



Section B

**Research
Degrees
Regulations**

B1 Principles

- 1.1 University of the Arts London (hereafter referred to as 'the University') shall award the degrees of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) to registered students who successfully complete approved programmes of supervised research.
- 1.2 Programmes of research may be proposed in any field of study within the expertise of University of the Arts London, provided that the proposed programme is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment by appropriate examiners. A research degree is characterised by the sustained, rigorous and critical investigation of a defined subject, by the openness of the research methods and results to evaluation by others, and by the contribution to public knowledge and understanding of its outcome. When creative work forms a significant part of the research programme, references to the 'thesis' are understood to mean the totality of the submission for the degree, which will include the creative work and/or documentation of the creative work, and the written text.
- 1.3 A PhD is awarded in recognition of the creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship. The thesis must be accessible to peers and other related academics, and give evidence of being a significant contribution to knowledge and/or to understanding of the subject researched, and of the student's capacity to pursue further research without supervision. The thesis should contain a significant amount of material worthy of publication or public presentation.
- 1.4 An MPhil degree is awarded in recognition of a systematic, well documented and well-argued study, which should demonstrate adequate knowledge and understanding, critical evaluation and discussion of a field of study. The MPhil must be accessible to peers and other related academics, must show initiative and independence of thought, and must be a distinct contribution to scholarship. It must also show evidence of the student's proficiency in the methods and techniques of research. It is an award in its own right or, alternatively, it may be undertaken as preparation for a PhD.
- 1.5 Only one award of MPhil or PhD can be made for a single project.
- 1.6 The MPhil may be awarded if the examiners consider a thesis submitted for a PhD meets the criteria specified for an MPhil (see 1.4 above) but does not meet the criteria specified for a PhD in 1.3 above (see section [10.4.iv](#) of these Regulations).
- 1.7 University Research Degrees Sub-Committee

Academic Board has delegated power to the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee to confer the award of degrees. The Committee also has delegated authority to:

- i. set and maintain standards for the award of research degrees through the approval of procedures;
- ii. consider and approve the applications to register for research degree study;
- iii. maintain an overview of students' progress, including the extension and suspension of registrations, ensuring that the guidelines and regulations for research degrees of the University are followed;
- iv. appoint internal and external examiners and Chairs for viva voce examinations;
- v. award research degrees on the basis of the report and final recommendation of the examiners;
- vi. ensure that the general arrangements under which the research of each student are carried out are satisfactory and meets the requirements of the University. These arrangements to include supervision and the provision of research training and other resources needed to enable students to complete their research to a satisfactory standard;
- vii. ensure that appropriate information relating to research degrees is available to students and supervisors;

- viii. consider confirmation reports and confirm the registration of students for the specific degrees of MPhil and PhD;
- ix. exercise all other responsibilities in relation to the registration of research degree students;
- x. monitor College's provision of resources for research degree students;
- xi. monitor the operation of College Research Degrees Sub-Committees.

1.8 College Research Degrees Sub-Committees

It is the responsibility of College Research Degrees Sub-Committees to:

- i. advise on the programme of work, registration and any ethical or health and safety issues of the applicant's research prior to their consideration by the University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee;
- ii. monitor student's progress, notable achievements and the effectiveness of the operation of quality assurance procedures;
- iii. assess Applications for Registration and approve these subject to RDSC ratification
- iv. ensure that the arrangements and infrastructure within the college under which students carry out their research meet the requirements of the University;
- v. be the first point of approval for applications for registration and confirmation reports and has devolved authority from the Research Ethics Sub-Committee for the approval of research ethics approval forms;
- vi. to advise on the nomination of examination teams for MPhil and PhD examination;
- vii. monitor the recruitment, registration and completion rates of research degree students.

1.9 University Research Ethics Sub-Committee

It is the responsibility of University Research Ethics Sub-Committee to:

- i. consider and advise as appropriate on legal, moral and ethical issues relating to research;
- ii. be responsible for the provision of an infrastructure which would facilitate the adherence to the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence, and thereby safeguard the interests of researchers, participants and those on whom the research might impact, directly or indirectly;
- iii. establish Codes of Practice on Ethics to be promulgated within the University;
- iv. review on a regular basis and recommend changes to the Codes of Practice on Ethics in the light of external and internal practice and developments;
- v. decide on applications for research ethics approval that are deemed to be more than minimal risk;
- vi. advise University Research Committee, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee or College Research Committees as appropriate, on legal, moral or ethical issues relating to research;
- vii. oversee the Research Ethics training provided for research degree students at the University;
- viii. monitor College Research Degrees Sub-Committees' operation of devolved responsibility for the approval of research considered as 'minimal risk'.

B2 Admissions

Entry requirements

- 2.1 An applicant seeking admission to the degree of MPhil or PhD are expected to hold a Master's degree in an appropriate subject, although the normal minimum entry requirement for a research degree is an upper second class honours degree of a British University or recognised institution of higher education.
- 2.2 In some instances, applicants without this requirement may be considered if they can demonstrate appropriate alternative qualifications, professional experience or previous research.
- 2.3 Where English is not an applicant's first language, an applicant must demonstrate evidence of English language ability to the following (or equivalent) minimum level of proficiency:
- International English Language Test (IELTS) scoring at least 7.0+ (with a 7.0 in writing) or a recognised equivalent as agreed by the University Language Centre.
- 2.4 These minimum University requirements may be supplemented by additional requirements by the Colleges.
- 2.5 Applications are for an unspecified research degree and include an expression of intent to complete with the degree of MPhil or PhD.
- 2.6 Candidates located outside the United Kingdom
- Colleges may approve an application from a candidate proposing to work outside the UK, provided that:
- adequate facilities are available to the applicant to carry out their proposed programme of study;
 - the supervisory arrangements enable regular and sufficient contact with supervisors based in the UK via electronic communication;
 - if the student is working abroad there will be regular contact with the supervisory team
- 2.7 Members of University staff will normally be registered to a College other than their place of work.

