

Code of Practice: Postgraduate Research Degrees 2015-16

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Code of Practice: Postgraduate Research Degrees

This document is a broad statement of University requirements covering departments', supervisors' and students' responsibilities.

Students at Partner Institutions should note that in some cases additional local policies and procedures apply.

1. Departments' Responsibilities

Each Department, School or Centre with research students should:

1.1. Graduate Director

Designate a Director of Research Students (DRS), or equivalent, who is an experienced research student supervisor. The DRS will be responsible to the Head of Department (HoD) for the departmental arrangements for postgraduate supervision and for liaising with and reporting as necessary to the Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education and/or the Deputy Dean (Education).

1.2. Admissions

Publicise information about entry requirements, areas where supervision is offered, whom to contact and information about funding sources administered by the department. Designate a member of academic staff with responsibility for research student admissions, who may be the DRS or some other member of the department.

Ensure that where an application is received to undertake research in an area in which the department offers supervision, two designated and trained members of staff are involved in making the admissions decision. These staff may consult other staff who are potential supervisors to discuss the application.

1.3. Departmental arrangements

Ensure that on acceptance of an offer of admission (that is normally well before registration) all new research students are supplied with the departmental arrangements for research students. The departmental documentation and the arrangements it describes should be appropriate for the degree programme concerned (ie there will be some variations depending on whether the student is registered for a PhD or a Masters degree by research) and should be approved by the Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education. Departmental documentation will be monitored every three years, or sooner if the department wishes to make any major changes to the arrangements.

1.4. Student induction

Ensure that all new research students are provided with an induction programme at the start of their period of study and are strongly encouraged to attend university and/or faculty induction events (see section 5 below). During the induction, or within the first three weeks of term, the DRS should discuss the details contained in this Code of Practice, and the departmental arrangements relating to it. Students should be given information about expectations and conventions regarding referencing and citations, and be advised about the University's policy on plagiarism and academic offences. Students should be required to sign that they have read and understood the documentation.

1.5. Supervisors

Ensure that appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place for all research students. Each student must have at least one supervisor who is engaged in research activity and has relevant publications. Where two supervisors are appointed, one supervisor must be nominated as the lead/primary supervisor who will be the first point of contact for the student, and responsible for record keeping and providing reports. Where a member of staff who has not previously supervised a student through to completion is appointed as sole supervisor, support must be provided through the department's normal mentoring arrangements as well as through the supervisory board (see section 6 below).

1.6. Replacement supervisors

Ensure that adequate arrangements are made for supervision when any supervisor either leaves the University or is on leave and is not carrying on with supervision during this period. Any changes in supervision must be approved by the DRS. Any permanent changes, as well as arrangements for replacement supervision where a member of staff is on leave, must also be reported to the Registry Research Team on the January and June progress lists.

1.7. List of supervisors

Keep an up-to-date record of all research students and their supervisors and make this available to the Registry Research Team on request.

1.8. Supervision and the frequency of supervisory meetings

Agree suitable norms regarding the frequency of formal supervisory meetings between students and supervisors and ensure they are followed by supervisors. These will probably vary according to the discipline and the stage that the student has reached. However, students and supervisors are required to communicate, whether face-to-face or by electronic means, to engage in discussion/review of the student's work and progress at least once a month (and bi-monthly for part-time students). Departments may also wish to specify or recommend the duration of contact. These norms should be included in the written documentation supplied to students and supervisors. Supervision should normally be provided until the student has submitted a final version of their thesis to the examiners and should, if this arises, cover any referral period.

A record of supervisory meetings/communications should be kept in accordance with the [Progress and Appeals Procedures for Research Degree Students](#).

1.9. Supervisory boards (see section 6 below)

Ensure that a supervisory board involving the supervisor(s) and at least one member of staff who is not the student's supervisor is held at least twice a year for each full-time student and once a year for part-time students. If a student or supervisor is away from the University in the period when the board is due, the board should be held by Skype, e-mail or video-link. Distance learning students must have at least one face-to-face supervisory board a year.

