REGULATIONS FOR THE MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (MPhil) / DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PhD) IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Academic Year: 2025/2026

INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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MPhil and PhD in International Relations

A postgraduate research degree - meaning an MPhil or a PhD - is very different to a taught BA/BSc or MA/MSc degree. It can be a lonely and all-consuming one, which occupies huge amounts of your time and mental space. Before you even consider applying to undertake postgraduate research at the IIR, it is crucial that you genuinely understand what the process entails, and that you are prepared to make the investment of time, energy, stress and intellectual effort that is required to reach the end of the degree. These are the qualities that successful research students need: ability, of course, but even more important, self-motivation, tenacity, determination and a willingness to make sacrifices – particularly in terms of your time - over a period of years as you will spend many lonely evenings enveloped by reading, writing, thinking and questioning your work. It goes without saying that endurance and an unusual capacity to cope with extended periods of solitude are of critical importance, too.

When engaging in the MPhil or PhD journey, it is fundamental to exhibit a high degree of commitment and responsibility. Candidates have the main responsibility for meeting their deadlines, ascertaining what is required and expected from them each step of the way, and ensuring that their administrative records are up to date.

General Entry Requirements

Our entry requirements - along with their justification - are explained in more detail below. To be considered for entry into the MPhil in International Relations (students generally register for the MPhil initially, whether or not they continue to PhD) students must have the following:

- **An impressive academic record.** You need a master's degree in international studies (such as our own MSc degree in Global Studies) or a very closely related subject with mostly A and B+ grades, and a very strong performance in the dissertation/research paper component.
- **A strong research proposal.** You need to show that you have a very clear idea about the broad area in which you wish to work and why, with a reasonably thorough proposal which is about 5000 words long and offers a clear statement of the academic problem to be investigated and a justification for how and why you are going to investigate it. Special attention will be given to the theoretical approach as well as to the methodological design of the research project.
- **High levels of personal motivation.** Accompanying your application should be a detailed covering letter explaining clearly the reasons why you wish to undertake the degree, and how it fits with your longer-term aspirations. You also need to show us that you genuinely understand what the

process entails, and how you will cope with the competing pressures that you will face personally as a research student for three years or more.

If you read on through this document, you will find a range of advice regarding how you should approach the application, along with a more detailed discussion of our entry requirements and the rationale for them.

Before you apply

A good place to start is by reading some of the literature that has been published on the subject, much of which is available in the IIR Library. See, for example, the following books:

- Dunleavy, P. (2003 and 2014) *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Harrison, S. (2010) *How to Write a PhD in Less Than Three Years: A Practical Guide* (Milton Keynes: Authorhouse).
- Marshall, S. and N. Green (2010) *Your PhD Companion* (Oxford: How To Books).
- Mewburn, I. (2013) *How to Tame Your PhD* (Melbourne: Thesis Whisperer Books).
- Petre, M. and G. Rugg (2010) *The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research* (Maidenhead: Open University Press).
- Phillips, E. and D. Pugh (2010) *How to Get a PhD: a Handbook for Students and Their Supervisors* (Maidenhead: Open University Press).
- Sword, H. (2012) *Stylish Academic Writing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).

Beyond this, there are numerous blogs and web resources that give advice on postgraduate research. These are a great place to discover the joys and the challenges that PhD students face. By reading them, you can develop a realistic sense of what faces you should you decide to apply and you can also interact with others who are dealing with the challenges of research at different stages of the process.

Closer to home, please ensure that you read the UWI Graduate Studies Guide for Students and Supervisors, as well as the Regulations for Graduate Diplomas and Degrees, and our own guidelines set forth below thoroughly. This document carries a wealth of information relating to the operation and process of the two research degrees. It is crucial that you genuinely understand what is expected of you – both in a general sense, and also at The UWI - when embarking on such a degree long before you actually apply to enter the programme.

What is an MPhil or a PhD?

