



**University
of Worcester**

**Handbook for Research
Students and Research
Degree Supervisors
2011-12**

This handbook is for advice and guidance only and is not a substitute for the Research Degree Regulatory Framework. In case of any conflict these formal statements and requirements take precedence over the student handbook.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in the handbook, as at 1st September 2011. The University of Worcester can, however, take no responsibility for errors or omissions or for arrangements made by third parties. It reserves the right to change the information given at any time.

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Contents

Introduction	1
Section 1: The Standard of Research Degree Awards at the University of Worcester	2
MPhil	2
Doctoral awards (PhD and Professional Doctorates)	3
Section 2: The Management of Research Degrees at the University of Worcester	5
The Supervisory Team.....	5
<i>Director of Studies on long term sick</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Director of Studies leaves the University</i>	<i>6</i>
The Graduate Research School (GRS)	7
Research Degrees Board	8
Institute Research Sub-Committees	8
Research Degree Coordinators	8
Section 3: The Research Degree Process	10
Starting your MPhil/PhD.....	10
<i>Registration.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Induction</i>	<i>10</i>
RDB Forms	11
Approval of the Research Proposal (RDB1)	11
<i>Some guidance on completing the RDB1</i>	<i>13</i>
Suspending your studies.....	19
Extension Requests	19
Submitting your thesis before the minimum completion date	20
Withdrawals	20
Supervisory Changes.....	21
Monitoring	21
<i>Records of Meetings</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Annual Monitoring (RDB7)</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Annual Interviews.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Evaluation Report (for students on a FT research studentship only)</i>	<i>22</i>
Transfer to PhD (RDB2).....	23
<i>Outcome of the upgrade interview</i>	<i>25</i>
Writing-Up	26
Examination (RDB3)	26
<i>Submitting your thesis.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Academic misdemeanour</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Before the Viva</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>The Viva.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>The outcome of the Viva</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Amendments.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Presentation of the final amended thesis</i>	<i>33</i>
Award and Graduation	33
Section 4: The Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors	35
Supervision	35

Research Training and Support	37
The Research	37
Teaching and Other Duties	38
Facilities and Resources	38
Illness and Other Absence from Study, including Maternity Leave	39
Holiday	41
Section 5: Funding for Research Expenses	42
Research Studentships	42
UW Small Grants Scheme	43
Section 6: Complaints, Appeals and Feedback	45
What to do if you wish to complain.....	45
Appeals.....	45
Feedback	45
<i>Student Representatives.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Research Student Forum.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Meetings with FT Research Students</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Course Evaluation.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Postgraduate Research Experience Survey</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Exit Questionnaires and Interviews.....</i>	<i>47</i>
Contacts.....	48
Weblinks	49
Appendix 1: Format of the Final Amended Thesis	50
Appendix 2: Rates of Remuneration for Externals	52

Introduction

The aim of this Handbook is to lead students undertaking an MPhil or PhD and their supervisors - through the research degree process: from registration to completion and all stages in between. A separate Handbook exists for students registered on the Professional Doctorate and PhD by Portfolio.

In this Handbook there will be particular focus on the key stages of the process: Approval of Research Proposal (RDB1); Transfer (RDB2); and Examination (RDB3). There will also be information on research training, on how progress and development is monitored and recorded, on the entitlements and responsibilities of both student and supervisor and on other key issues relating to undertaking and supervising an MPhil or PhD at the University of Worcester.

At the back of the Handbook you will find a list of useful contacts and a list of weblinks to documents and forms referred to throughout this Handbook.

This Handbook should be read alongside:

- The University's *Student Handbook* which contains general information on student support, financial matters, etc:
(<http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/674.htm>)
- The Course Handbook for the *Research Training Programme*
(<http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/776.htm>)
- The University of Worcester's Research Degree Regulatory Framework
<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/649.htm>
- The *Library Guide*

Section 1: The Standard of Research Degree Awards at the University of Worcester

- 1.1 The question of “how do I know if my work is of a sufficient standard?” is one that pre-occupies all research students. This section sets out the required standards for research degrees at the University of Worcester. Research students should familiarise themselves with these standards at the outset and supervisors should ensure that both they and their students are fully aware of what is required.
- 1.2 The standard of research degrees awarded is aligned with the levels as set out in the ‘Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland’ (FHEQ).

MPhil

- 1.3 The standard of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** (MPhil) is that of a good Honours graduate who has satisfactorily completed research training and has investigated and evaluated, or critically studied, an appropriate topic over not less than 18 months of full-time study, or equivalent, and has presented a satisfactory thesis. In addition, a candidate for the award of MPhil must be able to demonstrate a full and proper understanding of the research methods appropriate to the field of study.
- 1.4 The text of an MPhil thesis in science, engineering or art and design, excluding ancillary data, must not normally exceed 20,000 words; in the arts, humanities or social sciences, the limit is 40,000 words.
- 1.5 Where a submission incorporates material in other than written form, or the research involved creative writing or the preparation of a scholarly edition, the text of a thesis for the degree of MPhil must normally be of 20,000 words.
- 1.6 The FHEQ states the following:

MPhil degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- (i) a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- (ii) a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- (iii) originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- (iv) conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in

the discipline;

- to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- (a) deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- (b) demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- (c) continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

- (d) the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

Doctoral awards (PhD and Professional Doctorates)

1.7 The standard of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is that expected of a good Honours graduate who has satisfactorily completed research training and has investigated and evaluated, or critically studied, an appropriate topic over not less than 24 months of full-time study, or equivalent, resulting in a significant original contribution to knowledge, and has presented a satisfactory thesis.

1.8 The text of a PhD thesis in science, engineering or art and design, excluding ancillary data, must not normally exceed 40,000 words; in the arts, humanities or social sciences, the limit is 80,000 words.

1.9 Where a submission incorporates material in other than written form, or the research involved creative writing or the preparation of a scholarly edition, the text of a thesis for the degree of PHD must normally be of 40,000 words.

1.10 The FHEQ states the following:

Doctorates (PhDs) are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- (i) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- (ii) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;

- (iii) the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- (iv) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- (a) make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- (b) continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches;

and will have:

- (c) the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Section 2: The Management of Research Degrees at the University of Worcester

- 2.1 The MPhil and PhD at the University of Worcester are subject to the Research Degree Regulatory Framework (<http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/675.htm>). These regulations are managed collectively by the supervisory team assigned to each student, by the Graduate Research School, and by the University's research committees, particularly the Research Degrees Board and the Institute research sub-committees. Institute Research Coordinators also play an important role in the process.

The Supervisory Team

- 2.2 The single most important aspect of the support available to you as a research degree student is your supervisory team. Between them, the members of the team will have both subject expertise and experience of supervision. These are the people who will oversee your research and support your development as a researcher. Detailed arrangements for your team, in terms of completions etc, are set out in the Research Degree Regulatory Framework (<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/649.htm>).
- 2.3 Although in many universities a research degree student has only one supervisor, here at Worcester we use a team of two or more where each member of the team will be expected to bring a specific strength to the project. At least one of the team will be a member of staff at Worcester, i.e. an 'internal supervisor'. It is common, however, for one or occasionally more, of the supervisory team to be external to the University. It may be that this 'external supervisor' is attached to another University or perhaps to an organisation or business involved in research and development or is a highly-respected retired academic. In every case, the external supervisor will bring an expertise and experience to the team that is appropriate for the project. Please note that external supervisors are paid an annual fee for their work (see Appendix 2 for rates).
- 2.4 One of the team will be designated as the person who will guide you through the various stages of the research degree process. This nominated supervisor, known as the Director of Studies (DoS), will always be a member of staff at Worcester and will have particular administrative responsibilities towards you, which must be discharged in an orderly and timely manner.
- 2.5 The team may also include one or more formal Advisors. An Advisor is normally added to a team to support the student with a particular, key aspect of the research. Not every individual who offers a research student help and guidance over the course of their degree should be

classified as an Advisor; only those which play a distinct and discrete role. Unlike a supervisor, the Advisor does not enter a formal agreement with the student and supervisory team and does not have to provide any evidence of qualifications or experience to the Research Degrees Board.

- 2.6 Details of what support a research student can expect from his/her supervisory team is set out in the Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors (see **Section 4** of this Handbook).

Director of Studies on long term sick

- 2.7 When a Director of Studies is signed off on long term sick for more than 8 consecutive working weeks, it is the responsibility of the relevant Head of Institute to inform the Graduate Research School and, in collaboration with the Research Co-ordinator, to appoint an acting Director of Studies (DoS). Where the supervisory team has an internal supervisor with appropriate experience, it is expected that he/she will take on this role until the DoS returns to work. If the team does not have an appropriate internal supervisor, then a member of UW staff with the necessary supervisory experience will be brought on to the team for the period of illness. The Head of Institute is encouraged to take account of the time allocation the acting DoS will require to carry out these additional duties effectively.
- 2.8 Once an acting DoS has been appointed, he/she will be expected to contact the student and make arrangements for supervision. If the student is about to submit papers to the Research Degrees Board, the acting DoS will be required to sign off these papers (with an explanatory note) and in the case of the RDB1, to attend the meeting of RDB to support the student.

Director of Studies leaves the University

- 2.9 When a member of staff leaves the university they are expected to notify both their students and the Graduate Research School well in advance of leaving. It is the responsibility of the DoS to notify all external and internal supervisors associated with a supervisory team that they or a colleague are leaving the University. It is also the responsibility of the DoS to complete the required paperwork (RDB5) to notify the RDB of changes to supervision.
- 2.10 It may be that a student decides to follow their DoS to their new Institution. In these instances, it is important to liaise with the GRS team so that all appropriate paperwork can be forwarded to the new Institution. If however, the student wishes to remain at Worcester, a new supervisory team must be put in place.
- 2.11 It is the responsibility of the Head of Institute/Research Co-ordinator to appoint, where possible, a new Director of Studies and to discuss

these changes with the student and other members of the supervisory team. Every effort will be made to find a suitable replacement, but if one cannot be found, it may then be necessary to terminate the research degree. In these cases, it is expected that the existing DoS and colleagues will identify other institutions to which the student could apply for a transfer of their registration.

- 2.12 In some cases, it may be possible to keep the member of staff in question on the supervisory team as an external supervisor. This is only possible if consent is received from the member of staff and student in question and an appropriately qualified alternative DoS can be appointed.