1.10. Time allocation for supervision

Ensure adequate academic staff time is allocated for the supervision of each research student as part of the department's workload allocation model. There can be some flexibility in these arrangements, for example, time allocations might vary according to the stage the student has reached and whether he/she is studying away from the University.

1.11. Problems with supervision

Have a clear and well-publicised procedure that enables students to raise problems regarding their supervisory arrangements. Students should be encouraged to raise problems with their supervisor in the first instance. However, departments should make it clear that students have the right to discuss supervisory problems with a member of staff who is not involved in their supervision, such as the chair of the Research Students' Progress Committee (RSPC), the DRS or HoD. Students should also be told that if they feel unable to approach a member of the department they are free to contact the Registry Research Team. Discussions about problems with supervision should remain confidential if the student requests this. Students may request a change of supervisor. The chair of the RSPC should consider these requests and accommodate them where practicable, noting that it may not always be possible for suitable alternative arrangements to be made.

1.12. Submission deadlines and minimum and maximum periods

Ensure that students understand the University regulations on thesis submission deadlines. Students should submit their thesis between the end of their minimum period (three years full-time) and the end of their maximum period (four years full-time). Students permitted to enter a one-year completion period at the end of their minimum period do so on the understanding that their full thesis will be ready for submission by the end of that completion period. The minimum period of study may be reduced in exceptional circumstances, with the Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy) approval.

1.13. Progress guidelines

Provide guidelines for students regarding the volume and standard of work to be expected at the end of each year of their studies and for confirmation (for PhD only). These guidelines should be included in the written documentation supplied to students and supervisors. It should be made clear that progress from one year to the next, confirmation of PhD status and progress into the completion year, will depend on satisfactory achievement of the necessary work and attainment of published milestones.

1.14. Research Students' Progress Committee

Ensure that a Research Students' Progress Committee (RSPC) is held at least twice a year to review the progress of all students and report this to the Registry Research Team. The first meeting should be held between December and mid-January. The second meeting should be held in the summer term before the end of June. If the RSPC requires a third meeting (for example to review the progress of particular students) this should be held in September (see section 7 below).

1.15. Reports on students' progress

Ensure that an individual report on each student's progress is provided to the Dean towards the end of each year of their study and during the second year for confirmation of PhD status. This should indicate the state of the research and the amount of work that has been carried out, as well as a recommendation from the RSPC as to whether the student be allowed to progress to the following year and/or whether a downgrading, upgrading, confirmation of PhD status or discontinuation is recommended.

1.16. Staff induction and training

Ensure that all new members of staff who may become research student supervisors are seen by the DRS to discuss the University Code of Practice and that all supervisors are supplied with a copy of the Department's supervisory arrangements every year. The Department should also ensure that less experienced members of staff who have not supervised a PhD through to completion attend the

University's training for research student supervisors and that opportunities for sharing good practice in supervision are included in the arrangements for training and support provided to all academic staff.

Ensure that all members of staff with responsibility for admissions decisions have:

read the Handbook on Graduate Admissions, which describes the central and departmental responsibilities in respect of graduate admissions and includes guidance on overseas qualifications, handling student references, English Language requirements and equality and diversity; and

been briefed on the departmental arrangements for processing applications, by the Director of Research Studies, the Head of Department or his/her nominee in this area.

1.17. Academic networking

Ensure that research students are advised of the importance of making contact with other researchers in the field and of presenting their work to academic audiences. This should include advising them on the opportunities to present work to staff and fellow postgraduates and about attendance and participation in appropriate seminars and conferences.

1.18. Facilities

Ensure that during the minimum period all research students have access to the departmental facilities and equipment necessary to enable them to complete their research degree successfully.

1.19. Student feedback

Ensure that student feedback is collected and reviewed in accordance with the University's Student Representative Policy. A summary of the feedback and, where appropriate, details of any follow-up should be provided to the Dean on an annual basis for consideration by the autumn term Education Committee.

