

REGULATIONS

B5 Research Degree Regulations for Masters Degrees by Research

Regulations for the Award of the Degrees of Master of Arts, Master of Science and Master of Law by Research

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1. **Principles**

- 1.1 Oxford Brookes University (hereinafter referred to as 'the University') shall award the degrees of Master of Arts by Research (MA by Research), Master of Science by Research (MSc by Research) and Master of Law by Research (LLM by Research) to registered candidates who successfully complete approved programmes of supervised research.
- 1.2 Programmes of research may be proposed in any field of study subject to the requirement that the proposed programme is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment by appropriate examiners. The written thesis may be supplemented by material in other than written form. All proposed research programmes shall be considered on their academic merits and without reference to the concerns or interests of any associated funding body.
- 1.3 The MA, MSc or LLM by Research shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

2. **Entry requirements**

- 2.1 An applicant for registration for the degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research shall normally hold a first or upper second class honours degree of a Higher Education Institution in the UK or a qualification which is regarded by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee as equivalent to such an honours degree.
- 2.2 An applicant holding qualifications other than those in paragraph 2.1 shall be considered on the applicant's merits and in relation to the nature and scope of the programme of work proposed. In considering an applicant in this category, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall look for evidence of the candidate's ability and background knowledge in relation to the proposed research. Professional experience, publications, written reports or other appropriate evidence of accomplishment shall be taken into consideration. Where appropriate prior experience or certificated learning will be credited according to the requirements of the specific programmes. An applicant may be required to pass an externally assessed qualifying examination at final year honours degree level before registration is approved. An applicant wishing to be considered under this regulation shall include in the application for registration the names of two suitable persons whom the Faculty shall consult concerning the candidate's academic attainment and fitness for research.
- 2.3 Applicants whose main language is not English must meet the University's English language requirements and where applicable the Faculty or Department's requirements.
- 2.4 Before being accepted, self-funded students should provide evidence that they are able to adequately fund the whole of their research degree programme. Candidates applying from a number of countries may now be required to pay a deposit at the offer stage in order to be granted a visa for entry.

3. **Admission**

- 3.1 The admission of research candidates must comply with the requirements stipulated within the University Admission Policy.
- 3.2 Responsibility for the initial admission of candidates lies with individual Faculties and the Dean of Faculty who may delegate that responsibility as described in 3.3 below. Admission procedures should comply with Sections 2.1 – 2.8 of the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research. However, formal registration for a research degree may only take place following approval by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee of the Academic Board acting on behalf of the University.
- 3.3 In admitting a candidate to the degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research the Faculty or Department's Postgraduate Research Tutor or their deputy or the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee or Director of Research must ensure that:
- (a) the applicant is appropriately qualified in accordance with paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4;
 - (b) references are obtained;
 - (c) the proposed programme of research is viable, particularly if the topic has been generated by the candidate;
 - (d) adequate supervision is available which is likely to be sustainable and the Director of Studies identified;
 - (e) the necessary facilities exist for the conduct of the research;
 - (f) self-funded students should provide evidence that they are able to adequately fund the whole of their research programme;
 - (g) Ethical approval has been considered where appropriate;
 - (h) Intellectual Property Rights have been considered;
 - (i) if appropriate, formal collaboration is set up with the institutions necessary to undertake the research, and
 - (j) criminal records check has been carried out where appropriate.
 - (k) each candidate is interviewed either in person, by skype or by phone and the Postgraduate Research Tutor must be part of the interview panel;
 - (l) where there is an expectation of teaching being undertaken by a candidate applying for a funded studentship, their suitability for teaching should be considered as part of the admissions process.
- 3.4 Successful applicants must be issued with a formal offer letter from the Faculty or Department's Postgraduate Research Tutor or their Deputy or the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee or Director of Research. The offer must be accepted by the applicant in writing. Copies of the offer and acceptance letters must be lodged with the Research Degrees Team.
- 3.5 In accordance with Section 2.9 of the Code of Practice, the offer letter shall specify:
- (a) The total fees, including any other charges such as bench fees which will be levied;
 - (b) A brief outline of the proposed research area and the normal period of study, including mode of study;
 - (c) The names of the supervisors (normally indicating the Director of Studies, who must be suitably qualified see 9.2) and other supervisory arrangements;
 - (d) A clear statement that continuation is dependent on satisfactory academic progress;
 - (e) If the research area requires Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance, the correct JACS code must be noted. In addition to the code, a paragraph providing a concise, but detailed account of the proposed research must be included, complex technical details should be included if appropriate;
 - (f) The nature and extent of other duties (e.g. teaching) required (if any);
 - (g) The name and requirements and conditions of any sponsor, (if any);

- (h) A summary of the general facilities that will be made available;
 - (i) Requirements of attendance, holiday allocation, progress reports and review;
 - (j) Detail of compulsory Faculty or Department research methods or other training courses if any, and
 - (k) The University's terms and conditions governing entry to and study on the research degree programme. Ethics policy, Intellectual Property Rights policy and Health and Safety Information.
- 3.6 Should the need arise, the University will implement other regulations and policies relating to misconduct, including plagiarism as laid down in the following documents:
- Academic Integrity;
 - Cheating and Plagiarism;
 - Data Protection;
 - Research Ethics

- 3.7 Admission decision must take into account the needs and requirements of students with disabilities and other special needs. A clear statement must be made at the outset, indicating the level of support available for the student from both the Faculty and University.

When admitting a student to the full-time research programme, the Postgraduate Research Tutor must be satisfied that the student has sufficient time available to dedicate to their programme. Normally, a full-time student must allocate at least 35 hours a week to work on their programme and should not undertake more than 20 hours per week paid employment or other commitments. Part-time candidates should have a minimum of 15 hours per week available for their programme of study over the full duration of their programme.

- 3.8 When offering a student a place on the programme, Postgraduate Research Tutors must satisfy themselves that a candidate about to begin their research programme has given due consideration to their personal and financial circumstances before accepting the offer. Students should not suspend during the period of enrolment on this programme (See Section 7.3). Where a student is not in a position to comply with the regulations, the offer of a place should be deferred for a maximum of one year.

4. **Enrolment and fees**

- 4.1 Having been offered and accepted a place to study for an MA or MSc by Research, all candidates shall enrol as students of the University at the start of their programme of research and shall maintain their enrolment until conferment of the degree. Enrolment is a prerequisite for registration for a research degree and entry to the programme is only permitted in September and January of each year.
- 4.2 Students will be required to register their research proposals within 3 months of enrolment for full-time students and within a maximum period of 4 months for part-time students. If a student has not registered their proposal within a maximum of 4 months of enrolment, on the recommendation of a student's supervisors and the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee will terminate their enrolment (see Section 7.5.2).
- 4.3 If satisfactory progress has been made and the candidate's application for registration has been approved by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, students will be formally registered as MA, MSc or LLM by Research.
- 4.4 Full-time candidates are required to pay the full fee for a minimum period of one year or a maximum of two years until submission of the thesis, when no further fees will be due, unless the candidate is required to resubmit the thesis for re-examinations (Section 4.6).

- 4.5 Part-time candidates are required to pay the part-time fee for a minimum enrolment period of two years or a maximum of three years until submission of the thesis, when no further fees will be due, unless the candidate is required to resubmit the thesis for re-examinations (Section 4.6).
- 4.6 Following the submission of the thesis, candidates are required to remain enrolled until the degree is awarded, but no fees are payable for this period. If however following the viva examination, the examiners recommend that the candidate is required to revise their thesis and resubmit it for re-examination within one year, the candidate will be required to pay the re-submission fee until resubmission of the thesis.

