



Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degree Awards

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1. Overview & Purpose

- 1.1. These regulations govern the management, progression and award of degrees for candidates enrolled on postgraduate research degree programmes.

2. Scope

- 2.1. These regulations govern the award of the following postgraduate research degrees:

2.1.1. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) – 540 credit QAA FQHEIS Level 8 Research Degrees.

2.1.2. Doctor of Medicine (MD) – 540 credit QAA FQHEIS Level 8 Research Degree, which can only be enrolled on at the Norwich Medical School.

2.1.3. Master of Philosophy (MPhil) – 360 credit QAA FQHEIS Level 7 Research Degrees.

2.1.4. Master's Degrees by Research (MSCR / MAR as approved and defined by Senate) – 180 credit QAA FQHEIS Level 7 Research Degrees.

- 2.2. Separate regulations govern the management, progression and award of degrees for candidates enrolled on postgraduate professional doctorate degree programmes.

- 2.3. These regulations cover postgraduate research degree candidates enrolled and hosted at the Norwich Biosciences Institutes (NBI), as defined and agreed by the University's partnership agreement for postgraduate degree provision with NBI. For such candidates:

2.3.1. The Head of the NBI Graduate School will act with the equivalent status and role as a Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research.

2.3.2. Each Institute will appoint a suitable member of research-active staff who is approved to serve as a postgraduate research student supervisor to act as a School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Associate Director – Postgraduate Research	The Professional Service post-holder with lead responsibility for postgraduate research administration and operations across the University. The post-holder leads the University's PGR Service, part of the Student & Academic Services Division.

Term	Definition
Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College	The academic post-holder with lead responsibility for the management of postgraduate research strategy, development and provision across the University.
Candidate	A student granted admission to the University to enrol on a postgraduate research degree within the scope of these regulations.
Concession	A request that falls outside of University regulations
Continuation Fee	Fees candidates are liable for during their Period of Registration.
Doctoral College	The University's collection of Faculty/Institute graduate schools, which is led by the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College and supported by the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research and the PGR Service.
Exit Award	A qualification granted by the University to a candidate who leaves a programme early or does not fulfil the requirements for their intended, higher-level degree award. It recognises the credits and learning achieved up to the point of leaving.
Extension	The assignment of a later submission date for coursework. Applied when students cannot meet deadlines for valid reasons
Exceptional Circumstances	Circumstances beyond the student's control which affect the student's performance and/or ability to engage in their studies.
Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research	An academic or research-active member of staff selected by a Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor/Institute Directors with lead responsibility for Postgraduate Research affairs in a Faculty/collection of Institutes.
Corrections	Revisions and changes to a submitted and assessed thesis, which are specified and required by the examiners for the candidate to pass. Submitted corrections do not require the candidate to be reassessed.
Period of Registration	The period of a candidate's registration following their Period of Study, when they are competing and submitting their thesis. During this period a candidate may be liable for continuation fees.
Period of Study	The period of candidate's registration then they are actively studying and subject to tuition fees.
Resubmission	The process of submitted a significantly revised thesis, following a candidate's first oral examination, which will reassessed again by the examiners.

Term	Definition
School / Institute Director of Postgraduate Research	An academic or research-active member of staff selected by Head of School/Institute Director with lead responsibility for Postgraduate Research affairs in a School/Institute.
Supervisor	An authorised member of academic staff or external representative who oversees, supports and advises a PGR candidate during the course of their study and registration.
Supervisory Team	The allocated primary, secondary and any other supervisors who oversee, advice and support a PGR candidate during the course of their study and registration.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

- 4.1. Adherence to these regulations is the responsibility of all relevant staff and registered research students at the University/NBI.
- 4.2. The Doctoral College Executive is responsible for oversight and development of these regulations.
- 4.3. The Associate Director – Postgraduate Research is responsible for the administration and implementation of these regulations.

5. Commencement of Candidature

- 5.1. A candidate for a postgraduate research award must be a graduate of this University or another approved Higher Education Institution or possess some other equivalent qualifications approved by the University.
- 5.2. A candidate must, after consultation with academic member(s) of staff of the University/NBI who are approved to supervise research students, submit to the appropriate School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research:
 - 5.2.1. The proposed field of advanced study and research.
 - 5.2.2. Evidence of adequate training and ability to undertake the advanced study and research.
 - 5.2.3. The name(s) of the academic staff in the School/Institute who has been consulted and who are proposed to form the candidate's supervisory team.
- 5.3. Before being admitted to a research degree at the University a candidate must:

- 5.3.1.** Be approved by the appropriate School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research as a candidate for the degree in accordance with the University's admissions policy and procedures.
- 5.3.2.** Undertake research in a field of study approved by the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research.
- 5.3.3.** Engage in advanced study under the direction of academic staff in the School/Institute who are approved to undertake research supervision and appointed by the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research as the candidate's supervisory team.