The Graduate Research School (GRS)

- 2.13 The GRS offers day-to-day support and assistance for research students and supervisors. The School is managed by Helen Tabinor who is supported by two administrators: Veronica Young who is the Research Degrees Administrator; and Sarah O'Grady who is the Administrative Assistant. In addition, John-Paul Wilson is the Director of Research Development who is responsible for coordinating and delivering research training to students and staff. Details of staff hours, email, phone numbers, etc are to be found in 'Contacts'.
- 2.14 The School's principal role in the research degree process is to facilitate and monitor a research student's progress through enrolment, registration, transfer and examination and, if necessary, to assist with changes in a supervisory team, with suspensions or extensions of registration and with withdrawals. The Research Degrees Administrator is primarily responsible for aiding both the student and DoS in this process and Veronica should be the first port of call for advice on such matters.
- 2.15 The GRS Manager, in conjunction with the Research Degrees Board (see below), monitors the progress of students through the process. The GRS will contact the DoS if a student fails to progress at the necessary rate. There are formal time limits on the period between registration and examination (see **Section 3.18-9**). There are also, however, timescales relating to, for example, the time between enrolment and registration; and the point of transfer from MPhil to PhD.
- 2.16 Dr Wilson provides training and support for research students on the research degree process through the Research Training Programme (see <http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/776.htm>) and for supervisors through the Research Supervisor Training Programme (see <http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/689.htm>).

Research Degrees Board

- 2.16 The Research Degrees Board is principally responsible for the general oversight of research degree matters; for the scrutiny and approval of student research degree programmes; and for the monitoring of student progress.
- 2.17 The Board reports to Worcester's Research Degrees Board and Academic Board.
- 2.18 Its membership consists of experienced research degree supervisors from across all the University's academic institutes.

Institute Research Sub-Committees

- 2.19 The work of the Research Degrees Board is strongly supported at Institute level by the Institutes' Research and Knowledge Transfer Sub-Committees which have mechanisms for the review of research student proposals.

Research Degree Coordinators

- 2.20 Each Institute has one or more nominated Research Degree Coordinator who has particular responsibilities towards research students and supervisors:
- To coordinate the selection and admission of research degree students to the Institute.
 - To be involved in the induction (September and January) of all new research degree students to their Institute (see separate paper for outline of duties at induction)
 - To coordinate the Institute scrutiny of the RDB1.
 - To co-ordinate the annual interview and review of research students in their Institute.
 - To ensure that the research student data held by the Graduate Research School is correct and up-to-date for all students within the Institute, informing the GRS of any changes as and when they happen.
 - To inform the GRS immediately if any changes take place within an Institute that impact on supervisory capacity within the Institute or on a particular supervisory team (e.g. a supervisor leaving the University).
 - To put in place new supervisory arrangements, where possible, when a supervisor leaves the University or is on long term sick.
 - To liaise with the GRS team to support students who are not progressing according to agreed time frames and, in some instances, to participate in meetings with the GRS Manager to discuss progression issues with a student and their team.

- To receive and read all of the annual monitoring reports (RDB7) for students based within the Institute, both to build a picture of how students are progressing and to address any issues that arise in these reports with relation to supervision, progression etc. Where generic issues are raised, these should be discussed at the Institute Research and KT Sub committees. More personal issues should be discussed with the student and/or appropriate colleagues. The students, supervisors and GRS Manager should be informed of any actions that take place in an Institute in direct response to information provided in the RDB7.
- To liaise with the GRS with regard to the Register of Research Degree Supervisors and research supervisor training programmes and to support the GRS to track attendance of staff to these training and development sessions, including the requirement for refresher training every three years.
- To mediate, in liaison with the GRS Manager, if issues arise with regard to supervision.
- To liaise with the GRS with regard to the Register of Research Degree Examiners and research degree examiner training.
- To act as an alternative independent source of advice for research students in the event that there are problems in the student/supervisor relationship.

2.21 For a current list of Research Degree Co-ordinators please contact the GRS Office.

Section 3: The Research Degree Process

- 3.1 This section is intended to guide student and supervisor through all the academic and administrative requirements of undertaking an MPhil or PhD at the University of Worcester.

Starting your MPhil/PhD

Registration

- 3.2 Once you have been accepted on a research degree, you will be asked to register. You can currently register for a research degree at two points within the academic year (see Induction dates below). Re-registration in subsequent years will always take place prior to the beginning of the academic year in August/September.
- 3.3 You can currently register for an MPhil or PhD, although all PhD students will normally be placed on the MPhil/PhD route which will require them to transfer to PhD midway through their programme. A student will only be registered for PhD direct in certain circumstances, for example: when a student transfers their programme from another University where they have already completed the transfer to PhD process.
- 3.4 Registering for an MPhil does not preclude you from progressing to PhD, should you and your supervisory team feel that your work is of an appropriate standard.
- 3.5 Registration for all UW students takes place electronically through the SOLE (Student On-line Environment) pages on the University of Worcester website.
- 3.6 All students will be given a SOLE username and password when they start their research degree. If you forget your password, please contact Sarah O'Grady who can re-set this for you.
- 3.7 Instructions about re-registration and fees will be sent, in the first instance, by e-mail in August each year.

Induction

- 3.8 There are 2 formal entry points for research degree in 2010/11:
- 19th September 2011
 - 30th January 2012
- 3.9 On each of these days there will be a formal half-day induction beginning at 9:30am and ending with lunch at 1pm. It is recommended that you arrange to meet your DoS in the afternoon of the same day.

There will then be a series of other induction workshops across this first week. The full programme will be made available to you when you are accepted on to a research degree.

- 3.10 It is recognised that it might not always be easy for PT students to attend these formal induction sessions. Although we can organise an informal induction, we would encourage PT students to take advantage of the formal events, not least because these sessions will allow you to meet some of your fellow research students face-to-face.

RDB Forms

- 3.11 All the stages of the research degree process described below require the completion of the appropriate RDB form. Copies of these forms are on the GRS website: <http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/index.htm>.
- 3.12 These forms must in all instances be submitted to the GRS and will be subject to scrutiny and approval by the Research Degrees Board. It is essential that you ensure that the form is completed correctly and in full since failure to do so may delay your progress through the process.
- 3.13 The completion of these detailed forms may appear at first sight to be an unnecessary administrative burden; but, in fact, they ensure that the process is rigorous and entirely transparent. As a student, you will receive explicit guidance through the whole process, including the completion of the RDB forms, through the Research Student Training Programme. As a supervisor, you will receive guidance through the Research Supervisor Training Programme. Remember that the GRS is always available to offer any further guidance should it be needed.

Approval of the Research Proposal (RDB1)

- 3.14 One of the most important stages in the Research Degree Process is the approval of your research proposal. To progress with your research degree you must have your proposal approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- 3.15 Approval requires you to submit an RDB1 form to the Graduate Research School, in which you must set out the details of your research proposal in 1000 words – outlining the aims and objectives, the research context, the research question and the methodology or critical framework for the research; set out the project plan; and provide a brief, indicative bibliography. You are also required to complete an ethics checklist (see section 3.36 onwards).
- 3.16 You should start work on your RDB1 soon after you register. It is expected that a FT research student will submit their RDB1 to the GRS within 6 months of his/her start date. For PT students, it is within 9 months. The GRS will contact you when these dates approach. Failure to respond to this request for paperwork from the School may result in

the termination of your research degree programme, unless appropriate evidence can be provided to explain the delay.

- 3.17 Your proposal is then subject to scrutiny: firstly, by the relevant Institute Research Sub-Committee or its equivalent; and secondly by an external expert (or experts). At both stages of this scrutiny you may be asked to revise your proposal and you - the student and DoS together - will be asked to write letters detailing how you have responded to comments from the Institute and from the expert(s). The RDB1 must not be submitted for scrutiny before it has been approved by the whole supervisory team (although in exceptional circumstances the signatures of just the internal supervisors may be accepted).
- 3.18 It is at this point that the Research Degrees Board reviews your proposal. It is difficult to predict with any certainty the length of the process from the initial submission of the RDB1 to the GRS to the point at which the proposal goes to the Research Degrees Board. We request that comments from both Institute and expert(s) are returned within 3 weeks of their receipt of the RDB1. How long you take in revising the RDB1 and in responding to comments will of course depend on the extent of the required revisions and the nature of the comments. If any ethical issues are identified through the checklist this may also delay the process. We would suggest that you should expect this stage of the process to take a minimum of 3 months.
- 3.19 In order to carry out its review the Research Degrees Board receives:
- The revised version of the RDB1 form which incorporates all the changes made following Institute and external expert scrutiny
 - The comments from the Institute
 - The response of the student and DoS to the Institute's comments
 - The external expert's comments
 - The response of the student and DoS to the expert's comments
 - The CVs of the supervisory team
- 3.20 All students are normally required to attend the Research Degrees Board with their Director of Studies (or appropriate nominee) to present their proposal to the Board. The Board will not consider the proposal unless the student and their DoS are both present although exceptions will sometimes be made if, for example, the student is working overseas.
- 3.21 The student will be asked to give a short (3 minute) presentation to provide RDB with context for the research proposal to an audience of academics who do not necessarily have knowledge of the subject area (or even of the broader discipline) but who do have considerable experience of reading and assessing research degree proposals. The Board particularly want to learn about what interests the student in this research. The Board have the information about the proposal itself in front of them and so want to learn more about why the student is the

best person to undertake this research and the skills that they bring to the project.

3.22 Following this short presentation, the Director of Studies will be given the opportunity to add any additional information and the Board will then ask the student questions about their research. Following these discussions the student will be asked to leave the meeting. The DoS will remain to hear the recommendations of the Board. These fall into three categories:

- a.) No amendments, Board approves the proposal
- b.) Minor amendments need to be made to the proposal. A time frame for completion will be given to the student along with a list of the required changes and on receipt, these changes will be signed off by Chair's Action.
- c.) More significant changes are still required to the proposal. The GRS will write to the student and DoS with feedback from the Board and will give a timescale in which they expect to receive the amended paperwork. If the student fails to submit the revised paperwork by the given deadline they will be contacted by the GRS. The revised paperwork must be re-submitted to the GRS for re-submission to the Board. The Board will specify whether they wish to see the student and the DoS again at a second meeting.

3.23 The RDB1 process, although potentially quite a lengthy one, is vital to ensure that your aims and objectives are realistic and worth pursuing, your methodology is appropriate and the proposed timescales manageable. You should, at the end of this process, have in place a rigorous proposal which will act to guide you through the rest of your research degree – although the process of research of course means that some elements of your initial proposal *will* change.

Some guidance on completing the RDB1

3.24 Some of the information sought on the RDB1 form should be self-explanatory (e.g. Sections 1 and 2) but we offer here some brief guidance relating to sections of the form which may need some further explanation.

Section 3

3.25 Proposed Title of Thesis – this must be 20 words or less and should accurately reflect what the thesis is going to be about.

3.26 Initial Degree Registration – where a student has been accepted to undertake an MPhil, their initial degree registration will naturally be 'MPhil'; where a student has been accepted to undertake a PhD a student will normally be initially registered on the MPhil/PhD route, which will require them to transfer to PhD at the midpoint of their

research degree. A student may be registered for PhD direct (which will not require the student to transfer) only where the student is switching to the University of Worcester from a research degree programme at another University at an advanced (i.e. post-transfer) stage.

