

## CHAPTER 6: FRAMEWORK FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS

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## CHAPTER 6: FRAMEWORK FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS

The Regulations for Research Degrees apply to all students registered on research degree programmes at the University. For research degree programmes with taught elements, the Regulations for Taught Programmes will also apply. This section contains regulations on the following:

- 6.1. Research Degree Awards (programmes offered and criteria)
- 6.2. Registration
- 6.3. Minimum and maximum periods of registration
- 6.4. Collaborative Programmes and Off-Campus Study
- 6.5. Arrangements for off-campus study
- 6.6. Working and teaching during a research degree
- 6.7. Supervision
- 6.8. Progression
- 6.9. Extending and exceeding
- 6.10. Interruption of study
- 6.11. Examination entry requirements
- 6.12. Examinations
- 6.13. Examination Outcomes

These regulations are reviewed annually by the Centre for Doctoral Studies.

### **6.1. Research Degree Awards (programmes offered and criteria)**

6.1.1. A research degree programme incorporates a substantial research component which is carried out during the period of registration, and which results in the submission of a thesis for examination. The University offers the following research degree programmes:

Level 7 – Research Degrees

- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Master in Philosophical Studies (MPhilStud)

Level 8 – Research Degrees

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Doctor in Health Care (DHC)
- Doctor in Theology and Ministry (DThM)
- Doctor in Professional Studies (DrPS)
- Doctor of Medicine (Research) (MD(Res))
- Doctor in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy)
- Doctor of Medicine (MD)
- Doctor in Education (EdD) (not currently offered)
- Doctor of Ministry (DMin) (not currently offered)

#### *Criteria for the award of MPhil*

6.1.2. The MPhil degree shall be assessed by a thesis submitted by the student against the relevant criteria listed below and by an oral examination. The thesis shall:

- a. consist of the student's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken by the student during the period of registration under supervision for the degree,
- b. be either a record of original work or of an ordered and critical explanation of existing knowledge and shall provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly,
- c. be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument,
- d. give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings and include a discussion on those findings,
- e. include a full bibliography and references,
- f. be written in English and be of satisfactory literary presentation, and
- g. not exceed 60,000 words (inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of appendices and bibliography, the word limit not applying to editions of a text or texts), unless the thesis has previously been submitted and examined for a PhD and judged to be of MPhil standard regardless of when the student first registered, and
- h. where ethical approval is required, indicate that such approval has been granted by the appropriate body.

*Criteria for the award of MPhil Stud*

6.1.3. The assessment for the MPhil Stud degree is in two parts: the assessment of the taught components and the assessment of the thesis. Students are required to pass both parts but may undertake the research and taught components concurrently. The thesis shall:

- a. consist of the student's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken by the student during the period of registration,
- b. be either a record of original work or an ordered and critical explanation of existing knowledge and shall provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly,
- c. be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument,
- d. give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, present the findings of research and include a discussion on those findings,
- e. be written in English and with a satisfactory literary presentation,
- f. not exceed 30,000 words (inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of appendices and bibliography, the word limit not applying to editions of a text or texts), and

- g. where ethical approval is required, indicate that such approval has been granted by the appropriate body.

*Criteria for the award of PhD*

6.1.4. The PhD degree shall be assessed by a thesis submitted by the student against the relevant criteria listed below and by an oral examination. The thesis shall:

- a. consist of the student's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken by the student during the period of registration under supervision for the degree,
- b. form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power,
- c. be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument,
- d. give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, include discussion on those findings and indicate in what respects they appear to the student to advance the study of the subject,
- e. and, in so doing, demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study, (the student being able to place the thesis in a wider context), objectivity and the capacity for judgment in complex situations and autonomous work in that field,
- f. be written in English and be of satisfactory literary presentation,
- g. not exceed 100,000 words (inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of appendices and bibliography, the word limit not applying to editions of a text or texts),
- h. include a full bibliography and references,
- i. demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented,
- j. be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals), and
- k. where ethical approval is required, indicate that such approval has been granted by the appropriate body.

*Additional requirements for programmes with a practice-based component*

6.1.5. For research with a practice-based, a student may submit, as part of a thesis, a practice component which meets the requirements of the examiners, and which has been produced specifically for the degree. This may take the format, for example, of a portfolio of compositions, performance materials, artworks, digital materials, literary texts or translations, which will exemplify and illustrate the ideas

contained in the written part of the thesis. The practical component must demonstrate a publishable or exhibitable standard of originality and accomplishment as determined by the examiners, who will include those qualified in academic research as well as in the evaluation of the relevant field of creative practice. It must be presented in a form easily available to the examiners, whether as audio-visual recordings, printed texts, digital media or another suitable format. A photographic exhibition or projection of film may also be acceptable. In this case the practical component shall be accompanied by a written textual component, as determined by the specific subject programme.

- 6.1.6. The written component will include as appropriate an exposition of the research question(s), aims and concerns that generated the practical work, a methodological discussion framing and justifying its approach, format and presentation, and a critical discussion to demonstrate that the student is well acquainted with the disciplinary field in which he or she is working, and is able independently to analyse, interpret and evaluate debates and theoretical positions associated with it. However, presented, the practical component must be accompanied by an adequate and approved form of retainable documentation, and the entire thesis, comprising textual and practice components, shall not exceed 100,000 words. In all cases, the submitted material must together fulfil the criteria for the PhD or MPhil set out above.

*Criteria for the award of MD(Res)*

- 6.1.7. The MD(Res) degree shall be assessed by a thesis submitted by the student against the relevant criteria listed below and by an oral examination. The thesis shall:
- a. deal with any branch of medicine, or surgery or medical science,
  - b. consist of the student's own account of their investigations, the greater proportion of which shall have been undertaken by the student during the period of registration under supervision for the degree,
  - c. form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power,
  - d. be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument,
  - e. give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, include discussion on those findings and indicate in what respects they appear to the student to advance the study of the subject; and, in so doing, demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study (the student being able to place the thesis in a wider context), objectivity and the capacity for judgment in complex situations and autonomous work in that field,
  - f. be written in English and with a satisfactory literary presentation,
  - g. not exceed 50,000 words (inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of appendices and bibliography, the word limit not applying to editions of a text or texts),

- h. include a full bibliography and references,
- i. demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented,
- j. be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals), and
- k. where ethical approval is required, indicate that such approval has been granted by the appropriate body.

*Criteria for the award of Professional Doctorates*

- 6.1.8. The taught and practical elements shall be assessed by methods and at an intellectual level and at a time appropriate to the programme. Such assessment shall involve at least one examiner external to the University.
- 6.1.9. Unless stated otherwise in the programme specification, a student should meet the requirements of the examiners in all elements of the taught and practical assessment before being permitted to submit the thesis for examination.
- 6.1.10. The scope of the thesis shall be what might reasonably be expected after three or at most four years of full-time study, or after six or at most seven years of part-time study. It shall:
- a. be appropriate to the subject concerned, having regard to the other formally assessed elements for the degree,
  - b. consist of the student's own account of their investigations and must indicate in what respects they appear to the student to advance the study of the subject,
  - c. form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power,
  - d. be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument,
  - e. be at least 25,000 words in length and not exceed 55,000 words (inclusive of footnotes but exclusive of appendices and bibliography, the word limit not applying to editions of a text or texts),
  - f. be written in English and with a satisfactory literary presentation,
  - g. include a full bibliography and references,
  - h. demonstrate research skills relevant to the thesis being presented,
  - i. be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals), and

- j. where ethical approval is required, indicate that such approval has been granted by the appropriate body.

#### *Funded students*

- 6.1.11. Students in receipt of externally funded studentships may have to adhere to funder's requirements which override University regulations.
- 6.1.12. The student's acceptance of the offer of funding and the terms and conditions of the funding will be taken as proof that the student accepts these requirements. The main funders' additional requirements will be clarified in the offer letter or supporting documentation.
- 6.1.13. Any student who received funding as part of their degree but who is in an unfunded period, such as pending submission, will still be considered a funded student and funder's regulations will continue to apply until completion of the degree.

#### **6.2. Registration**

- 6.2.1. Except as provided for under the regulations on Collaborative research degrees and Off-campus study for research degrees, students will centre their academic activities on the University and attend at such times as the University or faculty might require.
- 6.2.2. In addition to the general entrance requirements specified in Chapter 1: Admissions, the following research programme-specific registration requirements apply.
- 6.2.3. The minimum entrance qualification is an Upper Second-Class Honours degree in a relevant subject, or an equivalent overseas qualification obtained after at least three years study. Any additional requirements will be detailed in the online prospectus.
- 6.2.4. Students who do not meet the minimum entrance requirements may be admitted if they hold an alternative qualification of an equivalent or higher level in a relevant subject or can prove relevant professional experience which satisfies the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies in the faculty of registration that the applicant can follow and complete the programme.
- 6.2.5. To be eligible for registration for the MD(Res) degree, an applicant must have obtained the MBBS degree or another registrable primary qualification in Medicine from a higher education institution and be eligible for full registration or hold limited registration with the General Medical Council.
- 6.2.6. It is the responsibility of the faculties to have transparent selection procedures in place to accept students onto postgraduate research programmes. Following an initial screening, selection will be by interview either face to face or by another communication method as deemed appropriate by the faculty. Offers for a place can then only be made by the appropriate authority within the faculty and via an offer letter from the Postgraduate Admissions office.