5. **Registration**

- 5.1 New students may only enrol on the programme in either September and January of each year. Students shall submit an application to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee to register for the degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research. This shall be done on form RDSC-MRR within the first three months of enrolment for full-time students and within a maximum period of four months for part-time students. If a student has not registered within a maximum of four months of enrolment, on the recommendation of a student's supervisors and the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee will terminate the student's enrolment (except as in paragraph 5.3 below). All students should have a formal interview as part of the registration process, as detailed in their Faculty Handbook. The form RDSC-MRR shall be completed by the candidate, with the assistance of the supervisors, and shall be approved by the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor who will forward it to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration.
- 5.2 The date of registration given in the application sets the start of the time period for the programme of research. The date of registration shall be the date the candidate initially enrolled on the research degree programme. The date of registration may not be backdated before the candidate's date of initial enrolment as a student at the University.
- 5.3 In approving an application for registration, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall satisfy itself that:
- (a) the candidate is suitably qualified;
 - (b) the candidate is embarking on a viable research programme;
 - (c) supervision is adequate and likely to be sustained;
 - (d) the University or formally approved collaborating establishment is able to provide appropriate facilities for the conduct of scholarly research in the area of the research programme;
 - (e) the candidate is enrolled as a student of the University and the research programme has been approved by the candidate's Faculty;
 - (f) Ethics approval has been obtained or an application submitted as appropriate;
 - (g) Intellectual Property Rights have been signed off.

Since this approval requires appropriate academic judgement to be brought to bear on the viability of each research proposal, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall be composed of persons who are or have recently been engaged in research and who have appropriate experience of successful research degree supervision (see Annex 1).

- 5.4 Where a research project is part of a piece of funded research, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall establish to its satisfaction that the terms on which the research is funded do not detract from the fulfilment of the objectives and requirements of the candidate's research programme.

5.5 Except where permission has been given for the thesis and the oral examination to be in another language, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall satisfy itself that the candidate has sufficient command of the English language to complete satisfactorily the programme of work and to prepare and defend a thesis in English. Permission to present a thesis in another language shall be sought at the time of application for registration. Permission to present a thesis in a language other than English shall only be given if the subject matter of the thesis involves language and related studies.

5.6 Where a candidate or the University wishes the thesis to remain confidential for a period of time after completion of the work, this shall be identified and approval sought from the Research Degrees Sub-Committee at the time of registration. In such cases where the need for confidentiality emerges at a subsequent stage, the request for the thesis to remain confidential after submission shall be made immediately to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

The Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall normally only approve an application for confidentiality in order to enable a patent application to be lodged or to protect commercially or politically sensitive material. A thesis shall not be restricted in this way in order to protect research leads. The normal maximum period of confidentiality shall be one year from the date of oral examination and in such cases all examiners shall be required to complete and sign a Confidentiality Agreement RDSC-CA. In exceptional circumstances the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may approve a longer period. Where a shorter period would be adequate the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall not automatically grant confidentiality for one year.

5.7 A candidate seeking substantial change to an approved programme of research at any time after registration shall submit a revised registration form to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for approval.

6. **Regulations relating to different types of research programmes**

6.1 **Candidates working as part of a research group**

6.1.1 A candidate whose work forms part of a larger group project may register for a research degree. In such cases each individually registered project shall in itself be distinguishable for the purposes of assessment and be appropriate for the award being sought. The application shall indicate clearly each individual contribution and its relationship to the group project.

6.2 **Candidates working overseas**

6.2.1 In exceptional circumstances the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may approve an application from a candidate proposing to work outside the UK, provided that:

- (a) the candidate shall spend not less than an average of six weeks per year at the University;
- (b) the arrangements proposed for supervision enable frequent and substantial contact between the candidate and the supervisor(s) based in the UK, including adequate face-to-face contact with the supervisor(s);
- (c) appropriate support is available for the candidate whilst they are working outside the UK through the appointment of a locally-based supervisor or adviser; and
- (d) there is satisfactory evidence as to the facilities available for the research both in the University and abroad.

6.3 **Research degrees involving creative work**

- 6.3.1 A candidate may undertake a programme of research in which the candidate's own creative work forms the most significant part of the intellectual enquiry. Such creative work may be in any field (for instance, fine art, design, engineering and technology, architecture, creative writing, musical composition, film, dance and performance), but shall have been undertaken as part of the registered research programme.
- 6.3.2 The creative work shall be accompanied by a written commentary which sets the work in its relevant theoretical, critical or design context. The commentary shall conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length (see paragraph 19.8).
- 6.3.3 Where the research degree involves musical composition, the portfolio of work shall comprise substantial compositions which show coherence, originality, experimentation with forms and language, and knowledge of contemporary issues in the field. The compositions shall be a total of 60 minutes duration and up to a maximum of 80 minutes and the written commentary shall address the compositional approaches used in each piece and shall demonstrate an understanding of the techniques used, the context of the piece, and appropriate aesthetic issues.
- 6.3.4 Where the research degree involves contemporary fine art practice, the submission shall represent a substantial individual achievement in the form of a major work (if a single installation, performance or event) or a body of works which demonstrates coherence, originality, experimentation with appropriate forms and media, and knowledge of contemporary issues in the field. The work or body of works shall give due consideration to its context and audience and, where relevant, the submission shall be presented in an appropriate public context. The written commentary shall address questions of context and audience and shall demonstrate an understanding of the methods, strategies and techniques employed, as well as the relevant aesthetic and theoretical issues. Since the exploratory research process is vital to the final form of the work, the submission is likely to include evidence of the research through practice (trials, examples, research diaries, evaluations) and the commentary may contain or be accompanied by visual or other relevant documentary material.
- 6.3.5 The final submission shall be accompanied by some permanent record (for instance, video, photographic record, CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, musical score, diagrammatic representation) of the creative work, where practicable, bound with the commentary.
- 6.3.6 The application for registration shall set out the form of the candidate's intended submission and of the proposed methods of assessment.
- 6.3.7 Where there is a physical element to the examination of a practiced based PhD, such as an installation, performance or event, the beginning of the examination process will start from the date of the physical element of the examination. The candidate will be permitted two months following this stage of the examination to complete the written thesis and submit the work for examination.

6.4 **Research degrees involving the preparation of an edition of texts or other work**

- 6.4.1 A candidate may undertake a programme of research in which the principal focus is the preparation of a scholarly edition of a text or texts, musical or choreographic work, or other original artefacts.

6.4.2 The final submission shall include a copy of the edited text(s) or collection of artefact(s), appropriate textual and explanatory annotations, and a substantial introduction and critical commentary which set the text in the relevant historical, theoretical or critical context. The thesis itself shall conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length.

7. **Period of study**

7.1 **Mode of study**

7.1.1 A candidate may register on a full-time or a part-time basis. A full-time candidate shall devote on average at least 35 hours per week over a 44-week year to the research; a part-time candidate on average at least 15 hours per week.

7.1.2 Where a candidate changes from full-time to part-time study or vice versa, the minimum and maximum registration periods shall be calculated as if the candidate were a part-time candidate. Application for such a change shall be made on form RDSC-MS.

7.1.3 When a candidate moves on to the Writing-up stage of the programme, their mode of study will remain unchanged unless an application for change of mode of study is submitted for approval.

7.2 **Programme length**

7.2.1 A full-time candidate shall normally reach the standard for MA, MSc or LLM by Research within one year of registration or two years for part-time.

7.2.2 The thesis must be submitted within the following minimum and maximum periods of registration:

	Minimum	Maximum
MA, MSc and LLM by Research		
Full-time	1 year	2 years
Part-time	2 years	3 years

7.3 **Temporary suspension of period of registration**

7.3.1 Where the candidate is prevented, by ill-health or exceptionally, for other reasons, from making progress with their research, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may suspend their registration for no more than two months at a time and for no longer than a maximum of three months. All applications will be considered on an individual basis and a case must be made by the student, which will be judged on merit, it should be noted that approval will not automatically be granted. A candidate seeking such a suspension shall apply on form RDSC-Susp. The candidate's enrolment as a student with the University shall be suspended for the period of the approved suspension and access to all University facilities will be put in abeyance for the approved period.

7.3.2 Supervisors must ensure that applications for suspension of registration are submitted before the period of suspension and not retrospectively. Where in exceptional cases an application for retrospective suspension is required, the full application and supporting documentation must be submitted to the appropriate Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration. The approval of applications for retrospective suspension cannot be guaranteed and if the Sub-Committee is unable to approve the application, the student will be required to enrol and pay the appropriate fees for that period of time.

