



Developed by: Curriculum development committee

Abrha Tesfay (Assistant Professor) Chairperson-PI

Gebregwergs Teklay (Senior Lecturer) member

Meressa Tsehaye (Associate Professor) member

Seife Hailu (Associate Professor) member

Yemane Gebremichael (Dr/Assistant Professor) member

Department of Political Science and Strategic Studies

June 2024

Executive summary

Programme name: PhD in Conflict and Peace Studies

Programme owner: Department of Political Science and Strategic Studies (DPSSS), College of Law and Governance (CLG), Mekelle University

Enrollment type: Regular

Degree to be awarded: Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict and Peace Studies

Duration of study: Four years

Programme administration tier: University Senate-College Council/Registrar and Alumni Directorate Office - Department Head - Department Graduate Committee/PhD programme coordinator

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Rationale	4
3. Objective	5
4. Competencies	6
4.1. Professional profile	6
4.2. Graduate Profile	6
5. Human resource capacity	6
6. Admission and duration.....	10
6.1. Admission Criteria	10
6.2. Duration of the program	10
7. Curriculum structure	10
7.1. Course work.....	11
7.2. List of courses and course descriptions.....	11
7.3. Research (Dissertation) work	16
8. Evaluation process	17
8.1. Evaluation of course work	17
8.2. Evaluation of Dissertation.....	18
9. Decision on Dissertation.....	20
10. Rating a dissertation	21
11. Supervision	23
11.1. Key responsibilities of principal and external supervisors	23
11.2. Key responsibilities and rights of students.....	24
12. Degree Nomenclature.....	25
13. Quality assurance system.....	25
14. Funding and Financial support system	25
15. Facilities for research students	26
16. PhD Programme Coordinator.....	26
Appendix 1-Research Proposal content format	27
Appendix 2-Thesis content format.....	28
Appendix 3-Sample PhD title page.....	29
Appendix 4-Sample PhD signature page.....	30

1. Introduction

This curriculum document contains the rationale, objective, competencies, admission requirements, curriculum structure, course descriptions, evaluation system and other specific rules and regulations of the PhD in Conflict and Peace Studies programme at the Department of Political Science and Strategic Studies (DPSSS) of Mekelle University (MU). The purpose of the curriculum document is to inform prospective and registered PhD students, course instructors, supervisors, examiners and other relevant actors and bodies about the PhD programme at the Department of Political Science and Strategic Studies of Mekelle University.

The PhD program in Conflict and Peace studies is a specialized study focused on three areas of study-Ethiopia, the Horn Africa and the Middle East. The program covers issues of study such as development/democracy-conflict/peace nexus, (geo-) politics-conflict/peace nexus, Women-conflict peace nexus, peace and security governance and conflict resolution and peace building systems and approaches. The issues are selected based on the belief that they are the key drivers of conflict and peace in the study areas. They are also reflected in the design of courses for the program.

The curriculum document is developed based on inputs from the vision and mission of the DPSSS/MU, assessment of national and regional development priorities, gaps and needs assessment study conducted on academic and regional institutions and government and non-government organizations in Ethiopia, best practices of PhD programs in partner Universities in Ethiopia and abroad and the 2017 Senate Legislation of Mekelle University and other relevant legal and institutional frameworks.

2. Rationale

The PhD programme in Conflict and Peace Studies at Mekelle University aims to contribute towards responding to national, regional and institutional needs and priorities in the areas of conflict resolution and peace building nationally and regionally. Regionally (the Horn of Africa and Middle East regions in particular) and nationally (Ethiopia and many other states in the two regions mentioned in particular) peace is currently badly needed but scarcely supplied. It will also

be probably the case in the foreseeable future. There is thus a need for producing peace and conflict researchers, educators, analysts, strategists and advisors in adequate quantity and quality in the regions and the states and societies inside them that can help through relevant knowledge production and dissemination.

By offering courses relevant to national and regional peace and security and development needs and priorities and producing professionals equipped with necessary knowledge, skills and attitude in the field of Conflict and peace studies, the programme would contribute to the development of innovative solutions to multifaceted peace and security problems (including wars), problems of political economy and social justice governance and problems of managing other socio-political issues in Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa and beyond.

The Ph.D. programme would also contribute towards enhancing the research and teaching capacity of Mekelle University and other academic and research institutions in Ethiopia and beyond and thereby enhancing their international competitiveness and excellence in the field. Currently, an increasing number of higher education institutions in Ethiopia are offering graduate level studies in many social science fields related to Conflict and peace studies and they are facing critical shortage of scholars and researchers with terminal degree. They need course instructors, theses and dissertations supervisors and examiners. The PhD programme would thus contribute towards filling up this gap by producing specialized experts.

The PhD program would also broaden the opportunity for prospective students to pursue higher level study and thereby enhance their national, regional and global level competitiveness and standing.

