

A2: Regulations for research degrees: Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Clinical Practice (DClinPrac), Doctor of Engineering (EngD), and Doctor of Psychology (PsychD)

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1. These *Regulations* should be read in conjunction with the University's [Code of practice for research degrees](#).

### **Admission**

2. An applicant holding an appropriate degree may be admitted to a research programme leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) with probationary status (with registration subject to confirmation). The minimum requirement for registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with probationary status will normally be that of an honours degree (Second Class, First Division) from a UK university or other qualification deemed by the Senate to be equivalent.
3. An applicant holding an appropriate degree may be admitted solely to a research programme leading to the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil). Should the student subsequently wish to transfer their registration to the Doctor of Philosophy then they would need to apply to register and undertake the confirmation.
4. An applicant who is registered with the General Medical Council and working within the NHS or an approved institution may be admitted to a programme of study and research leading to the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD).
5. An applicant holding an appropriate degree may be admitted to a programme of study, research and, as appropriate, practice, leading to one of the following Practitioner Doctorate awards:
  - Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)<sup>1</sup>
  - Doctor of Clinical Practice (DClinPrac)<sup>2</sup>
  - Doctor of Engineering (EngD)
  - Doctor of Psychology (PsychD)
6. An applicant who is not a graduate may be admitted provided that the applicant holds professional or other qualifications and/or work experience as deemed appropriate by the Executive Dean of Faculty.
7. An applicant may not be admitted to a research degree unless the applicant has first been accepted by the Executive Dean of the Faculty in which the applicant proposes to study through the admissions procedures specified in the [Code of practice for research degrees](#). The admission of an applicant may be subject to conditions specified by the Executive Dean of Faculty.

### **English language requirements**

8. Applicants will be required to satisfy the admissions panel of an ability to understand and communicate in both written and spoken English consistent with the University's current threshold level in IELTS or equivalent. IELTS scores, or equivalent, must be current and have been obtained no earlier than two years of the start date of the programme. It may be appropriate to ask for more than the minimum level in certain disciplines.

### **Registration**

9. A research student must register at the start of the programme and shall undertake to comply with the Charter, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations of the University. Research students will normally be able to register in October, January, April and July. A student must re-enrol by the specified date for each year the programme is pursued. The registration of a student who fails to re-enrol by the specified date may

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<sup>1</sup> There are no new registrations on this programme.

<sup>2</sup> There are no new registrations on this programme.

be deemed to have lapsed and will be terminated. No student is entitled to register or re-enrol unless the prescribed fees have been paid.

***Simultaneous registration***

10. A student pursuing a research degree may not simultaneously register for another award of the University, or any other university, except that:
  - if a student has completed a programme of study for another award but the award has not been made, the student may register provisionally for a period not exceeding three months
  - if a student is studying for a dual award as approved in accordance with the [Code of practice for collaborative provision](#)

***Subsidiary awards***

11. Where the taught component of a research degree is credit-bearing students who exit the programme early, having accumulated sufficient credit, will be entitled to a subsidiary award of a Postgraduate Certificate or a Postgraduate Diploma. Any credit-based subsidiary award offered as a part of a research degree must be approved through the validation and/or periodic programme review procedures.
12. No student may receive more than one award for a given programme of study. Exceptionally, a student who has received a subsidiary award may be permitted by the Executive Dean of Faculty to re-enrol for the next part of the programme but may receive the more advanced award only upon surrendering the first award.

***Transfer from another institution***

13. The University may permit a student who has started a research degree at another institution to complete it as a registered student of the University of Surrey. The University shall specify the minimum and maximum periods of study and research in each case and the student will be required to apply to the University through the standard admissions procedure.

***Mode of study***

14. A research degree may be pursued:
  - on a full-time or part-time basis at the University
  - on a full-time or part-time basis with a collaborative organisation including placement providers
  - on a full-time or part-time basis where the research student's time is divided between the University and a collaborative organisation

***Study on a collaborative basis***

15. Where an application to study on a collaborative basis is being considered, a formal, written, collaborative agreement between the University and the collaborating organisation is required in accordance with the [Code of practice for collaborative provision](#).

***Transfer between modes of study***

16. A student may be permitted by the Admission Progression and Examination Subcommittee (APESC) to transfer between full-time and part-time registration. The minimum and maximum periods of registration shall be determined in each case according to the periods in which the student was registered under each mode.

