assignments each carrying 5 marks and one seminar carrying 10 marks shall be added with the test marks of 20.

## **11.3. Attendance**

- 11.3.1. Each full time research scholar shall sign in the attendance register provided for the purpose on all working days. They are eligible for fifteen days leave in a year, on the recommendation of the Research Supervisor/ Joint Supervisor / Research Coordinator and approval from the HOD concerned.
- 11.3.2. Every part-time external research scholar shall spend at least one year in a minimum of six spells (those who are involving in laboratory work)/ six

months in minimum of three spells (those who are not involving in laboratory work) during the course of research at the NICHE / Institution where the guide is working. The supervisor / Research Coordinator has to submit the attendance certificate of the research scholar to the Director – Research at the time of synopsis submission. During the course of the Ph.D. Programme, for reasons approved by the Doctoral Committee, a candidate may be permitted by the NICHE to spend up to one month in an Institution or on a project approved for the purpose, outside the NICHE for carrying out research in areas related to the subject of investigation. The conditions for this will be laid down by BRDC from time to time.

#### **11.4. Comprehensive Examination**

- 11.4.1.** On the successful completion of the prescribed course work, as evidenced by the Grade sheet given by the Controller of Examinations, the Doctoral Committee shall conduct for every Scholar a qualifying comprehensive written and oral examination to test the overall background knowledge of the Scholar in the broad area of specialization. Based on the results of this examination, the Doctoral Committee shall recommend to the Director Research for the confirmation of the provisional registration and to proceed further with his/her Ph.D. work within one month from the date of the comprehensive examination held.
- 11.4.2.** Based on the results of the comprehensive examination, if a Scholar fails before the Doctoral Committee, then a grace period of up to a maximum of One year may be given, and at the end of which the Scholar shall be re-examined. If found satisfactory, the Doctoral committee shall recommend to the Director Research for confirmation to proceed with the doctoral work. Otherwise, the Scholar's provisional registration shall be cancelled.
- 11.4.3.** A research scholar shall take a comprehensive examination after the completion of the prescribed course works of his/her research programme but before the completion of four semesters. The comprehensive examination is mandatory.
- 11.4.4.** The Supervisor shall intimate the research scholar sufficiently in advance, the scope of the examination and other relevant details.

#### **12. MONITORING THE PROGRESS OF THE RESEARCH SCHOLAR**

- 12.1.** Every six months commencing from the date of provisional registration, the candidate shall submit progress (Half Yearly/6 Months) report in the prescribed format to the supervisor who shall forward it, to the Director Research for information and documentation in the R&D.
- 12.2.** In addition, a research scholar shall appear before the Doctoral Committee once in six months to make a presentation of the progress of his/her work for evaluation and further guidance.
- 12.3.** The research guide shall arrange a presentation by the research scholar on his / her work twice a year before the Doctoral Committee to review his/her progress in research work which is open to all faculty members and Research Scholars.



- 12.4. The minutes of the meeting shall be submitted by the Doctoral Committee to the Director Research, with a copy to the research scholar, if required.
- 12.5. In case, the progress of the research scholar is unsatisfactory, the Doctoral Committee shall record the reasons for the same and suggest corrective measures. If the research scholar fails to implement these corrective measures, the Doctoral Committee may recommend to the Director Research with specific reasons for cancellation of the registration of the research scholar.