3. Objective

The main objective of the PhD Program at the DPSSS is to contribute towards filling up the gap of highly qualified human resource demands in Ethiopia in the field of the Conflict and peace studies for meeting national development priorities. In this sprit, the PhD programme has also the following specific objectives:

- To produce Ethiopia, Horn Africa and Middle East specialists in conflict and peace
- To increase the number of PhD holder academic staffs in Mekelle University and thereby enhance its institutional competitiveness in the field at national and international level.
- To contribute towards meeting Ethiopian higher education institutions' need for qualified human resource for their teaching-learning, research and community engagement mandates (e.g., course delivery, thesis/dissertation supervision and examination in graduate studies)
- To enhance students' professional and employment competitiveness at national and international levels

4. Competencies

4.1. Professional profile

Professionals of Conflict and peace studies engage, among others, in the following roles in public, private and civil society sectors at local, national and international levels:

- **Knowledge production and transfer:** through conducting researches that address the root causes of conflicts and disseminating knowledge and skills that help to prevent and mitigate conflicts and build peace
- **Provision of capacity building supports:** through engaging in executive and community peace education/training programs
- **Participation in peace advocacy and peace action:** through engaging in peace dialogue facilitation, negotiating/mediating conflicts and policy advice efforts in this regard

4.2. Graduate Profile

The PhD in Conflict and peace studies program at the DPSSS will produce graduates:

- that are knowledgeable and skillful peace researchers and educators/trainers
- that are effective conflict mappers, conflict analysts, peace dialogue facilitators, conflict negotiators/mediators and peace builders

5. Human resource capacity

The Department of Political science and Strategic studies (and broadly Mekelle University) has adequate enough staff profile to successfully handle the PhD Programme in Conflict and peace

PhD Curriculum in Conflict and Peace Studies Programme

studies. The Department draws human resources for the PhD programme, among others, from the following sources:

- From within the department itself
- From relevant departments/colleges/institutes with in Mekelle University
- From sister Universities in Ethiopia and abroad
- From research institutions in Ethiopia and abroad... etc

The staff profile for handling the PhD program is provided by field of specialization and academic rank in the table below:

Currently available staff profile for the PhD program

S.N	Name	Field of Specialization	Academic rank	Institutional affiliation	Remark
1	Dr. Assefa Leake	MA in International Relations PhD in Political Theory	Assistant Professor	DPSSS, MU	
2	Dr. Yemane G/Michael	MA in International Relations PhD in Political Science	Assistant Professor	DPSSS, MU	
3	Dr. Solomon G/Yohannes	MA in Governance and Development Studies PhD in Higher Education Governance	Assistant Professor	DPSSS, MU	
4	Dr. Gebreyesus Teklu	Post-Doc in Conflict resolution	Associate Professor	College of Social Sciences, MU	
5	Dr. Tsegay Berhane	Post-Doc in Conflict resolution	Associate Professor	Law school, MU	

PhD Curriculum in Conflict and Peace Studies Programme

6	Dr. Muuz Gidey	MA in Peace and Security Studies PhD in Peace and Security studies	Assistant Professor	Tigray Institute of Policy Studies (TIPS)	Former staff of DPSSS, MU
7	Professor Kjetil Tronvolle	Professor of Conflict and peace studies	Professor	Oslo New University College	Adjunct professor at DPSSS, MU
8	Dr. Fana Gebresenbet	PhD in Peace and Security studies	Associate Professor	Institute of Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), AAU	

Potential staff profile for the PhD Program

S.N.	Name	Field of Specialization	Academic rank	Institutional affiliation	Remark
1	Meressa Tsehay	MA in Peace and Security Studies Associate Professor of Political Science	Associate professor	DPSSS, MU	
2	Yemane Zeray	MA in International Relations Associate Professor of Political Science	Associate professor	DPSSS, MU	

PhD Curriculum in Conflict and Peace Studies Programme

3	Seife Hailu	MA in Public Policy Associate Professor of Political Science	Associate professor	DPSSS, MU	
4	Abraha Tesfay	MA in Peace and Security Studies Assistant Professor of Political Science	Assistant professor	DPSSS, MU	
5	Gebrehiwot Hailemariam	MA in Peace and Security Studies Assistant Professor of Political Science	Assistant professor	DPSSS, MU	
6	Fre Alemshet	MA in Federalism Studies Assistant Professor of Political Science	Assistant professor	DPSSS, MU	
7	Gezae Desta	MA in Peace and Security Studies Assistant Professor of Political Science	Assistant professor	DPSSS, MU	
8	Gebremedhin Gebremichael	MA in International Relations PhD Candidate in Political Science	Senior lecturer	DPSSS, MU	
9	Tsige Gebremichael	MA in Human rights PhD candidate in Human Rights	Senior lecturer	DPSSS, MU	
10	Mickale Kihshen	PhD in Peace and Security studies	Assistant Professor	Department of Civics, MU	
11	Yohannes Mamo	MA in Governance and Federalism Studies	Assistant Professor	DPSSS, MU	

6. Admission and duration

6.1. Admission Criteria

- 6.1.1. Admission to the PhD Programme at the Department of Political Science and Strategic Studies follows the general guidelines set forth by MU's Senate Legislation.
- 6.1.2. Applicants who have successfully completed their MA or MSc degree from an accredited university, preferably in the social sciences and humanities, are eligible to apply for admission.
- 6.1.3. Admission will be considered based on the soundness of the applicants' PhD concept note (a maximum of 5 pages) specifying: which issues they are considering and the scientific approach, theory and methodology to be adopted for study, publications and research experience; and written and oral examinations.
- 6.1.4. Applicants are admitted at the beginning of each academic year.