1.20. External supervisors

Where an external supervisor is appointed, ensure that s/he receives a copy of the University Code of Practice and complies with its requirements.

2. Supervisors' Responsibilities

Supervisors have a responsibility to:

2.1. Code of practice and guidelines

Familiarise themselves with this Code of Practice, and the departmental supervisory arrangements.

2.2. Regular meetings

Maintain regular contact with the student through meetings until the thesis has been submitted and, if this arises, during any referral period. In the case of distance learning students, supervisors must maintain regular contact with the student through electronic and/or other means.

2.3. Research guidance

Provide guidance about the nature and standard of research work expected, including advice on attaining that standard, together with advice on academic practice in the discipline, matters of research design, and ethical issues, and appropriate health and safety issues. Supervisors should make it clear to each research student that the research and writing up should be capable of completion within the minimum period and provide guidance on the appropriate volume of research work for the degree in question. They should also assist each research student in developing a clear timetable of work and emphasise the importance of keeping to it.

2.4. Written work, oral presentations and feedback

Request written work and oral presentations as appropriate and comment on such work within a reasonable time. Supervisors are encouraged to run students' work through plagiarism detection software early on in their studies as an academic offences training exercise.

2.5. Accessibility, leave and supervisory changes

Be reasonably accessible to students during term time and advise them of any lengthy absences during the vacation. Keep each student well informed in advance about any prospective periods of leave and the planned supervisory arrangements during the leave.

2.6. Update knowledge and skills

Ensure that their knowledge and skills are as up-to-date as possible. Less experienced supervisors who have not supervised a PhD through to completion must attend the University's course on supervising research degrees.

2.7. Research training

Identify and record the student's training needs at the beginning of their studies and review them on a regular basis. Ensure that the student has opportunities for developing appropriate generic and research skills and that a record of course/workshop completion and attendance is kept. This may be in the form of a copy of a record maintained by the student that has been signed off by the supervisor. Keep up to date with courses available through [Proficio](#) and encourage the student to book onto relevant training.

2.8. Records of meetings and written work

Keep a record of dates of formal supervisions with the student and of written work submitted, including when feedback was provided, which can be produced later if necessary.

2.9. Supervisory boards (see section 6 below)

Ensure that meetings of the supervisory board are arranged for each student in accordance with the requirements set out in paragraph 6.2.

2.10. Submit reports

Report on each student's progress to the supervisory board indicating what has been achieved, advising the board where s/he believes that the student is unlikely to reach the standard for the degree for which s/he is registered or where progress is slow, and ensure that the chair of the board forwards a report on the board to the DRS in time for the next DRS Review/RSPC meeting.

2.11. Advising student on progress

Warn and advise students in writing, with a copy to the DRS, where work is not of the appropriate standard or is being produced too slowly, and of steps which might be taken to remedy the situation.

2.12. Employment

Where appropriate, encourage students to think about their subsequent employment, directing the student to suitable sources of advice and support.

2.13. Preparation for examination of the research thesis

Ensure that students understand the requirements of the degree, provide guidance on the examination process, and help students to prepare for the viva.

2.14. Approval of title

The supervisor and Head of Department are responsible for approving the proposed title for the thesis, which indicates that the thesis is close to submission. The Approval of Title form should be submitted to the Registry two months prior to submission in order for the appointment of the examiners process to start.

2.15. Appointment of examiners for the research thesis

Nominate examiners for a student's thesis.

2.16. Thesis examination

The supervisor should not be present at the viva without the specific permission of the Deputy Dean (Education), and normally there should be no contact between the supervisor and the examiners other than to arrange their appointment.

3. Students' Responsibilities

Research students have a responsibility to:

3.1. Documentation

Read the documentation provided to them, including the regulations for their degree, this Code of Practice and details of the departmental supervisory arrangements. Each student should sign a form to certify that s/he has read the documentation and agrees to abide by it.