## Doctoral programmes

17. A programme of research for doctoral degrees must include all of the following:
- original research leading to a contribution to new knowledge
  - sufficient study in discipline-specific matters as to permit a graduate to contribute at the forefront of the relevant profession or research
  - training in elements that allow the student to develop discipline-specific and transferable and generic skills

### **PhD**

18. In accordance with the level 8 of the QAA [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#), the thesis will demonstrate:
- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
  - a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
  - the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
  - a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry

### **MD**

19. The thesis submitted for Doctor of Medicine will have the characteristics listed above but the research is likely to draw on clinical or laboratory work and may involve clinical trials or other work with patients in the practical/clinical setting<sup>3</sup>.

### **MPhil**

20. A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy will be informed by the forefront of an academic or professional discipline, will show originality in the application of knowledge, and will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research<sup>4</sup>. The student will have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the discipline informed by current scholarship and research, including a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject; the ability to study independently in the subject; the ability to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to advanced scholarship in the subject<sup>5</sup>.

### **Practitioner doctorates**

21. Theses or portfolios submitted for a practitioner doctorate will demonstrate the same characteristics listed in Regulation 17 above but the research will normally be rooted in a professional field as well as in an academic discipline.

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<sup>3</sup> [Doctoral degree characteristics statement](#)

<sup>4</sup> [The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Master's degree characteristics statement](#)

### Minimum and maximum periods of study

22. The minimum and maximum periods of study, and where applicable expected period of study, for the awards covered by these *Regulations* are as listed below.

Programme	Minimum period of registration	Expected period of registration	Maximum period of registration
MPhil Full-time	20 months	N/A	36 months
MPhil Part-time	40 months	N/A	72 months
PhD Full-time	30 months	36 months or within the duration of research funding if longer	48 months
PhD Part-time	48 months	72 months or within the duration of research funding if longer	96 months
MD Full-time	24 months	N/A	36 months
MD Part-time	48 months	N/A	72 months
DBA Part-time	48 months	N/A	72 months
DClinPrac Part-time	48 months	N/A	60 months
EngD Full-time	45 months	N/A	54 months
PsychD Full-time	36 months	N/A	48 months
PsychD Part-time <sup>6</sup>	60 months	N/A	72 months

23. The minimum period of registration can be reduced further on the condition that the case for reduction is supported by the student, supervisors and Executive Dean of Faculty and is approved by the Admission Progression and Examination Subcommittee.

### Extensions and withdrawal

24. A student retains the right to permanently withdraw from a research degree.

<sup>6</sup> PsychD in Clinical Psychology is available only on a full-time basis; PsychD in Psychotherapeutic and Counselling Psychology may be pursued on the basis of full-time study for the first twelve months, followed by part-time study over the following four years.

***Extension of time***

25. The Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee will consider requests for extension where there has been:
  - failure or unavailability of specialist equipment or resources required for research that causes significant delay to progress that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal
  - a gap in supervision where a supervisor leaves or is absent for more than a month and cover has not been put in place that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal. There will need to be a demonstrable impact on the progress of the project
  - where a supervisor has not adhered to their responsibilities under the [Code of practice for research degrees](#), resulting in a material impact on the progress of the project that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal
  - where Additional Learning Support (ALS) recommend a learning adjustment that necessitates extension of registration that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal
  - physical or mental health-related circumstances that cannot be managed by temporary withdrawal
26. A student may apply for an extension to the maximum period of registration or resubmission period by submitting a request to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee. The maximum extension to a period of registration is twelve months aggregate. If a student is not granted an extension and has reached the maximum period of registration then their registration will be terminated on the grounds that it has lapsed.
27. All requests for extension will be made by the student on the standard pro-forma and accompanied by supporting evidence. Requests for extension without supporting evidence will not be considered by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee. Students are required to provide a timeline for submission with interim, testable milestones.
28. A request for extension requires the support of the supervisors and Executive Dean of Faculty. If the supervisors or Executive Dean of Faculty do not support the extension request, the student is at liberty to submit the request directly to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee for consideration. All requests for extension are subject to approval by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee.
29. Students in receipt of funding are advised to check the terms of their scholarship. International students are also advised to check their visa status before making a request for extension.
30. Retrospective applications for extensions will not be considered without valid extenuating circumstances.

***Temporary withdrawal***

31. It is expected that registration for a research degree will be continuously pursued. However, the Executive Dean of Faculty may recommend to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee that a student be granted a period of temporary withdrawal. In all but the most exceptional cases, students will not be permitted a period of temporary withdrawal in excess of twelve months aggregate over the period of registration.



