

Ph.D. Program Framework at Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Delhi, Delhi: A Synthesis of Guidelines

Executive Summary

The University of Delhi aims to develop a high standard of education and research across various disciplines, including medicine and allied sciences. The objective of the Ph.D. program is to develop independent, research-oriented clinicians and basic scientists trained to address research questions through a translational approach. Candidates will become well-versed in research methodology and acquire the right approach to scientific inquiry.

Candidates will be enrolled under five distinct categories, primarily differentiated by their funding source: National/Own Fellowships, Extramural Project Fellowships, Senior Research Fellowships, or as permanent institute faculty/staff and Self Finance. The selection for merit-based seats will be made through an interview. The program is highly structured, with oversight from a central Board of Research Studies (BRS) and a mandatory, dedicated Research Advisory Committee (RAC) for each scholar to monitor progress through biannual meetings.

Academic requirements are stringent, mandating pre-Ph.D. coursework in research methodology and biostatistics, successful completion of a two-part qualifying examination within the first year, and the publication of at least two original research papers in NMC/ NDC (DCI) approved indexed journals prior to thesis submission. The program duration is typically three to five years for full-time candidates and up to six years for part-time candidates. The guidelines provide exhaustive detail on every aspect of the program, from the eligibility and responsibilities of research guides to the specific procedures for thesis evaluation, public defense (viva-voce), and the final conferral of the degree, ensuring a high standard of academic and research integrity.

1. Program Overview and Objectives

The Ph.D. program at Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Delhi is designed to create a skilled medical and scientific workforce capable of undertaking high-standard basic and applied research in biomedical sciences with a translational approach. The core objective is to train candidates in research methodology and foster the right approach to addressing complex research questions.

1.1. Course Types

The faculty offers two distinct types of Ph.D. courses:

- (a) **Full-Time Ph.D. Course:** For candidates dedicating their full time to research.
- (b) **Part-Time Ph.D. Course:** Restricted to permanent, in-service employees of University of Delhi or its affiliated or constituent Colleges.

2. Eligibility and Admission Criteria

Admission requires a candidate to possess a degree from an institute recognized by a relevant Indian regulatory authority (e.g., NMC, UGC & NDC (DCI)).

2.1. Qualifications for Indian Nationals

- (a) **Medical Candidates:** Must hold an MBBS/BDS and MD/MS/DM/MDS/M.Ch./DNB or equivalent degree from a recognised University.
- (b) **Non-Medical Candidates:** Must possess a Master's degree (with at least 60% marks) in relevant Science, Health, Allied Subject. Preference is given to those who have qualified for national entrance tests like CSIR-UGC NET (JRF), ICMR-JRF, or DBT-JRF within the last two years.

2.2. Qualifications for Foreign Nationals

- (a) Foreign nationals fulfilling the eligibility criteria may be registered for Ph.D. over and above the maximum admissible strength. Each supervisor can guide up to two international research scholars on a supernumerary basis over and above the permitted number of Ph.D. scholars. Foreign nationals must provide evidence of language competence.
- (b) Candidates possessing a degree considered equivalent to M.Phil. Degree of an Indian Institution with 55% marks or from a Foreign Educational Institution accredited by an Assessment and Accreditation Agency which is approved, recognized or authorized by an authority, established or incorporated under a law in its home country or any other statutory authority in that country for the purpose of assessing, accrediting or assuring quality and standards of educational institutions, shall be eligible for admission to Ph.D. programme.
- (c) Applications must be submitted through diplomatic channels (Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India).
- (d) Foreign nationals are not eligible for any fellowships, contingency funds, or free medical facilities.

2.3. General Conditions

- (a) There is no age limit for Ph.D. admission.
- (b) Candidates employed by government or semi-government organizations must apply through the proper channels and submit a "No Objection Certificate."

3. Enrolment Categories and Institutional Funding

Candidates can be enrolled under one of five categories based on their fellowship and employment status.

