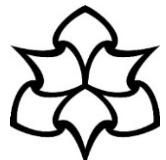


# Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees

## Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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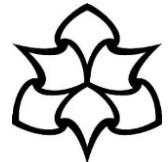
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### Version Control Statement

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## Introduction

These regulations outline the rules governing the formal stages of postgraduate research at the University: registration, progression and assessment.

These regulations are supported by a suite of policy and guidance documents that provide additional details for staff and students to support the practical implementation of the regulations.

Where the regulations state that approval must be sought by the Research Degrees Committee (RDC), this approval may be delegated to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee (Faculty RDC), Head of Faculty RDC or Graduate School, as outlined in the Schedule of Delegated Authority.

All of the other key documents are available on the Graduate School website.

### 1. General Principles

**1.1** The rules and procedures relating to postgraduate research degrees, including written and oral examinations, are set out in this document. These regulations provide mechanisms to ensure that students are assessed fairly and objectively, while maintaining the University's high academic standards. Ignorance of these rules and assessment requirements will not constitute a defence in any disciplinary procedures. Queries about the regulations should be directed to the appropriate Faculty Research Degrees Team in the first instance.

**1.2** Assessment at Manchester Metropolitan University is an integral part of the research degree. It is the principal instrument with which we recognise and reward student achievement and maintain academic standards.

**1.3** The University regulations on assessment support this principle and they aim to make the processes inclusive, fair, consistent and clear to both staff and students. The regulations also reflect the expectation and relevant indicators of the [QAA UK Quality Code](#).

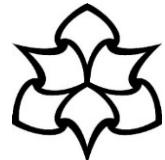
**1.4** These regulations and their underlying principles apply to postgraduate research degrees provision approved by the University and delivered by the University or by its collaborative partners leading to awards or academic credit of the University. They apply to all work that formally contributes to the award of the University, at whatever point in a programme the work is undertaken.

**1.5** Any exemption or variation from these regulations shall be exceptional and must be approved in advance by the RDC as set out in the Terms of Reference.

**1.6** These regulations shall be applied consistently to ensure equity of treatment of students regardless of their discipline or their mode of study.

**1.7** The latest version of the regulations is applied to all current students for any given academic year, irrespective of their year of enrolment.

**1.8** These regulations have undergone an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), in accordance with our public sector equality duties.



## 2. Admission

### Admission to the Degree

- 2.1** Candidates apply to study at the University via the online university admission system.
- 2.2** Applicants must meet the entry requirements set by the University, which are available on the [Applying for Postgraduate Research Courses](#) webpages. An offer will only be made upon confirmation from the admitting Faculty that there is appropriate supervision and resources available to support the proposed research.

## 3. Transferring PhD between institutions

### Transferring into Manchester Metropolitan University from another institution

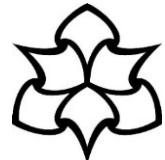
- 3.1** Applicants may transfer into Manchester Metropolitan University from another institution to complete their studies.
- 3.2** Each case will be considered on its merits and a maximum reduction of 12 months of study will be available for full-time students (24 months for part-time students).
- 3.3** In order for a student to be eligible for an award of the Manchester Metropolitan University, they must complete a minimum of 50% of their registration period at Manchester Met.
- 3.4** Applicants will be required to provide documentary evidence from their previous institution of agreement to the transfer, in line with the regulations for the previous institution (if available). This documentation should take the form of a report from the original institution to confirm the dates of registration, confirm support for the transfer, academic progress and assessment information, supervisory team comments on the work completed, and a statement from the student to confirm the reasons for moving institution.

### Transferring from Manchester Metropolitan University to another institution

- 3.5** Applicants may transfer from Manchester Metropolitan University to another institution to complete their studies.
- 3.6** Where this applies, the University will provide documentation to confirm the dates of the student's registration, academic progress and assessment information and comments on the work completed to the new institution.
- 3.7** In all cases, the transfers are subject to the required documentations being provided, agreement of the student, supervisory team and the two institutions involved, and the approval of RDC.

## 4. Enrolment

- 4.1** Students must enrol with the University prior to starting their research degree. If a student does not enrol within four weeks of the start date in their offer letter, they will be required to withdraw from the University or defer their enrolment to the next enrolment intake.
- 4.2** Students are required to renew their enrolment annually. If a student does not re-enrol, their registration shall lapse, they shall no longer be insured at the University, and they will be deemed to have withdrawn from their studies. A student whose registration has lapsed may be considered for re-admission to the same programme provided that the lapse in registration was not a consequence of academic failure and is within one calendar month from the re-enrolment start date.



