

MASTERS BY RESEARCH

Master of Arts, Master of Science and Master of Law by Research Policy and Procedures Handbook

The [University's Regulations for Study](#) contains the high level regulations for University Degree Programmes.

Research Degree Policy and Procedure Handbooks and other Documents can be found under [current students' regulations](#).

Contents	Page
1 Principles	1
2 Entry requirements	1
3 Admission	2
4 Enrolment and fees	4
5 Registration	5
6 Different types of research degree programmes	7
7 Period of study:	
7.1 Mode of study	10
7.2 Programme length	10
7.3 Temporary suspension of period of registration	11
7.4 Extension of period of registration	13
7.5 Withdrawal of registration	14
7.6 Paid work and holidays	15
8 Programme of related activities	16
9 Supervision	16
10 Collaborating establishments	14
11 Annual Monitoring	18
12 Progression from MA, MSc or LLM by Research	19
13 Approval of examination arrangements	19
14 The examiners	20
15 Submission of the electronic copies of the thesis	22
16 First examination:	
16.1 General	23
16.2 Preliminary assessment of the thesis	24
16.3 Oral examination	25
16.4 Independent Chair of Viva	26
16.5 Final report and recommendation	28
16.6 Approval of the examiners' recommendation	30
17 Re-examination	31
18 Conferment of the award	34
19 Format of the thesis	36
20 Complaints and appeals procedures:	
20.1 Complaints procedure	39

20.2 Appeal against an examination decision	40
Annex 1: The role and responsibilities of the Research Degrees Committee	46
Annex 2: Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes	48

1. Principles

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

2. Entry requirements

- 2.1 An applicant for registration for the degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research shall normally hold a lower second-class honours degree of a Higher Education Institution in the UK or a qualification which is regarded by the Research Degrees Committee as equivalent to such an honours degree.
- 2.2 An applicant holding qualifications other than those in paragraph 2.1 shall be considered on the applicant's merits and in relation to the nature and scope of the programme of work proposed. In considering an applicant in this category, the Research Degrees Committee shall look for evidence of the candidate's ability and background knowledge in relation to the proposed research. Professional experience, publications, written reports or other appropriate evidence of accomplishment shall be taken into consideration. Where appropriate prior experience or certificated learning will be credited according to the requirements of the specific programmes. An applicant may be required to pass an externally assessed qualifying examination at final year honours degree level before registration is approved. An applicant wishing to be considered under this regulation shall include in the application for registration the names of two suitable persons whom the Faculty shall consult concerning the candidate's academic attainment and fitness for research.

- 2.3 Applicants whose main language is not English must meet the University's English language requirements and where applicable the Faculty or Department's requirements.
- 2.4 Before being accepted, self-funded students should provide evidence that they are able to adequately fund the whole of their research degree programme. Candidates applying from a number of countries may now be required to pay a deposit at the offer stage in order to be granted a visa for entry.
- 2.5 All candidates applying for a place on the programme must submit their application via the on-line application system for entry.

3. Admission

- 3.1 The admission of research candidates must comply with the requirements stipulated within the University Admission Policy.
- 3.2 Responsibility for the initial admission of candidates lies with individual Faculties and the Dean of Faculty who may delegate that responsibility as described in 3.3 below. Admission procedures should comply with Sections 2.1 – 2.8 of the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research. However, formal registration for a research degree may only take place following approval by the Research Degrees Committee of the Academic Board acting on behalf of the University.
- 3.3 In admitting a candidate to the degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research the Faculty or Department's Postgraduate Research Tutor or their deputy or the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee or Director of Research must ensure that:
- (a) the applicant is appropriately qualified in accordance with paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4;
 - (b) references are obtained. In addition, for candidates where English is not their first language, copies of their degree, and where appropriate an IELTS certificate, from a recognised UKVI Test Centre must be obtained or an approved equivalent;
 - (c) the proposed programme of research is viable, particularly if the topic has been generated by the candidate;
 - (d) adequate supervision is available which is likely to be sustainable and the Director of Studies identified;
 - (e) the necessary facilities exist for the conduct of the research;
 - (f) self-funded students should provide evidence that they are able to adequately fund the whole of their research programme;
 - (g) Ethical approval has been considered where appropriate;
 - (h) Intellectual Property Rights have been considered;
 - (i) if appropriate, formal collaboration is set up with the institutions necessary to undertake the research, and
 - (j) a criminal records check has been carried out where appropriate.

- (k) each candidate is interviewed either in person, via an online meeting or by phone and the Postgraduate Research Tutor must be part of the interview panel;
 - (l) where there is an expectation of teaching being undertaken by a candidate applying for a funded studentship, their suitability for teaching should be considered as part of the admissions process.
 - (m) academic and, or professional references are obtained
 - (n) supporting documents and scanned copies of passports are obtained where required in order to undertake fees assessment or to confirm immigration status;
- 3.4 Successful applicants must be issued with a formal offer letter signed by the Faculty or Department's Postgraduate Research Tutor or their Deputy or the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee or Director of Research. The offer must be accepted by the applicant via the online application system.
- 3.5 In accordance with Section 2.9 of the Code of Practice, the offer letter shall specify:
- (a) The total fees, including any deposit or other charges such as bench fees which will be levied;
 - (b) A brief outline of the proposed research area and the normal period of study, including mode of study;
 - (c) The names of the supervisors (normally indicating the Director of Studies, who must be suitably qualified see 9.2) and other supervisory arrangements;
 - (d) A clear statement that continuation is dependent on satisfactory academic progress;
 - (e) If the research area requires Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance, the correct HECOS code must be noted. In addition to the code, a paragraph providing a concise, but detailed account of the proposed research must be included, complex technical details should be included if appropriate;
 - (f) The nature and extent of other duties (e.g. teaching) required (if any);
 - (g) The name and requirements and conditions of any sponsor, (if any);
 - (h) A summary of the general facilities that will be made available;
 - (i) Requirements of attendance, holiday allocation, progress reports and review;
 - (j) Detail of compulsory Faculty or Department research methods or other training courses if any are required;
 - (k) The University's terms and conditions governing entry to and study on the research degree programme. Ethics policy, Intellectual Property Rights policy and Health and Safety Information.
- 3.6 Should the need arise; the University will implement other regulations and policies relating to misconduct, including plagiarism as laid down in the following documents:
- Academic Integrity;
 - Cheating and Plagiarism;

- Data Protection;
- Research Ethics;
- University's Student Behaviour Policy and the Academic Conduct and Student Conduct procedures.

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

When admitting a student to the full-time research programme, the Postgraduate Research Tutor must be satisfied that the student has sufficient time available to dedicate to their programme.

Normally, a full-time student must allocate at least 35 hours a week to work on their programme and should not undertake more than 20 hours per week paid employment or other commitments.

Part-time candidates should have a minimum of 15 hours per week available for their programme of study over the full duration of their programme.

- 3.8 When offering a student, a place on the programme, Postgraduate Research Tutors must satisfy themselves that a candidate about to begin their research programme has given due consideration to their personal and financial circumstances before accepting the offer. Students should not suspend during the period of enrolment on this programme (See Section 7).

Where a student is not in a position to comply with the University's policy, the offer of a place should be deferred for a maximum of one year.

4. Enrolment and fees

- 4.1 Having been offered and accepted a place to study for an MA or MSc by Research, all candidates shall enrol as students of the University at the start of their programme of research and shall maintain their enrolment until conferment of the degree. Enrolment is a prerequisite for registration for a research degree and entry to the programme is only permitted in September and January, and exceptionally June of each year.
- 4.2 If satisfactory progress has been made and the candidate's application for registration has been approved by the Research Degrees Committee, students will be formally registered as MA, MSc or LLM by Research.
- 4.3 Full-time candidates are required to pay the full fee for a minimum period of one year. If exceptionally the candidate requires additional time to complete the thesis and this is approved by the Research Degrees Committee, they will be required to pay the continuation fee rate until submission of the thesis,

when no further fees will be due, unless the candidate is required to resubmit the thesis for re-examinations (Section 4).

- 4.4 Part-time candidates are required to pay the part-time fee for a minimum enrolment period of two years. If exceptionally the candidate requires additional time to complete the thesis and this is approved by the Research Degrees Committee, they will be required to pay the continuation fee rate until submission of the thesis, when no further fees will be due, unless the candidate is required to resubmit the thesis for re-examinations (Section 4).
- 4.5 Very exceptionally, the University has agreed that research students are given one extra month to the fee payment deadline to complete and submit their thesis for examination without having to pay any further fees. This is a special concession for research students and cannot under any circumstances be extended. If a student is unable to meet one of the fee submission deadlines set out below, the fees for that instalment period must be paid.
- 4.5.1 Therefore, having paid the required fees for at least the minimum number of years as set out in this section, in order to be eligible for the fee waiver at submission, a student must have submitted one electronic PDF copy of their thesis by email to the Research Degrees Team, with the completed, signed copy of the RDC Sub- submission form by 5.00pm on one of the following fee payment deadlines: **the last working day of September; January or June of each academic year**. If a student does not meet one of these deadlines, the fees for that instalment period must be paid before the thesis can be sent out for examination. This additional period of one additional month to submit the thesis for examination without having to pay fees, cannot be extended under any circumstances.
- 4.6 Following the submission of the thesis, candidates are required to remain enrolled until the degree is awarded, but no fees are payable for this period. If, following the viva examination the examiners recommend that the candidate is required to revise their thesis and resubmit it for re-examination within one year, the candidate will be required to pay the re-submission fee until resubmission of the thesis.

5. Registration

- 5.1 New students may only enrol on the programme in either September or January of each academic year. Very exceptional entry may be approved for a June start. Students shall submit an application to the Research Degrees Committee to register for the degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research.

This shall be done on form RDC-MRR by the second meeting of the appropriate RDC subject Sub-Committee meeting following first enrolment for full-time students, and by the third meeting for part-time students.

If a student has not registered by the above timeframes, on the recommendation of a student's supervisors and the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor, the Research Degrees Committee will terminate the student's enrolment (except as in paragraph 5.3 below)

All students should have a formal interview as part of the registration process, as detailed in their Faculty Handbook. The form RDC-MRR shall be completed by the candidate, with the assistance of the supervisors, and shall be approved by the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor who will forward it to the Research Degrees Committee for consideration.

- 5.2 The date of registration given in the application sets the start of the time period for the programme of research. The date of registration shall be the date the candidate initially enrolled on the research degree programme. The date of registration may not be backdated before the candidate's date of initial enrolment as a student at the University.
- 5.3 In approving an application for registration, the Research Degrees Committee shall satisfy itself that:
- (a) the candidate is suitably qualified;
 - (b) the candidate is embarking on a viable research programme;
 - (c) supervision is adequate and likely to be sustained;
 - (d) the University or formally approved collaborating establishment is able to provide appropriate facilities for the conduct of scholarly research in the area of the research programme;
 - (e) the candidate is enrolled as a student of the University and the research programme has been approved by the candidate's Faculty;
 - (f) Ethics approval has been obtained or an application submitted as appropriate;
 - (g) Intellectual Property Rights have been signed off.

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

- 5.4 Where a research project is part of a piece of funded research, the Research Degrees Committee shall establish to its satisfaction that the terms on which the research is funded do not detract from the fulfilment of the objectives and requirements of the candidate's research programme.
- 5.5 Except where permission has been given for the thesis and the oral examination to be in another language, the Research Degrees Committee shall satisfy itself that the candidate has sufficient command of the English language to satisfactorily complete the programme of work and to prepare and defend a

thesis in English. Permission to present a thesis in another language shall be sought when the application for Registration is considered. Permission to present a thesis in a language other than English shall only be given if the subject matter of the thesis involves language and related studies.

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

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

- 5.7 Students wishing to keep the final electronic copy of the thesis on restricted access for a period following final submission, should complete the appropriate sections of the RDC-Decl RADAR form when completing final submission.
- 5.8 A candidate seeking substantial change to an approved programme of research at any time after registration shall submit a revised registration form to the Research Degrees Committee for approval.

6. Different types of research programmes

6.1 Candidates working as part of a research group

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

6.2 Candidates working overseas

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

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

6.3 **Research degrees involving creative work**

- 6.3.1 A candidate may undertake a programme of research in which the candidate's own creative work forms the most significant part of the intellectual enquiry. Such creative work may be in any field (for instance, fine art, design, engineering and technology, architecture, creative writing, musical composition, film, dance and performance), but shall have been undertaken as part of the registered research programme.
- 6.3.2 The creative work shall be accompanied by a written commentary which sets the work in its relevant theoretical, critical or design context. The commentary shall conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length (see paragraph 19).
- 6.3.3 Where the research degree involves musical composition, the portfolio of work shall comprise substantial compositions which show coherence, originality, experimentation with forms and language, and knowledge of contemporary issues in the field. The compositions shall be a total of 60 minutes duration and up to a maximum of 80 minutes and the written commentary shall address the compositional approaches used in each piece and shall demonstrate an understanding of the techniques used, the context of the piece, and appropriate aesthetic issues.
- 6.3.4 Where the research degree involves contemporary fine art practice, the submission shall represent a substantial individual achievement in the form of a major work (if a single installation, performance or event) or a body of works which demonstrates coherence, originality, experimentation with appropriate forms and media, and knowledge of contemporary issues in the field. The work or body of works shall give due consideration to its context and audience and, where relevant, the submission shall be presented in an appropriate public context. The written commentary shall address questions of context and audience and shall demonstrate an understanding of the methods, strategies and techniques employed, as well as the relevant aesthetic and theoretical issues. Since the exploratory research process is vital to the final form of the work, the submission is likely to include evidence of the research through

practice (trials, examples, research diaries, evaluations) and the commentary may contain or be accompanied by visual or other relevant documentary material.