### **13. EXTENSION OF DURATION**

- 13.1. In exceptional circumstances, a maximum grace period upto two years beyond the normal maximum period may be granted, by the Director Research based on the recommends of the Doctoral Committee to enable the research scholar to submit the thesis. Such extensions shall be limited to half a year at a time, maximum of four times, beyond the normal maximum period of 5 years (Full time)/6 years (Part time) to enable the research scholar to submit the thesis. In such cases, extension fee as prescribed from time to time shall be payable.
- 13.2. If the research scholar fails to submit the thesis within the extendable period of two years, the registration shall be cancelled.
- 13.3. The Scholar is eligible to apply for extension of time only if his/her registration is already confirmed.
- 13.4. Request for an extension shall be submitted to the Director Research, with the recommendation of the Doctoral Committee, at least one month prior to the end of the maximum period or expiry of the previous extension.
- 13.5. After the expiry of the maximum period including the extension granted, a candidate will be permitted to Re-register as per the following regulations.
  - 13.5.1. For those candidates who want to re-register under the same supervisor on the same area of research, the earlier Doctoral Committee and the course works completed will hold good.
  - 13.5.2. For those candidates who want to re-register with a different supervisor on a different area of research will be subject to the regulations applicable for the fresh candidates.
  - 13.5.3. The women candidates and Persons with Disability (more than 40% disability) may be allowed a relaxation of two years for Ph.D. in addition to the maximum duration (including extension). Women candidates are provided Maternity Leave/Child Care Leave once in the entire duration of Ph.D. for up to 240 days, which shall not be accounted in the duration of the program.

### **14. CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION**

- 14.1. If the research scholar fails to submit the Thesis within the extended period of two years, the registration shall be cancelled and the name of the research scholar shall be removed from the rolls.
- 14.2. The registration is liable for cancellation, if:
  - 14.2.1. The scholar has not paid the semester fees within the stipulated time.

- 14.2.2. Two consecutive six month progress reports are not submitted or not satisfactory.
- 14.2.3. The scholar fails to complete the confirmation of provisional registration even beyond three years after his/her registration for the Ph.D. programme.
- 14.2.4. The performance is not satisfactory to the Doctoral Committee.
- 14.2.5. Prior permission is not obtained for break of study from the Director Research.
- 14.2.6. A scholar who voluntarily withdraw/cancel his/her registration for any reason thereof, shall submit an request application through the proper channel to the Director (R&D) and university whose decision in such matters shall be deemed as final.
- 14.2.7. Extension of time (beyond six years) not granted.
- 14.2.8. Fails to submit the thesis beyond six months from the date of approval of Synopsis by the Doctoral Committee.
- 14.2.9. Fails to submit the revised thesis incorporating the suggestions of any examiner even beyond six months.
- 14.2.10. Plagiarism is confirmed in Publication/ Thesis writing.
- 14.2.11. Attempted to contact Examiners regarding Thesis evaluation.
- 14.3. The registration of the Ph.D. scholar shall be immediately cancelled upon involvement in any act violation leading to a defamation and allegations to the university.
- 14.4. In case of cancellation, the fees paid by the research scholar shall not be refunded.
- 14.5. Before recommending a cancellation of Ph.D. registration, the office of the R&D should issue a notice to the candidate for his/her explanation. If the explanation is not agreed by the DC, the provisional registration of the candidate shall stand cancelled.

## **15. TEMPORARY BREAK FROM PH. D PROGRAMME**

- 15.1. Research scholars who completed their course work may be permitted to take a temporary break from the programme for a maximum period of one year for genuine and valid reasons subject to the recommendation of the Doctoral Committee and the approval of the Vice Chancellor and such period shall be within the duration of the programme. The research scholar should remit the programme fee during the break of period.
- 15.2. The Director Research shall permit, if deemed fit, reasons for break of study of the research scholar and in extraordinary circumstances like medical grounds, and other compelling reasons which warrant his / her absence to the programme.

## **16. PRE-SUBMISSION PRESENTATION**

Before convening the Doctoral Committee meeting for synopsis submission, the scholar shall present their entire work, along with specific research contribution before a “Pre Synopsis Review Committee”, constituted for this purpose. The committee upon reviewing the work done by the scholar and assessing the

technical aspects of the research work done, the quantum of work required to earn a degree, quality aspects of the research work, publications requirements etc., shall recommend to convene the Doctoral Committee meeting for Synopsis submission.