### *Advanced Standing*

- 6.2.7. With the approval of the relevant faculty, a student who is exceptionally well qualified may be permitted to register for the PhD without first registering for the MPhil. In such cases, the programme of study followed may not be less than two years of full-time or four years of part-time study.

### *Transfer*

- 6.2.8. Where a student has started an Mphil or PhD degree (or equivalent) at another university or from another department within the University, a faculty may have procedures in place to register the student for the Mphil or PhD degree with exemption from part of the programme of study already completed.
- 6.2.9. Registration for the degree to which transfer has been made should normally date from initial registration for the original degree, although this may be varied in exceptional circumstances on the approval of the faculty.
- 6.2.10. The period of time at the University following the transfer has to be at least one calendar year for full-time students or two years for part-time students. Students who have completed their research and have submitted their thesis for examination may not transfer.
- 6.2.11. A student may transfer from the MphilStud, the MD(Res) or a professional doctorate programme to the Mphil/PhD programme or vice versa with exemption from part of the programme of study already completed, subject to any requirements that may be set out by the faculty.
- 6.2.12. Students must adhere to the University's regulations on Research Ethics and Research Misconduct.
- 6.2.13. Academic Regulations and programme specifications in force when a student registers will normally apply to that student until completion of the programme. Academic Policies are subject to regular review and updated versions apply irrespective of the year of a student's registration.

### *Registration Status*

- 6.2.14. For students registered for a research degree at the University, there are five types of registration:
- a. full-time
  - b. part-time
  - c. part-time non-resident
  - d. pending submission (with access to library and computer facilities and supervision)
  - e. submitted (with access to library and computer facilities, and supervision).
- 6.2.15. The University may advise a student to enrol on part-time study where it is considered that the student's personal circumstances may hinder their ability to meet the requirements of a full-time programme. Examples of when this might be appropriate include but are not limited to:



- students engaged in earning their own livelihood who provide evidence from their employer to that effect at registration,
  - students who are registered as unemployed,
  - students who are acting as a full-time carer for a spouse or family member,
  - students registered as internal postgraduate research students who are also employed as a member of staff of the University.
- 6.2.16. Full-time students are expected to spend 35 hours per week on their research degree on average throughout the year, apart from when on annual leave. Part-time students are expected to spend 17.5 hours per week on their research degree on average throughout the year apart from when on annual leave.
- 6.2.17. Students will be allowed to change mode of study from full-time to part-time or vice versa only once during their period of study unless this is a funder's requirement.
- 6.2.18. Students are not permitted to transfer mode of attendance in the final year leading up to their submission deadline.
- 6.2.19. A student is entitled to annual leave of 40 working days per year (part-time pro rata), inclusive of public holidays and University closure dates. Students must agree the process for notifying of intended annual leave with their supervisors and students should notify their supervisors well in advance of any leave starting. Excessive absences should be reported to the faculty via normal progress report procedures.
- 6.2.20. Some restrictions may apply to periods of leave for students holding international visas to study in the UK. These students may be under obligation to report annual leave periods to the Visa Compliance team for monitoring purposes, as defined by Home Office.

### **6.3. Minimum and maximum periods of registration**

- 6.3.1. Students must adhere to the minimum and maximum periods of registration for the degree they undertake.

#### *Duration of programme*

- 6.3.2. Expected and required submission deadlines will be set out as part of the admissions offer letter and/or confirmed upon enrolment.
- 6.3.3. Students are expected to submit their thesis within the following timescales:
- a. for the PhD programme: within three years of full-time or six years of part-time registration,
  - b. for the MD(Res) degree: within two years of full-time or four years of part-time registration,
  - c. for the MPhilStud: within two years of full-time or four years of part-time

registration,

- d. for professional doctorates: within three years of full-time or six years of part-time registration.

6.3.4. Excluding any period of interruption, students are required to submit their thesis within the following timescales:

Type of Degree	Mode of Study	Minimum submission period	Maximum submission period
PhD	Full-time	2 years (24 months)	4 years (48 months)
PhD	Part-time	4 years (48 months)	7 years (84 months)
MPhil	Full-time	2 years (24 months)	3 years (36 months)
MPhil	Part-time	4 years (48 months)	5 years (60 months)
MDRes	Full-time	2 years (24 months)	3 years (36 months)
MDRes	Part-time	4 years (48 months)	5 years (60 months)
MPhilStud	Full-time	2 years (24 months)	2 years (24 months)
MPhilStud	Part-time	4 years (48 months)	4 years (48 months)
Professional Doctorate	Full-time	2 years (24 months)	4 years (48 months)
Professional Doctorate	Part-time	4 years (48 months)	7 years (84 months)

6.3.5. For Professional Doctorates a period of study as defined in the programme specification must be spent on the taught elements of the programme.

6.3.6. Where a student fails to submit within the required timeframe as set out above and an exemption request has not been granted to extend or exceed their submission deadline, the student will be classed as having failed to meet the requirements of the programme. Students will have the opportunity to appeal against this outcome in accordance with section 6.13.

#### **6.4. Collaborative research degrees and Off-campus study**

6.4.1. Students on joint, split-site or non-resident MPhil/PhD programmes must comply with the normal King's College London Regulations, with the exceptions listed below.

##### *Joint PhD programmes*

6.4.2. For joint PhD programmes run in collaboration between King's College London and a partner institution, leading to a jointly awarded qualification, admission is run in collaboration between the institutions and approval must be received from both i before an offer can be made.

6.4.3. Students are required to:

- a. select a home institution at the application stage, where they will start and end their programme,

- b. spend a specified minimum period of time at the partner institution during the course of their studies,
  - c. enrol at both institutions and re-enrol each year throughout their programme,
  - d. provide details of their travel plan at the application stage. Any changes to this must be discussed with supervisors and approved by both institutions,
  - e. follow the procedures for ethical approval set out by the Research Ethics Office of the Home institution. If a student intends to conduct research requiring ethical approval in the country of the partner institution, approval must also be gained from that institution according to its procedures,
  - f. refer requests for changes to registration status to both institutions, usually via supervisors in the first instance,
  - g. meet the examination and upgrade requirements of their home institution. Any King's-home students who do not upgrade to PhD may be awarded an MPhil, but this will be awarded solely by King's College London,
  - h. submit final copies of their thesis to both institutions. Students should check with the partner institution for confirmation of the number of copies required and method of submission.
- 6.4.4. Students must have supervisors based in both institutions who will work together to monitor progress, though the majority of the administration will be managed by the home institution.
- 6.4.5. The progress of students on joint PhD programmes will be monitored according to the procedures of the home institution. In some cases, students may also be required to complete progress reports whilst at the partner institution.
- 6.4.6. Examination is usually by a panel of at least three examiners. This will normally take place at the home institution and may involve the use of video conferencing.
- 6.4.7. Students on joint PhD programmes who wish to make a complaint will normally do so through the process of the institution where they are resident at the time, in so far as the complaint relates to their study at that particular university. Students who wish to make an appeal in respect of academic progress or concerning a decision of the examiners will do so by using the procedures of the designated home institution.

*Split-site MPhil/PhD programmes*

- 6.4.8. The minimum period of residence in the UK for students on a split-site MPhil/PhD programme will depend on the agreement between their Research Institution and their faculty at King's, but will normally involve periods at induction, upgrade, submission and oral examination.

- 6.4.9. Students on split-site programmes must have supervisors based in both institutions. The external supervisor will need to be approved by the faculty at King's where the student is based, using their normal procedures.
- 6.4.10. Supervisors should work together to monitor progress and comply with normal University processes and procedures for documenting this.

*Public Research Institutions and Industrial Laboratories (MPhil/PhD programmes only)*

- 6.4.11. A person engaged in research in a non-degree awarding, government or other public research institution or in an industrial research laboratory is eligible to apply for registration as a non-resident student of the University for the degrees of MPhil or PhD. The student must demonstrate to the faculty that they are following a prescribed programme of study appropriate to lead towards the award and, if accepted, will carry out the major part or the whole of their research for the degree at the research centre concerned, subject to the conditions below. The nature of the programme offered by the institute or laboratory will determine the appropriate mode of registration.
- 6.4.12. The application for registration as a part-time or full-time non-resident student must have the support of the authorities of the institution or laboratory at which the research is conducted, who shall confirm that:
- a. the student will be able to attend the faculty for the prescribed programme of study,
  - b. no additional restriction will be placed upon presentation for examination of the thesis,
  - c. a successful thesis shall be made available in accordance with the academic regulations,
  - d. except where these regulations make specific provision, the student will be required to comply with all relevant academic regulations both generally and those relating to progression, the transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD degree, and transfer pending submission status specifically. If the institution or laboratory at which the research is conducted has progression monitoring procedures that the faculty of registration considers are appropriate, these procedures may be used in place of the University procedures.
- 6.4.13. The prescribed programme of study should include elements requiring formal participation by the student, such as attendance at University lectures, tutorials, seminars, training sessions and appropriate consultation with the University supervisor.
- 6.4.14. The prescribed programme of study shall be carried out under the primary supervision of an external supervisor at the institution or laboratory at which the student is based. A second supervisor shall be appointed from an appropriate department at the university. The external supervisor must be eligible to act in accordance with the supervision regulations and must maintain close contact with the University supervisor in regard to the general strategy of the research and, in

order that the student may acquire background knowledge and skills relevant to their research.