3.2. Meetings

Attend meetings with their supervisors and supervisory boards as arranged and prepare adequately for them, notifying their supervisor in the event of unavoidable absence.

3.3. Contact with supervisors

Keep in regular contact with their supervisor. Students and supervisors are required to communicate, whether face-to-face or by electronic means, to engage in discussion/review of the student's work and progress at least once a month (and bi-monthly for part-time students).

During approved periods of study away, provide updates on progress as outlined in the [Progress and Appeals Procedures for Research Degree Students](#).

3.4. Agreed work

Carry out, as far as possible, the work agreed with their supervisor and submit written work as agreed so that they meet the required milestones.

3.5. Ethics, health and safety and IP

Familiarise themselves with University and subject-specific guidelines on ethical research, including data protection matters, and with health and safety and intellectual property regulations.

3.6. Academic referencing

Familiarise themselves with the expectations and conventions regarding referencing other people's work.

3.7. Training courses

Attend any research training and generic skills courses as agreed with their supervisor or required by their funding body.

3.8. Report on progress

Submit reports on progress as requested to supervisory boards, the Director of Research Students, or the departmental Research Students' Progress Committee.

3.9. Keep a record of progress

Keep a record of personal progress, including a copy of the agreed training needs, courses that need to be attended and when they are attended. This may take the form of a log book or research portfolio to be signed off by the supervisor.

3.10. Significant needs or circumstances

Inform their supervisor promptly if there are any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect their work.

Notify the Supervisory Board/Research Students' Progress Committee (see section 7) in writing of any extenuating circumstances that they believe have significantly affected their performance.

3.11. Supervisory problems

Discuss any supervisory problems with their supervisor or, if they prefer, with the chair of the Research Students' Progress Committee, Director of Research Students or the Head of Department.

Alternatively, if they feel unable to talk to a member of the departmental staff, they should contact the Registry Research Team to discuss their problems. Any discussions will remain confidential if requested. Students may request a change of supervisor but should note that it may not always be possible for suitable alternative arrangements to be made.

3.12. Submission of the thesis

Students must present their thesis for examination by the end of the final term of their completion period.

A request for an extension of up to two weeks to the submission deadline may be made. Requests must be made to the Registry in advance of the deadline. If granted, an extension, students will not be expected to register or pay the prescribed fee for that two week period.

Students who fail to present their thesis for examination by the deadline shall be deemed to have withdrawn permanently from the University and from their research degree unless they are permitted an exceptional further period of completion.

Where a student has extenuating circumstances that affect their ability to submit the thesis by the agreed deadline, the Deputy Dean (Education) will consider each circumstance on a case-by-case basis.

3.13. Preparation for examination of the research thesis

Familiarise themselves with the guidelines on thesis submission and with the examination process, and ensure that they are prepared for the viva.

4. Admissions

4.1. Research opportunities

Potential students should be provided with information on the:

- (a) areas in which supervision is offered;
- (b) research degree programmes offered;
- (c) research training provided and;
- (d) research environment in the department.

4.2. Funding information and selection

Departments should publicise information on any sources of funding administered by the department, including how to apply for any scholarships/studentships (e.g. Silberrad, University of Essex Scholarships and research council studentships) and the criteria for awarding support. At least three people should be involved in the decision to allocate funding.

4.3. Entry criteria and how to apply

The department's entry criteria should be publicised along with information about how to apply. Guidance should be given on preparing a research proposal, where appropriate, making it clear what is required. There is a standard University postgraduate application form and Notes of Guidance on additional requirements.

4.4. Considering applications

A decision to reject an application can be taken by one member of staff where the application is to conduct research in a field where the department does not offer supervision.

In all other cases decisions must be taken by two designated and trained members of staff (see section 1.2).

The Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education must approve applications from candidates who do not satisfy the standard entry requirements.

4.5. Recording decisions

A record should be kept of the reasons for rejecting an application or for making an offer for an alternative programme. A record may be placed within the applicant's file, and/or a note may be recorded under the 'Notes' facility on the Applicant Details screen of the Postgraduate Admissions System.