The selection process

- 2.8 The process of selecting appropriately qualified and/or experienced applicants for admission to a research degree is the responsibility of the individual Colleges.
- 2.9 The Associate Dean of Research of the College to which the student has applied will consider all applications for registration for a research degree. At this stage the applicant may be invited to visit the College for an informal discussion on the proposed programme of research.
- 2.10 After consulting potential supervisors on suitability of the proposals, the Associate Dean of Research of the Colleges or a senior member of academic staff who they have deputised this role to, informs the Research Student Team which students will be invited for formal interview.
- 2.11 The interviews will be conducted by at least two members of academic staff, of which one is the Associate Dean of Research of the College or a senior member of academic staff nominated by them. The other members on the panel would normally be potential supervisors for the research.
- 2.12 The Interview panel is required to provide feedback which will indicate their decision to either offer or decline the student a place on the research programme.

2.13 Selection criteria

Applications will be considered according to the following selection criteria:

- i. the academic profile of the applicant and his/her ability to achieve the standard of the appropriate degree within the maximum permissible timescales;
- ii. the viability of the proposed research project, its aims and its suitability for the level of award identified;
- iii. the availability of supervisors with appropriate expertise, experience of supervision and supervisory capacity;
- iv. the availability of sufficient supporting resources for the conduct of scholarly research and/or creative practice in the area of the proposed research project.

B3 Registration

- 3.1 Following enrolment students must make their Application to Register for a research degree to the College Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration and approval within the first year of study. Once approved by CRDSC the Registration is then ratified by the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee, which samples 10% of the approved Applications for Registration to ensure the quality standard and due process is followed.
- 3.2 A student may register on a full-time or part-time basis.
- 3.3 College Research Degrees Sub-Committees will consider applications to register for an unspecified research degree and decide whether:
- to refer the proposal back to the student and supervisors for further information or specified modifications; or
 - to approve the proposal and forward it to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for ratification.
 - to recommend the withdrawal of a student if they fail to make sufficient progress within the timeframe set for Application for Registration approval. In this case, the College's decision will be passed to the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for approval.
- 3.4 University Research Degrees Sub-Committee will ratify registration of applications for registration and will sample 10% of all application for registration approved by the College Committees and decide:
- to confirm the students registration; or
 - to reject the application and withdraw the student if they have not made sufficient progress within their first year of study.
- 3.5 When considering an application for registration, CRDSC will consider the applicant's proposed programme of research, which should indicate:
- i. the topic or area to be investigated;
 - ii. the problem, hypothesis or questions to be systematically investigated;
 - iii. the methods and techniques to be used in the study;
 - iv. the relationship of the proposed research to the published literature and to current research in the applicant's field; and
 - v. the contribution to knowledge (for the degree of PhD) or scholarship (for the degree of MPhil) that the thesis would make.
- 3.6 CRDSC will also consider the ability of the University to provide an appropriate supervisory team and adequate resources for the proposed programme of research.
- 3.7 Exceptionally, URDSC may impose conditions on registration to safeguard the standard of the award.
- 3.8 As part of the registration process it is compulsory for the research student to present their research at RNUAL Block 3. If it is not possible for a student to attend for reasons such as ill-health, then alternative arrangements need to be discussed with the Dean of Research.
- 3.9 Following Research Degrees Sub-Committee approval of the student's registration for an unspecified research degree, the student has a period of normally between 12 and 18 months (if full-time) or 24 to 30 months (if part-time) from the date of enrolment before which he/she can make an application to transfer to the specified research degree MPhil or PhD. This period is referred to as the probationary period.
- 3.10 Students who do not successfully register by the end of March may be withdrawn from the programme. The decision to withdraw a student will be that of the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

Registration periods

3.11 Registration periods are as follows:

Mode of study	Minimum duration	Expected duration	Maximum duration
MPhil (full-time)	1 year 3 months	1 year 9 months	3 years
PhD (full-time)	2 years	2 years 9 months	4 years
MPhil (part-time)	2 years	3 years	6 years
PhD (part-time)	3 years	5 years	8 years

3.12 Where a student applies to change from full-time to part-time study or vice versa, the minimum and maximum registration periods shall be calculated on a pro rata basis. One year of full-time study will be considered as being equivalent to 2 years of part-time study.

3.13 Changes of mode of study will normally only be permitted once during the registration period, and will only take effect from the beginning of an academic year.

3.14 The date of formal registration will normally be backdated to the date of enrolment.

3.15 Students who have transferred registration from another institution may have part or all of the period of their previous registration recognised subject to a satisfactory report from their new Director of Studies.

3.16 Students may not normally enrol for other degrees while they are registered for MPhil or PhD.

3.17 Where a student is prevented, by ill health or other good cause, from making progress with the research, the enrolment may be suspended for a specified period, normally for not more than one year at a time and no more than twice during the period of registered study. Students are not normally allowed subsequent suspensions for the same reason and retrospective suspensions are not normally approved.