- 6.3.5 The final submission shall be accompanied by some permanent record (for instance, video, photographic record, CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, musical score, diagrammatic representation) of the creative work, where practicable, this should be saved as part of the electronic PDF copy of the final thesis, with the commentary.
- 6.3.6 Where the research degree is undertaken through workplace-based research (including architectural practice) or action research; the outcome would be a practical piece of work with a critical reflection on the work. The thesis should reflect a coherent research process; demonstrate a critical appreciation of the context of the research and its relationship to existing literature and practices. The thesis must show that the research has produced an independent, original and innovative contribution to knowledge and practices. The relationship between practical and critical work will vary from project to project and within the thesis the balance between the reflective commentary and practical work will vary according to the nature of the research. This work may include one of a number of approaches such as: developing an innovative project at a workplace e.g. developing new tools (technical or analytical); implementing a project; learning and documenting new or hitherto undocumented/under-researched practices in a community of practice; adapting practices to new environments; formulating a new policy (institutional or thematic); working on a project/learning at work (including activist research in which the candidate actively work for change in an organisation/group)
- 6.3.7 Where the research degree involves creative writing such as poetry or other literary work, the submission shall represent a substantial individual achievement in the form of a significant selection of literary works or poems, the volume of which will be determined on a case-by-case basis as appropriate for the submission. The written commentary shall demonstrate a critical appreciation of the context of the research, its originality and coherence, including its relationship to existing work.
- 6.3.8 The application for registration shall set out the form of the candidate's intended submission and of the proposed methods of assessment.
- 6.3.9 Examiners must be appointed by the Research Degree Committee and have been formally contacted by the Research Degrees Team before they undertake any assessment associated with the final examination.
- 6.3.10 Where there is a physical element to the examination of a practice-based PhD, such as an installation, performance or event, the beginning of the examination process will start from the date of the physical element of the examination and will be considered as the official submission date for the student's research degree. Examiners must be appointed before the practical element and the

Research Degrees Team must be notified in advance of the date of the practical element so that formal letters and RDC Preliminary Report forms can be sent to the examiners in advance. The candidate will be permitted two months following this stage of the examination to complete the written thesis and submit the electronic PDF copy of the work for examination.

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

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

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

7. Period of study

7.1 Mode of study

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

7.1.2 Where a candidate changes from full-time to part-time study or vice versa, the minimum and maximum registration periods shall be calculated as if the candidate were a part-time candidate.

7.1.3 When a student has completed the maximum period for their programme and moved on to the final stage of the programme, they are then eligible to pay the Continuation Fee and their registered mode of study will remain unchanged unless an application for change of mode of study is submitted to the Research Degree Committee for approval.

7.2 Programme length

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

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

Minimum

Maximum

MA, MSc and LLM by Research

Full-time	1 year	exceptionally with approval 2 years
Part-time	2 years	exceptionally with approval 3 years

7.2 Temporary suspension of period of registration

- 7.3.1 Where the candidate is prevented, by ill-health or exceptionally, for other reasons, from making progress with their research, the Research Degree Committee may suspend their registration for no more than **one academic year** at a time.

Any student can apply during their studies for a maximum of 24 months in total.

Any suspension requests which start date after week 4 of any given Semester, then the student is liable for fees for the whole semester, please see [Oxford Brookes University Semester Dates](#)

- 7.3.2 All applications will be considered on an individual basis and a case must be made by the student which will be judged on merit. It should be noted that approval will not automatically be granted.

The candidate's enrolment as a student with the University shall be suspended for the period of the approved suspension and access to all University facilities will be put in abeyance for the approved period.

Please note that whilst on suspension they will still be able to access all services as a student (including Google suite and on-campus services except borrowing rights from Library Services).

Any student can make a request other than **Year 1 students**.

If a Year 1 student is unable to continue, they should withdraw and either defer their place where possible or re-apply in due course.

- 7.3.3 There are two types of requests for suspension from registration which will be considered:

- 7.3.3.1 **Standard request** –a standard request is a 'prospective' application for suspension for the current semester and any future semesters. This is where a candidate is requesting a suspension from registration for this time period for the first time this academic year.

Any standard request for suspension must include a full application and any documentation where appropriate to be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee, and relevant subject Sub-Committee for consideration.

Please note this can include the 'Events Log' where appropriate, which details where any life events have impacted on the candidate's ability to undertake their studies.

7.3.3.2 **Exceptional request** - this is where a candidate makes a request and meets any of the following criteria:

- a. is applying for a suspension retrospectively, which can be up to a maximum of one previous academic year;
- b. has gone above the 24 months maximum allowed for suspensions during their studies;
- c. are applying for more than one request for a period of suspension from registration in any academic year;
- d. the student is due to reach their Maximum Period of Registration;
- e. where there are significant concerns of engagement or progression;
- f. where the Director of Studies, Postgraduate Research Tutor or Research Degrees Team have concerns for the student to continue including where it may be felt that the student should be supported and / or signposted for additional support e.g. Student Services including Mental Health support.

Please note that any applications after **week 4** of each semester/fee paying period will be considered an exceptional application and will require evidence.

Any exceptional request for suspension from registration should be for no more than a maximum of **one academic year** at a time, in line with when a student's enrolment (e.g. September- August, January- December or June- May)

7.3.4. Any exceptional request for suspension must include a full application and must include evidence to support the application to be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee, and subject Sub-Committee for consideration.

The approval of applications for exceptional requests for suspension cannot be guaranteed and if the Sub-Committee is unable to approve the application, the student will be required to enrol and pay the appropriate fees for that period of time

The types of situations/ life events that may require evidence to be submitted for a standard or exceptional request include, but are not limited to:

- Pregnancy or new parenthood;
- Health reasons;
- Bereavement;
- Caring responsibilities;

- Financial commitments/work commitments (for part-time candidates only);
- Participation in a short-term professional placement/internship that directly correlates with the student's research;
- Public duties (such as jury service);
- Competing in national or international sporting events, or other similarly high-profile events, for a long period of time including training for an event in which the student is representing the University or their country;
- Religious events, such as a pilgrimage;

In addition, any application can include the [PGR Events Log](#)

- 7.3.5 All candidates beginning their research degree are expected to have given due consideration to their personal and financial circumstances before accepting an offer of a place on the programme. Probationer Research Students may not apply for a formal suspension or take unapproved periods of suspension during the first full year of enrolment.

Any candidate who requires a visa to study in the UK should take note of their [Visa Responsibilities](#) and adhere to the [Student Visa Engagement Policy](#). Students in this situation should contact the International Student Advice Team for guidance on the visa implications of a suspension, *before* making their application.

- 7.3.6 Faculties should note that in the case of students in receipt of Research Council funded studentships, or any other external studentship the process for being granted a suspension of registration may differ from those applied at Oxford Brookes.

It is important that the Directors of Studies contact the Research Degrees Team for advice before the student begins the period of suspension as failure to follow their procedures may lead to the funding bodies imposing sanctions on the University as a whole for a substantial period of time.

7.4 **Extension of period of registration**

- 7.4.1 A candidate shall submit the thesis to the Research Degrees Team before the expiry of the maximum period of registration. The Research Degrees Committee may extend a candidate's period of registration, for not more than three months at a time and for not more than a maximum of six months. A candidate seeking such an extension should discuss this with their Supervisors in the first instance. Supervisors must ensure that applications for extension of registration are submitted before the period of extension and not retrospectively.
- 7.4.2 A candidate may apply to the Research Degrees Committee for an extension to their period of registration. Extensions will be considered for time unavoidably lost through circumstances outside the control of the individual concerned or where a student's progress has been hindered through extreme pressure of external work for a limited period. Sympathetic consideration will be given to

cases where the student has been absent through illness supported by a valid medical certificate.

7.5 **Withdrawal of registration**

- 7.5.1 Where a candidate has discontinued the research, the withdrawal of registration shall be notified to the Research Degrees Committee on form RDC-W completed by the candidate and/or the supervisors.
- 7.5.2 On the recommendation of a candidate's supervisors and the Faculty or Departmental Postgraduate Research Tutor, the Research Degrees Committee may terminate the registration of a candidate for the following reasons:
- (a) if a student does not register their proposal within a maximum period of three months from the date of initial enrolment or four months for part-time students;
 - (b) if the candidate's period of registration has expired and an application for extension of registration has not been submitted within a reasonable period;
 - (c) if the candidate has not responded to any correspondence from the supervisors and there has been no contact between the candidate and the supervisors for a period of three months;
 - (d) if the candidate has not maintained enrolment as a student of the University and paid the appropriate fees (see Section 4.);
 - (e) if the candidate's Faculty provides evidence for unsatisfactory academic progress, over a period of six months.
- 7.5.3 A candidate who has formally withdrawn may apply for reinstatement of registration if, due to a change in circumstances, the candidate is in a position to be able to resume the research programme. The application should be considered by the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor in line with the Admissions procedures in the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research. Consideration will also be given to the likelihood of completion; past academic achievement; progress; references; financial viability and whether adequate supervision is available.

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

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

longer supervisors available to support the work.

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

7.6 **Paid work and holidays**

- 7.6.1 Full-time students who wish to undertake paid work not directly related to their research training must get the permission of their Director of Studies and Postgraduate Research Tutor.
- 7.6.2 A full-time student must allocate at least 35 hours a week to work on their research programme and should not undertake more than 20 hours per week paid employment or other commitments at any time during the programme. Part-time candidates should have a minimum of 15 hours per week available for their programme of study over the full duration of their programme.
- 7.6.3 Students may take up to eight weeks of holiday in each year (pro rata for parts of a year), inclusive of normal public holidays. No more than 4 weeks can be taken at any one time. The timing of the holiday must be agreed with their Director of Studies.

Any student who wishes to request more than 4 weeks of holiday at one time must seek permission from their Director of Studies and Postgraduate Research Tutor and Research Degrees Team. For those students on a Student visa, the Academic Registrar must also give permission.

- 7.6.4 A full-time candidate may undertake teaching, demonstrating and, subject to approval, other paid work directly related to their research training, provided that the total demands made on their time, including time spent in preparation, does not normally exceed six hours a week, averaged over 30 weeks. Full-time students must not undertake more than 20 hours of paid employment at any time during the course of their programme.
- 7.6.5 The Research Degree Committee acknowledges that not all Departments will be able to offer students the opportunity to teach. However, all students should undertake the basic teacher training provided by their Faculty or Department during their first semester, following enrolment on the programme.
- 7.6.6 The Faculty must, when asking research students to teach undergraduate students, provide appropriate instruction. Full-time students should not be

required to undertake more than 6 hours of teaching duties per week including all teaching related activities.

8. Programme of related activities

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

9. Supervision

- 9.1 A candidate shall have at least two supervisors.

- 9.2 One supervisor shall be the Director of Studies (first supervisor) with responsibility to ensure that the candidate receives supervision on a regular and frequent basis with members of the supervisory team. The Director of Studies shall normally have supervised to completion at least two PhD, MPhil, Masters by Research or Professional Doctorate students, or have supervised to completion one research student and completed key components of the Supervisor Training Course. Where a Director of Studies only has one completion, whether as Director of Studies or Second Supervisor, the supervision of that research programme must have been for more than two thirds of the whole programme, anything less will not be considered sufficient to meet this requirement. However, where a member of staff has had substantial experience of supervising graduate students and where the team as a whole has supervised at least two research students to completion, the Chair of the appropriate Sub-Committee with the Faculty or Department Postgraduate Research Tutor, will assess whether the experience is sufficient to take on the role of Director of Studies. The recommendation must be approved by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee before the member of staff can be appointed.
- 9.3 One individual shall not normally be Director of Studies for more than six full-time research students or pro-rata for part-time students. The ratio may vary according to the number of full or part-time students allocated to a particular member of staff. The Postgraduate Research Tutor and Dean of Faculty or Head of Department shall assess the workload of a member of staff to ascertain the appropriate number of students to be supervised by that individual. Supervisory time should be included in the individual's workload plan and should be the equivalent to that allocated for MPhil supervision.
- 9.4 The supervision team shall normally be research active and have substantial research experience in the relevant subject area and have had a combined experience of supervising at least two research degree candidates, which may include Masters by Research, MPhil and PhD degrees, to successful completion
- 9.5 At least one supervisor should be a member of the academic staff of the University. The Dean of Faculty must ensure that the supervisors are suitably qualified for the proposed project. The supervisory team should have substantial research experience in the relevant subject area and normally have experience of supervising at least two research degree candidates to successful and timely completion at the appropriate level.
- 9.6 In addition to the supervisors, an adviser or advisers may be proposed to contribute some specialised knowledge or a link with an external organisation.
- 9.7 A candidate for a research degree or professional higher degree, excluding PhD by Published Work, shall be ineligible to act as a Supervisor for another research candidate.

