

Research Degrees Regulatory Framework
(Applicable to all research degree postgraduates admitted since September 2010 onwards)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All Research Degree awards offered by the University are subject to the regulations as set out in this document unless, for reasons of professional or statutory body requirements or similar a variation or exception has been agreed by Academic Board. Such variations will be identified in a Programme Specification.
- 1.2 These Regulations apply to the award of research degrees other than by the submission of portfolio work, including Professional Doctorates and Masters Degrees by Research (MRes) where the research component includes a requirement on the student to produce original work, and is larger than the taught component in terms of student effort. All Regulations apply to all students unless specified.
- 1.3 The regulations concerning all taught postgraduate awards are set out in the Postgraduate Regulatory Framework. Where a programme of research includes taught modules, the reader is referred to this document.

2. Terminology

- 2.1 As a means of ensuring that the regulations are consistently interpreted and applied, the following definitions have been used:

Assessment: The process by which the University is able to confirm that a student has achieved the learning outcomes for a module or for the programme of research. Assessment is work, such as an oral examination, a thesis, a project proposal or a presentation; there may be one or more items of work which make up the components of assessment. The evaluation of the work (which may take the form of a mark or may take the form of 'pass', 'resubmit' or 'fail') contributes to the appraisal of the student's performance and the determination of his or her entitlement to proceed with the programme or eligibility for an award.

Assessment Item: a piece of assessed work, e.g. an essay, project, assignment or examination.

Award: A formal qualification awarded by the University to an individual student e.g. MPhil which may be either the qualification to which a student is registered or an intermediate award.

Award Title: the name of the programme which is appended to an Award e.g. PhD in 'Award Title' as it is to appear on an award certificate and transcript.

Intermediate Award: an award which can be obtained *en route* to the final Award such as a Postgraduate Certificate *en route* to a PhD. Intermediate Awards are not awarded to a student who is continuing towards a research award.

Level: a description of the research education module credit level i.e. 8 which is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity and depth of learning and of learner autonomy

A student may be described as studying at Level 8.

Level	Description	Framework for Research Education Qualification Levels (FHEQ)	National Qualification Framework (NQF)
Level 8	Doctoral Level	D	8

Mark: the percentage used to indicate the standard reached by a student in the item(s) of assessment and the overall module assessment.

Maximum period of registration: the maximum permitted period of time to complete a programme specified at the time of admission.

Mitigation: exceptional reasons outside of a student's control that either prevented a student from taking an item of assessment or affected his or her performance in an assessment.

Mode of Study: There are two modes of study, full-time and part-time. Full-time students are expected to engage in at least 37.5 hours per week of study. Part time students may work flexibly but should aim for an average of 22.5 hours per week across the year.

Module: a discrete unit of study with approved learning outcomes and assessment scheme. Modules are assigned to one or more subject areas. Each module will specify a level that indicates the intellectual standard required to successfully complete the module. Most modules are of a standard credit value although some modules (e.g. a Dissertation) may have a different credit value. A module will normally be taught and assessed over one semester. Modules may be designated 'open' or 'closed'.

Programme of Research: The approved programme followed by an individual student; it may be identical to the programme or it may be specific to the student and satisfies the requirements set out in these regulations.

Programme Specification: A document that specifies (amongst other matters) admission requirements for the programme, the structure of the programme, any particular conditions to be met (e.g. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body requirements) for conferment of the relevant named award.

Student: Any person admitted or enrolled by the University of Worcester to follow a programme of research, or any sabbatical officer of the Students' Union. All students remain subject to the common and statute law, and any rights or constraints conferred or imposed by these regulations are in addition to, and do not alter in any way, their right and duties as citizens.

Thesis: a substantial independent piece of work following systematic and detailed investigation into a discrete area of research which will primarily be in written form although it may include material in other than written form.

Transcript: A formal and verifiable record issued by the University of what a student has studied and achieved.

Viva Voce: An oral examination.