- 6.4.15. Students will normally have joint face-to-face meetings with both supervisors at least twice a year and monthly contact with the University supervisor. It is also expected that the external supervisor will ensure regular contact with the department at which the student is registered.
- 6.4.16. Where a student ceases to work at the centre for which their registration has been approved, their registration as a student for the MPhil/PhD degree shall cease at the same time. Where the new place of employment also meets the requirements for registration under these regulations the student may apply to the faculty at which they are registered for transfer of registration. The faculty shall inform the Student Administrative Services of any change in the place of research.

#### **6.5. Arrangements for off-campus study**

- 6.5.1. A student must centre their academic activities on the faculty of registration for a period of at least six months, of which defined periods of attendance must be;
  - a. at the beginning of the period of registration, including at induction,
  - b. at the period of upgrade, and
  - c. immediately before the submission of the thesis and any other times specified by the faculty.

Separate regulations and procedures govern students registered under collaborative research degree programmes.

- 6.5.2. The responsible authority within the faculty is the chair of the faculty PGR committee/Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies. They should establish that it is in the interests of the student's work that they should spend a period of study off-campus and that:
  - a. the institution or place in which the student proposes to study is suitable in terms of the facilities and academic supervision available,
  - b. the institution is willing to provide the necessary facilities and supervision, and
  - c. the student will be adequately insured.
- 6.5.3. A student may be permitted to spend part of their programme in off-campus study under the following conditions. Additional requirements will be outlined by the respective faculty:
  - a. Prior permission to study off-campus is obtained by the student from the faculty,

- b. A plan for monitoring the off-campus study is agreed with the student by the responsible authority before any period of off-campus study is undertaken,
  - c. The conditions set by the faculty ensure that the regulatory requirements of the University regarding attendance and programme of study are met,
  - d. Regular contact with the supervisors is maintained.
- 6.5.4. Students not based in the UK for the duration of their programme must ensure that:
- a. prior to registration, permission is obtained by the student from the responsible authority within the faculty,
  - b. a plan for monitoring the study progress is agreed with the student by the responsible authority by the first formal progress report sign-off.
- 6.5.5. The arrangements for monitoring the progress of the student will include the appointment of a local supervisor, who will supervise the student on a day-to-day basis, and maintain frequent contact with the student's first supervisor at King's. In addition to this it is expected that formal monitoring will continue to take place in line with normal procedures.
- 6.5.6. Any student wishing to spend less than the six months required at the faculty of registration must gain the permission of their faculty, in order that an exemption to the regulations can be sought from the University.
- 6.5.7. Timelines for submission are the same as for students whose studies are centred at the University and therefore off-campus study will not be permitted as a reason for late submission.
- 6.5.8. A student registered as off-campus will receive a research degree of King's College London and not of an external institution, unless they are registered under a formal collaborative research degree programme for a joint award.
- 6.5.9. Students must complete an off-campus study form in accordance with procedures in the faculty of registration and submit this to the relevant Registry office. Any changes to the plan must be communicated to the Registry office.

**6.6. Working and teaching during a research degree**

*Working during a research degree*

- 6.6.1. During the registration period, the priority of a student and supervisor(s) is the completion of the research degree. However, with the prior approval of the supervisor, a student may undertake work not directly related to their degree in their own time.
- 6.6.2. It is essential that the supervisor and student ensure that this work is not detrimental to the studies. If it becomes apparent that a student's progress is being affected by additional work then the supervisor should deal with this as a performance issue.

- 6.6.3. Where appropriate, full-time students may also undertake one clinical session (not related to their studies) per week, and/or contribute towards research-related projects not directly related to their studies. Where it is a condition of a fellowship, students may be permitted to do up to 0.2 full-time equivalent (FTE) clinical work to maintain their clinical skills. For craft specialists (eg surgeons), this can be increased to 0.4 FTE.
- 6.6.4. Students who are studying on a student visa must comply with the restrictions placed on their working hours and if in doubt consult with the Visa Compliance team.

*Teaching During a Research Degree*

- 6.6.5. Students may be given the opportunity, with the approval of the supervisor(s), to engage in education support by contributing to undergraduate teaching, such as:
  - a. lecturing
  - b. demonstrating practical classes
  - c. project supervision
  - d. taking tutorials and/or
  - e. being involved in both formative and summative assessment activities for undergraduate degrees.
- 6.6.6. The student's teaching responsibilities must:
  - a. be clearly defined in writing,
  - b. be compatible with their research responsibilities,
  - c. be supported by their supervisor(s), and/or
  - d. not exceed a maximum of six hours per week on average.
- 6.6.7. All students must be provided with appropriate training before commencing any teaching.
- 6.6.8. Students must be fairly paid for any teaching work.
- 6.6.9. Research students who engage in education support under the [Post-graduate research students involvement with teaching and learning](#) policy should be mentored by an academic member of staff and receive feedback on their activities from the students they have taught.

**6.7. Supervision**

- 6.7.1. Faculties are responsible for arranging the supervision of a research degree student and will ensure that a supervisory team (a first supervisor and a second supervisor, or panel of supervisors, is appointed to supervise the research of each student and that the supervisors have appropriate research experience.
- 6.7.2. The roles and responsibilities of the faculty Postgraduate Research Students Committee, Head of Department/Division, faculty Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, supervisors and students are detailed in guidance provided by the Centre for Doctoral Studies.

- 6.7.3. Each student will be allocated a provisional first supervisor at the time of offer of a place. The supervisory team will be confirmed within the first month of registration.
- 6.7.4. For professional doctorate programmes, the appointment of a supervisory team should take place within three months of the student successfully completing the taught elements of the programme.
- 6.7.5. Students and supervisors are required to read and sign a student-supervisor agreement within the first month of registration, the format of which may vary. Please refer to the admitting faculty for relevant details.
- 6.7.6. It is the responsibility of Heads of Departments, line managers, and Associate Deans of Doctoral Studies, or their delegates, to ensure that all supervisors are aware of the standards of conduct and performance expected of them in [the Roles and responsibilities for PGR supervisors](#). If the faculty Associate Dean believes these standards are not being met, the Associate Dean should raise their concerns with the Heads of Departments, who may escalate the matter further in line with University HR disciplinary procedures.
- 6.7.7. The faculty Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, or their delegate, is responsible for ensuring that staff who supervise students on research degrees are trained and informed about the processes of supervision and progression.
- 6.7.8. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department with support from the faculty Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, or their delegate, to ensure appropriate cover is provided in case of planned or unplanned absence of the first supervisor of more than thirty calendar days, for example because of illness; to make new supervisory arrangements within an appropriate timeframe where it is deemed necessary, and it is feasible to do so.
- 6.7.9. The roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Postgraduate Research Students Committee, Head of Department/Division, Faculty Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, supervisors and students are detailed in guidance provided by the Centre for Doctoral Studies.

#### *Supervisory Team*

- 6.7.10. The supervisory team for a research student must consist of a minimum of two:
- a first and second supervisor, or
  - co-first supervisors, or
  - a panel of supervisors.
- 6.7.11. For co-supervision models, both supervisors are considered to be first supervisors.
- 6.7.12. To be eligible, supervisors must have obtained a PhD or equivalent degree relevant to the student/topic in question.
- not be studying for a research degree themselves,



- have completed supervisory development,
- attend a formal refresher supervisory development session once every five years,
- Inform the student and the appropriate authority in the faculty if they are suddenly unable to perform their duties as supervisor for more than one month.

In addition, at least one of the student's supervisors must:

- have an employment contract with the University that extends beyond the duration of the student's degree. This includes adjunct appointed clinical academic staff,
- have supervised a PhD (or equivalent research degree as relevant to the student in question) to completion.

6.7.13. The maximum number of students a member of staff may supervise as first supervisor or co-first supervisor at any one point in time is eight research degree students (part-time or full-time).

6.7.14. The maximum number of students a member of staff may supervise as either first, co-first, second or third supervisor at any one point in time is twenty research degree students (part-time or full-time).

#### *1<sup>st</sup> supervisor*

6.7.15. The first supervisor role for a research degree student can be undertaken by:

- a. a member of academic staff of the University appointed by the faculty,
- b. adjunct academic staff who are employed by one of the King's Health Partner Trusts,
- c. a career development fellow, who has full salary support from a personal award with 4 years or more duration, including research funding, with an expectation of leading an independent research programme and equivalent status to Lecturer or above.

6.7.16. The first supervisor should have regular supervision meetings with the student either in person, via video conference or by phone, normally at least once every month, or part-time equivalent.