- 9.8 Any proposal for change in supervision arrangements shall be made to the Research Degrees Committee on form RDC-S.
- 9.9 Exceptionally the role of Director of Studies may be divided between no more than two Co-Directors of Studies. In these cases, the role of each person would have to be clearly identified at the outset and a case made to the Research Degrees Committee for approval. Where the role of Director of Studies is divided in this way, a second supervisor is also required to complete the team and exceptionally in this instance a team of three supervisors may be approved.

10. Collaborating establishments

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

11. Annual monitoring requirements

- 11.1 The progress and status of all research students, full-time and part-time must be reviewed by Faculties. Practice may vary and full details of the discipline specific requirements can be found in the Faculty Handbook. Candidates must produce a brief written annual progress report or equivalent about their research as appropriate for their discipline (approximately 1,000 words). Where appropriate, students may be asked to submit particular chapters of their thesis as part of the monitoring assessment. The work should be submitted to the Faculty or Departmental Postgraduate Research Tutor and copied to the Supervisory Team, in accordance with the annual monitoring procedures. This assessment

process must include one person external to the supervisory team and all students should be interviewed each year as part of the monitoring process.

- 11.2 In addition to the monitoring, at the end of the first six months full-time or first year part-time, the progress review should include consideration of the likelihood of the candidate achieving the award of MA, MSc or LLM by Research. If the review process indicates that the candidate is unlikely to achieve the degree within an appropriate period (one years for full-time or two years for part-time) clear indication should be given and if necessary the registration terminated. Where a candidate is not likely to achieve the degree, the necessary action should be taken with a view to terminating registration. Directors of Studies are required to submit a progress report annually in respect of all candidates they are supervising to the Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutors, who will sign the reports and forward them to the Research Degrees Team.
- 11.3 Faculties must ensure that progress monitoring occurs during each year. The monitoring must include someone external to the supervisory team. Appropriate arrangements must be made for all students to make at least one oral presentation during their research programme and these should form part of progress monitoring.
- 11.4 Students will be given the opportunity annually, to give comment anonymously on the adequacy of supervision and facilities provided for their research.
- 11.5 All students enrolled on a research degree programme must submit a piece of work, as appropriate for the discipline, through Turnitin no more than three times in any one academic year. It will be expected that all students will submit a chapter or piece of academic writing through Turnitin during the annual monitoring process each year. Full details of the work submitted at this point will noted on the Research Degree Committee, Annual Progress Report form and should include a summary or statement about the analysis of the Turnitin report. Other submissions may take place at the Registration.

12. Progression from MA, MSc or LLM by Research

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

13. Approval of examination arrangements

- 13.1 The supervisors shall propose examiners and the final thesis title to the Research Degrees Committee for approval on form RDC-E when proposing the

examination team. This should be done at least two months before the expected date of submission of the thesis. Exceptionally where the thesis is submitted prior to the approval of examination arrangements, Supervisors must ensure that the examination team is appointed no later than two weeks after submission has taken place. The examination may not take place until the examination arrangements have been approved. In special circumstances the Research Degrees Committee may act directly to appoint examiners and arrange the examination of a candidate.

- 13.2 In cases where the research degree involves creative work and the candidate is submitting work in other than written form, the application for approval of examination arrangements shall contain a statement of the format of the candidate's creative work and the proposed methods of assessment.
- 13.3 Where there is evidence that the research has proceeded exceptionally well, the Research Degree Committee may approve the thesis being submitted in less than the minimum period of registration as specified in Section 7. The minimum period of registration will not normally be reduced by more than two months. The request for early submission should be made by email to the Research Degrees Team by the Director of Studies on behalf of the candidate with the application for approval of examination arrangements. If approval is required before the appointment of the examiners, the Director of Studies should email the Research Degrees Team, setting out the reasons for the request for an early submission.
- 13.4 If the nature of the research necessitates the thesis being held on restricted access for a period of time up to a maximum of one year after completion of the work and approval of this was not sought at the time of registration, the request for confidentiality should be made with the application for approval of examination arrangements.
- 13.5 All examiners who are about to examine a candidate who has requested that the thesis be held on restricted access should complete the Confidentiality Agreement (RDC-CA) and submit it with the application for approval of examination arrangements.
- 13.6 At final submission of the thesis, candidates may request that the thesis is held on restricted access to enable them to exploit their work. This must be done by completing the RDC-Decl RADAR form and submitting it with the electronic PDF copy of the final thesis.

14. The examiners

- 14.1 The examining team shall only comprise one internal and one external examiner. Exceptionally where it is not possible to appoint one external examiner with both

the required expertise and examining experience, a second external examiner may be proposed.

- 14.2 The internal examiner shall be a member of staff of the University or the candidate's Collaborating Establishment other than a supervisor or adviser of the candidate. Where possible, Internal examiners should be experienced in research in the general area of the candidate's thesis but need not be a subject expert. In cases where the internal examiner has not previously examined a higher degree, the Committee will consider whether a Chair is necessary to ensure consistency. All new internal examiners must have completed the relevant central training before they are proposed for approval by the Research Degree Committee. This is to ensure consistency and standardisation of the processes.
- 14.3 The examiners shall be experienced in research in the general area of the candidate's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.
- 14.4 At least one external examiner shall have substantial experience of research degree examination (that is, shall have examined at least two research degree candidates).

In the case of an examination for MA, MSc or LLM by Research

(a) the external examiner must hold, or have experience of examining or supervising, one candidate for a master's level research degree

or

(b) where this is not possible, the Research Degrees Committee shall have the discretion to modify the requirement (a), subject to demonstration that the integrity of examination arrangements will otherwise be maintained; for example, by the appointment of an Independent Chair or internal examiner with experience of examining or supervising at least one candidate for a master's level research degree.

- 14.5 Where the candidate and the internal examiner are both on the staff of the same establishment, a second external examiner shall be appointed.
- 14.6 An external examiner shall be independent both of the University and of the Collaborating Establishment and shall not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser. An external examiner shall normally not be either a supervisor of another candidate or an external examiner on a taught course in the same Faculty at the University. Former members of staff of the University shall not be approved as external examiners until five years after the termination of their employment with the University. The Research Degrees Committee shall ensure that the same external examiner is not normally approved for more than four examinations in a period of three years, and so

ensure that the examiner does not become too familiar with the Faculty and therefore prejudice objective judgement. If an external examiner has been appointed for the maximum of four examinations, the examiner concerned should not be proposed again for a period of two years.

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

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

15. Submission of the thesis

15.1 Students may submit the final draft copies of their thesis electronically to their Supervisory Team for final review and comment. Should the Supervisors prefer to review the work in hard copy, they must produce their own copy within the Department at no cost to the student.

15.2 The Director of Studies or the Research Degrees Team shall make known to the candidate the procedure to be followed for the electronic online submission of the thesis, and any conditions to be satisfied before the candidate may be considered eligible for examination. The thesis will not be sent for examination until all outstanding fees or debts to the University have been paid in full.

15.3 All research degree examinations and vivas have one of three options to be as follows:

- an all-in person viva;
- a hybrid viva;
- an all online viva

Students must submit their thesis for examination by emailing one electronic PDF copy of the final thesis for examination, and the completed, signed RDC-Sub submission form, to the Research Degrees Team. A copy of the Abstract should also be included in the electronic copy of the thesis.

15.4 Where there is evidence that the research has preceded exceptionally well, the Research Degree Committee may approve the thesis being submitted in less than the minimum period of registration as specified in Section 7. The minimum period of registration will not normally be reduced by more than six months. The request for early submission should be made by the Director of Studies on behalf of the candidate with the application for approval of examination arrangements, or if requested earlier, by email to the Research Degrees Team for approval by the Chair of the relevant RDC subject Sub-Committee.

15.5 The candidate shall ensure that the thesis is submitted to the Research Degrees Team before the expiry of the registration period (see paragraph 7).

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

16. First examination

16.1 General

- 16.1.1 The examination for MA, MSc or LLM by Research shall have two stages, (with the exception of practised based work - see paragraph 6): firstly, the submission and preliminary assessment of the electronic PDF thesis, and secondly its defence by oral or approved alternative examination.
- 16.1.2 The candidate shall satisfy any conditions of eligibility for examination required by the Research Degrees Committee.
- 16.1.3 A candidate who has been required to undertake a programme of formally assessed studies shall not be permitted to proceed to research degree examination until the course work examiners are satisfied with the candidate's performance. The result of the assessment shall be communicated to the examiners of the thesis.

- 16.1.4 The Research Degrees Committee shall ensure that all examinations are conducted and the recommendations of the examiners are presented wholly in accordance with the University's policies as set out in this document. In any instance where the Research Degrees Committee is made aware of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.
- 16.1.5 All viva examinations will be agreed between the students, in conjunction with their supervisory team, and they can choose from one of three options:
- an all in-person viva;
 - a hybrid viva, where the external participates remotely but the internal and candidate are physically present (note that it is the responsibility of the internal examiner to ensure the facilities are in place are in place for this;
 - an all-online viva, which must be cleared in advance using the procedure established during Covid.
- 16.1.6 Where evidence of plagiarism in the preparation of the thesis, or other irregularities in the conduct of the examination come to light subsequent to the recommendation of the examiners, the Academic Conduct Officer must be informed immediately, who will deal with the matter in line with the University's Student Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.
- 16.1.8 The degree of MA, MSc or LLM by Research may be awarded posthumously on the basis of a thesis completed by a candidate, which is ready for submission for examination. In such cases the Research Degrees Committee shall seek evidence that the candidate would have been likely to have been successful had the oral examination taken place.

16.2 **Preliminary assessment of the thesis**

- 16.2.1 The Research Degrees Team shall send a copy of the electronic thesis to each examiner, together with the examiner's preliminary report form - RDC-MR(A) or RDC-MR(B) and the University's Masters by Research Handbook, and shall ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties. Examiners should be appointed before the thesis is submitted so that the thesis may be sent for examination within days of submission. In exceptional circumstances, where examiners have not been appointed in advance of submission, the examining team must be proposed and approved within a maximum of two weeks from the date of submission.
- 16.2.2 Each examiner shall read and examine the thesis and submit on form RDC-MA/MSc/LLM by Research(A), an independent preliminary report and send it to the Research Degrees Team, at least one week before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the

requirements of the degree and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.

- 16.2.3 The Research Degrees Team shall ensure as far as possible that all the examiners have completed and returned their preliminary reports to the University at least one week before the oral examination takes place.
- 16.2.4 Where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination, they may recommend that the Research Degrees Committee dispense with the oral examination and refer the thesis for further work. In such cases the examiners shall provide the Research Degrees Committee with written guidance for the candidate concerning the deficiencies of the thesis. The examiners shall not recommend that a candidate fail outright without holding an oral examination or other alternative examination.
- 16.2.5 At submission of the electronic PDF thesis for examination, students must complete the section on the RDC-Sub submission form, confirming whether they have an existing health condition that requires a formal assessment by Wellbeing Services in order to identify any reasonable adjustments that will be required at examination and viva. If this is required, the student must register with the Wellbeing Service as soon as they know when the thesis will be ready to submit for examination, and this must be done no later than the actual submission date, the [Wellbeing self-referral form](#).

Once Wellbeing Services has sent the report to the Research Degrees Team, with the candidate's permission, it will be shared with the examiners to ensure that the necessary adjustments are put in place when examining the thesis and for the viva examination.

16.3 **Oral examination**

- 16.3.1 A candidate shall be examined orally on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies.
Where for reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause the Research Degrees Committee is satisfied that a candidate would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral viva examination, an alternative form of examination may be approved. Such approval shall not be given on the grounds that the candidate's knowledge of the language in which the thesis is presented is inadequate. Where reasonable adjustments to an examination and viva are required, examiners will be notified and a report from Wellbeing Services will be sent to them containing all the approved recommendations for the conducting the examination and viva.
- 16.3.2 It is the responsibility of the internal examiner to make all the necessary arrangements for the oral viva examination. This will include agreeing the date of

the oral viva examination and notifying the candidate, external examiner(s) and supervisors in writing by email, of the date and the arrangements for the oral examination. Where the internal examiner is external to the University, the Faculty or Departmental Postgraduate Research Tutor shall take responsibility for organising the oral examination.

- 16.3.3 The candidate shall take no part in the arrangement of the examination and shall have no formal contact with the external examiner(s) between the appointment of the examiners and the oral examination.
- 16.3.4 The oral examination shall normally be conducted within two months from the date of receipt of the thesis by the examiners and within a maximum of three months. The oral examination shall not be arranged less than one month from the date of receipt of the thesis by the examiners in order to give the examiners a reasonable period to assess the work. Where circumstances arise, which prevent the oral examination being conducted within the maximum period, the Research Degree Team shall be notified of the reasons for the delay. Following consultation with the Chair of the Research Degree Committee, a decision will be taken as to whether an extension to the period for examination shall be approved or if a new examining team should be appointed.
- 16.3.5 All face-to-face viva examinations should be held at this University, however in special circumstances it may be held elsewhere, for example at a Collaborating Establishment. Where the viva examination is being held on line, the Internal Examiner must liaise with the candidate to ensure that they are able to take part with the viva if it is conducted by e.g. MS Teams, Zoom, Video Conferencing etc; whether they have adequate IT and Wi-Fi connections; and where the candidate will be based and what sort of facilities will be available in terms of the room that will be used. This will be considered by the Chair of the Research Degrees Subject Sub-Committee and if it is appropriate, the arrangements will be approved.

