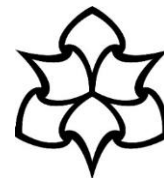


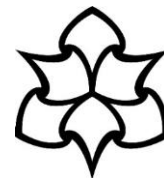
Research Degrees Handbook

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New for academic year 2020-21

The Research Degrees Handbook is reviewed annually. Changes may be made throughout the year, so please refer to the [Graduate School website](#) for the latest version of this document.

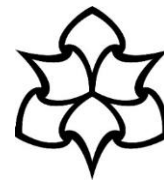
This Handbook is owned and updated by the Manchester Metropolitan University Graduate School on behalf of Academic Board. Queries should be directed to the Graduate School (gsresearchdegrees@mmu.ac.uk).

Introduction

This Handbook is for postgraduate research students, supervisors and professional services staff. It details the procedures and practices that apply to the core aspects of undertaking and administering postgraduate research programmes.

The handbook should be read alongside the regulations and other supporting documentation available on the [Graduate School website](#).

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Document Title:	Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations		
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1. Research student journey

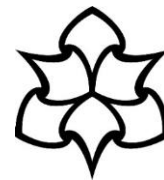
The following pages summarise students' main activities and milestones. These include

- **Enrolment** - you must enrol each year on the anniversary of your initial enrolment (see 'Enrolment').
- **Undertake independent research** - depending on your projects and the stage of your research, you will spend much of your time undertaking independent research activities.
- **Meet with the supervisory team** – you will meet with your supervisors regularly. Meetings with supervisors should be recorded on the Record of Supervisory Meetings form which is in the PGR record system (SkillForge). Further details are available in the [Guidance on Postgraduate Research Supervision](#).
- **Engage with personal and professional development activities** - you will need to complete a training needs analysis (TNA) when you start your research degree and revisit this on a regular basis. The TNA and training and development requirements are discussed with your Principal Supervisor.
- **Complete the progression review meetings** - At key points in the student journey you will have progression review meetings to make sure your progress is in line with where it's expected to be. You will also be able to raise any issues or concerns you may have. For further information, see the [Guidance on Milestones for PGR Research Degrees](#).
- **Submit research publications** - Where relevant, you should seek to publish your research in journals or other channels and take part in knowledge exchange activities.

2. Starting the degree

2.1 Key activities

- **Attend an induction meeting with your Principal Supervisor**
This meeting will cover health and safety guidance, facilities for research students, training and development needs, etc. You should also agree with your supervisor what you each expect from each other (see 'Getting started').
- **If required, contact the Disability Service to set up a Personal Learning Plan**
See 'Getting started'.
- **If required, contact the English Language Centre (if required)**
See 'Language Centre'.
- **Attend Faculty and University inductions**
The Graduate School provides information about the induction programmes (see 'Getting started').
- **Complete Manchester Met's Online Induction**
Manchester Met's Online Induction for research degrees students is available via [Moodle the university online learning environment](#).
- **Complete Research Integrity training**
The Research Integrity training course is available via the online induction on [Moodle](#) (See also 'Research ethics').



- **Read the regulatory documents**

You should familiarise yourself with the Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees and other relevant regulatory documents available on the [Graduate School webpages](#).

- **Prepare for your initial project review meeting**

To help you prepare, see the [Guidance on Milestones for PGR Research Degrees](#).

2.2 Starting your research degree

2.2.1 Enrolment

Enrolment dates are available as outlined below:

Arts and Humanities: October, January and April

Business and Law: October and January

Education: October

Health, Psychology and Social Care: October, January, April, July

Science and Engineering: October, January, April, July

Successful applicants are sent an offer which includes their start date in the offer letter. Applicants who accept their offers are sent welcome information about a month before their start date providing details of how to [enrol online](#). Please make sure you enrol with us prior to starting your research degree. If you don't enrol within four weeks of your start date, you will be considered to have withdrawn from Manchester Met. Please see the [Postgraduate Research Student Withdrawal Policy](#) for further information.

2.2.2 Re-enrolment

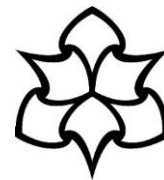
You must re-enrol on the anniversary of your initial enrolment each year until you are awarded your degree. If your enrolment date changes, because of an interruption or suspension, you must then re-enrol each year on the anniversary of your revised enrolment date.

If you fail to re-enrol within four weeks of your re-enrolment date, you will be deemed to have withdrawn from the programme. Please see the [Postgraduate Research Student Withdrawal Policy](#) for further information.