#### *2<sup>nd</sup> supervisor*

6.7.17. The second supervisor role for a research degree student can be undertaken by:

- a. staff who meet the criteria to act as first supervisor, and
- b. external colleagues, with or without honorary academic contract with the University, who provide external academic expertise and enhance the research degree through a collaboration with the King's first supervisor and

student, for example, academic staff in other universities, NHS staff, cultural leaders such as Head of Collections at British Museum, industrial partners for iCASE awards, or legal professionals.

- 6.7.18. The second supervisor should play a clearly defined role in the student's supervision and should meet the student at least every three months, or part-time equivalent, and should be able to act independently of the first supervisor.
- 6.7.19. The second supervisor is expected to support the student, to assist in the monitoring of the student's progress and to stand in in the first supervisor's absence. Therefore, in cases where the second supervisor does not meet the eligibility criteria to act as the first supervisor, the faculty Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, or their delegate, will appoint a new first supervisor if the first supervisor is absent for more than one month.
- 6.7.20. Post-doctoral researchers are not normally eligible to act as first or second supervisor for research degree students. On a case-by-case basis, senior post-doctoral researchers who meet specific criteria may apply, with the support of their faculty Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, to be considered for an exemption to this regulation to act as a second supervisor.

#### *Third Supervisor*

- 6.7.21. The third supervisor, where appointed, would bring specialist knowledge or supervisory experience to the research project but is not responsible for monitoring the academic progression of the student. A third supervisor will be appointed via the faculty and could include the following:
  - a. staff who meet the criteria to act as first or second supervisor,
  - b. members of staff who hold a post-doctoral researcher position,
  - c. members of staff who hold a teaching fellow position,
  - d. individuals who are external to the University but can provide expert knowledge as set in regulation 6.7.17b,
  - e. individuals who are external to the University but can provide local support for students who carry out fieldwork abroad or elsewhere in the UK.

#### **6.8. Progression**

- 6.8.1. All students and members of staff, including supervisors, must comply with, and have access to, the University's rules in place for progress monitoring. The rules in this section represent a minimum level to which all faculties will adhere, although faculties may choose to implement stricter procedures. For this reason, it is important that this is read in conjunction with the guidelines set out in the appropriate faculty and departmental handbooks.

#### *Skills training*

- 6.8.2. Research project work constitutes the major training component of the programme. In line with Research Council requirements and QAA

recommendations, students should also demonstrate that they are acquiring generic skills and skills in research methods.

- 6.8.3. All research students have the right to undertake the equivalent of 10 days (FTE) of training and development activities per year of study.
- 6.8.4. The development needs for each new student must be assessed individually by their supervisory teams at the start of the study programme and a training plan must be agreed between students and supervisors. The training plan should be reviewed as part of the progress reviews of all students.
- 6.8.5. The student's training record must also be reviewed at the upgrade to PhD stage and any deficiencies highlighted and addressed.
- 6.8.6. Faculties must ensure that students are supported to develop an appropriate training plan based on their individual development needs, and the activities to fill these needs can be drawn from workshops run centrally by the Centre for Doctoral Studies or by other providers within or external to the University.
- 6.8.7. Attendance at training sessions run by the Researcher Development Programme and other training providers at the University will be recorded and students should use their progress reports to log training undertaken outside of the University.

*Regular review of progress*

- 6.8.8. The progress of all students will be subject to regular, formal review. Progress reviews, including upgrade reviews, must involve three assessors, at least one of whom is independent of the student's supervisory team.
- 6.8.9. During their first year of study, both full- and part-time students must have their progress formally reviewed within three months of initial registration and again after a further period of nine months registration. Thereafter, the progress of all students will be reviewed at least every six months.
- 6.8.10. A formal progress review will have one of three possible outcomes:
  - a. Satisfactory progress: the student's registration is allowed to continue unconditionally until the next review.
  - b. Conditional progress: there is cause for concern about the student's progress such that continued registration is subject to completing whatever conditions are set out in writing by the assessing panel prior to a subsequent follow-up review. This may include cases where the lack of progress is due to supervision problems; in such cases the assessors should ensure that steps are taken to resolve those problems as part of the assessors' conditions.
  - c. Unsatisfactory progress: the student has not made the normal academic progress expected of all students and compulsory removal proceedings will begin in line with regulations 8.2-8.25. A finding of 'unsatisfactory progress' and removal proceedings shall only commence where:

- there has been an earlier finding of ‘conditional progress’ and the follow-up review determines that the student has failed to make satisfactory progress, or
- the student has otherwise received prior written warning from the faculty in the manner specified in the regulations on academic progress.

In the event of removal under regulations 8.2-8.25, the student has a right of appeal against the termination of their studies.

- 6.8.11. Whenever ‘conditional progress’ is recommended the student must undergo a follow-up progress review to determine whether progress is satisfactory or if the student should be removed for failure to make the normal academic progress expected of all students. In the case of first year students undergoing their nine-month review, this follow-up review must occur before the end of the first year. For other students the follow-up review must occur no later than six months from the date of the initial review. The result of any such follow-up review will either be:
- a. Satisfactory progress: the student’s registration is allowed to continue unconditionally until the next review, or
  - b. Unsatisfactory progress: the student has not made the normal academic progress expected of all students and compulsory removal proceedings will begin under regulations 8.2-8.25. In the event of removal under these regulations, the student has a right of appeal.
- 6.8.12. The result of all progress reviews must be proposed by the student’s first supervisor and signed off by the PG/research co-ordinator for the subject area via the University’s online progress monitoring system.

*Upgrade from MPhil to PhD*

- 6.8.13. Unless exceptionally exempted from this requirement, a student following a PhD programme will initially be registered for the MPhil degree and will be permitted to upgrade from the MPhil degree to the PhD degree according to the procedures outlined by the faculty of registration.
- 6.8.14. The upgrade from MPhil to PhD registration is classed by the University as a formal milestone to be satisfactorily attained by students in their progress towards attaining their PhD. The upgrade does not lead to a qualification in its own right.
- 6.8.15. Transfer of registration from the MPhil degree to the PhD degree will be considered after the student has completed nine months full-time study, or eighteen months part-time study; but before eighteen months of full-time study, or thirty-six months part-time study.
- 6.8.16. Transfer from MPhil to PhD status must be completed within the above timeframes. A student will only be allowed to undertake a maximum of two formal reviews to upgrade. A second attempt at the upgrade, if necessary, plus the completion of any associated tasks in order to complete the transfer.

- 6.8.17. Students must satisfy any conditions prescribed by the faculty of registration before being considered for upgrade.
- 6.8.18. The key principle for upgrading is for an academic panel, at least one of whom has to be independent to the supervisory team, to assess that the student is on course to produce research of the required standard for the final degree within the permitted timescale.
- 6.8.19. The upgrade from MPhil to PhD will involve the student producing either a substantial report, draft chapters or other pieces of work, along with:
- a research schedule
  - a clear research question
  - evidence of a clear methodology
  - set of research procedures or framework of inquiry
  - a work plan to completion
  - a record of training and development activities undertaken.

Plus, a formal review meeting must take place to assess the submitted work.

- 6.8.20. The upgrade review, including any following reviews, may be conducted in face-to-face, fully remote, or hybrid format subject to the agreement of all involved parties.
- 6.8.21. Where a student is registered for a joint degree with an institution that does not offer the MPhil degree, or where it is an explicit condition of the funding of a studentship that a student must register directly for a doctoral degree, the student will be registered directly onto the PhD degree.
- 6.8.22. If it is a funder's requirement that the student should be registered directly for the doctoral degree, then the student will still have to go through the upgrade process to confirm the final degree level.
- 6.8.23. The faculty Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies is responsible for ensuring that the procedures are followed within the faculties. Where this responsibility is devolved to a PGR Committee based in departments or research centres, the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies should ensure that the monitoring mechanisms are effective and that improvements are being made towards submission and successful completion times and to the quality of the supervisory process.
- 6.8.24. Faculty representatives on the University's Postgraduate Research Students Subcommittee will be required to address the effectiveness of the process and any issues arising from it in their faculty's annual report.
- 6.8.25. Progression timelines and requirements for professional doctorate degrees may vary. These will be outlined in the relevant programme specification.

*First attempt at the upgrade*

- 6.8.26. There are three possible outcomes to a formal upgrade review:

- a. unconditional pass: the student's registration is transferred from MPhil to PhD with immediate effect.
- b. refer for further review: the student does not meet the requirements to upgrade at this time and is required to meet conditions set by the panel and undertake a further formal review. This will follow the same process as the first review.

The student will be required to either:

- complete minor amendments for the current upgrade attempt. Where minor amendments have been completed and submitted, the panel will determine the final outcome of the upgrade attempt as either an unconditional pass or a fail (see 6.8.26c), or
  - repeat a second attempt at the full upgrade process including re-submission of documents and a panel meeting, at which the student must be physically present.
- c. fail: the review determines:
    - that the student's registration should remain at MPhil, or
    - that proceedings to terminate the student's registration under academic regulations 8.2-8.25 should commence.

6.8.27. Formal notification of outcome (b) above to the student shall be classed as a written warning under academic regulations 8.2-8.25, provided that this is made clear to the student in the notification.