6.2. Duration of the program

- 6.2.1. The duration for the completion of the PhD Programme is four years.
- 6.2.2. Extensions may only be granted by a recommendation from the advisor and with an endorsement from the Department Graduate Committee (DGC). The extension will only be granted to students who request it for reasons beyond their control. The maximum number of years granted for completion of the programme is six years.
- 6.2.3. Students who fail to maintain continuous registration without official withdrawing from the programme shall be considered to have dropped out of the programme. If such students wish to resume their studies, they must submit a readmission application to the Office of the Registrar. Their application will be assessed and endorsed by the DGC on the basis of the rules and regulations in force at the time of readmission.

7. Curriculum structure

The PhD Programme integrates coursework and a dissertation. It aims to deliver a curriculum appropriate to the multi-disciplinary nature of Conflict and Peace studies. Accordingly, PhD

PhD Curriculum in Conflict and Peace Studies Programme

students will pursue a rigorous doctoral curriculum with core and specialization courses. The program may require students who are deemed to have a deficiency in the field of Conflict and Peace studies to take relevant courses from the MA programmes in the Department of Political science and Strategic studies or other post-graduate programmes at MU.

7.1. Course work

- 7.1.1. Course work takes a maximum of three semesters and the preparation and public defense of a dissertation proposal will be made at the third semester
- 7.1.2. The coursework amounts to a maximum of **27** credits (meaning not more than **8** courses in total) and will be concluded at the first semester of second year. Beginning in the second semester of second year, PhD students will exclusively concentrate on researching and writing their doctoral dissertation. Additionally, the programme seeks to impart pedagogical skills to doctoral students with the expectation that some of them will pursue careers in institutions of higher learning.
- 7.1.3. For sound academic reasons, a supervisor may request the suspension of a student. This request is presented to and approved by the DGC.
- 7.1.4. A student forgoes any of his/her academic rights when he/she fails to register on time.

7.2. List of courses and course descriptions

- 7.2.1. Course codes: The course code for all courses in PhD in Conflict and Peace studies program is PACS which refers to Conflict and Peace studies. All courses are numbered in **800** in which First semester courses end with **1**, and Second semester courses end with **2**. The course number for the dissertation is **900**.

Course code	Course title	Credit Hours	Year, Semester	Remark
PACS 801	Theoretical Perspectives in Conflict and Peace	3	I, I	
PACS 811	Advanced Research Methods in Conflict and Peace Studies	6	I, I	
PACS 821	Dispute Systems Design and Conflict Resolution	3	I, I	
PACS 832	Development, Democracy and Peace	3	I, II	

PhD Curriculum in Conflict and Peace Studies Programme

PACS 842	Women, Conflict and Peace	3	I, II	
PACS 852	Conflict and Peace dynamics in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East	3	I, II	
PACS 862	Peace and Security Governance in the Horn of Africa	3	I, II	
PACS 871	Seminar on Conflict and Peace in Ethiopia	3	II, I	Students prepare and defend their Dissertation proposals
PACS 900	Dissertation		II, III & IV (All semesters)	
Total course credit hours		27		

Fig. Summary of Core and Specialization courses, Course codes and Credit hour weights

Course descriptions

PACS 801: Theoretical Perspectives in Conflict and Peace, Core course, 3 CHrs.

This course revisits and examines various competing and contending theoretical perspectives in the field of conflict and peace studies. It covers, among others, classical theoretical perspectives such as realism, liberalism and Marxism/structuralism and modern and post-modern theoretical perspectives such as critical theory (with its various strands like feminist theory, liberation theory, ecological theory...etc) and others.

The course is a foundation to subsequent courses in the program and it aims to help the doctoral students establish philosophical and theoretical thinking clarity in their engagement in research or other exercises on any topic/issue of conflict and peace.

PACS 811: Advanced Research Methods in Conflict and Peace Studies, Core course, 6 CHrs.

This course engages students in epistemological, ontological and methodological discussions and debates as they embark on using historical, comparative or empirical research approaches and qualitative, quantitative or mixed method in conducting conflict and peace research. It also engages them in navigating through the research process from topic selection to producing final research work. In this regard, it particularly focuses on acquainting the students with the academic writing

skills (i.e., based on Mekelle University's research work guideline and format) and research ethics required in conflict and peace research.