The basis on which an MPhil or a PhD is examined is its 'original contribution to knowledge'. Indeed, all scholarly work, including that which is published in academic journals, is fundamentally judged on the extent to which it makes such a contribution or not. In the first instance, the degree is not only about the thesis; the thesis, rather, is a by-product of the process of doing the research. It is important to bear this in mind: by the end of the endeavour, you will be consumed with finishing the thesis; but for most of the process, the research itself is where your focus should be. Good research generally leads to a good thesis. Weak theses, by contrast, are often based on questionable research designs and processes. We strongly recommend that our candidates should have some substantive research experience before engaging in an MPhil or a PhD program to enhance their chances of success.

An MPhil thesis should take approximately 3 years full-time. A PhD thesis is longer should take between 3-and 5-years full time (or up to 7 years part-time). For greater clarity, consult the regulations of the UWI School for Graduate Studies and Research. Nowadays, **MPhil/PhD students will register initially for an MPhil and will 'upgrade' their registration to PhD about two years or so into the process** (which is explained in the next section). This reflects both the relative difference in work required for each degree, and the esteem in which they are held. A PhD takes about double the amount of time and practical effort that goes into an MPhil, and the bar is set considerably higher in terms of the extent and quality of the original research that is required, along with the original contribution to knowledge that the thesis should represent.

Moreover, during the process, all students must first take courses with a minimum value of 6 credits (for the MPhil) and 9 credits (for the PhD). Please note that these are a minimum: it is quite legitimate, and often likely, that a student will be expected to undertake more credits during the first year or two of the process, if it is concluded by mutual consultation between the student and the supervisory team that such courses would provide better preparation for the research work. It is now mandatory for students to complete the Research Ethics Course and to submit the research project to the Campus Research Ethics Committee for its scrutiny and approval.

Second, all students must complete a number of graduate seminars along the way where they defend their research work in front of a panel comprising their supervisor, members of the supervisory committee or other academics. MPhil students must successfully complete two seminars before they can submit the thesis, and PhD students have to complete at least one more seminar than this. As noted, to move from MPhil to PhD, most candidates will 'upgrade' their registration and this involves undertaking a seminar in front of a panel comprising the supervisor and two independent examiners, at least one of whom will be drawn from within The UWI academic

community. For most students, the upgrade will be their third seminar (after the two MPhil seminars) but in exceptional circumstances – i.e. if they have made exceptional progress – the upgrade seminar can also comprise their second compulsory seminar. Regardless of whether this is, indeed, the second or third seminar, all students continuing to PhD will have to complete a final seminar, usually once the draft thesis is ready, a few months before it is to be submitted. This is an important staging post en route to both submission and the final exam, the *viva voce*. In this exam, the student must defend the work in a public oral exam before a panel comprising an independent chair and two experts: one 'independent internal examiner', drawn from within The UWI community, and one 'independent external examiner' who is usually an international academic working in the field.

The process: MPhil or upgrade?

There are four factors considered by the examiners during the upgrade process:

1. Has the student made sufficient progress to warrant an upgrade? This is usually evidenced by: first, a thorough research proposal which displays a sound justification of the ontological basis of the study, the epistemological agenda, the methodological approach to be taken, all of which should be underpinned by a set of coherent research questions or hypotheses; second, an extensive literature review which demonstrates a clear grasp of the major controversies and gaps in the relevant literature, along with a convincing analysis of where the work fits within the field of study; third, a well-founded and incisive conceptual framework which illustrates with some confidence the utility, relevance and novelty of the theoretical approach to be taken; and fourth, potentially – but not necessarily - some initial empirical research findings.
2. Does the research have the potential to make an original contribution to knowledge worthy of a PhD? Is it likely to be good enough to meet international standards of research in the field?
3. Is the methodological agenda that is proposed by the student plausible? Is the research practically achievable, and are the available resources, particularly in terms of access to empirical data, accessible within the proposed timeframe?
4. Does the student have the intellectual and organisational capability to complete the PhD to an acceptable standard, and is there a viable plan in place for doing so?

Those who exit the process at the MPhil level may do so for various reasons: perhaps they never intended to continue all the way to PhD in the first place; they might become tired of the process and simply wish to stop being a student; they might have lost interest in their research topic, so they decide to complete the MPhil thesis before starting a new PhD project from the very beginning; or,

after 2-3 years of research, it may become clear that the work does not have the potential to become a PhD. It is also the case that students who attempt an upgrade unsuccessfully may only receive a second chance if this is recommended by the examining committee. Generally, this would mean that they would either withdraw from the programme or complete and submit a thesis for consideration for the MPhil degree.