3.27 Registration Date – this is the date when you started your research degree.

3.28 Minimum and Maximum completion dates – the minimum and maximum times allowed for research degrees are set out below so you should be able to work out your minimum and maximum completion dates (i.e. respectively, the date before which you cannot submit your thesis for examination and the date by which you must have submitted your thesis for examination). Note these can be reduced or extended in exceptional circumstances.

Category	Mode	Minimum	Maximum
MPhil	Full-time	18 Months	36 Months
	Part-time	30 Months	48 Months
MPhil/PhD	Full-time	33 months	60 months
	Part-time	45 months	72 months

If you have any problems in calculating these dates please contact the GRS for advice. If you are registering for PhD direct having moved to the University of Worcester from a research degree programme at another University at an advanced (i.e. post-transfer) stage, please contact the GRS to establish these dates for you.

3.29 Expected transfer date – this only needs to be completed if you are registering for MPhil/PhD. This is no more than an estimate but should reflect the timescales you set out in the proposal itself. This will be around 12-15 months after approval of the Research Proposal by the Research Degrees Board for FT students and 18-24 months for PT students. You will not be held to this date but it will act as a trigger for the GRS to contact you if the date goes by and you have not applied to transfer.

3.30 Expected submission date – again this is no more than an estimate but should be in line with the timescales in your proposal and must fall between the minimum and maximum completion dates. You will not be held to this date but it will act as a trigger for the GRS to contact you if the date goes by and you have not submitted.

Section 4 – Research Proposal

3.31 This is the key section of the RDB1. The proposal must be the student’s work guided by the DoS. Detailed advice and assistance in completing this section is provided for students through the Research Training Programme but there follows here some initial guidance.

- 3.32 The proposal must be preceded by a lay summary of 200 words. This should be written so that it can be understood by a non-specialist audience. It must therefore be generalised and avoid unnecessary jargon and acronyms (known only in your research community) unless these terms are clearly defined.
- 3.33 The lay summary and proposal should be completed separately to the form and attached. The proposal should consist of:
- the proposal itself
 - a timescale for the research
 - a reference list
- 3.34 The proposal itself should not exceed 1000 words: that is approximately 2 sides of A4 in a 12pt font assuming sensible margins and single line spacing. Proposals that ignore this limit may simply be returned to the student for further editing.
- 3.35 The proposal **MUST** be organised under the following headings:
- Context for the research – this should provide the background for your research and is essentially a preliminary literature review that should outline the work that has been done in your research area in the past but perhaps most essentially the work that has not been done i.e. the gap(s) in the research; you are not expected to be systematic here so should focus on the key works in your area.
 - The research question – this should outline what question or questions your research will be addressing; all researchers should have a question in mind that their research is trying to answer – although this question may change as the research progresses, you need to show here that you have a clear idea of where your research is going at the outset.
 - Aims and objectives – it may be that your overall aim is to answer the research question you have posed but it may be that your aim for the research degree is to answer only a part of this question or to lay the groundwork for answering this question; your objectives should be more specific and should feed into the overall aim.
 - The expected or planned original contribution to knowledge (for MPhil/PhD students only) – RDB want to see clear evidence that your work has the potential to progress to PhD. The way in which your research does or will contribute to new knowledge should therefore be clearly articulated.
 - Methodology/critical framework – this part of the proposal will differ considerably for students from different subject areas but for all students this section is about demonstrating how you will go about ‘doing’ your research:
 - How you will collect and/or select your data (i.e. your methods) – whether the data is from experiments, whether it is from questionnaires, interviews or focus

- groups, whether it is from fieldwork diaries or whether it is a body of literary texts, historical documents or visual images.
 - How you will analyse the data – for some this may be an account of statistical techniques or of analytical tools (such as content analysis) or it may be an account of the theoretical or critical framework(s) that will inform your analysis.
- 3.36 The timescale for the research should take the form of a Gantt chart or similar (clear guidance on this will be given as part of the Research Training Programme) and should outline when the key stages of the research will take place (e.g. literature review, data collection, data analysis, fieldwork, archival research) and when the key stages of the research degree process are scheduled (e.g. approval, transfer, submission). This timescale will be more detailed for projects where data is collected and analysed in clear, distinct phases or for those projects where data can only be collected at certain, specific times. The detail **MUST** reflect the nature of the project. It is recognised that the timescale is likely to change as the project progresses and that at this early stage there is a considerable amount of conjecture but it is imperative that your timescale is realistic and achievable.
- 3.37 The reference list should only include work that you have referred to in the proposal. This is not an opportunity to produce an exhaustive bibliography. You should ensure that your referencing is complete, consistent and in an appropriate style.

Section 5 - Ethics

- 3.38 **All students** are required to complete an ethics checklist regardless of the nature of the project. The checklist can be found on the GRS website: (http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/documents/Ethics_Agenda_12_5_10_Checklist_revised_Apr_2009.doc). This checklist must be signed by the student and DoS and then submitted to the relevant Institute Ethics Representative with a copy of the proposal itself.
- 3.39 Where a student has answered 'no' to all questions on the checklist and this has been confirmed as appropriate by the DoS and by the Institute Ethics Representative no further action is required. It must be stressed that if ethical issues arise with the project after the student and DoS have identified that there would be none (through the act of signing off the checklist), the DoS will be held responsible.
- 3.40 Where a student answers 'yes' to one or more questions then the research project must be given ethical approval through the University's Ethical Review Procedures before it can be registered. Full details of these procedures are to be found on the GRS website. In brief, however, you are required to complete a form in which you set

out the ethical issues involved in your project, how you will address these issues and what ethical approval you might need from other establishments involved in the project. This is then submitted, in the first instance, for review at the Institute level. The Institute will either approve your project without change or approve subject to some suggested changes or refer to the University's Ethics Committee if it feels that the issues cannot be resolved at the Institute level. If the project is referred to the University's Ethics Committee, you will be entitled to give responses to the Institute's comments.

- 3.41 In some instances, a project will require external ethical approval. Where a project, for example, involves working with the NHS then it should be referred immediately to the appropriate external ethical review system.
- 3.42 Where a student and his/her supervisory team are aware from the outset that there will be major ethical issues and/or various permissions will be required, it is essential that the student and DoS work to get the ethical review procedure underway at the earliest opportunity. Ideally, ethical approval will have been received by the time your RDB1 is reviewed by the Research Degrees Board. If it has not then details of why it has not received approval must be supplied in the relevant box.
- 3.43 Please note that all students are expected to be aware of the University's guidelines on good research practice and on ethics and research governance. This information will be flagged up to students through the Research Training Programme but supervisors are encouraged to make their students fully aware of this documentation.

Section 6 – Collaborating establishment

- 3.44 This section relates only to formal collaborations whereby the collaborator is providing, for example, funding or access to equipment, archives or other data for which a letter, confirming provision is required.

Section 7 – Research Training

- 3.45 Students are expected to undertake 40 credits of research training: the generic research student training module RTP401 and a subject specific module (see *Research Training Programme Course Handbook* for details). The Research Degrees Board will *normally* only approve your RDB1 if you have undertaken *and* completed these modules at the point it sees your proposal.
- 3.46 You should record here the year and semester you took these modules and the mark you were awarded (agreed or provisional) if known. If you have been granted APL or APEL for the subject specific research methods module, you should record your mark as APL or APEL as appropriate.

- 3.47 If you have not undertaken one or both modules, you should elaborate why this is the case. There may be good practical reasons why you have not undertaken the module, e.g. the appropriate module has not run this academic year, and the Research Degrees Board will take this into account in making its decision.
- 3.48 Where a student has failed (or provisionally failed) a module, the Research Degrees Board will normally delay approval of the student's proposal.

Section 8 – Supervisory Team

- 3.49 Full details of all the supervisory team must be provided here including information about the research supervisory experience of each member of the team, i.e. the number of successful research degree completions (for UK doctorates and UK MPhils) for each member and the number of students currently being supervised. This information must be complete and accurate since the Research Degrees Board will use it to ensure the team as a whole has the requisite experience.
- 3.50 Signed CVs must be provided for all the team and attached to the RDB1.

Section 9 - External experts

- 3.51 You are required to provide the full contact details for **TWO** external experts. These experts should be independent. At least one must be based at an academic institution and would normally be expected to hold a doctorate themselves. They must be external to both the collaborating establishment and the University of Worcester.
- 3.52 The DoS should informally approach these experts in advance to ensure that they are happy to carry out this role if asked. It is worth pointing out that experts are paid a small fee for their work (see Appendix 2).
- 3.53 At the appropriate stage in the process the GRS will formally write to the external experts sending them the RDB1 for comment. If comments are only received back from one expert but are broadly favourable then the student may proceed to RDB with only one set of comments. If however the first expert does not show strong support for the proposal then the form cannot proceed until comments from the second expert have been received.
- 3.54 Identifying appropriate external experts is not always an easy task, but it should be noted that external experts CAN now be used as external examiners.

Suspending your studies

- 3.55 Any student who wishes to suspend their studies must make their case for suspension in the RDB4a form. A request will normally only be approved if the student can provide evidence of having grounds for claims of exceptional mitigating circumstances. What constitutes grounds for such a claim and the type of evidence that is required is listed in 'Procedures for Dealing with Claims of Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances' which can be found at: <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/649.htm>. The final decision will be made by the Research Degrees Board in recognition that what constitutes reasonable grounds may sometimes vary between a taught postgraduate and research degree programme. All requests must be agreed by the supervisory team.
- 3.56 A request can be made for no more than 12 consecutive months at any one time. Only one suspension request will normally be permitted during a research degree programme. If, in exceptional circumstances a suspension of more than 12 months is required, a second request must be made which once more must make the case. Although the Research Degrees Board will always be sympathetic to any such request, it must be stressed that questions as to whether a student can successfully return to their project after a period longer than 12 months may be raised.
- 3.57 The student will not pay fees for the period of the suspension. The maximum completion dates will be amended to take the suspension period in to account.

Extension Requests

- 3.58 If a student and his/her DoS think it is likely that a student will be unable to submit by their maximum completion date, a request for an extension must be made using the form RDB4b. This cannot normally be done retrospectively and the Board will normally only approve one extension request.
- 3.59 Such requests are normally only granted if sufficient grounds can be demonstrated, as discussed in 3.55 above.
- 3.60 Where possible, documentary evidence must be provided to support your extension request and this must also be fully supported in writing by your DoS. It should be noted that if you have already been granted a suspension on grounds of, for example, ill health your completion date will have been amended to accommodate this suspension and a request for an extension based on the same evidence will not be accepted.