3. Programme of Research

- 3.1 A programme of research may be undertaken in any field of study within which the University has supervisory expertise, provided that it is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment in the form of a thesis.
- 3.2 A general programme of research for each subject area is set out in a programme specification, approved under the University's quality assurance procedures.
- 3.3 Each programme of research includes formally assessed related studies modules and the student will not be permitted to proceed to the next stage of his or her research degree until the examiners are satisfied with the student's performance in all these modules.
- 3.4 Each student must propose his or her own specific programme of research to be approved by the University's Research Degrees Board before he or she may proceed.
- 3.5 Each proposed programme must be considered on its academic merits and without any reference to the concerns or interests of any funding body which might be associated with the project. In particular, satisfying the terms on which a project is funded must not detract from the fulfilment of the objectives and requirements of the student's work leading to the submission for a research degree.
- 3.6 Each student will normally be required to defend his or her thesis at a *viva voce*.
- 3.7 The general arrangements for a student registered on a programme of research must ensure the student adheres to the relevant codes of practice and be such as to enable the student to conduct and complete the programme in a safe and efficient manner.

4. The Admission of Students

- 4.1 The admission of an individual applicant is at the discretion of the authorized admissions tutor(s), subject to:
 - the University's policy on admissions;
 - a reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to achieve the standard required for the award;
 - fulfilling the entry requirements as stated.
- 4.2 Applicants for a research degree may apply at any time of the year but will only be permitted to commence their studies at one of the entry points as advertised by the Graduate Research School.
- 4.3 All applicants for a research degree must apply to the University using the appropriate application form.

- 4.4 The normal requirements to enable an applicant to be considered for admission onto a University research degrees programme of study are as follows:
- a) MRes/MPhil
 - i) First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree or an approved equivalent award; *or*
 - ii) The applicant has appropriate research or professional experience which has resulted in appropriate evidence of achievement.
 - b) Doctorate (MPhil/PhD)
 - i) A Postgraduate Masters Degree in a discipline which is appropriate to the proposed programme of study; *or*
 - ii) First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree or equivalent award in an appropriate discipline; *or*
 - iii) The applicant has appropriate research or professional experience at postgraduate level which has resulted in published work, written reports or other appropriate evidence of achievement.
- 4.5 Any applicants whose first language is not English or who has not been educated wholly or mainly in the medium of English must reach a minimum IELTS score of 7.0 with a score of 7 in writing (or equivalent in an approved test in English) or otherwise demonstrate that they have an adequate command of both written and spoken English before starting a programme. If an applicant does not meet this standard they may be required to attend a pre-sessional English course or any other requirement laid down by the University.
- 4.6 An applicant holding qualifications other than those specified above shall be considered on his or her merits. Evidence of ability and background knowledge must be provided in relation to the proposed topic and research degree.
- 4.7 All applicants must produce at or before initial Registration evidence of having satisfied the relevant entry requirements.
- 4.8 The university reserves the right to refuse admission (or cancel Registration) to any applicant (or student) who has misrepresented information in their application.
- 4.9 There is no appeal against admissions decisions. Applicants who are dissatisfied with any aspect of the admissions process may use the Complaints Procedure detailed in the prospectus.
- 4.10 All successful applicants are provided with an individual letter of acceptance and a contract which sets out the terms of the offer. Students with special needs are referred to the University's student support services. The terms of the contract are binding on the institution and, upon acceptance, on the student.

5. The Registration of Students

- 5.1 Each student, other than sabbatical officers of the Students' Union, must register at the start of his or her programme and will undertake to comply with the regulations of the University. Students must re-register at the start of each academic year irrespective of when they started the programme. The registration of a student who fails to re-register is deemed to have lapsed.
- 5.2 Students are required to pay fees in accordance with the prevailing fees policy and financial regulations approved by the Board of Governors. No student will be entitled to register or re-register unless the prescribed fees have been paid or satisfactory arrangements made to ensure that they will be paid.
- 5.3 The University reserves the right to decline acceptance of, or make a charge for, late or incorrect registration of awards, programmes and modules.
- 5.4 Where a student has not completed the formal process of registration but, by their actions, are deemed to be undertaking activities compatible with the status of a registered student, the Head of Registry Services may formally register a student and arrange for the relevant tuition fee to be charged. Such activities would include attendance at classes, submission of work and regular use of their ID card to gain access to the University etc.
- 5.5 Students may not simultaneously register for more than one full-time award.
- 5.6 The minimum and maximum periods of registration are as follows:

Award	Mode of Study	Minimum	Maximum
Masters by Research (MRes)	Full-time	12 months	24 months
	Part-time	18 months	36 months
MPhil	Full-time	18 Months	36 Months
	Part-time	30 Months	48 Months
MPhil/PhD	Full-time	24 months	60 months
	Part-time	36 months	72 months
PhD	Full-time	24 months	60 months
	Part-time	36 months	72 months
Professional Doctorate	Full-time	24 months	60 months
	Part-time	36 months	72 months

- 5.7 Any reduction in a period of registration from the minimum specified may only be approved by the Research Degrees Board when it is apparent that the programme of study is proceeding exceptionally well on the recommendation of the supervisory team. Any request for such an exceptional shortening of the duration of registration must be submitted at the same time as the request for approval for the proposed examination arrangements.
- 5.8 Similarly, any extension of duration of registration from the maximum may only be granted when the maximum registration period has been exceeded and when reasonable and exceptional grounds (prorogued illness, compassionate grounds etc)

have been provided. A request for an extension must always be accompanied by a written recommendation by the supervisory team and if possible, supporting documentary evidence.

- 5.9 The Research Degrees Board will normally only approve one extension request for a maximum period of 12 consecutive months. The Research Degrees Board will not approve an extension if a suspension has already been previously agreed based on the same supporting evidence.
- 5.10 Students may apply to the Research Degrees Board to suspend their registration, for reasons of ill-health or other circumstances, for a maximum period of twelve consecutive months under the procedure notified. Retrospective suspensions are not normally permitted. The period of suspension shall be included within the maximum registration period for the award. A student returning from a period of suspension of registration shall be subject to the regulations that apply at the time of re-registration.
- 5.11 Where a student has previously undertaken research as a student registered for a research degree of a university or other institution of research education, or of an appropriate organisation, it may be appropriate to approve a duration of registration which is less than the specified minimum to take account of all or part of the time already spent by the individual on such research. In no circumstances shall the overall duration of registration be less than 6 months full-time or 12 months part-time including any retrospective registration approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- 5.12 Any change in the duration of registration must be approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- 5.13 In the case of international students, the duration of registration agreed at the time when a visa was sought must be adhered to and, in those exceptional circumstances where an extension to the duration of study is required, a written request for this must be submitted to the Head of Registry Services for consideration prior to the period of extension being agreed with the student.
- 5.14 A research degree student, whether full-time or part-time is permitted to register as a writing-up student for one year. It is expected that this will be the final year of the research degree programme
- 5.15 Research degree students may register on a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time students are required to devote at least 37.5 hours per week on average to the programme of study over a normal 45 week academic year. Part-time students are required to study flexibly and efficiently in a pattern agreed with the supervisory team. Any change in the mode of attendance from part-time to full-time or vice versa must be notified by the student to the Graduate Research School. All changes in mode of attendance must be approved by the relevant Institute Research Subcommittee.
- 5.16 Once registration is completed, a student will continue to be registered with the University until the end of the programme or until re-registration is required,

whichever is the earlier, unless a student shall cease to be a registered student due to:

- a) exclusion from the programme on academic grounds;
- b) exclusion from the programme for non-compliance with the prevailing fees policy;
- d) exclusion from the programme on medical grounds;
- e) exclusion from the programme due to persistent non-attendance;
- f) expulsion from the University following a recognised disciplinary procedure;
- g) the voluntary withdrawal from the programme

5.17 Students must notify the Graduate Research School of any changes occurring during the academic year in the information supplied at registration.

6. Supervisory arrangements

6.1 All supervisors must be on the Approved Register of Research Degree Supervisors and will be monitored by the Research Degrees Board to ensure that they have the experience and capacity to undertake the supervision of the assigned student.

6.2 Unless an individual has been given a designated research role, they will not be expected to supervise more than six research degree student Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) concurrently, and to be Director of Studies for no more than three student FTEs at any one time. For the purposes of supervision, a part time research degree student should be regarded as 0.5 FTE.

6.3 Members of the supervisory team should notify the Chair of the Research Degrees Board if it is felt that the student's programme of research is being put at risk as a result of the volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual supervisors.

6.4 Supervisors will have their assigned workload monitored by their line manager as part of the annual review process but it is expected that a part time student will receive a minimum of 20 hrs direct contact/year with their internal supervisor(s) and a full time student 30 hrs direct contact/year.

