

GONDWANA UNIVERSITY, GADCHIROLI

Direction No. 197 of 2016.

Eligibility Criteria And Procedure For Registration of Candidates, Allotment of supervisors/Guides And Research Topics, Submission of Thesis And Its Evaluation For The Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Direction,2016.

(Direction issued under Section 14(8) of the Maharashtra Universities Act, 1994)

Whereas, the Maharashtra Universities Act 1994 i.e. Maharashtra Act No. XXXV of 1994(herein after referred to as the Act) has come into force with effect from 21st July 1994;

AND

Whereas, the above said Act has been made applicable to the Gondwana University,Gadchiroli with effect from 2/10/2011;

AND

Whereas, the University Grants Commission has framed Regulations prescribing Minimum Standards for Ph.D. Degrees of the Universities vide its Notification No.F.I-/2002/(PS)Exemp., dt. 1st June 2009 published in the Gazette of India,dt. 11-17th July 2009(hereinafter referred to as the UGC Regulations, 2009);

AND

Whereas,the vice-chancellor has accepted there U.G.C.Notification on behalf of the Academic Council of the University on 20 /07/2016 and the Management Council of the University on 20/07/2016 and also decided to implement it in the University for which an Ordinance is required to be made;

AND

Whereas, the process of making an ordinance is time consuming one and since the existing Direction for award of Ph.D degree is found to be inconsistent with the UGC Regulations,2009;

AND

Whereas, it is found expedient to issue new Direction, encompassing all the recommendations of UGC mentioned in its Notification dated 1st June,2009;

AND

Now, therefore, I, Dr.N.V.Kalyankar ,Vice-Chancellor, Gondwana University, Gadchiroli in exercise of the Powers vested in me under provision of Section 14(8) of the Act, do hereby issue the following Directions:-

- 1) This Direction shall be called "Eligibility criteria and procedure for registration of candidates, allotment of supervisors/guides and research topics, submission of thesis and its evaluation for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Direction, 2016"(hereinafter referred to as "the Direction".)
- 2) This Direction shall come into force from the date of its issuance.
- 3) Scope:- This Direction shall govern the award of Ph.D. degree in all the faculties in the University.
- 4) Definitions:
In this Direction, unless the context otherwise requires;
 - a. "Act" means the Maharashtra Universities Act, 1994,(Maharashtra Act No. xxxv of 1994);
 - b. "Board of Studies" means a Board for a particular subject or group of subjects constituted as per the provisions of Section 37(2) of the Act and as provided under original Statute 23;
 - c. 'College' means a college as defined under section 2(10) of the Act.
 - d. "Faculty" means a faculty constituted as per the provisions of Section 33(5) of the Act and as provided under original Statute 18;
 - e. "Head, Place of Research" means the Head of the "Place of the research", designated by the University/Principal of the College/Director of the Institute;

- f. "Place of Research" means all the post-graduate teaching departments of the University and includes any other place which is duly recognized as the "place of research" by the University;
 - g. "Ph.D. Entrance Test(PET)" means the entrance test conducted by the Gondwana University Gadchiroli in accordance with the applicable rules framed by the University in this regard;
 - h. "Post Graduate Department" means a department in a college or institution of higher learning, research or specialized studies, recognized to be so by the university and imparting post-graduate instruction or guidance for research and includes the post-graduate teaching department of the University;
 - i. "Research & Recognition Committee" means a committee for the particular Board of Studies constituted by the University as per provisions of Section 36(A)(5) of the Act;
 - j. "University" means the Gondwana University, Gadchiroli;
- 5) Subject to his compliance with the requirements of this Direction, an applicant fulfilling the following criteria shall be eligible for registration for the award of Ph.D. Degree of the university:
- a) Has passed Post Graduate Degree (Master's Degree) Examination of the University or an equivalent degree of any other university recognized thereto; in concerned subject, with at least 50%marks or equivalent Grade Point Average(GPA);

OR

Is having a Post Graduate Degree and is holding a post of the rank of Assistant Director or its equivalent post or above and working in National Laboratories/Institutes/ Government and nominated/ sponsored by the respective employer.