- 7.3.3 Applications for suspension of registration will only be considered in circumstances related to illness / accident, exceptional personal circumstances, maternity leave, or where a difficult language has to be learnt. If a student applies for a suspension of registration due to illness lasting for any period longer than 4 weeks, a medical certificate must be given to the Postgraduate Research Tutor to support the application. If a suspension falls during an academic year, fees will not be payable for that period only.
- 7.3.4 All candidates beginning their research programme are expected to have given due consideration to their personal and financial circumstances before accepting an offer of a place on the programme. Where an application for suspension is not approved, the student will be required to withdraw and apply again at a future date when they are able to maintain continuous enrolment. All applications must be requested immediately and with the full support of the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor and Supervisory Team. Retrospective applications will not be considered.

7.4 **Extension of period of registration**

- 7.4.1 A candidate shall submit the thesis to the Research Degrees Team before the expiry of the maximum period of registration. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee may extend a candidate's period of registration, for not more than three months at a time and for not more than a maximum of six months. A candidate seeking such an extension shall apply on form RDSC-Ext. Supervisors must ensure that applications for extension of registration are submitted before the period of extension and not retrospectively.
- 7.4.2 A candidate may apply to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for an extension to their period of registration. Extensions will be considered for time unavoidably lost through circumstances outside the control of the individual concerned or where a student's progress has been hindered through extreme pressure of external work for a limited period. Sympathetic consideration will be given to cases where the student has been absent through illness supported by a valid medical certificate.

7.5 **Withdrawal of registration**

- 7.5.1 Where a candidate has discontinued the research, the withdrawal of registration shall be notified to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee on form RDSC-W completed by the candidate and/or the supervisors.
- 7.5.2 On the recommendation of a candidate's supervisors and the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may terminate the registration of a candidate for the following reasons:
- (a) if a student does not register their proposal within a maximum period of three months from the date of initial enrolment or four months for part-time students;
 - (b) if the candidate's period of registration has expired and an application for extension of registration has not been submitted within a reasonable period;
 - (c) if the candidate has not responded to any correspondence from the supervisors and there has been no contact between the candidate and the supervisors for a period of three months;
 - (d) if the candidate has not maintained enrolment as a student of the University and paid the appropriate fees (see Section 4.);
 - (e) if the candidate's Faculty provides evidence for unsatisfactory academic progress, over a period of six months.

- 7.5.3 A candidate who has formally withdrawn may apply for reinstatement of registration if, due to a change in circumstances, the candidate is in a position to be able to resume the research programme. The application should be considered by the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor in line with the Admission procedures in the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research. Consideration will also be given to the likelihood of completion; past academic achievement; progress; references; financial viability and whether adequate supervision is available.

As part of the application, the candidate should submit a full proposal containing a detailed progress report, clearly outlining the work already undertaken with a full account of the work still to be completed. The application should include a realistic timetable of when the various stages of the remaining work will be completed.

The application will be considered by the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor in the same way as for a new application. However, particular attention will be paid to the progress made and the academic standard of the work already completed when the candidate was previously registered. The Faculty and the Research Degrees Sub-Committee reserve the right to refuse re-entry to the programme if previous work was not of a satisfactory standard or if there are no longer supervisors available to support the work.

If an application to resume study is successful, the candidate will be required to enrol on a new student number and pay the appropriate full-time or part-time fee (see Section 4), no concession will be made for fees previously paid. An application for registration will then be made to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee in the usual way, the amount of time allowed for the backdating of a candidate's new registration will depend on the recommendations made by the Faculty and Sub-Committee.

7.6 **Paid work and holidays**

- 7.6.1 Full-time students who wish to undertake paid work not directly related to their research training must get the permission of their Director of Studies and Postgraduate Research Tutor.
- 7.6.2 A full-time student must allocate at least 35 hours a week to work on their research programme and should not undertake more than 20 hours per week paid employment or other commitments. Part-time candidates should have a minimum of 15 hours per week available for their programme of study over the full duration of their programme.
- 7.6.3 Students may take up to four weeks holiday in each year (pro rata for parts of a year), inclusive of normal public holidays. The timing of the holidays must be agreed with their Director of Studies.

8. **Programme of related activities**

- 8.1 As part of the programme of research a candidate shall follow a programme of related activities in order to attain competence in research methods and knowledge related to the subject of the thesis. This programme shall be intended:
- (a) to provide the candidate with the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of the proposed research;
 - (b) to provide breadth of knowledge in the related subjects;
 - (c) to place the candidate in contact with the research community; and
 - (d) to provide generic training in related skills appropriate for personal and professional development.

- 8.2 Each candidate's previous experience and training in research methods will be assessed at the offer stage and if necessary the candidate will be required to undertake up to the equivalent of 60 M-level credits methods training. This will not require the candidate to enrol on taught modules or for the work to be formally assessed. They will be required to attend as required and the Supervisory team will evaluate the learning outcomes in terms of the contribution made to the research and thesis.
- 8.3 Where the programme of related activities includes an approved programme of studies leading to another award and the candidate is registered for that programme and fulfils all its requirements, the candidate may be recommended for that award in addition to the degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall only approve such dual registration where either the research degree registration or the other course of study is by part-time study and that, in the opinion of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, the dual registration will not detract from the research. The work undertaken for the other award must not be submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the candidate's research degree.
- 8.4 A candidate may be required to undertake and pass a programme of formally assessed studies and if this is the case they will enrol and pay the fees due in respect of the modules taken. Such a course of study shall not occupy more than one third of the total period of registration and shall complement the research. This programme is intended to provide a body of knowledge normally associated with a degree in the field of study of the proposed research.

9. **Supervision**

- 9.1 A candidate shall have two supervisors.
- 9.2 One supervisor shall be the Director of Studies (first supervisor) with responsibility to ensure that the candidate receives supervision on a regular and frequent basis with members of the supervisory team. The Director of Studies shall normally have supervised one research student to completion and completed key components of the Supervisor Training Course. Where a Director of Studies only has one completion, whether as Director of Studies or Second Supervisor, the supervision of that research programme must have been for more than two thirds of the whole programme, anything less will not be considered sufficient to meet this requirement. However, where a member of staff has had substantial experience of supervising graduate students and where the team as a whole has supervised at least two research students to completion, the Chair of the appropriate Sub-Committee with the Faculty or Department Postgraduate Research Tutor, will assess whether the experience is sufficient to take on the role of Director of Studies. The recommendation must be approved by the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee before the member of staff can be appointed.
- 9.3 One individual shall not normally be Director of Studies for more than six full-time research students or pro-rata for part-time students. The ratio may vary according to the number of full or part-time students allocated to a particular member of staff. The Postgraduate Research Tutor and Dean of Faculty or Head of Department shall assess the workload of a member of staff to ascertain the appropriate number of students to be supervised by that individual. Supervisory time should be included in the individual's workload plan and should be the equivalent to that allocated for MPhil supervision.
- 9.4 The supervision team shall normally be research active and have substantial research experience in the relevant subject area and have had a combined experience of supervising at least two research degree candidates to successful completion.

- 9.5 At least one supervisor should be a member of academic staff of the University. The Dean of Faculty must ensure that the supervisors are suitably qualified for the proposed project. The supervisory team should have substantial research experience in the relevant subject area and normally have experience of supervising at least two research degree candidates to successful and timely completion at the appropriate level.
- 9.6 In addition to the supervisors, an adviser or advisers may be proposed to contribute some specialised knowledge or a link with an external organisation.
- 9.7 A candidate for a research degree or professional higher degree, excluding PhD by Published Work, shall be ineligible to act as a Supervisor for another research candidate.
- 9.8 Any proposal for change in supervision arrangements shall be made to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee on form RDSC-S.
- 9.9 Exceptionally the role of Director of Studies may be divided between no more than two Co-Directors of Studies. In these cases the role of each person would have to be clearly identified at the outset and a case made to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for approval. Where the role of Director of Studies is divided in this way, a second supervisor is also required to complete the team.