MPhil theses usually do not require a 'viva voce' (oral) examination. If examiners believe that the MPhil thesis is of such good quality that it goes beyond the standards of knowledge required for the degree, and could therefore be developed into a PhD, it may be recommended that the student be invited to forego the MPhil degree and undertake the requisite work that is necessary to bring the thesis fully up to PhD quality, and then resubmit for the higher degree of PhD (and thereby undergo a viva voce exam). This is the only situation in which a student who has completed the MPhil process may be able to turn the degree into a PhD.

Students who complete the MPhil have 3 years (full-time) or 5 years (part-time). If a student wishes to upgrade from MPhil to PhD, this must take place within those same timeframes: i.e. the upgrade seminar must occur by the end of year 3 for full-time students, or year 5 for part-time students. Please note that these are maximum timescales. Ideally, we would expect stronger students to move through the process far more quickly: around 2 years to upgrade, and 4 years to complete the PhD (if full-time). This is partly because of the toll a PhD takes on your personal life, but also because global developments move quickly: the longer you take to complete the thesis, the more likely it is that your research will become dated while you are still undertaking the research. In this instance, it is therefore less likely to make a substantive contribution to knowledge.

What characterises a successful PhD?

A high-quality PhD thesis is one that extends our theoretical and empirical knowledge of a particular problem, issue, controversy or debate in an original way. After submission of the thesis, a student will defend their research in the viva voce exam before a panel of examiners, at least one of whom is an internationally recognised scholar in the field of research from outside of The UWI. This independent external examiner will be interested to see that the work meets global standards of research; that the community of scholars in the relevant field would find it of interest and learn something from it; and that it genuinely advances, in a meaningful way, the global store of knowledge on the issue. The examiners will also need to be convinced that: the research agenda has been outlined in a convincing way; the parameters of the study have been clearly delineated; the research questions underpin the work in a cogent fashion, and the student addresses them

successfully by deploying coherently, consistently and comprehensibly the appropriate conceptual and empirical tools and evidence.

Moreover, the examiners will judge the work by the same standards that peer-reviewed books and articles are judged: meaning, are significant parts of the work potentially publishable in a serious, peer-reviewed book series or in scholarly journals? The external examiner's job, in particular, is a critical one: his or her advice and input potentially holds the key to the student's future academic career, particularly if the work is excellent and the examiner wishes to draw the student into future research networks or assist with job applications or elements of the publication process. Meeting these challenges – and thereby gaining the training necessary to join the academic community of scholars by becoming a post-doctoral researcher - is an enormous undertaking for any student, no matter how clever and able he or she may be; it requires a huge amount of sustained hard work over many years.

Why do a postgraduate research degree?

If, therefore, you are considering applying for our research programme, you must have some very clear reasons why you are doing so. Good reasons are: a passion for research, and a strong desire to further that research in a given area; longer-term career aspirations in academia or policy-related research; or a burning desire and yearning to solve a particular intellectual problem that is nagging away at you.

What are we looking for in prospective PhD students?

The IIR is a small institute with a relatively small faculty. The attrition rate in research degree programmes can be high. Our ambition, over the coming years, is to reduce our attrition rate dramatically. The first aspect of achieving this is a necessary tightening of our acceptance criteria at the application stage; therefore, we are increasingly only accepting into the programme prospective students who stand an excellent chance of completing the process. This is something which should be reflected in an impressive academic record, an evidently high level of self-motivation, and a very strong initial research proposal. Second, we are facilitating the throughput rate of those students who are making good progress and enforcing more stringent assessment criteria for those who are not. The broader consequence of these developments is that our programme will become more competitive: the smaller number of students whom we accept will receive more focused supervision with a corresponding expectation that they will make more rapid and sustained progress.