To note, no online, or face to face viva, must ever be recorded. Therefore, if the viva is online and there is use of Zoom, the Internal Examiner must ensure that the record function is turned off before the viva begins.

- 16.3.6 Supervisors, advisers and the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee may, with the consent of the candidate, attend the oral examination, but must not contribute to the viva and must withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.

16.4 Independent Chair of Viva

- 16.4.1 An Independent Chair may be appointed in the following situations and should be proposed when the application for approval of examination arrangements is submitted to the Research Degrees Committee for approval.

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

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

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

- (7) in the event of a review or appeal against an examination decision, the Independent Chair of the examination may be approached by the Chair of the University's Research Degree Committee or the review panel for further information.

16.5 **Final report and recommendation**

- 16.5.1 Following the oral or approved alternative examination the examiners may recommend that:
- (a) the candidate is awarded the degree;
 - (b) the candidate is awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis;
 - (c) the candidate is awarded the degree subject to major amendments being made to the thesis;
 - (d) the candidate is permitted to re-submit for the degree and must be re-examined with an oral examination; However, if exceptionally the examiners agree that the quality of the revised thesis was outstanding, the degree may be awarded without the second viva;
 - (e) the candidate be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be re-examined.
- 16.5.2 The examiners shall inform the candidate of their recommendation on the result of the examination but they shall make it clear that the decision rests with the Research Degrees Committee.
- 16.5.3 The examiners shall, where they are in agreement, make their joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree on the appropriate RDC Final Report Form that has been sent with the thesis. The RDC Final Report Form must be completed and signed by all examiners directly after the Viva and where appropriate, the Independent Chair at the Viva, to note that electronic signatures must be inserted in the final form. A copy must be sent by email to the Research Degrees Team directly after the oral examination has been completed and definitely within 24 hours of the completion of the examination. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate report forms and recommendations must be submitted.
- 16.5.4 The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Research Degrees Committee to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen is correct.
- 16.5.5 Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires some Minor amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call

for the submission of a revised thesis, the examiners shall recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal examiner. The internal examiner shall collate all the comments of the examiners and shall produce an agreed written list of the minor amendments and corrections required to the thesis. This shall be forwarded by email to the Research Degrees Team within two weeks of the date of the oral examination. This report must not be included in the RDC Final Report form, it must be sent by email as a separate word document to the Research Degrees Team. The examiner(s) must not send a copy to the candidate or their Supervisors.

- 16.5.6 Candidates should complete the revisions within one month of receiving the report from the Research Degrees Team and should produce an electronic copy of the amended thesis and a list of how they have addressed the amendments in the thesis and send them as PDF attachments, by email to the Research Degrees Team, or to the internal examiner to approve as set out in the letter that is issued following the viva. The internal examiner should notify the Research Degrees Team of their decision within two weeks of receipt of the thesis. Once the amendments have been approved, an email should be sent to the Research Degrees Team from the examiner, confirming that the amended thesis meets the examiners' requirements.
- 16.5.7 Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires some Major amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the submission of a revised thesis, the examiners shall recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s). The internal examiner shall collate all the comments of the examiners as a Word document and shall produce an agreed list of the Major amendments and corrections required to the thesis. This should be sent by email to the Research Degrees Team within two weeks of the date of the oral examination and once approved, the report will be sent to the candidate.
- 16.5.8 Candidates should produce an electronic copy of the amended thesis and a list of how they have addressed the amendments in the thesis, and this should be sent by email to the Research Degrees Team, or to the examiner(s) as indicated in the letter that is issued following viva, within three months of the date the examiners' report was issued by the Research Degrees Team. Once the amendments have been approved, an email should be sent to the Research Degrees Team from the examiner(s), confirming that the amended thesis meets the examiners' requirements and they will confirm the outcome with the candidate.
- 16.5.9 Where the examiners recommend that the candidate is permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, the examiners shall provide the candidate with

written guidance on the deficiencies of the thesis and the further work which is required. The internal examiner shall collate all the comments of the examiners and shall produce an agreed written list of the revisions required to the thesis. This should be sent by email to the Research Degrees Team within two weeks of the date of the oral examination and once approved, the report shall be sent to the candidate. The revised thesis shall be submitted to the Research Degrees Team within six months of the date of the examination. The re-examination shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of Section 17.

- 16.5.10 Where the examiners recommend that the degree be not awarded and that no re-examination is permitted, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which should be sent by email to the Research Degrees Team, and once approved by the Chair, a copy will be sent to the candidate and the Supervisors.
- 16.5.11 A further examination in addition to the oral examination may be requested by the examiners. In such cases the approval of the Research Degrees Committee shall be sought without delay. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination, it shall normally be held within two months of the oral examination unless the Research Degrees Committee permits otherwise. Any such examination shall be deemed to be part of the candidate's first examination.

16.6 **Approval of the examiners' recommendation**

- 16.6.1 Where the examiners are in agreement and make a joint recommendation, the Chair shall, on behalf of the Research Degrees Committee, make a decision on the reports and recommendations of the examiners in respect of the candidate. This decision shall be reported to the Research Degrees Committee.
- 16.6.2 In any instances where the Chair does not agree with the examiners' joint recommendation, the Chair shall refer the matter to the Research Degrees Committee for consideration. The Research Degrees Committee may:
- (a) seek clarification or further information from the examiners as to the reasons for their recommendation;
 - (b) refer the recommendation back to the examiners for review in the light of the Research Degrees Committee's comments; or
 - (c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner.
- 16.6.3 Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the Chair shall refer the matter to the Research Degrees Committee for consideration. The Research Degrees Committee may:
- (a) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner);
 - (b) accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
 - (c) require the appointment of an additional external examiner.

16.6.4 Where an additional external examiner is appointed under section 16.6, the additional examiner shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner the Research Degrees Committee shall reach a decision regarding the outcome of the examination.

17. Re-examination

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

17.2 The candidate shall submit the electronic PDF copy of the thesis for re-examination within the period of six months from the date the examiners' report was issued by the Research Degrees Team following the final part of the first examination. Unless the revised thesis is of exceptional quality and the examiners agree that the degree may be conferred without a second Viva, all re-examinations must include a second oral examination. The re-examination shall take place within six months of the date of this dispensation, however the Research Degree Committee may, where there are good reasons, approve an extension of the re-submission period.

17.3 The Research Degrees Committee may require that an additional external examiner be appointed for the re-examination.

17.4 The submission of the revised thesis and the re-examination process shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements for the first examination.

17.5 The candidate shall follow the guidance for submission as detailed in Section 15 and unless otherwise stated, produce an electronic PDF copy of the revised thesis as at the first examination. This should be resubmitted to the Research Degrees Team with RDC-Sub form, and a copy of the abstract must be included in the electronic copy of the thesis.

17.6 The preliminary assessment of the thesis will be undertaken as detailed in Section 16. If the Research Degree Committee has not appointed an additional examiner, the thesis will be sent to the original examination team for re-examination against the final report and recommendations approved following the first viva. The second oral examination should take place within the maximum deadline of three months from the date the examiners receive the thesis and each examiner should submit an independent preliminary report to

the Research Degrees Team at least one week before the date of the second oral examination.

- 17.7 Where the examiners agree that the revisions to the thesis are of exceptional quality, they may recommend that no further oral examination is required and the degree may be conferred. However, in all other cases a second oral examination must be held and following that oral examination, they may recommend that the degree be awarded subject to minor or major amendments being completed as indicated in the original report and reiterated in their report following re-examination.
- 17.8 Arrangements for the second oral examination should be carried out in the same way as for the first examinations and stated in Section 16.
- 17.9 There are five forms of re-examination:
- (a) where the candidate's revised thesis is of exceptionally high quality and the performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination, or further examination was satisfactory, the examiners may agree that the degree may be conferred and no further oral examination will be necessary;
 - (b) where the candidate's performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination or further examination was unsatisfactory and the thesis was also unsatisfactory, any re-examination shall include a re-examination of the thesis and an oral or approved alternative examination;
 - (c) where on the first examination the candidate's thesis was so unsatisfactory that the Research Degrees Committee dispensed with the oral examination, any re-examination shall include a re-examination of the thesis and an oral or approved alternative examination;
 - (d) where on the first examination the candidate's thesis was satisfactory but the performance in the oral and/or other examination(s) was not satisfactory the candidate shall be re-examined in the oral and/or other examination(s), subject to the time limits prescribed in section 17, without being requested to revise and re-submit the thesis;
 - (e) where on the first examination the thesis was satisfactory but the candidate's performance in relation to the other requirements for the award of the degree was not satisfactory, the examiners may propose instead a different form of re-examination to test the candidate's abilities; such an examination may take place only with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee.
- 17.10 The timescale for examining a resubmitted thesis shall be the same as for the first examination with the oral examination being held within three months of the date of receipt of the thesis.
- 17.11 Where the thesis is deemed of such high quality that the degree may be awarded without a second oral examination, the examiners must notify the

Research Degree Team normally within two months from the date of receipt of the thesis and within a maximum of three months.

- 17.12 In the case of a re-examination under section 17, each examiner shall read and examine the revised thesis and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent preliminary report on it to the Research Degrees Team before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the revised thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination. This report will constitute the basis of any further revisions should they be required.
- 17.13 Following the re-examination of the thesis and further oral or other examination if required, the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, make their joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree on the appropriate form - RDC-MA/MSc/LLM by Research(B). This shall be submitted by email to the Research Degrees Team as soon as possible after the completion of the oral examination and definitely within 24 hours of the completion of the examination or within one week after the examiners have reached their joint decision where no further oral examination is being held. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted.
- 17.14 The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Research Degrees Committee to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen is correct.
- 17.15 Following the completion of the re-examination the examiners may recommend that:
- (a) the candidate be awarded the degree;
 - (b) the candidate is awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis;
 - (c) the candidate is awarded the degree subject to major amendments being made to the thesis;
 - (d) the candidate is not awarded the degree.
- 17.16 Where an oral examination has taken place, the examiners shall inform the candidate of their recommendation on the result of the re-examination but they shall make it clear that the decision rests with the Research Degrees Committee. Where no further oral examination has been held, following the receipt of the examiners' final report and recommendation, the Research Degrees Team shall notify the candidate of the outcome of the re-examination and shall copy this to the supervisors and Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor.

17.17 Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires some minor or major amendments and corrections, the examiners shall recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or external examiner. The internal examiner shall collate all the examiners' comments as a Word document and shall produce an agreed written list of the amendments and corrections required to the thesis. This should be sent by email to the Research Degrees Team within two weeks of the date of the oral examination and once approved, the report shall be sent to the candidate.

17.18 The candidate should send an electronic copy of the amended thesis and a list of

where the revisions have been made to the thesis, to the Research Degrees Team or internal examiner as indicated in the letter that will be issued following the examination to approve the corrections within one month of receiving the report for minor amendments or three months for major amendments. The internal examiner should notify the Research Degrees Team of their decision by email, within a maximum of one month of receipt of the thesis. The final approved thesis shall then be uploaded to the University's Repository RADAR and the link emailed to the Research Degree Team within one month of the date the examiner formally approved the revisions, together with a copy of the notification from the examiner confirming that the amended thesis meets the examiners' requirements.

17.19 Where the examiners recommend that the degree be not awarded, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be submitted to the Research Degrees Team for approval by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee. The report will then be sent to the candidate by the Research Degree Team.

17.20 The Research Degrees Committee shall make a decision on the examiners' recommendation in relation to the re-examination in accordance with the requirements of Section 16.

18. Conferment of the award

18.1 The delegated power to confer the degree rests with the Research Degrees Committee and the Committee, or the Chair of the relevant RDC Subject Sub-Committee, on behalf of the Research Degrees Committee, shall make a decision on the reports and recommendation(s) of the examiners in respect of the candidate as laid down in Section 16.

18.2 Where the degree has been awarded without amendments, the conferment date

the shall be the date of the Viva. Where Minor or Major amendments are required,
date of the award shall be the date the examiners' emailed the Research Degrees
Team, signed off all revisions as being satisfactory and confirming that the degree
may be conferred. In the case of resubmission and re-examination, the date of the
award shall be the date of the email, submitted by all the examiners, confirming
that the thesis is satisfactory and that the degree may be conferred.

- 18.3 Once a decision has been made on the examiners' recommendation(s) as laid down in Section 16, one electronic PDF copy of the approved thesis should be uploaded to RADAR as set out in the RDC-Decl RADAR form. All the other necessary documentation should be sent by email to the Research Degrees Team with the link to the online RADAR thesis submission, and the Chair of the Research Degree Committee will then sign the appropriate Conferment form which will be sent to the candidate. The final electronic copy of the approved thesis submitted to RADAR must be identical to that examined, except for where corrections have been requested and approved by the examiners following either the first oral examination, or in the case of a resubmission, the second oral examination.
- 18.4 When all the requirements of the University have been met, the award will be recorded on the Student Records System and recorded on the Certificate Team's spreadsheet as authorisation that the research degree certificate should be printed.
- 18.5 At final submission of the approved thesis, students will be required to upload an electronic PDF copy of their thesis to the University's Online Repository, RADAR, and if the thesis is not going to be held on restricted access, it will be released online by the University's Library, it will then be added to the British Library Ethos repository.
- 18.6 Where the Research Degrees Committee has agreed that the confidential nature of the candidate's work is such as to preclude the thesis being made freely available in the Research Degrees Team, the final approved thesis shall be retained by the University on restricted access and, for a time not exceeding the approved period, shall only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project.
- 18.7 Candidates wishing to attend one of the University's Graduation Ceremonies, must have been awarded their research degree at least eight weeks before the date of the next Graduation Ceremony. All amendments required by the examiners should be approved, and the final electronic copy of the thesis uploaded to RADAR, and all the necessary paperwork must be submitted to the Research Degrees Team before the award can be recorded on the Student Records System and the candidate may attend that ceremony.