If you do not re-enrol each year, you will not be covered by Manchester Met insurance, should not come onto the Manchester Met premises, and are not able to use any of the facilities or receive any supervisory support.

2.2.3 Period of student registration

The periods from registration to thesis submission and completion and award are indicated in the [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#). For all research degrees, the registration period commences on the date indicated in your offer letter. The registration period continues until the degree is awarded, you reach your maximum registration period (unless an extension is granted), or you withdraw from the programme.



2.3 Getting started

Once you have successfully enrolled, you can access your student email account by visiting [MyMMU](#). You can login with their student ID and password. The default password is set to your date of birth in the following format: ddMonyy, e.g. 28Aug87.

[My MMU](#) contains several useful links, including to your email account, SkillsForge and the Moodle virtual learning environment.

2.3.1 PGR Induction

Within the first week, you must arrange to meet with your Principal Supervisor for your initial induction meeting. You will be able to commence your research and use Manchester Met facilities, including the library. You should also start to prepare for your Initial Project Review meeting. See the [Guidance on Milestones for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#) for further information.

You are required to complete the online induction on Moodle and attend the PGR Induction Programme. The Induction Programme is designed to:

- Provide research students with useful information regarding the Regulations and the student journey
- Support research students to help them feel part of the research student community
- Introduce the training and development opportunities on offer
- Raise students' awareness of research ethics and research governance
- Provide students with up-to-date information on the library, IT systems and wellbeing and support services.

You will need to familiarise yourself with the current [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#) and the supporting documentation (which are all available via the Graduate School webpages).

2.3.2 Student support

If you have a disability or a specific learning difficulty for which you require additional support, it is advisable that this is disclosed to Manchester Met at the earliest opportunity to ensure there is no delay to the provision of appropriate support. If you are unsure about what support is available, or whether or not you are entitled to disability related support, contact the [University's Disability Service](#) for advice.

If English is not your first language and you wish to develop your language skills further, the [Language Centre](#) runs a variety of courses to improve English by focusing on the four key skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

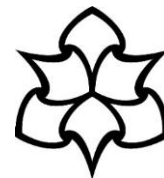
[The Student Hub](#) can help with a range of advice about your studies and being a student.

2.3.3. Transferring from another institution

Students may transfer into Manchester Metropolitan University from another institution to complete their studies. Information relating to this is detailed in Transferring PhD between institutions section of the [postgraduate research degree regulations](#).

2.3.4 Working with a collaborating organisation

A collaborating establishment is an external organisation that is actively involved in or supporting the research by providing facilities such as studio space, laboratories or other resources, which may also include supervision. The Faculty must assure itself that any facilities provided by a collaborating



establishment to enable the research project to be conducted and completed are available. The name of the collaborating establishment should be given, and confirmation of approval and details of the facilities being provided by a collaborating establishment must be confirmed in the collaborative agreement.

Please note that the involvement of an external supervisor does not necessarily mean that the institution is a collaborating establishment.

2.3.3 Thinking about research ethics

Research ethics is an important part of any research study. You will need to give consideration to any ethical issues related to your research, and apply for ethical approval via the [University's EthOS system](#). Ethical approval must be obtained before any research or data collection begins. See 'Research ethics' for further information.

3. Training and development

As a research student, you are expected to take responsibility for your own personal, professional and career development during your research degree, with advice and support from your supervisory team.

Manchester Met is committed to principles contained within the [Vitae Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#). This sets out a minimum expectation for engagement in training and development across the sector. Postgraduate research students are at an early stage of their research career, and will need to engage with a wide variety of training and development opportunities internally and externally to develop the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of effective researchers as outlined in the Vitae [Researcher Development Statement \(RDS\)](#), derived from the [Researcher Development Framework](#).

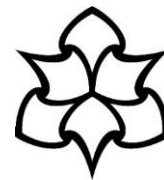
3.1 Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

With the support of your supervisory team, you will complete a training needs analysis as part of the Initial Project Review meeting and revisit it regularly throughout your research degree.

This process enables you to assess your current knowledge and skills across a variety of domains and establish areas for development. With advice from your supervisory team, you should then identify PGRs and engage in relevant training and development activities. The TNA is updated throughout your research degree and is discussed at each Progression Review meeting. A guide on how to complete a TNA is available in the PGR Development area on [Moodle](#).

3.2 Training and development opportunities

Once you have completed a TNA and established areas for development, the next step is to identify and complete training and development activities. There are many activities available within and beyond Manchester Met. Some examples are listed in the sections below and more information can be found in the PGR Development area on Moodle.