6.5 Any individual currently appointed as an Emeritus Professor, Honorary Professor, Visiting Professor or Honorary Research Fellow may undertake a supervisory role as set out in these Regulations subject to approval by the Research Degrees Board.

Masters by Research (MRes)

6.6 Each student registered for an MRes must have up to two identified supervisors.

6.7 Where there is more than one supervisor one of them must be identified as the Director of Studies with the specific responsibility to supervise the student regularly and frequently and to ensure that the student receives proper guidance and support.

6.8 The supervisor(s) must have experience in research in the area covered by the research degree.

MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorates

- 6.9 Each registered research degree student must have at least two, but not more than three, supervisors.
- 6.10 The supervisor(s) must have experience in research in the area covered by the research degree.
- 6.11 It is the expectation that the supervisory team should have collective experience of supervising at least three research degree students to successful completion. When the supervisory team has less than the required number of completions, or the Director of Studies has no completions, a case must be made to the Research Degrees Board, who may appoint a mentor (from the Approved Register of Research Degree Mentors) to work alongside the team.
- 6.12 In the case of a person registered for a Doctorate, one of the supervisors must have successfully supervised to Doctorate level.
- 6.13 One of the supervisors must be appointed as the Director of Studies with the specific responsibility to supervise the student regularly and frequently and to ensure that the student receives proper guidance and support. Since they are responsible for overseeing the completion of any administrative matters, the Director of Studies must be located at the University of Worcester.
- 6.14 In addition to the supervisors, if appropriate, an adviser or advisers may be identified to contribute specialist knowledge and to provide a link with an external organisation.
- 6.15 Anyone who is registered for a research degree, either by the University or by another institution, shall be ineligible to act as the Director of Studies for a research degree student, but, in certain circumstances and subject to the prior approval of the University, may be appointed to act as a second supervisor or as an adviser.

7. Approval of the Research Proposal

- 7.1 To progress with a research degree the student must have their research proposal approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- 7.2 Prior to submission to the Research Degrees Board, the research proposal must have been approved by the Institute, or Institutes in which the student's research is based and at least one external expert.
- 7.3 It is expected that the research proposal will be submitted to the Graduate Research School six months after initial registration on the programme for a FT student and 9 months for a PT student. It is expected that the proposal will have been approved by the Research Degrees Board twelve months after initial registration on the programme for a FT students and after 18 months for a part time student. Research Degrees Board will receive regular progress reports of all research degree students and failure to meet these deadlines may result in a decision to withdraw a student from their programme of research.

Work to be undertaken abroad

- 7.4 When a self-funded research degree applicant proposes to work outside the United Kingdom, for whatever period, the following conditions must be satisfied:
- a) the student will establish and maintain close links with the University;
 - b) there will be satisfactory evidence about the environment in terms of both the supervisory arrangements and the available facilities in which the research is to be undertaken abroad;
 - c) the arrangements proposed for supervision will specify that frequent and substantial contact will be made between the student and the supervisor(s) based in the United Kingdom, including adequate face-to-face contact;
 - d) the student will be expected to spend a minimum of three weeks/year undertaking the programme of research in the University. These three weeks must take into account the requirement to attend compulsory research training at the University. A longer period of time may be appropriate depending on the particular programme, the supervision and the facilities available abroad, and on the University.

Group-based research

- 7.5 If the proposed programme of research is to be part of a group project or activity, the programme of research to be undertaken by the applicant for registration must, in itself, be distinguishable for the purposes of assessment and be appropriate for the category of registration and level of award being sought.

8. Transfer from MPhil/PhD to PhD

- 8.1 All students registered for MPhil/PhD and who wish to transfer to PhD undertake an upgrade interview. That interview 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.
- 8.2 At the interview the student will be asked to demonstrate that their work is at PhD level, based on a presentation, submission of a sample of written work, for example a chapter of the thesis, and a *viva voce*.
- 8.3 The interview panel will include all members of the supervisory team (including external supervisors) and will be chaired by an experienced member of staff, usually from within the institute but external to the supervisory team. The chair must have at least 2 successful research degree completions. Guidelines for the format of the interview are outlined in the Research Student Handbook.
- 8.4 A person who is registered for MPhil only may exceptionally be allowed to apply for a transfer of registration to PhD, subject to the same requirements for transfer as above and to there being clear arguments to support an exceptional transfer of registration.