## **17. SYNOPSIS OF THESIS**

- 17.1. The scholar shall be permitted to submit the Synopsis only after successful completion of all prescribed courses and after obtaining the confirmation of provisional registration and completion of the minimum duration of the programme applicable to the scholar.
- 17.2. Upon satisfactory completion of comprehensive viva-voce, DC ensures the quality publications (NICHE Affiliation) and proceedings based on their research work and recommend for further approval for Synopsis and Thesis submission to the office of Director (R&D).
- 17.3. The Office of Director (R&D) will verify the publication details and permit the research scholar to submit the synopsis and Thesis.
- 17.4. The research scholar shall be permitted to submit the synopsis six months prior to the completion of minimum duration, provided more than five papers are published in indexed journals (indexed in Scopus/Web of Science [Thompson Reuters]).
- 17.5. Publications of the scholars where a PG student is a corresponding/first/second author shall not be considered for processing of his/her Synopsis. A Research scholar shall not publish research articles with similar contents in part or full in more than one journal, which amount to deception and cheating.
- 17.6. The author of a publication should be a Scholar with “Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education” affiliation.
- 17.7. If the Doctoral Committee approves the research work reported in the synopsis, it shall forward two copies and one eCopy of the approved synopsis and a soft copy of it in CD/DVD to the Director Research along with a panel of six experts (Three from India & Three from Abroad). Such examiner(s) shall be an academician or established researcher with a good record of scholarly publications in the field of Research.
- 17.8. The Vice-Chancellor shall consider these names and constitute a Board of two external examiners (one from each category mentioned in the above point). Besides, the Vice-Chancellor may also nominate the examiners from outside the panel.
- 17.9. The External Examiners, who are not in employment of the Institution/College, of whom one Examiner may be from outside the country and another one Examiner may be from outside the local district/region.

## **18. SUBMISSION OF THESIS**

- 18.1. The thesis shall be prepared in the format prescribed by the NICHE with an account of the original research work of the candidate leading to the discovery of new facts or techniques or correlation of facts already known (analytical, experimental etc.) and demonstrating a quality as to make a definite contribution to the advancement of knowledge and the candidate's

ability to undertake independent research and present the findings in an appropriate manner with actual accomplishments of the work, plainly stated and honestly appraised.

- 18.2.** While submitting for evaluation, the thesis shall have an undertaking from the research scholar and a certificate from the Research Supervisor attesting to the originality of the work, vouching that there is no plagiarism after testing the thesis with a Plagiarism software recommended by the NICHE BRDC and that the work has not been submitted for the award of any other degree/diploma of the same Institution where the work was carried out, or to any other Institution.
- 18.3.** The Thesis shall be scrutinized by R&D, will assess the overall layout, contents and the quality of presentation of the Thesis. The deviation, if any, shall be rectified by the scholar in consultation with the Supervisor and the same shall be approved by the Director (Research).
- 18.4.** Four copies of the thesis shall be prepared and submitted to the Director (Research) in accordance with the format and specification prescribed. Thesis shall be submitted within three months of the approval of the Synopsis by the Doctoral Committee to the Registrar. Along with the submission of four copies of the thesis, the Scholar shall submit a copy of the thesis in CD ROM with all details duly certified by the Research Supervisor.
- 18.5.** The thesis Submission shall not be delayed except under extraordinary circumstances, where an extension of three months may be permitted. However, a late fee which will be fixed by the NICHE shall be charged.
- 18.6.** Fees shall be paid by the candidates on yearly basis, till the submission of the thesis; the candidate will produce a no dues certificate from all concerned departments/sections at the time of submission of the thesis.

## **19. THESIS EVALUATION**

- 19.1.** The Vice Chancellor shall consider the panel of 6 examiners (3 Indian & 3 Foreign) already recommended by the Doctoral committee at the time of Synopsis submission and appoint two examiners consisting of one from each of the above categories.
- 19.2.** The thesis shall be referred to the first two examiners from the panel as nominated by the Vice-Chancellor recommended by the Doctoral Committee.
- 19.3.** In the case of undue delay in receiving the report from the examiner, the Director Research shall refer the thesis to the second examiner selected by the Vice Chancellor.
- 19.4.** The examiners are expected to send, in the prescribed form, their reports within two months from the date of receipt of the thesis.
- 19.5.** The examiner shall include in his report an overall assessment placing the thesis in one of the following categories:
  - a) Recommended for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy: Commended/Highly Commended.
  - b) Recommended for Revision before Viva Voce
  - c) Recommended for Revision and Resubmission
  - d) Not Recommended and Rejected

The examiner shall enclose a report in about 500 words the standard attained in regard to category (a), the nature of revision in regard to category (b), the major revision required in the category of (c) and the reasons in regard to category (d).