As indicated before, to consider an application for our MPhil or PhD programme, we expect you to have:

- **An impressive academic record.** You need a master's degree in international studies (such as our own MSc degree in Global Studies) or a very closely related subject. We would also expect you to have regularly achieved a mixture of A and high B+ grades in most of your courses, and a distinction, or something close to it, overall. You should also display obvious aptitude for research, as measured by a strong performance in your MA/MSc thesis or dissertation.
- **A strong research proposal.** You need to show that you have a very clear idea about the broad area in which you wish to work and why. **Your proposal should be approximately 5,000 words long.** It should have a reasonably detailed and coherent explanation of: a) the academic 'problem' that the research seeks to investigate, and how it potentially fits within prevailing debates in the academic literature; b) the central aims and objectives of the research; c) the key research questions or hypotheses guiding the study; d) clear ideas about the theoretical and methodological approach to be taken, and the justification for it; e) a timeline for the research process; and, f) a select bibliography of sources. At this stage, we do not expect you to be able to offer a clear potential contribution to knowledge (this, after all, is the basis of the MPhil to PhD upgrade process) but we do expect you to have a cogent and convincing initial proposal.
- **High levels of personal motivation.** You need to be able to cope with the challenges of undertaking a PhD. Few people complete a research degree with a perfectly aligned constellation of supervisory relationships, financial wellbeing, workspace, family life, physical and mental health, access to books, data, equipment or time. All these phenomena are desirable and important, but for every PhD student, one or more of them will cause problems, and most of them require some kind of sacrifice to be made at some point. Accompanying your application, therefore, should be a detailed cover letter clearly explaining the reasons why you wish to undertake the degree, and how it fits with your longer-term aspirations. You need to show us that you genuinely understand what the process entails, what are the competing financial, professional, familial, and time pressures that you will face personally as a PhD student, and you must explain to us how you intend to deal with them. We would like to stress that you are the main person responsible for meeting your deadlines, knowing the regulations, delivering what is required and expected at the different stages and keeping your administrative records up to date.

How should you apply?

In the first instance, you should make contact with the co-ordinator of the MPhil and PhD programme in order to signal your interest and possibly arrange an appointment where the many issues described here can be initially discussed. You should read some of the books and explore some of the websites listed above. You should also peruse the profiles of staff on the IIR website to see if there is a member of staff whose expertise fits well with your proposed area of research, and, if you wish, you are welcome to make initial contact with them to discuss whether they may be prepared to supervise you, and also to seek assistance and advice on shaping a putative research proposal.

If, after these initial discussions, you are confident that an MPhil/PhD is right for you, then you are invited to apply in the manner described above. General UWI application guidelines are available from the Office of Graduate Studies and Research website. Please note that there are two application periods for research degrees: for students who wish to commence their work in Semester I (September) the deadline to apply is January 31st of the same year. For those who wish to begin in Semester II (January) the deadline is October 31st of the preceding year.

Please note that students who wish to move directly from our MSc degree to the MPhil are advised to consider delaying their application until they graduate from the MSc. This has many benefits: it allows us to make a decision based on a fuller appreciation of the student's capacity for research as they will have completed the MSc thesis; it provides more time for the student to develop a fuller and stronger research proposal, having themselves undertaken a large piece of research, probably for the first time; and it gives the student a break from academic work for a few months between finishing the exhausting process of writing an MSc thesis and beginning the MPhil during which time they can reflect consciously on whether they truly wish to continue undertaking academic research for another four years or more.

IIR Guidelines for Graduate Seminars

Graduate seminars are substantive *examinations* and must be taken seriously. They have two main purposes: firstly, to offer a regular mechanism by which we can ensure that students are making progress; and, secondly, to offer an opportunity to defend that work in front of the IIR community and receive constructive feedback. Students are reminded that, although the seminars are graded on a pass/fail basis – and their work will be judged according to different expectations at each seminar, depending on the stage that they have reached - we are increasingly applying more

rigorous criteria to ensure that only those making genuine progress do move forward. Students who do not complete their seminars in an acceptable timeframe, or who fail a given seminar twice, may be asked to leave the programme. The best way to ensure that the seminars are not excessively painful is to write frequently and meet deadlines for submitting chapters to your supervisors, solicit regular meetings and feedback on written work from them, heed their advice, and ensure that you have a strategy for completing each seminar in timely fashion according to the stage you have reached in the MPhil/PhD.

