



**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

By -Law for the Award of  
**Research Degrees**

**By-Law No: 26**

**Effective Date: 23.03.2022**

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**  
**BY-LAW FOR THE AWARD OF**  
**RESEARCH DEGREES**

This By-Law was prepared under Section 135 of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 read in conjunction with Ordinance No. 1 of 1990 (as amended).

**Part I - General**

- 1.1. This By – Law shall be cited as By-Laws no. 26 of 2022 and being approved by the Council of The Open University of Sri Lanka at its *[Council Number]* meeting held on *[Date], [Month][Year]* replacing the By-Law for the Award of Research Degrees No. 26 of 2019 and shall be deemed to be the consolidated By-Law for the award of Research Degrees which amend all the Rules and Regulations approved by the Council of the Open University of Sri Lanka for award of various Research degrees.
- 1.2. This By-Law for the Award of Research Degrees shall be made by the Council.
- 1.3. This By-Law shall be read in conjunction with “The General By-law for the Award of Certificates, Advanced Certificates, Diplomas, Higher Diplomas, Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas and Higher Degrees” as amended, referred to hereinafter as the General By-law.
- 1.4. This By-Law shall come into effect from *[Date], [Month][Year of approval]*.
- 1.5. The relevant Research Degree may be awarded to a candidate who has fulfilled all the requirements for an award as specified in the General By-law, and in particular has,
  - 1.5.1 fulfilled all the requirements for admission to the Programme of Study leading to the award of the relevant Research Degree as set out in Part II of the relevant Regulations of this By-Law, and,
  - 1.5.2 completed the prescribed Programme of Study, as set out in Part IV of this By-Law and Part VI of the relevant Regulation to the satisfaction of the Senate of the University, and
  - 1.5.3 paid the fees prescribed by the University in accordance with Part IX of this By-Law.
- 1.6. A student who has successfully completed the prescribed Programme of Study shall be awarded the relevant Research Degree in accordance with this By-Law and the relevant Regulation for the award of the Research degree.

**Part II - Eligibility for Admission to the Programme of Study**

- 2.1. A person seeking admission to the Programme of Study leading to the award of the relevant Research Degree shall be required to have fulfilled the requirements

specified in Part II of the relevant Regulation for the award of such Research Degree.

- 2.2. The University may select candidates for admission to the Programme of Study from among those deemed to be eligible for admission under Section 2.1 of this By-Law on the basis of their performance at a test and/or an interview conducted for the purpose of admission.
- 2.3. The applicant shall submit a research proposal containing sufficient information on the background, research problem, justification, brief literature review, objectives, research plan with a time plan and research methodology to AR/SAR of the Faculty and it should be forwarded to the relevant Head of the Department and Dean of the Faculty to be submitted to the Faculty Research Committee (FRC).
- 2.4. Two experts having postgraduate qualifications at Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) Level 11 or above for Masters level research degree and at SLQF Level 12 or above for the Doctoral level research degree, in the relevant area, at least one of whom is an external member to the Open University of Sri Lanka, shall be appointed by the relevant Faculty Board, to evaluate the proposal and determine the suitability of it for the Research degree.
  - 2.4.1. If both evaluators do not approve, the proposal shall be rejected.
  - 2.4.2. If one expert rejects the proposal, a third evaluator having postgraduate qualifications at SLQF Level 11 or above for Masters level research degree and at SLQF Level 12 or above for the Doctoral level research degree, in the relevant area, shall be appointed by the relevant Faculty Board.
  - 2.4.3. A proposal accepted by any two evaluators as specified in Section 2.4 of this By-Law shall be recommended by the relevant Faculty Board for consideration of the Higher Degrees and Research Committee and the Senate.
- 2.5. The supervisors should be recommended by the FRC and informed to the Senate through Higher Degrees and Research Committee (HDRC). One or more supervisors should hold at least an MPhil qualification or equivalent, for a Masters level research degree and the principal supervisor should essentially possess MPhil (Equivalent to SLQF Level 11) or higher level qualifications in the relevant field.

One or more supervisors should hold at least PhD qualification or equivalent, for a Doctoral level research degree and the principal supervisor should essentially possess Doctoral level qualifications (Equivalent to SLQF Level 12) in the relevant field).

A supervisor having other qualifications may be appointed only with a justification acceptable to the university Senate complying with the UGC Promotional Circular/s with justification acceptable to the Senate of the OUSL, and a good publishing record acceptable to the HDRC and the Senate.

