

**HANDBOOK FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDENTS**

**Ph.D. PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

**MAKERERE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH**

**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

**JULY, 2015**

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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to help you navigate through the years of study and research that will lead to an MPhil or Ph.D. degree in Social Studies at MISR. It is hoped that these explanations and the outlining of procedures will help you in planning your studies.

The Ph.D. in Social Studies typically requires 2 years of coursework followed by a year of building bibliographies, comprehensive exams, prospectus writing, and grant submissions; 1 year of dissertation research; and 1 year of dissertation write-up.

The ideal time frame for completion is 5 years, but circumstances vary. *MISR, however, cannot guarantee funding beyond 3 years for the MPhil and another 2 years for research and writing.* Only those students who successfully complete the MPhil can access funding for the Ph.D.

*If you do not complete the MPhil in 3 years, you will need to petition the Institute for extra time to finish the MPhil and find your own funding to pay for all costs (tuition, fees, upkeep, etc) for that extra time.*

When you enter the program, you will take three required core courses in the first semester of the programme. That should provide you with a basis on which to make a selection of courses for the second semester. By the end of the second year at the latest, each student chooses an advisor and one additional faculty member in order to form a committee. (See below, Advising). Your progress will be reviewed at the end of every semester by the entire Ph.D. teaching team.

When reporting to commence studies in year one, semester one, all students coming from outside Uganda will be provided with airport pickup from Entebbe International Airport. During holiday breaks, long vacations, and any other travel, all students shall be expected to arrange their own transport from MISR to their preferred destination and back to MISR, unless on official travel or whenever the Administrator deems transport is available.

MISR offers a full scholarship that primarily covers the academic well-being of the student. It does not cover your family, spouse, and children. In addition, when admitted to the programme you become a full-time student who will not be in any form of employment unless approved by the Director.

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## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

In order to qualify for candidacy for dissertation research, you must successfully complete at least twelve courses for credited letter and numerical grades (6–Core, 3–Major, 2–Minor, and 1–Elective).

Beyond this basic requirement, students may audit one course per term. Approval for audit must be sought from the instructor of the course, followed by final approval from the Director. An audited course will not appear on the student’s record. A pattern of incomplete work in courses on a student’s academic record will be a cause for academic concern, and possible dismissal from the program. *In all cases, incompletes must be resolved within one semester of their assignment, or the incomplete will automatically convert to an “F” grade.*

Three courses per semester is a standard load required for all students. Many students take a language course in addition to the three required courses. Only in exceptional circumstances would a student be allowed to take fewer than three courses, and then only in consultation with the Director. After the student has formed a committee, students should seek the advice of their committee members; in particular, they should obtain specific approval each semester from their Advisors. Course choices will be made for the subsequent semester in the eleventh week of the preceding semester. A student can only drop a course in the first two weeks of the semester.

### **Core Course**

Every student will be required to take specific core courses. All three courses a student takes in the first semester of year one will be required core courses. A list of core courses offered each semester may be obtained from the Ph.D. Administrator/Registrar's office.

### **Language Requirement**

MISR is committed to the fundamental importance of language skills for research, whether for primary research, for gaining access to secondary literature in a language other than English, or to utilize works in other intellectual traditions. Language training should be considered integral to a student’s program of graduate training.

### **Response papers and Term Papers**

Students shall be required to write weekly response papers of between 700 and 800 words every week. These will be due at least 24 hours BEFORE the seminar meeting. The student will also be required to write a semester paper of between 8,000 and 12,000 words. The semester paper shall be submitted before the last seminar of the semester; any late submission will require the

permission of the instructor and will be no later than two weeks after the end of the semester in which the course was taken.

Instructors are required to submit course grades within a month after the end of a semester. The specific deadline for when students are to submit semester papers will be set by the instructor of the course.

## **LIBRARY FACILITIES**

Students shall have access to all the Libraries within Makerere University during the time they are open for use and shall abide by their rules and regulations. In addition, the graduate student library at MISR shall be accessed by all **M.Phil./Ph.D.** students who shall equally adhere to its rules and regulations in using it.

Before the start of each semester, students will be provided with a copy of the reader for the courses they are taking, and these shall be picked from the MISR librarian.

In addition, students in the fifth year shall be availed a reading cubicle (as soon as the library extension is completed) at the MISR library where they can sit to write their dissertation. If a student is unable to complete the programme within the defined five years, the reading cubicle will only be available at the discretion of the MISR Librarian and the permission of the Director.

In the case of printing materials, students shall be assisted by the MISR librarian. Any photocopying shall first be approved by the MISR librarian and/or the Ph.D. Programme Administrator.

## **ACCOMODATION**

MISR shall provide student accommodation (a bed and mattress, reading chair and table, cups and plates, and internet services) to all first-year students depending on availability each year. All students will be expected to find their housing beyond the first year.