32. The Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee will consider requests for temporary withdrawal where there has been:
- (i) bereavement through the death of a close relative or significant other that in employment would lead to a reasonable employer to grant compassionate leave. In such cases the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee will require independent evidence of the nature of the relationship;
  - (ii) serious short-term illness or accident of a nature that, in employment, would lead a reasonable employer to agree absence on sick leave;
  - (iii) a long-term (chronic) health problem suddenly worsening;
  - (iv) for part-time students in full-time employment only, a significant increase in their workload due to circumstances beyond their control;
  - (v) maternity or paternity;
  - (vi) a gap in supervision where a supervisor leaves or is absent for more than a month and cover has not been put in place;
  - (vii) where the supervisor has not adhered to their responsibilities under the [Code of practice for research degrees](#) resulting in a material impact on the progress of the project;
  - (viii) where ALS recommend a learning adjustment that necessitates a temporary withdrawal;
  - (ix) difficulties in research beyond the student's control;
  - (x) failure or unavailability of specialist equipment or resources required for research that causes significant delay to progress;
  - (xi) other exceptional circumstances.
33. All requests for temporary withdrawal will be made by the student on the standard pro-forma and accompanied by supporting evidence. Requests for temporary withdrawal without supporting evidence will not be considered by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee. A request for temporary withdrawal requires the support of the supervisors and Executive Dean of Faculty. If the supervisors or Executive Dean of Faculty do not support the request for temporary withdrawal, the student is at liberty to submit the request directly to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee for consideration. All requests for temporary withdrawal are subject to approval by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee.
34. Where a period of temporary withdrawal is approved, the student's registration will be extended by the same period of time.
35. Retrospective applications for temporary withdrawal will not be considered except in exceptional circumstances.
36. Students in receipt of funding are advised to check the terms of their scholarship. International students are also advised to check their visa status before making a request for temporary withdrawal.

### **Supervisors**

37. The Executive Dean of Faculty shall appoint at least two supervisors for each student. The Executive Dean of Faculty may appoint a replacement or additional supervisor at any time if necessary or desirable. In all cases, at least one of the supervisors shall have supervised solely or as a team member at least one research student through to successful completion of a doctoral degree. The Principal Supervisor will be the main point of contact between the student and the University.

38. In addition to the University supervisors, a collaborative student will be allocated a Collaborative Supervisor in accordance with the [Code of practice for collaborative provision](#).
39. The Executive Dean of Faculty shall inform the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee of any changes to supervision.

**Principal Supervisor**

40. At least one supervisor, the Principal Supervisor, shall be a member of the University's staff holding an appointment as Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow or Research Fellow.
41. The Principal Supervisor will:
  - be an active researcher in an area relevant to the student's field of research
  - have completed the relevant training as set out in the [Code of practice for research degrees](#) if new to supervision
  - have an expectation of holding the appointment with the University for at least the minimum period of the student's registration

**Co-supervisor**

42. The Co-supervisor should be appointed from among the following:
  - a member of the University's staff holding an appointment as Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Research Fellow, Research Officer / Research Assistant, Emeritus/a staff, and Honorary NHS Appointments and, at the discretion of the Associate Dean (Doctoral College) Professorial Teaching Fellow, Senior Teaching Fellow and Teaching Fellow
43. A Co-supervisor will:
  - have appropriate knowledge and normally be an active researcher
  - have an expectation of holding the appointment with the University for at least the minimum period of the student's registration
  - have completed the relevant training as set out in the [Code of practice for research degrees](#) if new to supervision

**Collaborative Supervisor**

44. A Collaborative Supervisor may be appointed in situations where: i) a research student spends a part or all of their research degree in another organisation; ii) where additional external expertise is required which would be of benefit to the research student and project. A Collaborative Supervisor is typically drawn from industry, clinical organisations, a research institution, or other university
45. A Collaborative Supervisor will:
  - have specialist knowledge or expertise in order to support the student's research and/or manage the student's day-to-day performance in the collaborative organisation
  - normally have experience of successfully supervising research students at doctoral level. Collaborative Supervisors will be offered guidance and training opportunities to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities

### ***Supervisor responsibilities***

46. The responsibilities of supervisors are set out in the [Code of practice for research degrees](#). If supervisors are found not to be fulfilling their responsibilities under the Code then they will not be permitted to supervise new students.