- 8.5 A person who is registered for an MPhil/PhD and who is unable to complete the approved programme of research, may at any time prior to the submission of the thesis for examination apply for the registration to be changed to that for MPhil.
- 8.6 Transfers into or from a Masters degree by Research (MRes) shall be treated as new applications to the proposed new degree.

9. Submission of the Thesis

- 9.1 The thesis must be submitted primarily in English and it shall be the responsibility of each student to ensure that the thesis is submitted for examination, in the form prescribed by the University before the expiry of the period of registration, taking account of any extension(s) or suspensions of registration that have been approved.
- 9.2 Although the University would not recommend that a student submit the thesis for examination against the advice of the supervisors, the submission of the thesis for examination is at the sole discretion of the student.
- 9.3 A student must not assume that the supervisors' agreement to the thesis being submitted, or any decision relating to progression made by an Assessment Board, guarantees a successful outcome of the examination or the recommendation for the award of the degree being sought.
- 9.4 The student shall not be precluded from incorporating in a thesis submitted for examination, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is made clear in a formal declaration and in the thesis which work has been so incorporated. This may occur, if, for example, a student has completed an MRes Degree and chooses to progress the same project to PhD level. In these circumstances the student would not be permitted to replicate the work but would be expected to show how the earlier work has been progressed.
- 9.7 Where the final submission includes creative work, the submission must be accompanied by a permanent record of any such creative work and, where practicable, these should be bound into the thesis. The creative work must be clearly presented in relation to the argument of the written thesis and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context.
- 9.8 Where the principal focus of the programme of research includes the preparation of a scholarly edition of a text, texts or other artefacts, the completed submission must include a copy of the edited text(s) or collection of artefacts, appropriate textual and explanatory annotations, and a substantial introduction and critical commentary setting the text(s) or artefacts in the relevant historical, theoretical, critical context or design.

Thesis Length

- 9.9 The text of a thesis in science or art and design, excluding ancillary data, must not exceed:
- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---------------|
| a) | for the Masters by Research: | 15,000 words; |
| b) | for the Degree of MPhil: | 20,000 words; |

- c) for a Doctorate: 40,000 words.
- 9.10 The text of a thesis in the humanities or social sciences (including business and management studies), excluding ancillary data, must not exceed:
- a) for the Masters by Research: 30,000 words;
 - b) for the Degree of MPhil: 40,000 words;
 - c) for a Doctorate: 80,000 words.

Artefacts and Creative Work-

- 9.11 Where it is not practical to replicate creative work, it must be displayed appropriately, catalogued and labelled for the examiners to view prior to the *viva voce* examination.
- 9.12 Small artefacts which cannot be bound should be presented in an appropriate manner with a label clearly indicating the reference number.
- 9.13 Large artefacts which cannot be moved should be photographed and the photograph should have a reference number and location of the original artefact firmly attached.
- 9.14 Performances or other dynamically creative works should be captured in audio and video on CD, DVD, appropriate video tape format or other similar appropriate medium.
- 9.15 Artefacts which are created by a group should be accompanied by the following:
- i) a brief summary from the student of the work and the nature of his/her involvement;
 - ii) a clear statement from the other members of the group about the student's contribution to the work presented on the letterhead of the group's host institution.
- 9.16 A summary sheet listing all artefacts in reference number order should be included in the thesis.

Copies

- 9.17 The student is required to submit soft cover securely bound copies of the documentation to be examined for each examiner.
- 9.18 The student is required to submit an identical electronic copy of the thesis and associated documentation in PDF format (one single file) to the Graduate Research School for possible submission to the University's plagiarism detection service.
- 9.19 It is the student's responsibility to ensure the reprographic accuracy of each copy of the documentation and any artefacts submitted.
- 9.20 Following the conferment of an award, an additional hard copy of the final thesis will be required for the University Library and an electronic copy for the University Research Repository and the British Library. If there are issues of confidentiality or intellectual property relating to another party, please contact the Graduate Research School.