Explanation: Person who has obtained a Master's Degree of any Statutory Indian University and working outside India and holding a post equivalent to Assistant Director or above shall also be included in this category;

OR

Has passed graduate degree examination with 50% of marks and is having minimum 15 years experience after graduation in the related field

with exceptional research abilities/ contribution to be judged by an expert, in respective field, appointed by the Research and Recognition Committee;

OR

Is a graduate in any faculty with atleast 50% of marks and is having minimum 3 years of experience after graduation and has developed important new techniques (new for the country) or designed and fabricated special instruments or apparatuses which are deemed by competent judge in respective field appointed by Research and Recognition Committee to be a valuable contribution.

OR

Is a fellow member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Institute of Cost and Works Accountants, Institute of Chartered Secretaries, with a Bachelor's degree from any statutory university of India and has atleast 5 years of professional experience, However, such a person shall be held eligible only for the subject comprised in the Boards of Studies in the Faculty of Commerce;

AND

- b) Has a valid score in Ph.D. Entrance Test(PET), consisting of the General Entrance Test and Subject wise test, conducted by the University, as per the rules framed by the University in this regard.

AND

- c) WHERE a candidate has obtained his qualifying degree from any University other than Gondwana University, Gadchiroli he should be residing within the jurisdiction of the University on the date of his application for Ph.D. for a period not less than six months.

6) INTER DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Application for research in inter-disciplinary areas from an applicant belonging to a faculty or subject other than the faculty or subject in which research is proposed to be done shall be permissible on the basis of the proven ability and aptitude of the researcher for such kind of research. Such

proposal shall be referred to the Board of inter- disciplinary studies. On examination, the Board shall send the proposal to the concerned R.R.C. depending on the major component of the research for registration.

7) VALDITY OF RESULT OF PET

The candidate who has been declared to be successful in the Ph.D Entrance Test of the university shall be eligible to submit his application for registration for Ph.D. within a period of 36 months from the date of result of his Ph.D. Entrance Test(PET).

8) ALLOTMENT OF RESEARCH GUIDE/CO-GUIDE

An eligible candidate shall approach the Place of Research where he intends to do the research work. On the basis of number of seats available with the approved Ph.D. Guides, the available specialization amongst the Ph.D. Guides and the research interest of the candidate, the guide shall be allotted by the Committee consisting of Head ,Place of Research and 2 senior teachers, who are recognized Ph.D. supervisors, nominated by the Vice-Chancellor. In no case the selection of guide by the student and selection of researcher by the guide shall be done by the researcher and the guide independently.

The modality regarding conduct of meeting of the committee, preparation of list of guides, vacancies with individual guides, their specialization and any other matter shall be such as laid down by the University.

While granting admission to candidates for Ph.D. programme, due attention shall be paid to the State Reservation Policy.

In case certain facilities of research do not exist in the jurisdiction of the University, the candidate may be permitted by the Guide and Head of the Place of Research to carry out his research work at an Institution approved by any Statutory University or Central/ State Government, outside the jurisdiction of the University for such period as may be approved by the Research and Recognition Committee.

9. PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION/REGISTRATION

- (i) After allotment of guide, an eligible applicant seeking admission to the Ph.D. programme shall apply for registration to the University, on line, in

the prescribed from(Annexure-I). The hard copy of the on line application form along with the registration and other fees, as may be prescribed by the University from time to time, and the supporting documents shall be submitted to the University, endorsed by the allotted guide, through the Head, place of research, on any working day of the University. The date of submission of the application form to the University shall be considered as the date of registration subject to the approval, with or without modifications, by Research and Recognition committee. However, where deficiencies in application for registration have been communicated by the University to the candidate, the candidate shall remove the deficiencies, by complying with the directions issued by the University in this regard, within the period of thirty days. Where the candidate fails to remove the deficiencies within thirty days but does so within one year from the date of said communication of the University, the application for registration shall lapse and the candidate shall be required to apply for registration de novo as per the rules for registration existing on that day. The University shall not be liable to the candidate for the lapse of his application for registration under this caluse.