3.18 University Research Degrees Sub-Committee may exceptionally extend the period of registration beyond the maximum period.

Writing Up Status

3.19 Students can apply for Writing Up status when they have completed their research and practice and a complete first draft of their thesis, including introduction and conclusion, has been approved by their Director of Studies and the Chair to their College Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

3.20 Writing Up status can start at any point during the year and normally starts on the 1st of the Month after the Application for Writing Up Status has been approved by the Director of Studies, Chair to College Research Degrees Sub-Committee and Chair to UAL Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

3.21 The maximum period for Writing Up is 12 months regardless of the mode of study of the student and does not change the student's final submission date.

3.22 For students who commenced their research degree in 2016/17 or earlier. The Writing Up Fee covers the period of Writing Up and is not calculated pro-rata, regardless of when the student submits.

3.23 If a student is unable to submit at the end of their Writing Up Status they will return to paying normal fees and may have to request to extend the period of registration beyond the maximum period. Students commencing their research degree in 2017/18 or later will pay their writing up fee in 4 instalments to be paid on 1 October, 1 January, 1 April, 1 July. (Requirement to pay instalments ceases on submission of PhD.)

3.24 During the Writing Up period the student will have full student status, however, only the Director of Studies will receive hours for the supervision.

B4 Supervision

- 4.1 A Director of Studies will be appointed by the College as part of the offer to study, and the supervisory team must be approved by University Research Degrees Sub-Committee at the point of registration.
- 4.2 The supervisory team will consist of at least two and normally not more than three supervisors, one of whom will be the student's Director of Studies. The Director of Studies will be a member of the University's staff and, wherever possible, the co-supervisor will also be drawn from the University's staff, although external co-supervisor(s) may be appointed where the appropriate supervision experience is not available internally. In addition to the supervisory team, advisors may also be appointed to contribute specialist knowledge or provide a link with an external organisation.
- 4.3 Each member of a supervisory team should normally meet the following criteria:
- i. be a member of the academic staff of a university or recognised institution of higher education, or a research group of appropriate academic standing;
 - ii. have produced either high level creative work or publications or hold a research degree in the student's field of study (or in the general subject area if they are to be a co-supervisor);
 - iii. have experience of supervising research in the student's field of study (or in the general subject area if they are to be a co-supervisor) or have undertaken research supervisor training;
 - iv. not be reading for a research degree at UAL or any other institution;
 - v. not have a close personal or professional (such as line management) relationship with the other supervisor(s) or with the student.
- 4.4 The responsibilities of supervisors are set out in the Code of Practice for supervisors and research students ([Annex 7](#) of these Regulations).
- 4.5 Within the supervisory team as a whole, there should be a combined experience of supervising at least two research degrees to successful completion. Where a student's ultimate objective is a PhD, at least one of these two completions should be a doctorate. If a supervisor has successfully completed the SEDA accredited Supervising A Research Degree elective unit from the MA Academic Practice which is co-ordinated through the University's Teaching and Learning Exchange (TLE) or an equivalent SEDA accredited course at another University, this will be counted as the equivalent of one completion, though this is only the case when the other member of the team holds one full completion.

B5 Confirmation

- 5.1 Students are registered initially for an unspecified research degree, at which point they will have indicated their intended degree (MPhil or PhD). The application to confirm the degree for which they will be examined will normally take place after a probationary period of 12 to 18 months for full-time students and 24 to 36 months for part-time students.
- 5.2 In making their application to confirm the degree for which they will be examined, students are required to provide (normally in a document of no more than 10,000 words):
- i. A contextual review (e.g. a literature or practice review) and an analysis of methods employed which may later form a chapter of the final thesis. If the student intends to submit a body of creative, practical work for the final examination, the contextual review will include a practice review. A practice review explains the significance of the student's own work in the appropriate historical, critical and theoretical context and should include documentation of the project.
 - ii. a detailed plan of the research project to completion and chapter outlines for the written text (and, if the degree includes a significant body of creative work, an indication of the likely form of the creative work at submission in terms of documentation or exhibition/ event).
 - iii. an abstract outlining the main thesis of the work.
 - iv. a comment on any new ethical considerations since Registration.
 - v. a written health and safety risk assessment (if applicable).
- 5.3 A formal meeting will be held and the student will be invited to make a short presentation on the work achieved to a confirmation panel.
- 5.4 The panel will normally consist of the supervisory team and one other member of the University's academic staff normally from a different College than the student; exceptionally an external may be included if the topic is very specialised. The independent academic is required to have the experience of at least one Research Degree completion. The Director of Studies would normally be expected to chair the meeting. The independent member of the University's academic staff will lead the questions about the work presented and contribute their judgement on the student's work to the writing of the report.
- 5.5 The panel will complete the confirmation report at the same time as the meeting in order to record the supervisors' comments and recommendations and confirm supervisory arrangements.
- 5.6 At the Confirmation meeting the Director of Studies and co-supervisor(s) are required to provide in writing:
- i. an assessment of the student's work and progress since registration;
 - ii. comments on; the contextual review; the analysis of methods employed; the schedule for the completion of the research project proposed by the student; and description of chapter headings and (if applicable) creative work to be submitted;
 - iii. details of the progress reviews undertaken during the probationary period, including a report of the meeting held in connection with this probationary report;
 - iv. details of any concerns they may have about the student's performance and ability to complete successfully a research degree within the maximum registration period;
 - v. details of supervisory arrangements, including details of the division of responsibilities between the supervisors, in relation to the assessment of the student's written work, frequency and approximate duration of supervisory sessions and the date of the most recent contact;
 - vi. comments on the annual assessment of any new ethical considerations for which the student may need to seek approval;
 - vii. comments on the annual health and safety written risk assessment of the student's research (if applicable).