3.1. Enrolment Categories

- (a) **Category 1 (National Fellowship):** Candidates who qualify for fellowship/scholarship in UGC-NET/CSIR NET/GATE/CEED/ICMR-NET/DBT-JRF and similar National level tests based on an interview (Ordinance VI, 2023-C.5).
- (b) **Category 2 (Extramural Project Fellowship):** Candidates holding Junior Research Fellowships or equivalent research positions in funded projects at the University of Delhi or in any of the affiliated or constituent Colleges or in any Government Organisations, satisfying the minimum eligibility conditions (subject to selection by the duly constituted committee as per the University norms for research projects) may also appear directly for an interview (Ordinance VI, 2023-C.8).
- (c) **Category 3 (Direct SRF):** Candidates holding a Senior Research Fellowship directly from a government agency for work to be conducted at the University of Delhi or in any of its affiliated or constituent Colleges.
- (d) **Category 4 (Permanent Faculty/Staff):** In-service employees of the University of Delhi or in any of its affiliated or constituent Colleges.
- (e) **Category 5 (Self-Financed):** Candidates who do not have any financial assistance but are willing to own up to the expenses of research on his/her own. An undertaking will be required to be submitted that the candidate will not ask for any financial assistance from the FMSc or University of Delhi till the completion of his/her Ph.D. Programme. Such candidates shall apply for Non-NET UGC fellowships.

4. NUMBER OF SEATS AND PROCESS OF SELECTION

The Professor may guide a maximum of eight MD/MS/DM/MDS/M.Ch./Ph.D. thesis at one time as a supervisor. Each eligible faculty member should prioritize guiding postgraduate students.

After receiving notification from the Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Delhi, the eligible guides can send requests to take Ph.D. student. Guides at the time of making a request for registration of Ph.D. students, must also mention the broad area of research and details of funding supports (if any) from Government / or any other funding agencies.

4.1 PROCEDURE FOR ADMITTING STUDENTS BY THE FACULTY MEMBERS UNDER THEIR SUPERVISION:

- (a) The faculty members who are eligible to become a guide will be asked to indicate number of Ph.D. student they wish to enrol (based on point 4).
- (b) The faculty member needs to indicate the number of Ph.D. scholars currently enrolled under him/her.

5. Selection Methodology

The selection of the students for admission in Ph.D. will be made through an interview.

5.1 At the time of the interview, the candidates are required to discuss their research interest/area through a presentation before a duly constituted Committee.

5.2 The interview shall also consider the following aspects:

- (a) The candidate possesses competence for the proposed research;
- (b) The research work can be suitably undertaken at the University
- (c) The proposed area of research can contribute to new/ additional knowledge.

5.3 The merit list of the recommended candidates shall be displayed on the website after approval by the DRC. There may be a waiting list in order of merit.

5.4 The DRC reserves the right not to select candidates for all the vacancies advertised.

5.5 The DRC shall ensure that all University rules, as well as reservation rules, are followed in the admission process.

5.6 The registration of candidates in the Ph.D. programme may be confirmed by the BRS based on the recommendation of the DRC after the completion of coursework.

6. Part-Time Ph.D. Program for Internal Candidates

This program is exclusively for regular employees of University of Delhi or of its affiliated or constituent Colleges and is governed by strict regulations.

The Part-Time seats will be over and above the maximum admissible strength. Each supervisor can guide up to one Part-Time Ph.D. Research Scholar on a supernumerary basis over and above the permitted number of Ph.D. scholars.

6.1 Key Eligibility and Conditions

- (a) **Service Requirement:** Must be a regular employee with at least five years of continuous service at the University of Delhi or in any of its affiliated or constituent Colleges and have a minimum of 10 years of service left.
- (b) **Academic Gap:** Must apply at least 5 years after obtaining their postgraduate degree.
- (c) **Service Bond:** Selected candidates must execute a bond to serve the University of Delhi or in any of its affiliated or constituent Colleges for at least five years after completing the Ph.D. or pay a penalty of ₹1,00,000. Discontinuation of the course after one year incurs a penalty of ₹50,000.

- (d) **Departmental Limits:** Strict quotas are enforced. For instance, not more than 02 (Two) faculty members per department on the basis of seniority and only one other than teaching faculty staff in total can pursue a part-time Ph.D. at any given time.
- (e) **Restrictions:** A faculty member pursuing a Ph.D. in any University cannot serve as a primary guide for other Ph.D. students until their own thesis is submitted.