The course aims at clearing the ground for the doctoral students to discover how a research question is formulated, how an appropriate research method is chosen, how adequate and quality data is collected, how the data is analyzed and interpreted and how results are effectively presented and finally how a quality dissertation or other scholarly work is produced.

PACS 821: Dispute Systems Design and Conflict Resolution, Core course, 3 CHrs.

This course surveys and examines different conflict resolution and peace building systems design in different regions, states and societies in the world. The course particularly analyzes state systems design (federal, unitary), government systems design (parliamentary, presidential), party systems design, (political) economy systems design, security systems design, customary/alternative dispute settlement systems design and other designs in light of their roles in and impacts on conflict resolution and peace building. At practical level, the course also exposes students to the notions of Stakeholder Analysis and Needs Assessment, Process Design and Selection, Institutional Design and Capacity Building, Evaluation and Impact Assessment and other models in conflict resolution systems design.

The course aims to equip students with theoretical, empirical and comparative knowledge and skills that help them design effective conflict resolution and peace building systems or evaluate designed systems.

PACS 832: Development, Democracy and Peace, Core course, 3 CHrs.

This course explores and examines the political economy of conflict and peace-i.e., the interplay among development, democracy and peace. It particularly examines development theories such as (neo-) liberal peace theory, socialist/Marxist peace theory, social democratic peace theory and development peace theory and political theories such as democratic peace theory and authoritarian peace theory that explain structural and cultural violence which are the cores of absence of sustainable peace. In light of this, the course surveys and examines natural resource management, power and wealth (re-) distribution and other development related conflicts and ethnic/national, religious, ideological (including on state (re-) formation and nation (re-) building

issues) and other diversity management/democratization related conflicts in the context of Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa region and beyond by employing historical, comparative and empirical approaches.

The course aims to help students to comprehensively understand the causes, actors, issues and dynamics of intra-state and inter-state conflicts in the Horn of Africa states in particular and thereby to contribute knowledge and skills that contribute towards conflict resolution and peace building by addressing development deficit and democracy deficit.

PACS 842: Women, Conflict and Peace, Core course, 3 CHrs.

This course examines the theoretical and empirical relationship between women and conflict and women and peace. The course also examines the various international and national level policy and legal frameworks that capture the notions of women inclusion and women empowerment in conflict resolution and peace building and navigates world experiences on the roles of women in conflict and peace.

The course aims to equip students with necessary theoretical, empirical and comparative knowledge and skills that encourage them to do research on the role of women in conflict and peace or advocacy on enhancing women inclusion and empowerment in conflict resolution and peace building systems and processes.

PACS 852: Conflict and Peace dynamics in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, Core course, 3 CHrs.

This course navigates and examines conflict and peace dynamics in the Horn of Africa and the Middle East including the interplay between the regions. It particularly surveys and examines emerging causes of conflict in these two regions such as water and hydro politics, land, mineral and port (geo-) politics, ideology and security and regional hegemonic competition, actors of conflict and peace in two regions (national, regional and global actors) and dynamics of inter-region influence. In this regard, the course examines the dynamics of Ethio-Somalia/Somaliland, Ethio-Egyptian, Ethio-Sudan/South Sudan, Ethio-Eritrea conflicts and others as exemplifications.

The course also examines the recent wars in the regions such as the Tigray war, the Sudan war and the Israel-Palestine war in this context.

The course aims to help students acquire necessary historical, empirical and comparative knowledge that help them comprehensively understand the dynamics of conflict and peace in the Horn of Africa and Middle East regions and thereby to contribute knowledge and skills for conflict resolution and peace building.

PACS 861: Peace and Security Governance in the Horn of Africa, Core course, 3 CHrs.

This course explores and examines the national, regional and global level peace and security systems and architectures in the Horn of Africa. It analyses theoretical and conceptual perspectives of security, types of security and the development and nature of security along with its governance system. The course particularly, examines the African Union (AU), the Inter-Governmental Authority (IGAD), the United Nations (UN) and other peace and security systems and architectures as they operate in the Horn of Africa. It will focus on their roles, nature and trajectories (achievements, strengths and limitations). The course aims to help students acquire necessary historical, empirical and comparative knowledge that help them comprehensively understand the nature and problems of Peace and Security Governance in the Horn of Africa and thereby to contribute knowledge and skills that support peace and security governance reforms in the region.

PACS 871: Seminar on Conflict and Peace in Ethiopia, Core course, 3 CHrs.