### **Reports to supervisors and reviews**

47. As a minimum, all research students will have at least one supervisory session per month
48. Student progress will be formally monitored at six month intervals through the interim review and end of year review procedures. An end of year or interim review is not required if the deadline for the review is one month either side of the confirmation examination.
49. Students registered for the degrees of PhD, MD and MPhil are required to undergo a second year progress review in place of the standard interim review or end of year review. This will take place either at 24 months for full-time students or at 48 months for part-time students, or the nearest review point thereafter. Students are required to submit the following for the review:
- the standard review form
  - a copy of the examiners' report from the confirmation examination
  - a Gantt chart plan for completion
  - a draft table of contents for the thesis
50. The second year progress review will involve at least one of the original confirmation examiners, or the PGR Director, who can provide a helpful external perspective on work. The confirmation examiner/PGR Director may either attend the review meeting in person or review the paperwork and send their findings to the supervisory team.
51. An unsatisfactory outcome of a review or refusal by a student to complete a review will result in the initiation of unsatisfactory academic progress procedures.

### **Programme structure and training**

52. Students and supervisors will agree at the outset a programme of discipline-specific and skills courses ensuring that the compulsory elements are included. Students and supervisors will keep this under review and formally report on progress every six months.
53. Practitioner doctorates and structured PhD programmes will include a series of credit bearing modules at FHEQ Level 7 or non-credit bearing taught units which students shall be required to pass before progressing to the research stage of their programme.

### ***Board of Examiners***

54. The assessment of components of the programme other than the thesis or portfolio shall be the responsibility of a Board of Examiners which will operate in accordance with the terms of reference for Boards of Examiners as set out in the [Code of practice for academic governance](#).

### ***Repetition of assessment***

55. In the case of non-credit bearing taught units, the Board of Examiners may allow a student who has failed a unit of assessment other than the thesis or portfolio to repeat the assessment on one subsequent occasion, normally within one year of the first attempt.

56. The programme of a student, who has not been permitted to repeat an assessment or who has failed an assessment a second time, shall be terminated by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee.
57. In the case of credit bearing modules, repetition of an assessment and progression to the next stage of the programme will be managed in accordance with the [Regulations for taught programmes](#).

### **Extenuating circumstances**

58. During the course of their research programme, students may need to make a claim for the recognition of extenuating circumstances affecting: i) assessment for a credit bearing module or taught unit; ii) progress monitoring and/or confirmation; iii) unsatisfactory academic progress procedures. Research students wishing to make a claim for the recognition of extenuating circumstances shall follow the procedures as set out in the [Regulations for extenuating circumstances](#).

### **Unsatisfactory academic progress**

59. A student's registration may be terminated on the grounds of unsatisfactory academic progress. If the Principal Supervisor judges a student's progress to be unsatisfactory they will first consult the Associate Dean (Doctoral College) for the Faculty<sup>7</sup>. The details of this consultation will be documented and both parties must be in agreement that the student's progress is unsatisfactory. If there is a disagreement between the parties then the case will be referred to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee for a decision.
60. The student will be sent written notification that their progress has been deemed unsatisfactory and offered the opportunity to remedy this. The student will be offered at least three months to meet specified targets.
61. Following the specified period, the student's case will be reviewed by a panel consisting of an Associate Dean (Doctoral College) and an academic member of staff not involved with the supervision of the student. Prior to the panel meeting both the student and their supervisor will be asked to submit a written statement to the panel and/or attend the panel in person. If the panel members agree that the student has failed to meet the targets to the required standard then a recommendation for programme termination will be made to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee. If there is a disagreement between the parties then the case will be referred to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee for adjudication.

### **Loss of contact**

62. In cases where the student appears to have withdrawn from the research degree and failed to make contact with the Faculty (normally for 3 months or more), it will be sufficient for a recommendation of termination to be made to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee solely on the basis of evidence showing that reasonable efforts have been made to contact the student at the last email and postal address provided and warning the student of the consequences of not contacting the Faculty within 10 working days.

### **Fitness to practise and study**

63. The [Regulations for fitness to study](#) and [Regulations for fitness to practise](#) apply to postgraduate research students and should be consulted where there are concerns about a student's fitness to study and/or practice.

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<sup>7</sup> If the Associate Dean (Doctoral College) is a supervisor to the student in question then they will consult the Faculty Associate Dean (Research and Enterprise).