7. Program Governance and Supervision

The program's integrity is maintained through a structured governance system involving research guides and Research Advisory Committees.

7.1 Eligibility Criteria for Guides/ Supervisor

- (a) Must be a regular faculty member (Associate Professor or above for medical/non-medical) who has completed probation.
- (b) **For supervisors with DM/M.Ch./Ph.D.:** Must have a minimum of **three years** of teaching and research experience as a regular faculty after a DM/M.Ch./Ph.D.
- (c) **For supervisors with MD/MS/MDS/DNB:** **Five years** teaching and research experience as a regular faculty after an MD/MS/MDS/DNB.
- (d) **Must have at least Five Original Research Papers** in NMC/NDC approved list of journals as a first, second or corresponding author.
- (e) Faculty members due for superannuation within the next two years are not eligible.
- (f) The guide must not be related to the Ph.D. candidate.

7.2 Departmental Research Committee

(a) Structure and Composition

- **Chairman:** The Head of the Department of the University serves as the Chairman.
- **Members:**
 - College Heads of the concerned departments (from institutions like MAMC, LHMC, UCMS, MAIDS, IHBAS, GIPMER or VPCI).
 - One Professor nominated by the Vice Chancellor.
 - One Professor from each institution/ medical college, selected by rotation based on seniority for a period of 2 years.
 - One Associate Professor from each institution/ medical college by rotation for a period of 2 years.
 - Respective Supervisor(s)
- **Quorum:** A meeting requires a minimum of 1/3rd members to be present.

- **Tenure:** The duration for committees of courses and studies is generally two years.

(b) Key Responsibilities

The DRC is responsible for several critical stages of the research lifecycle:

- **Ph.D. Supervision:** The committee appoints supervisors and can recommend the appointment of eminent scholars as Joint Supervisors.
- **Research Approval:** It provisionally appoints supervisors for candidates with M.Sc. qualifications in allied subjects before final registration and approval by the Board of Research Studies (BRS).
- **Thesis & Leave Monitoring:** Supervisors must report student absences due to illness or other circumstances to the BRS through the DRC.
- **Protocol Review:** The DRC and BRS review thesis protocols for feasibility, ethical compliance, and statistical validity.

7.3 Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

A RAC is constituted for each candidate within nine months of admission. Its key functions are to review the candidate's progress every six months, approve the research plan, and recommend examiners for the thesis. The RAC comprises:

- The Guide (as Coordinator)
- One or two external experts from other departments
- Co-guides, if any.

A detailed schedule of mandatory RAC meetings is prescribed to ensure timely progress through the program milestones.

Meeting	Timeline (from registration)	Key Action
1st RAC	Within 3 months	To prescribe coursework.
2nd RAC	Within 6 months	Finalize and approve Ph.D. protocol for ethics committee submission.
3rd RAC	Within 12 months	Complete Part I examination and discuss initial research progress.
4th RAC	Within 36 months	Encourage completion of work for synopsis and thesis submission.
Final RAC	Within 54 months	Approve completion of work, permit thesis writing, and propose examiners.

7.4 Board of Research Studies (BRS)

The composition of the BRS shall be in accordance with the provisions of Ordinance VI of the University of Delhi.

The BRS is the apex body responsible for the smooth functioning of the entire Ph.D. program.

It approves program rules, oversees the selection of guides and committee members, scrutinizes registration forms, and monitors the overall progress and quality of research at the institute.

8. Academic and Research Requirements

Candidates must fulfil specific academic and research milestones to qualify for the degree.

8.1. Program Duration:

- a) The Ph.D. programme shall be for a minimum duration of three (03) years, including coursework and a maximum duration of six (06) years from the date of registration to the Ph.D. programme.
- b) For Ph.D. scholars, beyond a period of six years, a two (02) years extension can be granted through a re-registration by the Board of Research Studies on a written justification for the delay by the research scholar. The request of the research scholar has to be recommended by the Supervisor and DRC of the respective Department.
- c) Female Ph.D. scholars and Persons with Disability (having more than 40% disability) may be allowed an additional relaxation of two (02) years; however, the total period for completion of a Ph.D. programme in such cases should not exceed ten (10) years from the date of registration in the Ph.D. programme.