Submitting your thesis before the minimum completion date

- 3.61 As noted above, there is a date before which you are not entitled to submit your thesis. This reflects a belief that a PhD or MPhil cannot reasonably be completed before this date because of the practical time required to undertake training, to complete a full literature review, to identify and test the methodology to be used, to collect and analyse the data and to write up the thesis but also because of the developmental journey often involved in undertaking a research degree.
- 3.62 It is recognised, however, that there may be rare occasions where a student is in a position to submit early. In these instances, the student must complete an RDB4c outlining a case for why he/she is ready to submit in advance of the minimum completion date. This will only be considered by RDB where it is supported by the DoS.

Withdrawals

- 3.63 Any student who wishes to withdraw from their research degree should take every opportunity to discuss this intent with their DoS, with the GRS and with fellow students. It is not unusual to feel like giving up during a research degree: the sometimes solitary nature of a research degree can make you feel lost or helpless.
- 3.64 If, after discussion, you still wish to withdraw then:
- If you have not had your RDB1 approved, write to the GRS Manager stating your intent, ideally outlining your reasons for withdrawal.
 - If you have registered, complete an RDB5, which asks you to give reasons for your decision.
- 3.65 You will also be asked to complete a withdrawal questionnaire and given an opportunity to discuss your reasons for leaving in more detail with staff from the GRS.
- 3.66 Following your withdrawal, your supervisory team may be asked to undertake a supervisory team de-brief. This was introduced in September 2009 and provides an opportunity for the individuals involved in the supervision process to learn, develop and come to terms with situations where a student departs before completing their research. It is particularly useful where the student has completed a substantial part of the research ($\geq 40\%$) before leaving. Early departure debriefing enables those involved to discuss their experiences using a structured format and seeks to establish why a student departed early and enable both individual and organisational level learning. Feedback on supervision provided by the student may be drawn upon during the de-briefing process.

Supervisory Changes

- 3.67 Once the supervisory team has been deemed appropriate through the approval of the RDB1, any changes to this team must be approved by the Research Degrees Board. This requires the completion of an RDB6. Reasons for the change must be detailed in the form. Please note the requirement that every supervisor who is being added or replaced must sign the form.
- 3.68 It goes without saying that all changes should be discussed at length by the student and supervisors and it should be ensured that the student is happy with the proposed changes. Where a change is necessitated by, for example, the DoS leaving the University of Worcester, it should be recognised that it may not always be possible to provide a suitable replacement. While every effort will be made to identify an appropriate and satisfactory (to the student) supervisory team, this may not always be possible (see also **section 2.7-2.12**).

Monitoring

- 3.69 A student's progress is monitored in a number of more or less formal ways throughout the research degree process:
- By the DoS through regular meetings with the student of which a record should be kept
 - Through formal annual monitoring which requires the completion of an RDB7 form
 - Through annual interview of which a record must be kept
 - Through a 6-monthly evaluation report for students on a FT research studentship
 - By the GRS which tracks the progress of all research students through the RDB process and contacts student and/or DoS as appropriate if this progress does not match stated requirements and/or expectations
 - Through a report to each meeting of the Research Degrees Board which presents information on the progress of each research student

Records of Meetings

- 3.70 Students and supervisors are advised to make formal records of all their meetings. The way in which these records are kept can be decided upon between the student and their supervisory team but the GRS suggests a number of possible methods which are set out here: <http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/679.htm>

Annual Monitoring (RDB7)

- 3.71 The Student and DoS are asked to complete an annual monitoring report, that is the form RDB7, at the end of each academic year and to submit the form to the Graduate Research School.
- 3.72 The form asks the student and then the DoS:
- to comment on progress against the student's initial research proposal (RDB1) if approved
 - to note any revisions to the research project
 - to record the regularity of meetings
 - to note the completion of training/related studies
- 3.73 The RDB7s are reviewed by staff within the GRS who will refer any issues to the Chair of the Research Degrees Board. Please note that the process of annual monitoring is currently under review. Students will be notified of any changes to the current process as and when these have been agreed.

Annual Interviews

- 3.74 All research students are required to engage in an interview at the end of the academic year. You will be contacted by the GRS and asked to arrange a time for this interview some time during July/August.
- 3.75 Staff within the GRS will organise interviews with all FT and PT research students. A record of this meeting will be made using a proforma. Any general issues raised will be referred to the Chair of the Research Degrees Board as a matter of course. Specific issues will only be raised with the student's consent.
- 3.76 It is recognised that not all PT students will be able to attend an interview, so they are given the option to complete the proforma independently and to submit it to the GRS.

Evaluation Report (for students on a FT research studentship only)

- 3.77 The progress of students on a FT research studentship is formally reviewed at six-monthly intervals, whereby the student must submit and discuss a written progress report to his/her DoS.
- 3.78 If, in the opinion of the DoS a student's progress is unsatisfactory at any review point, having discussed the matter with the student, they will issue a formal written warning including a statement of what is unsatisfactory, and the actions which are required to rectify the situation together with a reasonable time scale, normally no later than the next six-monthly review. This document will be copied to the whole supervisory team, the Chair of the Research Degrees Board for the Board's formal record, and to the Graduate Research School Manager.

- 3.79 Where progress continues to be unsatisfactory the DoS, in consultation with the Graduate Research School Manager, will give one month's notice of termination of contract.

Transfer to PhD (RDB2)

- 3.80 Transfer from MPhil to PhD should only be contemplated when enough progress has been made to provide evidence of the development of the project and the student towards a PhD. This will be around 12-15 months after approval of the Research Proposal by the Research Degrees Board for FT students and 18-24 months for PT students.
- 3.81 The transfer process requires you to submit a substantial piece of written work, normally a chapter of your thesis, and to undergo an 'interview' with an upgrade panel consisting of all members of your supervisory team (normally including external supervisors) and a researcher with experience in your field who is independent of your team (internal expert). Where an appropriate member of staff cannot be identified internally, it will be necessary to make a case to your Head of Institute to call upon the expertise of a colleague external to the University (normally one of the External Experts used during the Approval of the Research Degree RDB1). If this decision is supported by the Head of Institute, it is important to inform the Graduate Research School who will be responsible for organising the interview on your behalf. The cost of using an external expert in this process will be met by your Institute.
- 3.82 As stated above, transfer should only take place when you and your team feel that the work has now reached or is about to reach the appropriate level. This will mean that your supervisory team is fully supportive of your case for transfer to PhD. On very rare occasions it is possible for a student to decide to go through the transfer process without the backing of their supervisory team. This is not advisable and in these circumstances the team will not sign off the RDB2 form.
- 3.83 The format and content of the written work will vary across disciplines and it is therefore imperative that you discuss this with your Supervisory Team. It should be stressed that students are not being asked to write a separate transfer document but to use something they have already written. This is not to say that some students don't still adopt the 'writing up' approach in their final year, but in these cases written work *will* then need to be produced explicitly for Transfer.
- 3.84 As a guideline, it is normally expected that the written work will involve 1-2 chapters of your thesis of around 10,000 words. Ideally the written work should introduce the research, set the context and include a discussion around the methodology or data collection and initial analysis. The GRS would advise against the submission of a literature review which is something most students will be expected to do in the first 6-12 months of their programme.

- 3.85 The Upgrade Interview will be chaired by an experienced researcher and supervisor (with at least two successful completions at PhD level and, where possible, have expertise in the field). This person will act as an Independent Chair, whose role will be primarily to ensure that the interview is conducted according to the regulations and to keep an eye on your welfare. It is expected that the Chair will be involved in the final decision of the Panel about the transfer to PhD. At the interview, you must give a presentation of up to 30 minutes and take questions from the panel for up to 1 hour.
- 3.86 The Supervisory Team are present at the Upgrade Interview primarily to support you and to listen to the discussion and then any feedback given by the panel at the end of the process. It is hoped that this will make post transfer discussions between you and your supervisor more effective. It is expected that any fundamental questions about the research will normally have already been addressed at supervisory meetings and that in the context of the upgrade interview, supervisors will therefore normally only ask questions in order to draw out information from the student which may not have otherwise been made explicit. On an occasion where it is necessary for the supervisor to ask more critical questions, we strongly advise the student and supervisor to discuss this approach prior to the interview.
- 3.87 It is hoped that this process will be of benefit to you, as it offers an opportunity for you to undergo an experience similar to the viva but also offers an opportunity for your whole supervisory team to hear you present your research in a formal context.
- 3.88 The purpose of this process as a whole is to demonstrate that your work is of PhD standard. Therefore, the written work you submit should be of the required standard in terms of presentation, literary style, referencing, etc, as well as in terms of its content.
- 3.89 The purpose of the Upgrade Interview is to show that you:
- understand your research problem
 - are aware of the related literature
 - have demonstrated the capacity to conduct research including the use of appropriate methodology
 - have made satisfactory progress in your research to date and have a realistic research plan and schedule for completion of your research
 - have demonstrated that your work has the potential to make an original contribution to knowledge.
- Your presentation should therefore seek to address each of these issues and you should be prepared for further questioning of these issues as well as in relation to your written work.
- 3.90 In order to set the process in motion, you must submit an RDB2 with sections 1 to 4 completed and sufficient copies of the piece of written

work for each member of the interview panel (i.e. the number in your supervisory team plus one).

- 3.91 It is the responsibility of your team (primarily your DoS) to find an appropriate Internal Expert to sit on your Upgrade Panel. Please provide the name of this person when the transfer paperwork is submitted to the GRS along with the preferred date for interview (as it is likely that the whole team will meet with the student prior to upgrade we would suggest that you agree some suitable dates at this point which are finalised on speaking to the Internal Expert). When choosing a date please allow enough time for organisation of the interview and reading of the work. We would suggest you allow at least 4 weeks for this.
- 3.92 The GRS will appoint the Chair for the Interview. The GRS will also organise a time and place for the Interview, normally within 4 weeks of the submission of the RDB2.

Outcome of the upgrade interview

- 3.93 Following the Interview the Panel will complete section 5-7 of the RDB2 (which includes a written report, to be collated by the Chair) identifying the outcome of the interview and their recommendation to the Research Degrees Board as follows:
- Recommend transfer to PhD.
 - Recommend transfer to PhD subject to a satisfactory response to the comments of the Panel (the student will be expected to provide this evidence in written form for RDB and to then attend RDB to discuss these comments).
 - Recommend the student not be upgraded to PhD at this time but re-submit for transfer at a later date, taking account of the Panel's comments. It is expected that when the student re-submits for transfer they will undergo the same process, as discussed above, but with a new Chair. The student will be expected to include a discussion in their presentation around the original comments of the Panel and how these have been addressed.
 - Recommend the student not be upgraded to PhD and submit for an MPhil taking into account the Panel's comments.
- 3.94 Where the Panel requires the student to respond to comments, the response should be sent to the GRS. This response should address how the student will meet any issues highlighted by the Panel and any planned changes to be made to the project in light of the comments. The Independent Expert will review these comments and make a final recommendation to the Research Degrees Board. At this stage this may be for Transfer to PhD or for the student to submit for transfer at a later date. This recommendation must be approved by the Research Degrees Board.