18.8 The candidate shall confirm through completion of form RDC-Decl RADAR, that the final an electronic copy of the thesis may be submitted to the University's repository (RADAR).

The candidate should also confirm that:

- the thesis can be made publicly available online;
- the thesis can be made publicly available online only after an agreed period as approved by the Research Degree Committee;
- the thesis may not be made publicly available online;
- that an additional, abridged version can be made publicly available online during the limited period when the whole version of the thesis remains on restricted access;
- permission has or has not been obtained for the use of all third-party material included in the thesis and where that was not granted, those sections, images, graphics etc. have been removed from the final submission;
- request to keep the thesis on restricted access.

18.9 The candidate shall also confirm through completion of form RDC-Decl RADAR, that the final copy of the thesis includes all the work approved by the examiners at, or following viva if revisions are required.

18.10 Where the candidate wishes to publish material from the thesis following final submission, they may complete the appropriate section on the RDC-Decl RADAR form, withholding the copy of the thesis for up to for up to two years in the first instance, and where required up to a maximum of five years.

18.11 Very exceptionally at the final submission, student may request that the electronic copy of the the thesis is withheld indefinitely at Registration, and by completing the appropriate section of the RDC-Decl RADAR form.

19. Format of the thesis

19.1 All research degree examinations and vivas are carried out in person or online. Therefore, the submission of the thesis for examination should be electronic, by email, directly to the Research Degrees Team. Students must submit their thesis for examination by emailing one electronic PDF copy of your final thesis, and the completed, signed RDC-Sub submission form, to the Research Degrees Team.

Once all elements of the examination process have been completed satisfactorily, the final approved electronic copy of the thesis must be uploaded to the University's online repository, RADAR as set out in the RDC-Decl form, before the degree may be awarded. Students confirm, through the completion and submission of a declaration form RDC-Decl RADAR, that the contents of the final thesis are identical with the version submitted for examination, except where amendments have been made to meet the requirements of the examiners (Section 18).

19.2 Except with the specific permission of the Research Degree Committee the thesis shall be presented in English. Where a thesis is presented in a language

other than English, a summary in English of 1,000 words shall be included in the thesis.

- 19.3 There must be an abstract of approximately 300 words included in the thesis, and should provide a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated.
- 19.4 The thesis shall include a statement of the candidate's objectives and shall acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography or list of citations depending on the discipline) and any assistance received.
- 19.5 Where a candidate's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the thesis shall indicate clearly the candidate's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.
- 19.6 The candidate shall be free to publish material in advance of the thesis but reference shall be made in the thesis to any such work. Copies of published material should be included in the electronic copy of the thesis.
- 19.7 The thesis submitted for examination shall remain the property of the University but the copyright in the thesis shall be vested in the candidate.
- 19.8 The material excluded from the overall maximum word limit includes: the bibliography or reference lists, as well as all supplementary information such as data, including transcribed or original source data; questionnaire responses; computer listings, and previously published work by the candidate. All these elements should be included in the Appendices.

The Maximum number of words permitted in the text of a thesis itself are set out below. Please note that the number of words in a thesis submitted for examination must not exceed the maximum upper-limit for the disciplines, as described below.

To note that absolutely no applications for extension to the maximum word limit would be considered or approved.

The text of the thesis should not exceed the following length:

MSc by Research: Science, Engineering, Art and Design

30,000 words

MA or LLM by Research: Arts, Humanities, Environment, Social Sciences,
Health Care

35,000 words

Where the programme of research involves the candidate's own creative work, the written commentary should not exceed the following length:

for an MA by Research 8,000 words

Where the programme of research involves the preparation of a scholarly edition of texts or other work, the written thesis should not exceed the following length:

for and MA by Research 10,000 words

- 19.9 Absolutely no applications for extension to the maximum word limits set out above will be considered or approved. Students and Supervisors must plan the work to ensure that the final maximum word count falls within the approved limit.

To note that following examination where the examiners recommend amendments to the thesis, the additional word count that will result from the revisions requested, falls outside the limits set here.

- 19.10 The following requirements shall be adhered to in the format for all submitted theses:

- a) Theses shall be in A4 portrait format; the Research Degree Committee may give permission for a thesis to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis can be better expressed in that format;
 - b) Electronic copies of the thesis shall be presented in a legible form and the size of character used in the main text, including displayed matter and notes, shall not be less than 10 pt type for capitals and 9 pt. type for lower case;
 - c) For an electronic thesis submission, all margins should be not less than 15mm. If a hard copy submission is required the margin at the left-hand binding edge of the page shall not be less than 40mm; other margins shall not be less than 15mm;
 - d) Double or one-and-a-half spacing shall be used in the typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used;
 - e) Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages;
- (e) the title page shall give the following information:
- (1) the full title of the thesis;
 - (2) the full name of the author;

- (3) that the degree is awarded by the University;
- (4) that the thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of MA/MSc/LLM by Research;
- (5) the Collaborating Establishment(s), if any; and
- (6) the month and year of first submission.

19.11 One electronic PhD copy of the final thesis must be uploaded to RADAR and lodged in the University Library. It should be noted that it is normal practice to provide a final copy of the thesis for the Collaborating Establishment(s), Director of Studies or Faculty. The thesis must be presented as follows:

- (a) The electronic copy of the thesis should be submitted as a PDF file. The electronic thesis should be uploaded to the University's online repository RADAR as set out in the RDC-Decl RADAR form, and confirmation and the link to the online thesis sent by email to the Research Degrees Team.
- (b) Exceptionally, where final submission for the degree of PhD by Published Work or a Practice Based on the degree cannot be submitted electronically, special arrangements will be made with the Research Degree Team, to receive the final submission in another approved form, such as partially electronic with elements in a hardbound or other form of submission as required.

19.12 Exceptionally, if it is not possible to submit the thesis electronically due to the nature of the work, a hard copy may be submitted with the permission of the Research Degrees Committee. The University's copy may be bound in any colour and shall be presented as follows:

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

In addition it should be printed:

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

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

20. Complaints and appeals procedures

20.1 Complaints procedure

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

20.2 Appeal against an academic decision

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

- not to register a student for a research degree;
- not to transfer registration from MPhil to PhD;
- to revert registration from PhD to MPhil;
- to withdraw registration.

20.2.2 Such appeals will be dealt with by the Faculty in the first instance and should be referred to the Postgraduate Research Tutor or the PVC Dean of Faculty. The students should submit the appeal within 2 months of receiving notification of the academic decision.

20.2.3 The first review will be conducted as indicated above and the student notified of the outcome within 20 working days of receiving the appeal.

20.2.4 Where the matter remains unresolved, the student may appeal to the Research Degree Committee within 10 working days of despatch of the outcome of the first appeal.

20.2.5 The Research Degrees Committee Review Panel will consider the appeal and respond within 20 working days of receiving the request to review the outcome of the first appeal. No appeal can be made against decisions of the Research Degree Committee Review Panel.

20.3 Appeal against an examination decision

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

20.3.2 An appeal against an examination decision may only be made in relation to a decision of the Research Degree Committee made on the recommendation of the examiners. Given the existence of procedures for complaint and grievance during the study period (see Section 20.1), alleged inadequacy of supervisory or

other arrangements during the period of study shall not constitute grounds for appealing against an examination decision.

- 20.3.3 An appeal against an examination decision may only be made on the following grounds:
- (a) that there were circumstances affecting the candidate's performance of which the examiners were not aware at the oral examination; and/or
 - (b) that there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result might have been different had there not been such an irregularity; and/or
 - (c) that there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners - a candidate may not otherwise challenge the academic judgement of the examiners.
- 20.3.4 It should be noted that students are not permitted to appeal on the grounds of poor supervision once they have submitted their thesis for examination.
- 20.3.5 An appeal under subparagraph 20.3.3(a) will not be allowed unless:
- (a) medical certificate or other documentary evidence acceptable to the examiners is produced; and
 - (b) valid reasons can be shown why the candidate was unable or unwilling to make the relevant facts known to the examiners before their original decision was taken.
- 20.3.6 Candidates wishing to lodge an appeal should submit an application by email to the Research Degrees Team (rdt-researchdegrees@brookes.ac.uk). The Appeals procedure aims to ensure students have the opportunity to seek redress if there are grounds to indicate an irregularity has occurred. Any student who wishes to raise an appeal against an examination decision should feel able to do so without fear of subsequent victimisation.
- 20.3.7 All staff and students are required to keep information relating to an Academic Appeal confidential, except where it is necessary to progress, investigate or respond. If there is an unnecessary breach of confidentiality, it may result in formal disciplinary action being taken through the Student or Staff Disciplinary Procedure.
- 20.3.8 The University recognises that there is appropriate conduct when submitting, pursuing or investigating appeal against an examination decision. Raising a vexatious appeal is a breach of the Student Conduct Procedures and may lead to disciplinary action. The Procedure can only operate in a climate of mutual respect. It is understood that in upsetting or distressing circumstances, people may act out of character and may become persistent, angry or upset. However, where it leads to aggressive behaviour, unreasonable demands or repeated

related requests, it is considered unacceptable. The Academic Registrar reserves the right to suspend the appeals procedure if they consider the student is acting inappropriately and will write to the student to inform them of the reasons for doing so.

20.3.9 The University will investigate all appeals against examination decisions as fully as possible. Therefore, students are not allowed to submit a subsequent Appeal if the content is substantially similar to one already considered.

20.3.10 The Research Degrees Team can provide authoritative advice on the application and operation of these procedures. The [Brookes Union Advice Service](#) can provide advice independent of the University.

20.3.11 Raising an appeal against an examination decision

All requests for an appeal against an examination decision must be submitted by email to rdt-researchdegrees@brookes.ac.uk and should include:

- a clear account for the appeal based on the grounds set out in Section 20.3.3/ 20.3.4;
- clearly stated facts that support the appeal;
- sufficient evidence to support the case being made;
- the remedy the student is seeking.

20.3.12 All appeals must be received in full, within two months of the notification of the Research Degrees Committee's decision. If a student is unable to comply with that timescale but would like to submit an Appeal, they must write to the Research Degrees Team by email: (rdt-researchdegrees@brookes.ac.uk), within two months of the notification.

20.3.13 This request must include:

- a statement about why the appeal will be late, demonstrating that the circumstances which caused the delay were through no fault of the student, and could not have been accommodated by them;
- suitable evidence to demonstrate the reasons for lateness and why it was outside of the student's control.

The Research Degrees Team will notify the Student of a time limit for the submission of the full appeal within 10 working days of receiving the request.

20.3.14 The Research Degrees Team will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 5 working days.

20.3.15 The appeal will be considered by a senior member of the Directorate of Academic and Student Administration nominated by the Academic Registrar in the first instance, who will consult with the Chair of the Research Degree Committee and where appropriate the Chair of the relevant Research Degree Sub-Committee; Science and Technology or Humanities, Environment and Social

Sciences; and shall determine whether, based on the evidence presented by the candidate and having studied the supporting documentation held by the university, there is sufficient evidence to support a case for an appeal. If it is considered that the request is frivolous, vexatious or outside the permitted grounds, the Academic Registrar's nominee, shall inform the candidate in writing within 10 working days of receiving the appeal, that there is no evidence to support a case for an appeal and the reasons for this decision.

20.3.16 If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, an application may be submitted within 10 working days of notification of the outcome of the first stage, requesting that the decision is reviewed by the Registrar or Academic Registrar as appropriate. Any such request must be set out in writing and include the reasons why the student believes the decision was unjustified. The request must be received by the senior member of the Directorate of Academic and Student Administration who was nominated by the Academic Registrar to undertake the first review.

20.3.17 The Registrar or Academic Registrar will notify the student of the outcome of the second review within 10 working days of receiving the request for the review.

20.3.18 If it is considered that there is a valid case for an appeal, the Academic Registrar's nominee shall gather such evidence as is considered appropriate and likely to assist a panel in reviewing the case. This may include seeking written or oral testimony from the examiners, from other persons present at the oral examination, from supervisors or other members of the academic staff, or further evidence or statements from the candidate.

20.3.19 The appeal shall be considered by a review panel, convened by the Academic Registrar's nominee, and held within 20 working days of receiving the appeal. The review panel shall have the following composition:

- (a) a member of the Senior Management Team as Chair (preferably PVC for Research & Global Partnerships);
- (b) one Associate Dean or Head of Department;
- (c) one Professor, experienced supervisor or research active member of staff;
- (d) two research degree students nominated by the President of the Students' Union;
- (e) the Academic Registrar's nominee as secretary.

None of the members of the panel shall be a member of staff or a student in the candidate's Faculty. At least two members of the panel shall have significant experience of research degree examining.