4.6. Turnaround times

An applicant should normally receive a response within four weeks. The University's advertised service level to applicants is a maximum period of six weeks. The additional fortnight may be necessary in order to further explore the applicant's research topic and ascertain whether suitable supervision is available, or to validate references. Applications may also require the longer processing period over the Christmas vacation. Graduate Admissions should be aware of any applications which are expected to need longer than this maximum period and the applicant should be informed accordingly.

4.7. Equality and Diversity

All admissions decisions must relate to a student's estimated potential to succeed academically on a programme. Any criterion used should be an appropriate and genuine requirement, which does not discriminate directly or indirectly against any individual or group on the grounds of gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, age, socio-economic background, disability, religious or political beliefs and affiliations, family circumstances or responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or other irrelevant distinction. Further guidance is available in the published handbook "*Equality Policy and Strategy 2011-14*" Available on the Equality and Diversity website at: www.essex.ac.uk/eo/codespolicies/codesdefault.htm.

4.8. Communicating admissions decisions

Offer letters are issued by the Head of Graduate Admissions on behalf of the Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education. The offer letter will state the degree programme for which the student is being offered a place, the start date of the study period, the duration of the programme, the estimated cost of tuition fees and living expenses and any conditions which must be met in order for the place to be confirmed. The web address for the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees is also provided. From May of each year onwards, applicants holding offers and receiving new offers are sent information on University accommodation, how to access the online International Student Handbook and confirmation of the tuition fee amounts for the forthcoming year.

Applicants who are rejected are informed in writing by the Graduate Admissions Office.

4.9. Monitoring

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The University's Education Committee receives a summary of monitoring of gender, disability and ethnicity for applications and rejections at its autumn meeting each year. In advance of Education Committee, each department will receive a detailed report from the Head of Graduate Admissions, with a request for feedback on any anomalies.

TURNAROUND TIMES

The Head of Graduate Admissions will monitor the turnaround times of research degree applications in accordance with paragraph 4.6 and will raise any concerns with the Head of Department.

5. Student Induction

5.1. Information

Research students should be provided by departments with the following information as soon as possible after they accept their offer and no later than the end of the second week of their first term:

- (a) general information about the University and its postgraduate portfolio in the relevant subject(s);
- (b) the University's regulations and procedures for research degrees;
- (c) the names and contact details of the student's supervisor(s) and information about supervisory arrangements;
- (d) general information about student support and welfare services;
- (e) a summary of the facilities that will be made available to the student;
- (f) relevant health and safety and other legislative information.

5.2. Face-to-face induction

Departments should strongly encourage students to attend university-wide induction events such as those organised through Proficio. In addition, departments should hold a face-to-face student induction no later than the end of the third week of the first term. This should cover:

- (a) the University's and the students' responsibilities as set out in this Code of Practice;
- (b) the challenges that will typically face research students during the course of their studies and where guidance may be sought in the event of difficulties;
- (c) progress, confirmation and completion procedures and requirements;
- (d) the University's research ethics and codes and those of relevant professional bodies and discipline groups;
- (e) issues concerning authorship, plagiarism and intellectual property;
- (f) details about opportunities and requirements for skills development;
- (g) opportunities for careers advice and preparing for post-graduation;
- (h) opportunities for postgraduates to be represented on departmental and school student liaison committees and the Education Committee;
- (i) opportunities for interdisciplinary activities;
- (j) departmental policies on funding attendance at conferences.

5.3. Distance learning students and January or April starters

Departments should ensure that distance learning research students or students who register after the beginning of the academic year receive written information about all of the above if they are unable to attend the department's induction programme.

6. Supervisory Boards

6.1. Composition

Supervisory boards should comprise of a usual minimum of the student, at least one supervisor (or in exceptional circumstances where the supervisor is on leave, an acting supervisor may attend) and one other academic. Where the supervisor is a less experienced member of staff who has not supervised a student through to completion, the chair must be an experienced supervisor. Where the supervisor is a less experienced member of staff who has not supervised a student through to completion, the chair must be an experienced supervisor.