- 3.95 Where the Interview Panel cannot reach an agreement, it should submit a report, outlining the disagreements. This should be collated by the Chair. At this point the views of an External Expert may be sought.
- 3.96 Following the interview, the RDB2 paperwork, associated written report from the Panel and, where applicable, written response from the student must be forwarded to the GRS for consideration at the next meeting of the Research Degrees Board.

Writing-Up

- 3.97 If you are undertaking an MPhil or PhD research degree you are permitted to enrol on a writing-up basis. To be enrolled as a writing-up student you must be close to submission of your thesis and require time to write up your work. It is assumed that this process should not involve further experimentation or laboratory based work, and only minimal access to supervisors and other facilities. The option to enrol on a writing-up basis is envisaged to be for a **maximum of one year**, and, in exceptional circumstances, two years.
- 3.98 To register as a writing-up student you must be within the minimum and maximum registration period for your research degree and MPhil/PhD students must have successfully completed Transfer to PhD.
- 3.99 If authorised by your DoS, writing-up status will become operative from the point of re-registration and would normally extend for one year only. In normal circumstances, if you have completed one year in writing-up mode without completing your examination you will be required to revert to part-time status for the purposes of the fee, with no provision for reverting subsequently to writing-up status. **It should be noted that the writing up fee is a one-off payment, and that no pro-rata refunds will be given.**

Examination (RDB3)

- 3.100 When you are approaching the final stages of your research degree you will need to submit an examination arrangements form (RDB3) to the Graduate Research School accompanied by CVs for each of the proposed examiners.
- 3.101 It is up to your DoS:
- to put together the proposed examination team (please note that External Examiners are paid a fee plus expenses – see Appendix 2)

- to get each member of the proposed team to supply a copy of their CV
- to acquire their signatures in Section 7 of the RDB3 form which confirms that they are willing to undertake the task and that they are independent of the project (and in the case of External Examiners of the University). The form cannot be considered without these signatures

You, the student, should have no contact with the examiners.

3.102 In identifying the examination team you must remember the following:

- The team must normally consist of at least one internal and at least one external examiner; unless the student is a member of staff at Worcester in which case two external examiners are required.
- Any person appointed as External Examiner must not have been employed by the University during the previous three years.
- The team should not normally consist of more than three examiners.
- Each examiner must be experienced in research in the general subject area of a particular candidate's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.
- The collective experience of the examining team should include a minimum of three MPhil or PhD candidates examined, normally in the UK. For the assessment of a candidate for PhD, at least one examiner must have experience of examining at that level.
- Each examiner must not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser.

3.103 Completing the RDB3 form should be fairly straightforward but please note the following:

- The title on your RDB3 is essentially the final title of your thesis.
 - It should be the same or fairly close to the title in your RDB1 and your RDB2
 - If there have been substantial changes to the title, you may be asked to justify and explain these changes.
 - The title on the RDB3 must match exactly the title of the subsequently submitted thesis. Any change to the title must have been approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- The estimated submission date is not written in stone but as a guide it **MUST** be between the minimum and maximum completion period and should normally be about three months after the date of the Research Degrees Board to which the RDB3 is to be submitted.
- You are similarly not bound by the estimated examination date but this should normally be about two months after the estimated submission date.

- 3.104 The RDB3 and CVs are submitted to Research Degrees Board. Assuming it is satisfied that the team has the appropriate expertise and experience and that it satisfies other aspects of the regulations (see below), the Board will, if in agreement, approve the arrangements and will also appoint an Independent Chair for the *viva*.
- 3.105 The process of approval can be completed in an absolute minimum of 6 weeks, but you are normally advised to submit the RDB3 three months before you plan to hand in your completed thesis.
- 3.106 It is recognised that even the most meticulous plans can go awry and that you may end up submitting your thesis somewhat later than intended. If twelve months have passed since the approval of your exam arrangements and you have still not submitted, it will be necessary for the GRS to approach the examiners again to ensure that they are still happy to act as such and that they remain independent.
- 3.107 Please remember that if you go beyond the maximum completion date between having your exam arrangements approved and submitting your thesis, you must apply for an extension of your registration period. The 'clock' does not stop ticking until the thesis is actually submitted.

Submitting your thesis

- 3.108 Once your examination arrangements have been formally approved by the Research Degrees Board you can submit your completed thesis to the Graduate Research School. Once you have submitted your thesis you will not be required to pay fees. However if you are awarded major amendments by your examiners, fees will resume at the 'writing up' rate until the final amended thesis is submitted to the GRS.
- 3.109 The thesis must include:
- i) a statement of the student's objectives;
 - ii) an acknowledgement of published and other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and of any assistance received;
 - iii) an abstract of around 400 words bound into each copy which provides 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;
 - iv) where the research was undertaken as part of a collaborative group, a clear statement of the student's individual contribution and of the extent of the collaboration;
 - v) if applicable, the student must state which part of the submission has been submitted for another academic award, name the award concerned, and give the outcome of that submission plus date of any conferment.

3.110 There are certain requirements for the formatting of the text of the thesis (see Appendix 1):

- Your work should be presented either in typescript or print.
- The text may be printed on one or both sides of the paper. If you print on both sides of the paper it should be of sufficient density that the text on one side does not show through to the other.
- The text should be in one-and-a-half or double line spacing, except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.
- Pages should be numbered consecutively through the main text, including photographs and diagrams which form whole pages.

3.111 We also recommend:

- A 3cm margin is used for all margins, which gives ample space for binding, etc.
- Any clear and readable font is acceptable, i.e. Arial or Times New Roman.
- You don't use a font smaller than 10 point for the main text.

3.112 There are also some requirements for the look of your thesis (see Appendix 1):

- The front cover of your thesis should have the title of the work in at least 24-point type.
- The title here must match that on the RDB3
- The initials and surname of the author, the academic award for which submitted and the year of submission must also be shown.
- On the spine, there should be the name of the author, the award and the year of submission (see over for example).

3.113 You must submit 1 **soft-bound** copy for each of the examiners. You are also advised to have a bound copy for yourself at this stage and for your DoS and other members of the supervisory team but please do not print these until you have confirmed with your team what is required. It is your responsibility to get the thesis bound at this stage.

3.114 It is also your responsibility to ensure that the thesis has been correctly printed and copied. It is not the responsibility of the GRS to check, for example, that there are no pages missing or that the print is consistently legible.

3.115 You must also submit at this time an RDB10 signed by you and by your DOS which declares that the thesis is your own work and that it has not been submitted in part or whole for any other award.

3.116 Once received the copies of the bound thesis will be sent to the examiners.

Academic misdemeanour

- 3.117 A research degree student is subject to the same regulations as other students of the University in the eventuality of any cheating or plagiarism in the preparation of the thesis or other academic misdemeanour in connection with an assessment or examination <http://www2.worc.ac.uk/registry/pdf/Proceduresforinvestigationofallegedcheating.pdf>.
- 3.118 Any entitlement to an award may be set aside by an Examination Investigatory Panel following a case of cheating; the Panel may also award a lower award to a candidate in such circumstances, and may fail a student who has otherwise passed the course concerned. A student penalised for cheating shall not normally have the right to be assessed or reassessed to improve their award.
- 3.119 The final amended thesis may be submitted to the University's plagiarism detection service. This will be on a random basis but may be used if an examiner or supervisor suspects that sections of the thesis have been plagiarised.

Before the Viva

- 3.120 At this stage the GRS will liaise with the student, the supervisory team, the Independent Chair and the examiners to organise a date for the *viva* that is suitable for all parties. Neither you nor your supervisory team should have any contact with the examiners.
- 3.121 As an absolute minimum we give the examiners 6 weeks to read the thesis. Normally the *viva* will take place 2-3 months after the thesis is submitted. Please note, however, that in arranging the date for the *viva* we are not in a position to insist on dates to the examiners.
- 3.122 The GRS writes to all parties with the agreed date and timings for the *viva*.
- 3.123 At least one week prior to the *viva* the examiners must submit their preliminary reports (RDB8a) to the GRS.
- 3.124 The examiners must complete these forms independently although they may ask/agree that their fellow examiners see their preliminary report. A copy is automatically sent to the Independent Chair.
- 3.125 Under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 the student may see a copy of these reports after the *viva*. Requests should be made formally to the Registrar within 40 days on the request form available in the University Student Handbook. There is an associated fee of £10.

The Viva

- 3.126 The *viva* normally takes place at the University of Worcester and normally lasts about two hours. Those automatically present at the

viva will comprise the candidate, the independent chair and the appointed examiners.

- 3.127 The Independent Chair is there to ensure that the examination is conducted in an orderly fashion and to keep an eye on the welfare of the candidate.
- 3.128 No one else is permitted to attend the *viva* without prior permission being granted in writing by the student. This applies to the DoS or any other supervisors.
- 3.129 If invited the DoS and any other supervisors are there as observers only.
- 3.130 You are expected to defend the thesis in English, and respond to the rigorous questioning of the examiners. You will have been given training relating to the *viva* through the Research Training Programme. It is also useful for the supervisory team to set up a mock *viva* in advance of the real thing. Remember: no-one knows your thesis as well as you do; you're the expert in this context. Many people leave a *viva* and comment on how much they enjoyed really getting to grips with their work.

The outcome of the Viva

- 3.131 At the conclusion of the *viva* you and any supervisors present will be asked to leave the room so that the examiners can discuss their decision. You should not assume that the examiners will give any indication of what this decision might be during the *viva*. It is not unheard of for the examiners to make it clear to the candidate at the beginning of the *viva* that, assuming the student demonstrates the thesis is his/her own work, it will pass with limited changes. This is not, however, the norm. Most examiners will not give you any real idea of what their decision might be: which may be because they have not yet decided but which may also be because that is their approach.
- 3.132 Once the examiners have reached their decision, the Chair will call you back into the room to reveal the outcome. Do not panic if you are left waiting for some time: the amount of time the examiners spend discussing the outcome has no necessary correlation to what that outcome might be.
- 3.133 The examiners are required to recommend one of the following outcomes:
- a) The candidate be granted the degree.
 - b) The candidate be granted the degree subject to minor amendments and corrections being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal examiner(s) and/or external examiner(s). The candidate should be advised that these amendments must be completed and submitted according to a

timeframe which will be decided by the examiners but shall not exceed 6 months.

- c) The candidate be permitted to re-submit for the degree (often referred to as 'major amends') within 12 months and be re-examined as follows:
 - i) the thesis must be revised and if deemed satisfactory by the examiners, the candidate will be exempt from further examination, oral or otherwise.
 - ii) the thesis must be revised and the candidate must undergo a further oral or alternative examination.
 - iii) the thesis is satisfactory, but the candidate must undergo a further oral or alternative examination.
 - iv) the thesis is satisfactory, but the candidate must undergo a further examination.
- d) The candidate not be granted the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined.
- e) In the case of a PhD student, the examiners have the option to grant the candidate the degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners.
- f) In the case of an MPhil student, the candidate be awarded the degree of PhD subject to presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners.