5.4. Commencement of MD Candidates

- 5.4.1.** For a candidate to commence on a MD they must:

- 5.4.1.1.** Hold a qualification that is recognised and accepted for registration by the General Medical Council for the United Kingdom.

- 5.4.1.2.** Be either a Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) graduate of this University or a graduate of another approved Higher Education holding an appointment or an honorary appointment within a health or social care setting that has established research and/or teaching links with the University.

- 5.4.2.** A MD candidate's permitted supervisory team may consist of the following:

- 5.4.2.1.** Two (2) academic members of staff from the University approved to supervise research students and/or research staff based at one of the NBSs approved to supervise research students.

- 5.4.2.2.** A member of staff based at the University or NBI approved to supervise research students, and a University honorary appointed clinical lecturer/supervisor approved to supervise research students.

5.5. Candidates from Affiliate Organisations

- 5.5.1.** Persons employed within one of the Doctoral College's Affiliated Organisations may be permitted to register as a full-time or part-time candidate for a postgraduate research degree, subject to meeting the University's admissions requirements:

- 5.5.2.** The Associate Director - Postgraduate Research will maintain a register of Affiliated Organisations, which is managed and amended by the Doctoral College.

5.5.3. Candidates from Affiliated Organisations will proceed on their research degree programme in accordance with these regulations, subject to the modification that each candidate shall have a supervisory team consisting of at least one (1) member of University academic staff that is approved to supervise research students who will be the primary supervisor and one suitably-qualified senior member of staff from their host Affiliate Organisation, who preferably will hold a PhD and have prior supervisory experience. The supervisor from the host Affiliate Organisation will constitute an external supervisor.

6. Category of Candidature

6.1. Candidates will be designated as either:

6.1.1. Category A (Staff/Internal) candidates, which includes academic members of staff of Schools/Institutes, including NBI-employed staff, and other such candidates as Senate shall determine.

6.1.2. Category B (Non-Staff) candidates.

6.2. Category B (Non-Staff) candidates will proceed on their degree programme in accordance with these regulations.

6.3. Category A (Staff/Internal) candidates will proceed on their degree programme in accordance with these regulations, subject to the following modifications:

6.3.1. Where School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research approval, recommendation, determination or similar is defined, the duties for a Category A candidate will be undertaken by the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research, or by their nominee should there be an identified or perceived conflict of interest.

6.3.2. Where Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research approval, recommendation, determination or similar is defined, the duties for a Category A candidate will be undertaken by the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College, or by their nominee should there be an identified or perceived conflict of interests.

6.3.3. Where Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College approval, recommendation, determination or similar is defined the duties for a Category A candidate will be undertaken by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research & Innovation, or by their nominee should there be an identified or perceived conflict of interests.

7. Duration of Candidature

7.1. The duration for full-time candidates shall normally be as follows:

7.1.1. PhD awards – Three (3) years Period of Study, followed by one (1) year Period of Registration.

7.1.2. MD awards – Two (2) years Period of Study, followed by one (1) year Period of Registration.

7.1.3. MPhil awards – Two (2) years Period of Study, followed by one (1) year Period of Registration.

7.1.4. MSCR/MAR awards – One (1) Year Period of Study, followed by one (1) year Period of Registration.

7.2. The duration for a part-time candidates shall normally be as follows:

7.2.1. PhD awards – Six (6) years Period of Study, followed by one (1) year Period of Registration.

7.2.2. MD awards – Four (4) years Period of Study, followed by one (1) year Period of Registration.

7.2.3. MPhil awards – Four (4) years Period of Study, followed by one (1) year Period of Registration.

7.2.4. MSCR/MAR awards – Two (2) years Period of Study, followed by one (1) year Period of Registration.

7.3. The School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research may approve a Period of Study of up to four (4) years for full time PhD awards and seven (7) years for part-time PhD awards, where a candidate's programme has additional training and/or research requirements and/or their sponsorship provides for this. In such circumstances a candidate will either have no initial authorised Period of Registration or a reduced initial authorised Period of Registration.

7.4. The School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research may approve a Period of Study of up to three (3) years for full time MPhil awards and five (5) years for part-time MPhil awards, where a candidate's programme has additional training and/or research requirements and/or their sponsorship provides for this. In such circumstances a candidate will either have no initial authorised Period of Registration or a reduced initial authorised Period of Registration.

7.5. Where a candidate is transferring to the University from another Higher Education Institution having undertaken a Period of Study towards their research degree that is

recognised by the University, a candidate's remaining Period of Study at the University will be calculated to take account of this prior registration at the other Higher Education Institution.