- (ii) The applicant shall submit to the University the application for registration alongwith eight copies of synopsis, duly signed by the guide, of his proposed research work.
- (iii) Every application for registration shall be placed for consideration before the Research and Recognition committee of the concerned subject, constituted as per section 36(A)(5) of the Act. The Research and Recognition committee(RRC) shall take decision either to accept or reject the research topic on the basis of the submitted synopsis and also the personal interview/presentation by the candidate. The RRC may accept the research topic subject to suitable modifications. The decision of Research and Recognition Committee shall be treated as final for registration for Ph.D., candidate. The concerned guide may be invited during the interview/presentation by the candidate, if deemed fit by the RRC.
- (iv) The last date for submission of application for Ph.D. Registration shall be 15th January and 15th July of every calendar year. All the applications received on or before these dates shall be placed before the Research & Recognition Committee and the meeting of the Research & Recognition Committee shall

be called as far as possible, within 60 days from the last date of application for registration of Ph.D.

- (V) After approval of application by Research and Recognition Committee, the Particular of the candidate, title of research work, the particulars of the candidate, title of research work, research guide and place of work shall displayed on the website of the University, within a period of one month, as far as possible.
- (Vi) If a candidate desires, he may be permitted, to partially modify the title and or the plan of the approved research work, by the concerned Research and Recognition committee. The proposal for partial modification, however, should be recommended by the guide and Head of the Place of Research.
- (Vii) Once a candidate has been registered for any Ph.D. programme of the University, he shall not be allowed to be registered simultaneously for any other research degree programme of this or any other University in India or abroad. The breach of this condition shall result in automatic cancellation of registration in this University.

10) TENURE OF REGISTRATION

The registration of a candidate shall be valid and shall remain in force for a period of 5 years from the date of registration and shall stand cancelled automatically on expiry of the said period of 5 years.

Provided that on the recommendation of the guide and also the head of the place of research an extension upto maximum period of 12 months may be permitted. The decision for extension, however, shall be taken by the relevant Research and Recognition Committee. In case Research & Recognition Committee is not in existence for any reason, the powers may be exercised by the Vice-Chancellor. The application for extension of the period of registration under this clause shall be submitted at least 3 months prior to the date of expiry of registration. The decision to extend the period as above shall be taken and communicated within the period of 60 days. On failure to take decision and communicate it by the university, it shall be deemed that the extension has been granted. In no circumstances, however, second extension shall be permitted. Therefore, on expiry of the extended period of registration the candidate shall be required to apply for registration afresh following the procedure denovo.

11) CANCELLATION OF REGISTRATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCE

A. Cancellation of registration:- The registration of a candidate for the Ph.D. programme may be cancelled in the following manner:-

a) Voluntary Cancellation:-

The candidate can opt for voluntary cancellation of his Ph.D. registration. In such event the application duly signed by the candidate and duly endorsed by the Guide and Head of Place of Research shall personally appear before the Controller of Examinations and shall submit a declaration of cancellation under his signature. The controller of Examinations shall then endorse the declaration of the candidate contained in his application and forward it to the relevant Research and Recognition Committee. The registration shall stand cancelled from the date of acceptance of the application by the Research and Recognition Committee.

b) Cancellation for misconduct:

If a candidate after registration, during the course of research work, is found to be guilty of commissions and omissions amounting to misconduct like indiscipline, dereliction of duties, unbecoming behavior, insubordination etc., the registration shall be cancelled by the relevant Research and Recognition Committee by way of punishment on the receipt of report from the Guide and the Head of place of Research work.

Provided that the Head of place of research work before submitting report to the University shall grant an opportunity to the candidate for submitting his explanation and shall conduct such enquiry as deemed necessary.

Provided also that the involvement of the candidate in a criminal offence involving moral turpitude shall be treated to be a misconduct and registration shall be cancelled with immediate effect on his/her conviction by the Competent Court. In such case there shall be no requirement of offering opportunity of being heard before cancellation of the registration.

c) Cancellation for failure to abide by the provisions of this Direction and/or Rules framed by the University:

The registration of a candidate committing breach of provisions of this direction and/or Rules framed by the University shall be cancelled by the Controller of Examinations on receipt of the report from the Guide and the Head of Place of Research and the approval from Research and Recognition committee.

Provided that the Head of place of Research shall before submitting report to the University shall provide opportunity to the candidate to submit his explanations.