10. Assessment of a Research Degree Thesis

Examination Arrangements

- 10.1 The student's Director of Studies must submit details of a proposed Examination Panel which will assess the thesis and examine the student through a *viva voce*. These details must be submitted a minimum of three months in advance of the proposed date of the *viva voce*.
- 10.2 The Research Degrees Board will be required to approve the Examination Panel before the Graduate Research School co-ordinates the examination according to the procedures notified at the time.
- 10.3 The Examination Panel must be made up of at least two independent examiners, of whom at least one must be an External Examiner.
- 10.4 When the student is a current member of the University's staff (or has been a member of staff in the 12 months prior to the *viva voce* examination), two External Examiners must be appointed.
- 10.5 Any External Examiner must be wholly independent of the student, the University, and any collaborating establishment. The same person must not be appointed as an External Examiner so frequently that familiarity with the University might prejudice the giving of independent judgement. In this respect, the same external examiner must not be appointed more regularly than once every two years.
- 10.6 Each examiner must be experienced in research in the general subject area of a particular student's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.
- 10.7 The collective experience of the examining team for an MRes should include a minimum of three MRes students examined at an external institution, in the UK.
- 10.8 The collective experience of the examining team for MPhil and PhD students should include a minimum of three MPhil or Doctorate students examined, in the UK. For the assessment of a student for PhD, at least one examiner must have experience of examining at PhD level.
- 10.9 Each examiner must not have acted previously as the student's supervisor or adviser. The Research Degrees Board may in some circumstances approve as Internal or External Examiner a person who has acted as one of the external experts who reviewed the Approval of the Research Proposal documentation.
- 10.10 Any person appointed as External Examiner must not have been employed by the University during the previous three years.
- 10.11 No person who is registered for a research degree, whether of the University or of any other university or institution of research education, may be appointed to act as an examiner.

- 10.12 Any individual currently appointed as an Emeritus Professor, Honorary Professor, Visiting Professor or Honorary Research Fellow may undertake an internal examining and/or Independent Chairing role under these Regulations subject to approval from the Research Degrees Board.
- 10.13 A student must take no part in the arrangement of the examination and have no formal contact with the Examiner(s) between the time of their being appointed and the holding of the *viva voce* examination, or between that and any subsequent *viva voce* examination in the case of there being a reassessment of the thesis.
- 10.14 Each examiner is required to read and assess the thesis and to submit an independent preliminary report to the University before any *viva voce* or alternative form of examination is held. As part of that assessment, each examiner must consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the University's requirements for the degree concerned and, where possible, make an appropriate provisional decision, subject to the outcome of the *viva voce* examination.
- 10.15 Examiners are not permitted to discuss the thesis with the supervisory team between receipt of the examiner's preliminary reports within the University and the commencement of the *viva voce* examination.
- 10.16 Any failure to comply with any of the procedures established by the University for the examination process may lead to a particular assessment being declared null and void and to the appointment of new examiners by the University.

The *Viva Voce*

- 10.17 The appointment of an Independent Chair must be made for all *viva voce* covered by these Regulations.
- 10.18 The Independent Chair must be wholly independent of the student and will be nominated by the Research Degrees Board.
- 10.19 The Independent Chair is nominated by the Research Degrees Board and must have successfully supervised at least two research degrees to successful completion. The Chair is not required to read the thesis or complete a preliminary report form and should be seen as totally independent throughout the process.
- 10.20 Prior to the *viva voce* the Chair is expected to brief the examiners on the University's procedures and facilitate the development of an agenda if requested by the examiners.
- 10.21 During the *viva voce* of the student, the Independent Chair ensures that the examination process takes place in a fair and transparent manner, guides the examiners and student through the *viva voce* and acts as an arbitrator throughout.
- 10.22 Following the *viva voce* of the student, the Independent Chair assists in the completion of documents confirming the outcome of the examination.
- 10.23 Any supervisor may be allowed, subject to the consent of the student, to attend the *viva voce*. Participation in the discussion, however, is not permitted. The supervisor

is required to withdraw prior to the deliberation of the Examination Panel on the outcome of the *viva voce*.