6.2. Timetabling and frequency of meetings

Supervisors should ensure that meetings of supervisory boards with the student are arranged at least twice a year for full-time students and once a year for part-time students until they have submitted. Virtual meetings can take place via video or telephone conferencing (such as Skype) or email. Distance Learning Students may have the Supervisory Board held face-to-face or via Skype if deemed more appropriate.

6.3. Advice, monitoring and reports

The purpose of supervisory boards is to provide the student with a wider range of advice on their research and to provide an opportunity to reflect on the student's progress. It is also the role of the chair of the board to prepare a formal report on the student's progress for the DRS and/or the RSPC. At each meeting, the supervisory board should receive a written report from the student on progress and a future work schedule as well as oral or written comments on the student's progress from the supervisor. Though not compulsory, requesting a written report from the student should be seen as best practice as it gives students the opportunity to disclose any extenuating circumstances. The supervisory board may also receive a formal report of extenuating circumstances from the student, which should be considered by the board and included in the report to the RSPC. At the end of the meeting, the chair should complete a report of the board, including any recommendations made, which should subsequently be seen and acknowledged by the supervisor and the student. If there is concern about the student's progress this must be indicated clearly in the chair's report. A copy of the report should then be forwarded to the DRS, along with the student's report, for consideration at the next RSPC meeting.

6.4. Confirmation and completion

Students in the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences

By the end of the first year, for full-time PhD students (or equivalent for part-time students) a supervisory board shall be held to consider a student's progress with MPhil/PhD registration against the departmental criteria for the confirmation of PhD status, and will make a recommendation to the RSPC. If PhD status is not confirmed at the meeting, the case will be reconsidered at the next supervisory board on one further occasion, ahead of entering into the second year of study (or equivalent for part-time students).

If the supervisory board is satisfied that a student has produced work of sufficient quality and quantity to provide evidence of appropriate PhD-level progress and agreed milestones for confirmation had been met, a recommendation should be made to the RSPC that PhD status should be confirmed by the end of the first year (or equivalent for part-timers).

Students in the Faculty of Science and Health

By the end of the first term of the second year for full-time PhD students (or equivalent for part-time students) a supervisory board shall be held to consider a student's progress with MPhil/PhD

registration against the departmental criteria for the confirmation of PhD status, and will make a recommendation to the RSPC. If PhD status is not confirmed at the meeting, the case will be reconsidered at the next supervisory board on one further occasion, ahead of entering into the second term of the second year of study (or equivalent for part-time students).

If the supervisory board is satisfied that a student has produced work of sufficient quality and quantity to provide evidence of appropriate PhD-level progress and agreed milestones for confirmation had been met, a recommendation should be made to the RSPC that PhD status should be confirmed by the end of the first term of the second year of study (or equivalent for part-timers).

For **all research students**, a supervisory board shall be held at the end of a student's minimum period to consider whether they are ready to move into completion and will make a recommendation to the RSPC.

6.5. Board membership and internal examining

No member of staff who has been a member of a supervisory board during the final six months before submission of the thesis may be nominated as the internal examiner.

7. Research Students' Progress Committee and DRS Reviews

7.1. Composition and role

The postgraduate Research Students' Progress Committee (RSPC), to be established by each department, should be chaired by the DRS or HoD, and should include at least two other experienced supervisors. It should review the progress of every student through to the award of a degree, withdrawal or failure, on the basis of the reports from the supervisory board, including the written report from the student and any submission of extenuating circumstances. Where no supervisory board has taken place, for instance because a student is carrying out research abroad, the supervisor and the student must each submit a progress report. A decision/recommendation for discontinuation, downgrading or upgrading, or to confirm PhD status or change to MPhil, to permit entry into completion, or to extend the minimum period can only be made by the RSPC (see section 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6). Where the RSPC is considering a recommendation from a student's supervisory board of discontinuation or downgrading, or at confirmation to change a student's status to MPhil, the RSPC membership must include at least two members who were not on the student's last supervisory board. Smaller departments may want to co-opt a supervisor from another department in a cognate discipline as a member of the RSPC if the department finds it difficult to satisfy this requirement.