## Confirmation of registration

64. Research students on the following programmes are required to undergo a confirmation of registration examination:
  - PhD
  - MD
  - EngD
65. For students registered on a traditional PhD or MD degree, the confirmation will normally take place twelve to fifteen months after initial registration for full-time students and twenty-four to thirty months for part-time students. With the agreement of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee, students may undergo the confirmation earlier.
66. In the cases of an EngD or a PhD programme that contains a structured taught element, the confirmation must take place no later than 24 months for full-time students and no later than 48 months for part-time students.
67. The Principal Supervisor shall take responsibility for making arrangements for the confirmation of registration examination. The examination will involve the student and the appointed examiners. In addition, at least one member of the supervisory team is required to attend the examination, although they do not form part of the examination panel. If a student has reservations about a member of their supervisory team attending the examination then this must be discussed with the relevant PGR Director or Associate Dean (Doctoral College), who may grant an exemption.
68. The student will be examined by two examiners (normally, internal). The examiners will:
  - have expertise in an area relevant to the student's research
  - have completed the relevant confirmation examiner training if they have no prior experience of examining a confirmation
  - not have had any involvement with the project that could give rise to a conflict of interest
  - have no personal relationship with the student that could give rise to a conflict of interest
  - any external will have examined at least one confirmation, or equivalent, at another institution
69. Where the candidate is also a member of staff of the University, at least one examiner will be external to the University.
70. Where an external examiner is used, the internal examiner will perform the dual role of examiner and Chair.
71. The appointment of the examiners is subject to the approval of the Executive Dean of Faculty.
72. At the end of the examination, the supervisors will be asked to leave the room and the student will be offered the opportunity to raise any matters with the examiners.
73. Following the confirmation examination, the Executive Dean of Faculty shall consider the recommendation of the examination panel that:
  - the student be permitted to continue registration on the degree
  - the student's registration should not be confirmed but that the student may resubmit for confirmation of registration on a single occasion only, normally three

months later for full-time students or six months later for part-time students, with or without further oral examination. One of the examiners will supply the candidate with a written statement within five working days after the meeting of the action to be taken in order to satisfy the criteria for confirmation of registration.

74. The Executive Dean of Faculty may require other evidence, for example fitness to practise or fitness to study, before reaching a decision.
75. Following the second examination, the Executive Dean of Faculty shall consider the recommendation of the examination panel that:
  - the student be permitted to continue registration on the degree or
  - in the case of PhD and MD students, the student should be registered for the degree of Master of Philosophy or
  - the student's registration be terminated
76. The Executive Dean of Faculty may require other evidence, for example fitness to practise or fitness to study, before reaching a decision.

### **Completing status**

77. A student may apply to register as completing status while writing-up the thesis or portfolio. The following criteria must be fulfilled for a student to transfer to completing status:
  - that the supervisor will be required to confirm that they are satisfied that submission of the thesis within six months is feasible
  - that the student will no longer be using specialist resources for research
78. In order for the request to be considered, the following must be provided:
  - a detailed plan covering both student and supervisor responsibilities for submission within the first six months of completing status or by the end of registration if completing status will last for fewer than six months
  - a draft table of contents for the thesis
  - the examination entry form

If the thesis is not submitted within the initial six month period of completing status then an updated plan for submission within the remaining period of registration will be required in order to continue on completing status
79. Retrospective applications for completing status will not be considered without valid extenuating circumstances.

### **Thesis or portfolio**

80. A student shall present a thesis or portfolio for examination<sup>8</sup>.

### ***References to work of others and previous work***

81. A student shall indicate by means of explicit references the citation of the work of others or work by the student which is not part of the submission for the degree. Work submitted for another degree may not comprise part of the submission.

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<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of these *Regulations* the term "thesis" hereafter shall be taken to imply also "portfolio".

***Joint or group project***

82. A student who has submitted work forming part of a joint or group research project, shall be required to satisfy the examiners that the student's share of the work is sufficient to justify the award of the degree. In such cases the thesis must contain an introductory note stating the student's own claims to his or her contributions. A copy of such a note should be countersigned by the co-researchers.

***Performing arts and creative writing***

83. A student registered for an MPhil or PhD award in the fields of performing arts and creative writing may submit, in lieu of a thesis, a portfolio of original works that the student has undertaken while registered for the degree. The portfolio shall include notes on each item within it and either an extended analysis of one item or a dissertation on a related theme.

**Examination entry form**

84. A student shall be required to complete an examination entry form not earlier than six months nor later than two months before the thesis is presented; the proposed title of the thesis will be stated on the form. The title of the thesis must be approved by the Executive Dean of Faculty. No change in the approved title may be made except with the consent of the Executive Dean of Faculty.

**Time limits**

85. The thesis shall be submitted no earlier than the end of the minimum period of registration and no later than the end of the student's period of registration. In exceptional circumstances, the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee may permit the student to submit the thesis at an earlier date.