## **PAYMENTS**

Students shall be expected to have a local (Uganda) bank account where any payments by MISR shall be deposited. Students shall be paid on the terms and conditions of the project that they are attached to in the course of pursuing their M.Phil/Ph.D.

Students shall be expected to provide accountability for any funds that have been advanced to them during the programme. In particular cases, students will be required to provide

accountability before the next batch of payments can be made. Students will also be required to provide accountability for long vacation funds before the start of the new academic year in January.

## **REGISTRATION**

Every semester each student will be expected to register with the academic registrar's office, Makerere University, through the College of Humanities and Social Sciences-Institute registrar's office. Registration shall always be done by the fourth week of each semester. First-year students in semester one shall be expected to attach their relevant academic documents, and three passport-size photographs on Form R1.

Subsequent registration will be done as continuing students on Form R2 and shall be coordinated by the Institute Registrar/Ph.D. Programme Administrator. On completion of registration in semester one of every academic year, all non-Ugandan students shall be required to process student passes/ VISA and this will be done with the assistance of the Institute Administrator.

## **GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING**

Good academic standing means that you are completing courses promptly, maintaining at least a "B" grade average, and fulfilling all requirements as MISR and Makerere rules stipulate. A student's progress will be reviewed every semester by the entire Ph.D. Teaching Team. All funding is contingent upon being in good academic standing.

A student loses his or her good academic standing if any of the following occurs:

- 1) The student receives a grade lower than a "B" in any class.
- 2) The student has a cumulative grade point average of below 4.2.
- 3) The student has two unexcused absences for any one class.
- 4) The student receives an unexcused incomplete in any one class.

An "unexcused" absence or incomplete is one that is not the result of medical reasons or other personal emergencies. Decisions on whether absences and incompletes are excused or not will be subject to the consideration of the MISR Academic Board, as will decisions concerning the revocation of good academic standing and loss of fellowship.

It should be noted that any student who has two or more incompletes for any reason will not be allowed to enroll until the work for those courses have been completed to the satisfaction of the instructor.

## **TA/TEACHING FELLOWS**

Teaching experience as a graduate student Teaching Fellow is an integral part of Ph.D. training and is an essential credential for obtaining future academic positions.

MISR requires its Ph.D. students to be Teaching Fellows for two semesters. A student is meant to have no teaching responsibilities during the first and second years. A student will be expected to tutor the first semester of the 3rd year (the undergraduate second semester beginning January/February) and the long vacation at the end of the 3rd year (the undergraduate first semester beginning August or September). These will follow the undergraduate academic calendar and will coincide with a student's third year. A student's tutoring responsibility each semester will involve teaching two tutorials of no more than 20 students each.

## **LONG VACATION FUNDING**

MISR will endeavour to get each student funds for research during the long vacation. For this purpose, each student is encouraged to join one of the research groups at MISR. A report detailing research results and activities must be submitted to the relevant research group after long vacation research.

Funding for long vacation research and training early in one's graduate career is meant to promote theoretically and methodologically refined and feasible dissertation research proposals, based on enhanced language skills, and preliminary visits to potential sites and archives.

Students in their first year will be paid long vacation funding that would be accounted for by January of the following year. Subsequent long vacation funding/payments to students shall be paid after submission of and proper auditing of accountabilities for the previous academic year.

## **APPLICATIONS FOR EXTERNAL FUNDING**

MISR encourages each student to apply for research and writing funds for years 4 and 5 of their programme. Information on funding opportunities can be accessed from the Ph.D. Administrator. These applications should be made in the third year.

## **ADVISING**

Advising relationships are basic to the department's graduate programme.

**Preliminary Advisor:** Following the Orientation in the first semester, every student will be assigned a Preliminary Advisor. In the first two years, before a committee is formed, students must discuss their course selections and academic progress with the Preliminary Advisor before the beginning of each semester.

**Reading Committee:** After completing two years of Coursework, the student will join a research Colloquium which will bring together all third-year students with the entire Ph.D. teaching team for the full third year. The student will spend the third year preparing to take two Comprehensive Exams, one thematic, and the other place-specific. In the *thematic* exam, the student is expected to have an understanding of scholarly debates that have informed the development of literature on the student's chosen theme globally. In the place-specific exam, the student focuses on the scholarly literature on at least three themes on the country/region (e.g., Uganda, Ethiopia/Eritrea) of his/her specialization. The student is guided in this by a Reading Committee. The Reading Committee is dissolved as soon as the student passes the Comprehensive Exams and is granted the MPhil.

### **A. Written Comprehensive Examination**

Each comprehensive exam must have a formatted cover page (a template is attached to this handbook). The same cover page should be used for the answer.

