



# Postgraduate Guidelines

Faculty of Computer Science & Information Technology

Welcome to the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. These guidelines<sup>1</sup> address some important aspects of your work which takes place at the faculty level. These include arranging a research project with your supervisor(s), monitoring your progress, assessing your work and involving you in the faculty's research community.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the UNIMAS Postgraduate Handbook including the University calendar.

If you have any queries regarding the guidelines, please discuss them with your supervisor or the Deputy Dean (Research & Postgraduate)

## **Admission and Research Proposal**

1. All applications for Master by Research (MSc) and PhD. studies must include a research proposal. Every applicant must already make informal contact with any member of the faculty as their potential supervisor to work on the research proposal. Once successfully enrolled, students are expected to enhance and improve their research proposal with their designated supervisor(s).

The research proposal should contain a research plan with a tentative schedule of tasks planned by the student. MSc students have two months to complete their proposal, while PhD students need to submit their proposal within six months of enrolling. A typical length of full-time PhD studies is three years and for full-time MSc projects are 18 months long.

2. The proposal is reviewed by the supervisor(s) and an appointed member from the Faculty Postgraduate (PG) Committee (other than the supervisor), and is approved by the Faculty Dean/Deputy Dean (Research & Postgraduate).

## **Interim Report and Presentation**

3. Six months after the start of their studies, MSc students will be asked to submit an interim report to the Faculty PG Committee. You will then be asked to give a presentation of your submitted interim report in the Faculty Seminar Series. Selected members of the Faculty PG committee plus additional academics will be appointed as the Board of Assessors. This board is responsible to evaluate the

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<sup>1</sup> This guidelines is adopted from the Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

potential of the student to conduct research and progress in the chosen area. The Board should provide feedback on the progress of the project to the students and recommends to the Faculty PG Committee whether you should be terminated or proceed as postgraduate student. This means that failing to submit and defend your report well during the presentation will result of you being terminated from the postgraduate studies. Therefore, you should take this very seriously and progress well and according to your proposal.

This applies the same for PhD students however; you will only be asked to submit and present nine months after the start of your studies.

## **Progress Reports**

1. The Faculty PG Committee monitors progress in MSc and PhD studies. MSc and PhD students should produce progress reports every six months for the faculty in the form of a seminar. The progress presentation should be at least 30-minutes long, and should describe work done since the previous report, highlighting achievements and any difficulties. The report should also contain research plan with a tentative schedule of future tasks, and any papers published by the students should be attached.
2. Part-time students should produce progress reports in the form of a written report at least 3-pages long with the same contents as above.
3. The University Center for Graduate Studies (CGS) also requires the student to submit their progress via the *eProgress* available at <https://cgsweb.unimas.my/eProgressReport/>
4. In addition to formal progress reports, all supervisors should email informal extra progress reports to the Chair of the faculty PG Committee in the first week of each semester FOR ALL students (irrespective of full-time, part-time, MSc, PhD etc). The informal report should state either that:
  - a. They have not faced any problems affecting the progress of the student OR
  - b. They have encountered problem(s), a brief description of the problem(s) and ways they intend to overcome the problem(s).

If serious problems persist, close monitoring will occur, which might involve meetings with the students and the supervisory team, and/or extra progress reports. Information about related activities will be added to the student's files.

## Study

1. MSc and PhD students continue studies under the direct guidance of their supervisor(s), following the faculty and university guidelines and rules regarding progress reports, examination of theses, etc.

MSc and PhD students are expected to cooperate with their supervisor(s) and observe mutually agreed schedules of study, timetables for consultations, etc. If a student is dissatisfied with the supervisor(s), the problem may be resolved in consultation with the members of the faculty PG committee, or other members of the academic staff.

All other standard university regulations for resolving disputes between students and academic staff remain applicable.

2. During the course of your study you may have the opportunity to undertake employment, consulting or industry placement. Such activities may impair your ability to complete your thesis work satisfactorily. Before undertaking such activities, you should discuss with your supervisor(s) the possibility of switching to part-time study, or suspending your enrollment for a period. It may be the case that you will be able to derive some academic benefit from an industry-related activity (e.g. gathering data or performing case study). Before undertaking any such external activity you should write a brief amendment to your research proposal explaining the academic relevance, if any, whether a suspension of part-time enrollment is planned, and giving your revised schedule for your thesis work up to the next progress report due date. This should be forwarded, along with your supervisors' comments, to the Deputy Dean (Research & Postgraduate) and will be brought to the CGS for approval.

## Seminars

1. An MSc or PhD student (irrespective of full-time or part-time status) must present his/her research results to a general audience at least once a year at the FCSIT Postgraduate Colloquium.
2. MSc and PhD students are expected to attend faculty seminar series and participate in other research-related activities at the faculty and university level. The faculty seminar series held every Wednesday at 2-3pm serve as a forum for presenting current research results, and for receiving feedback from academics and other fellow students. Every research student is expected to present at the faculty seminar series at least twice a year (June and December) of their current progress. This enables the faculty to assess the current project status and provide critical input.
3. In some cases the students may be advised by their supervisor(s) to attend lectures and tutorials/laboratories of selected courses.

## **Final Stage of Studies**

1. MSc and PhD students present their final results during a faculty seminar series scheduled normally not more than six months before the thesis is submitted. This preliminary presentation is to ensure that the student's research project is nearly finished and final suggestions and comments can be addressed.
2. Not more than a month before the submission, MSc and PhD students will give a final presentation at the faculty seminar series. This is to finalize and ensure that the student has taken action on the suggestions and comments during the preliminary presentation.
3. If the timing is correct, then the MSc and PhD students may be asked to present again in the FCSIT postgraduate colloquium before their viva.

## **FCSIT Postgraduate Society**

Every postgraduate student registered in the faculty will automatically be a member of the FCSIT postgraduate society. The society is responsible to promote and serve the academic, intellectual, cultural, social and recreational needs and interests of the students enrolled in the postgraduate programs of the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. This entity is introduced to represent the postgraduate students in the faculty to the faculty management committee and to the university as a whole.