- 5.7 The panel should make a recommendation in their report to the College and University Research Degrees Sub-Committees as to whether the student's registration for either MPhil or PhD should be confirmed; the probationary period extended by a maximum of 3 months for full-time and 6 months for part-time students (to enable items of further work to be completed – the panel should normally remain the same when reconvened to assess the student's progress); or their registration discontinued.
- 5.8 The Director of Studies is responsible for submitting the final report to the relevant secretary of College Research Degrees Sub-Committee. The supervisors must ensure that, at the end of the meeting, the student has a chance to discuss any further issues with the independent academic privately. The report will be sent to College Research Degrees Sub-Committee for comment and a recommendation, and then to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee, which will consider the report and confirm the recommendation.
- 5.9 A copy of the report will be shown to the student after University Research Degrees Sub-Committee has approved it. The student has the right to appeal against the confirmed recommendation, according to the procedure laid out in the Section 11 of these Regulations.
- 5.10 As part of the confirmation process it is compulsory for the research student to present as part of the RNUAL Block 2. If it is not possible for a student to attend for reasons such as ill health, then alternative arrangements need to be discussed with the Dean of Research.

Criteria to be considered

- 5.11 The purpose of this stage is to confirm that:
- i. the student has the knowledge and skills appropriate to completing their research programme;
 - ii. that they have completed work of a quality to justify continuation and that the research methods are appropriate and practical;
 - iii. that the proposed research is likely to make a significant contribution to knowledge (as set out in the requirements for the award of a PhD at the University); or that confirmation as MPhil is more appropriate;
 - iv. that a realistic plan is in place for completion of the research within the expected timeframe.
- 5.12 For those students where practice is to form a significant component of the thesis, the papers presented must:
- i. clearly articulate the role and purpose of the practice within the overall research project;
 - ii. identify how the creative/practical work (both achieved and anticipated) are likely to be included in the final submission and how this will be presented (as event or exhibition) and documented for final examination;
 - iii. identify which research methods have informed their work and present the contexts (both historical and/or theoretical) in which they are working;
 - iv. offer reflection on the development of their practice, with an emphasis on what can be communicated to others (i.e. as a contribution to new knowledge in the field).

B6 Monitoring progress of the research

Annual Reports

- 6.1 Each year the supervisory team will produce an annual report for their student regardless of registration or writing up status. An annual report is not required for students who have submitted or will submit their thesis , or have completed Confirmation during the academic year.

The report should either be an agreed text or a composite report with at least a paragraph of comment from each of the supervisors. The report should cover the following points (although not all of them will be relevant to all students):

- i. an assessment of the student's progress over the past year;
- ii. details of any academic contributions made by the student to publications, seminars, conferences, etc;
- iii. details of any formal training undertaken;
- iv. details of how the student has addressed modifications required after Application for Registration
- v. details of any changes in ethical considerations;
- vi. any changes that require a review of the health and safety risk assessment;
- vii. details of supervisory arrangements, including details of the division of responsibilities between the supervisors, in relation to the assessment of the student's written work, frequency and approximate duration of supervisory sessions and the date of the most recent contact;
- viii. a recommendation:
 - that the student's registration should be continued for a further year; or
 - that registration should be continued for a limited period subject to specified conditions, etc; or
 - that registration should be discontinued.

- 6.2 Annual reports for continuing students need to be submitted on the 1st of July each year to the College Research Degrees Sub-Committees and referred to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee only where there are matters of significant concern.

- 6.3 Annual reports for first year students need to be submitted after RNUAL Block 3 to include RNUAL attendance and presentation.

- 6.4 An annual report needs to be completed for each year of study apart from the year in which a student is undergoing the process of Confirmation or is submitting for examination.

Supervisory Record Sheets

- 6.5 Students are required to complete a Supervisory Record Sheet after each formal supervision (normally 10 per year for full-time students and 5 per year for part-time students) and submit this to the supervisor(s) for comments. Once agreed the record sheet needs to be submitted to the Research Student Team for filing and to be circulated to the further supervisory team for noting.