Timeframes for seminars (other than upgrades, which are arranged separately) will be posted at the start of each semester by the programme coordinator. **Students wishing to present in a given semester must communicate their interest via their supervisor to the programme coordinator a minimum of one month before the date of the seminar.**

All seminar presentations must be supported by full written papers and chapters (details specified below). These must be properly edited scripts that include appropriate references, using either the 'author-date' or 'notes and bibliography' system of the Chicago Manual of Style.

Plagiarism detection software must be applied to each paper and a report submitted along with the written presentation. Written work *must* be submitted to the supervisor, the examining committee, the programme coordinator and the IIR Secretariat *a minimum* of two weeks before the date of the seminar: missing this deadline will constitute failure of the seminar.

Seminars will last at least one hour. Aside from the upgrade, for which there are different regulations, a panel comprising the supervisor (who might act as chair in case he/she is part of the IIR academic staff) and two other members of academic staff (usually members of the supervisory committee) will examine the student. Presentations will last approximately 25 minutes (and a maximum of 35) with additional time for questions. Usually, there are two rounds of questions posed by the Assessors. Students are encouraged to speak to power point presentations that serve as a guide to the audience rather than a verbatim representation of the seminar presentation.

All members of the IIR graduate research community – i.e. other MPhil and PhD students, as well as academic staff – are encouraged to make the time to attend seminars. These are an important part of our research culture, and we all benefit from receiving feedback from our peers and colleagues. In case of Upgrade Seminars, the session is to be advertised to the wider university community.

Seminar One (MPhil)

Timeframe: takes place around 9-12 months into the process for F/T students (18 months P/T)

The purpose of the first seminar is to gauge the initial progress of students during the first year or so of the MPhil. Given that students will be undertaking courses for credit simultaneously, it is expected that they will generally only be able to devote around 50% of their time to research.

Consequently, the minimum expectations of work required at Seminar One are as follows:

- The submission of a detailed research proposal of between between 10-25 pages with double-line spacing detailing and justifying clearly: (i) the topic of research; (ii) the academic problem to be addressed (background to the problem and statement and/or importance of the problem situation and purpose of the study); (iii) the aims and objectives of the project; (iv) a clear hypothesis and/or set of research questions for investigation; (v) a detailed discussion of both methodology and methods, and (vi) a timeframe for completion.
- A preliminary literature review chapter that informs the questions to be answered or objectives to be investigated, preliminary or substantive assumptions and theoretical framework that maps the key debates in the relevant scholarly literature in a critical, analytical and incisive fashion, and in doing so identifies some of the gaps that the candidate's work may ultimately seek to fill.
- Anticipated methodological approach and definition of terms.
- Scope and delimitations of the study.
- A detailed initial bibliography of sources cited.

Although not compulsory, students making exceptional progress may also choose to submit:

- Extended discussion of other aspects of the research, whether in the research proposal itself, or as full draft chapters. These could include, for example a background or historical chapter.

Note for examiners: students *must* be examined on the basis of what are the expectations for a candidate's progress at this early stage of the process. Their work should show clarity and incisiveness, and it should certainly have a measure of quality, but it does not yet have to embody the level of sophistication we might expect of a final MPhil or PhD thesis.

Seminar Two (MPhil)

Timeframe: usually takes place approx. 18-24 months into the process F/T (36 months P/T)

The purpose of the second seminar is to gauge the ongoing progress of candidates as they move forward, and to gain an early sense of whether or not they are likely to succeed in upgrading from MPhil to PhD (should they so wish). Their work should have developed considerably from the first seminar, and they must display clear evidence of this in both the written work and the seminar presentation itself. The ontological, epistemological, and methodological foundations of the project must be clear and cogent: for those wishing eventually to upgrade the research to PhD, some emerging ideas about how the project will be both sufficiently substantive and feasible for a doctoral project must be in evidence; for those wishing to submit the MPhil thesis, there must be clear evidence of the empirical work undertaken and some substantive findings.