- 7.6.** A School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research may reduce a full-time PhD candidate's Period of Study by not more than one (1) year and a part-time PhD candidate's Period of Study not more than two (2) years to take account of any prior advanced progress the candidate has made.
- 7.7.** A School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research may reduce a full-time MPhil candidate's Period of Study by not more than six (6) months and a part-time MPhil candidate's Period of Study not more than year (1) years to take account of any prior advanced progress the candidate has made.
- 7.8.** The duration of a candidate's Period of Study and their initial authorised Period of Registration will be agreed and confirmed during the admission and commencement of the candidate.
- 7.9.** Requests to interrupt a candidate's Period of Study once the candidate has commenced their candidature may be made by the candidate, with the support and approval of their supervisory team and School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, to the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College, following the Doctoral College's concession procedures. The grounds when an interruption of a candidate's Period of Study may be sought encompass but are not limited to medical and/or personal circumstances. Retrospective requests for interruption will only be considered in special cases at the discretion of the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College.
- 7.10.** Requests to extend a candidate's Period of Study once the candidate has commenced their candidature may be made by a candidate, with the support and approval of their supervisory team and School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, to the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College, following the Doctoral College's concession procedures. The grounds when an extension to a candidate's Period of Study may be sought encompass but are not limited to exceptional circumstances where a candidate requires additional time to conduct their research. Retrospective requests for extension will only be considered in special cases at the discretion of the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College.
- 7.11.** Should a candidate not submit their thesis within their initial authorised Period of Registration, as specified at the candidate's commencement and subject to any amendment following any interruptions or extensions, they will be able to enrol for subsequent further Periods of Registration by academic year, subject to the candidate passing their Annual Progress Review. Where a candidate's total Period of

Registration is greater than one (1) year they will be subject to continuation fees in accordance with the University's fees schedule.

- 7.12.** Once a candidate has progressed to their Period of Registration, they may request an extension to their Period of Registration that is not subject to or included in the calculation of any continuation fee liabilities, with the support of their supervisory team and School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, via the Doctoral College's concession procedures. Such requests are available for medical and personal reasons and other exceptional circumstances that have significantly impacted the candidate's ability to submit their thesis. Such requests are not available due to the impact of any employment or other related activities undertaken by the candidate. Retrospective requests for extensions not subject to continuation fee liability will only be considered in special cases at the discretion of the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College.
- 7.13.** Once a candidate has progressed to their Period of Registration they cannot be switched back to be registered on a further Period of Study, except in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research.

8. Location of Candidature

- 8.1.** Candidates are expected to complete the duration of their Period of Study on campus or at their host NBI Institute, except were based at and employed by an Affiliate Organisation or for MD candidates.
- 8.2.** A PhD, MPhil or MSCR/MAR candidate, with the support and approval of their supervisory team and School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, may request to the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College that they be permitted to undertake a defined period of their Period of Study away from campus due to exceptional circumstances, usually no longer than six (6) months and excluding absences for fieldwork, placements and other standard off-campus activities. Requests for such a waiver should be made via the Doctoral College's concession procedures and will be considered in conjunction with a candidate's visa sponsorship status where applicable.
- 8.3.** A PhD and MPhil candidates may, with the permission of the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, spend up to 50% of their Period of Study at another approved place(s) of research, such as a Higher Education Institution outside of the UK. When the nature of the candidate's research requires that their studies should be undertaken elsewhere than the University/Institute the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research may appoint an additional external supervisor from the host organisation that the candidate is with.

- 8.4.** Where a PhD or MPhil candidate spends up to 50% of their Period of Study at another approved place(s) of research, a suitable agreement must be in place between the University and the host organisation to manage the relationship and support and safeguard the candidate, which must be approved by the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research.
- 8.5.** Where a PhD or MPhil candidate, supported and approved by their supervisory team and School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, wishes to formalise any relationship with another Higher Education Institution as to their research, supervision and prospective examination in the form of a double or joint research degree, the supervisory team must raise this with the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research at the earliest opportunity and usually no later than following the candidate's completion of probation.

9. Progress & Probation of Candidature

9.1. Annual Progress Review

- 9.1.1.** All PhD, MD and MPhil candidates shall be subject to and complete an Annual Progress Review for each year of their Period of Study and Period of Registration.
- 9.1.2.** MSCR/MAR candidates are not subject to Annual Progress Review requirements, but their supervisory team must continuously monitor their progress and report to the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research when a candidate is assessed to not be making satisfactory progress.
- 9.1.3.** Annual Progress Reviews must be conducted in accordance with Doctoral College policies and procedures.

9.2. Probation

- 9.2.1.** A PhD/MD/MPhil candidate's first Annual Progress Review will constitute and be recorded as the candidate's Probationary Review.
- 9.2.2.** For full-time PhD/MD/MPhil candidates, their Probationary Review meeting will normally be held between months seven (7) and nine (9) of the candidate's first (1st) year of Period of study and must take place no later than 10 months following the PhD/MPhil candidate commencing their Period of Study.
- 9.2.3.** For part-time PhD/MD/MPhil candidates, their Probationary Review meeting will normally be held between months seven (7) and nine (9) of the candidate's second (2nd) year of Period of Study and must take place no later than 20 months following the PhD/MD/MPhil candidate commencing their Period of Study.