**Format of thesis**

86. The thesis shall be temporarily bound before it is examined. One copy per examiner shall be submitted to the Student Services and Administration Directorate for distribution and, if required, a copy shall be submitted for use by the supervisors. Where appropriate, a copy of the thesis may also be required by a collaborating organisation.
87. The thesis shall be typed on A4 sized paper. All pages should be numbered. The title page shall bear the approved title, and student's name, the degree for which the student is registered and the year in which the thesis is presented. A summary of the work, not exceeding 300 words in length and a signed Statement of Originality must be included in each copy following the title page. Whenever possible, any other material should form part of the thesis, but a student is at liberty to submit such material separately for consideration by the examiners.
88. The thesis shall be written in English except when the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee has given permission for another language to be used owing to the nature of the subject. The summary should always be written in English.
89. Following recommendation by the examiners that an award be made, the final version of record of the thesis will be uploaded by the student to the University's digital repository.
90. No alterations or additions may be made to a thesis after it has been submitted except with the agreement of the examiners.

**Examiners**

91. The examination shall be conducted by at least two examiners, at least one of whom must be external to the University.

92. Normally, there should be one internal and one external examiner. The internal examiner will have the dual role of examining and chairing<sup>9</sup>, the viva voce examination unless an independent chair is appointed.
93. The examiners must have expertise in examining at the appropriate level so that they are familiar with the standards expected and the achievement likely to be attained. The appointed examiners should, between them, normally have examined a minimum of six candidates at the appropriate level; an external examiner must have experience of at least one relevant examination.

**Selection and appointment of examiners**

94. The examiners shall be appointed by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee on the recommendation of the Executive Dean of the Faculty.

**External examiner nominations**

95. Nominees for consideration for appointment as external examiners should normally:
- (i) have expertise in the area relevant to the student's field of research and be demonstrably research active;
  - (ii) hold an academic appointment (a curriculum vitae should accompany any nomination to the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee);
  - (iii) have experience of examining at doctoral level;
  - (iv) not have, nor have previously had, a personal relationship with the student or member of the supervisory team;
  - (v) not have had any professional relationship with the student which may give rise to a conflict of interest (for example supervisory, collaborative research, co-authoring of papers);
  - (vi) not have had a significant research relationship (for example, co-authoring of numerous research outputs such as papers and conferences) with any member of the supervisory team within the last five years;
  - (vii) not hold (or have held) any appointment of the University, other than that of external examiner, during the period in which the student has been registered for the degree;
  - (viii) be appointed from within the European Economic Area (EEA) and have the right to work in the United Kingdom. In cases where the candidate is located outside of the EEA and is experiencing extenuating circumstances which render them unable to travel to the UK it would be permissible to appoint an examiner from outside of the EEA.
96. Normally, an external examiner would not examine more than three candidates of the University in any five year period without permission from the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee.

**Internal examiner nominations**

97. Nominations for appointment of internal examiners should normally:
- have expertise in the area relevant to the student's field of research and be demonstrably research active

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<sup>9</sup> In this role the internal examiner will be responsible for ensuring the proper and fair conduct of the meeting, including conformity with the *Regulations*. They will sign the final joint examination report to confirm that the examination took place according to the *Regulations*, resulting in one of the permitted outcomes by the *Regulations*.



- hold appointments as Professor, Reader, Senior Lecturer, Lecturer, Professorial Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Research Fellow, Research Officer / Research Assistant, Professorial Teaching Fellow, Senior Teaching Fellow, Teaching Fellow, Emeritus/a staff, or Honorary NHS Appointments
- not have, nor have previously had, a personal relationship with the student
- not have had any professional relationship with the student which may give rise to a conflict of interest (eg supervisory, collaborative research, co-authoring of papers)
- internal examiners with no previous experience of examining or chairing *viva voce* examinations at the University will have undergone appropriate training prior to appointment

### ***Independent Chairs***

98. Independent Chairs will be appointed by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee in the following circumstances:
- (i) where a student is being re-assessed upon appeal;
  - (ii) where all examiners on the panel are external, for instance:
    - where the candidate is a member of the staff of the University. This would normally apply to candidates holding permanent lectureships or research positions but not to candidates on short-term research contracts such as Research Officers / Research Assistants;
    - where the University is unable to provide an internal examiner with the appropriate subject matter expertise and a second external examiner is appointed;
  - (iii) where the internal examiner has no previous experience of doctoral-level *viva voce* examinations in the UK;
  - (iv) where the external examiner has no previous experience of the doctoral-level *viva voce* examinations in the UK;
  - (v) where the internal examiner holds an Emeritus/a or Honorary Appointment;
  - (vi) in any other special case as determined by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee.