The student will take two written examinations. One exam will be theme-specific (e.g., development, political violence, culture, politics, etc.) and the other place-specific (e.g., Buganda, Uganda, East Africa, etc.). Each exam will be taken as a week-long (7-day) take-home exam. If the student does not submit the exam within the stipulated 7-day period, that exam becomes invalid and the student must restart this process afresh by resubmitting questions and retaking the exams. The timing of the comprehensive exams is therefore of the essence and must be strictly adhered to. The student must prepare bibliographies and base questions on these in consultation with the advisor. These questions should be given to committee members who, after consultation, may amend/delete/add to these questions. Each exam paper should be divided into two sub-themes. There must be at least two questions under each sub-theme and the student given a choice, to answer 2 or 3 questions, at least one on each sub-theme (i.e., from each section). The student will receive the exact exam questions from the Ph.D. Administrator before the beginning of the examination period. **Each exam should entail answers amounting to about thirty pages with 1.5 spacing (15 pages for each of two questions, 10 pages each for three)**, although the length of the examinations can vary on approval by the committee. Each exam will be graded by two examiners. The advisor will grade both examinations. The Committee Member may grade both exams or the student may choose to have an external examiner (from outside the Committee but from within MISR) grade one of the two exams. Each examiner will give the exam one of the following three grades: pass, fail, or distinction.

Each examiner will enter this mark on a grade sheet to be supplied by the Ph.D. Administrator, sign and return the sheet to the same Ph.D. Administrator.

Following the written examinations, the committee will hold a one-hour oral consultation with the student to discuss the student's performance in the examinations and the writing of the Ph.D.



research proposal. The timing of the exams will be agreed upon in the third-year Research Colloquium during the first semester of Year 3.

In the event of a Fail, students may be asked to retake the exam at a date determined by the readers. Failure in both exams may be grounds for dismissal from the program. Upon successful completion of the exams, the committee will recommend to the department to advance the student to Ph.D. candidacy. An M.Phil. degree will be granted if all requirements have been met (i.e., successful completion of the written exams, twelve courses taken for letter grades, satisfaction of the language requirement, no outstanding incompletes in courses taken, and teaching two semester of tutorials). Students are not authorized to leave for the field to begin their dissertation research until they have fulfilled all the requirements necessary in order to receive the M.Phil. degree and have successfully completed the dissertation research prospectus defence as outlined below.

## **B. Dissertation Prospectus**

Not all students choose to move on to write the Ph.D. dissertation. Those who wish to do so, prepare a proposal and submit it by a specified deadline. Besides the literature review that the student has already prepared during the third year, the key to the doctoral proposal is a problem statement, and a statement of the theoretical/conceptual framework and objectives of the research. Ph.D. proposals are evaluated once a year. It is only after the proposal is passed that the student is admitted to the Ph.D. programme. It is at this point that the student is given a Doctoral Committee.

The dissertation research prospectus is to be submitted for provisional approval by two examiners identified by the Director as having expertise in the subject matter of the examination. The student will submit a written proposal to the committee during the second semester. The proposal should be submitted at least a week before the Academic Board meets to evaluate all doctoral proposals.

**Doctoral Committee:** A student's committee is composed of an Advisor (Sponsor) and one or two committee members. By the end of the third year, a student will convey to the Ph.D. Administrator a list of three names of those the student would prefer on his/her Committee. The final appointment of members to the Committee will be made by the Academic Board of MISR. A one-hour meeting with the committee must then be scheduled and held before the end of the third year; in that meeting, the student's plans for research and grant applications should be discussed. Although continuity is desirable in advising relationships, students may petition the Director to change the membership of their committees. The academic staff likewise are free to remove themselves from committees.

Such changes must be reported to the Ph.D. Administrator. Oversight for the advising system is provided by the Director.

A committee is expected to provide tailored advice and support concerning such matters as language training, grant applications, and dissertation research, together with general intellectual guidance and critical input in preparation for a professional career.

Based on their particular interests and objectives, students may be advised concerning possible sources of funding and the gamut of possible careers, ranging from the multi-field generalist to one of the many types of specialization. Committee members also will prepare letters of reference and recommendation in support of advisee applications of various types.

At the end of each academic year, the annual faculty meeting for the evaluation of students represents the collective effort of the faculty to monitor progress through the graduate program.

In advance of this meeting (usually held in late July) students should communicate with their committee members, seek letters of recommendation as necessary, and check their academic records for accuracy. In accordance with the discussions at this meeting, the Ph.D. The Institute Registrar/Ph.D. administrator will send letters to each student commenting on his or her progress and detailing steps to redress any problems going forward.

You may have any member of the Ph.D. Teaching Team at MISR, with the minimum rank of Research Fellow, as your advisor. It is advisable that a committee include individuals with relevant historical and theoretical expertise. A committee member who has left MISR may continue to serve on the committee as a member for two years after leaving MISR – so long as such members will meet their own cost of travel to MISR for thesis defence. In all cases, the advisor must be a member of the MISR academic staff.