Outcome of the Examination

- 10.25 Following the *viva voce*, the Examination Panel must, when all examiners are in agreement, present a joint report and decision to the University relating to the award of the research degree being sought. The preliminary reports and joint decision of the examiners must together provide enough detailed observation on the scope and quality of the work undertaken to enable the University to be satisfied that the criteria for the award of the research degree have been met. When the examiners are not in agreement, they must submit separate reports and recommendations to the University.
- 10.26 The Examination Panel shall only be permitted to recommend to the University the following:
- a) that the student be awarded the degree for which registered;
 - b) that the student be awarded the degree for which registered, subject to amendments being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiners, the timeframe of which will be decided by the examiners but shall not exceed 6 months;
 - c) that the student be permitted to resubmit for the degree concerned and to be reassessed, with or without a *viva voce* within 12 months;
 - d) that the student be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be reassessed;
 - e) in the case of an assessment for a Doctorate, that the student be awarded the Degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners;
- 10.27 The Examination Panel may require that a particular student be subject to a further assessment in addition to the *viva voce*. Where such an additional assessment is arranged following a *viva voce*, it must be held within two calendar months of the *viva voce* and it must be deemed to be part of the student's first assessment.
- 10.28 When it is decided, on the recommendation of the Examination Panel, that the degree be not awarded and that no reassessment be permitted, the examiners must be required to prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and give the reasons for their decision to be forwarded to the student by the University.
- 10.29 It is expected that possible disagreements between the examiners will be apparent when preliminary reports are received from the Examination Panel and will, at this point, negate the appointment of an experienced Independent Chair. The Independent Chair will, where possible, facilitate a decision of the examiners on the day of the viva.
- 10.30 Where a decision can not be reached, a decision about the award will be passed to the appropriate assessment board; the Research Degrees Board, who will make a decision on how to proceed. This may be to accept a majority recommendation provided that majority recommendation has been supported by at least one External Examiner or require the appointment of an additional External Examiner in accordance with the procedures approved for the appointment of examiners.

11. Re-assessment of a Research Degree Thesis

- 11.1 Only one opportunity for reassessment of the thesis shall be allowed.
- 11.2 A student must not assume that the supervisors' agreement to the thesis being resubmitted guarantees a successful outcome of the examination or the recommendation for the award of the research degree being sought.
- 11.3 The following forms of reassessment of the thesis shall be permitted:
- a) the thesis only to be reassessed after revision without the holding of a second *viva voce* (and presentation, where specified);
 - b) the thesis to be reassessed after revision followed by the holding of a second *viva voce* (and presentation, where specified);
 - c) a second *viva voce* (and presentation, where specified); after due time, without the need to revise or resubmit the thesis;
- 11.4 When the thesis is to be reassessed after revision (either with or without the holding of a second *viva voce* and presentation, where specified), the Examination Panel shall only be permitted to recommend to the University the following:
- a) that the student be awarded the degree for which registered;
 - b) in the case of a PhD, that the student be awarded the fall back award of MPhil, subject to very minor amendments being made to revise the thesis to MPhil standard to the satisfaction of the examiners;
 - c) that the student be not awarded the degree.

12. Cheating

- 12.1 Cheating is defined by the University as any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment or assisting another student to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment. See [Procedures for investigation of cases of alleged cheating](#).

13. Mitigating circumstances

- 13.1 If a student believes that their performance, absence or non-submission of work in an item of assessed work was due to illness or other valid reasons, the student may submit a claim under procedures approved by Academic Board. See [Procedure for Dealing with claims of Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances](#).

14. Awards

- 14.1 An award of the University will be conferred when the following conditions are satisfied:
- a) the student was a registered student of the University or was registered as a student for the award of the University by a partner organisation at the time of his or her assessment for an award and has paid the appropriate fee to the University;

- b) details of the student's full name, date of birth, programme and the award for which he or she is a student have been recorded by the University;
- c) satisfactory confirmation has been received that the student has completed a programme of research approved as leading to the award being recommended;
- d) the award has been recommended by an Examination Panel convened, constituted and acting under assessment regulations approved by the Academic Board and including the requisite number of approved external examiners for the programme of research and/or the award;
- e) the recommendations of the external examiners has been received in writing.

14.2 The following awards will be available to students who meet the following minimum requirements at the levels shown or at a research level:

Award	Requirement
Masters by Research (MRes)	Minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 including 120 credits from the thesis
MPhil	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 7 and a thesis that meets the requirements at level 8.
PhD	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 7 and a thesis that meets the requirements at Level 8
Professional Doctorate	Minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 and 360 credits at Level 8 including 300 credits from the thesis

14.5 The award recommended by a Board of Examiners normally will be that for which the student is registered, specified in the approved programme specification, for which the student has fulfilled the requirements. There may be occasions where the Board of Examiners recommends the student be awarded a research or lower award from that for which the student is registered.