### ***Criteria for the appointment of an Independent Chair***

99. The Chair will be appointed by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee on the recommendation of the Executive Dean of the Faculty.
100. The Independent Chair will:
- be internal to the University
  - not have, nor have previously had, a personal relationship with the student
  - not have had any professional relationship with the student which may give rise to a conflict of interest (eg supervisory, collaborative research, co-authoring of papers)
  - have experience of examining at doctoral level
  - not be Emeritus/a or honorary staff

**Examiners' reports**

101. Each examiner shall submit via the student's Faculty an independent report on the content and style of the thesis prior to the *viva voce* examination.

**Viva voce examination**

102. The *viva voce* examination should normally be held not less than 30 days and not more than 90 days after submission of the thesis. Only with the approval of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee and with the written agreement of the examiners and the candidate, the *viva voce* examination may exceptionally be held earlier.
103. The content of the thesis, the conduct of the examination of a student and matters related thereto shall be regarded as confidential to those taking part in the examination and to appropriate officers of the University until such time as the outcomes of the examination are agreed by the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee.
104. Each appointed examiner will receive a copy of the thesis to be examined in advance of the *viva voce* examination and will prepare an independent, written report on the content and style of the thesis in advance of the examination. The reports will be submitted and considered at the *viva voce* examination.
105. The *viva voce* examination is concerned with the content of the thesis and any related matters which the examiners consider appropriate. The student should expect to be questioned by the examiners on matters including: the focus of the research, the existing literature, the methodology used, the conduct of the research, the outcomes and conclusions.
106. The *viva voce* examination shall be conducted in the presence of the examiners at the University in Guildford. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee, the examination may be arranged at another venue, provided all parties, including the student, agree. Exceptionally, and subject to the approval of the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee, the *viva voce* examination may take place via video-conference provided that the student is accompanied by at least one of the examiners.
107. Supervisors are not expected to be present at the closed *viva voce* examination but should endeavour to make themselves available for the conclusion of the examination when the verdict is given and any required corrections to the thesis are explained. In exceptional circumstances, students may make a written case to the Faculty Associate Dean (Doctoral College) to request that their supervisors attend the *viva voce* examination. The case must explain why the presence of the supervisors is necessary to ensure the effective and proper conduct of the examination. On the rare occasion that a supervisor is present at the examination they must not participate in the examination and may only speak at the behest of the chair.
108. No persons other than the above shall be present at or otherwise take part in the *viva voce* examination

**Examiners' recommendation**

109. After the examination, the examiners shall report on the *viva voce* examination, together with any reports that may have been submitted by the supervisors in response to a request by the examiners. They shall preferably present a joint report but are at liberty to present separate ones if they so wish.

110. They shall jointly make one of the following recommendations, as appropriate:
- (i) that the degree be awarded;
  - (ii) that the degree be awarded, subject to specified minor corrections<sup>10</sup> being made to the thesis or portfolio to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within a period not exceeding one month;
  - (iii) that the degree be awarded, subject to specified, minor revisions<sup>11</sup> being made to the thesis or portfolio to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within a period not exceeding six months;
  - (iv) that the degree not be awarded, but that the student be permitted to submit a revised thesis, by a specified date, normally twelve months, with or without further research, and be examined with or without a further *viva voce* examination;
  - (v) that for those students registered for the PhD or MD, that the degree not be awarded but that the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded, if appropriate, after specified minor corrections or minor revisions have been made to the thesis or portfolio, and if the student submits the thesis for that degree within one month in the case of minor corrections or six months in the case of minor revisions;
  - (vi) that for those students registered for the PhD or MD, that degree not be awarded but the student be permitted to submit a revised thesis, for the degree of Master of Philosophy, by a specified date, (normally twelve months), with or without further research, and be examined with or without a further *viva voce* examination;
  - (vii) that the degree not be awarded and with no recommendation regarding a re-submission of the thesis.
111. If specified minor corrections or revisions are required to the thesis, the internal examiner shall inform the student of the nature of the corrections, within 10 working days of the *viva voce*, in the form of a written list<sup>12</sup>.
112. Any corrections required to the thesis shall be completed and the thesis uploaded to the online repository within one month of receipt of the corrections and minor revisions shall be completed and the thesis uploaded to the online repository within six months of receipt of the corrections, unless the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee allows a longer time.
113. The Internal Examiner shall, within 20 working days of submission of the corrected thesis, certify that any specified, minor corrections or minor revisions have been carried out satisfactorily. Where there is no internal examiner on the panel, the Chair will ask the panel to agree who will assume responsibility for certifying completion of the specified, minor corrections or revisions.
114. In the case of any resubmission, the student may be liable for additional composition and/or re-examination fees.