*Second attempt at the upgrade (if necessary)*

6.8.28. There will be two possible outcomes to a second formal upgrade review:

- a. unconditional pass: the student's registration is transferred from MPhil to PhD with immediate effect,
- b. fail: the review determines:
  - that the student's registration should remain at MPhil, or
  - that proceedings to terminate the student's registration under academic regulation 8.2-8.25 should commence.

*Post upgrade review*

6.8.29. Removal under academic regulations 8.2-8.25 shall only be permitted after a second upgrade review, unless the student was formally notified prior or after the first upgrade review in the manner specified in the academic regulations that their progress was not satisfactory.

6.8.30. Students can appeal the outcome of an upgrade review in accordance with the procedure set out within the academic appeals regulations (6.13.43 – 6.13.77).

6.8.31. Students who remain at MPhil level will need to submit a final thesis and have an examination as per the normal examination regulations. The upgrade meeting

does not automatically lead to an MPhil award. Students on the MPhil route will be expected to adhere to the submission periods for that programme.

- 6.8.32. Students should not be allowed to continue their research without their registration status being clear.

*MD(Res) review for transfer to year two*

- 6.8.33. At one year from registration (or two years if part-time), MD(Res) students are required to give a presentation to the academic members of the relevant progression committee in order to transfer to the second year of the programme. This is a mandatory requirement and a satisfactory transfer review is required for the student to continue their registration. The aim is to satisfy the academic panel that the student's research is progressing satisfactorily, to ensure the student is on track to successfully complete their degree, and to help the student and supervisors anticipate any potential problems.
- 6.8.34. The key principle for MDRes review is for an academic panel, at least two of whom have to be independent to the supervisory team, to assess that the student is on course to produce research of the required standard for the final degree within the permitted timescale. This is a mandatory requirement, and a satisfactory review is required for the student to continue their registration.
- 6.8.35. The review is classed by the University as a formal milestone to be satisfactorily attained by students in their progress towards attaining their MDRes degree.
- 6.8.36. The MDRes review will be considered:
- a. after the student has completed nine months of full-time study, or eighteen months' part-time study,
  - b. before the student has completed fifteen months of full-time study, or thirty months' part-time study.
- 6.8.37. The MDRes review must be completed within the above timeframes. This includes the first and, if necessary, the second attempt, plus the completion of any associated tasks or conditions prescribed by the faculty of registration.
- 6.8.38. There are three possible outcomes to a formal review:
- a. Unconditional pass
  - b. Refer for further review  
The student does not meet the requirements at this time and is required to meet conditions set by the panel and undertake a further formal review. This will follow the same process as the first review. The student will be required to either:
    - complete minor amendments, or
    - repeat the full review process including re-submission of documents, if appropriate, and a panel meeting, at which the student must be present.

Following review of these amendments, the panel will determine the final outcome of the review as either an unconditional pass or a fail with the options as below.

c. Fail

The review determines:

- that proceedings to terminate the student's registration under academic regulation 8.2-8.25 should commence.

- 6.8.39. Removal under academic regulations 8.2-8.25 shall only be permitted after a second review, except where the student was formally notified prior to their first review in the manner specified in the academic regulations that their progress was not satisfactory.
- 6.8.40. A student will only be allowed to undertake a maximum of two formal reviews, i.e., the initial review and one additional review.
- 6.8.41. Students can appeal against the outcome of the review, in accordance with the procedure set out within the Academic appeals for research degree students.

*Transfer to 'pending submission' status*

- 6.8.42. When a student has completed the data collection and research required for their research degree, they may apply to transfer status from registration as a full-time or part-time student to that of 'pending submission' status according to the procedure established by the faculty of registration.
- 6.8.43. Transfer to pending submission status will only be approved following three years of full-time study, or six years of part-time study.
- 6.8.44. Transfer to pending submission status is not an automatic right and the decision on whether to permit the transfer of registration status should not be made solely by the student's supervisory teams.
- 6.8.45. The maximum pending submission registration period for both full- and part-time students is one year.
- 6.8.46. Should the transfer to pending submission take place after three years' full-time registration (or six years' part-time registration), then the student will not be entitled to the full year usually permitted for pending submission. In this instance, the required submission deadline will come before the end of the pending submission year and must always take precedence.
- 6.8.47. Pending submission fees will not be charged pro-rata.
- 6.8.48. Progress during the period of pending submission must be monitored by use of regular progress reports.
- 6.8.49. Where students are required to resubmit their thesis within eighteen months, as noted in the research degree examination outcomes regulations, they will be transferred back to pending submission status in order that their progress towards resubmission can be monitored via regular progress reports, and therefore will be



charged pending submission fees. This period of 'pending submission' is separate to any pending submission status that may have been in place pre-exam.

## **6.9. Extending and exceeding**

### *Extending the thesis submission deadline*

- 6.9.1. In exceptional cases, students may apply for an exemption to the regulations to extend their submission deadline. Extensions can be requested for circumstances that would otherwise be classified as a reason for interruption, for example illness or personal difficulties. Another reason might be the sudden unexpected absence of the supervisor. Extensions will not be permitted in cases of bad planning, lack of academic progress or poor communication.
- 6.9.2. If an exemption is requested based on medical/health problems, appropriate supporting evidence (eg medical certificate, counsellors report) must be provided by the student, usually noted by the supervisor and kept on the student file for future reference where required. These problems may have been ongoing throughout the research period. Without supporting documentation, an extension may not be granted.
- 6.9.3. If an exemption is requested for purely financial reasons, it will be considered. However, an exemption is not guaranteed, and students should prioritise their studies and adhere to the expectations relating to work that are covered in the regulations on research degree entrance requirements and mode of study, and on working and teaching during a research degree.
- 6.9.4. Requests for an extension to a submission deadline must be made by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies for the faculty of registration by completing the exemption request form in advance of the deadline. Where possible, this should be 3 months in advance of the submission deadline.
- 6.9.5. Once submitted by the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, exemption requests for postgraduate research programmes are approved via the Centre for Doctoral Studies. A centralised record is kept to monitor requests.
- 6.9.6. Exemptions relating to taught elements of professional doctorates will also require approval from the faculty Board of Examiners.
- 6.9.7. Requests to extend a deadline will change the final submission deadline; however, the student will be classed as on-time submission provided they submit within the approved extended period.
- 6.9.8. The Centre for Doctoral Studies may decide to change applications to extend the deadline to be approved under the category of exceeding if it is not considered that a sufficiently strong case has been made or the application is submitted after the original deadline has passed.

### *Exceeding the thesis submission deadline*

- 6.9.9. Where an extension to the submission deadline has been rejected or in exceptional cases, students may apply for an exemption to the regulations in order to exceed their submission deadline. Applications could include requests for students who are approaching or have exceeded their original submission deadline

where there is no strong reason for this, for example, lack of organisation, planning or progress.

- 6.9.10. Requests to exceed a deadline will leave the original submission deadline unchanged, but the student will be permitted to exceed their submission date and to remain registered in order that they can submit their thesis within an approved period of registration.
- 6.9.11. Exceeding the submission deadline will result in a late submission within the key performance indicators. It is designed to enable a student who is close to submission but who will miss their deadline to submit rather than have their studies terminated.

With both of the above types of exemption, the student must submit within the extended period or termination of studies procedures will be started.

## **6.10. Interruption of study**

- 6.10.1. An interruption of studies is a supportive mechanism where a student is permitted by their faculty (and funder, where appropriate) to formally step away from their studies for an agreed period.
- 6.10.2. Although submission deadlines are adjusted accordingly for approved interruptions, the interrupted period does count towards the maximum registration period, as detailed in the regulations on research degree minimum and maximum periods of registration. Students should be aware of, and adhere to, the maximum period of registration for their programme.
- 6.10.3. Students will be permitted to interrupt their studies for periods between one and twelve months in most circumstances, with a maximum of twenty-four months interruption during their degree. The total period of interruption across a research degree programme will be a cumulative total of any/all periods of interruption. For periods of interruption between twelve and twenty-four months, approval should be sought from the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies within the faculty of registration.
- 6.10.4. Interruptions to the course of study may be requested for a number of reasons, such as:
  - illness
  - maternity/paternity leave
  - personal and family reasons
  - financial hardship
  - internships not directly related to the research project
  - periods of investigation of research misconduct or student complaints
  - major restructuring of the department or research group.

These reasons are not exhaustive, and faculties may grant interruptions for other reasons they consider acceptable.

- 6.10.5. Interruptions will not normally be permitted based on:
  - a change of research topic,

- lack of progress,
  - fieldwork, or
  - time spent training or in industry where this is part of the research programme.
- 6.10.6. In cases of illness or injury, the student should inform the supervisors and department of absences of more than one week, and medical certification must be provided.
- 6.10.7. Retrospective interruptions are not allowed. In such cases an exemption request should be submitted in order to extend or exceed the registration period.

### **6.11. Examination entry requirements**

- 6.11.1. The decision to submit a thesis for examination rests with the student, subject to the faculty in which the student is registered confirming that:
- the student has completed the programme of study,
  - the student meets the requirements of the programme, and
  - that they conform to submission timescales as set out in the regulations on research degree minimum and maximum periods of registration.