- 9.2.4.** The Probationary Review requires the involvement of an Internal Assessor who is not a member of the PhD/MD/MPhil candidate's supervisory team. As part of the Probationary Review meeting, the Internal Assessor should agree a joint recommendation with the supervisory team on the candidate's probationary status.
- 9.2.5.** If there is evidence at a Probationary Review meeting that the PhD/MD/MPhil candidate is not making satisfactory progress or the Internal Assessor and the supervisory team do not agree in their recommendations, the candidate will be notified promptly by the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research that they may be asked to withdraw from the University or transfer to a MSCR/MAR research degree programme. A notification to a PhD/MD/MPhil candidate that they are not making satisfactory progress, must also include an agreed clear list of measurable goals to be achieved and the timescale for achieving these.
- 9.2.6.** The PhD/MD/MPhil candidate will subsequently be required to attend a second Probationary Review meeting, at which the Internal Assessor and supervisory team will reconsider the candidate's progress and agree a joint recommendation as to whether the candidate should be confirmed as a PhD/MD/MPhil candidate for the remainder of their Period of Study or withdrawn from the University or transferred onto a MSCR/MAR research degree programme.
- 9.2.7.** If the Internal Assessor and the supervisory team cannot agree their recommendations following the second Probationary Review meeting and consensus cannot be established by the School Director of Postgraduate Research, the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research shall consider the evidence provided through the probationary review process and determine whether there is sufficient evidence on which to determine a candidate's probationary status.
- 9.2.8.** Where there is insufficient evidence or if for any other reason the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research needs a further opinion, they shall recommend to the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research the appointment of an additional Internal Assessor who shall review the available evidence, meeting with the candidate where necessary, in order to make a recommendation to the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research.
- 9.2.9.** A full-time PhD/MD/MPhil candidate's probationary status must be determined by the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research within one (1) year of the PhD/MD/MPhil candidate commencing their Period of Study.

- 9.2.10.** A part-time PhD/MD/MPhil candidate's probationary status must be determined the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research within two (2) years of the PhD/MD/MPhil candidate commencing their Period of Study.
- 9.2.11.** Should a candidate's probationary status not be determined by the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research by the specified point in a candidate's Period of Study then the candidate's registration will be interrupted and held in abeyance until a determination is made.
- 9.2.12.** A PhD/MD/MPhil candidate may appeal a School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research's determination as to their probationary status via the University's appeals policy and procedures. Whilst an appeal against a final determination of a probationary status is being considered, the candidate's Period of Study will be amended to accord with the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Study's determination.

9.3. Continuous Progress Monitoring

- 9.3.1.** A candidate and their supervisory team should meet regularly during the candidate's Period of Study and Period of Registration, at least monthly, to assess and support the candidate's progress towards timely submission and completion of their thesis.
- 9.3.2.** A supervisory team will report to the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research at any time when a candidate appears not to be making satisfactory progress.
- 9.3.3.** Where a candidate is assessed to not be engaging in their studies, the supervisory team and School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research will instigate and follow the University's student engagement policy and procedures.

9.4. Progress Management

- 9.4.1.** Should a PhD/MD/MPhil candidate who has passed probation be assessed to be not making satisfactory progress following a subsequent Annual Progress Review, the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research shall notify:
- 9.4.1.1.** The candidate of their status and detail the area(s) of concerns and proposed steps required to progress satisfactorily.
- 9.4.1.2.** The Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research of the candidate's status and the steps that the candidate must take to progress satisfactorily.
- 9.4.2.** A School/Institute Director of Postgraduate may also notify a PhD/MD/MPhil candidate and the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research and

commence Progress Management of the PhD/MD/MPhil candidate at any other time prior to, or proceeding the candidate's Annual Progress Review where the School/Director of Postgraduate Research has significant concern(s) as to the satisfactory progress of the candidate. When notifying the candidate and the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research, the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research must specify the grounds for their significant concern(s) and the proposed steps to address these significant concern(s).