20.3.20 The review panel shall hear the appeal. The conduct of the appeal is at the discretion of the Chair, but the candidate and the examiners shall have the right to:

- (a) submit written representations;
- (b) appear at the hearing;

- (c) call witnesses;
- (d) examine any witnesses called;
- (e) be accompanied by a friend.

20.3.21 The Internal Examiner shall be expected to attend the review panel hearing if invited to do so. In these cases, the panel will not proceed without the Internal Examiner present to represent the examining team.

20.3.22 If the review panel decides that a candidate has valid grounds for an appeal, it shall recommend that the Research Degree Committee either:

- (a) invite the examiners to reconsider their decision; or
- (b) appoint new examiners.

20.3.23 A review panel shall not be constituted as an Examination Board and shall not have the authority to recommend the award of the degree. Academic appeal procedures are internal to a provider and should not be unduly formal. It will not be appropriate for a student or the provider to be legally represented at an academic appeal hearing except in the most exceptional circumstances. The Academic Registrar will be responsible for considering whether the circumstances of an appeal are such that legal representation is appropriate.

20.3.24 The Student will be notified of the outcome within 10 working days of the review panel meeting.

20.3.25 If a candidate is dissatisfied with a decision of the Academic Registrar's nominee under paragraph 20.3.11 above, the candidate may request in writing that it be reviewed by the Academic Registrar. Any such request must be received within 10 working days of issuing the decision letter.

20.3.26 The Academic Registrar will acknowledge receipt of the request within 10 working days and will review the appeal and respond within 20 working days from receipt of the request. The decision of the Academic Registrar shall be final.

20.3.27 If a member of staff, being in possession of material that, by reason of its confidential nature, cannot be communicated to the candidate, wishes to appeal on behalf of the candidate, he or she may, with the written consent of the candidate, bring an appeal under these procedures with the substitution of 'member of staff' for 'candidate' as appropriate.

20.3.28 Throughout this procedure the Academic Registrar's nominee may nominate a senior member of her/his staff to act on her/his behalf in relation to any request for a review.

20.3.29 If the Appeal is not upheld this will be the termination of the University's Appeal against an examination procedure and a letter stating this will be sent to the student within 20 working days of the final decision being agreed.

Further Review

20.3.30 If a student has completed the University's internal Appeal procedure and they are still dissatisfied with the outcome, they may be able to refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), providing that the complaint is eligible under the OIA's Rules. A letter stating that a complainant has completed the University's internal complaint procedure shall include information on the OIA and comply with the OIA's guidance for a "Completion of Procedures" letter.

Appeal against an examination decision

University Stage of Procedure

*Timescale**

Responsibility

Submission of an Appeal against an examination decision

Within two months from the publication of the Examination Committee decision

Student

Acknowledgement of an Appeal against an examination decision

5 Working Days from Submission of Complaints and Appeals Form

Research Degrees Team

Response (Admissible or not)

10 Working Days from Submission of an Appeal against an examination decision

Academic Registrar's nominee

Student Requests a Review of the Associate Director's Decision

10 Working Days from the issue of the Response letter

Student

Acknowledgement of review request

10 Working Days from Student Request

Academic Registrar/Registrar

Response to review request

20 Working Days from Student Request

Academic Registrar

Review Panel to be convened

20 Working days from response to review request

Academic Registrar

Notification of Review Panel Decision

10 Working days from the date of the Panel meeting

Academic Registrar

If the appeal against an examination decision is not upheld this will be the termination of the University's Appeal procedure and a letter stating this will be sent to the student within 20 working days of the final decision being agreed.

*The University defines a 'working day' as Monday-Friday excluding bank holidays and other days when the University is closed.

Annex 1:

The role and responsibilities of the Research Degrees Committee

1 Powers and responsibilities of the Research Degrees Committee

1.1 The Academic Board of the University has established a Research Degrees Committee with the following powers:

- (a) to register students for MPhil, for MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD, or for PhD direct, PhD by Published Work and MA, MSc, LLM by Research on approved programmes of work under approved supervision;
- (b) to transfer registration from MPhil to PhD;
- (c) to exercise all other responsibilities for the registration, supervision, transfer, suspension and extension of registration which have been delegated to it and to approve examination arrangements;
- (d) to complete the examination process in respect of individual candidates by deciding upon the examiners' recommendations;
- (e) to consider and decide upon requests by candidates for a review of an examination decision; and
- (f) to confer all Research Degrees, Higher Degrees and Professional Doctorates awards.

1.2 The Research Degrees Committee shall be responsible for:

- (a) the general arrangements under which the candidate's research is carried out, including arrangements for academic supervision and postgraduate study and the provision of adequate facilities to enable the candidate to conduct and complete the research programme in an efficient and safe manner; and
- (b) approving examination arrangements and for the conduct of the examination.

- 1.3 The Research Degrees Committee shall assume full responsibility for and have appropriate mechanisms for dealing with all stages of the activities delegated to it, including responsibility for dealing with the recommendations of examiners.
- 1.4 The Research Degrees Committee shall ensure that the interests of students are protected and that the standard of awards is maintained under the University's Policy and Procedures Handbook for research degrees.

2 Membership

- 2.1 The membership of the Research Degrees Committee shall be constituted to ensure:
- (a) appropriate experience of completed research degree supervision;
 - (b) appropriate experience of examining research degrees;
 - (c) a wide range of research experience and research-based publications;
 - (d) subject expertise to reflect the range of disciplines in which students are registered as far as is reasonably practicable; and
 - (e) familiarity with the University's Regulations for Study and the Policy and Procedure Handbook for research degrees.
- 2.2 The above implies that:
- (a) a majority of the Research Degrees Committee shall have supervised three or more candidates to successful completion of PhD degrees;
 - (b) a substantial proportion shall have had experience of examining research degrees;
 - (c) there shall be clear evidence that members are or have been engaged in research activities leading to publication; and
 - (d) there is sufficient expertise represented on the Research Degrees Committee to ensure that each application can be dealt with appropriately.
- 2.3 No person who is registered for a research degree, with the exception of PhD by Published Work, shall be a member of the Research Degrees Committee.
- 2.4 Members may be co-opted onto the Research Degrees Committee for a period of no longer than two years.

Annex 2:

Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes, leading to the Award of the University's Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy, PhD by Published Work, MA, MSc, LLM by Research and the Research Component of the Professional Doctorate

1. Introduction

1.1 This Code of Practice sets out the responsibilities of research students enrolled at Oxford Brookes University, their supervisors and Faculties. The guidelines contained in the Code represents the University's view of what constitutes good practice for postgraduate research. This Code will be supplemented by separate Faculty guidelines covering specific Faculty practice. The Code of Practice is not intended to provide a comprehensive guide to the procedures involved in undertaking a research degree and must be read in association with the following University approved codes, regulations, policies and procedures:

- Research Degree regulations, policies and procedures;
- Code of Practice for Research Student Training;
- Intellectual Property Policy;
- Ethical Standards for Research involving Human Participants Code of Practice;
- Personal, Professional and Career Development Planner;
- Regulations, policies and procedures for the degree of PhD on the basis of Published Work;
- Regulations, policies and procedures for MA by Research, MSc by Research, LLM by Research;
- Research component of the Professional Doctorate;
- Notes of guidance for internal examiners on Research Degree Examinations;
- University Research Studentship Scheme Handbooks;
- Academic Integrity Policy.

Copies of all documentation produced by the Research Degrees Committee or the University are available from the University Regulations website.

1.2 Throughout this Code, the following terminology is used:

‘Faculties’ are administrative and academic divisions within the institution.

‘Students’ refer to those people enrolled to study for a research degree.

‘Supervisors’ are those members of staff who guide the students’ research.

The ‘Director of Studies’ is the senior member of the supervision team who has overall responsibility for the supervision of the student.

‘Postgraduate Research Tutors’ are members of staff who have responsibility for research student matters within a Faculty, on behalf of the PVC Dean of Faculty.

The ‘Research Degrees Committee’ is the senior committee in the University with responsibility for research degree matters.

‘Research Degrees Team’ is the central administrative unit, located within Student Central, which supports the Research Degrees Committee and is responsible for research degree administration.

- 1.3 These guidelines are published annually by the University, and students and their supervisors should acquaint themselves with them.
- 1.4 As defined in the University’s Research Degree Handbook an MPhil or PhD thesis should be a critical investigation and evaluation of an approved topic, including the demonstration of understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field. A PhD thesis, in addition to this, should result in an independent and original contribution to knowledge. The MPhil or PhD degree will be awarded following the presentation and defence of the thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.
- 1.5 The MA, MSc or LLM by Research shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.
- 1.6 The research component of the Professional Doctorate shall be awarded to a candidate who has demonstrated the creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research, or other scholarship, of a quality that satisfied peer review, extends the forefront of the discipline and merits publication. The thesis should meet the national qualification descriptors at D level as outlined by the QAA.
- 1.7 The University shall award the degree of PhD on the basis of Published Work to registered candidates whose submitted work forms a coherent programme of research, demonstrates the use of appropriate research methodology, and makes an original and sufficient contribution to the present state of knowledge in a particular field to the satisfaction of the examiners. The work submitted should reflect the same academic standards as those which operate for a traditional PhD based upon an approved programme of supervised research.
- 1.8 The University considers that full-time research students should be able to complete a satisfactory MPhil thesis within two years and PhD thesis within three years (and part-time students within three or four years for MPhil and five or six years for PhD) and recommends that they should initially plan their research accordingly. This Code of Practice establishes good practice to enable students at the University to complete their theses within the recommended times.

- 1.9 This document will be supplemented by Guidelines issued by individual Faculties within the University.
- 1.10 Guidance at Faculty or Department level, for example in Faculty Handbooks, will provide additional advice for students and staff. When appropriate, Faculties may consider consulting external agencies e.g. funders, concerning codes of practice for research programmes.

2. Admissions

- 2.1 Responsibility for the admission of students to a research degree lies with the PVC Dean of Faculty who may delegate that responsibility as described in 2.3 below.
- 2.2 Admissions procedures should be clear and consistently applied to ensure equality of opportunity, confidentiality and that only appropriately qualified and/or prepared students are admitted onto research programmes. The Research Degree Policy and Procedures Handbook details appropriate qualifications/ experience (see Section 2.1 to 2.5 of the Policy and Procedures section of this document).
- 2.3 Admissions decisions should always involve more than one member of appropriately experienced staff. Normally, the Faculty's or Department's Postgraduate Research Tutor or their deputy or the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee or Director of Research will be involved in the decision.
- 2.4 Admissions decisions will consider the candidate's qualifications, *curriculum vitae* and previous work. Where appropriate prior experience or certificated learning will be credited according to the requirements of the specific programmes. Two academic references will be obtained and, wherever possible, the candidate will be interviewed. Where possible a telephone or video-conferencing interview should be conducted for international candidates.
- 2.5 Appropriate evidence of competency in the use of English will be required (see section 2.4 of the Policy and Procedures section of this document).
- 2.6 Admissions decisions will take into account whether appropriate supervision is available for the research proposed and whether this supervision is likely to be sustainable (see 4.3 maximum numbers to be supervised). They will also take into account the research environment available for the work and only take on students in areas where there is a sufficiently large number of staff to supervise a particular topic.
- 2.7 Admissions decisions will take into account whether a self-funded candidate has, or is likely to secure, the necessary financial support to enable them to undertake their studies for the duration of the programme. Candidates applying from a number of countries may now be required to pay a deposit at the offer stage in order to be granted a visa for entry.

- 2.8 Where a studentship is fully or partly funded from a University or external source, the terms, conditions and remuneration available should be clearly communicated to the candidate, together with a clear indication of any other remuneration the student is likely to receive.
- 2.9 It should be noted that an offer letter constitutes a formal contract with a student and care should be taken to ensure all the details are relevant and accurate.
- 2.10 The formal offer of a place on a research student programme or research studentship should be made in writing by the Faculty and signed by the Faculty's or Department's Postgraduate Research Tutor and should include:
- 2.10.1 The total fees, including any other charges such as bench fees, which will be levied;
 - 2.10.2 A brief outline of the proposed research area and the normal period of study, including mode of study;
 - 2.10.3 The names of the supervisors (normally indicating the Director of Studies, who must be suitably qualified see 4.2) and other supervisor arrangements
 - 2.10.4 A clear statement that continuation is dependent on satisfactory academic progress
 - 2.10.5 If the research area requires Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance, the correct HECOS code must be noted. In addition to the code, a paragraph providing a concise, but detailed account of the proposed research must be included, complex technical details should be included if appropriate;
 - 2.10.6 The nature and extent of other duties (e.g. teaching) required (if any)
 - 2.10.7 The name and requirements and conditions of any sponsor, CASE award or similar (if any)
 - 2.10.8 A summary of the general facilities that will be made available¹
 - 2.10.9 Requirements of attendance, holiday allocation, progress reports and review¹
 - 2.10.10 Detail of compulsory Faculty or Department research methods or other training courses if any¹
 - 2.10.11 The University's terms and conditions governing entry to and study on the research programme, Ethics policy, Intellectual Property Rights policy and Health and Safety information¹
- 2.11 Should the need arise, the University will implement other regulations and policies relating to misconduct, including plagiarism as laid down in the following documents:

- Academic Integrity;
- Cheating and Plagiarism;
- Data Protection;
- Research Ethics;
- University's Student Behaviour Policy and the Academic Conduct and Student Conduct procedures.