This course engages students in scholarly discussions and debates (based on research presentations) on various themes and issues of conflict and peace in Ethiopia. The course particularly focuses on identifying and analyzing emerging issues of conflict and Peace in Ethiopia such as the resurgence of the land question, the resurgence of the nations and nationalities question, the question of democratic deficit, the question of development deficit, the question of climate change and environment conflicts, the question of communication technologies revolution and governance crises, and the question of security dilemma amidst regional geo-political competition. In light of these macro conflicts, the course analyzes resource-based conflicts (including territorial claims and counter claims), identity-based conflicts (ethnic/national, religious, ideology), political conflicts (power struggle) and other development and democratization related conflicts in today's

Ethiopia. It also examines the conflict resolution and peace building approaches at play in Ethiopia including their degree of effectiveness and challenges.

The course aims to equip students with the analytical tools and empirical insights necessary to conduct advanced research, policy analysis and advocacy on contemporary conflicts and peace in Ethiopia

PACS 900: Dissertation

The dissertation is a research project involving theoretical and empirical issues of conflict, peace and related questions. Students enroll for the dissertation beginning in the Second semester of their Second year up to the successful defense of their Dissertation.

7.3. **Research (Dissertation) work**

- 7.3.1. The Research (Dissertation) work period covers the research and write-up period and continues from second year second semester to third and fourth years all semesters.
- 7.3.2. The Research (Dissertation) work is intended to be an independent academic work of high standards and one which has not previously been presented to any university for an award of degree. The dissertation should contribute to the development of knowledge in its field, and be of sufficient quality for it to be considered publishable with in the field's academic literature
- 7.3.3. During their second year in the program, PhD students will be required to prepare a research proposal for their dissertation. By the end of first semester of second year, students are required to submit a substantiated and detailed dissertation proposal and work plan. At the beginning of second semester of second year, students who have performed satisfactorily on the course work (who scored a minimum CGPA of 3.00) and successfully defended their dissertation proposal will be granted a PhD candidate status and shall fully concentrate on their dissertation research
- 7.3.4. The Department of Political Science and Strategic Studies through its DGC appoints and approves the main and second supervisors. The supervisors must hold doctoral degrees or equivalent qualifications in the fields of specialization captured in the

program courses or related disciplines. In addition, the main supervisor should have a rank of Associate Professor with PhD and, in case of shortage, a minimum rank of Assistant Professor with PhD.

- 7.3.5. The department establishes a multi-disciplinary PhD colloquium where doctoral candidates are required to present their draft chapters/findings twice a year. Moreover, at the end of each semester both doctoral candidates and their respective supervisors formally report to the department head about the progress of their dissertation project. This reporting starts from the beginning of the semester of the year of PhD candidacy.
- 7.3.6. The research period will be complete with a submission of a dissertation totality 80,000 words in length, with an absolute maximum of 100,000 words. Additional material contained within the thesis, such as appendices or the bibliography, is excluded from the word limit. No candidate may submit a dissertation within three academic years of registration except with special permission from the DGC.
- 7.3.7. A dissertation should be publicly defended and have a minimum grade of ‘Satisfactory’ from a board of examiners to be accepted for partial fulfilment of a PhD degree.
- 7.3.8. The department forms a three-to-five-member board of examiners from academics with proven competence in the subject matter of the dissertation and who hold at minimum a PhD degree.
- 7.3.9. The Board of Examiners will consist of internal and external scholars. Internal examiners are those with an appointment at MU, while external examiners are those who work outside of the MU system.

8. Evaluation process

8.1. Evaluation of course work

- 8.1.1. All coursework will be evaluated by a series of reading and written assignments, paper presentations, term papers and final examinations.
- 8.1.2. Detailed evaluation mechanisms and criteria for each course are expected to be developed by the course instructor and letter grades will be assigned to students at the end of each course

- 8.1.3. The letter grades range from 'A' which represents Excellent and 'F' which represents Fail. The GPA and CGPA grade values are A+=4.00, A= 4.00, A- =3.75, B+=3.50, B=3.00, B-=2.75, C+=2.50, C=2.00, F=0.00
 - 8.1.4. To successfully complete the programme, doctoral students must earn a minimum of B (CGPA of 3.00 and above) in the 27-credit coursework and they shall have no C+ or below grade in all courses
 - 8.1.5. By the end of first semester of second year, PhD students will publicly present and defend their dissertation proposal, which is only approved after successful presentation.
 - 8.1.6. For students whose candidacy is approved and are undertaking research towards their dissertation, their supervisors are required to regularly and formally report to the Department about the progress of each candidates' dissertation project.
 - 8.1.7. From the beginning of second semester of second year, doctoral students will be required to enroll for the Dissertation Seminar and at the end of each semester their supervisors are required to report on their progress.
- 8.2. **Evaluation of Dissertation**
- 8.2.1. The PhD dissertation examination exposes the student's research and thesis to academic criticism and gives the student an opportunity to defend their work.
 - 8.2.2. The PhD dissertation evaluation process consists of three components: the examination of the doctoral thesis, the oral presentation and the questioning of the PhD candidate. An examiner assesses a thesis by completing an evaluation form. Examiner reports and ranking forms must be submitted to the Department at least three days before a doctoral thesis defense.
 - 8.2.3. Upon initial submission of a PhD dissertation to the Department, the DGC, in consultation with the student's supervisor(s), appoints an Examining Committee. The PhD Programme Coordinator forwards the committee's evaluation form to the Department. This form lists the members of the Examining Committee, the name

and the address of the external examiner and the stated date and time for the oral examination.