#### *Entrance to examinations*

- 6.11.2. A student must give written notice to the University of their intention to submit via the examination entry form (RD1). This form has to be submitted to the Research Degrees Examinations Team at least four months prior to submission.
- 6.11.3. The supervisor must use the examination entry form (RD1) to nominate the examiners.
- 6.11.4. Following the submission of the RD1, the University will appoint the examiners in accordance with the regulations on conduct of research degree examinations.
- 6.11.5. The RD1 is valid for a maximum of eighteen months. If a student fails to submit their thesis within this period, they will be required to submit a new form.
- 6.11.6. A thesis must be presented for examination in accordance with the procedures and in the format specified by the University, which includes a requirement to submit an electronic version of the thesis (e-thesis).
- 6.11.7. The oral examination will normally take place within three months of dispatch of the thesis, subject to examiners' availability and the timely submission of the RD1.
- 6.11.8. Once students submit, they will not be charged any further fees, even if their registration period crosses over into a new academic year. They should continue to receive access to library, computer facilities and supervisory support as required to assist with preparation for their oral examination.

### **6.12. Examinations**

#### *Appointment of examiners*

- 6.12.1. For each student the Research Degrees Examinations Board shall oversee the appointment of normally two individuals to act as examiners.

- 6.12.2. Both examiners should be external to King's College London. In exceptional circumstances the Research Degrees Examinations Board can allow the appointment of an internal examiner.
- 6.12.3. If the student is a member of King's staff, then the examiners will both have to be external to the University.
- 6.12.4. The Board may, if it considers it appropriate or if it is a requirement of a programme, permit the appointment of three examiners to act jointly or an Independent Chair and two examiners.
- 6.12.5. The examiners formally approved by the Subject Area Board or University are expected to perform this role through the entire examination process, including re-examination if applicable.
- 6.12.6. In the case of major amendments or re-examination, changes to approved examination panels following first examination will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances when the appointed examiners are not available. In these cases, the Research Degrees Examinations Team will contact the supervisor with the request to propose a new examiner using the examination entry form (RD1).
- 6.12.7. For students registered for a research degree that is jointly awarded with another institution, the Research Degrees Examinations Board may, at its discretion and on application to it by the faculty concerned, approve a different composition to the oral examination (details of specific arrangements will be detailed in the relevant Schedule of Activity).
- 6.12.8. The criteria for examiners is as follows:
  - a. examiners shall be expert in the field of the thesis and able to make an independent assessment of the student,
  - b. between them, the examiners should have examined at least three research degrees in the UK of appropriate level,
  - c. examiners should not have had any significant research or other contact with the student. The student's supervisor should not be an examiner nor should they have had any role in the assessment or supervision of the student,
  - d. There should be no personal link between the examiner and student,
  - e. an internal examiner will not have been involved in the supervision of the student during the research period,
  - f. an internal examiner will not have been part of the upgrade assessment panel of the student,
  - g. an internal examiner will not have been supervised by the student's supervisors for their own degree or post-doc,

- h. an internal examiner will not have a close personal relationship with the student's supervisor,
- i. reciprocal examining with a supervisor from another institution is not permitted within a two-year period,
- j. The repeated nomination of an examiner by a supervisor will not normally be permitted within a two-year period,
- k. a supervisor will not be able to use the same internal examiner more than once per academic year,
- l. former lay members of Council, students or employees of King's shall not normally be appointed before a period of three academic years has elapsed.

6.12.9. An examiner from outside the UK or the Republic of Ireland shall be appointed where the faculty can demonstrate that they are the most appropriate examiner for the thesis. If an examiner from outside the UK or the Republic of Ireland is appointed, the Board must be satisfied that the examiner is familiar with the British higher education system and the general requirements and procedures for the award of research degrees.

6.12.10. Visiting professors, retired, emeritus and industry professionals can be appointed where the faculty can demonstrate they are the most appropriate examiner for the thesis, and providing one of the examiners holds a current and active position at a UK university.

#### *Conduct of examinations*

6.12.11. Examiners are required to:

- prepare independent preliminary written reports on the thesis to assist in conducting the oral examination.
- submit the preliminary reports to the Research Degrees Examinations Team prior to the oral examination for quality assurance purposes.
- exchange preliminary reports prior to the oral examination.

6.12.12. If the examiners suspect cases of plagiarism or other research misconduct in the thesis they must inform the Research Degrees Examinations Office before the oral examination is due to take place. The Research Degrees Examinations Team will ensure that the research misconduct process is followed and that the oral examination does not take place.

6.12.13. The examiners, after reading the thesis, shall conduct an oral examination with the student in accordance with University guidelines.

6.12.14. The oral examination may be conducted in face-to-face, fully remote or hybrid format. Students are required to present themselves for oral, practical or written examinations at such place and time as the University may direct. Students are

recommended to have a copy of their thesis to hand, either in hard copy or electronic format.

- 6.12.15. Where exams take place face-to-face, these will normally be conducted in London, or at other King's College London premises. The University may, however, exceptionally agree, via the Research Degrees Examinations Board, that the examination be conducted elsewhere if there are circumstances which make this expedient.
- 6.12.16. Different examination arrangements may be in place for joint awards involving a partner institution. Details will be set out in the relevant partnership agreement.
- 6.12.17. The student may indicate on their examination entry form whether their supervisor(s) shall be present at the oral examination as an observer. The supervisor(s) does not have the right to participate in the examination of the student but may contribute if invited to do so by the examiners. Otherwise, the oral examination shall be held in private.
- 6.12.18. After an oral examination, a joint final report of the examiners and list of required amendments (if applicable) must be submitted to the Research Degrees Examinations Board via the Research Degrees Examinations Team within three weeks of the examination taking place.
- 6.12.19. The joint final report shall indicate whether the thesis meets the requirements listed in the criteria for research degree thesis and award regulations and shall include a reasoned statement of the examiners' judgment of the student's performance. Where applicable, the report should also include a list of required amendments for the student to make.
- 6.12.20. The examiners can inform the student of the outcome of the examination after the oral examination.
- 6.12.21. Following ratification by the Research Degrees Examinations Board, all examiner reports and any list of required amendments will be released to the student by the Research Degrees Examinations Team.
- 6.12.22. Examiners have the right to make comments in confidence to the University in a separate report. Such comments should not normally be concerned with the performance of the student but may cover, for example, matters which they wish to draw to the attention of the Research Degrees Examinations Board or the Centre for Doctoral Studies.
- 6.12.23. All matters relating to the examination will be treated as confidential. Examiners are not permitted to divulge the content of previously unpublished material in a student's thesis until any restrictions on access to the thesis, granted by the University, are removed.

### **6.13. Examination Outcomes**

- 6.13.1. The options open to examiners in determining the result of the examination for ratification by the Research Degree Exams Board are as follows and apply to all research degree students regardless of when they first registered:

- Pass
- Pass subject to minor amendments
- Pass subject to major amendments;
- Re-examination of thesis (with or without second examination)
- Consideration for a lower, related award
- Academic fail

The result is recorded on the decision form.

*Pass*

- 6.13.2. Where the student's thesis meets the criteria for the specified award and the student satisfies the examiners in all elements of the assessment, the examiners will make a formal recommendation for award to the Research Degrees Examinations Board.

*Pass subject to minor amendments*

- 6.13.3. Where the student's thesis broadly meets the criteria for the specified award and the student satisfies the examiners in all other elements of the assessment, the examiners will make a formal recommendation for award to the Research Degrees Examinations Board, subject to the completion of minor amendments.
- 6.13.4. Where the examiners have recommended award subject to minor amendments the student will be given up to three months from the date on which the student receives notification of the corrections required from the Research Degrees Examinations Team following ratification of the report by the Research Degrees Examinations Board.
- 6.13.5. One examiner will be required to confirm that the amendments are appropriate and have been made within the specified timeframe. Which examiner will do this will be agreed between the examiners themselves and will be confirmed on the Decision form.
- 6.13.6. If the student fails to make the amendments in the timeframe or the examiner is unable to confirm that the amendments are satisfactory, the procedure under 'Failure to satisfy after minor or major amendments or after re-examination' below will apply.

*Pass subject to major amendments*

- 6.13.7. Where the student's thesis is thought to be able to meet the criteria for the specified award with additional work, the examiners will make a formal recommendation for award to the Research Degrees Examinations Board subject to the completion of major amendments within six months.
- 6.13.8. A further oral examination will not be required where a six-month amendment period is given.
- 6.13.9. Where the examiners have recommended that the student be permitted to make major amendments to their thesis, the student will be given up to six months from the date on which the student receives the joint examination report and notification of the corrections required by the Research Degrees Examinations

Team following ratification of the report by the Research Degrees Examinations Board.

- 6.13.10. Both examiners must confirm that the amendments are appropriate and have been made within the specified timeframe.
- 6.13.11. If the student fails to make the amendments in the specified timeframe or the examiner is unable to confirm that the amendments are satisfactory, the procedure outlined under 'Failure to satisfy after minor or major amendments or after re-examination' below will apply.