Amendments

3.134 Where major or minor amendments are required, the GRS will formally write to you with a list of corrections, requirements, timescale etc as provided by the examiners. It will also make clear whether just one or more of the examination team will wish to see the amended thesis. It is often the case that it is agreed after the *viva* that the amendments will be checked by just the internal examiner. You will normally receive this letter within a week of the *viva*.

3.135 Minor amendments are awarded when only very minor corrections are required to the thesis, such as typos, changes to formatting etc. in most cases, minor corrections can be completed within a few weeks, but students are given up to 6 months to complete and submit their amended thesis to the GRS.

3.136 Major amendments are awarded when the examiners agree that more substantial work is required to the thesis. This may involve, for example, some re-structuring of the thesis, the inclusion of more material etc. Major amendments should not be regarded as a fail but as a way of ensuring that the thesis is absolutely right before being released into the intellectual community.

3.137 You will be asked to submit soft bound copies of the amended thesis to the GRS, one for each examiner who has requested to see the

amended version. It is helpful to the examiners to provide a letter indicating exactly how you have responded to their comments.

- 3.138 Where oral or alternative re-examination is required the GRS will organise this.
- 3.139 The GRS will forward the amended thesis to the examiner(s). The examiner(s) have up to four weeks to notify the GRS in writing if the amended thesis meets their requirements and to recommend or not the candidate for the award.
- 3.140 If the examiner(s) are not satisfied that the amendments meet their requirements the student does not have the right to re-submit for a second time.
- 3.141 If the examiner(s) are satisfied the GRS will contact the student and the DoS with the decision.
- 3.142 The formal regulations for reassessment of an MPhil or Doctoral thesis can be found in the Research Degree Regulatory Framework.

Presentation of the final amended thesis

- 3.143 Before you can be formally awarded your research degree, you must submit the final amended versions of your thesis.
- 3.144 The GRS requires you to submit:
- One hard-bound copy (to be kept in the library) accompanied by a copyright declaration (obtained from the GRS)
 - One CD-ROM with a copy of your thesis in PDF Format, for possible submission to the University's plagiarism detection service. The thesis **MUST** be saved as one PDF document and not chapter by chapter. The software (Adobe Acrobat Professional) to do this is available on two PC's in the part time student room WB113.
- 3.145 It is intended that the electronic copy of your thesis will be uploaded to WRaP, Worcester's digital repository of research and to the British Library to be made available via the EThOS system. The CD-Rom must therefore be submitted alongside the Deposit Agreement which the GRS will send to you when you are ready to submit. The thesis can only be uploaded if it is saved as one PDF document. If there are issues of confidentiality or intellectual property relating to another party please contact the GRS Manager.
- 3.146 The rules relating to the format of the final amended thesis are set out in Appendix 1.

Award and Graduation

- 3.147 The submission of your final amended thesis is not quite the end of the story, although *your* work is now done. The copies of the thesis and a CD ROM are sent to the Chair of Academic Board along with:
- Your RDB file (containing all the relevant RDB documents)
 - A letter from the Chair of Research Degrees Board approving the file.
- 3.148 It is Academic Board's role to ensure that the process has been completed satisfactorily at each stage. If it is satisfied that this is the case, the award is approved and a letter confirming this is sent to the candidate.
- 3.149 If you wish to graduate in a given year – graduation is normally in November – you must have submitted your final amended thesis by **September 30th** in that same year.

Section 4: The Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors

- 4.1 Formal regulations governing the registration and examination of research students are published annually in the Research Degree Regulatory Framework and the University of Worcester Student Handbook. Students and their supervisors should acquaint themselves with these regulations.
- 4.2 All successful applicants are provided with an individual letter of acceptance. The letter constitutes a contract between the student and the University and sets out the terms of the offer. Students with special needs are referred to the University's student support services. The terms of the letter are binding on the institution and, upon acceptance, on the student.
- 4.3 Every year, all students are required to complete a UoW registration form. On signing this form, the student is entering into a binding agreement with the University.

Supervision

- 4.4 Supervisors are normally assigned to students at the time an offer of admission is made, although external supervisors are usually added to the team at a later date.
- 4.5 Every Research Degree student will normally expect the following:
 - A supervisory team consisting of at least two supervisors, at least one of whom will be a member of staff at the University of Worcester and normally, at least one of whom will be external to the University of Worcester (hereafter the 'external supervisor'). The lead internal supervisor is called the Director of Studies (hereafter the 'DoS').
 - A supervisory team with appropriate experience in the subject area and of research supervision, with the team as a whole having a minimum of 3 research degree completions at the appropriate level.
 - Contact with the DoS (and/or any other internal supervisor) amounting to a minimum of **20** hours per year (or equivalent) for part time students and **30** hours per year (or equivalent) for full time students. This contact may be in the form of face to face meetings, e-mail or telephone correspondence but this and the frequency of contact should be agreed at an early stage of the research degree.
 - A meeting with the whole supervisory team **once** per year for part time students and **at least once** and normally twice a year

for full time students to formally review the student's progress and plan the next stage or phase of the programme.

- A response within 10 working days to any e-mail communication, documentation and other work submitted by the student to the Director of Studies.
- The appointment of an alternative acting Director of Studies, where a Director of Studies is ill or absent continuously from the University for more than 8 working weeks.
- Where possible, the appointment of an alternative Director of Studies if the existing Director of Studies leaves the Institution. Every effort will be made to find a suitable replacement, but if one cannot be found, it may then be necessary to terminate the research degree (see also Section 2.7-2.12 above).

4.6 Obligations of the student

It is expected that Research Students will:

- be research active; agree research activity with their Director of Studies (DoS).
- undertake at least **37.5** hours study per week over the year (FT students only).
- study flexibly and efficiently. This pattern of study may be varied with the prior agreement of the DoS.
- submit work to their DoS for evaluative comment as the research proceeds.
- respond to any suggestions regarding the development of work submitted.
- maintain regular contact with all supervisors, including external supervisors to ensure that the fullest advice on the research project is maintained.
- provide the DoS with a formal progress report once a year (RDB9) which will be completed by the DoS and sent to the Graduate Research School.

4.7 Obligations of the Director of Studies and supervisors

The Director of Studies should have knowledge of a student's subject area and theoretical approach.

It is expected that the Directors of Studies and Supervisors will:

- agree research activity with their research student(s).
- make evaluative comments on work as the research proceeds.
- suggest development of the work submitted.
- initiate and develop contact with other supervisors to ensure that the fullest advice on the research project is maintained.
- ensure that the research student maintains an ongoing record of their research progress (to include material 'written-up' in semi-finished form).
- maintain a good professional relationship with the student.

- provide the GRS Manager with a formal progress report once a year (RDB9) and evaluation forms related to the students personal development planning were appropriate.
- ensure that appropriate administrative arrangements are made for changes in the student's circumstances (such as registration, transfer, examination arrangements, suspension, extension, withdrawal etc.).
- liaise as appropriate with the Manager of the GRS about the general progress of the student.
- take the initiative in updating their skills relevant to supporting and guiding research students, such as through the supervisor training workshops offered by the GRS and external workshops publicised by the School.

Research Training and Support

4.8 A Research Degree student should normally expect:

- A programme of workshops, modules and events to develop their underpinning research and subject skills.
- Access to individual careers advice, workshops or events to help prepare for future employment or the development of the next stage in their research career.

4.9 Obligations of the student

It is expected that Research Students will:

- complete a Training Needs Analysis.
- undertake the Research Training Programme.
- maintain an ongoing record of their research progress (to include material written-up in a semi-finished form) and personal development (PDP)
- attend appropriate seminars and workshops organised by the GRS and Institute and take opportunities to present and discuss their own work.

4.10 Obligations of the Director of Studies and supervisors

It is expected that the Directors of Studies and Supervisors will:

- explore, at the outset, the student's academic background in order to identify any areas in which further training (including language training) is required.

The Research

- 4.11 The University recognises that the research project undertaken is the student's work guided by the DoS and other supervisors. It is an expectation that the student will have considerable self-reliance and that he/she will be able to think through research problems. It is unrealistic that a student will make contact with their DoS every time they are unsure of a matter of fact or research strategy, although

guidance on such matters will be given at regular meetings with Directors of Study and Supervisors.

4.12 Obligations of the student

It is expected that Research Students will:

- in due course, publish material relating to the research being undertaken, where this is practicable. Reference to any such published material must be made in the thesis. Moreover, a copy of any published material must either be bound into the thesis or be placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the thesis.
- supply one copy of the thesis for Coventry University's library, and a further copy to be up loaded to the University of Worcester Digital Repository.
- make contributions to conferences.

4.13 Obligations of the Director of Studies and supervisors

It is expected that the Directors of Studies and Supervisors will:

- give guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, the planning of the research programme, relevant literature and sources, research methods and instrumental techniques.
- arrange, as appropriate, for the student to present his or her work at seminars within the University and to attend external academic meetings or conferences and where possible to present their work, and to provide encouragement and assistance with possible publication of the student's research.

Teaching and Other Duties

4.14 A Research Degree student may be given the opportunity to undertake teaching or other academic or research/consultancy support duties to include demonstrating work (up to 6 hours/week for FT students) on behalf of their DoS.

This opportunity is, however, subject to:

- The student completing the requisite training module for teaching (SEDA 1) if the student is to undertake extensive teaching duties.
- The requirements of the DoS and his/her department.

Facilities and Resources

4.15 A FT Research Degree student should normally expect the following:

- A desk and storage space in a shared office.
- A PC with appropriate software to facilitate research activity.
- Shared access to a printer.

- Secure storage on the University Servers which is automatically and regularly backed up.
- Access via the Library or on-line to appropriate reference and research materials to facilitate research.
- Up to **50** inter-library loan requests/annum.
- For self funded, registered (RDB1 approved) students, access to the small grants scheme to help support costs such as conference attendance etc.

4.16 A PT Research Degree student should normally expect the following:

- 24-hour access to the PT student room in the GRS.
- Secure storage on the University Servers which is automatically and regularly backed up.
- Access via the Library or on-line to appropriate reference and research materials to facilitate research.
- Up to **30** inter-library loan requests. Additional requests are negotiable with ILS staff providing the service.
- For registered (RDB1 approved) students, access to the small grants scheme to help support costs such as conference attendance etc.