- 9.4.3.** For MSCR/MAR candidates, where a supervisory team reports two (2) or more instances of unsatisfactory progress within a four (4) month period, the MSCR/MAR candidate will be subject to Progress Management.
- 9.4.4.** The School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research will convene a School Progress Management Review Meeting with the candidate and their supervisory team no later than two (2) months after their Annual Progress Review. At this meeting, the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research will determine whether the candidate is making satisfactory progress or not. Where satisfactory progress is not determined to be made, the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research will notify the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research.
- 9.4.5.** On notification of continued unsatisfactory progress, the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research will review the candidate's progress and convene a Faculty Progress Management Review Meeting with the candidate, their supervisory team and the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research. Following this meeting, the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research will determine the candidate's progress status and next steps.
- 9.4.6.** Where satisfactory progress is not determined to be made, the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research will either notify the candidate of the further steps required to make satisfactory progress and convene a follow-up Faculty Progress Management Review Meeting or make a recommendation to the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College as to the future status of the candidate. The Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research may recommend:
- 9.4.6.1.** The transfer of the candidate to a lower research degree programme.
 - 9.4.6.2.** The interruption of the candidate.
 - 9.4.6.3.** Further available support for the candidate.
 - 9.4.6.4.** Referral to a Senate Student Discipline Committee (SSDC) to consider the possible withdrawal of the candidate under the terms of Regulation 13 of the University's general regulations for students.

- 9.4.6.5.** Any other options as permitted and determined by the University's general regulations for students and other applicable policies and procedures.
- 9.4.7.** Should satisfactory progress not be determined to be made by the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research after the follow-up Faculty Progress Management Review Meeting, they will make a recommendation to the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College as to the future status of the candidate.
- 9.4.8.** Where a recommendation is made to the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College as to the future status of a candidate, the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College will determine the most appropriate option for managing and resolving the student's continued unsatisfactory progress under these regulations, the University's general regulations for students and the University's discipline procedures.
- 9.4.9.** A candidate may appeal the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College's final determination following the University's academic appeals policy and procedures, except for instances where the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College determines to refer a candidate to a Senate Student Discipline Committee (SSDC) to consider their possible withdrawal.
- 9.4.10.** At any point during the conduct of Progress Management of a candidate, should the candidate be assessed to not be engaging in their studies, then the candidate will also be referred and subject to the University's student engagement policy and procedures for further support and action.
- 9.4.11.** When undertaking Progress Management of a candidate, all participants must follow the Doctoral College's relevant supporting policies and procedures.

10. Thesis Requirements

- 10.1.** In the thesis and examination, a candidate is expected to take due account of previously published work on the subject, to show distinct ability in conducting original investigations and in testing ideas whether the candidate's own or those of others. Furthermore, a candidate is also expected to show understanding of the relationships of their area of specialism to a wider field of knowledge.
- 10.2.** For PhD and MPhil candidates, their thesis must represent a significant contribution to the development of understanding, for example, through the discovery of new knowledge, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of a new theory or the revision of older views.

10.3. For MD candidates, their thesis must be deemed to make an original contribution to the field in some subject of Medicine to the satisfaction of the examiners.

10.4. For MSCR/MAR candidates, their thesis must show evidence of adequate industry and application and obtain appropriate conclusions from the research.

10.5. In making their judgement on the award of a research degree, examiners will consider that the substance and significance of the thesis should:

10.5.1. Accord and meet the expectations and requirements of the qualification level, as described and detailed by the QAA's Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies and similar/subsequent statements on degree outcomes made by quality assurance authorities and organisations that pertain to the University.

10.5.2. Be of a kind that might be reasonably expected of a capable and diligent candidate after the duration of their candidature.

10.6. Thesis Word Count Limits

10.6.1. The normal word count of research degree thesis are as follows:

10.6.1.1. A PhD thesis shall not exceed 100,000 words, including footnotes and references (as defined in paragraph 11.9.3).

10.6.1.2. A MD these shall not exceed 65,000 words including footnotes and references (as defined in paragraph 11.9.3).

10.6.1.3. A MPhil thesis shall not exceed 60,000 words, including footnotes and references (as defined in paragraph 11.9.3)

10.6.1.4. A MSCR/MAR thesis shall not exceed 40,000 words, including footnotes and references (as defined in paragraph 11.9.3).

10.7. A candidate may seek approval in exceptional circumstances from the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College permission to submit a thesis no greater than 20% in excess of these word limits. Requests must be supported and approved by the candidate's supervisory team and be submitted following the Doctoral College's concession procedures.

10.8. Non-Standard Forms of Thesis Composition

10.8.1. Submission by Publication

10.8.1.1. PhD candidates may submit a collection of single authored or substantively joint authored peer reviewed publications or equivalent outputs that is comparable in quality and length to the thesis requirement,

together with a critical analysis, no greater than 15,000 words in length (including footnotes and references) of the publications and outputs submitted covering the development of the candidate's submitted research and its contribution to the field in general. This form of submission is classified as Submission by Publication.

10.8.1.2. In cases where multi-authored works are included in a candidate's submission, evidence, usually in the form of written confirmation by at least one co-author per published work, of the candidate's own original contribution to the output in respect of following must also be provided:

10.8.1.2.1. Design of the investigation.

10.8.1.2.2. Conduct of the research.

10.8.1.2.3. Analysis of the outcome(s).

10.8.1.2.4. Preparation of the publication manuscript.

10.8.2. In addition to standard academic or creative publications that may be included, for candidates based in Schools in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, equivalent outputs may include performance, exhibition, installation, media of various kinds as defined that are relevant for a Professional Practice PhD award submission, provided that they are made available in an appropriate digital or other recorded format.