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

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

¹These may be included with the covering letter as supporting documentation; however, reference to their importance should be made in the letter.

2.14.1 It is essential that the Research Degrees Team be informed of the offer as soon as the letter is sent to the student and a copy of all correspondence relating to the offer must be lodged with the Research Degrees Team.

3. Induction

Both the University and Faculties will carry out induction of new research students. Induction will include written information and formal or informal meetings.

On enrolment all students will receive information from the Research Degrees Team on:

Research degree procedures and forms, together with key dates and deadlines
 Student welfare
 Training programmes
 Maps and details of the University's facilities
 Relevant University policy documents
 Information on complaints and appeals procedures

3.1.2 Faculties and/or Departments will run a formal or informal induction event to enable students to be introduced to staff involved in research degree supervision, monitoring and administration. This event (or events) will include:

The Faculty research environment, including resources and facilities
 Health and safety
 Faculty research training events
 Dates, deadlines, monitoring, progression and review procedures

Expectations of student conduct and academic standards

Ethics

Intellectual Property Rights

Complaints and appeals procedures within the Faculty

Opportunities for networking within the Faculty

Opportunities within the Faculty for feedback and comment on issues related to supervision, facilities and other resources

Opportunities for networking external to the Faculty, including funding sources for attendance at conferences.

3.2 The University will also run an induction event which will include:

Research training events and managing the training process

Time management and milestones

Student supervisor relationships

The process of registering for a research degree

Monitoring and progression, including an introduction to the Research Degrees Committee

An introduction to the facilities of the University including Library and Learning Resources

4. Supervision

4.1 The student will be supervised by a team which will be led by a Director of Studies and include normally one or two Second Supervisors. The PVC Dean of Faculty or Deputy has the responsibility for ensuring that a Director of Studies is appointed for each student. The Director of Studies would normally be appointed simultaneously with the offer of a place. Under no circumstances should Faculties ask students to find their own supervisors.

4.2 No member of staff should be appointed as Director of Studies unless they have supervised one research student to completion and completed key components of the Supervisor Training Course.² Where a Director of Studies only has one completion, whether it as Director of Studies, Second Supervisor or Third Supervisor, the supervision of that research programme must have been for more than two thirds of the whole programme, anything less will not be considered sufficient to meet this requirement. However, where a member of staff has had substantial experience of supervising graduate students and where the team as a whole has supervised at least two PhD, Masters by Research or Professional Doctorate students to completion, the relevant Committee with the Faculty or Department Postgraduate Research Tutor, will assess whether the experience is sufficient to take on the role of Director of Studies. The recommendation must be approved by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee before the member of staff can be appointed.

4.3 One individual shall not normally be Director of Studies for more than six full-time research students (pro rata for part-time students) and a further six students may be supervised as Second Supervisor, but the total number should not exceed a maximum of twelve students. The Postgraduate Research Tutor and PVC Dean of Faculty or Head of Department shall assess the workload of a member of staff to

ascertain the appropriate number of students to be supervised by that individual. Supervisory time should be included in the individual's workload plan.

- 4.4 Staff acting in the role of Second Supervisor should not supervise more than six full-time students (pro rata for part-time). If this number is exceeded, a letter should be provided from the PVC Dean of Faculty, confirming that the numbers allocated to the individual had been addressed through the Faculty work load planning review.
- 4.5 At least one supervisor should normally be a member of academic staff of the University. The PVC Dean of Faculty must ensure that the supervisors are suitably qualified for the proposed project. The supervisory team should have substantial research experience in the relevant subject area and normally have experience of supervising at least two research degree candidates to successful and timely completion at the appropriate level (see Section 9.5 of this document).
- 4.6 Supervisors are entitled to decide what subjects they can usefully supervise; although every effort will be made, the University cannot guarantee that students will be able to work with any particular supervisor or that they will have the same supervisor throughout their period of study at the University.
- 4.7 A student may ask for a change of supervisor if the student considers the relationship between the student and supervisor has irretrievably broken down and the student should take the matter up with the Director of Studies in the first instance. If there is no way to resolve the situation, the matter should be referred to the Postgraduate Research Tutor, stating the reasons for the proposed change. The Postgraduate Research Tutor should then advise the PVC Dean of Faculty of the most appropriate action, such as the appointment of an additional or replacement supervisor. If the supervisor in question is the Postgraduate Research Tutor, the matter should be taken up with the PVC Dean of Faculty.
- 4.8 Supervisors must demonstrate their willingness to maintain and update the relevant supervisory skills. This should include attending the training provided by the University's Director of Researcher Development.
- 4.9 Exceptionally the role of Director of Studies may be divided between no more than two Co-Directors of Studies. A Co-Director of Studies may supervise twelve students but this should not be added to the full quota allowed for other supervisory roles. In these cases the role of each person would have to be clearly identified at the outset and a case made to the relevant Sub-Committee for approval.
- 4.10 All part-time lecturers and supervisors, whether internal members of staff or external, must be issued with a contract containing full details of their role and responsibilities in relation to their supervisory role on a student's team.

² *Key components include attendance at relevant elements of the Supervisor Training Programme. The level of equivalent courses will be considered by the University's Director of Researcher Development, the Faculty or Department Postgraduate Research Tutor and Chair of the Research Degrees Committee.*

5 External Supervisors

- 5.1 External supervisors should also engage in the training activities designed to enhance their supervisory capabilities. Such supervisors will be invited to attend relevant training offered by the University or should record attendance at equivalent training with the Research Degrees Team. The Research Degrees Committee will ensure that external supervisors have the range of current skills required for their role in the supervisory team.
- 5.2 External supervisors must also comply with all other requirements laid out in the University's Code of Practice and this Policy and Procedures Handbook.

6 Responsibilities of the Supervision Team

- 6.1 The Director of Studies is responsible for the supervision of the student and the work of the supervision team. The roles and responsibilities of the supervisory team will be agreed at the start of each student's programme (see Section 2.9). Supervisory agreements will be reviewed as an ongoing process by the Research Degrees Committee at the key milestones for the relevant programme: e.g. registration, transfer from MPhil to PhD and as part of annual monitoring.
- 6.2 The supervision team must have knowledge of a student's subject area and/or theoretical approach to be applied. The roles and responsibilities of the team must be articulated in the RDC application for approval of registration and as part of any application for change of supervisory arrangements. If a student's work goes significantly outside the supervision team's field, the supervisors and the Faculty should be responsible for finding specialists either inside or outside the University who could be appointed as an advisor; this may in some cases involve a change in the supervision arrangements. All applications must be approved by the Research Degrees Committee.
- 6.3 There should be regular supervisory sessions between the student and a member of the supervisory team. Practice and frequency will inevitably vary from Faculty to Faculty and at different stages of the research, but, as a guideline, 44 hours per year would be appropriate for full-time students (based on the notion of one hour per week). For part-time students the equivalent time should be approximately half of this. Frequency of meetings and the nature of supervisory sessions should be agreed at the outset and reviewed regularly. It is recommended that the supervision team should meet as a whole once a Semester. Supervisory sessions may take the form of meetings, email interactions, telephone discussions, video conferencing, Zoom workshops, seminars and conferences, as deemed appropriate by the supervisory team. It is important that supervisory sessions should be largely uninterrupted by telephone calls, personal callers or Faculty business. It is advisable to arrange the time of the next meeting at the end of each session.
- 6.4 If the student has an urgent problem, the supervisors should deal with the matter as soon as possible. If this were not possible the student should be referred to the Postgraduate Research Tutor or PVC Dean of Faculty.

- 6.5 Directors of Studies should inform their students and the Postgraduate Research Tutor of times when they will be away from the University for any extended period so that the students can plan accordingly and the Faculty can make special arrangements if necessary.
- 6.6 The supervisors should review and critically comment on the student's work as it progresses, normally within two weeks. However, in the case of a student submitting a substantial number of chapters or the final draft of the thesis for assessment, the timescale for reviewing the work will be agreed with the supervisors.
- 6.7 The supervisors should assist new students to plan their time, draw up a programme of work and monitor their subsequent progress. The supervisors should assist students in completing the application to register for a research degree. The application has to be approved by the Postgraduate Research Tutor or the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee and should normally be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee within the first 6 months after initial enrolment. The Research Degrees Committee will not backdate the effective date of registration by more than 6 months unless for good reason (see section 5.1 of the Policy and Procedures section of this document). The supervisors should be aware of the requirements of some funding bodies that renewal of funding can depend on successful transfer from MPhil to PhD and should help students on such contracts to plan their work accordingly. It is the supervisors' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary administrative steps in undertaking a research degree - such as registration, transfer, approval of examiners, suspension or extension of registration - are carried out promptly at the appropriate time.
- 6.8 Supervisors should keep a record of formal supervisory sessions with students and where possible they should also keep a note of other interactions by recording the date and time of the sessions and the major areas of discussion. In addition, students should comply with Section 7.2 below, and keep a record of all meetings with supervisors and sign them confirming the agreed outcome of the meeting. An email is an acceptable alternative to a signature when necessary and these records should be made available to the PVC Dean of Faculty or Postgraduate Research Tutor upon request. Other documents, such as medical certificates, which might have a bearing on the student's ability or capability to progress in a satisfactory manner, must also be kept.
- 6.9 Once the annual monitoring process has been completed, the Director of Studies should then summarise the outcome of the monitoring and submit an annual report on the student's progress, on the RDC annual monitoring form. When the supervisory team have completed their reports the form is sent to the Postgraduate Research Tutor or Faculty Research Committee who will review the report and once they are satisfied with the report, they will sign it on behalf of the Faculty and forward it to the Research Degrees Team. This assessment process must include one person external to the supervisory team and all students should be interviewed each year as part of the monitoring process. All annual monitoring reports are reviewed by the Research Degrees Team and any concerns or outstanding actions

are reported to the appropriate subject Sub-Committee of the University's Research Degrees Committee.

- 6.10 The supervisors must ensure that the student is notified in writing by the Director of Studies if either progress or the standard of work is unsatisfactory, and arrange any necessary remedial action. Copies of the reports etc. should be held by the Director of Studies on his/her copy of the student's file and an email will be accepted as the equivalent to a signature when confirming agreement of these records.
- 6.11 It is the responsibility of the supervisors to ensure that the data, results, and information collated by the student during his or her research are freely available to the student for the purposes of the research degree for which the student is registered.
- 6.12 Any public output resulting from the student's work should give due acknowledgement of the student's contribution, generally through co-authorship.
- 6.13 In matters relating to intellectual property rights, supervisors should refer to the University's IPR policy.
- 6.14 Supervisors should advise their students about courses within the University which may complement their field of research. Supervisors should also consider any training which can be provided in generic skills (as detailed in the University Code of Practice for Research Student Training).
- 6.15 The supervisors should take an active part in introducing the student to meetings of learned societies, seminars and workshops and to other research workers in the field. The supervisors should give advice on writing up the research work in the form of papers and the final thesis, and should give advice on publication as appropriate.
- 6.16 The supervisors should nominate internal and external examiners to the Research Degrees Committee for approval at least two/three months before the expected date of submission of the thesis, and should ensure that the student is made fully aware of the examination procedures.
- 6.17 Supervisors must ensure that the agreed sections of their student's work is submitted through Turnitin as required each year as part of Annual Progress Monitoring, and that work submitted for examination has been correctly referenced.
- 6.18 Supervisors must ensure that their students begin to obtain permission for the use of all third-party copyright material from an early stage in the programme in order that it may be included in the publicly available online version of the thesis.

7 Responsibilities of the Student

- 7.1 The student should prepare, with the assistance of the supervisors, an application to register for a research degree. The application has to be approved by the Postgraduate Research Tutor or the Chair of the Faculty Research Committee and should normally be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee within the first 6 months after initial enrolment. The Research Degrees Committee will not backdate the effective date of registration by more than 6 months unless for good reason (see section 5.2 of the Policy and Procedures section of this document). Exceptionally, if a student has not registered their proposal by the fifth meeting of the appropriate RDC subject Sub-Committee meeting following first enrolment; on the recommendation of a student's supervisors and the Faculty or Departmental Postgraduate Research Tutor, the Research Degree Committee will terminate the student's enrolment.

In the application the student should define the area of research, show familiarity with appropriate background knowledge and the context within which the research is to be set, outline the literature review, and prepare a proposed plan of work. Students are advised to read the Research Degrees Committee's Notes of Guidance on Completing the Application to Register for a Research Degree, Form RDC-R and the details set out in each section of the form before completing the application form.

- 7.2 The responsibility is on students to generate topics for discussion with their supervisors and to set the agenda for supervisory sessions. Students should keep a record of their meetings with supervisors and sign them confirming what has been agreed. It is the student's responsibility to make contact with the supervisor. Any serious problems a student has with a supervisor, including those of access, should be taken up by the student with the supervisor, or with the Postgraduate Research Tutor.
- 7.3 In their own interests, students should submit their work frequently to their supervisors for review.
- 7.4 Students should take note of the guidance and feedback from their supervisors.
- 7.5 Students are required to produce a brief written annual progress report on their research, which should be submitted to the Postgraduate Research Tutor and copied to the supervisors. In addition, Faculty's will have in place a procedure which gives students the opportunity to comment directly to the Postgraduate Research Tutor or PVC Dean of Faculty on the adequacy of supervision and facilities provided for their research.
- 7.6 Students are required to attend both the Faculty and the University Training programmes (as detailed in the Code of Practice for Research Training)
- 7.7 Students are required to participate in any research seminar programme organised by the Faculty, where they can present their work to their peers. Students are advised that this is an important part of their course.
- 7.8 Students should generally produce all written work for the thesis in the appropriate professional style.