3.2.1 Face-to-face workshops

The Graduate School organises a programme of face-to-face workshops on a wide variety of topics including, for example: poster design and presentation; ethnography; using statistical software; and enhancing your research using technology.

Faculties may also provide a range of workshops and seminars for PGRs, in some cases offered as part of PGR membership of Manchester Met University Centres for Research and Knowledge Exchange (UCRKE).

You can also benefit from opportunities to attend workshops at Manchester Metropolitan's partner universities around the region. There may also be opportunities to attend external workshops or courses regionally, nationally and internationally. You are advised to check Moodle for any opportunities or speak to your Principal Supervisor/supervisory team about possibilities within your subject area.

3.2.2 Postgraduate taught programmes

All faculties offer taught Master's programmes that it might be possible for PGRs to attend. Principal Supervisors may be aware of existing units that may be of benefit to their supervisees. However, as there is no automatic right to attend such units, you should approach unit leaders prior to attending.

3.3.3 Conferences, seminars and symposia

An exciting way of finding out about research, and putting presentation skills into practice, is by attending and presenting at conferences. There are a wide range of research seminars, symposia and conferences organised by faculties, departments and UCRKEs around Manchester Met, as well as the flagship Annual PGR Conference, organised and run by PGRs with support from the Graduate School. Look out for opportunities on notice boards, through email circulars, UCRKE websites, the [PGR Development area](#) on Moodle and [@ManMetPGR](#) on Twitter.

3.3.4 Competitions

You are encouraged to enter research communication competitions such as Three Minute Thesis[®] (3MT) and Images of Research, both of which provide you with the opportunity to communicate your research and its impact in a concise and focused way to non-specialist audiences. These competitions run annually and opportunities to participate are advertised by Faculty and Graduate School email circulars and notice boards.

4. Progressing through your research degree

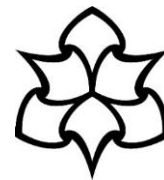
During a research degree, you will be notified of key dates and milestones on [SkillsForge](#), Manchester Met's system for monitoring and administering the research student journey.

The format and timescales for the completion of formal milestones are detailed in the [Guidance on Milestones for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#).

The expected thesis submission deadline will be indicated on the student's offer letter and in the Student Details section on SkillsForge.

All communications relating to your studies, including alerts and emails from SkillsForge, will be sent to your Manchester Met email account. It is therefore important that you check your student email regularly.

If you are undertaking your PhD by Published Works, information relating to progress is outlined in the [Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees – PhD by Published Works](#).



5. Research Ethics

Research in the UK is underpinned by the highest standards of rigour and integrity, as described in the [UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#).

To reach this goal of integrity, Manchester Met implements a programme of research governance, which means that research must be conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in University [policies and guidelines](#).

Manchester Met expects anyone carrying out research to understand the University's policies and guidelines and complete research integrity training as part of the Online Induction via Moodle.

5.1 Ethical approval

One of the main requirements of research governance is that **all research must obtain ethical approval before it commences**. You must apply for ethical approval using Manchester Met online application system [EthOS](#) before you start any research, and select the full application route for PGRs and Staff.

You must ensure that you read the necessary [policies, forms and guidelines](#), and the [Standard Operating Procedures for research ethics](#).

At the time of your Initial Project Review, you will be asked to confirm that you have understood the ethical procedure and that you agree to comply with it. You will also be asked if you have already obtained ethical approval. If you have, you will be asked to upload your approval letter. If you have not obtained approval yet, you will be asked to confirm an approximate date by which you will do so.

The Initial Project Review and each annual review include a requirement to discuss expected research ethics and governance issues with the review panel.

You can access numerous sources of support and information about research ethics. Your supervisory team will provide guidance and input on the importance of ensuring research is carried out according to Manchester Met requirements and the regulatory framework, and how to prepare applications for ethical approval.

If supervisors are unable to answer a question, students can seek advice from the [Faculty Research Officer](#).

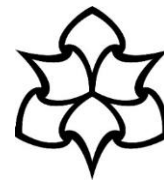
6. Changes relating to your research study

It is sometimes necessary to make some changes during your research degree. For example, new supervisors may be required, you may need to take time off from your research degree, a change in programme or mode of study may be required or you may wish to request an extension to complete their project. These changes are sometimes referred to as concessions.

6.1 Processes for making changes

If you are thinking of making a change, make sure you discuss this with your Principal Supervisor before proceeding.