Consequently, the minimum expectations of work required at Seminar Two are as follows:

- Documents presented should be 50 pages of text with double-line spacing and excluding tables, bibliography, and detailed appendices.
- The resubmission of a detailed research proposal, explaining and justifying the objectives and approach taken as per seminar one. However, this document should have been revised significantly considering any critical feedback at seminar one, and, for those students wishing to eventually pursue the upgrade to PhD, it must contain some justification of why the project is sufficiently substantive to ultimately become a doctoral-level study.
- A thorough initial literature review chapter that maps the key debates in the relevant scholarly literature in a critical, analytical and incisive fashion, and in doing so identifies some of the gaps that the candidate's work may ultimately seek to fill. Again, this draft must have been revised extensively in line with the feedback given at seminar one.
- A comprehensive conceptual or theoretical framework chapter (or chapters) that comprehensively sets out the candidate's theoretical agenda, along with both its novelty and utility.
- A comprehensive review and identification of the gaps in the literature in the field that has informed the conceptual approach and methodologies being used.
- A methodology chapter and/or initial drafts of any other background historical or contextual chapters that are required to underpin the thesis.
- A detailed initial bibliography of all sources cited.

For those planning to submit an MPhil thesis, they must also produce at least one draft empirical chapter that shows clearly the original research undertaken, displaying clear evidence that the MPhil thesis itself is at least 75% complete.

Note for examiners: students *must* be examined on the basis of what are reasonable expectations for this stage of the process. All research projects are unique, and, as they develop, all theses ultimately look very different: although it is advisable, they may not have discrete chapters named 'literature review' or 'conceptual framework', some will have very succinct methodologies while others are longer and more detailed, and all theses will have radically different structures. Consequently, these guidelines should be read as a broad guide to expectations. The work submitted by students may justifiably vary. However, by seminar two, a student who is hoping to eventually upgrade should have written at least 30,000 words and be able to display a clear research agenda that is reasonably sound in ontological, epistemological and methodological terms. **Unless they are to submit an MPhil thesis, they do *not* have to have any empirical findings, nor does their research have to yet offer any claims to originality.**

The 'Upgrade' Seminar

Timeframe: students are expected to complete the upgrade seminar to change their registration from MPhil to PhD candidate within 36 months F/T (or 60 months P/T). The UWI Graduate Studies regulations lay down the exceptional conditions under which a waiver may be sought if the timelines have been exceeded.

The purpose of the upgrade seminar is to determine whether a candidate's work is of the appropriate standard to merit becoming a doctoral project. The examination committee comprises a) an independent chair, b) the supervisor, and c) two independent assessors, at least one of whom must be drawn from the UWI community external to the candidate's supervisory committee. There are four criteria against which the candidate's work and performance is judged:

- Progress: has the candidate undertaken sufficient work of the requisite quality to warrant an upgrade to PhD?
- Feasibility: is the methodological approach elaborated by the candidate plausible and sound, and will it generate the appropriate empirical data to satisfy the wider epistemological agenda?
- Potential: is the research project sufficiently substantive to become a doctoral project, and will it make an original contribution to knowledge?
- Credibility: does the candidate have the intellectual and organisational capacity to complete the PhD to an acceptable standard, and is there a viable plan in place for doing so?

The minimum expectations for work to be submitted are essentially the same as for the second seminar and exceptional candidates may well decide to undertake the upgrade directly after the first seminar in lieu of a second one. However, the difference between them is that the criteria against which the candidate is judged at an upgrade seminar are considerably more exacting. In sum, it is not sufficient to simply show a solid degree of coherence in the draft chapters, but rather the candidate must demonstrate to examiners unfamiliar with the project that it clearly has the potential to become a PhD project and eventually make an original contribution to the scholarly literature and therefore the store of academic knowledge on a given subject. Consequently, to achieve this, candidates and their supervisors may wish to consider:

- Offering an extensive and detailed chapter plan for the entire proposed PhD thesis, clearly showing the chapters already completed, how they fit into the thesis as a whole, and, in those yet to be written, some ideas or bullet-points explaining the different sections (or even sub-sections) and their purpose.
- Explaining clearly which tasks have so far been undertaken, which are yet to be undertaken, what the timeframe for completing them is likely to be, along with some analysis of potential pitfalls in the generation of original data and how these might be overcome with contingency plans.
- Providing a clear statement of the original empirical research either undertaken or to be undertaken. Wherever possible and appropriate, candidates may choose to present some initial empirical findings – or expectations of what may be found, whether based on extrapolating from existing data or some circumscribed pilot studies – and even a draft empirical chapter or two.
- Considering how the research may eventually make an original contribution (or a series of contributions) to knowledge. At the very least, candidates should display comprehension of where in the wide sweep of international studies their work is broadly located, to which debates they are seeking to contribute, and, if possible, the gaps they are hoping to fill.
- Preliminary results of field work where this has been carried out. Pilot studies where carried out should draw attention where appropriate to selection of subjects, field, system of data collection and recording, data processing and analysis, methodological strengths and limitations.
- Statement of originality and potential of the thesis as a PhD work.
- The student should advise on the proposed work programme and timeline required to develop the project/thesis to the PhD level.
- An extensive bibliography.

Please note: students generally receive just *one chance* to upgrade. However, if the examiners perceive some weaknesses that can be rectified in an otherwise promising project, they may specifically recommend a second attempt at a later date, in line with the UWI MPhil/PhD regulations. Otherwise, the option open to students who do not succeed with the upgrade attempt is to submit an MPhil thesis for consideration.

Given that the assessors for the Upgrade Seminar cannot be members of the Advisory Committee, it is recommended that the supervisor(s) and the student submit the work intended for evaluation to the Advisory Committee members prior to request for the Upgrade Seminar. This will allow them to provide feedback and recommendations on whether the work is sufficiently prepared to be presented at the Upgrade Seminar.

Note for examiners: students *must* be examined on the basis of the *potential* of their work to become a doctoral-level project; at this stage, it *does not* yet have to be final-PhD quality. Please remember that most students will upgrade 2-3 years into the process (full-time) and they will have at least a year or even two remaining to complete the project. In the social sciences, it is generally during this period, post-empirical analysis, where their substantive ideas and claims to originality will come together, gestate, and ultimately crystallise. Consequently, although they *may* provide empirical material or some consideration of their eventual contribution to knowledge, these are *not* compulsory and they *cannot* be a basis, on their own, for passing or failing the upgrade; they are *only* relevant insofar as they offer an indication of the four criteria noted above – progress, feasibility, potential and credibility – on which the recommendation or denial of upgrade must be based. At this stage, students *do not* have to provide an unambiguous statement of originality, nor have undertaken substantive empirical work, but rather offer a clear plan and the potential to eventually generate both.

Seminar Three (PhD)

Timeframe: usually takes place 3-6 months before submission of the final PhD thesis

The purpose of the third seminar is to gauge the readiness of a candidate's suitability to submit their PhD. Usually, it is expected that a student attempting this seminar will have written and revised all the background/theoretical chapters, undertaken all of the empirical work, drafted the vast majority of the remainder of the thesis, and, crucially, will have some clear ideas regarding the original contribution to the literature represented by their work. An ideal timeframe, then, is for a candidate to do this seminar six months before he/she (realistically) expects to submit: this affords them

feedback on their study while there is still time to make necessary revisions, roughly three months before the IIR submits the nomination of examiners form to the Office of Graduate Studies (three months before submission).

Consequently, the minimum expectations of work required at seminar three are as follows:

- Documents presented should be 80 pages of text with double line spacing and excluding tables, bibliography and detailed appendices
- The submission of a detailed introductory chapter to the thesis along with as many chapters as possible, up to and including an entire thesis. The chapters should be coherent and fit together in a cogent and clear structure.
- The student should outline the major findings to date. This should indicate that substantial progress has been made and is worthy of being considered close to being of PhD standard. Some indication should be given as to the contribution of the current work to the body of knowledge and any differences or similarities with what is now known.
- Findings are presented in tables or charts when appropriate, or in narratives, or in other qualitative analysis forms.
- Findings need to be reported with respect to furnishing evidence for each research question asked or each hypothesis posed in the problem statement.}
- Students may choose to present chapters entitled “Discussion”, “Interpretation”, or “Evaluation” that ties together findings in relation to theory, review of literature or rationale and thus get feedback on the rigor and argumentation of the thesis itself, i.e. that there is a match between the conceptual, methodological, data collection mechanisms, analysis of data and findings or insights of the thesis.