10. **Collaborating establishments**

- 10.1 The University encourages collaboration with industrial, commercial, professional or research establishments for the purposes of research leading to research degree awards. Such collaboration shall be intended:
- (a) to encourage outward-looking and relevant research;
 - (b) to extend the candidate's own experience and perspectives of the work;
 - (c) to provide a wider range of experience and expertise to assist in the development of the project;
 - (d) to be mutually beneficial; and,
 - (e) where appropriate, to enable the candidate to become a member of a research community.
- 10.2 Collaboration may be formalised with one or more bodies external to the University. For the purpose of the research degree regulations these shall be referred to as Collaborating Establishments. Formal collaboration shall involve the candidate's use of facilities and other resources, including supervision, which are provided jointly by the University and the Collaborating Establishment(s). In such cases a formal letter from a senior member of the Collaborating Establishment(s) confirming the agreed arrangements should be submitted with the application for registration.
- 10.3 The name(s) of the Collaborating Establishment(s) shall appear on the candidate's thesis and degree certificate.

11. **Annual monitoring requirements**

- 11.1 The progress and status of all research students, full-time and part-time must be reviewed by Faculties. Practice may vary and full details of the discipline specific requirements can be found in the Faculty Handbook. Candidates must produce a brief written annual progress report on their research which should be submitted to the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor and copied to the Supervisors, in accordance with the Faculty's monitoring procedures. This assessment must include one person external to the supervisory team.

- 11.2 In addition to the monitoring, at the end of the first six months full-time or first year part-time, the progress review should include consideration of the likelihood of the candidate achieving the award of MA, MSc or LLM by Research. If the review process indicates that the candidate is unlikely to achieve the degree within an appropriate period (one years for full-time or two years for part-time) clear indication should be given and if necessary the registration terminated. Where a candidate is not likely to achieve the degree the necessary action should be taken with a view to terminating registration. Directors of Studies are required to submit a progress report annually in respect of all candidates they are supervising to the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutors, who will sign the reports and forward them to the Research Degrees Team.
- 11.3 Faculties must ensure that progress monitoring occurs during the first year of study for full-time students and during the second year for part-time students. The monitoring must include someone external to the supervisory team. Appropriate arrangements must be made for all students to make at least one oral presentation during their research programme and these should form part of progress monitoring.
- 11.4 Students will be given the opportunity annually, to give comment anonymously on the adequacy of supervision and facilities provided for their research.
- 11.5 Faculties must ensure that the required sections of the work have been submitted through Turnitin each year and that full details of the work submitted, including the outcome of the analysis is formally recorded on the RDSC Annual Progress Report form.

12. **Progression from MA, MSc or LLM by Research**

- 12.1 A candidate initially registered for the degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research may apply to continue as a student on the MPhil/PhD research degree programme. Applications should be submitted in the same way as for all candidates applying for a place on the MPhil or PhD programmes as indicated in Sections 2 and 3 of the Research Degree Regulations.

13. **Approval of examination arrangements**

- 13.1 The supervisors shall propose examiners and the final thesis title to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for approval on form RDSC-E. This should be done at least two months before the expected date of submission of the thesis. The examination may not take place until the examination arrangements have been approved. In special circumstances the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may act directly to appoint examiners and arrange the examination of a candidate.
- 13.2 In cases where the research degree involves creative work and the candidate is submitting work in other than written form, the application for approval of examination arrangements shall contain a statement of the format of the candidate's creative work and the proposed methods of assessment.
- 13.3 If the nature of the research necessitates the thesis being held on restricted access for a period of time up to a maximum of one year after completion of the work and approval of this was not sought at the time of registration, the request for confidentiality should be made with the application for approval of examination arrangements (Section 5.8 refers).

13.4 All examiners who are about to examine a candidate who has requested that the thesis be held on restricted access should complete the Confidentiality Agreement (RDSC-CA) and submit it with the application for approval of examination arrangements.

14. **The examiners**

14.1 The examining team shall only comprise one internal and one external examiner.

14.2 The internal examiner shall be a member of staff of the University or the candidate's Collaborating Establishment other than a supervisor or adviser of the candidate. In cases where the internal examiner has not previously examined a higher degree, the Sub-Committee will consider whether a Chair is necessary to ensure consistency. Where possible the proposed internal examiner should attend relevant training to ensure consistency and standardisation of the processes.

14.3 The examiners shall be experienced in research in the general area of the candidate's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.

14.4 At least one external examiner shall have substantial experience of research degree examining (that is, shall have examined at least two research degree candidates). In the case of MA, MSc or LLM by Research, examiners should have experience of examining research degrees (MPhil or PhD) and have experience of both the delivery and regulatory requirements associated with a Masters award.

14.5 Where the candidate and the internal examiner are both on the staff of the same establishment, a second external examiner shall be appointed. A candidate who is on a fixed short-term employment contract (for instance, a research assistant) shall be exempt from the requirements of this regulation.

14.6 An external examiner shall be independent both of the University and of the Collaborating Establishment and shall not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser. An external examiner shall normally not be either a supervisor of another candidate or an external examiner on a taught course in the same Faculty at the University. Former members of staff of the University shall not be approved as external examiners until five years after the termination of their employment with the University. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall ensure that the same external examiner is not normally approved for more than four examinations in a period of three years, and so ensure that the examiner does not become too familiar with the Faculty and therefore prejudice objective judgement. If an external examiner has been appointed for the maximum of four examinations, the examiner concerned should not be proposed again for a period of two years.

14.7 No candidate for a research degree or a professional higher degree shall act as an examiner.

14.8 The University shall determine and pay the fees and expenses of the examiners.

15. **Submission of the thesis**

15.1 The Director of Studies or the Research Degrees Team shall make known to the candidate the procedure to be followed for the submission of the thesis and any conditions to be satisfied before the candidate may be considered eligible for examination. The thesis will not be sent for examination until all outstanding fees or debts to the University have been paid in full. The number of copies of the thesis to be submitted will be determined by the number of examiners appointed, in most cases one internal and one external examiner are appointed and therefore

two copies of the thesis should be submitted. A copy of the abstract page should also be submitted with the thesis at this stage.

- 15.2 The candidate shall ensure that the thesis is submitted to the Research Degrees Team before the expiry of the registration period (see paragraph 7.2.2).
- 15.3 The candidate shall ensure that the thesis format is in accordance with the requirements of the University's regulations (see Section 19).
- 15.4 The submission of the thesis for examination shall be at the sole discretion of the candidate. While a candidate would be unwise to submit the thesis for examination against the advice of the supervisors, it is the candidate's right to do so. Equally, candidates should not assume that a supervisor's agreement to the submission of a thesis guarantees the award of the degree. Candidates are required to present the final version of the thesis to the supervisors before submission and to obtain the Director of Studies' signature on the submission form RDSC-Sub. This form must be submitted to the Research Degrees Team before the thesis can be sent out to the examiners.
- 15.5 In exceptional cases, a candidate may submit the thesis for examination without the supervisor's agreement, however the supervisor will still be required to sign the submission form before the thesis can be sent to the examiners.
- 15.6 The candidate shall confirm, through completion of form RDSC-Sub, that the thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award. The candidate shall not be precluded from incorporating in the thesis, covering a wider field, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is indicated, on the submission form and also in the thesis, which work has been so incorporated.
- 15.7 The candidate shall confirm through the completion of form RDSC-Sub, that the work submitted is their own, unless otherwise indicated through the use of an approved referencing system.

16. **First examination**

16.1 **General**

- 16.1.1 The examination for MA, MSc or LLM by Research shall have two stages, (with the exception of practiced based work - see paragraph 6.3.7): firstly the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis and secondly its defence by oral or approved alternative (see paragraph 16.3.1) examination.
- 16.1.2 The candidate shall satisfy any conditions of eligibility for examination required by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.
- 16.1.3 A candidate who has been required to undertake a programme of formally assessed studies (see paragraph 8.3) shall not be permitted to proceed to research degree examination until the course work examiners are satisfied with the candidate's performance. The result of the assessment shall be communicated to the examiners of the thesis.
- 16.1.4 The Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall ensure that all examinations are conducted and the recommendations of the examiners are presented wholly in accordance with the University's regulations. In any instance where the Research Degrees Sub-Committee is made aware of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

16.1.5 Where evidence of plagiarism in the preparation of the thesis or other irregularities in the conduct of the examination come to light subsequent to the recommendation of the examiners, the Academic Conduct Officer must be informed immediately, who will deal with the matter in line with the University's Student Conduct Regulations and Disciplinary Procedure.