**19.6.** Based on the reports of the examiners, Director (Research) will act further with the due approval of the Vice Chancellor:

**19.6.1.** If both the examiners recommended the award of the degree, thesis shall be provisionally accepted. Any minor revision, modification etc., suggested by the examiners shall be carried out by the research scholar and duly certified by the research supervisor before the viva voce examination.

**19.6.2.** If both examiners recommended rejection, the thesis shall be rejected and the registration of the research scholar shall stand cancelled.

**19.6.3.** If one examiner recommends the award of the degree while the other recommends rejection, then the thesis shall be referred to a third examiner to be nominated by the Vice-Chancellor. If two of the three examiners recommended the award, the thesis shall be provisionally accepted.

**19.6.4.** If any examiner recommends correction / revision of the thesis, the candidate shall be permitted only once to revise and resubmit the thesis within six months. The Doctoral Committee shall study the report of the examiners to ascertain whether the corrections / revisions carried out in the thesis is as suggested by the examiners and then recommend panel for constitution of an Viva Voce Examination Board, within a period of three months from the receipt of the reports by the supervisor.

**19.6.5.** If any examiner recommends revision of the thesis, the Scholar shall be permitted only once to revise and resubmit the thesis within six months and the revised thesis shall be referred to the same examiner only in situations such as (i) When the examiner recommends new experiments and major modification involving new methodology and also (ii) The examiner insists the NICHE to send the thesis back to the same examiner after revision for offering his final decision on the thesis which should only be either recommended for the award or rejection. In case, the examiner does not insist on sending the thesis back to him, then the NICHE may refer the revised thesis to the Doctoral Committee for verification/acceptance.

**19.6.5.** Individual cases not covered by the above clauses shall be referred to the Vice-Chancellor. On reasons deemed fit, the Vice-Chancellor shall refer to the Board of Research and Consultancy which in turn shall refer to the Board of Management, if necessary.

## **20. VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION**

**20.1.** If the thesis is provisionally accepted, a minimum of twenty five members excluding Viva Voce Examination Board members shall be present for the Viva-Voce Examination. The viva voce examination shall be conducted as "Open Defence Type" examination. The decision of the Board of Examiners shall be final.

**20.2.** The Vice Chancellor shall constitute a Viva-Voce board with the following members:

<b>i.</b>	Deans of the Faculty Concerned / Senior most Professor in the	Chairman
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	Department	
ii.	Indian Examiner of the Thesis or Expert nominated by the Vice Chancellor	External Member
iii.	Research Supervisor	Convener
iv.	Joint Supervisor/Research Coordinator (If any)	Member

**20.3.** The circular for the same in the prescribed format shall be communicated to all the faculty members/ research scholars/ other departments/ other institutions, at least 15 days prior to the viva – voce Examination.

**20.4.** The viva-voce shall be open to all faculty members of the university, other research scholars and other interested experts/researchers /Examiners/Attendees may seek clarification/questions, if any, to be answered by the candidate at the time of viva-voce.

**20.5.** If the Viva-Voce Examination Board reports the performance of the scholar as “not satisfactory”, the candidate must to reappear for the Viva-Voce Examination at a later date (not later than six months from the date of the first Oral Examination). On the second occasion, the Oral Examination Board shall include one more expert nominated by the Vice-Chancellor.