There are some processes on SkillsForge to request changes:



- Application for change in approved arrangements for supervision
- Application for extension to the standard or maximum period of registration
- Application for interruption of a period of registration

There are also some processes to request changes to arrangements that are not administered in SkillsForge:

- Change in approved programme of study
- Change in mode of study
- Request to withdraw from studies

The following supporting documentation outlines information in relation about applying for changes:

- [Guidance on Postgraduate Research Supervision](#) outlines details relating to requests to changes supervisory arrangements
- [Guidance on Concessions](#) outlines details relating to requests to interrupt or extend studies. You should refer to the [Finance Regulations for Postgraduate Research Students](#) to find out any fee implications.
- [The Postgraduate Research Student Withdrawal Policy](#) outlines details for requests to withdraw from study.

6.2 Changes in approved programme of study

When you write your thesis proposal, the title is assumed to be a working title. The title may change or be amended at any time up to thesis submission. However, if your research changes substantially from that which has been approved, then you will have to complete a change in approved programme of study (RDCP) form for this to be reviewed and approved.

6.3 Changes in mode of study

You may apply to change your mode of study from full-time to part-time, or part-time to full-time at any point, and student fees will be adjusted in accordance with the approved changes.

- If you are funded you will need to seek confirmation from your sponsor before applying, to confirm if a change in mode of study will affect your financial situation, and/or if there is a limit on the number of times you can change your mode of study.
- Overseas students will need to consult with the Visa and Compliance team to clarify whether there are visa restrictions that preclude you from being able to change your mode of study from full-time to part-time.

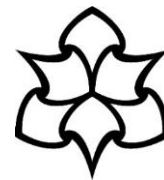
To request a change to the mode of study, you will have to complete a change in mode of study form for review and approval.

7. Final doctoral examination

You should discuss with your supervisor when to submit your thesis for examination. You should be aware that once your thesis has been formally submitted, it's not possible to make any revisions prior to examination. A brief outline about thesis submission is included below:

Three months before the thesis submission deadline

- Complete the Notice of Intention to Submit form
- Submit thesis draft to your supervisory team



- If you would like to request a temporary embargo of publication of your thesis, this should be submitted now
- Your Principal Supervisor submits the approval of examiners form
- NB if you give less than three months' notice of submission, there may be a delay in appointing your examiners and arranging your viva examination

By the thesis submission deadline

- Submit your thesis for examination

After thesis submission

- Speak to your supervisor about arranging a mock viva examination

There are supporting resources and videos in the [PGR Hub](#) and PGR Development areas on Moodle.

Day of the viva

- Make sure you know the arrangements and arrive in good time.

After the viva

- Most students need to make some form of corrections to their viva after feedback from the examiners. You will be told what those changes are, and the maximum amount of time you have to complete and submit your revised thesis.
- Some students may also have a further viva, in which case speak to your supervisor about the arrangements.

After the corrections have been approved

- Submit the final copy of your thesis. Congratulations, doctor!

Master's by Research students don't normally have a viva, but may do if the examiners request it. MPhil students follow the same process as for doctoral students.

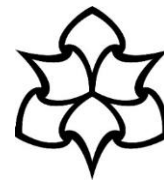
Further information is available in the [Guidance on Thesis Submission for Postgraduate Research Degrees](#) and [Guidance on the Examination of Postgraduate Research Degrees](#).

8. Support during your studies

8.1 Using the Library and its services

The [Library website](#) provides a starting point to discover information and resources for your research. You will find a link on the website to the [user guide for researchers](#), which gives an overview of the services the Library provides. In addition to printed publications such as books and journals, the Library provides access to a wide range of online journals, databases and other resources.

The Library runs a number of workshops to help research students. These include workshops on Endnote (Manchester Met's preferred reference management tool), advanced searching techniques and citation searching.



The Library manages [e-space](#), Manchester Met's institutional repository. It aims to collect and preserve all of the research output of Manchester Met and make it freely accessible online. When a research student is awarded their degree, their thesis is made available on e-space.

8.1.1 Subject Librarians/Research Support Librarian

Subject Librarians can provide advice on specialist subject resources as well as general library services. If you can't visit the library, you can email your [Subject Librarian contact](#) with your information request.

The [Research Support Librarian](#) works alongside the library subject teams to help research students make the most of the library resources and services in their field of research. The Research Support Librarian also works with the Research and Knowledge Exchange Directorate to ensure that the research agenda informs the Library Service.

8.1.2 Borrowing from the Manchester Met Library

Following enrolment, you are issued with an ID card, which gives you access to the Library. All researchers may borrow up to 30 books for 2 weeks and they will be renewed automatically unless another borrower has reserved them. Items that are not on the shelves or are at another Library site can be reserved without charge.