16.1.6 The degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research may be awarded posthumously on the basis of a thesis completed by a candidate, which is ready for submission for examination. In such cases the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall seek evidence that the candidate would have been likely to have been successful had the oral examination taken place.

16.2 **Preliminary assessment of the thesis**

16.2.1 The Research Degrees Team shall send a copy of the thesis to each examiner, together with the examiner's preliminary report form - RDSC-MR(A) or RDSC-MR(B) and the University's research degree regulations, and shall ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties. Examiners should be appointed before the thesis is submitted so that the thesis may be sent for examination within days of submission. In exceptional circumstances, where examiners have not been appointed in advance of submission, the examining team must be proposed and approved within a maximum of two weeks from the date of submission.

16.2.2 Each examiner shall read and examine the thesis and submit on form RDSC-MA/MSc/LLM by Research(A), an independent preliminary report and send it to the Research Degrees Team at least one week before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.

16.2.3 The Research Degrees Team shall ensure as far as possible, that all the examiners have completed and returned their preliminary reports to the University at least one week before the oral examination takes place.

16.2.4 Where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination, they may recommend that the Research Degrees Sub-Committee dispense with the oral examination and refer the thesis for further work. In such cases the examiners shall provide the Research Degrees Sub-Committee with written guidance for the candidate concerning the deficiencies of the thesis. The examiners shall not recommend that a candidate fail outright (see sub-paragraph 16.5.1(d)) without holding an oral examination or other alternative examination (see paragraph 16.3.1).

16.3 **Oral examination**

16.3.1 A candidate shall be examined orally on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies. Where for reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause the Research Degrees Sub-Committee is satisfied that a candidate would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination, an alternative form of examination may be approved. Such approval shall not be given on the grounds that the candidate's knowledge of the language in which the thesis is presented is inadequate.

16.3.2 It is the responsibility of the internal examiner to make all the necessary arrangements for the oral examination. This will include agreeing the date of the oral examination and notifying the candidate, external examiner(s) and supervisors in writing of the date and the arrangements for the oral examination. Where the internal examiner is external to the University, the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor shall take responsibility for organising the oral examination.

- 16.3.3 The candidate shall take no part in the arrangement of the examination and shall have no formal contact with the external examiner(s) between the appointment of the examiners and the oral examination.
- 16.3.4 The oral examination shall normally be conducted within two months from the date of receipt of the thesis by the examiners and within a maximum of three months. The oral examination shall not be arranged less than one month from the date of receipt of the thesis by the examiners in order to give the examiners a reasonable period to assess the work. Where circumstances arise which prevent the oral examination being conducted within the maximum period, the Research Degree Team shall be notified of the reasons for the delay. Following consultation with the Chair of the Research Degree Sub-Committee, a decision will be taken as to whether an extension to the period for examination shall be approved or if a new examining team should be appointed.
- 16.3.5 The oral examination shall be held at this University, however in special circumstances it may be held elsewhere, for example at a Collaborating Establishment. In exceptional cases the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may give approval for the examination to take place abroad, elsewhere in the UK or to be held by Video Conference.
- 16.3.6 Supervisors, advisers and the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may, with the consent of the candidate, attend the oral examination, but shall withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.

16.4 **Independent Chair of Viva**

- 16.4.1 An Independent Chair may be appointed in the following situations and should be proposed when the application for approval of examination arrangements is submitted to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for approval.
- (1) An Independent Chair may be appointed in the following situations and should be proposed when the application for approval of examination arrangements is submitted to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for approval.
 - (2) the internal examiner has not previously examined a higher degree or completed the Internal Examiner training, an Independent Chair should be appointed to ensure consistency;
 - (3) where the external examiner is not fully acquainted with UK procedures for Doctorate examinations;
 - (4) at the discretion of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee when the application for approval of examination arrangements is considered;
 - (5) where a student has taken longer than the normal period of time to complete, i.e. four years for full-time students and five years for part-time students;
 - (6) an Independent Chair must be present at all second vivas;
 - (7) at the discretion of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee if there is reason to feel the viva will benefit from the presence of an external party;
 - (8) a student may request that an Independent Chair is present, however the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may decline approval if a Chair is deemed unnecessary;

16.4.2 The following guidelines are designed to make clear the role of the Independent Chair and the extent of his/her responsibilities.

- (1) the primary role of the Independent Chair is to ensure that the University's processes and regulations are carried out as stated in the Research Degrees Regulations and Guidance notes for internal and external examiners;
- (2) at the beginning of the viva the Independent Chair should introduce the candidate to the examiners and then hand over all matters related to the viva to the examiners and remain in the room as an observer;
- (3) the independent Chair should not:
 - (i) read the thesis;
 - (ii) make any contributions to the academic examination of the thesis;
 - (iii) make any contributions to the academic evaluation of the thesis by the examiners.
- (4) in difficult situations the independent Chair may advise the examiners of the particular regulations and procedures that may be applied;
- (5) an Independent Chair is not expected to have any academic expertise in the area being examined, nor to bring to the examining process any such expertise she/he may coincidentally possess;
- (6) at the end of the viva the Independent Chair will complete the relevant section of the final report form confirming the examiners' recommendations and detailing any issues that may have arisen;
- (7) in the event of a review or appeal against an examination decision, the Independent Chair of the examination may be approached by the Chair of the University's Research Degree Sub-Committee or the review panel for further information.

16.5 **Final report and recommendation**

16.5.1 Following the oral or approved alternative examination the examiners may recommend that:

- (a) the candidate be awarded the degree;
- (b) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis (see paragraph 16.5.5);
- (c) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to major amendments being made to the thesis (see paragraph 16.5.7);
- (d) the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree and must be re-examined with an oral examination (see paragraph 16.5.6 and Section 17); However, if exceptionally the examiners agree that the quality of the revised thesis was outstanding, the degree may be awarded without the second viva;
- (e) the candidate be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be re-examined (see paragraph 16.5.8); or

16.5.2 The examiners shall inform the candidate of their recommendation on the result of the examination but they shall make it clear that the decision rests with the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

16.5.3 The examiners shall, where they are in agreement, make their joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree on the appropriate form - RDSC-MA/MSc/LLM by Research(B). This shall be submitted to the Research Degrees Team as soon as possible after the completion of the oral examination and definitely within 24 hours of the completion of the examination. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted.

- 16.5.4 The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Research Degrees Sub-Committee to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in paragraph 16.5.1 is correct.
- 16.5.5 Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires some minor amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the submission of a revised thesis, the examiners shall recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal examiner (see sub-paragraph 16.5.1(b)). The internal examiner shall collate all the comments of the examiners and shall produce an agreed written list of the minor amendments and corrections required to the thesis. This shall be forwarded to the candidate and the Research Degrees Team within two weeks of the date of the oral examination.
- 16.5.6 Candidates should complete the revisions within one month of receiving the report from the Research Degrees Team and send the amended thesis to the internal examiner to approve the corrections. The internal examiner should notify the candidate of the decision within two weeks of receipt of the thesis. Once the amendments have been approved, a letter or email should be sent to the Research Degrees Team from the examiner, confirming that the amended thesis meet the examiners' requirements.
- 16.5.7 Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires some major amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the submission of a revised thesis, the examiners shall recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) (see sub-paragraph 16.5.1(b)). The internal examiner shall collate all the comments of the examiners and shall produce an agreed written list of the major amendments and corrections required to the thesis. This shall be forwarded to the candidate and the Research Degrees Team within two weeks of the date of the oral examination.
- 16.5.8 Candidates should send the amended thesis to the examiner(s) who have been given the responsibility for approving the corrections within three months of the date the examiners' report was issued by the Research Degrees Team. The examiners should notify the candidate of their decision within one month of receipt of the thesis. Once the amendments have been approved, a letter or email should be sent to the Research Degrees Team from the examiner(s), confirming that the amended thesis meet the examiners' requirements.
- 16.5.9 Where the examiners recommend that the candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined (see sub-paragraph 16.5.1(d)), the examiners shall provide the candidate with written guidance on the deficiencies of the thesis and the further work which is required. The internal examiner shall collate all the comments of the examiners and shall produce an agreed written list of the revisions required to the thesis. This shall be forwarded to the candidate and the Research Degrees Team within two weeks of the date of the oral examination. The revised thesis shall be submitted to the Research Degrees Team within six months of the date of the examination. The re-examination shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of Section 17.
- 16.5.10 Where the examiners recommend that the degree be not awarded and that no re-examination is permitted (see sub-paragraph 16.5.1(e)), the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be submitted to the candidate by the Research Degrees Team.