- 8.2.4. The Examining Committee consists of at least three members, of whom one must be from the candidate's department or programme within the university (internal examiner) and one from outside the university (external examiner). The Chairman of the DGC or his designators shall chair the committee. Should the DGC chair be the advisor of the defending student, the DGC shall assign the chair of the committee. The candidate's advisor shall be a non-voting member of the Examining Committee.
- 8.2.5. Any member of the Examining Committee who cannot attend the defense must submit to the chair of the DGC, a written report on the thesis with any questions at least one week before the defense. The Department will then appoint a proxy to raise these questions during the examination. The proxy examiner will assume the role of the absent member of the Examining Committee.
- 8.2.6. The Department announces the upcoming defense via notice posted on the Department's notice board. Any member of the University can attend a doctoral defense.
- 8.2.7. The candidate first presents his/her thesis orally with any necessary aids required to make an effective presentation. The candidate is then questioned on their thesis. The chair will give priority to questions from members of the Examining Committee. The chair adjourns the examination when the Examining Committee decides that further questioning is unnecessary.
- 8.2.8. The decision of the Examining Committee is based on the thesis and on the candidate's ability to defend it. All members of the Examining Committee then vote on whether the thesis should be accepted or rejected.
- 8.2.9. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure that a report on the examination is prepared before the committee adjourns. This report will be written according to a

format prepared for this purpose, and must include the signatures of all members of the Examining Committee who dissent from its decision.

8.2.10. In addition to the joint report of the committee, external examiners are required to submit a brief report on the session and any other remarks or recommendations of general nature related to the programme of study.

9. **Decision on Dissertation**

The Examining Committee can render one of four decisions, subject to a vote of majority. The thesis can be

- 9.1. **Accepted** with no change
- 9.2. **Accepted** with minor changes to be made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner
- 9.3. **Accepted** with major modifications to be made to the satisfaction of internal examiner, and the chair. If a thesis/dissertation requires substantial changes in substance, which are to be made to the satisfaction of members of the examining Board or its designate, the examining Board's report shall include a brief outline of the nature of the changes required and indicate the time by which the changes are to be completed (a maximum of six months). It is the responsibility of the student's supervisor to confirm in writing to the Examining Committee and the Department that the required modifications have been made and approved. It is not necessary for the Examining Committee to reconvene.
- 9.4. **Rejected** if the work does not meet the required standards; the work is plagiarized as judged by the Examining Board; or the work has been already used to confer a degree from this or another University. Such a thesis may be re-submitted only once, in a revised form or with some additional work. Such re-submission may only be made six months from the date of the original defense. Formal re-submission of a thesis follows the same procedure as an initial submission. Should one of the examiners raise the issue of plagiarism, decisions will be made based on the relevant regulations stipulated by the MU Senate Legislation.

10. Rating a dissertation

Theses that receive one of the first three decisions listed above (accepted as submitted, accepted with minor modifications or accepted with major modifications) shall be rated **Excellent, Very Good, Good or Satisfactory**. A thesis that has been rejected shall be rated **Fail**. The ratings shall be based on points given by the external and internal examiners. The points given by the external examiner, internal examiner and advisor shall be multiplied by **0.5, 0.35** and **0.15** respectively, and added up.

- 10.1. **Excellent (≥ 90):** A thesis rated 'Excellent' ought to be an original contribution to knowledge. This does not mean that it must explore a 'new' or little studied problem. An original contribution to knowledge can also result from a novel and perceptive reassessment of a familiar question. The thesis should be exemplary both in the selection of problems and data for consideration and in the manner by which conclusions are reached about the problem(s). If based upon empirical data, a thesis graded 'Excellent' should report the data clearly and completely. The conclusions drawn from the data should be persuasive. A person reading a thesis rated 'Excellent' should conclude that they have learned something new about the issue.
- 10.2. **Very Good ($80 \leq X < 90$):** A Thesis rated 'Very Good' should demonstrate mature and sustained critical engagement with the theoretical and practical context of the work. The research should show high familiarity with the literature in the area of study. The work should also reflect an in-depth integration of research data and a student's personal contributions. The analysis and interpretation displayed in the thesis should demonstrate a clear understanding and critical judgement of the issues at hand. The thesis ought to be well organized, well written and proofread. Very few errors tolerated.
- 10.3. **Good ($65 \leq X < 80$):** A thesis rated 'Good' need not be a contribution to knowledge, but should show sound judgment, a substantial amount of work, clarity of thought and presentation and some creativity. The writer of a 'Good' thesis need only demonstrate that he/she has carefully and intelligently thought about a problem and presented those thoughts clearly and persuasively. If the thesis is an empirical one, the research design

should be sound and the data judiciously interpreted, although slight flaws in design or analysis may occur. The thesis ought to be well organized, written and proof read. Occasional errors are tolerated.