8.1.3 Inter-Library Loans

Students can make up to 30 requests per academic year for material not held by the Manchester Met University Library, via the [Inter Library Loans service](#). There is no charge for this service. If you require more than your allocation, you must discuss this with the Inter-Library loans team.

8.1.4 Access to other libraries

You may be able to borrow books directly from other UK university libraries participating in the SCONUL Access Scheme. Full details, including an application form, are available on the [SCONUL website](#).

8.2 Student support

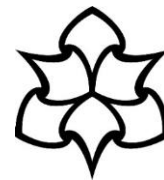
8.2.1 Student Services

[Student Services](#) aims to enhance the student experience by providing access to a range of facilities and support to all students. This includes Counselling Services, Chaplaincy, Careers and Employability, Sport, and the [Disability Service](#) (support for students with a disability).

[The Student Hub](#) can help with a range of advice about your studies and being a student.

8.2.2 The Language Centre

The [Language Centre](#) provides free English classes and one-to-one tutorials for international students.



Useful Terms

Academic Board: The body that oversees Manchester Met's academic activities, and considers matters related to the awarding of degrees.

Advisor: An optional supervisory team member with specialist knowledge or connections.

Department, Faculty, School: Manchester Metropolitan is made up of five Faculties. Each Faculty is subdivided into a number of different Schools or Departments.

e-space: Manchester Met's research repository for uploading and storing students' electronic theses.

Ethics: Research ethics are a set of core principles defining how researchers interact with research participants, including their data or tissue.

EthOS (Ethics online system): Manchester Met's system for submitting and monitoring ethics applications.

EThOS (Electronic theses online service): The British Library's thesis repository.

Examiner: A specialist academic who can assess a student's research output. Examiners may be internal (employees of Manchester Met) or external (not employed by Manchester Met).

Extension of study: Where a student has exceptional factors that mean they require additional time to submit (or re-submit) their thesis, they can apply for an extension of study to have more time after the writing-up period.

Faculty Research Degrees Committee: Based within each Faculty and responsible to the University Research Degrees Committee for the oversight of research degrees in the Faculty. These are chaired by the Head of Faculty Research Degrees and are the delegated authority for the Research Degrees Committee in many instances.

Graduate School: Manchester Met's Graduate School oversees the administration and quality assurance of research degrees, is responsible for the day-to-day administration and oversight of research degrees, and works to enhance the student experience and raise the profile of postgraduate research.

Head of Faculty Research Degrees (HFRD): Provides strategic leadership within Faculties for postgraduate research.

Independent chair: Chairs the oral examination. The chair does not examine the thesis, but is responsible for ensuring the oral examination is run and administered appropriately.

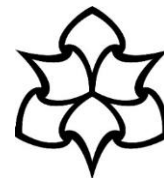
Moodle: Manchester Met's online learning environment.

Oral examination (viva, viva voce): Most research degrees are examined via an oral examination often referred to as a viva or viva voce.

Personal Learning Plan (PLP): Students who declare a disability to the Disability Service may have a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) that details any reasonable adjustments they require.

PGR: Abbreviation for postgraduate research, or postgraduate researcher.

PRES (Postgraduate Research Experience Survey): A survey that Manchester Met participates in every other year in order to gather feedback from postgraduate research students about their learning and supervision experiences.



Principal Supervisor: is the lead source of supervisory support for a research student.

Registration period: The formal period that a student is registered on a research degree.

Research Degrees Coordinator/PGR Lead: Academic lead within Schools/Departments for research degrees, providing oversight of the research degrees programme. Note, in some faculties this role is also called PGR Lead.

SkillsForge: Manchester Met's system for monitoring and administering the research student journey.

Supervisory team: The team that supervise the research student. The supervisory team includes a Principal Supervisor, supervisor(s) and – in some cases – advisor(s).

Interruptions of study: Where a student has exceptional factors that prevent them from progressing with their research, they can apply for a temporary break of study, known as an interruption of study. During an interruption of study, a student is not engaging with their studies or receiving supervision.

Thesis submission: The formal submission of the thesis to Manchester Met.

University Centre for Research and Knowledge Exchange (UCRKE): these centres bring together academic staff and postgraduate research students in a research community in particular areas. There are [fourteen UCRKEs](#).

University Research Degrees Committee (RDC): Responsible to Academic Board through Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and Education Committee for the educational oversight of all research degree provision, wherever delivered. Its focus is on priority issues of an institutional nature.

Additional guidance and support

Regulations and their supporting documents are available on the [Graduate School website](#).