14.7 Any award of the University may be conferred posthumously and accepted on the student's behalf by a parent, spouse or other appropriate individual. The normal conditions of award must be satisfied.

15. Award titles

15.1 The titles of the award will be:

Award	Award Title
Masters by Research (MRes)	Course Title
MPhil	Thesis Title
PhD	Thesis Title
Professional Doctorate	Course Title

16. Publication of Results

- 16.1 The Graduate Research School is responsible for the publication of official results to students following the meeting of the Boards of Examiners. Publication of taught module results will be made electronically via the secure student portal (SOLE) and will include access to individual module results, the progression decision and the award agreed by Boards of Examiners.
- 16.2 If students do not satisfy some or all of the assessment requirements, the Graduate Research School will communicate the decision of the Board of Examiners.
- 16.3 It is the student's responsibility to ascertain his or her results.
- 16.4 Results will be withheld from students if they have outstanding obligations to the University, or are the subject of an allegation of a breach of discipline as follows:
- a) students who are at the end of the final year of their programme will neither receive their degree transcripts nor be supported by a University reference until the obligation is discharged;
 - b) registration for the next stage of the programme will be denied to a student who has an outstanding obligation to the University at the start of the next stage;
 - c) the award concerning a student who is subject of an allegation of breach of discipline will be withheld until the allegation has been determined and any consequent action discharged.

17. Appeals against the decisions of Board of Examiners

- 17.1 Students will be allowed to appeal against the decisions of Boards of Examiners on the following grounds:-
- a) a material administrative error in the conduct of the assessment process or in the recording, transcription or reporting of assessment results;
 - b) an error by the Board of Examiners who did not act in accordance with the relevant regulations and procedures;
 - c) some other material irregularity relevant to the assessment(s) concerned which has substantially prejudiced the results of the assessment;
- 17.2 Disagreement with the academic judgement of an Examination Board in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work, or in reaching any assessment decision based on the marks, grades or other information relating to a student's performance cannot in itself constitute grounds for appeal.
- 17.3 Appeals must be submitted and considered according to the Procedures approved by Academic Board. See [Student Academic Appeals Procedures](#).

18. Certification and Transcripts

- 18.1 The certificate of an award conferred by the University shall record:

- a) the name of the University and or any partner organisation at which the student has studied, if appropriate, and the name of any other institution sharing responsibility for the student's programme of research;
- b) the student's name;
- c) the date of the award;
- d) the title of the course (if any) as approved by the Academic Board for the purposes of the certificate;
- e) the certificate shall bear the signatures of the Vice Chancellor and of the Registrar and Secretary.

18.2 A transcript shall be issued to all completing students on programmes of study.

18.3 The transcript shall be constructed in accordance with the QAA Guidance.

18.4 The transcript shall be signed on behalf of Academic Board by the Registrar and Secretary or by some other person authorised by the Registrar and Secretary to do so.

19. Withdrawals

19.1 Students may withdraw from their programme of research at any time. In such cases it is the student's responsibility to inform the Graduate Research School of the withdrawal through the procedure notified. A student will not be permitted to re-register for their research degree and a new application for a new research project will have to be made

19.2 A student who withdraws or who fails an Award will be granted any intermediate Award to which their credits entitle them.

19.3 Where the student is required to withdraw by the Board of Examiners for reasons of academic failure the student may not be re-admitted to a further programme of research until a period of at least twenty-four months has elapsed.

19.4 A student who has not formally withdrawn but who fails to respond to contact from either the Graduate Research School or Supervisory team or fails to meet required assessments or deadlines will, after an appropriate period of time agreed by the Research Degrees Board, be withdrawn from their programme of research.

20. Interpretation

20.1 These regulations should be interpreted using the terminology above. In cases of dispute these regulations will be interpreted by the Academic Board.

Version reference: KP/RDRF/1.0

Date document was approved and comes into effect: 1 September 2010

Author of the document: Helen Tabinor/ Kevin Pickess

Date document is due for review: 1 February 2012

Revision History

Committee	Date	Change
Academic Board	14 October 2010	New Regulations Approved