B7 The thesis

- 7.1 Students may undertake a programme of research in which their own creative work forms, as a point of origin or reference, a significant part of the intellectual enquiry. In such cases, the 'thesis' is understood to mean the totality of the work submitted for the degree, which will include the creative work itself (or its adequate documentation) and a written text. Such creative work may be in any field within the competence of the staff, and commensurate with the mission statement, of the University.
- 7.2 After enrolment but before a degree has been awarded, a student may publish papers or exhibit work arising from the research. A note must be made in the thesis of any material that has been published or exhibited, and reprint(s) (or the equivalents) must be submitted with the thesis.
- 7.3 Where there is a requirement for the thesis to remain confidential for a period of time after completion of the work, application for confidentiality shall normally be made at the time of registration. In cases where the need for confidentiality emerges at a subsequent stage, the application for the thesis to remain confidential after submission shall be made at the same time as approval is sought for examination arrangements. The period approved shall normally not exceed two years from the date of the oral examination.
- 7.4 The copyright of the thesis shall normally be vested in the student.
- 7.5 The thesis shall be presented in English.
- 7.6 There shall be an abstract of approximately 300 words bound into the written text on the page following the title page and which shall provide a synopsis of the thesis, stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated.
- 7.8 The thesis written text shall acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted and any assistance received.
- 7.9 The student must confirm that the thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award.
- 7.10 In exceptional circumstances it is, however, permissible to incorporate, in a thesis covering a wider field, work that has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, as long as both the declaration form and the thesis make clear which part of the work this is.
- 7.11 Where a student's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the written text shall indicate clearly the student's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration. The signed declaration must state how far the work contained in the thesis was the student's own work, or how far it was undertaken in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others.
- 7.12 The final submission must be accompanied, where appropriate, by an archival record (such as video, photographic record, musical score, diagrammatic representation or digital storage medium) of the candidate's practice. Such a record must be in a standard retrievable form that has been agreed with the Chair to URDSC.
- 7.13 The length of the written part of the thesis includes foot- and endnotes, but excludes appendices, the bibliography and translations from texts that do not exist in another format and should be:
- i. for a PhD: not more than 100,000 words regardless of whether the research is text or practice based; the minimum word count for a text based thesis is 60,000 words whereas for practice-based thesis it is 30,000 words.
 - ii. for an MPhil: not more than 60,000 words regardless of whether the research is text or practice based; the minimum word count for a text based thesis is 40,000 words whereas for practice-based thesis it is 15,000 words.

- 7.14 The student shall ensure that the format and binding of the thesis is in accordance with the requirements prescribed by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee ([Annex 4](#) of these Regulations).
- 7.15 In the event that a thesis is not submitted within the timeframe as approved by the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee, the student will be required to pay additional tuition fees until submission.

B8 Examination

8.1 The examination for a research degree shall have the following stages:

- i. the student's submission of the thesis and the examiners' independent preliminary assessment of it, which will be recorded in a written report;
- ii. the defence of the thesis by viva voce or University Research Degrees Sub-Committee approved alternative examination.

The viva voce examination should normally be completed within three months of the formal submission of the thesis for examination as long as the examiners have indicated in their preliminary reports that they are happy for the viva voce to take place.

8.2 Students submitting a thesis that includes a body of creative work may wish to arrange a visual representation of this work for the approved examiners to view prior to the oral examination as a means of familiarising themselves with the student's practice. In this case the student would be responsible for making the practical arrangements. The normal procedure would also be that the examiners view the work themselves prior to then viewing it with the student.

8.3 The submission of the thesis for examination shall be at the sole discretion of the student. While a student would be unwise to submit the thesis for examination against the advice of the supervisors, it is the student's right to do so. Equally, students should not assume that a supervisor's agreement to the submission of a thesis guarantees the award of the degree.

8.4 It shall be the responsibility of the student to ensure that one copy of the thesis for each approved examiner and for the Chair of the Examination as well as a digital (pdf) version of the thesis are submitted to Research Management and Administration before the expiry of the maximum period of registration.

8.5 A student shall normally be examined orally on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies. Where for reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause, the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee is satisfied that the student would be seriously disadvantaged if required to undergo an oral examination, the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee may approve an alternative form of examination.

8.6 The oral examination shall normally be held at the University and shall normally be chaired by a nominee of the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee. After receiving the thesis, the Research Student Team will arrange the location and time of the oral examination by agreement between examiners, observer (normally the Director of Studies, cf point 9.15 below) and the student taking into account the following guidance:

- i. The date should normally be within three months of the examiners' receipt of the thesis.
- ii. The place should normally be on the premises of the University, but it may be at the external examiner's place of work or elsewhere within the UK.

8.7 Apart from the oral examination, the student should not have any contact with the nominated examiners during the entire examination process, i.e. from submission to final approval.

8.8 University Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall ensure that all examinations are conducted, and the recommendations of the examiners are presented, wholly in accordance with these regulations. In any instance where University Research Degrees Sub-Committee is made aware of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

B9 Examiners

- 9.1 One external and one internal examiner shall normally examine a candidate. Two external examiners may examine a candidate where no suitable internal examiner is available. Where the candidate is a member of staff of the University or a partner college (that is, subject to working over the six hours a week threshold) there shall be two external examiners and one internal examiner.
- 9.2 Internal examiners, external examiners and the Chair of the oral examination should not be related to or have a close personal or contractual relationship with the supervisors or other members of the examining panel.
- 9.3 Internal examiners, external examiners and the Chair of the oral examination should not be related to or have a close personal, professional or contractual relationship with the student.

External examiners

- 9.4 An external examiner shall be independent of the University, Partner College or collaborating establishment and shall not have acted previously as the student's supervisor, advisor or external member of the student's Confirmation panel.
- 9.5 An external examiner shall normally not be either a supervisor of another student at the same College, Partner College or collaborating establishment. Former members of staff shall normally not be approved as external examiners until three years after the termination of their employment with the University.
- 9.6 The external examiner(s) should normally:
- i. be competent in the area of work being examined;
 - ii. be experienced in research, including having published exhibited or have professional practice in the field;
 - iii. be experienced in the examination of research students; or if not, then to normally have the experience of supervising at least one research degree student to completion.
- 9.7 The external examiner will normally be an academic from another higher education institution, but from time to time it may be appropriate to appoint an examiner from outside the university sector. In such cases, the examiner must at least have an understanding of the examination process, and if s/he has not previously examined a research student then a mentoring session with an experienced member of RDSC will be offered.