### **Part III - Registration to the Programme of Study**

- 3.1. Registration shall be valid for twelve (12) months from the date of registration and shall be renewable, subjected to a maximum period prescribed in the relevant Regulation for the award of the Research Degree.
- 3.2. The Effective date of registration shall be recommended by the Dean of the relevant Faculty, and shall be either the date on which the application is submitted to the Office of the Dean of the Faculty or the date on which the candidate is registered by paying relevant fees to the University (on or before due date of registration)
- 3.3. A candidate with the stipulated entry requirements as per the Section 2.1 of the relevant Regulation for the Research Degree shall be registered directly to the Programme of Study.
- 3.4. An applicant who does not have the stipulated entry requirements for direct registration as specified in the Section 2.2 of the relevant Regulation for the Research Degree, but possesses alternate qualifications specified in Section 2.2 of the relevant Regulation, may be considered for provisional registration. Such provisional registration shall be valid for a maximum period of twelve (12) months.
  - 3.4.1. A candidate so registered shall be required to successfully complete a qualifying examination equivalent to SLQF Level 6 and/or 7 in the same or related field to demonstrate his/her capability to undertake the proposed research.
  - 3.4.2. Qualifying examination can be either a presentation or a written examination. Panel of examiners for qualifying examinations shall be appointed by the relevant Faculty Board as specified in the relevant Regulation.
  - 3.4.3. Acceptance of the candidate by the relevant Faculty shall be communicated by the Dean of the Faculty to the Higher Degrees & Research Committee, which shall be forwarded its recommendation to the Senate.
  - 3.4.4. If accepted by the Senate, the registration shall be effective from the date of first registration as a provisional candidate.
  - 3.4.5. If the candidate is not successful in the qualifying examination, the period of provisional registration may be extended by a further period of six (06) months, subject to the maximum period stipulated in Section 3.4 above,

during which time the candidate shall be required to complete a second qualifying examination.

- 3.4.6. If the candidate is successful in the second qualifying examination, the registration shall be effective from the date of first registration as a provisional candidate.
- 3.5. A candidate who does not satisfy the requirements specified under Section 3.4 above shall have his/her provisional registration cancelled.
- 3.6. Candidates registered for a Research Degree shall submit progress reports in every six (06) months, to the Chairperson of the Higher Degrees and Research Committee through the supervisor, Head of the Department, and the Dean of the Faculty.
- 3.7. The Senate may decide on the recommendations of the Higher Degrees & Research Committee to discontinue the registration of a student who does not show satisfactory progress for a continuous period of twelve (12) months.

#### **Part IV - Programme of Study**

- 4.1. A candidate for the relevant Research Degree shall undertake a research programme leading to the submission of a thesis as per the period prescribed in the relevant Regulation. Any extension of this period may be granted under exceptional circumstances as specifically determined by the Senate.
- 4.2. The Programme of Study may consist of a combination of courses and other requirements as determined by the Senate and as specified by the Regulations for the award of the relevant Research Degree.
- 4.3. The medium of instruction of the Research Degree shall be English/Sinhala/Tamil.

#### **Part V – Submission of Thesis**

- 5.1. A candidate for the Research Degree shall undertake a research programme leading to the submission of a thesis as prescribed in the relevant Regulation.
- 5.2. At the time of submission of the thesis, the candidate shall have disseminated the findings/results of research study as specified in Section 5.2 of the relevant Regulation for the research Degree.
- 5.3. A candidate shall give the University three (03) months' notice in writing, on the prescribed form of his/her intention to submit the thesis for examination to the Deputy Registrar/Academic Administration through the Supervisor, Head of the Department and the relevant Dean of the Faculty. Notice of intention to submit the thesis will lapse automatically after three (03) months. In such an instance, the candidate shall be required to submit a fresh notice in the prescribed form.
- 5.4. Three (03) copies of the thesis must be submitted through the Dean of the

relevant Faculty and the Head of the relevant Department/s with the signature/s of the Supervisor/s, for examination in conformity with the guidelines on the preparation of the thesis.