B) Consequence of cancellation of registration:-

Where the candidate whose registration has been cancelled as above has received scholarship/financial assistance from funding agencies like UGC, CSIR, University etc, the amount so received shall be recovered from the candidate and shall be promptly returned by the candidate to the funding agency. Where the funding agency happens to be the Gondwana University Gadchiroli, an interest at the Rate of 18% may be charged by the university from the candidate on failure to return the amount within a period of 3 months from the date of cancellation of the registration. The university may take appropriate steps for recovery of the said amount from the candidate.

12) SUPERVISION

A) GUIDE

Candidate shall be required to complete his/her doctoral research under the supervision of allotted guide. The concerned Research & Recognition Committee may allow change of guide on production of 'No Objection Certificate' from the earlier allotted guide and an acceptance letter from the new guide. In case of such a change, the candidate shall work for a minimum period of one calendar year under the new guide

before he submits the thesis. The requirement of 'No Objection Certificate' shall not be necessary if the candidate justify(ies)the non-availability of his earlier allotted guide. The Justification will have to be endorsed by the Head, Place of research.

B) Maximum number of researchers at places of research

(a) The maximum number of researchers in the University's post graduate teaching departments, which are also places of research, shall not exceed fifty.

(b) The maximum number of researchers for affiliated colleges, which are recognized as places of research, shall not be more than ten for professional courses and twenty for the non-professional and traditional courses.

(c) Maximum students per Supervisor

At any given time, no Ph.D. supervisor shall have more than eight researchers working under him. Out of these eight researchers there shall not be more than two researchers in any other University within the state of Maharashtra and six from the University. A vacancy with a supervisor shall occur as soon as a candidate registered under him submits Ph.D. thesis as per the provisions of this Direction.

C) SELF GUIDE

The research and recognition committee may on considering the published research work of the candidate and or his teaching/research experience of 15 or more years in senior college/institute, exempt him from carrying out his research work leading to Ph.D. degree under the guidance of a guide and allow him to carry out the research work under self guidance. The decision of the Research and Recognition Committee in this regard shall be final. The RRC may in such cases prescribe any additional condition(s), which it may deem proper.

D) REDRESSAL OF DISPUTES

The case of a dispute between a candidate and his guide or a co-guide, the committee, consisting of the following members, shall examine the matter and report to the Vice-Chancellor;

- i) Dean of the Concerned faculty(Chairman)
- ii) Nominee of the Vice-Chancellor,
- iii) The Head place of research(If the complaint is against the Head or the Dean,he/she shall not participate in the proceedings of the meeting. In that case, additional member/s may be nominated by the Vice-Chancellor),

The report shall include, among other things, specific recommendations of the committee. Based on the recommendations of the committee the Vice-chancellor may issue appropriate directions. The decision of the Vice-Chancellor shall be final and binding on the parties.

13) **COURSE WORK**

(a) After having been registered to the Ph.D. programme every candidate shall have to undertake a research methodology course work of the duration of minimum one semester, consisting of sixty hours, to be treated as pre Ph.D. preparation.

(b) The centres of the course work, the intake capacity of the centre, allotment of candidates to the centres, the syllabus of the course, teaching scheme , scheme & place of examination, and its certification shall be such as may be prescribed by the University through notification issued by the University.

14) **PROGRESS REPORT**

Every registered candidate shall submit to the Controller of Examinations of the University, through guide, the progress report of his research after every six months in the prescribed form,(Annexure-II). If a candidate fails to submit three consecutive reports, his registration may be cancelled by the relevant Research and Recognition Committee on the recommendation of the guide.

15) **SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION OF THESIS**

A) **SUBMISSION OF THESIS:-** The Submission of thesis shall be

on the following terms and conditions:-

- i) Every candidate registered for Ph.D. shall be allowed to submit his Thesis only twenty four months after the date of his registration, determined as per clause(9) of this Direction, if he has completed course work, as per the requirement of cl.13) before registration for Ph.D. Where, however, the candidate has completed the course work after registration for Ph.D; he shall be allowed to submit the thesis twenty four months from the date of certificate of completion of the course work from the competent person. A candidate will be allowed to submit the summary of his thesis twenty two months from the date of certificate of completion of the course work where the course has been completed after registration and in case where the candidate had completed the course work before registration the period of twenty two months shall be counted from the date of registration. The summary should contain introduction, chapter wise brief account of the work done and overall conclusions.
- ii) At least three months before the date of submission of the summary of the thesis each candidate shall give a pre-submission seminar. The seminar shall be arranged by the Head of the place of research, on the request of the candidate duly endorsed by the guide. The seminar shall be attended by the Head, place of research, the guide, other research guides or teachers in the related subjects at the place of research and other Ph.D researchers. The organization of the seminar should be duly certified by Head, place of research and the researcher guide(**Annexure III**)
- iii) Suitably incorporating the discussions and suggestions made in the pre-submission seminar, the candidate shall submit to the Controller of Examinations ten copies of the summary of his thesis through his guide within three month from the date of seminar.
- iv) It shall be mandatory for the researcher to publish at least one research paper, relating to his topic of Ph.D research, in the peer reviewed research journal, before submission of the Ph.D thesis and the researcher shall submit the copy of the published article alongwith the Ph.D. thesis.

