

# Open University of Mauritius

## PhD (Doctor of Philosophy)-OUdp002

### 1. Introduction

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is a doctoral qualification that can be obtained as a result of successful research work within a wide range of subjects. The PhD course gives an opportunity to students to make a significant contribution to knowledge. The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is conferred in recognition of the student's contribution of an original piece of research revealing high critical ability and powers of imagination and synthesis. The PhD degree cannot be completed successfully without dedication and commitment throughout the period of study. The PhD allows students to think independently and critically so that they can pursue research without any supervision. In order to deal with the vast amount of literature available, students have to follow a few courses together with their research-based thesis.

### 2. Aim

The PhD course aims at

- (a) Empowering students so that they can significantly add to an existing body of knowledge;
- (b) Providing a thorough grounding in research methodology, methods and techniques;
- (c) Development of vital skills including critical thinking, conducting research independently, writing, synthesising, and analysing, that are necessary to produce an original research-based thesis;
- (d) Preparation of a substantial and original thesis emanating from an in-depth investigation and analysis;
- (e) Empowering students to review current research critically, and understand emerging trends from an inter-disciplinary perspective.

### 3. Entry Requirements

Applicants must have the following:

A masters-level degree in the related area

Applicants with undergraduate degrees (at least a second class first division, as per general rules and regulations) may be considered but they would only be allowed to register for an M.Phil/Ph.D degree. They can eventually request for a transfer from M.Phil/Ph.D to Ph.D.

### 4. Programme Duration

Minimum

Maximum

PhD

3 years

8 years

## **5. Course Structure**

The program consists of the following elements:

Course Stage

### **Year 1-Semester I**

OUdp002111: Research Issues

OUdp002112: Systematic Literature Review

(The supervisor may recommend that the students follow other courses)

Supervised Stage

### **Year 1: Semester II**

The appointment of supervisor shall be by mutual consent between the student and the University. Students should submit the name of the supervisor(s) for approval by the OU Research Degrees Committee (RDC) sub-committee.

After exploring the key issues and critically reflecting on relevant aspects of practice and their relationship with theory, students must finalise the topic of the thesis. They must assess the appropriateness of research paradigms; finalise the research framework that will guide their investigation; develop a thorough knowledge of the paradigms and methodologies by which knowledge in the field of their enquiry has been advanced and develop and robustly defend their chosen research approach. Thus, they must critically examine the use of different research methodologies employed by researchers in the chosen field of research. They must demonstrate a detailed and critical understanding of research activity and issues within the field of research and the interrelationship of research results among the topic areas as well as a thorough understanding of the research problems in the particular area chosen for the thesis.

They must master the techniques and methodologies that are likely to be productive in addressing the chosen research problem.

The research proposal must be submitted to the Open University Research Committee for review and approval.

Year 2, 3,....

Students carry out research and writing a thesis.

## **6. Assessment**

The thesis is submitted formally to the University. Assessment takes the form of a review and/or by an oral 'defence' of the thesis, usually referred to as the 'viva voce' which is Latin for 'with the living

voice'. The examination is conducted in person or by live video link at the University's discretion. The PhD degree is awarded to successful students.

## **7. Publications**

The doctoral programme has been carefully designed and duly approved by the Academic Council and Board of the Open University. All PhD students are required to publish at least two papers in peer-reviewed journals before being allowed to submit their final thesis. This ensures the quality of research produced by the doctoral learner. The research papers published should be hence derived from the thesis they will submit.

During the module Systematic Literature Review, learners are informed about the procedures to publish papers. They are also informed about the journals where they may contemplate to publish their papers.

## **8. Course Outline**

### **OUdp002111: Research Issues**

This course gives student a basic understanding of what research is and how it is done. It also introduces some of the key issues associated with doctoral research and writing. Attention is given to the nature of the research process, including the steps to be followed in planning and designing a research project and this leads to the consideration of the philosophy of research and the means by which researchers identify issues and acquire knowledge.

The topics covered include: the concept of research; philosophy of research in business and management; demonstrate understanding of philosophical assumptions and different

underpinning research approaches and strategies; understanding the specifics of management and business research; choosing a research topic and research focus; evaluating topic feasibility; research process; qualitative and quantitative research; overview of research methods; application to business research; writing a research proposal; ethics in research; and developing a research timetable.

### **OUdp002112: Systematic Literature Review**

The course allows students to understand the methods to conduct literature review systematically; students will learn how to describe and critically analyse the work of other people. Students also undertake a program of directed, in depth reading to an advanced level in the field of research in which they wish to specialise for their dissertation.

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate a detailed and critical understanding of the field of research to be studied and the interrelationship of the topic areas within the field; they should be able to thoroughly analyse and evaluate a range of critical and controversial issues drawn from the literature of the field of research as well as critically discuss the key debates within the chosen field of research. Students are also expected to develop the research problem with reference to relevant ideas in their discipline while synthesizing ideas at a high level of

understanding; this would allow them to start creating new knowledge through the development of a relevant conceptual framework.

The topics covered include: the concept of a literature review; analysis and synthesis of academic literature; theory development; sources of information and search techniques; the structure and format of a business literature review.