**4.3** Enrolment on time is the expected standard. If exceptional circumstances prevent timely enrolment or re-enrolment, backdating of that enrolment may be possible at the discretion of the RDC.

## 5. Award and Registration Information

### Criteria for Awarding research degrees

**5.1** Manchester Metropolitan University assures its academic standards for research degrees through engagement with external reference points established by the [Quality Assurance Agency Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#) (FHEQ), and through the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education \(Quality Code\)](#) which clearly outlines what higher education providers are required to do, what they can expect of each other, and what the general public can expect of them.

**5.2** The standards of the University's awards are regulated through the [Regulations for the Academic Awards of the Manchester Metropolitan University](#), and the [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#).

### Awards of the University

**5.3** The awards that the University offers for postgraduate research study are detailed in the [Regulations for the Academic Awards of the Manchester Metropolitan University](#).

**5.4** Information relating to aegrotat and posthumous awards are outlined in the [Regulations for the Academic Awards of the Manchester Metropolitan University](#).

## 6. PhD Period of Student Registration

Minimum period of registration	Standard period of registration	Maximum period of registration
24 months (full-time) 48 months (part-time)	36 months (full-time) 72 months (part-time)	48 months (full-time) 84 months (part-time)

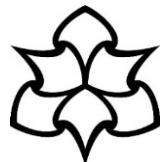
**6.1** The standard length of supervised study for a PhD is 36 months (full-time) / 72 months (part-time).

**6.2** Students can apply to the RDC for permission to submit before this in line with the minimum period of registration.

**6.3** Students will be eligible to enter a writing up period immediately after the end of the standard registration period, for a maximum of 12-months. The 12-month period is applicable to both full-time and part-time students. See Section "Supervision, Review and Progression/Writing-up" for full details.

**6.4** For all research degrees, the registration period commences on the date indicated in the student's offer letter. The registration period continues until the degree is awarded, the student reaches their maximum registration period (unless an extension is granted), or the student withdraws from the programme. See also the requirement for students to re-enrol on an annual basis to maintain their registration.

**6.5** Appropriate fees are payable annually for the duration of the degree and for any resubmission period (if applicable).



## 7. Supervision, Review and Progression/Writing-Up

### Supervision

7.1 All research degree students shall be supervised by a supervisory team including a Principal Supervisor, supervisors and, where appropriate, specialist advisor(s).

7.2 The aim of supervision at Manchester Met is to:

- Support and develop the student to enable them to complete their studies within the agreed timeframe.
- Enable the student to develop and effectively provide and receive a critical overview of their work.
- Provide effective support and prepare the student for their oral examination.
- Provide a framework in which new supervisors can gain experience alongside those with more experience.

7.3 Supervision team criteria, roles and responsibilities of the supervisory team and student, schedule of agreed contact, and the process that a student needs to follow if they are not satisfied with their supervision arrangements, are all detailed in the Guidelines for PGR Supervision.

7.4 Supervisory teams are subject to approval by the RDC.

### Formal Progression Milestones

7.5 Formal progression milestones require the student to submit a progress report and attend a review meeting, which consists of the student and a panel of reviewers who are independent of the supervisory team.

7.6 The role of the panel is to assess the progress of the student and produce and submit a written recommendation report to the RDC for review.

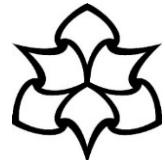
7.7 The following recommended outcomes are available to the panel, for subsequent approval by the RDC:

- **Continue.** The student has made sufficient progress to indicate they are on track to meet the required doctoral standards, and may continue with their studies.
- **Resubmit.** The student is not currently making sufficient progress to indicate they are on track to meet the required doctoral standards to continue with their studies. The student is required to make revisions and amendments to their work and resubmit them for further review. Upon resubmission the outcomes available to the student will be continue, transfer or withdraw.
- **Transfer.** The student has not made sufficient progress to indicate they are on track to meet the required doctoral standards and it is recommended that they transfer from the doctoral degree to a lower award.
- **Withdraw.** The student has not made sufficient progress to indicate they are on track to meet the required doctoral standards for PhD or a lower award, and it is recommended that the student is withdrawn from the University.

7.8 The format and timescales for the completion of formal milestones are detailed in the Milestones for PGR Progression document.

### Transfer of registration to a lower award

7.9 A registered student may request a transfer to a lower award at any time.



**7.10** A Principal Supervisor may recommend that a student is transferred to a lower award at any time prior to the submission of the thesis for examination, which will then be managed through the formal progression milestone process or through the Procedure to Support Postgraduate Research Progress (if the formal progression milestone is not imminent).