8.2. Attendance: Research scholars shall be required to attend lectures (coursework) and participate in seminars arranged in the Department during the programme. The minimum percentage of lectures to be attended during the coursework will be two-thirds of the lectures delivered in all courses, individually.

8.3. Coursework:

- a) The Credit requirement for the Ph.D. coursework is a minimum of 12 credits, including a “Research and Publication Ethics” course as notified by UGC vide D.O. No. F.1-1/2018(Journal/CARE) in 2019, and a research methodology course. A minimum of four credits shall be assigned to the course on Research Methodology. A sufficient number of the optional courses shall be offered by the Departments. Other courses shall be advanced-level courses preparing the students for a Ph.D. degree.
- b) All courses prescribed for the Ph.D. programme coursework shall be in conformity with the credit hour instructional requirement and shall specify content, instructional and assessment methods. These courses shall be duly approved by the DRC and the BRS.
- c) The Department where the research scholar pursues his/her research shall prescribe the course(s) to him/her based on the recommendations of the Research Advisory Committee of the research scholar.
- d) The Departments shall ensure that all research scholars, admitted to Ph.D. programme, complete the coursework along with the declaration of the result within the initial one or two semesters (first year).

- e) Marks/Grades in the course work shall be finalized after a combined assessment by the Research Advisory Committee and the Department, and the final marks/grades shall be communicated to the BRS & University before the end of the first year.
- f) The DRC shall satisfy itself that each research scholar has completed the requirement of coursework. The Head of the Department shall provide to the student a certificate of completion of coursework and names of courses opted by each student. If a research scholar fails to qualify the coursework, s/he may be allowed to reappear only once in the immediate next examination after the declaration of results. If the result is still found unsatisfactory, the DRC may recommend cancellation of his/her registration. This may be reported to the Board of Research Studies in case of Ph.D. scholars. Under special circumstances (e.g. medical reasons), a final decision may be taken by BRS on the recommendation of the DRC for Ph.D. scholars.
- g) The research scholars shall not be allowed to take up any assignment outside the University during the coursework.
- h) Research scholars already holding M.Phil. Degree or equivalent M.Phil. Degree (equivalence to be determined by DRC) and admitted to the Ph.D. programme, or those who have already completed the coursework in M.Phil. of University of Delhi and have been permitted to proceed to the Ph.D. programme, may be exempted by the DRC from the Ph.D. coursework. All other research scholars admitted to the Ph.D. programme shall be required to complete the Ph.D. coursework prescribed by the Department.
- i) A Ph.D. scholar must obtain a minimum of 55% marks or its equivalent grade in the UGC 10-point scale in the course work to be eligible to continue in the programme and submit his or her thesis.
- j) Upon satisfactory completion of course work, and obtaining the marks/grade prescribed as the case may be, the Ph.D. scholar shall be required to undertake research work and produce a draft thesis within a reasonable time, as stipulated by the University based on UGC Regulations, 2022.
- k) After admission to the Ph.D. programme, the research scholar in consultation with the Supervisor, may propose a tentative broad area/title for Ph.D. thesis within one year. However, the final title for the Ph.D. thesis must be decided at the time of the pre-Ph.D. presentation. The final title will be subject to approval of the DRC and the BRS.

8.4. Publication Requirement: Before submitting the thesis, a candidate must have at least **two original research papers** published or accepted for publication in NMC/NDC approved indexed journals. The candidate must be the first author on, at least one of the papers preferably from the thesis work.

9. Thesis Evaluation and Assessment

9.1. Upon satisfactory completion of course work and obtaining the marks/ grade as prescribed, the Ph.D. scholar shall be required to undertake research work and produce a draft thesis.

9.2. Prior to submission of the thesis, the Ph.D. research scholar shall make a pre-Ph.D. presentation in the Department before the Research Advisory Committee, which shall be open to all faculty members and other research scholars/ students. The feedback and comments obtained from them may be suitably incorporated in the draft thesis in consultation with the Research Advisory Committee.