The form, length, and style of the dissertation prospectus are worked out between the student and his or her committee members.

### **FIELDWORK**

Most students will undertake fieldwork for a period of up to one year. During that time, you will be pursuing a particular research interest. It is advisable that you maintain copious notes during your tenure away from the University, and that you make duplicate copies—whether you are “taking notes” in a notebook or on a computer. These should be kept separately; one copy may even be forwarded to your dissertation sponsor or elsewhere for safekeeping. It may also be advisable to email your notes to yourself on a Gmail account, or something comparable, thereby maintaining a password-protected data archive available from anywhere you have access to the internet. Maintaining contact with your advisors during fieldwork is crucial. Often, they can detect lacunae in your research, or can help you to redirect or reformulate your research agenda as you encounter new and unpredicted circumstances. They can also help you to maintain a sense of perspective during a period that can be extremely demanding, both intellectually and personally.

You should also maintain contact with the Ph.D. Administrator, who will help to ensure that you are appropriately registered and receiving any MISR funding that is due to you. It is essential that you advise the Ph.D. Administrator of your field address or an appropriate contact for you. It is your responsibility to ensure that you remain registered and in good standing with the University while away from campus for the purposes of research.

## **DISSERTATION WRITING**

The challenges of writing a dissertation are as great as the intellectual rewards. Sustaining an argument and maintaining good writing over such a long piece can be daunting. Analyzing and then finding ways to integrate diverse material from ethnographic, archival, and library research take effort. There are several things you can do to make the process go more smoothly. First, the work you do for your written examinations and dissertation proposal should be useful for the dissertation. The more care you devote to them, the more you will be able to use them as resources. Second, while in the field you try to correspond regularly with your committee. Even if they do not have the opportunity to respond at length, the process of formulating your ideas and thinking about what you are learning will be invaluable to you. Finally, when you return from the field and are trying to write, you will have a meeting with the Director and your advisor where a writing schedule will be discussed and agreed upon. Your advisor's approach to reading dissertation chapters is something you should clarify early on in your relationship. Please know that your advisor is expected to be your primary reader.

Students may find it rewarding to organize thesis-writing groups in which work can be shared and critiqued, deadlines suggested, ideas engaged, the mechanics of writing and structuring arguments discussed, and a sense of community created.

## **THREE AND FIVE-YEAR RULE**

Keep in mind that your MPhil funding will not go beyond three years and your Ph.D. funding beyond years 4 and 5. This means that should you fail to complete your MPhil in three years and your Ph.D. dissertation in the fifth year, you will need to find your financial resources to register as a student and to meet your expenses during the fourth year (in case of an extended MPhil) and the sixth or subsequent years in case of an extended Ph.D. Permission to register each term is contingent, in part, on the academic staff's judgment that progress in the degree program is satisfactory. A student who fails to maintain satisfactory progress will have his or her candidacy terminated.

### **The Defence**

Before defence is ready to be scheduled, the two inside (departmental) members of the committee must approve the final draft of the dissertation.

You should provide sufficient time for your committee members to read thoroughly, and you must distribute the final version of your dissertation one month before the defence. The Ph.D. Administrator will schedule a defence if the application is filed by March 15 in the first semester and July 15 in the second semester; otherwise, this must be handled between you and your sponsor.

The three possible outcomes of the defence are: Pass (minor revisions), Incomplete (major revisions), and Fail. In the event of an Incomplete, a time frame is set by the examining committee, such that acceptable major revisions must be submitted not earlier than a certain time and not later than a certain time.

If these major revisions are not completed within the time stipulated, conditional acceptance will be changed to Fail.

### **Appendix: Template for Comprehensive Examination:**

#### **MAKERERE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL RESEARCH**

#### **INTER-DISCIPLINARY PHD IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

#### **COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION 1**

Name of Student:

Examiners:

- 1.
- 2.

Dates:

THEME:

Sub-theme 1:

Sub-theme 2:

MAKERERE INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION I

STUDENT:

EXAMINERS:

THEME 1:

Answer TWO or THREE questions from the following, at least one for each sub---theme.

**NOTE: YOUR ANSWER SHOULD BE ROUGHLY 30 PAGES FOR ALL QUESTIONS COMBINED, 15 PAGES PERQUESTION SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ANSWER TWO QUESTIONS, AND 10 PAGES PER QUESTION SHOULD YOU ANSWER THREE QUESTIONS. (USE 1.5 SPACING BETWEEN LINES.)**

Sub-Theme 1:

Question 1.

Question 2:

(You may add up to two more questions)

Sub-Theme 2:

Question 3.

Question 4.

(You may add up to two more questions)