**7.11** All transfer requests are subject to approval by the RDC.

### Supporting Student Progress

**7.12** The Procedure to Support Postgraduate Research Progress may be used to support a student's progress in the following scenarios:

- Where students are not making sufficient progress with their research, or they are failing to maintain contact with their supervisory team, the procedure can be instigated by supervisors at any point during the academic year.
- In the event that the formal progression milestone(s) outcomes deem that insufficient progress has been made to continue, the independent review panel, in consultation with the supervisory team, may recommend that the procedure be instigated.

**7.13** The procedure aims to seek a resolution, agreeable to both parties, within an appropriate timescale. However, if insufficient progress continues, or engagement does not improve, it may lead to the withdrawal of the student's registration by the RDC. The student has a right of appeal regarding any progression recommendation via the [University Academic Appeals Procedure](#)

### Intention to submit

**7.14** Students should register their intention to submit 3 months prior to their planned submission, using the relevant University form.

### Writing-up Period

**7.15** All students registered on a PhD degree are eligible to enter a writing-up period after the end of their period of supervised study, to allow additional time to prepare and write up their thesis in advance of submission.

**7.16** A fee will be payable for any writing-up period that is approved by the University. Details of the writing-up fee and other University fees can be found in the Regulations for the Payment of University Fees and other related Financial Information for Postgraduate Research Students.

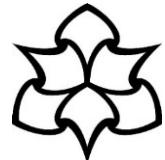
**7.17** If students are funded, or hold a visa, they are advised to check if there are any restrictions in advance of applying.

## 8. Research ethics and academic misconduct

**8.1** The University expects research students to maintain the highest level of professional integrity in research practice and publication. Students are accountable to their professional bodies, Manchester Metropolitan University and to the organisations that fund their research. The Manchester Metropolitan University Academic Ethical Framework provides further details.

**8.2** Prior to the commencement of any research, students must gain [ethical approval](#) for that work.

**8.3** The Manchester Metropolitan University website on Research Governance provides guidelines for good research practice and links to legal requirements and Manchester Metropolitan University policies and procedures. The [Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research](#)



and the [Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct](#) provide guidance on appropriate behaviour and definitions of misconduct in research.

**8.4** The University will implement the [Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research](#) if an allegation of scientific or ethical misconduct is identified. Once this procedure is complete, any necessary recommendations and decisions on penalties will be made through an Assessment Disciplinary Committee as outlined in the [Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct](#).

## 9. Training and Development

**9.1** A programme of skills training and development is a fundamental component of the research degree, as outlined in [The Quality Code, Advice and Guidance Theme: Research Degrees; Guiding principle 4](#), which states that 'Research students are afforded opportunities for professional development'.

**9.2** All full-time and part-time research students must attend the appropriate Faculty induction programme and complete the online induction at the start of their registration period.

**9.3** Research students are required to engage in training and development to support their development as researchers. Manchester Met is committed to principles contained within the [Vitae Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#), including the minimum requirements for professional development time.

**9.4** Training and Development opportunities provide personal and professional skills and the skills necessary to attain competence in research methods, wider research integrity and knowledge related to the subject of the thesis.

**9.5** Development opportunities and events are available on The Graduate School webpages. Detailed training and development information is provided to all students at induction events and throughout their studies.

## Employment of Research Students

**9.6** During the student's period of registration, there is a maximum number of hours per week that a full-time research student can be employed and be paid for. Details of the maximum number of hours per week are detailed in the Research Degrees Handbook.

**9.7** Students who require a visa and/or students who are funded should also check their eligibility to work with the relevant authority.

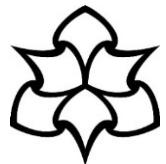
## 10. Change in Circumstances

### Request to Interrupt

**10.1** Where a student is prevented from making progress with their research, they may apply, in accordance with the Guidelines for Interruptions, Suspensions and Extensions, to interrupt during their period of supervised study. Retrospective applications for interruption will not normally be considered.

**10.2** An interruption of studies for a period of up to 6 months at any one time, and for a maximum of 12 months' continually, may be granted.

**10.3** The total length of time taken as an interruption will not normally exceed 24 months over the duration of the student's registered period of study.



**10.4** The student [Maternity, Paternity & Adoption leave policy](#) outlines the maternity procedures for all students where this applies to an interruption of study.