- v) The candidate shall be allowed to submit his thesis after completion of a period of two months and before six months from the date of submission of the summary, failing which the candidate will have to pay the fine prescribed by the University from time to time for late submission. Late submission of thesis may be allowed up to the completion of one year from the date of submission of the summary or till the expiry of the registration period, whichever is earlier.
- vi) Five copies of the thesis shall be submitted in compact bound form along with a soft copy(CD), through his guide and Head of Place of Research.
- vii) The final thesis shall be presented in accordance with the following specifications:
 - a. The paper used for printing shall be of A4 Size.
 - b. Printing shall be in a standardized form on both sides of the paper and with minimum of one and –half spacing.
 - c. A margin of one-and-a half inches shall be on the left hand side.
 - d. The title of thesis, name of the university, name of the concerned subject in which thesis is submitted(like Economics, Political Science, Physics, Chemistry etc.), name of the concerned faculty, name of the candidate, name of the guide and co-guide wherever appointed, month and year of thesis submission shall be printed on the title page and the front cover.(For specimen see an **(Annexure-IV)**)
- viii) The thesis shall include a Certificate of the guide(Annexure-V) and a Declaration by the candidate(Annexure-VI) that the work reported in the thesis has been carried out by the candidate himself and that the material from other sources, if any, is duly acknowledged. The thesis should also be accompanied by the certificate of pre-submission seminar issued by guide and Head, Place of Research.
- ix) The thesis shall be written in English/Marathi/Hindi except where it relates to foreign or other Indian Languages. In the Faculty of Science, Law, Engineering and Technology,

Medicine(Pharmaceutical Science) the thesis shall invariably be written in English only.

B. APPOINTMENT OF REFEREES

1. On receipt of the copies of the summary of the thesis the same shall be placed before the relevant Research and Recognition Committee, as soon as possible, for recommending panel of referees, for evaluation of the thesis, comprising of not less than six referees in an alphabetical manner with their full addresses, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, mobile numbers and pin code for correspondence. The RRC while recommending the panel of referees may take into consideration the names of experts suggested by the guide.

Provided firstly, that the RRC shall recommend the panel in such a way so as to include at least two referees within the State are not available the panel shall be recommended so as to have all the referees outside the State of Maharashtra.

Provided thirdly, that if language of thesis is Marathi and referees are not available out of the state or out side India, the panel shall be recommended so as to have all referees within the state of Maharashtra.

2. In terms of the resolution of the Board of University Teaching and Research the Research and Recognition Committees of the University may recommend to the committee appointed under provision of section 32(5)(a) of the Act a panel of referees for evaluation of the thesis. The said committee shall prepare the list of referees in order of preference, category-wise as mentioned above, for being finally appointed by the Board of Examinations.

C) EVALUATION

1. The thesis shall be evaluated by three referees(hereinafter external referees) out of which atleast two shall be out of Maharashtra, for all the faculties, subject to the compliance of proviso second and third in clause B) above.

2. After the candidate has submitted the copies of thesis and Board of Examinations has appointed category-wise referees the Controller of Examinations shall, preferably within one week from the date of appointment of referees as per Clause B) above, request the first referee from each of the categories mentioned in proviso 1st of sub clause(1) of clause B) of para 15 on the list to communicate within 15 days their willingness to examine the thesis. Copy of the summary of the thesis submitted by the candidates shall be sent to the referees alongwith the request letter. If the referee fails to communicate his acceptance/willingness within 30 days from the date of dispatch of the first invitation letter, Controller of Examinations shall send the invitation letter to next referee in the list. If the referee fails to convey his acceptance within 15 days, controller of Examinations shall send a reminder to the referee to send the acceptance letter immediately.