10.8.3. Where a PhD candidate wishes to submit by publication, they must indicate this and gain the approval of the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research no later than the completion and approval of their Probation.

10.8.4. Creative & Critical Writing PhD Programmes

10.8.4.1. For PhD candidates enrolled on Creative & Critical Writing programmes in the School of Literature, Drama & Creative Writing a substantial part of the candidate's thesis may be an original literary text of high standard written specifically for the degree. In the remaining part of the thesis, which shall normally be between 20,000 and 50,000 words in length (including footnotes and references), the candidate shall produce a critical text of high academic standard, either literary-critical or interdisciplinary in nature and written in dialogue with the creative work and shall defend the thesis as a coherent whole in the oral examination.

10.8.5. Professional Practice PhD Programmes

10.8.5.1. For PhD candidates enrolled on Professional Practice programmes in the School of Art, Media & American Studies, a substantial part of a PhD

thesis may be archival / curatorial, educational or creative in content. This will be represented in the thesis submission by a substantial dossier of practical work presented in an appropriate, accessible and enduring format. This will be analysed in and complemented by a written commentary, normally of between 40,000 and 50,000 words (including footnotes and references). The purpose of the commentary is to show a critical understanding of professional practice, to set the material in the dossier in a broader historical and theoretical framework, and to draw attention to its originality and utility.

10.8.6. Literary Translation PhD Programmes

10.8.6.1. For PhD candidates enrolled on Literary Translation programmes in the School of Literature, Drama & Creative Writing, part of a candidate's thesis may be a translation of high standard by the candidate, written specifically for the degree. In this case the remaining part of the thesis shall be a substantial critical essay. In the essay the candidate is required to demonstrate a critical understanding of the academic study of translation, which is related to the submitted translation. The candidate must defend the thesis as a coherent whole in the oral examination. The proportion between the parts will normally be 60% for the translation and 40% for the critical essay.

11. Thesis Submission

- 11.1.** A thesis may be submitted and presented for examination at any time after the beginning of the last six (6) months of a Period of Study for PhD, MPhil and MSCR/MAR candidates.
- 11.2.** A MD candidate may submit and present for examination their thesis at any time after the beginning of the last four (4) months of their Period of Study.
- 11.3.** No later than three (3) months prior to the anticipated thesis submission, the precise title of the thesis must be submitted by a candidate to the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research.
- 11.4.** A candidate must submit their thesis electronically to the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research, following the Doctoral College's thesis submission policy and procedures.
- 11.5.** If the thesis is accompanied by supplementary material, such as datasets, visual items or audio recordings, this should be submitted at the same time as the electronic version of the thesis. Where the form of the submission makes it difficult to submit in purely digital formats, for example, where there are multiple objects that

cannot be digitised, advice should be sought from the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research.

- 11.6.** A candidate's thesis must be written and submitted in English and presented in the required form and format.
- 11.7.** The title page of a thesis must bear the name of the candidate, the title of the thesis, the name of the degree for which the thesis is submitted and the date of submission. The title page will also include the following words:
- 11.7.1.1.** *"This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with the author and that use of any information derived there-from must be in accordance with current UK Copyright Law. In addition, any quotation or extract must include full attribution."*
- 11.8.** A candidate may, with the permission of the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor - Doctoral College submit recorded material, such as audiotape, videotape and film, of not more than one hour's running length as supporting evidence. This must be in addition to a written thesis and not a substitute for any part of it. The examiners may require candidates to deposit copies of the recorded material with the thesis in the Library and in the appropriate School/Institute. Work submitted should be in a durable form suited to preservation over long periods. The item should be provided with an appropriate container approved by the University Library and bearing on its exterior the particulars listed in 11.7.
- 11.9.** When submitting their thesis, a candidate must provide:
- 11.9.1.** An abstract of the thesis, not exceeding 300 words, in a form suitable for publication. If the candidate is awarded the degree, the University may publish this abstract in any manner approved by Senate or by School/Institute Postgraduate Research Director.
- 11.9.2.** A statement showing what part, if any, of the material offered has previously been submitted by the candidate for a degree in this or any other University and, if joint work is submitted, what part of it is the candidate's independent contribution.
- 11.9.3.** A statement as to the word count of the thesis, including footnotes, endnotes, the abstract and the bibliography, but excluding the title page, copyright statement, acknowledgements, table of contents, list of illustrations, tables, figures or images and their legends, glossary of terms, and appendices.
- 11.9.4.** A statement as to whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and applications were used by the candidate in the course of their research and the production of

their thesis, and how the candidate's use of Artificial Intelligence complies with the University's policies and procedures as to the use of Artificial Intelligence in research.