Note for seminar panel, supervisor and advisory committee members: **there should *not* have to be significant remedial work undertaken after the seminar:** feedback for candidates should *not* suggest new directions or additional work that might push them off track. The main question guiding their examination in seminar three is: how close is their work to being final PhD-quality, and what needs to be done by them to ensure that, within the next few months, it is brought fully up to standard?

IIR Guidelines for Graduate Seminars in the virtual environment

Adjustments have been made to organizational procedures because of the increased use of the virtual environment. The following guidelines are to be observed when conducting MPhil / PhD Seminars in the virtual environment, in addition to the protocols already established by The UWI and the IIR.

- The official email confirming the date, time and the ZOOM link is sent approximately one week before the virtual session.
- Before the official email and invitation is sent, the IIR Secretariat must receive from the candidate the written work in electronic format (WORD or PDF file). As it is established in the IIR Guidelines for Graduate Seminars, the "**written work must be submitted to the supervisor, the examining committee, the programme coordinator and the IIR Secretariat a minimum of two weeks before the date of the seminar: missing this deadline may constitute failure of the seminar**." Accompanying the written work should be the full report (PDF format) of the plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) that has been applied to each paper.
- The only channel to participate in the virtual Seminar is via the ZOOM link provided by the IIR IT team.
- A ZOOM test with the IIR IT team has to be conducted before the session, one to three days beforehand. If the candidate will present PowerPoint / video material, it has to be sent to the IIR IT team before the beginning of the session.
- Recordings of the sessions will not be available unless the supervisor request it on behalf of the student.
- If the candidate is to be alone in a distant room for the Seminar, measures will be specified in order to preserve the examination integrity of the session. Procedural guidelines will be provided by the UWI Graduate Studies and Examinations authorities.
- In the event of technology breakdown, or any such adverse eventualities, the Seminar will be rescheduled. The Chair will be responsible for making such a decision after consulting with examiners, candidate and supervisor.
- Attendees are to be allowed to enter the virtual room at any point of the presentation since it does not disrupt the session. They will be asked to leave or will be removed from the virtual session during the examiners' deliberation after the formal proceedings have ended.

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOKS, REGULATIONS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

The Institute of International Relations MPhil/PhD Regulations should be read together with the following (available at the Office of Graduate Studies and Research page (http://sta.uwi.edu/postgrad/downloads.asp) :

Item	Link	Content
Postgraduate Information	https://sta.uwi.edu/admissions/postgrad/	Includes information on how to get your student ID, how to finance your education, how to find a place of residence, how to find student support, life at UWI, how to complete academic requirements, how to access academic facilities, university regulations on registration, lifelines while on campus, important dates at UWI etc.
Faculty and Staff at the IIR	http://sta.uwi.edu/iir/	Information on the Institute, Faculty, Staff etc.
Faculty of Social Sciences Booklet (Postgraduate)	https://sta.uwi.edu/resources/documents/facultybooklets/SocSciPostgrad.pdf	See especially the General Regulations for all Programmes in the Faculty of Social Sciences, policy on plagiarism etc.
Regulations for Graduate Diplomas and Degrees	https://sta.uwi.edu/resources/documents/postgrad/Regulations%20for%20Graduate%20Diplomas%20and%20Degrees.pdf	See especially the rules for submission of coursework assignments, marking schemes etc. at UWI
Graduate Studies Guide for Students and Supervisors	..\Graduate Studies Guide for Students and Supervisors.pdf	See especially the guidelines for Research Papers
The Code of Principles and Responsibilities for Students	https://sta.uwi.edu/resources/documents/conduct.pdf	A code of conduct written by students, faculty and staff defining rights and responsibilities of students of the University.
Thesis Guide		http://sta.uwi.edu/resources/documents/thesisGuideLibrary.pdf