16.5.11 A further examination in addition to the oral examination may be requested by the examiners. In such cases the approval of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall be sought without delay. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination, it shall normally be held within two months of the oral examination unless the Research Degrees Sub-Committee permits otherwise. Any such examination shall be deemed to be part of the candidate's first examination.

16.6 **Approval of the examiners' recommendation**

16.6.1 Where the examiners are in agreement and make a joint recommendation, the Chair shall, on behalf of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, make a decision on the reports and recommendation of the examiners in respect of the candidate. This decision shall be reported to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

16.6.2 In any instances where the Chair does not agree with the examiners' joint recommendation, the Chair shall refer the matter to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee may:

- (a) seek clarification or further information from the examiners as to the reasons for their recommendation;
- (b) refer the recommendation back to the examiners for review in the light of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee's comments; or
- (c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner (see paragraph 16.6.4).

16.6.3 Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the Chair shall refer the matter to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee may:

- (a) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner);
- (b) accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
- (c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner.

16.6.4 Where an additional external examiner is appointed under sub-paragraph 16.6.2(c) or 16.6.3(c), the additional examiner shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall reach a decision regarding the outcome of the examination.

17. **Re-examination**

17.1 On the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, one re-examination may be permitted for a candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners at the first examination and this must include an oral examination. Where appropriate, an approved alternative examination (see paragraph 16.3.1) or any further examination required under paragraph 16.5.9.

17.2 The candidate shall submit the thesis for re-examination within the period of six months from the date the examiners' report was issued by the Research Degrees Team following the final part of the first examination. Unless the revised thesis is of exceptional quality and the examiners agree that the degree may be conferred without a second Viva, all re-examinations must include a second oral examination. The re-examination shall take place within six months of the date of

this dispensation (see paragraph 16.2.4), however the Research Degree Sub-Committee may, where there are good reasons, approve an extension of the re-submission period.

- 17.3 The Research Degrees Sub-Committee may require that an additional external examiner be appointed for the re-examination.
- 17.4 The submission of the revised thesis and the re-examination process shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements for the first examination.
- 17.5 The candidate shall follow the guidance for submission as detailed in Section 15 and unless otherwise stated, produce the same number of copies of the revised thesis as at the first examination. These should be resubmitted to the Research Degrees Team with RDSC-Sub form and a copy of the abstract.
- 17.6 The preliminary assessment of the thesis will be undertaken as detailed in Section 16.2. If the Research Degree Sub-Committee has not appointed an additional examiner, the thesis will be sent to the original examination team for re-examination against the final report and recommendations approved following the first viva. The second oral examination should take place within the maximum deadline of three months from the date the examiners receive the thesis and each examiner should submit an independent preliminary report to the Research Degrees Team at least one week before the date of the second oral examination.
- 17.7 Where the examiners agree that the revisions to the thesis are of exceptional quality, they may recommend that no further oral examination is required and the degree may be conferred. However, in all other cases a second oral examination must be held and following that oral examination, they may recommend that the degree be awarded subject to minor or major amendments being completed as indicated in the original report and reiterated in their report following re-examination.
- 17.8 Arrangements for the second oral examination should be carried out in the same way as for the first examinations and stated in Sections 16.3 and 16.5.
- 17.9 There are five forms of re-examination:
- (a) where the candidate's revised thesis is of exceptionally high quality and the performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination (see paragraph 16.3.1) or further examination (see paragraph 16.5.10) was satisfactory, the examiners may agree that the degree may be conferred and no further oral examination will be necessary;
 - (b) where the candidate's performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination or further examination was unsatisfactory and the thesis was also unsatisfactory, any re-examination shall include a re-examination of the thesis and an oral or approved alternative examination;
 - (c) where on the first examination the candidate's thesis was so unsatisfactory that the Research Degrees Sub-Committee dispensed with the oral examination (see paragraph 16.2.4), any re-examination shall include a re-examination of the thesis and an oral or approved alternative examination;
 - (d) where on the first examination the candidate's thesis was satisfactory but the performance in the oral and/or other examination(s) was not satisfactory the candidate shall be re-examined in the oral and/or other examination(s), subject to the time limits prescribed in sub-paragraph 17.2, without being requested to revise and re-submit the thesis;
 - (e) where on the first examination the thesis was satisfactory but the candidate's performance in relation to the other requirements for the award of the degree was not satisfactory, the examiners may propose instead a different form of re-examination to test the candidate's

abilities; such an examination may take place only with the approval of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

- 7.10 The timescale for examining a resubmitted thesis shall be the same as for the first examination with the oral examination being held within three months of the date of receipt of the thesis.
- 17.11 Where the thesis is deemed of such high quality that the degree may be awarded without a second oral examination, the examiners must notify the Research Degree Team normally within two months from the date of receipt of the thesis and within a maximum of three months.
- 17.12 In the case of a re-examination under sub-paragraphs 17.5(a), (b) or (c), each examiner shall read and examine the revised thesis and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent preliminary report on it to the Research Degrees Team before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the revised thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination. This report will constitute the basis of any further revisions should they be required.
- 17.13 Following the re-examination of the thesis and further oral or other examination if required, the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, make their joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree on the appropriate form - RDSC-MA/MSc/LLM by Research(B). This shall be submitted to the Research Degrees Team as soon as possible after the completion of the oral examination and definitely within 24 hours of the completion of the examination or within one week after the examiners have reached their joint decision where no further oral examination is being held. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted.
- 17.14 The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Research Degrees Sub-Committee to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in paragraph 17.10 is correct.
- 17.15 Following the completion of the re-examination the examiners may recommend that:
- (a) the candidate be awarded the degree;
 - (b) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis (see paragraph 17.12);
 - (c) the candidate be awarded the degree subject to major amendments being made to the thesis (see paragraph 17.12);
 - (d) the candidate be not awarded the degree (see paragraph 17.14); or
- 17.16 Where an oral examination has taken place, the examiners shall inform the candidate of their recommendation on the result of the re-examination but they shall make it clear that the decision rests with the Research Degrees Sub-Committee. Where no further oral examination has been held, following the receipt of the examiners' final report and recommendation, the Research Degrees Team shall notify the candidate of the outcome of the re-examination and shall copy this to the examiners, supervisors and Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor.
- 17.17 Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires some minor or major amendments and corrections, the examiners shall recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or external examiner. The internal examiner shall collate all the examiners' comments as a Word document and shall produce an agreed written list of the amendments and corrections required to the

thesis. This should be sent by post or emailed to the Research Degrees Team within two weeks of the date of the oral examination and once approved, the report shall be sent to the candidate.