### **Part VI - Scheme of Assessment**

- 6.1. A candidate for the Research Degree is assessed on the
  - (1) Thesis and
  - (2) Oral Examination
- 6.2. Examiners for the assessment of the thesis and the Oral Examination shall be appointed by the Senate on the recommendations of the Higher Degrees & Research Committee for the evaluation.
- 6.3. A Minimum of two (02) examiners from outside the University shall be appointed to assess the thesis.
- 6.4. The thesis may be referred to a third examiner in the case of the two(02) examiners differ in their evaluation.
- 6.5. The Oral examination of the student shall be carried out by a Panel of Examiners constituted as follows:
  - Dean of the relevant Faculty (Chairperson)
  - Head/s of the relevant Department/s
  - Examiner/s
- 6.6. All supervisors shall be invited as observers and at least one (01) supervisor shall be present for the oral examination.
- 6.7. If the Dean of the Faculty is supervising the candidate, he/she shall not serve on the Panel of Examiners, and the Dean shall nominate a suitable person with the concurrence of the Faculty Research Committee to serve in his/her place. If the Head of the Department is supervising the candidate, he/she shall not serve on the Panel of Examiners, and the Dean shall nominate a suitable person from among senior academics in the Faculty to serve in his/her place.
- 6.8. The Panel shall make the final decision for the acceptance of the Thesis as specified in Part VII of the By-Law.
- 6.9. The Deputy Registrar shall function as the Secretary to the Panel of Examiners.
- 6.10. Student shall have published/have the acceptance for publication as at least one (01) research paper for a Master level research degree and two (02) research papers for a Doctoral level research degree, in peer reviewed journals accepted by the Higher Degrees and Research Committee.

## **Part VII – Acceptance of Thesis**

- 7.1. The thesis submitted for the award of the Research Degree may be found to be
  - 7.1.1. acceptable by the Panel of Examiners, or
  - 7.1.2. acceptable on the certification of the supervisor that minor corrections/modifications suggested by the Panel of Examiners have been satisfactorily incorporated by the candidate, or
  - 7.1.3. acceptable after major revision, re-submission within a maximum period of twelve (12) months, re-examination by two (02) examiners, and Viva-Voce examination.
- 7.2. The thesis shall be rejected,
  - 7.2.1. if both examiners recommend rejection, or,
  - 7.2.2. if two (02) among three (03) examiners recommend the rejection at re-examination or
  - 7.2.3. even if one (01) of the examiners recommends major revisions or rejection at re-examination
- 7.3. Award of the degree shall be based on the recommendation of the examiners as given in Sections 7.2 and 7,3 and candidate's success in the Oral Examination.
- 7.4. However, in case of Doctoral Research, the thesis may be acceptable for the award of MPhil Degree upon the recommendation of the Panel of Examiners with the candidate's consent as in Section 3.5.1 of the Regulation for Doctor of Philosophy.

## **Part VIII – Effective Date and the Award of the Research Degree**

- 8.1. If the thesis is accepted by the examiners without any revision and the student successfully completes the oral examination, the effective date of the award shall be the date of submission of thesis, provided that the thesis in the bound form with a digital copy is handed over to the Deputy Registrar / Academic Administration within one (01) month of the oral examination.
- 8.2. If the thesis is accepted by the examiners with minor revisions and the student successfully completes the oral examination, the effective date of the award shall be the date of submission of thesis, provided that the corrected thesis is submitted in the bound form, with a digital copy along with a certification from the Supervisors to the effect that all revisions required by the Panel of Examiners have been made and is handed over to Deputy Registrar / Academic Administration within three months of the oral examination.
- 8.3. If the thesis requiring minor revisions has not been submitted within the specified period as in Sections 8.1 and 8.2 above, the effective date of the award shall be the date on which the thesis is re-submitted in the bound form with the digital copy to Deputy Registrar / Academic Administration

- 8.4. If the thesis requires major revisions, the effective date of the award shall be the date on which the thesis is re-submitted in the bound form with the digital copy as determined by Sections 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3, taking into consideration the re-submitted date.
- 8.5. No thesis shall be accepted one (01) year after the successful oral examination.
- 8.6. The award of the Research Degree in respect of a student shall be determined by the Board of Examiners, and the results shall be submitted to the Senate for confirmation. The Board of Examiners shall be constituted as follows:
  - Vice-Chancellor (Chairperson)
  - Dean of the relevant Faculty
  - Head/s of the relevant Department/s
- 8.7. The Deputy Registrar shall function as the Secretary to the Board of Examiners

#### **Part IX – Fees**

- 9.1. Fees payable for the programme will comprise of Registration fee, Tuition fee, Laboratory fee (where applicable), Library Fee, Examination Fee, and Re-examination Fee (if applicable) or any other fee as determined by the Council.
- 9.2. Fees to be paid shall be determined by the Council.
- 9.3. A student who is registered provisionally and whose registration is back-dated consequent to a qualifying examination shall pay the registration and tuition fees from the effective date of registration.
- 9.4. The other fees shall be payable at registration or as determined by the Council.

#### **Part X - Revisions**

- 10.1. This By-Law may be revised, amended, or repealed as and when deemed necessary by the Council.
- 10.2. Such revisions, amendments or repeals shall come into effect as determined by the Senate and approved by the Council.