- 10.4. **Satisfactory ($50 \leq X < 65$):** A thesis rated ‘Satisfactory’ has to demonstrate some understanding of the debates and issues appropriate to the area of study. While a thesis rated ‘Satisfactory’ should not be deficient in any major, it may be weak in the selection of the problem, manner of presentation, research design and analysis or interpretation and conclusions. A ‘Satisfactory’ thesis may be deficient in one of these areas or to a lesser degree in a number of them. This student is able, when provoked, to offer limited critical reflection on his/her dissertation topic.
- 10.5. **Fail (<50):** There is no reason why a student should automatically pass an oral exam just because he/she has written a thesis. A thesis should be rated according to its merits. Poor theses will receive poor ratings. A thesis rated ‘Fail’ shows minimal industry, deficient understanding of the subject discussed, and poor presentation and insufficient familiarity with the relevant literature.
- 10.6. Following these principles, quantitative grading can be done as follows:
 - A. Content of the thesis: **80%**
 1. Problem formulation and methodology 20%
 2. Data presentation and interpretation 35%
 3. Literature coverage 15%
 4. Format and overall organization 10%
 - B. Defense **20%**
 5. Presentation 10%
 6. Response to questions 10%
 - C. Total 100%
- 10.7. If the Examining Committee is unable to reach a decision concerning the thesis at the time of the defense, it is the responsibility of its chair to determine what is required by the Examining Committee to reach a decision, to make the necessary arrangements for

- fulfilling the requirements of the Examining Committee and to promptly call another meeting and inform the student that the Examining Committee's decision is pending. The student is not usually required to be present at the second meeting of the Examining Committee.
- 10.8. The DGC renders a decision on whether the student has fulfilled the requirements of the doctoral degree based on the Committee's and its own records of the student's progress in their assigned programme of study. When the DGC has assessed that the student has fulfilled the requirements of the doctoral degree, it shall request that the Department recommends to the College Council (CC) that the doctoral degree be awarded. The College dean through the Registrar and Alumni Directorate Office (RAD) shall make a recommendation to the Senate for the award of the doctoral degree. Once the Senate approves such a recommendation, the electronic version of the thesis may be made available to the public.
- 10.9. The Academic Vice President may bring up, before the Senate or its delegate, any matter that may affect the acceptance of the thesis or the award of the doctoral degree.

11. Supervision

11.1. Key responsibilities of principal and external supervisors

- 11.1.1. Supervisors should be available to students on a reasonable basis for consultation, discussion of thesis progress and issues related to research. They should provide timely comments on written material submitted by students, including advising students on thesis submission for examination.
- 11.1.2. Supervisors should make appropriate arrangements for students when they go on sabbatical leave or an extended absence i.e. maintain contact when possible or if not, establish a time line for contact.
- 11.1.3. The supervisor should play an active role in seeking to ensure the availability of basic resources required for the student's research, such as funding.
- 11.1.4. The supervisor shall fully inform the student of any and all contractual obligations, which may affect the public defense and/or publication of a student's thesis.

- 11.1.5. When a thesis is accepted with major modifications, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to demonstrate to the Examining Committee that the required modifications have been made. The supervisor should inform the PhD Programme Coordinator and the Department in writing that the modifications have been approved.
- 11.1.6. If any supervisor wishes to withdraw from supervising a student, he/she should demonstrate and submit justifiable reasons in writing to the coordinator and to the student. Supervisors have a duty to monitor the progress of the student in a supportive way. They must provide a progress report on each student after each semester. External supervisors are assigned from a different area of expertise than the internal supervisors and are usually expected to support students in those areas. The external supervisor (s) will act as principal supervisor in the absence of the principal supervisor.

11.2. *Key responsibilities and rights of students*

- 11.2.1. Students should inform themselves regarding regulations and standards specified in relevant documents produced by the department and other relevant bodies in Mekelle university pertinent to graduate studies
- 11.2.2. Students are responsible for: presenting their work, meeting contractual obligations in a timely fashion and maintaining regular contact with supervisors. They are also responsible for responding to their supervisor's advice, sticking to agreed upon timetables for the submission of work and producing work that is typed or word-processed in hard copy.
- 11.2.3. All students are required to schedule a minimum of 6 meetings a year with their supervisors. Students should keep a diary and write one entry per meeting with their supervisor. This will serve as a reference for the next meeting. Supervisors are also required to complete a student progress report once a semester
- 11.2.4. A student with valid reasons is allowed to change supervisors or a member of the Examining Committee. He/she should submit a written request outlining their

reasons directly to the PhD Programme Coordinator. The coordinator presents the case to the DGC, which is responsible for issuing a final decision within two weeks.