Internal examiners

- 9.8 An internal examiner shall be defined as an examiner who:
- i. is a member of staff of the University, partner college or collaborating establishment;
 - ii. has relevant knowledge of the thesis subject area;
 - iii. has not been a supervisor or adviser to the student;
 - iv. is experienced in research or has professional practice in the field;
 - v. is experienced in the examination of research students; or if not, then to normally have the experience of supervising at least one research degree student to completion;
 - vi. has not been part of the student's Confirmation interview;
 - vii. where possible is a member of staff based at a different College from the student (partner colleges are exempt from this requirement).
- 9.9 University Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall appoint the examiners. The Director of Studies shall propose the examiners to the Committee for approval at least three months before the expected date of submission. The examination shall not take place until the examiners have been appointed by the Committee.

- 9.10 The University Research Degrees Sub-Committee will nominate a senior member of academic staff at the University with experience of at least 3 previous examinations to Chair the oral examination. The Chair will oversee the oral examination and the Examiners' meeting(s) and ensure that the appropriate report and recommendation is passed to the Committee. The Chair will also not normally be based at the same College as that of the candidate who is to be examined.
- 9.11 In appointing examiners, University Research Degrees Sub-Committee will ensure that the examining panel has the necessary expertise and experience. It is expected that there will be a total of at least three previously examined research degrees within the panel, although allowances can exceptionally be made in subject areas where there is little history of research degree activity. The total examinations of the panel exclude those of the Chair of the examination.
- 9.12 Normally the internal examiner should have prior experience of research degree examination, however, an internal examiner may be appointed who has subject experience but lacks examination experience, subject to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee approval. If s/he has not previously examined a research student then a mentoring session with an experienced member of URDSC will be offered.
- 9.13 In an examination for PhD at least one examiner shall have experience of PhD examining.
- 9.14 The University Research Degrees Sub-Committee shall ensure that the same external examiner is not approved so frequently that familiarity with the University might prejudice objective judgement.
- 9.15 One of the candidate's supervisors (usually the Director of Studies) will normally be present at the oral examination as a non-participatory observer.
- 9.16 In exceptional circumstances the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may act directly to appoint examiners and the observer, and arrange the examination of a student.
- 9.17 The candidate shall take no part in the proposal or appointment of examiners and shall have no formal contact with the external examiner(s) between the appointment of the examiners and the oral examination.
- 9.18 No student for a research degree shall be appointed as an examiner.
- 9.19 Where an examination cannot be held within three months of the submission of the thesis because of the unavailability of an examiner, the Research Degrees Sub-Committee may rescind the appointment of all or any of the examiners and appoint new examiners as appropriate.
- 9.20 In the event that an examiner for good reasons, is not available where the viva outcome is re-examination with second viva, the Research Student Team will contact the student and supervisory team with the request to propose a new examiner, using the Approval of Examination Arrangements form with an Examiner's Details form for the new examiner, which will then be considered by URDSC. If approved the Research Student Team will send them the thesis and the report of first Examination complete with guidance on what the thesis will be judged against. If the supervisory team is unable to find a new examiner the student's abstract and first report will be taken to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for recommendations of examiners.

B10 The viva voce

- 10.1 The examiners must each submit a written preliminary report on the thesis five working days prior to the oral examination. This report should consist of a brief indication of examiner's view of:
- i. the likely outcome
 - ii. the nature of any corrections to be made
 - iii. that the examiner is happy for the viva voce to go ahead.
- 10.2 In order for the viva to take place the internal and external examiners need to be in agreement that this should be the case. If the examiners disagree on this point then the Chair will be responsible for making the final ruling and will report this back to the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee.
- 10.3 Where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination, they may recommend that the oral examination be postponed and return the thesis for further work and resubmission. They should do this at least five working days before the viva voce examination. In such a case the examiners shall provide University Research Degrees Sub-Committee with written guidance for the student concerning the deficiencies of the thesis. The examiners shall not recommend that a student fail outright without holding an oral examination or other alternative examination. If a member or members of the examination team do not feel it would be appropriate to participate in an oral examination of the student then the matter will be referred to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for further guidance and advice. The report approved by University Research Degrees Sub-Committee will count as first examination with the result resubmission with viva voce (see item 10.7 iii for further information) and the student will be sent the report as after first examination.
- 10.4 On the day of the oral examination the Chair and examiners, should meet beforehand to agree on the structure of the questioning.
- 10.5 The oral examination should cover all aspects of the thesis, in particular the points selected by the examiners at their preliminary meeting. The student should be given an opportunity to comment on any adverse points and on any amendments of substance that examiners are intending to recommend. Examiners may sometimes want to indicate their initial opinion of the thesis at the beginning of the oral examination, so that the student has the opportunity to challenge it. The examiners should satisfy themselves that the thesis is the student's own original work.
- 10.6 The oral examination may include the inspection of practical work, demonstration of software, viewing original data, or any other reasonable request from the examiners. The examiners should make such requests in advance to the student. Equally, the student may offer some form of practical introduction but this should not normally introduce material not included in the thesis; again, such an offer should be made in advance. The student may bring an annotated copy of the thesis and any other source materials to the oral. The duration of the oral will vary according to such factors as the nature of the thesis, the size of the panel.
- 10.7 The examiners may recommend that:
- i. The student should be awarded the degree unconditionally;
 - ii. The student should be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments to the thesis to be completed within two months of the notification in writing to the satisfaction of the internal and/or external examiner (to be agreed by the examiners at the time of examination). The examiners shall provide a list of the minor amendments and corrections required in writing for communication to the student by the Research Management and Administration Office. Minor amendments are restricted to required changes that are typographic or grammatical in nature or to required changes to the presentation of practice that are of a similar scale. Minor amendments can also include