- 11.10.** Once a candidate has submitted their thesis they will be considered to be under examination, and this status will continue until the final outcome of their examination, which will constitute their pass list or other issuance of other formal outcome documentation by the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research. During this period, the candidate will continue to be registered with the University but not be subject to tuition or continuation fees.

12. Appointment of Examiners

- 12.1.** The School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research shall recommend for approval by the Faculty Associate Dean – Postgraduate Research two (2) or more examiners, at least one (1) of whom shall be an external examiner. This recommendation shall be made no later than three (3) months before the anticipated date of the submission of the thesis.
- 12.2.** In certain circumstances, the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research shall also recommend that an Independent Chair be appointed to convene and/or oversee the examination of the candidate. An Independent Chair, who oversees the conduct of the examination and does not serve as an examiner, is required where:
- 12.2.1.** The proposed internal examiner has not previously examined under the UK research degree examination system.
 - 12.2.2.** There are two (2) external examiners nominated for appointment, which is required in cases for the examination of a Category A (Staff) candidate.
 - 12.2.3.** There is a second oral examination of the candidate, required following a candidate's resubmission of their thesis.
 - 12.2.4.** An additional external examiner is appointed by the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor – Doctoral College and the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor – Doctoral College requires a further oral examination of the candidate to be undertaken.
- 12.3.** Candidates and supervisory teams must follow the Doctoral College's policy and procedures for the appointment of examiners.

13. Examination

- 13.1.** A candidate shall be examined orally (the 'Viva Voce') on the thesis and on subjects relevant to it, and the examination shall normally be held usually within three (3) months and no later than six (6) months from the date of submission of the thesis or the date of resubmission of a revised thesis.
- 13.2.** At the request of the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, and the candidate's approval, the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College may in exceptional circumstances waive the requirement for the oral examination or agree to its replacement by an alternative form of assessment. In making such a decision, the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College will take due regard and enact any reasonable adjustments that have been agreed for the candidate in relation to the conduct of their oral examination.
- 13.3.** An oral examination of the thesis will take place at an agreed venue with all the participants physically present, usually on campus or at an NBI, or with participants joining and participating remotely from other locations using University or NBI provided communications applications, such as Microsoft Teams. The location and mode of participation in an oral examination must be jointly agreed by the candidate, the examiners and, where also appointed, the Independent Chair.
- 13.4.** When conducting an oral examination when the candidate is not in same physical location with the other participants, the examiners and, where also appointed, the Independent Chair must be assured of the candidate's identity and independence to undertake the oral examination unaided.
- 13.5.** Prior to the oral examination of the thesis, each examiner shall each prepare and submit independent preliminary reports regarding the candidate's performance. These preliminary reports are not shared with the candidate except in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College.
- 13.6.** A candidate will be assessed solely based on the thesis and oral examination, unless a change in the format of a candidate's oral examination is agreed by the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor – Doctoral College following a request for an alternative form of assessment.
- 13.7.** Where the thesis comprises a portfolio of work or consists of several elements, each element will be given equal weighting in the oral examination, and all elements must be passed to be awarded the degree. Compensation cannot be offered for failure of any element within the thesis.
- 13.8.** Having assessed a candidate, the examiners shall send their joint final report and recommendation to the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research. If the

examiners do not agree in their recommendations or if for any other reason the School Director of Postgraduate Research needs a further opinion, the School Director of Postgraduate Research shall recommend to the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor – Doctoral College the appointment of an additional external examiner who shall conduct a further examination of the candidate.

13.9. Examination Outcomes

13.9.1. The School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, having considered the final report and recommendation of the examiners, shall then proceed in one of the following ways:

- 13.9.1.1.** If the thesis and performance in the oral examination are of sufficient merit they shall recommend that the candidate be approved for the award of the research degree that the candidate is registered on.
- 13.9.1.2.** If the thesis and performance in the oral examination are of sufficient merit, but that corrections are required, they shall recommend that the candidate be approved for the award of the research degree that they are enrolled on subject to completion of corrections normally within six (6) months and no longer than one (1) year.
- 13.9.1.3.** If the thesis and performance in the oral examination are not of sufficient merit for the degree that the candidate is registered on, but there is reasonable expectation that the thesis, if revised, could meet the standard required for the research degree that the candidate is registered on, the School Director of Postgraduate Research shall recommend either that the candidate be asked to resubmit a revised thesis, usually within one (1) year.
- 13.9.1.4.** For a PhD candidate, if the thesis and performance in the oral examination are not of sufficient merit for the degree of PhD, they shall, if the thesis and performance in the oral examination are of sufficient merit for a MPhil, recommend that the candidate be approved for the award of a MPhil, with or without corrections.
- 13.9.1.5.** For a PhD or MPhil candidate, if the thesis and performance in the oral examination are not of sufficient merit for the degree of PhD or MPhil, they shall, if the thesis and performance in the oral examination are of sufficient merit for a MScR/MAR, recommend that the candidate be approved for the award of a MScR/MAR, with or without corrections.
- 13.9.1.6.** If the thesis and performance in the oral examination are not of sufficient merit to entitle the candidate to award of any available research degree,

the School Director of Postgraduate Research shall recommend that no degree be awarded.