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<sup>10</sup> The phrase “specified, minor corrections” shall be taken to include the correction of minor corrections, minor errors of fact, typography, grammar, style, syntax and/or layout of graphs/tables etc., which would enhance the readers’ understanding of the author’s argument but which does not alter the intellectual content and reasoning of the thesis.

<sup>11</sup> “Minor revisions” are those which do not involve further supervision or any further original research. Such additions might include, for example, additional sentences, tables, paragraphs or pages but not normally additional chapters. They may additionally include specified minor corrections.

<sup>12</sup> The examiners may indicate in general terms a need to correct grammar and/or spelling, and, in addition, may return to the student an annotated copy of the thesis or portfolio.

115. The recommendation of the examiners shall be considered by the Student Progression and Awards Board (SPAB). If a recommendation that the degree be not awarded is approved, the student's programme shall be terminated.

### **Submission of revised thesis**

116. A student may submit a revised thesis once only, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Student Progression and Awards Board.
117. A student shall be informed in writing within 10 working days after the *viva voce* of the reasons for the examiners' rejection of the original thesis, normally by being sent by the Student Services and Administration Directorate a Statement of Requirements prepared by the examiners listing the principal aspects of the thesis which require improvement, a copy of which will be appended to the Examination Entry Form.
118. A student may submit a revised thesis once only. The examiners shall determine the date by which the revised thesis shall be submitted, normally twelve months from the date that the Statement of Requirements is sent to the student. The student is entitled to supervisory support in the form of monthly meetings during the resubmission period.
119. The procedure for submitting a revised thesis shall be the same as that for submitting the original one.
120. A revised thesis shall normally be examined by the original examiners but the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee may appoint different examiners in exceptional cases. Examiners may not recommend re-submission for a second time but may make one of the following recommendations, as appropriate, and should do so within 90 days of receipt of the revised thesis:
- (i) that the degree be awarded;
  - (ii) that the degree be awarded, subject to specified minor corrections<sup>13</sup> being made to the thesis or portfolio to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within a period not exceeding one month;
  - (iii) that the degree be awarded, subject to specified, minor revisions<sup>14</sup> being made to the thesis or portfolio to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within a period not exceeding six months;
  - (iv) that for those students registered for the degree of PhD or MD, that the degree not be awarded but that the degree of Master of Philosophy be awarded, if appropriate, after specified minor corrections or minor revisions have been made to the thesis or portfolio, and if the student submits the thesis for that degree within one month in the case of minor corrections or six months in the case of minor revisions;
  - (v) that the degree not be awarded.

### **Disagreement between examiners**

121. If the examiners are unable to agree on a recommendation, the Admission Progression and Examination Sub-committee shall appoint an additional external examiner to review the thesis and the original examiners' reports which will be

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<sup>13</sup> The phrase "specified, minor corrections" shall be taken to include the correction of minor corrections, minor errors of fact, typography, grammar, style, syntax and/or layout of graphs/tables etc., which would enhance the readers' understanding of the author's argument but which does not alter the intellectual content and reasoning of the thesis.

<sup>14</sup> "Minor revisions" are those which do not involve further supervision or any further original research. Such additions might include, for example, additional sentences, tables, paragraphs or pages but not normally additional chapters. They may additionally include specified minor corrections.

anonymised. The additional examiner may require the student to undergo one further *viva voce* examination. The Student Progression and Awards Board shall consider the reports of all examiners before reaching a decision.

### **Copyright and access to dissertations**

122. Dissemination of knowledge is one of the objectives of the University. Copies of theses accepted for research degrees are stored in an online repository and are available for anyone to consult. A student is therefore advised to mark the thesis as copyright.
123. Under special circumstances it is possible to restrict access to a thesis.

### **Intellectual property**

124. Postgraduate research students are required to adhere to the University's [Intellectual Property Code](#).

### **Award**

125. The degree shall be awarded to a successful student by the Student Progression and Awards Board on behalf of Senate. The date of the award shall be the date on which the relevant Sub-committee approves the award.

### **Students in debt**

126. No student shall be entitled to the award of a degree unless all fees for tuition have been paid.

### **Formal conferment**

127. Degrees shall be formally conferred at a congregation held for the purpose.

### **Degree certificate**

128. After the formal conferment, each graduate shall be given a degree certificate. The certificate shall either be handed to the graduate or sent through the ordinary post to the student's address as listed in the University records. A replacement certificate can be issued only on receipt of a written request from the graduate and on payment of the appropriate fee.

### **Appeals and complaints**

129. The grounds for and procedures for appeals are set out in the [Regulations for academic appeals](#) and the grounds and procedures for complaints are set out in the [Procedure for complaints](#).