*Re-examination of thesis (with or without a second oral examination)*

- 6.13.12. Where the student's thesis, though inadequate, is thought to be able to meet the criteria for the specified award, the examiners may determine that the student be permitted to re-present their thesis in a revised form. This will be within eighteen months for the PhD or Professional Doctorate examination and twelve months for the MPhil from the date on which the student receives the joint examination report and notification of the corrections required by the Research Degrees Examinations Team following ratification of the report by the Research Degrees Examinations Board.
- 6.13.13. The examiners must indicate on the examination decision form whether a further oral examination is required. This decision cannot be changed upon receipt of the revised thesis.
- 6.13.14. As this is a re-examination to confirm degree, the examiners will examine the amended thesis, submit preliminary reports (when a second oral examination was required) and will provide a second joint examination report. The examiners will be asked to confirm whether the amended thesis now meets the criteria to award the degree.
- 6.13.15. If the student fails to make the amendments or the examiners are unable to confirm that the amendments are satisfactory, the procedure outlined under 'Failure to satisfy after minor or major amendments or after re-examination' below will apply.
- 6.13.16. Students whose thesis examiners require them to resubmit within eighteen months will be transferred back to pending submission status in order that their progress towards resubmission can be monitored, and therefore will be charged writing-up fees.

*Consideration for a lower, related award*

- 6.13.17. Where the student's thesis does not meet the criteria for the specified award, the student may be considered for a related, lower degree (where available).
- 6.13.18. Minor or major amendments, or the re-examination of the thesis may be permitted by the examiners before the student is considered for the related, lower degree.



- 6.13.19. Where additional time has already been granted for major or minor amendments or after the re-examination of the thesis, no further additional time will normally be given to the student to prepare the thesis for examination.
- 6.13.20. For examination for the PhD only: Where the examiners have recommended that the student be considered for a related, lower degree, the examiners may consider whether the student has met the criteria for the award of an MPhil degree unless this is a joint degree with an institution that does not offer the MPhil (although if appropriate the student may be offered an MPhil single award from King's College London only).
- 6.13.21. If the student's thesis does not meet the criteria, the examiners will recommend to the Research Degrees Examinations Board that the student be recorded as an academic fail.
- 6.13.22. For examination of Professional Doctorates only: Where the individual programme specification permits, the final reports and outcome will be sent by the examiners to the Research Degrees Examinations Team, who will forward the information to the relevant Postgraduate Assessment Board for consideration of an exit award.

*Academic Fail*

- 6.13.23. Where the student's thesis does not meet the criteria for the award of a research degree and the thesis is unsuitable for minor or major amendments or re-presentation within eighteen months the examiners will recommend to the Research Degrees Examinations Board that the student be recorded as an Academic Fail.
- 6.13.24. A student who fails to satisfy the examiners will not be permitted to re-enter for the examination.

*Failure to satisfy the examiners after minor or major amendments or after the re-examination of the thesis*

- 6.13.25. Where a student fails to satisfy the examiners after minor or major amendments or after the re-examination of the thesis, the examiners will either:
- a. recommend to the Research Degrees Examinations Board that the student be recorded as an Academic Fail, or
  - b. recommend the student for consideration for a related, lower degree (as set out above).
- 6.13.26. The examiners have the discretion to permit an additional calendar month for the student to make further minor amendments before making a final decision.
- 6.13.27. In both cases the student has the right to appeal under section 6.13.

*Additional examiner*

- 6.13.28. When the examiners appointed are unable to reach agreement when approving amendments or following a re-examination, they shall report this to the Research

Degrees Examinations Board, which shall appoint an additional examiner who is external to the University.

- 6.13.29. Whenever possible the additional examiner shall be of Professorial status and shall have considerable experience of examining for a research degree of the University of London.

*Thesis award*

- 6.13.30. With the exception of students registered for joint degrees, a student will not be permitted to submit as their thesis one which has been or will be submitted for a degree or comparable award of this or any other university or institution.
- 6.13.31. The greater proportion of a student's investigations must be carried out during the period of registration.
- 6.13.32. All theses for University degrees shall be written in English with the exception of students whose subject involves an element of study of a modern foreign language who may apply at the start of their degree to submit their thesis in a language other than English. All such applications will need the support of the supervisor and will be considered by the Research Degrees Examinations Board. In this instance, an abstract in English of up to 5,000 words shall be submitted at the same time as the thesis.
- 6.13.33. The contribution by the student in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow research workers must be clearly stated by the student and certified by the supervisor.
- 6.13.34. For any thesis, publications derived from the work in the thesis but not forming a main part of the work described may be bound as supplementary material at the back of the thesis.
- 6.13.35. In addition to a research component resulting in the submission of a thesis at doctoral level:
- a. a professional doctorate programme shall include elements of a practical/work-related/professional nature and formally taught elements appropriate to support the academic objectives of the degree programme.
  - b. a Master in Philosophical Studies (MPhilStud) degree programme shall provide a student with advanced knowledge of three areas of the relevant discipline, including sustained research on a single topic (presented in the form of a thesis), and provide progressive research training which is an adequate foundation for doctoral study.

*Thesis incorporating publications*

- 6.13.36. Students are allowed to include in their thesis work that is already published, or accepted for publication, at the time of submission of the thesis, either by the student alone or jointly with others.
- 6.13.37. The majority of the research making up the publication must have been done under supervision at the University during the period of registration.

- 6.13.38. The thesis will require additional chapters and information for it to meet the requirements for the award, particularly that of the thesis being an integrated whole and presenting a coherent argument.
- 6.13.39. A series of papers alone, whether published or otherwise, is not acceptable for submission as a thesis.
- 6.13.40. A thesis incorporating publications should include at least one paper published, or a paper accepted for publication, in a peer reviewed publication. This should be presented in its final accepted form with appropriate referencing from the relevant publication.
- 6.13.41. The inclusion of a paper(s) accepted for publication within the thesis does not guarantee that the thesis as an entity will be judged to have met the standards required for the award.
- 6.13.42. The thesis must be accompanied by a signed declaration by the student that the work presented in the thesis is their own and explaining their contribution to jointly authored publications. Further information can be found in [Guidelines on submitting a thesis incorporating publications](#).

#### *Appeals*

- 6.13.43. There are two academic appeals processes available to research degrees students:
- a. to appeal the PhD upgrade and MD(Res) transfer decisions.
  - b. to appeal the outcome of the thesis and oral examination.

Neither appeal process can be used to challenge academic judgement.

- 6.13.44. The appeal procedure in respect of upgrade decisions should be completed at faculty level before the University will consider any appeal by the student under the regulations on failure to make sufficient academic progress (regulations 8.2-8.25).
- 6.13.45. An appeal must be requested in writing on the upgrade appeal form and lodged with the relevant faculty registry office within 15 working days of the upgrade decision. The grounds of the appeal must be clearly stated in the appeal and appropriate documentation supplied.
- 6.13.46. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies in the faculty will normally advise the student in writing of their decision on the appeal request within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal, subject to collecting all relevant information and interviewing people. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies will allow an appeal to be heard if they are satisfied that one or more of the following criteria apply:
- a. where there is evidence that the student's performance may have been adversely affected by mitigating circumstances which the student was unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to divulge to the examiners before the decision was reached.

- b. where there is clear evidence of a significant administrative or procedural error on the part of the University in the conduct of the upgrade process and that this accounted for the student's performance.
- 6.13.47. The Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies will have the discretion to take into account grounds (including grounds of compassion) other than those stated above in deciding whether to allow an appeal to be heard.
- 6.13.48. Where a student submits an appeal that their examination was adversely affected by alleged harassment, bullying or discrimination, or by any other factor, which, in the opinion of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, requires an investigation which falls outside the remit of the appeal regulations and which constitutes a complaint under the [Complaints Policy](#), then the matter shall be referred for consideration under that policy. In these circumstances, the appeal may be suspended, at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, until the consideration of the matter under the Student Complaints Regulations has been concluded.
- 6.13.49. Any information supplied by the student at a later date will only be considered if, in the judgment of the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies, there are valid reasons why it could not have been submitted as part of the initial appeal. However, the student shall have the right to receive copies of any documents provided to the appeals panel (including the information from the upgrade panel, the statement of the student's supervisor, and any referee's reports), and may submit comments for the panel's consideration within five working days of being sent this information.
- 6.13.50. An appeals panel shall be established comprising:
- the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies or nominee, who shall act as Chair,
  - two members of the faculty Postgraduate Research Committee,
- and will be supported by a representative from the relevant faculty or registry office.
- 6.13.51. The panel shall not include anyone involved in the original upgrade decision or the student's supervisors. At the discretion of the Chair, the panel may be supplemented with additional member(s) with expertise in the academic area of the appeal.
- 6.13.52. The quorum for the panel shall be the Chair and two other members. The decision of the panel shall be reached by a majority vote of the members, which may be conducted by email correspondence. The Chair shall have an additional casting vote where necessary.
- 6.13.53. The upgrade panel which made the original decision will submit the outcome provided to the student together with a more detailed account of the factors which informed the decision.