- 13.9.2.** Should the oral examination give rise to any concerns by the examiners and/or Independent Chair as to the integrity and conduct of the candidate's research, including compliance with the candidate's ethical approval for their research and any perceived form of potential research misconduct, the examiners and/or Independent Chair must report their concerns immediately to the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research and the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research.
- 13.10.** Should a candidate resubmit a revised thesis and may also be required to undergo a second oral examination they shall be required to pay a reassessment fee.
- 13.11.** A candidate will not be allowed to resubmit a revised thesis on more than one (1) occasion following examination; however, the candidate may be required to complete further corrections to their revised thesis following reassessment.
- 13.12.** A candidate required to make corrections to their thesis or revised thesis is only permitted to submit their corrected thesis or revised thesis on one (1) occasion.
- 13.13.** In all cases, the recommendations of the School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research must be presented to the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research, who will ensure that appropriate action is taken on behalf of Senate.

14. Final Submission of Thesis

- 14.1.** A candidate shall submit an electronic copy of the final version of the thesis and other associated materials in accordance with rules approved by Senate and the Doctoral College's policy and procedures.
- 14.2.** If a candidate is approved for the award of a research degree the Associate Director – Postgraduate Research will deposit a copy of the thesis with the University Library where it shall be publicly available for consultation.
- 14.3.** The School/Institute Director of Postgraduate Research, at the request of the candidate, may determine that a particular thesis shall, for a period of up to three (3) years, be available only to those who have the candidate's written permission to consult it.

15. Past List & Graduation

- 15.1.** The Associate Director – Postgraduate Research shall issue a candidate's pass list on behalf of the University Secretary once all of the requirements for a candidate's

completion of their research degree have been met. The Pass List will not be issued until the electronic version of the final thesis, and other associated materials, have been deposited with the University.

- 15.2.** A candidate who has received their pass list is not entitled to describe themselves as holding a research degree granted by the University unless the qualification has been awarded in Congregation or by special resolution of Senate.

15.3. Additional MD Candidate Requirements

- 15.3.1.** For a MD candidate to meet all of the requirements to complete their research degree, in addition to fulfilling the requirements of their examiners, they must:

- 15.3.1.1.** Have held for the last three (3) years or more from the point of the submission of their thesis a qualification that is recognised and accepted for registration by the General Medical Council for the United Kingdom.
- 15.3.1.2.** Hold an appointment or an honorary appointment within a health or social care setting that has established research and/or teaching links with the University.
- 15.3.1.3.** Have been employed for two (2) years or longer in appropriate clinical or scientific setting, within which they completed the requirements for their degree.

16. Compliance & Monitoring

- 16.1.** The Associate Director – Postgraduate Research is responsible for the administration and operational monitoring of these regulations to ensure their implementation and integrity.
- 16.2.** These regulations are overseen and scrutinised by the Doctoral College Executive, who report into and make recommendations and proposals to the University's Learning & Teaching Committee on postgraduate research quality assurance.
- 16.3.** Doctoral College Executive will review and consider any arising quality assurance issues from the conduct and implementation of these regulations on an annual basis, reporting its deliberations, findings and recommendations to the Learning & Teaching Committee.

17. Related Documents

- 17.1.** General Regulations for Students
- 17.2.** Doctoral College / PGR Service Policies & Procedures

17.3. Student Admissions Policy

17.4. Appeals & Complaints Policy & Procedures

17.5. Student Discipline Procedure

17.6. Student Engagement Policy & Procedures

17.7. Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct (Students)

17.8. Research AI Policy

17.9. Research Ethics Policy

18. Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Approval	Details of Change (s)
0.1	11/05/2026	Harrop, Chris	Internal Discussion Only	• First draft at revamp and refresh of documentation. • Prior separate regulations for PhD/MD/MPhil/Masters brought together, together with Rules for the Submission of Theses for Research Degrees and elements of the Instructions for PGR Examiners.
0.2	12/05/2026	Harrop, Chris	Discussion at Doctoral College Executive	Draft copy shared with Doctoral College Executive following internal development and drafting.
0.3	14/05/2026	Harrop, Chris	Doctoral College Executive	Document discussed and reviewed in detail. Approved subject to further amendments, as detailed in meeting minutes.
0.4	22/05/2026	Harrop, Chris	Doctoral College Executive	Subsequent amendments and clarifications made and circulated from DCE meeting.
1.0	17/06/26	Harrop, Chris	Senate	Initial version approved.

Further Information

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