9.3. The research scholar shall submit the thesis after pre-Ph.D. presentation within a period of six months.

9.4. In case of issues related to Intellectual Property Rights, necessary patents shall be filed before disclosure in the seminar.

9.5. Each thesis will go through a Plagiarism Check that will be verified by the University Library before submission. The certificate of verification given by the library has to be submitted along with the thesis at the time of thesis submission in the Examination Branch. The thesis has to be submitted within 30 days from the date of plagiarism check.

9.6. The supervisor shall forward the abstract of the thesis, including the Table of Contents and panel of six examiners to the Head of the Department for consideration by the DRC & upload on the examination portal. The panel of examiners shall be eminent Scholars and specialists in the area of the thesis, normally not more than one from the same Department of a particular University/ Institute. The Head of the Department shall convene a meeting of the DRC within one month (or within a reasonable time) of submission of the abstract, table of contents and examiners list and forward the same to the BRS (online/offline). The concerned BRS shall review the recommendations of the DRC and forward the panel of examiners to the Examination branch on or before the submission of the thesis. In order to avoid delay, the Chairman of the respective BRS may approve the panel of examiners duly recommended by the concerned DRC and report the same in the next meeting of BRS.

9.7. The thesis must be a piece of original research work characterized either by the discovery of new facts, or by a fresh interpretation of facts or theories. In either case, it should show the research scholar's capacity for critical examination and judgment. It must be satisfactory as far as its language and presentation are concerned.

9.8. The research scholar may incorporate in the thesis the contents of any work published by him/ her on the subject during the course of his/ her Ph.D. and shall indicate the same in the thesis. If any content of the published work has been incorporated in the thesis of one of the authors, then the same content cannot be included by any of the other authors for the award of any degree or diploma.

9.9. The Ph.D. thesis submitted by a research scholar shall be evaluated by three external examiners who are experts in the field and not employed by the University. Such examiner(s) should be academics with a good record of scholarly publications in the field. Those who have retired from the University of Delhi, will not be appointed as external examiners.

9.10. While submitting for evaluation, the dissertation/thesis shall have an undertaking from the research scholar and a certificate from the Research Supervisor attesting to the originality of the work, vouching that there is no plagiarism and that the work has not been submitted for the award of any other degree/ diploma of the same Institution where the work was carried out,

or to any other Institution. The Head of the Department shall countersign these certificates for submission of the Ph.D. thesis. In case of resubmission, the same procedure may be followed. The research scholar shall also attach a Student Approval Form in the format provided by the UGC for hosting and distributing their thesis in digital format in 'Shodhganga', or any other server designated for this purpose.

9.11. The research scholar shall submit one double-sided typed and printed soft bound copy of the Ph.D. thesis to the Examination Branch of the University. The soft copy of the Ph.D. thesis must be uploaded online on the Ph.D. Thesis Evaluation System Portal of the Examination Branch in the specified format (pdf).

9.12. The Examination Branch may send all communication to the examiners, viz. request for consent, sending of Ph.D. thesis for evaluation and receiving report/s electronically through e-mail/online portal.

9.13. The examiners may (i) recommend that the degree be awarded; (ii) recommend that the degree be awarded subject to corrections/revision being made in consultation with the Supervisor before viva voce; (iii) ask for resubmission of the thesis or (iv) reject the thesis.

9.14. The Supervisor will provide a general report and a technical report based on the comments of all the examiners duly signed by the Supervisor and the HOD to the Examination Branch. Reports of the examiners should be shared with the research scholar only for the purpose of revision only.

9.15. The public viva voce of the research scholar to defend the Ph.D. thesis shall be conducted only if the evaluation report(s) of the external examiner(s) on the thesis is/ are satisfactory and include a specific recommendation for the conduct of the viva voce examination.