**20.6.** If the performance of the scholar in the Viva-Voce Examination in the second occasion also reported to be “not satisfactory”, the Vice Chancellor, if deems it necessary, shall refer the remarks of the Viva-Voce Examination Board, along with the Thesis and comments of the Examiners, to a Committee constituted for this purpose and the decision of the Vice-Chancellor shall be final.

**20.7.** After successful completion of the viva-voce, the research supervisor shall prepare and forward the minutes of the meeting for the award of the Ph.D. degree to the office of Director (R&D)

## **21. AWARD OF PH.D. DEGREE**

If the report of the Board of viva-voce Examination is SATISFACTORY, the Scholar will be awarded the Ph.D. Degree with the approval of the Board of Management.

## **22. PUBLICATION OF THESIS**

Papers arising out of the thesis may be published by the Scholar. However, the thesis as a whole shall not be published by the Scholar without the express approval of the BRDC of the NICHE.

## **23. THE ACT OF PLAGIARISM**

**23.1.** In the case of research scholars who have committed the act of plagiarism his / her thesis / degree shall be forfeited and his / her research registration shall be terminated in this NICHE and also he / she shall be permanently debarred to register for any other programme in this NICHE.

**23.2.** In cases of abetment to plagiarism by the Supervisor, the recognition may be withdrawn for a period of five years and he / she shall be debarred from guiding the research scholars for any research programme in this NICHE till such period.

- 23.3. Attempt to influence the Examiners by the Research Supervisor /Joint Supervisor after the submission of synopsis / thesis of his/her scholar in connection with the evaluation report, shall lead to the withdrawal of his/her supervisorship for a period of three years and he/she shall be debarred from any research programme in the NICHE till such period.
- 23.4. Attempt to influence the Examiners by the research scholar regarding the thesis evaluation, shall lead to withdrawal of his/her registration and he/she shall be debarred from registering for any research programme for the next three years.

## **24. REPOSITORY WITH INFLIBNET AND THE UNIVERSITY**

- 24.1 The NICHE shall submit an electronic copy of the accepted Ph. D. thesis to the INFLIBNET, for hosting the same so as to make it accessible to all Institutions/Colleges.
- 24.2. Prior to the actual award of the degree, the Controller of Examination will issue a provisional Certificate to the effect that the Degree has been awarded in accordance with the provisions of the UGC Regulations, 2023.
- 24.3 One hard copy of the thesis shall be recorded in the university central library reference section, one separate copy shall be maintained in the concerned department library and one separate copy shall be maintained in the office of the Director (R&D).

## **25. DISCIPLINE AND RESEARCH ETHICS**

- 25.1. NICHE Policy on Code of ethics in research shall be applicable to all the registered scholar of the University.
- 25.2. Every Scholar enrolled on the Ph.D. Programme are expected to adhere to standards of behavioural discipline both inside and outside the university as per the Code of Ethics of NICHE and shall not indulge in any activity that could bring down the reputation of the University.
- 25.3 Any act of indiscipline of scholar shall be referred to the university disciplinary committee for inquiry and necessary action to be imposed immediately.
- 25.4. Any act of unethical practices, including plagiarism by a scholar, shall automatically result in the termination from the Programme and the admission stands cancelled. Further, such a candidate shall not be eligible to apply for any programme of study offered by the University

## **26. INTERPRETATION**

- 26.1. The Vice-Chancellor shall decide on any questions/issues regarding the interpretation of the mentioned Regulations, if any, and the decision shall be final.
- 26.2. The University shall have the power to clarify any doubt, difficulty or anomaly that may arise during the implementation of the provisions of the mentioned Regulations.

**27. POWER TO MODIFY**

**27.1.** Notwithstanding anything contained in the above said regulations, the BOM/BRDC reserves the right to modify any of the above said regulations from time to time.

**27.2.** More information is available in the NICHE website [www.niuniv.com](http://www.niuniv.com)

**27.3** For further queries, scholars are encouraged to contact the office of Director Research, Noorul Islam Centre for Higher Education through email: [dir-research@niuniv.com](mailto:dir-research@niuniv.com)