- 7.9 Students are required to present the final version of the thesis to their Director of Studies before submission.
- 7.10 Students should acknowledge the University and their supervisors in any public output which results from their research degree work.
- 7.11 In matters relating to intellectual property rights, students should refer to the University's IPR policy.
- 7.12 Students must ensure that agreed sections of their work are submitted through Turnitin as required by their Director of Studies and that all work submitted for examination has been referenced correctly.
- 7.13 Students must ensure that they have obtained permission for the use of all third-party copyright material to allow its inclusion in the publicly available online version of the thesis.

8 Responsibilities of the Faculty

- 8.1 The PVC Dean of Faculty is responsible for ensuring that a member of staff is appointed as Postgraduate Research Tutor for the Faculty, who will have responsibility for research students within the Faculty or Department.
- 8.2 Each Faculty will have an appropriate committee that will have responsibility for reviewing student progress and other postgraduate matters. It is recommended that this committee consists of the PVC Dean of Faculty or Deputy, Chair of the Research Committee; the Postgraduate Research Tutor (or tutors), at least two or three members of academic staff, and, where appropriate, a student representative. It is considered inappropriate for student representatives to be present when the progress of individual students is being discussed.
- 8.3 Each Faculty will produce its own guidelines for students, which will include what expectations it has for their progress, the specific Faculty procedures for monitoring expectations it has for their progress, the specific Faculty procedures for monitoring progress, and the timetable for transfer to PhD where appropriate progress, and the timetable for transfer to PhD where appropriate.
- 8.4 The progress and status of all research students, including Professional Doctorate students, full-time and part-time, must be reviewed annually by each Faculty. Candidates must produce a brief written annual progress report or equivalent, about their research as appropriate for their discipline (approximately 1,000 words). Where appropriate, students may be asked to submit particular chapters of their thesis as part of the monitoring assessment. The work should be submitted to the Faculty or Departmental Postgraduate Research Tutors and copied to the Supervisory Teams in accordance with the annual monitoring procedures. This assessment process must include one person external to the supervisory team and all students should be interviewed each year as part of the monitoring process.

- 8.5 Each Faculty must ensure that progress monitoring occurs during the first year of study and either at transfer of registration or the end of the second year for full-time students and pro-rata for part-time students. Where a student has registered for PhD direct, in addition to the first-year report, a full progress review must take place at the end of the second year and should include an interview. The monitoring must include someone external to the supervisory team. Appropriate arrangements must be made for all students to make two oral presentations during their research degree programme and these should form part of progress monitoring.
- 8.6 The PVC Dean of Faculty, in conjunction with the Postgraduate Research Tutor, must ensure that no supervisor is overloaded with supervisory responsibilities. The recommended maximum number of registered research students for each supervisor must be laid out by each Faculty and will vary according to the supervisor's other duties. In making this judgement, the PVC Dean of Faculty should bear in mind the guidelines for supervisory sessions in paragraph 6.3 above, and the recommendation of the University Research Degrees Committee that a supervisor's load should not normally exceed that of six full-time students or equivalent supervised as Director of Studies with a further six students supervised as a Second Supervisor. Supervision contact with research students is to be allocated as part of the formal contact hours of staff. PVC Deans may choose to divide the contact between the members of the supervision team. The terms of the allowable contact hours should be made explicit to the supervisors and the student. The Research Degrees Committee will retain the right not to approve a registration for a research degree if, in its judgement, the supervisor(s) would be overloaded by approving it.
- 8.7 Exceptionally the role of Director of Studies may be divided between no more than two Co-Directors of Studies. A Co-Director of Studies may supervise twelve students but this should not be added to the full quota allowed for other supervisory roles. In these cases, the role of each person would have to be clearly identified at the outset and a case made to the relevant Sub-Committee for approval. Where the role of Director of Studies is divided in this way, a second supervisor is also required to complete the team.
- 8.8 The PVC Dean of Faculty, in conjunction with the Postgraduate Research Tutor, should ensure that supervisors have the training and support they require to undertake effective supervision. This support might include recommending a supervisor to attend various training courses, conferences and seminars; teaching relief; and adjustment of other Faculty responsibilities to take account of the supervisory load. The PVC Dean of Faculty, in conjunction with the Postgraduate Research Tutor must ensure that students are accepted into an environment that provides support for doing and learning about research and where high-quality research is occurring. Where this environment is not already in place, they must facilitate networking links with the wider research community within the Faculty or Department. The Research Degrees Committee has overall responsibility, on behalf of the University, to ensure that appropriate training for supervisors is available and to monitor this provision.

- 8.9 The staff development and appraisal system should be used to identify training needs and PVC Deans of Faculty should review supervisors' responsibilities on an annual basis.
- 8.10 The PVC Dean of Faculty should discuss complaints with the supervisor if the supervisor is criticised for poor supervision. If the complaint is substantiated, the PVC Dean of Faculty should recommend remedial action, such as training or, if necessary, withdraw the supervisor from supervision duties.
- 8.11 In cases where the supervisor being criticised is also the PVC Dean of Faculty, the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee will have the responsibilities set out in paragraph 8.6 above.
- 8.12 Appropriate action should be taken by the Postgraduate Research Tutor to ensure that the supervision of students is maintained when a Director of Studies either leaves the University or is temporarily absent for a period longer than six weeks. This may involve a change in roles within the supervision team or the appointment of an additional or replacement supervisor.
- 8.13 The Faculty must, when asking research students to teach undergraduate students, provide appropriate instruction. Students whose teaching duties exceed 50 hours per year are required to attend the training course run by the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development. Undergraduate teaching should be distributed amongst research students as fairly as possible to prevent individual students from being overloaded, which could have a detrimental effect on their research. Full-time students should not be required to undertake more than 6 hours of teaching duties per week including all teaching related activities. In total Full-time students must not be employed for more than 20 hours a week at any time during the course of their programme.
- 8.14 It is the responsibility of the PVC Dean of Faculty to ensure that the level and amount of teaching duties undertaken by a student are appropriate to the student's experience in this area.
- 8.15 Special arrangements should be made where faults or a shortage of specialised equipment causes delay to the student, and the Faculty should attempt to minimise such disruption.
- 8.16 The Faculty must ensure that the student has access to all the data, results and information collated during the course of his or her research and that this is freely available to the student for the purposes of the research degree for which the student is registered.
- 8.17 Faculties must ensure that the progress of all students is monitored formally on an annual basis. The annual 1,000 written progress report produced by the student should be submitted to the Postgraduate Research Tutor, and the progress report should be followed up by an interview at the end of the student's first year and, where necessary, in subsequent years. In addition to any usual informal meetings with the Postgraduate Research Tutor, students are entitled to request an annual interview.

- 8.18 Faculties must have in place a separate procedure which allows students to anonymously comment on the adequacy of supervision and facilities provided for their research. This could be done through a form submitted to the PVC Dean of Faculty or Postgraduate Research Tutor or Deputy and the issues raised would be reported to the Research Degrees Committee for consideration. The Faculty must also ensure that an annual interview takes place between the students and the Postgraduate Research Tutor to discuss specific supervisory issues. Faculties must ensure that these procedures are made clear to the students.
- 8.19 Faculties should arrange seminars on a regular basis where students can present work to their peers.
- 8.20 All students should have training in research methods appropriate to their discipline and Faculties should ensure that appropriate research training programmes are in place to achieve this.
- 8.21 In addition, all students should have training in appropriate generic skills such as computing skills, communication and presentation skills, and report writing.
- 8.22 The Faculty is responsible for ensuring that the students are fully aware of the relevant Health and Safety Policy.
- 8.23 The Faculty must ensure that students receive appropriate training regarding plagiarism and the use of an appropriate referencing system.

9 Temporary Suspension and Extension of Period of Registration

- 9.1 Exceptionally a candidate may apply to the Research Degrees Committee for a temporary suspension or extension of registration for not more than one year at a time and for not more than a maximum of two years. All applications will be considered on an individual basis and a case must be made by the student, which will be judged on merit, approval will not automatically be granted.
- 9.2 Applications for suspension of registration will only be considered in circumstances related to illness / accident, exceptional personal circumstances, maternity leave, or where a difficult language has to be learnt. If a student applies for a suspension of registration due to illness lasting for any period longer than 4 weeks, a medical certificate must be given to the Postgraduate Research Tutor to support the application. If a suspension falls during an academic year, fees will not be payable for that period only.
- 9.3 A candidate may apply to the Research Degrees Committee for an extension to their period of registration. Extensions will be considered for time unavoidably lost through circumstances outside the control of the individual concerned or where a student's progress has been hindered through extreme pressure of external work for a limited period. Sympathetic consideration will be given to cases where the student has been absent through illness supported by a valid medical certificate.

- 9.4 Faculties should note that in the case of students in receipt of Research Council funded studentships, the process for being granted a suspension or extension of registration may differ from those applied at Oxford Brookes. It is important the Directors of Studies contact the Head of the Research Degrees Team for advice before the student begins the period of suspension as failure to follow their procedures may lead to the funding bodies imposing sanctions on the University as a whole for a substantial period of time.

10 Responsibilities of the Research Degrees Committee

- 10.1 The University is responsible, through the Research Degree Committee, for the process of registering students, approving any changes to the status of students and approving examiners; for providing the framework for the discussion of policy relating to research students; for providing a central induction programme for students; for providing the framework for the training of supervisors; and for ensuring the adequacy of the arrangements for research training for students.
- 10.2 The Research Degree Committee is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of Faculty's Research Degree programmes. All Faculties must undertake a full annual review of their programme and forward the report to the Research Degrees Committee for consideration.

The annual monitoring undertaken by both Faculties and the Research Degree Committee should include:

- recruitment profiles;
- feedback from research students via an Exit Questionnaire;
- feedback from sponsors and funding bodies;
- the number of appeals and complaints and how many were upheld;
- an analysis of comments from examiners.

11 Completion

- 11.1 The supervisors and student should agree a timetable for completion which should include approval of the thesis title, nomination of the examiners, entry for the examination and compliance with other regulations of the University.
- 11.2 There should be no unreasonable delay in examining a thesis once it has been submitted to the University; three months is a reasonable maximum in most circumstances. However, the viva would not normally be arranged in less than 4 weeks from the date of submission.
- 11.3 In cases where a thesis is referred for resubmission in revised form, the Postgraduate Research Tutor should be informed of the situation and if appropriate, the student invited to discuss his or her position with the Postgraduate Research Tutor and supervisors. The supervisors should continue supervision until the thesis is resubmitted. If there are difficulties between supervisor and student, the Postgraduate Research Tutor should arrange alternative supervision arrangements.

11.4 An Independent Chair should be appointed in cases such as those outlined in the Guidance Notes for the appointment of an Independent Chair. The Independent Chair should, where possible be proposed when the examiners are nominated for approval. All internal examiners must attend relevant training to ensure consistency and standardisation of the processes.

12 Complaints and Appeals Procedures

12.1 Students wishing to raise a complaint must do so in accordance with the University Student Complaint Procedure. Complaints may be in relation to a variety of university services including those in relation to the supervision of the research, the resources provided for it or any other of the obligations of the University in relation to the research (other than the conduct or result of an examination). A Complaint should be taken to the Postgraduate Research Tutor in the first instance and/or the PVC Dean of Faculty. A candidate who has a grievance against the University in relation to the supervision of the research, the resources provided for it or any other of the obligations of the University in relation to the research (other than the conduct or result of an examination, see Section 20.2 of the Policy and Procedures section of this document) may pursue the matter under the University's Student Complaint Procedure.

12.2 Students have the right to appeal against the following academic decisions made by a supervision team as relevant to the particular degree: not to register a student for a research degree, not to transfer registration from MPhil to PhD, to revert registration from PhD to MPhil, or to withdraw registration. Such appeals will be dealt with by the Faculty in the first instance and should be referred to the Postgraduate Research Tutor or the PVC Dean of Faculty. Where the matter remains unresolved, the student may appeal to the Research Degrees Committee. No appeal can be made against decisions of the Research Degrees Committee.

12.3 Students may request a review of an examination decision, either at the first examination or re-examination (section 20 of the Policy and Procedures section of this document refers). A request for a review may only be made on the following grounds: that there were circumstances affecting the student's performance of which the examiners were not aware; that there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination; or that there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners. As procedures exist for addressing grievances during the period of study, alleged inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements during the period of study do not constitute grounds for requesting a review of the examination decision. Candidates wishing to lodge a complaint or appeal should refer to the University's Appeals, Complaints and Conduct procedures which are available on the University's Central website. Details of the appeals process can be found above in Section 20.2 of this Policy and Procedure Handbook.

Approved by Research Degrees Committee: 2 March 2021

Updated by Research Degrees Committee: 14th October 2025

Approved by Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee: 2nd December 2025

Approved by Academic Board –