Illness and Other Absence from Study, including Maternity Leave

4.17 Research Degree Students are not employees of the University and are therefore not entitled to the statutory entitlements of employees in relation to illness or absence of study. For this reason, the benefits laid out below in relation to illness, maternity and paternity pay are discretionary and offered in accordance with best practice. A FT Research Degree student should normally be expected to commit to:

- Notify their DoS of any illness or other emergency absence as quickly as possible and preferably before 09:00 hours on the day of the absence.
- Provide self-certified absence forms for periods of illness up to 5 working days and a medical certificate for periods greater than or equal to 6 working days.
- For absences of more than 7 calendar days a medical certificate is required. This must be obtained as soon as the absence exceeds 7 days and sent immediately to the Graduate Research School. Further certificates must be submitted if the absence exceeds the expiry date of the original certificate. The student and their DoS should ensure that regular contact is maintained throughout the period of absence.

4.18 Full time research students on a studentship contract are entitled to one month's full pay within any 12 month period, at which point the

studentship will be suspended until the student's return to study. Students who are absent for more than four weeks are advised to contact the Benefits Agency immediately as all University financial support will cease until study is resumed.

- 4.19 Irrespective of circumstances, the maximum period of suspension allowed for any research degree student is twelve months in total.
- 4.20 When the student is certified as fit to resume study the research programme will re-commence and for a student on a studentship, the bursary will be re-instated until the student has received three years funding in total. The maximum submission date is not altered following a period of suspension.
- 4.21 A judgement of what constitutes 'unacceptable' or 'acceptable' levels of absence is dependent on the individual circumstances of each case. Above all, it is imperative that a student remains in regular contact with their DoS to discuss any absence, medical, or other circumstances which may prevent them from completing their programme of study in the agreed timescale.
- 4.22 Where students are absent long-term due to sickness and have little or no prospect of returning to study or where frequent sickness absence is preventing adequate progress on the research degree programme, the studentship contract or research degree programme may need to be terminated.
- 4.23 The University of Worcester will allow up to four months paid maternity leave for full time research students in receipt of a studentship bursary without the level of the award being reduced. However, if the student does not return to study or if the student returns, but withdraws prior to completing 3 full months of study, she will be expected to pay this back in full. A further 6 months unpaid maternity leave may also be approved following discussions with the Graduate Research School and Supervisory Team.
- 4.24 Once you have informed your supervisory team that you are pregnant, they will complete a Risk Assessment with you to identify any relevant risks associated with your study programme and to manage these risks for your protection. The main risks are associated with physical activity or exposure to some chemicals, radiation and biological agents.
- 4.25 You will also need to plan with your team the impact of your pregnancy on your course of study. You are entitled to interrupt your course of study because of pregnancy and it is important to make a plan to take account both of the academic requirements of your study programme and your needs as a pregnant mother. You will be expected **not** to attend UoW during the four weeks immediately preceding birth and for one month after birth. Normally, the maximum period of interruption allowed is one year but this must be approved by your supervisory

team and the University's Research Degrees Board. You should also arrange with your team any absences needed for attendance at antenatal clinics.

- 4.26 Students on a studentship bursary may take two weeks' paternity leave over and above their holiday entitlement. There is no extension of funding or registration for students who take paternity leave.
- 4.27 A PT Research Degree student should normally be expected to commit to:
- Discuss with their DoS any absence, medical, or other circumstances which may prevent them from completing their programme of study in the agreed timescale.
- 4.28 As for FT students, where students are absent long-term due to sickness and have little or no prospect of returning to study or where frequent sickness absence is preventing adequate progress on the research degree programme, the research degree programme may need to be terminated.
- 4.29 Part time students who become pregnant are referred to para 4.24-4.25 above which refers to both full time and part time students.

Holiday

- 4.30 Research students are not subject to terms or semesters in the conventional sense nor do they have fixed hours of study. The academic year and therefore the leave year commences on 1 September and ends on 31st August.
- 4.31 If you wish to take annual leave you can take up to the following:
- 1.) Up to **35** working days holiday per academic year, with the prior agreement of the DoS.
 - 2.) Statutory Bank Holidays and University Closed Days.
- 4.32 In reality most students tend to keep holidays to a minimum to maximise their chances of completing their studies during their funded period. Holiday is not accrued when a student is on long term sick leave or maternity leave and holiday not taken in one academic year cannot be carried forward to another academic year.

Section 5: Funding for Research Expenses

Research Studentships

- 5.1 Students on a FT, fully funded research studentship will have an annual expenses budget. The budget is university money and is there specifically to pay for expenses directly related to your research. It should therefore be used only for the following:
- Photocopying
 - Printing of research posters
 - Purchase of books
 - Conference attendance
 - Travel to conferences, to see supervisors, to access research materials etc
 - Accommodation when attending conferences, visiting external supervisor etc
 - Lab or field materials specifically for your research (Petri dishes, chemicals, protective clothing etc)
 - Membership of learned societies etc
 - Relevant journal subscriptions
 - Training courses
 - Thesis binding
- 5.2 All items purchased through the expenses budget belong to the University and should therefore be returned to the University at the end of the studentship. This includes all IT equipment, lab materials etc. Books can normally be retained by the student.
- 5.3 The expenses budget is a set sum and runs from 1st August-31st July (financial year of the university). Money cannot be carried over from year to year. The expenses budget for students who start a studentship after 1st August will be pro rata for the first year and therefore also the last year.
- 5.4 As the expenses budget is a limited fund we are now asking for all claims of expenditure to be approved by the Director of Studies. This can be done by e-mail so as not to delay the process.
- 5.5 The expenses budget is not intended for the purchase of IT equipment, including external hard drives. The GRS automatically purchases IT equipment (PC or laptop, cables, printer etc) for all FT students as this has to be purchased by and authorised by the University's purchasers and Purchasing Manager respectively. All IT equipment is consequently owned by and insured by the University.
- 5.6 All FT students are given access to the secure University staff server which will store a large amount of material and is backed up every evening.

- 5.7 If you find that you need to store a large amount of data on an external hard drive, the GRS Manager will require approval for this from the DoS. The hard drive that is purchased is owned by the University and must be given back at the end of your studentship.
- 5.8 No IT equipment is permitted to leave the campus unless it is a laptop which has been hired out from the School.
- 5.9 If you wish to purchase a software licence please talk to the GRS Manager. If the licence will be of benefit to more than one student, the School will consider purchasing this. If the software is specific to one individual's needs, it will be taken out of the expenses budget.

UW Small Grants Scheme

- 5.10 The University has a small pot of money to support research students who are not in receipt of a studentship. This 'Small Grants Scheme' cannot be used to cover the cost of fees but can be used, as in section 5.1 above.
- 5.11 Currently you can apply for up to a maximum of £300 per annum if you are a registered student (RDB1 approved). The GRS will only approve a claim from a non-registered student in exceptional circumstances, for example, to pay for attendance at an international conference which only runs once every 5 years. Since there is a limited amount of money available in this scheme, we cannot guarantee that any or all expenses applied for will be covered. You need to make your case in the application form.
- 5.12 The application form can be found online (see weblinks). It must be signed off by your DoS before being submitted to the GRS.

External funding for research expenses

- 5.13 There are a number of external funders who will provide funding for research expenses, in particular for travel to and from conferences or for travel associated explicitly with your research.
- 5.14 Many such funders tend to be subject associations or learned societies focused on a very specific subject area and it is only in this specific area that they will fund research. In some cases, you can only apply for such funding if you are a member of the association or society.
- 5.15 There are too many such funders to list them here. Your DoS may be able to guide you to associations or societies who will support you. Alternatively, you might make use of the research funding database Research Professional (www.researchprofessional.com) which allows you to search for funding of all kinds by specific subject area. Contact the GRS for assistance in using the database. You might also make use

of the Alternative Guide to Postgraduate Funding which can be accessed through the GRS website (see weblinks).

Section 6: Complaints, Appeals and Feedback

- 6.1 This section firstly provides some information on complaints and appeals. Research students are subject to the same standard regulations and procedures for complaints, appeals and disciplinary matters as all other students at the UoW. Exceptions are highlighted below. More details on complaints and appeals can be found on the Registry Services website (see weblinks).

What to do if you wish to complain

- 6.2 If you feel that you have cause for complaint during the course of your research degree programme, the first point of contact should always be your DoS. In this way it is normally possible for concerns to be resolved informally and rapidly.
- 6.3 Should you feel that it is inappropriate to talk to your DoS or if the matter is unresolved after discussion, then you should bring the matter to the attention of your Institute Research Coordinator who in turn may refer you to the Chair of the Research Degrees Board.
- 6.4 If the problem cannot be resolved to your satisfaction you should consult the Graduate Research School Manager about the formal University Grievance Procedures.

Appeals

- 6.5 If Research Degrees Board (RDB) makes a recommendation that results in the termination of your research degree course then you have the right to appeal within 5 working days. For further advice, for example, concerning the grounds for appeal, you should consult the Graduate Research School Manager.
- 6.6 Candidates for MPhil and PhD are subject to the same regulations and procedures as other students at the UoW.
- 6.7 Alleged inadequacy of supervision, or of other arrangements during the period of registration are not admissible grounds for a candidate requesting a review of an assessment decision. Complaints regarding inadequacy of supervision, where these cannot be resolved in conjunction with the DoS should be referred to the Chair of RDB, and should be raised at the time of the problem.

Feedback

- 6.8 There are a number of more or less formal ways in which you may express your views of your experience as a research student to the

University. Remember, however, that you can discuss your experience with the supervisory team and with the GRS manager at any time.

Student Representatives

- 6.9 Each year a FT and a PT research student representative is elected. You yourself may stand for this position: you will be contacted when elections are coming up.
- 6.10 The reps sit on the Graduate Research School Steering Group and are expected to attend the Research Student Forum and induction sessions for new research degree students.
- 6.11 'Student Business' is a standing item on the GRS Steering Group. The reps will therefore contact the research student body in advance of the Group meeting to ask if there are any issues that should be raised. Please note that the Group is not the right forum to raise issues of a specific, personal nature but rather issues that might affect part or all of the research student body.

Research Student Forum

- 6.12 The Research Student Forum meets once a semester, normally in the early evening, and is led by the Chair of Research Degrees Board. All students are welcome and times and dates are circulated to you well in advance and can also be found on the website and the BLOG.
- 6.13 The Forum has a number of purposes. It is a social occasion; a chance to meet your fellow students. It is an opportunity for us to pass on to you important developments in the University's research policy. It is also an opportunity for you to raise issues that you think are important.

Meetings with FT Research Students

- 6.14 The GRS Manager holds semi-formal meetings with the FT research students at least once a semester. These meetings are another opportunity to address issues that are affecting the FT research student community.

Course Evaluation

- 6.15 At the end of all Research Training Programme modules, seminars and workshops, you are given the opportunity to complete a course evaluation form.

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

- 6.16 In 2007, 2008 and 2009 the University participated in a national survey on the research student experience. The survey allowed our students to comment on and to assess all aspects of their research degree.