9.16. For Ph.D. thesis evaluation, the corresponding actions suggested in the following table may be followed based on the comments/observations received from external examiners:

Events	Recommendation			Action Suggested
	Examiner 1	Examiner 2	Examiner 3	
Event 1	Accept	Accept	Accept	Viva Voce
Event 2	Accept	Accept	Minor Correction	Revise thesis in consultation with Supervisor followed by Viva Voce
Event 3	Accept/ Resubmission	Resubmission	Resubmission	Resubmission within one year after incorporating suggestions. Thesis to be sent to all examiners again.
Event 4	Accept	Accept	Resubmission	Thesis to be sent to the fourth examiner whose recommendation shall be final. If the 4th examiner recommends revision, the thesis will be sent to same examiner after revision. Resubmission within one year after incorporating suggestion.
Event 5	Accept	Accept	Reject	Thesis to be sent to the fourth examiner.

				If the 4th examiner rejects the thesis, registration of the student shall be closed/ cancelled.
Event 6	Accept/ Resubmission	Reject/ Resubmission	Reject	Reject and cancel registration

For any cases that need special consideration, a Special Committee consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, Dean of Examination, Dean (Academic) and Controller of Examination (if any) may be referred to for a decision in the matter.

9.17. The viva voce examination, on the evaluation report, shall be conducted by the Head of the Department and at least one of the three external examiners as approved by the Vice Chancellor. The viva voce shall be chaired by Head of the Department and shall be open to Members of the Research Advisory Committee, all faculty members of the Department, other research scholars and other interested experts/researchers.

9.18. If the thesis has undergone revision after external evaluation, the soft copies of the final version of the Ph.D. thesis, after revision, must be re-submitted to the Examination Branch. To ensure that the soft copy is a complete and exact replica of the print version accepted for the award of Ph.D., the Department Supervisor/ Head must authenticate the soft copy submitted by the scholar.

9.19. Following the successful completion of the evaluation process and the announcement of the award of the Ph.D., the University shall ensure that an electronic copy of the Ph.D. thesis submitted to INFLIBNET for hosting the same to make it accessible to all Institutions/ Colleges.

9.20. The University shall develop appropriate methods so as to complete the entire process of evaluation of Ph.D. thesis, including the declaration of the viva-voce result, within a period of six (6) months from the date of submission of the thesis.

9.21. Prior to the actual award of the degree in convocation, the University may issue a Provisional Certificate to the effect that the Degree has been awarded in accordance with the relevant provisions.

10. Administrative Framework and Student Conduct

The guidelines establish a clear administrative and disciplinary framework for Ph.D. scholars.

10.1. Duties of a Scholar: Scholars are required to maintain a log-book, interact regularly with their guide, participate in departmental academic activities, and adhere to principles of professional and research integrity.

10.2. Leave:

- (a) Any leave of more than thirty days from research work would require prior intimation and approval of the DRC and the BRS. This period shall be counted in the total duration for submission of thesis.

- (b) On the recommendation of the Supervisor and the DRC, the BRS may permit the research scholar to be away from the University of Delhi to pursue research related to Ph.D. work for not more than two semesters after completion of the coursework.
- (c) Female Ph.D. Scholars may be provided Maternity Leave/Child Care Leave for up to 240 days in the entire duration of the Ph.D. programme. This period shall not be counted in the total duration for submission of Ph.D. thesis.
- (d) The Supervisor must report an absence from research work by a research scholar due to illness, maternity leave or other circumstances to the DRC and BRS. Negligence of research work or any other acts of indiscipline must be recorded and reported to the DRC and the concerned BRS. On receipt of a complaint, the BRS may take appropriate action against the research scholar, including cancellation of his/her registration.
- (e) Only in exceptional cases, a research scholar may be allowed to de-register from the Ph.D. programme after successful completion of a minimum duration of three years on the recommendation of the DRC and the approval of the BRS. The research scholar shall re-register within a period of three years. The Ph.D. thesis should be submitted within such a period that the period of initial registration and re-registration does not exceed the duration of the Ph.D. programme.

10.3. Fees: As decided and notified by the University of Delhi from time to time.

10.4. Disciplinary Action: The institute reserves the right to take disciplinary action, including cancellation of registration, for offenses such as furnishing false information, academic malpractice, plagiarism, unauthorized absence, or causing damage to institute property. Unsatisfactory research progress, as determined by the RAC and DRC, can also lead to cancellation.