#### [Request for an extension to a deadline or writing-up period](#)

**10.5** An application for an extension to the writing -up period will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and should be submitted with satisfactory documentary evidence to support the request.

**10.6** If the Faculty RDC considers that the extension request is valid, and the application is supported by satisfactory documentary evidence, the Committee may agree to an extension of the deadline date.

**10.7** An application for an extension to a formal progression milestone, thesis revisions, or resubmission deadline should be submitted in accordance with the Guidelines for Interruptions, Suspensions and Extensions.

#### [Change in Mode of studies](#)

**10.8** A student may apply to the Faculty RDC to change their mode of study from full-time to part-time, or part-time to full-time at any point. Details of the application process are outlined in the Research Degrees Handbook.

**10.9** Students who require a visa and/or students who are funded should also check their eligibility to work with the relevant authority.

#### [Change in Programme of studies](#)

**10.10** A student may apply to the Faculty RDC to change their approved programme of study if there has been a significant change in the direction of their research in advance of the approval of their second progression review milestone. Details of the application process are outlined in the Research Degrees Handbook.

#### [Adjustments for students](#)

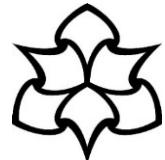
**10.11** The needs of students with disabilities, including specific learning difficulties, are supported throughout the research degree in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. If a student requires any adjustment to be made this will be implemented with support from colleagues in the Disability Service. Details around student adjustments are outlined in the Research Degrees Handbook.

#### [Compulsory Suspension](#)

**10.12** For reasons of academic or personal misconduct, the University may apply a suspension from attendance at the University for a specified period. A student's registration status throughout this period will be 'Suspended'. The procedure for this can be accessed from the [Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct](#) document on the Manchester Metropolitan University website.

**10.13** The Finance Service Centre under certain circumstances (e.g. non-payment of fees) can suspend a student's studies. This will occur where the University has had a number of failed attempts to contact the student to reach a resolution. It is the student's responsibility to contact the University to negotiate a payment arrangement.

**10.14** Where the above applies, there will be implications to the student's funding provision, access to University facilities, and for international students, implications to their visa and immigration



status. It is the student's responsibility to contact the University to confirm what these implications will be.

## Withdrawal

**10.15** A student may make a request to withdraw from their studies at any time.

**10.16** Where the Research Degrees Committee requires a registered student to be withdrawn from their studies, this will be managed, as outlined in the Withdrawal Policy.

## 11. Preparation and Presentation of Thesis

### Thesis word limit

**11.1** The text of the thesis should not exceed the maximum word limit of 80,000 words (excluding ancillary data such as footnotes, bibliographies, diagrams and references).

**11.2** It should be noted that the maximum limit is not intended to be interpreted as a requirement for the length of the thesis and that in certain disciplines the thesis may be shorter. A student can apply to submit a thesis that exceeds the maximum word limit and should seek further advice from their Principal Supervisor.

**11.3** Students registered to conduct research within a practice-based context may be permitted other variants of assessment methods. This would normally be based on a thesis with a lower word limit of up to 50,000 words, and a practice-based element (for example a live performance, exhibition or calculations and equations). Where this applies, and a student requires alternative examination arrangements, they must inform the Graduate School and Research Degrees Committee in advance of thesis submission.

### Thesis Submission requirements

**11.4** The thesis should be submitted in accordance with the University Thesis Submission Requirements guidance.

**11.5** To successfully submit a thesis, a student must ensure that they are currently enrolled as a student of the University, and that they have no outstanding fees.

**11.6** If a thesis is not submitted before the end of the maximum period of registration, the student will be withdrawn from the University and deemed unable to submit, unless further approval is granted owing to reasons of exceptional circumstances.

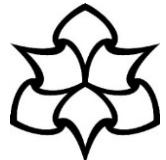
### Request for early submission

**11.7** A student can submit a request for early submission to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. Specific guidance on the process is provided in the Submission Requirements guidance.

**11.8** The minimum length of registration before a student can submit for a PhD is 24-months full-time (48 months part-time).

### Copyright guidance

**11.9** Students must have a full understanding and awareness of copyright issues and when it is necessary to seek permission to use other people's work to avoid infringing copyright. Further specifics in relation to copyright guidance are provided in the Submission Requirements guidance.



## 12. Examination and Assessment

### Examination arrangements

**12.1** Standard attendance at the oral examination consists of the student, two examiners and an independent chair. Additional examiners may attend dependent on the individual assessment requirements for the degree being examined.

**12.2** Members of University staff, and other postgraduate research students of the University, may attend the examination, if prior consent if provided by the student.