minor changes to references, re-writing of small sections of the text where this improves existing explanations or descriptions or limited amendments to the presentation of the practice that is of a similar scale. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners, or to one of their number nominated by them for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory. If the amendments are satisfactory, the examiners will report to the URDSC that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination for the PhD degree. In the event that the amended thesis is not approved by the examiner/s then the examiner/s' comments will be passed to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration.

iii. The student should be awarded the degree subject to the student successfully completing specified major amendments within six months of these being notified in writing. The examiners shall provide a list of the amendments and corrections required in writing for communication to the student by the Research Management and Administration Office. Major amendments will be required if the thesis otherwise fulfils the criteria for the PhD degree set out in Section 7 of these regulations, but requires amendments to address errors of substance or omission, and the student satisfies the examiners in all other parts of the examination. This option is not available to examiners re-examining a thesis. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners, or to one of their number nominated by them, for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory, without the requirement to conduct a further viva. If the amendments are satisfactory, the examiners will report to the University Research Degrees Sub Committee that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination for the PhD degree. In the event that the amended thesis is not approved by the examiner/s then the examiner/s' comments.

iv. The student should not be awarded the degree but be permitted to re-submit the thesis in revised form and be re-examined by all examiners, with or without an oral examination (to be agreed by the examiners), within twelve months of the notification in writing. This option is not available to examiners re-examining a thesis. The examiners shall not make such a decision without first submitting the candidate to an oral examination. The examiners should recommend resubmission only if there is sufficient evidence of original work and if the amount of further work to be undertaken is not so substantial as to constitute a new thesis. The examiners shall provide a list of the amendments and corrections required in writing for communication to the student by the Research Management and Administration Office.

v. In the case of a PhD examination, the examiners may recommend to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee that the student should not be awarded the degree of PhD, but be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to all the criteria for the award of MPhil being met and the presentation of the thesis being amended to the satisfaction of the examiners.

vi. The student should not be awarded any degree and should not be permitted to re-submit the thesis. In this case the examiners shall prepare an agreed general statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be submitted to the Research Management and Administration Office for transmission to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee and to the student.

10.8 Normally the panel is expected to inform the candidate of its recommendation on the same day of the oral examination by calling the candidate back after the examiners have adjourned for a brief discussion.

10.9 Directly following the oral examination, with the Chair's guidance the examination panel should complete and sign off the Examiners' Joint Report form indicating the panel's agreed recommendation from the options provided above and prepare a joint report. The Examiners' Joint Report form and list of required amendments will then be submitted to the Research Student Team who will forward it to the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration. The examination panel's report should therefore be sufficiently detailed to enable the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee to reach a well-founded decision. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations should be submitted.

In all cases the examination panel's decision will only be officially confirmed following approval of the examination panel's recommendation and report by University Research Degrees Sub-Committee with which rests the power to confer an award of either PhD or MPhil.

The Research Student Team will communicate examination panel's recommendations and reports, which have been endorsed by University Research Degrees Sub-Committee, to the candidate.

- 10.10 Where the examiners are not in agreement separate reports and each examiner should submit recommendations. In this case the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee may:
- i. accept a majority recommendation provided that this majority includes at least one external examiner; or
 - ii. require the appointment of an additional external examiner. Following this appointment, there shall be one re-examination only.

Viva results

10.11.1

Unconditional Award

In the case of recommendation unconditional award, the award of PhD will be confirmed once the candidate has submitted one hard bound copy and a digital copy (pdf) of their thesis to the Research Student Team and resolved any outstanding tuition fee debts.

10.11.2

Minor Amendments

In the case of recommendation Minor Amendments, the examiners shall jointly provide a list of the corrections and minor amendments that are required. The candidate is then required to complete these amendments within two months of official notification by the Research Student Team and return the thesis to that office. Once the revised thesis is submitted the nominated examiner/s will be required to check the amended thesis and confirm whether or not they approve the award of PhD.

If the award is confirmed the procedure outlined in 10.11.1 will apply. In the event that the amended thesis is not approved by the examiner/s then the examiner/s' comments will be passed to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration.

10.11.3

Major Amendments

In the case of recommendation of major amendments the examiners shall provide a list of the amendments and corrections required in writing for communication to the student by the Research Management and Administration Office. The student is required to complete these amendments within six months of official notification by the research student team. This option is not available to examiners re-examining a thesis. The amended thesis shall be submitted to the examiners, or to one of their number nominated by them, for confirmation that the amendments are satisfactory, without the requirement to conduct a further viva. If the amendments are satisfactory, the examiners will report to the University Research Degrees Sub Committee that the candidate has satisfied them in the examination for the PhD degree. In the event that the amended thesis is not approved by the examiner/s then the examiner/s' comments will be passed to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration.