6.13.54. The student's first supervisor will be asked to provide a statement indicating whether they support the appeal and whether they think that the student should be allowed to upgrade and the reasons for their recommendation.

6.13.55. The panel will consider:

- the upgrade outcome provided to the student,
- the supplementary information from the upgrade panel,
- the statement from the student's supervisor(s),
- the written submission from the student appealing against the decision, and
- any further comments received from the student.

6.13.56. Before making a decision the panel, at the discretion of the Chair, may decide to:

- a. request a further referee's report,
- b. seek clarification from any party involved,
- c. interview the student and/or supervisor.

6.13.57. The panel is not required to meet unless it is decided to interview the student and/or supervisor. In such circumstances, the student and the supervisor will be invited to attend the meeting of the panel and may each give evidence to the panel. The student may be accompanied by a colleague, friend or representative of the King's College London Students' Union.

6.13.58. The panel shall normally reach a decision on the appeal within thirty working days of receipt, subject to the need to compile the above information and to meet as appropriate.

6.13.59. The panel may take one of the following decisions:

- a. to reject the appeal and uphold the decision to terminate the student's registration,
- b. to reject the appeal and uphold the decision that the student's registration should continue at MPhil level,
- c. to uphold the appeal and allow the MPhil to PhD upgrade,
- d. to uphold the appeal and allow the student a further opportunity to attempt the MPhil to PhD upgrade.

6.13.60. In the event of a) being the decision of the panel, removal proceedings shall commence under the Academic Progress Regulations. The student has the right to appeal against the removal in accordance with academic regulations 8.2-8.25.

*Appeals concerning decisions of examiners: thesis and oral examination*

6.13.61. An appeal must be requested in writing on a form provided for the purpose and lodged with the Head of Student Conduct and Appeals (HoSCA) on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor within 15 working days of the date of notification to the student of

the result of the examination. The grounds for the appeal must be clearly stated as part of the request and appropriate documentation supplied within the deadline for submission of the appeal.

- 6.13.62. The Vice-Chancellor will normally advise the student in writing of their decision on the appeal request within 30 working days of receipt of the appeal. An appeal will be permitted if the Vice-Chancellor is satisfied that one or more of the following criteria apply:
- a. where there is evidence that the student's performance at the oral examination may have been adversely affected by mitigating circumstances which the student was unable, or for valid reasons unwilling, to divulge to the examiners before the decision was reached,
  - b. where there is clear evidence of significant administrative or procedural error on the part of the University in the conduct of the examination and that this accounted for the student's performance.
- 6.13.63. The Vice-Chancellor will have the discretion to take into account grounds (including grounds of compassion) other than those stated above in deciding whether to allow an appeal to be heard.
- 6.13.64. Where a student submits an appeal that their examination was adversely affected by alleged harassment, bullying or discrimination, or by any other factor, which, in the opinion of the Vice-Chancellor, requires an investigation which falls outside the remit of these appeal regulations and which constitutes a complaint under the Student Complaints Policy, then the matter shall be referred for consideration that policy and procedure. In these circumstances, the appeal may be suspended, at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor, until the consideration of the matter under the Student Complaints Policy has been concluded.
- 6.13.65. If the Vice-Chancellor decides to allow an appeal they will appoint an Appeal Committee and will advise the student in writing of their decision on the appeal application. If an appeal is rejected reasons will be given.
- 6.13.66. The student has the right to appear before the Appeal Committee. The student may be represented by another member of the University or a member of the King's College London Students' Union or, where the student is registered on a programme associated with professional practice, a member of their professional organisation. The student may also be accompanied by a family member or a friend (either from inside or outside the University) but that person will not be allowed to speak at the hearing. However, the Chair of the Appeal Committee will have the discretion to consider representations from the person accompanying the student to make a statement.
- 6.13.67. If the student is to be represented and/or accompanied then the names of the attendees must be received in writing by the HoSCA at least forty-eight hours in advance of the hearing. The Chair of the Appeal Committee has the discretion to refuse to permit a representative or friend or family member to attend where prior written notice has not been given.

- 6.13.68. The examiners shall be invited to attend the meeting of the Appeal Committee. The University reserves the right to call any other relevant individuals to present evidence to the Committee.
- 6.13.69. The Committee shall normally conduct the proceedings in the presence of both the student and the examiners. The student and/or their representative have the right to be present throughout the meeting of the Appeal Committee, as have the examiners, until such time as the Committee retires to consider its findings. The absence of the student or the examiners will not prevent the hearing from taking place nor invalidate the proceedings.
- 6.13.70. Written notice of the date of the hearing will be sent to the student as soon as possible following the Vice-Chancellor's decision to refer the matter to an Appeal Committee. The names of the Committee members together with all documentary evidence will normally be sent to the Committee and to the student at least seven days before the hearing date. Any concerns regarding documentation or membership of the Committee should be raised in writing by the student at the earliest opportunity in advance of the hearing to the HoSCA.
- 6.13.71. The documentation with which the Committee is provided shall include:
- a. the written submissions of the student and of the examiners (should they wish to make a written submission),
  - b. the final report(s) and the preliminary independent reports of the examiners,
  - c. any documentation that either the student or the examiners wish to submit.
- 6.13.72. In addition, the Committee may request to see any other documentation it considers relevant to the appeal.
- 6.13.73. The procedure is for the student to address the Committee first and, during this part of the proceedings; they may call witnesses, if this has been agreed by the Chair of the Committee at least five working days in advance of the hearing. The examiners shall be invited to make any observations. Any questions by the student or the examiners shall be put through the Chair. The student may make any concluding remarks. The members of the Appeal Committee may put questions to any of those present at any time during the proceedings. The Chair has the discretion to vary the procedure in any case where they consider it just to do so.
- 6.13.74. The Appeal Committee shall take one of the following decisions:
- a. to reject the appeal, in which case the result of the outcome of the examination appealed stands,
  - b. to request the examiners to reconsider their decision. The examiners shall normally be expected to hold another oral examination before reaching a decision as to whether the result should be changed,
  - c. to determine that the original examination be cancelled and that a new examination be conducted. The new examination shall be conducted by

examiners who did not take part in the original examination and were not involved in the appeal.

- i. For an appeal following the first examination, normally the new examiners will be sent the original thesis submission and will have all the examination outcome options available to them. They will not have access to the original examiners' reports.
- ii. For an appeal following any subsequent examinations, normally the new examiners shall have access to the outcome appealed, ie be sent the original examiners' reports and the most recently examined thesis. A new revised thesis is not permitted under this outcome.

6.13.75. The decision of the Appeal Committee shall be final and shall be provided to the student in writing normally within five working days of the appeal hearing. The Committee shall provide reasons for its decision.

6.13.76. When a new examination is to be held, new examiners shall be appointed in accordance with the academic regulations for research degrees. However, all examiners should be external to the University. The examiners may make any of the decisions open to the original examiners. The examiners will not be given any detailed information about the previous examination.

6.13.77. The result of the original examination having been cancelled, the result of the new examination shall be considered by the Research Degrees Examination Board.

#### *Availability of thesis*

6.13.78. It is a requirement that a thesis resulting from a research degree undertaken at the University is placed within the public domain once it has been awarded and ratified. Theses will be made available electronically, via the system determined by the University.

6.13.79. A thesis will normally be placed in the public domain immediately after the award of the degree. Departure from this requirement will only be made when the student can demonstrate circumstances such as grounds of commercial exploitation, patenting, creative writing or where the thesis includes material which is of significance to national security or personal safety and/or where a funding body allows.

6.13.80. A student may apply to the Chair of the Research Degrees Examination Board for restriction of access to their thesis, subject to the conditions noted above. The student's application must be submitted after the date of award but before the final thesis is submitted to the library.

6.13.81. Where approved, a restriction of access will normally be granted for a period of one or five years. A permanent restriction of access may be sought on very limited grounds relating to personal or national security, or where permission to include third party copyright material could not be obtained and exclusion of this material would significantly reduce the academic value of the thesis.



6.13.82. Theses funded by a Research Council UK training grant must be placed in the public domain within a maximum of twelve months following award.

6.13.83. The availability of theses produced as part of a joint programme must also conform to the publication requirements of the partner institution.

#### *Revocation*

6.13.84. An award type, award title or classification can be revoked and reissued, or an award can be revoked in its entirety under the following conditions:

- a. where there is satisfactory proof that there was an administrative error in the award made,
- b. when, subsequent to award, the Research Degrees Examination Board takes into account information which was unavailable at the time its original decision was made,
- c. following a recommendation or ruling by the Misconduct Committee, or
- d. following a recommendation or ruling by an Inquiry Panel established to investigate allegations of research misconduct.

#### **Policies and Procedures**

[Postgraduate Research Students, Involvement in Teaching & Learning](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedure](#)

[Non-Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedure](#)

[Complaints Policy](#)

[Interruption of Study Policy and Procedure](#)

#### **Useful Links**

[Centre for Doctoral Studies](#)

[Research Degree Examinations](#)

[Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#)

[Student Conduct and Appeals](#)

[Glossary](#)