11.2.5. Students should make themselves aware of the rules and regulations on proper citation, including copyright and intellectual property regulations to avoid using the work of another as their own. This may result in a severe charge of plagiarism.

11.2.6. Students should make themselves aware that any research funds made available for the research project are utilized as per the supervisors' agreement.

12. Degree Nomenclature

Students who have: i) successfully completed the coursework with a minimum letter grade of B (CGPA of 3.00), ii) successfully and publicly defended their dissertation, iii) produced at least two publications in a reputable journal in addition to their dissertation work and iv) gained approval from the Board of Examiners, will be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in their respective fields of specialization.

Example:

“Conflict and Peace –Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict and Peace Studies” (with equivalent Amharic translation)

13. Quality assurance system

The programme strives to maintain the quality of its education through the use of external examiners for doctoral defenses and creating links with academic institutions in Ethiopia and abroad. The Department will also undertake periodical evaluation of the programme by organizing workshops and conducting surveys to gather information from different stakeholders such as course instructors, students, supervisors, examiners, employers and relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.

14. Funding and Financial support system

14.1. MU will provide research funds for field visits

14.2. Short-term research assistantships may be offered by the Department of Political science and Strategic Studies upon fund availability.

15. Facilities for research students

- 15.1. Students will have access to all resources at MU libraries.

16. PhD Programme Coordinator

- 16.1. Is responsible for maintaining the overall quality of the PhD students.
- 16.2. Manages the admissions process.
- 16.3. Identifies appropriate internal and external examiners
- 16.4. Is responsible for maintaining appropriate academic standards and completion rates.
- 16.5. Organizes PhD colloquiums and other department-wide research seminars
- 16.6. Chairs the department's PhD committee

Appendix 1-Research Proposal content format

1.1. The student must demonstrate the following key points in his/her research proposal:

- 1.1.1. A conceptual and practical understanding of initial ideas into an effective research plan and proposal.
- 1.1.2. A systematic and critical understanding and awareness of the relevant literature in the area of the study and how this has led to the genesis of the proposed research.
- 1.1.3. The ability to produce a well-constructed research proposal that outlines the various stages of a research project.
- 1.1.4. The ability to work independently and use sound judgment to make methodological decisions and, the ability to foresee potential problems and plan options accordingly.
- 1.1.5. The effective use of skills in time management, written communication, identifying requirements for further learning or progress, and how the proposed research will add to the knowledge base of the discipline.

1.2. Contents of the research proposal:

- 1.2.1. Provisional title of thesis
- 1.2.2. Appropriate, clear genesis of research
- 1.2.3. Ability and opportunities to carry out the research effectively
- 1.2.4. Key research questions
- 1.2.5. Appropriate and relevant existing work in the field that is identified, critiqued, considered and effectively related to the proposed research
- 1.2.6. Proposed methodology, including:
 - a. Identification of ethical issues
 - b. Access to appropriate data
 - c. Appropriate data analysis plans
 - d. Reference list (cited in proposal)
 - e. Timetable for the research
 - f. Evidence of identification of potential problems with consideration of appropriate back-up plans

Appendix 2-Thesis content format

2. Sequence of contents

A. Title page

A standard title page is required for all theses. The title page has no page number.

B. Signature page

A signature page containing the signatures of the members of the thesis Examining Committee must be prepared by the student. After the defense, signature pages are sent to the PhD Programme Coordinator and the Department head for signatures. This is then returned to the Department. The signature page has no page number. A blank copy of the signature page (with Examiners' names but no signatures) must be inserted in to the final electronic submission of the Thesis

C. Abstract

Each doctoral thesis must include an abstract with the title of the thesis, the author's name, the degree being sought, the name Mekelle University, the year the degree is to be granted, and some text not exceeding 350 words. The abstract must be numbered "iii" in lower case roman numerals.

D. Acknowledgments or Dedications page

An acknowledgments or dedication page can be included if desired. If included, it must be page numbered in roman numerals.

Summary of contents

Title page

Signature page

Abstract (must start on page iii)

Summary (where thesis is not written in English)

Acknowledgments or Dedications

Table of contents (includes everything after the table of contents)

List of Figures

List of tables, illustrations, equations, special symbols, abbreviations, definitions, etc (where applicable)

Text of thesis (starts with "Page1" written in Arabic numerals – 1, 2, 3, etc.)

Endnotes (where applicable)

Bibliography or references

Appendices

Glossary (where applicable)

N.B. Title page, Signature page, and Acknowledgments are not included in the Table of Contents

Appendix 3-Sample PhD title page

Title of Thesis

Name of Author

A Thesis Submitted to

Full Name of the Department

Presented in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in (Name of Degree)

Mekelle University

Mekelle, Ethiopia

June 2024

Appendix 4-Sample PhD signature page

Mekelle University

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by [name of student], entitled: [thesis title], and submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in (Name of degree) complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee:

Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Department head or PhD Programme Coordinator

Signature _____ Date _____