- 17.18 The candidate should send the amended thesis to the internal examiner to approve the corrections within one month of receiving the report for minor amendments or three months for major amendments. The internal examiner should notify the candidate and the Research Degrees Team of their decision by letter or email, within a maximum of one month of receipt of the thesis. The final approved thesis shall then be submitted to the Research Degree Team within one month of the date the examiner formally approved the revisions, together with a copy of the notification from the examiner confirming that the amended thesis meets the examiners' requirements.
- 17.19 Where the examiners recommend that the degree be not awarded, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be submitted to the Research Degrees Team for approval by the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee. The report will then be sent to the candidate by the Research Degree Team.
- 17.20 The Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall make a decision on the examiners' recommendation in relation to the re-examination in accordance with the requirements of Section 16.5.
18. **Conferment of the award**
- 18.1 The delegated power to confer the degree rests with the Research Degrees Sub-Committee and the Sub-Committee, or the Chair on behalf of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, shall make a decision on the reports and recommendation(s) of the examiners in respect of the candidate as laid down in Section 16.5.
- 18.2 Where the degree has been awarded without amendments, the conferment date shall be the date of the Viva. Where Minor or Major amendments are required, the date of the award shall be the date the examiners' signed off all revisions as being satisfactory and confirming that the degree may be conferred. In the case of resubmission and re-examination, the date of the award shall be the date on the letter or email, submitted by all the examiners, confirming that the thesis is satisfactory and that the degree may be conferred.
- 18.3 Once a decision has been made on the examiners' recommendation(s) as laid down in Section 16.5, one permanently bound copy of the thesis and all the necessary documentation has been submitted to the Research Degrees Team, the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee and the University's Academic Registrar shall sign the appropriate conferment form – RDSC-MA/MSc/LLM by Research(C). When all the requirements of the University have been met, the conferment form shall be forwarded to the Student Records Team as authority to print the research degree certificate. The thesis submitted must be identical to that examined except for those corrections that have been requested by the examiners at either the first oral examination or in the case of a resubmission, the second oral examination.
- 18.4 Following the award of the degree one copy of the thesis shall be lodged in the Research Degrees Team and a catalogue of all awards will be held in the Library of the University.
- 18.5 Where the Research Degrees Sub-Committee has agreed that the confidential nature of the candidate's work is such as to preclude the thesis being made freely available in the Research Degrees Team, the final approved thesis shall be retained by the University on restricted access

and, for a time not exceeding the approved period (see paragraph 5.8), shall only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project.

- 18.6 Candidates wishing to attend one of the University's Graduation Ceremonies, must have been awarded their research degree at least eight weeks before the date of the Award Ceremony. All amendments required by the examiners should be approved, and the final bound copy of the thesis and all the necessary paper work must be submitted to the Research Degrees Team before a candidate may attend that ceremony.
- 18.7 An electronic copy of the thesis must be submitted with the final hardbound copy of the final thesis. The electronic copy should be submitted as a Word document or in another suitable open document format. The electronic thesis should be saved on a CD ROM and inserted securely in the inside front cover of the thesis.
- 18.8 The candidate shall confirm through completion of form RDSC-Decl, that the final electronic copy of the thesis may be submitted to the University's repository (RADAR).

The candidate should also confirm that:

- the thesis can be made publicly available online;
 - the thesis can be made publicly available online only after an agreed period as approved by the Research Degree Sub-Committee;
 - the thesis may not be made publicly available online;
 - that an additional, abridged version can be made publicly available online during the limited period when the whole version of the thesis remains on restricted access;
 - permission has or has not been obtained for the use of all third party material included in the thesis and where that was not granted, those sections, images, graphics etc. have been removed from the electronic (PDF) submission.
- 18.9 The candidate shall also confirm through completion of form RDSC-Decl, that the final hard bound copy of the thesis includes all the work approved by the examiners at or following viva if revisions are required.
- 18.10 Where the candidate wishes to publish material from the thesis following final submission, they may complete the appropriate section on the RDSC-Decl form, withholding the electronic copy of the thesis for up to five years.
- 18.11 Exceptionally at the final submission, student may request that the electronic copy of the thesis is withheld indefinitely by completing the appropriate section of the RDSC-Decl form.

19. **Format of the thesis**

- 19.1 Theses may be submitted for examination in a temporarily bound form which is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed. The thesis shall be presented in a permanent binding of the approved type (see paragraph 19.11 for details) before the degree may be awarded. A thesis submitted in a temporarily bound form shall be in its final form in all respects save the binding. In such cases the candidate shall confirm, through the submission of a declaration form RDSC-Decl that the contents of the permanently bound thesis are identical with the version submitted for examination, except where amendments have been made to meet the requirements of the examiners.
- 19.2 Except with the specific permission of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee the thesis shall be presented in English (see paragraph 5.7). Where a thesis is presented in a language other than English, a summary in English of 1,000 words shall be included in the thesis.

- 19.3 There shall be an abstract of approximately 300 words bound into the thesis which shall provide a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated. In addition the abstract shall be submitted with the thesis.
- 19.4 The thesis shall include a statement of the candidate's objectives and shall acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography or list of citations depending on the discipline) and any assistance received.
- 19.5 Where a candidate's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the thesis shall indicate clearly the candidate's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.
- 19.6 The candidate shall be free to publish material in advance of the thesis but reference shall be made in the thesis to any such work. Copies of published material should either be bound in with the thesis or placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the thesis.
- 19.7 The copies of the thesis submitted for examination shall remain the property of the University but the copyright in the thesis shall be vested in the candidate.
- 19.8 The text of the thesis should not exceed the following length:

for an MSc by Research in Science, Engineering, Art and Design	15,000 words
for an MA or LLM by Research in Arts, Humanities, Environment, Social Sciences	30,000 words

The abstract, main text and bibliography should be included in the maximum word length. Appendices should also be included in the maximum word length, except where they contain supplementary information such as data, including transcribed or original source data, questionnaire responses, computer listings and previously published work by the candidate.

Where the programme of research involves the candidate's own creative work (see regulation 6.4), the written commentary should be within the following range:

for an MA by Research	5,000- 8,000 words
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Where the programme of research involves the preparation of a scholarly edition of texts or other work (see regulation 6.5), the written thesis should be within the following range:

for and MA by Research	8,000 – 10,000 words
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- 19.9 In exceptional cases, variations to the word limits may be granted by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee. Requests for such variations should be made by the Director of Studies on behalf of the candidate, stating the reasons for the proposed different word length.
- 19.10 The following requirements shall be adhered to in the format of the submitted thesis.
- Theses shall be in A4 format; the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may give permission for a thesis to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis can be better expressed in that format;
 - copies of the thesis shall be presented in a permanent and legible form either in typescript or print; where copies are produced by photocopying processes, these shall be of a permanent nature; where word processor and printing devices are used, the printer shall be capable of producing text of a satisfactory quality; the size of character used in the main

text, including displayed matter and notes, shall not be less than 10 pt type for capitals and 9 pt type for lower case.

- (c) the thesis submitted for examination shall be printed on single sides of the paper which shall be white and within the range 70 g/m² to 120 g/m²;
- (d) the final bound thesis submitted following examination shall be printed on both sides of the paper which shall be white and within the range 70 g/m² to 120 g/m²;
- (e) the margin at the left-hand binding edge of the page shall not be less than 40mm; other margins shall not be less than 15mm;
- (f) at final submission when the thesis is printed on both sides of the paper, the right-hand margin should also be no less than 40mm;
- (g) double or one-and-a-half spacing shall be used in the typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used;
- (h) pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages;
- (i) the title page shall give the following information:
 - (1) the full title of the thesis;
 - (2) the full name of the author;
 - (3) that the degree is awarded by the University;
 - (4) that the thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of MA/MSc/LLM by Research;
 - (5) the Collaborating Establishment(s), if any; and
 - (6) the month and year of submission.

19.11 The University copy may be bound in any colour and shall be presented as follows:

- (a) the binding shall be of a fixed type so that leaves cannot be removed or replaced; the front and rear board shall have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upright and the text may be printed on both sides of the page.

In addition it should be printed:

- (b) in at least 24pt embossed type the outside front board shall bear the following:
 - (1) the title of the work;
 - (2) the name and initials of the candidate;
 - (3) the qualification, e.g. MA by Research; and
 - (4) the year of submission;

the same information (excluding the title of the work) shall be shown on the spine of the work, reading downwards.

- (c) the electronic copy of the thesis should be submitted as a Word document or in another suitable open document format. The electronic thesis should be saved on a CD ROM and inserted securely in the inside front copy of the thesis.

20. **Complaints and appeals procedures**

20.1 **Complaints procedure**

20.1.1 A candidate who has a grievance against the University in relation to the supervision of the research, the resources provided for it or any other of the obligations of the University in relation to the research (other than the conduct or result of an examination, see Section 20.2) may pursue the matter under the University's Student Complaint Procedure.

20.1.2 It should be noted that students are not permitted to appeal on the grounds of poor supervision once they have submitted their thesis for examination.

20.2 **Appeal against an examination decision**

20.2.1 A candidate may in the circumstances set out below appeal against an examination decision, whether at the first examination or re-examination.