- 6.17 The results of these surveys, including an overview are published on the GRS website and have been fed back to the University's Research Degrees Board, to the Institutes and to the GRS Steering Group which have acted/are acting on the conclusions drawn from the survey.
- 6.18 The survey will not run nationally in 2010 to avoid survey fatigue. The University will, however, continue to canvas students for their opinion on their experience.

Exit Questionnaires and Interviews

- 6.19 All students who have completed their research degree are asked to complete an exit questionnaire which will solicit their opinion on their experience and will seek suggestions as to how, if at all, it might have been improved.
- 6.20 Leaving students are also given the opportunity to have an exit interview with an appropriate member of staff should they wish to comment more directly on their experience.
- 6.21 In some cases, the supervisory team are asked to participate in a Supervisory Team de-brief following withdrawal of a student. De-briefing provides an opportunity for the individuals involved in the supervision process to learn, develop and come to terms with situations where a student departs before completing their research. It is particularly useful where the student has completed a substantial part of the research ($\geq 40\%$) before leaving.

Contacts

Prof. Ros Foskett	Academic Head of the Graduate Research School	01905-855124 r.foskett@worc.ac.uk
Mr John Ryan	Registrar and Secretary	01905-855013 j.ryan@worc.ac.uk
Prof. Geoffrey Elliott	Chair of the Research Degrees Board	01905-855145 g.elliott@worc.ac.uk
Mrs Helen Tabinor	Graduate Research School Manager	01905-855012 h.tabinor@worck.ac.uk
Dr John-Paul Wilson	Director of Research Development	01905-542196 j.wilson@worc.ac.uk
Miss Veronica Young	Research Degrees Administrator	01905-855214 v.young@worc.ac.uk
Ms Sarah O'Grady	GRS Administrator	01905-542182 s.ogradey@worc.ac.uk
Anna Stenning	FT Research Student Representative	a.stenning@worc.ac.uk
David Flanagan	PT Research Student Representative	d.flanagan@worc.ac.uk
Dr Rachel Johnson	Research Support Officer, ILS	01905-542093 r.johnson@worc.ac.uk

Research Coordinators

Dr Claire Cochrane	Humanities and Creative Arts	01905-855452 c.cochrane@worc.ac.uk
Dr Jan Francis-Smythe	Business School	01905-855242 j.francis-smythe@worc.ac.uk
Dr Stephen Parker	Education	01905-542165 s.parker@worc.ac.uk
Louise Martin	Sport and Exercise Science	01905-855270 l.martin@worc.ac.uk
Dr Chris Brown	Science and Environment	01905-8552185 chris.brown@worc.ac.uk
Prof Dominic Upton	Health, Social Care & Psychology	01905-855517 d.upton@worc.ac.uk

Internal Contact number:

The last four digits of the telephone number are also the internal telephone extension numbers.

Email Contact:

You can contact staff in the Graduate Research School on the following email address: research@worc.ac.uk.

Weblinks

GRS Website (internal):

<http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/index.htm>

Registry Services Website (internal):

<http://www2.worc.ac.uk/registry/>

Research Degree Regulatory Framework:

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/649.htm>

Postgraduate Regulatory Framework:

<http://www2.worc.ac.uk/registry/index.php?option=displaypage&Itemid=100&op=page&SubMenu>

Student Handbook:

<http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/666.htm>

Research Training Programme Course Handbook:

<http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/776.htm>

RDB Forms:

<http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/677.htm>

Progress File:

<http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/709.htm>

Record of Meeting Form:

<http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/679.htm>

Small Grants Form:

<http://www.worc.ac.uk/graduateschool/680.htm>

Alternative Guide to PG Funding (contact Sarah O'Grady for password):

<http://release.worc.ac.uk/watch.php?r=1V0WQQIQ&s=Y>

Appendix 1: Format of the Final Amended Thesis

This information sheet is intended to answer the most frequently asked questions received about the physical layout of a thesis.

Please be aware that your thesis must be lodged with the Graduate Research School **PRIOR** to an award being recommended. This means that when the final version of your thesis has been approved and signed off by your examiners, you **MUST** submit the required number of hard and electronic copies to the Graduate Research School before your award can be granted.

What should the text look like?

The Regulations require that:

- ❖ Your work should be presented either in typescript or print.
- ❖ The text may be printed on one or both sides of the paper. If you print on both sides of the paper it should be of sufficient density that the text on one side does not show through to the other.
- ❖ The text should be in one-and-a-half or double line spacing, except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.
- ❖ Pages should be numbered consecutively through the main text, including photographs and diagrams which form whole pages.

We recommend the following:

- ❖ A 3cm margin is used for all margins, which gives ample space for binding, etc.
- ❖ Any clear and readable font is acceptable, i.e. Arial or Times New Roman.
- ❖ Don't use a font smaller than 10 point for the main text.

What is a 'hardbound' copy?

For a 'hardbound' copy, the outside covers should be made of a rigid board and is a permanent form of binding – the pages are glued or stitched into the cover and cannot be removed.

What is a 'softbound' copy?

A softbound copy is a photocopy of the thesis with a plastic or card cover. It may be fastback, spiral or comb bound.

Requirements

There aren't many rules and regulations governing the 'look' of the thesis, but the following are the requirements:

- ❖ The front cover of your thesis should have the title of the work in at least 24-point type.
- ❖ The initials and surname of the author, the academic award for which submitted and the year of submission must also be shown.
- ❖ On the spine, there should be the name of the author, the award and the year of submission (see over for example)

Colour of hard binding

University of Worcester require dark blue covers and Cardiff green.

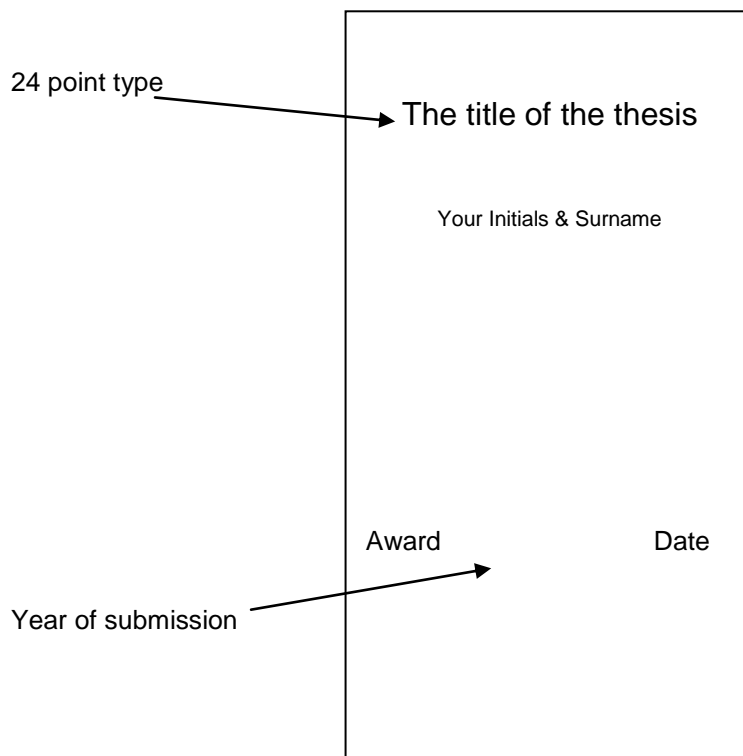
How to get the thesis bound

Binding is arranged by the Graduate Research School, and the student is invoiced for the costs incurred.

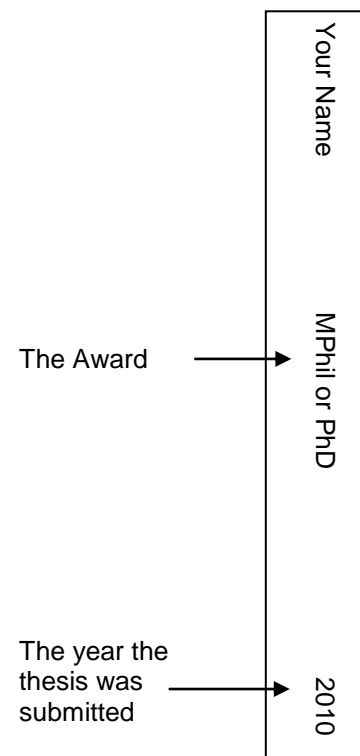
Appendices, etc

If you wish to submit Appendices as a separate volume, it is acceptable. Just make sure the covers comply with the regulations above, and specify volume numbers on each copy (i.e. Vol I, Vol II).

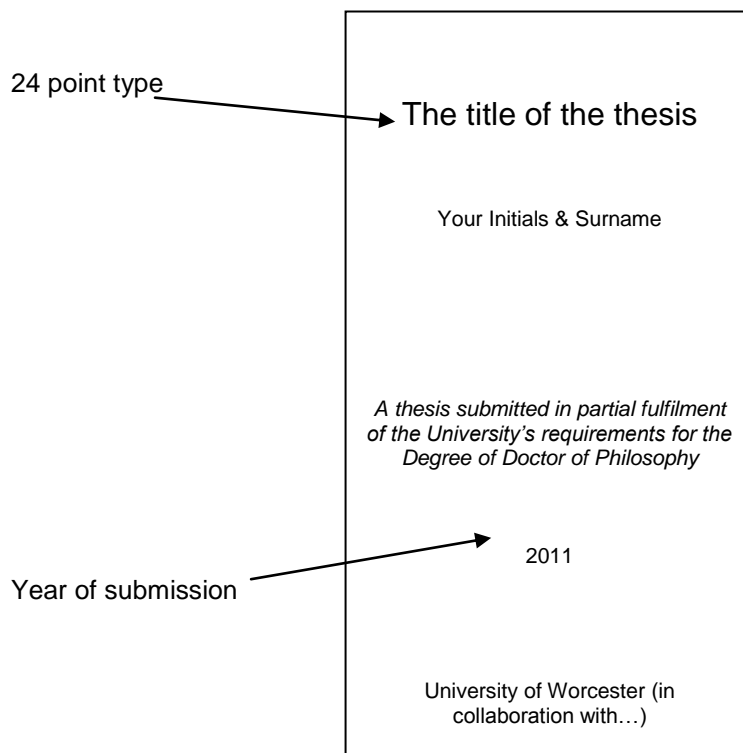
An example of the front cover for a thesis:



An example of a Spine:



An example of the first page of the thesis:



Title of thesis

It is absolutely essential that the title of the thesis matches the title on the RDB3 form (examination arrangements).

Appendix 2: Rates of Remuneration for Externals

Role	Payment (2011/12)
External Examiner	£165 + expenses ¹
External Expert (RDB1)	£75
External Expert (RDB2/RDB2a)	£75
External Supervisor (FT)	£315 ²
External Supervisor (PT)	£215 ²
Advisor	No fee

1. Expenses to include travel plus accommodation plus subsistence
2. To be paid annually subject to the submission of a brief report detailing contact with the student