10.11.4

Re-submission

In the case of recommendation re-examination, the examiners shall jointly provide the candidate with written guidance on the deficiencies of the submission. The examiners' joint examination report will indicate whether the re-examination will be with or without a second viva and will be submitted to the Research Degrees Sub-Committee for approval. The thesis should be submitted within twelve months of notification in writing. The re-examination, subject to the provisions of these Regulations, shall cover those aspects of the first examination in which the candidate's performance was not satisfactory and may cover any new or amended material included in the resubmitted thesis.

Once the candidate's revised thesis is submitted the examiners will then be required to re-examine the thesis completing the examiners' re-examination joint report form and make a recommendation to:

- i. award the degree unconditionally;
- ii. award the degree subject to minor amendments to the thesis to be completed within two months of the notification in writing to the satisfaction of the internal and/or external examiner (to be agreed by the examiners at the time of examination). The examiners shall provide a list of the minor amendments and corrections required in writing for communication to the student by the Research Management and Administration Office;
- iii. in the case of a PhD examination, not to award the degree of PhD, but award the degree of MPhil subject to all the criteria for the award of MPhil being met and the presentation of the thesis being amended to the satisfaction of the examiners;
- iv. not to award any degree and not to permit re-submission of the thesis. In this case the examiners shall prepare an agreed general statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be submitted to the Research Management and Administration office for transmission to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee and to the student.

These will also be the options available to the examiners in the event that a second viva is required or in the event that the examiners deemed the thesis submitted was not strong enough for the viva to go ahead after first submission.

If the award of PhD is confirmed the procedure outlined in [10.11.1](#) will then apply.

In the event that the amended thesis is not approved by the examiner/s or is not submitted within the specified deadline this will be passed to the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration.

10.11.5

Recommendation for the Award of MPhil

In the case of recommendation of Award of MPhil examiners shall jointly:

- i. Explain briefly in the final report why they consider that the thesis could not be revised to meet the criteria for the award of PhD for which it was submitted;
- ii. Confirm that the thesis (subject to any specified correction or amendment) fully meets the criteria for the recommended award of MPhil. It is not enough for a thesis to fall somewhat short of the PhD criteria; it must qualify positively for the award of MPhil;
- iii. Specify the amendments required to meet the award of MPhil.

- iv. If endorsed by the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee then the Research Student Team will inform the candidate of the examination panel's recommendation and required amendments and provide the deadline as recommended by University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for the candidate's resubmission of the revised thesis to the Research Student Team.

Once the candidate's revised thesis is submitted the nominated examiner/s will be required to check the amended thesis and confirm whether or not they approve the award of MPhil.

If the award of MPhil is confirmed the procedure outlined in 10.11.1 will then apply. In the event that the amended thesis is not approved by the examiner/s for the award of MPhil or submitted within the specified deadline then this will be passed to University Research Degrees Sub-Committee for consideration.

10.11.6

Non-award and Resubmission

In the case of recommendation 'Non-award and Resubmission' where the examiners recommend that a degree of an MPhil not be awarded, the candidate may not resubmit for a research degree (including an award of MPhil/PhD by Published Work) within a period of three years from the date of the original examination. Any further submission must include evidence of additional work.

10.12 Posthumous Awards

A research degree may be awarded posthumously on the basis of a thesis prepared by a student that is ready for submission for examination. In such cases evidence shall be provided that the student would have been likely to be successful had the oral examination taken place.

B11 Right of appeal

11.1 A student has the right to appeal the following decisions:

- i. withdrawal from the programme of research before it has been completed on the grounds of unsatisfactory progress,
- ii. the outcome of Confirmation,
- iii. the degree outcome at examination.

B12 Disciplinary code for students

12.1 There is a separate appeal procedure for student disciplinary cases ([Annex 8](#) of these Regulations).

12.2 If there is evidence of plagiarism in the preparation of the thesis or if evidence comes to light after the examiners have made their recommendation, action will be taken in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Code for Students ([Annex 8](#) of these regulations). The definition of plagiarism is set out in [Annex 2](#) of these Regulations.

B13 Grievances and complaints

13.1 The University provides all students with a Charter that sets out the rights and responsibilities of students following a course of study at the University. In accordance with the Charter, all students are supplied with copies of the University's general regulations on grievance procedures, which relate to non-academic matters, complaints, which relate to academic matters and appeals, which relate to assessments. These can be found on the intranet. The following complaints procedures are intended for academic related issues that specifically relate to research students.

Grievances

13.2 The following issues which may give rise to complaint by a research degree student(s) are covered in the grievance procedures for all students referred to above:

- i. assault or serious or threatening behaviour
- ii. sexual harassment
- iii. racist activity or behaviour
- iv. abusive or unreasonable behaviour
- v. any action likely to cause injury or impair the safety of the student
- vi. unacceptable social behavior.

University Complaints Procedures

13.3 The complaints procedures are intended for those issues that may give rise to complaint, relating to matters specifically pertaining to research degree students such as:

- inadequate supervision*
- loss of or undue delay in the return of work*
- non-availability of essential equipment or resources necessary to complete work*
- plagiarism of the student's research
- unauthorised disclosure of confidential information to a third party
- appeal against assessment outcome (see Section 11 of the regulations)
- maladministration*

Details and Guidance on the University Complaints Procedure are on the link below:

<http://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/academic-regulations/complaints-and-appeals/making-a-student-complaint/>