**12.3** The oral examination will be conducted within the University, or via video conferencing if deemed appropriate (see the [Oral Examination by Video Conferencing Policy](#) for full details and eligibility). Alternative format of examination, such as public defence, may be permitted subject to formal agreement between collaborating institutions.

**12.4** All students must defend their thesis in English.

**12.5** Where a student requires alternative assessment arrangements the student must inform their Principal Supervisor and the Faculty Research Degrees Team in writing at the point of thesis submission at the latest.

### Examination Team

**12.6** The appointment of examiners shall proceed in accordance with the Guidelines on the Examination of PGR Degrees.

**12.7** The examination team will normally consist of two examiners; at least one shall be an external examiner. Exceptions to this, such as for members of staff at MMU, are outlined in the Guidelines on the Examination of PGR Degrees.

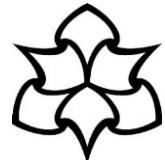
**12.8** Examination teams are approved by the RDC.

**12.9** For all research degree students who are required to undertake an oral examination, an independent chair shall be appointed to promote consistency and fairness. The independent chair does not examine the student, and is solely responsible for chairing the examination and ensuring the associated administration of the oral examination is completed.

### Examination outcomes

**12.10** After examining the thesis presented by a candidate and considering the results of the oral examination, the examiners shall make one of the following recommendations for subsequent approval by the Assessment Board.

- i) The student **be awarded the degree** with no revisions to the thesis being required.
- ii) The student **be awarded the degree subject to minor revisions** being made to the thesis within the timelines noted in the Guidelines on the Examination of PGR Degrees.
- iii) The student **be awarded the degree subject to major revisions** being made to the thesis within the timelines noted in the Guidelines on the Examination of PGR Degrees.
- iv) The student **be invited to revise and resubmit the thesis** within the timelines noted in the Guidelines on the Examination of PGR Degrees. The student will be permitted to resubmit on only



one occasion. The thesis will be re-examined, normally by the original examiners, and a further oral examination may be required.

- v) The student **be awarded a lower qualification with or without corrections** being made to the thesis within the timelines noted in the Guidelines on the Examination of PGR Degrees. (see '[Awards of the University](#)' for appropriate awards/exit awards).
- vi) **No award be made to the student** and no resubmission be permitted.

### **Submission of revisions (outcomes ii, iii & v)**

**12.11** If the student has submitted the corrected thesis within the deadline, but the examiners are not satisfied with the revisions, the examiners may agree to allow up to one additional month on one occasion for the student to make further, minor revisions.

### **Re-assessment and resubmission (outcome iv)**

**12.12** The student shall be required to re-submit for re-examination and approval within a period of time specified in the Guidelines on the Examination of PGR Degrees.

**12.13** The form of the re-examination shall be as specified in the initial examiner outcome report, and shall address those aspects of the first examination in which the student's performance was not satisfactory and may consider any new or amended material included in the thesis presented for re-examination.

**12.14** Students who fail to resubmit their amendments by the date specified may be deemed to have failed their degree and may be withdrawn by the University.

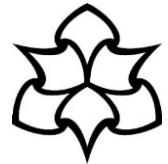
**12.15** Upon resubmission, the examiners shall make one of the following recommendations for subsequent approval by the Assessment Board:

- i) The student **be awarded the degree** with no corrections to the thesis being required.
- ii) The student **be awarded the degree subject to minor revisions** being made to the thesis within the timelines noted in the Guidelines on the Examination of PGR Degrees. The revisions will be assessed as outlined in the "Submission of revisions" section above.
- iii) The student **be awarded a lower qualification with or without corrections** being made to the thesis within the timelines noted in the Guidelines on the Examination of PGR Degrees. (see '[Awards of the University](#)' for appropriate awards/exit awards).
- iv) **No award be made** to the student, and the student is withdrawn from the University.

**12.16** The original examiners will normally undertake the re-examination, but in the event of non-availability, new examiners shall be appointed and approved by the Research Degrees Committee.

**12.17** For the purpose of satisfying the provisions of these regulations, the Faculty RDC acts as the Assessment Board for all research degrees.

**12.18** In all cases, having considered the recommendation, the RDC shall submit its final recommendations for an award to the Academic Board for University approval.



### 13. Complaints and appeals

13.1 The [Student Complaints Procedure](#) and the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#) apply to all postgraduate research students of the University.

### 14. Further Information

#### Additional guidance and support

14.1 Information to support the regulations is available from the Graduate School website.