Where the referee has accepted to examine the thesis, the Controller of Examinations shall forward the thesis to him within one week after receipt of letter of acceptance and shall request the referee to submit the report within 45 days from the receipt of the thesis.

3. The external referees shall independently send their reports in the prescribed format to the Controller of Examinations within forty-five days from the date of receipt of the thesis. If the referee fails to do so, the Controller of Examinations shall send a reminder immediately after the expiry of the said period and request him to submit the report within thirty days. If the concerned referee fails to comply even within the extended period the Controller of Examinations shall cancel his appointment and invite the next referee from the approved list to evaluate the thesis.
4. i) As soon as reports of two referees have been received, those shall be placed before the Vice-Chancellor by the Controller of Examinations. The reports shall be opened and if both the referees have recommended acceptance of the thesis the process for conduct of open viva-voce test shall be initiated immediately notwithstanding that the reports of the third referee has not been received. If one of the two referees whose reports have been

received has either rejected or suggested revision of the thesis then further steps for conduct of the open viva-voce shall be taken only after report of the third referee has been received by the university.

- ii) The viva-voce shall be conducted by the nearest external examiner. After the satisfactory viva-voce test the candidate shall become eligible for the award of Ph.D. Degree.
- iv) If the referees by majority recommended revision of the thesis, then the candidate shall submit revised thesis(five copies) within 12 months from the date of the communication by original referees who have suggested revision and it will be subjected to the process of evaluation and conduct of viva-voce test as prescribed above. The referees recommending revision must state the reasons for his opinion and also must clearly indicate the direction in which he desires the thesis to be revised.
- v) If out of the three referees, one has recommended the acceptance of thesis, the second has recommended rejection and the third one has recommended revision then the following procedure shall be followed:

The thesis shall be sent back to the candidate alongwith the recommendations of the referee, who has suggested revision. The candidate shall resubmit the thesis, within a period of 12 months, revised in terms of the recommendations of the referee. Thereafter, the revised thesis shall be sent back to the referee who had recommended the revision of the thesis. If the thesis is accepted by the referee then the candidate shall be declared to have become eligible for appearing in the viva-voce test.

- vi) The guide of the candidate shall be the internal referee for open defence. In case of a candidate working independently defence shall be conducted by the external referee only.
5. After ascertaining that the reports are favorable, Controller of

Examinations shall arrange the viva and the defence of the thesis on the earliest date suitable to the internal examiner, preferably the nearest external examiner and the Head of the Place of Research who will act as Chairman. In case the Head of the place of research is not available he shall nominate senior research guide as Chairman for the defence. The Controller of Examinations shall make the reports available to the Head of Place of research/Chairman a day before the date of the viva. In case of any difficulties, the Dean of the concerned faculty shall take appropriate decision.

16. VIVA-VOCE AND OPEN DEFENCE OF THE THESIS

- 1) The day, date, time and the place for the viva voce and the open defense of the thesis shall be notified by the Controller of Examinations preferably eight days in advance. Normally the viva-voce and the open defence of the thesis shall be arranged in the University. However, in exceptional cases, the Vice-Chancellor may permit the viva-voce to be conducted at a different place.
- 2) The open defence of the thesis shall take place in presence of guide(internal referee), one external examiner and the Head, Place of research who shall jointly evaluate the performance of the candidate. In case of any difficulty, Dean of the concerned faculty shall take the appropriate decision.
- 3) If the external referee is unable to be present at the time of the open defense, the Vice-Chancellor, on the recommendation of the guide and the Dean of the concerned faculty, shall appoint a senior research guide to act as an external referee for the open defense of the thesis. In case the internal referee is not available, the Vice-Chancellor shall appoint one of the senior research guide as an internal referee, on the recommendation of the Dean of the concerned faculty & Head of the place of research.
- 4) The referee present for the viva-voce and the open defense of the viva-voce of the thesis shall submit to the Controller of Examinations their final report in written form duly signed by them, immediately after the open defence is over, alongwith the copy of the thesis, through the Chairman of the Viva-voce, about the award of Ph.D. degree.