Students have the right to appeal against the following academic decisions made by a supervision team:

- Not to register a student for a research degree;
- Not withdraw registration;

Such appeals will be dealt with by the Faculty in the first instance and should be referred to the Postgraduate Research Tutor of the PVC Dean of Faculty. Where the matter remains unresolved, the student may appeal to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee. No appeal may be made against decisions of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee (Section 12.2 of the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research).

20.2.2 An appeal against an examination decision may only be made in relation to a decision of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee made on the recommendation of the examiners. Given the existence of procedures for complaint and grievance during the study period (see Section 20.1), alleged inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements during the period of study shall not constitute grounds for appealing against an examination decision.

20.2.3 An appeal against an examination decision may only be made on the following grounds:

- (a) that there were circumstances affecting the candidate's performance of which the examiners were not aware at the oral examination; and/or
- (b) that there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result might have been different had there not been such an irregularity; and/or
- (c) that there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners - a candidate may not otherwise challenge the academic judgement of the examiners.

20.2.4 An appeal under sub-paragraph 20.2.3(a) will not be allowed unless:

- (a) medical certificate or other documentary evidence acceptable to the examiners is produced; and
- (b) valid reasons can be shown why the candidate was unable or unwilling to make the relevant facts known to the examiners before their original decision was taken.

20.2.5 Candidates wishing to lodge a complaint or appeal should refer to the University's Appeals, Complaints and Conduct regulations which are available on the Academic Registry website.

- 20.2.6 The appeal shall first be considered by the Academic Registrar, who shall consult with the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, and shall determine whether based on the evidence presented by the candidate and having studied the supporting documentation held by the University, there is sufficient evidence to support a case for an appeal. If it is considered that the request is frivolous, vexatious or outside the permitted grounds, the Academic Registrar shall inform the candidate in writing that there is no evidence to support a case for an appeal and the reasons for this decision.
- 20.2.7 If it is considered that there is a prima facie case for an appeal the Academic Registrar shall gather such evidence as is considered appropriate and likely to assist a panel in reviewing the case. This may include seeking written or oral testimony from the examiners, from other persons present at the oral examination, from supervisors or other members of the academic staff, or further evidence or statements by way of elucidation from the candidate.
- 20.2.8 The appeal shall be considered by a review panel, convened by the Academic Registrar. The review panel shall have the following composition:
- (a) a member of the Senior Management Team as Chair (preferably PVC for Research);
 - (b) one Associate Dean or Head of Department;
 - (c) one Professor, experienced supervisor or research active member of staff ;
 - (d) two research degree students nominated by the President of the Students' Union;
 - (e) the Academic Registrar or deputy as secretary.
- None of the members of the panel shall be a member of staff or a student in the candidate's Faculty. At least two members of the panel shall have significant experience of research degree examining.
- 20.2.9 The review panel shall hear the appeal. The conduct of the appeal is at the discretion of the Chair, but the candidate and the examiners shall have the right to:
- (a) submit written representations;
 - (b) appear at the hearing;
 - (c) call witnesses;
 - (d) examine any witnesses called;
 - (e) be accompanied by a friend.
- 20.2.10 The Internal Examiner shall be expected to attend the review panel hearing if invited to do so. In these cases the panel will not proceed without the Internal Examiner present to represent the examining team.
- 20.2.11 If the review panel decides that a candidate has valid grounds for an appeal, it shall recommend that the Research Degrees Sub-Committee either:
- (a) invite the examiners to reconsider their decision; or
 - (b) appoint new examiners.
- 20.2.12 A review panel shall not be constituted as an examination Board and shall not have the authority to recommend the award of the degree.
- 20.2.13 If a candidate is dissatisfied with the review panel's decision as indicated in the Completion of Procedures letter, they may be able to refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) providing that the complaint is eligible under the OIA's Rules.
- 20.2.14 If a candidate is dissatisfied with a decision of the Academic Registrar under paragraph 20.2.6 above, the candidate may request in writing that it be reviewed by the Director of Academic and

Student Affairs. Any such request must be received within two weeks of the despatch of the decision. The decision of the Director of Academic and Student Affairs shall be final.

- 20.2.15 If a member of staff, being in possession of material that, by reason of its confidential nature, can not be communicated to the candidate, wishes to appeal on behalf of the candidate, he or she may, with the written consent of the candidate, bring an appeal under these regulations with the substitution of 'member of staff' for 'candidate' as appropriate.
- 20.2.16 Throughout this procedure the Academic Registrar may nominate a senior member of her/his staff to act on her/his behalf in relation to any request for a review.

Annex 1: The role and responsibilities of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee

1 Powers and responsibilities of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee

- 1.1 The Academic Board of the University has established a Research Degrees Sub-Committee with the following powers:
- (a) to register students for MPhil, for MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD, or for PhD direct, PhD by Published Work and MA, MSc, LLM by Research on approved programmes of work under approved supervision;
 - (b) to transfer registration from MPhil to PhD;
 - (c) to exercise all other responsibilities for the registration, supervision, transfer, suspension and extension of registration which have been delegated to it and to approve examination arrangements;
 - (d) to complete the examination process in respect of individual candidates by deciding upon the examiners' recommendations;
 - (e) to consider and decide upon requests by candidates for a review of an examination decision; and
 - (f) to confer all Research Degrees, Higher Degrees and Professional Doctorates awards.
- 1.2 The Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall be responsible for:
- (a) the general arrangements under which the candidate's research is carried out, including arrangements for academic supervision and postgraduate study and the provision of adequate facilities to enable the candidate to conduct and complete the research programme in an efficient and safe manner; and
 - (b) approving examination arrangements and for the conduct of the examination.
- 1.3 The Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall assume full responsibility for and have appropriate mechanisms for dealing with all stages of the activities delegated to it, including responsibility for dealing with the recommendations of examiners.
- 1.4 The Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall ensure that the interests of students are protected and that the standard of awards is maintained under the University's regulations for research degrees.

2 Membership

- 2.1 The membership of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall be constituted to ensure:
- (a) appropriate experience of completed research degree supervision;
 - (b) appropriate experience of examining research degrees;
 - (c) a wide range of research experience and research-based publications;
 - (d) subject expertise to reflect the range of disciplines in which students are registered as far as is reasonably practicable; and
 - (e) familiarity with the University's regulations for research degrees.
- 2.2 The above implies that:
- (a) a majority of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall have supervised three or more candidates to successful completion of PhD degrees;
 - (b) a substantial proportion shall have had experience of examining research degrees;

- (c) there shall be clear evidence that members are or have been engaged in research activities leading to publication; and
 - (d) there is sufficient expertise represented on the Research Degrees Sub-Committee to ensure that each application can be dealt with appropriately.
- 2.3 No person who is registered for a research degree, with the exception of PhD by Published Work, shall be a member of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee.
- 2.4 Members may be co-opted onto the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for a period of no longer than one year.

Annex 2: List of the University's research degree forms

RDSC-MRR	Application to register for an MA, MSc, LLM by Research
RDSC-E	Application for approval of examination arrangements
RDSC-S	Application for change in approved supervision arrangements
RDSC-Ext	Application for extension of registration
RDSC-Susp	Application for suspension of registration
RDSC-MS	Application for change in approved mode of study
RDSC-W	Notification of withdrawal of registration
RDSC-MR(A)	Preliminary report and recommendation of an examiner on a candidate for the degree of MA, MSc, LLM by Research
RDSC-MR(B)	Final report and recommendation of the examiners on a candidate for the degree of MA, MSc, LLM by Research
RDSC-Sub	Candidate's submission form
RDSC-Decl	Candidate's declaration form on submission of final permanently-bound thesis following initial submission of temporarily-bound thesis for examination
RDSC-CV	Curriculum vitae form for research degree supervisors and examiner
RDSC-CA.I	Confidentiality Agreement form for a research degree internal examiner
RDSC-CA.E	Confidentiality Agreement form for a research degree external examiner

For further information about these regulations, please contact Student Central - Research Degrees Team.

Approved:

Research Degrees Sub-Committee, 30 April 2013

Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee, 28 May 2013

Last updated: Head of Research Degrees Team, December 2013