7.2. Frequency and timing

There should be at least two formal reviews of research students' progress each year, one held mid-year in December/January and one in June. Any review that recommends progression to the next year, confirmation of PhD status or to change to MPhil, entry into the completion period and any recommendation for discontinuation, or downgrading or upgrading should normally take the form of a face-to-face meeting of the RSPC. Any other review may either take the form of a meeting of the RSPC on the basis of the written reports from supervisory boards.

An additional meeting of the RSPC may be required in September to consider any outstanding progress decisions which need to be made before the start of the new academic year.

7.3. Taught course requirements

For students on a research degree programme that includes compulsory taught course requirements, as part of the consideration of students' progress the RSPC shall receive a copy of the recommendations from the appropriate Board of Examiners meeting, including the approved marks.

7.4. Reports and recommendations to the Dean

The RSPC will report its decisions/recommendations on each student to the Registry Research Team at least annually as follows:

- (a) a list of the decisions on students who have been allowed to proceed with their studies either unconditionally or subject to further review at a specified date if appropriate;
- (b) a list of the decisions on those MPhil/PhD students whose status should be confirmed as PhD;
- (c) a list of the decisions on those students who have been permitted to move into completion;
- (d) a list of the decisions on those Masters by Dissertation students who have been upgraded to MPhil or MPhil/PhD, and those MPhil students who have been upgraded to MPhil/PhD;
- (e) individual reports on students where the recommendation to the Dean is: change of status for a student for the degree of MPhil, MPhil/PhD or PhD to either the degree of MPhil or of

Masters by Dissertation; extension to the minimum period; discontinuation; or permission to move into further completion (only applies to students admitted before October 2008).

- (f) In cases where replacement supervisors are appointed, or a change of supervisor has taken place, this should also be reported to the Registry Research Team.

In all cases, a copy of the supervisory board report on each student shall be forwarded to the Registry Research Team.

7.5. Downgrading or discontinuation

If the RSPC is minded to make a recommendation that a student's status be downgraded or studies discontinued, the student must be offered an opportunity to discuss this with the RSPC before the final recommendation is forwarded to the Dean and if appropriate to present evidence about any extenuating circumstances. The student should be invited to meet with the RSPC, or the Chair of the RSPC, in advance of the formal recommendation being made to the Dean. If downgrading or discontinuation is confirmed by the RSPC and the Dean, the student may then request a review of the recommendation (see Appeals against Progress Decisions). The Committee should in all cases inform the student in writing of the Committee's recommendation and of the opportunity to appeal.

7.6. Confirmation of PhD Status

For students registered from October 2014

Students in the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences

By the end of the first year, and before entering into the first term of the second year of study, for full-time MPhil/PhD students (by the end of the second year for part-timers) following a supervisory board, the RSPC will make a decision/recommendation to the Dean to confirm the student's PhD status, change to MPhil or to discontinue their studies. If the RSPC is satisfied that a student has produced work of sufficient quality and quantity to provide evidence of appropriate PhD-level progress and agreed milestones for confirmation had been met, PhD status will be confirmed at the end of the first year, before entering into the second year of study (or equivalent for part-timers).

Students in the Faculty of Science and Health

By the end of the first term of the second year (fourth term), and before entering into the second term of the second year of study, for full-time MPhil/PhD students (by the end of the first term of the third year (seventh term), and before entering into the second term of the third year of study, for part-timers) following a supervisory board, the RSPC will make a decision/recommendation to the Dean to confirm the student's PhD status, change to MPhil or to discontinue their studies. If the RSPC is satisfied that a student has produced work of sufficient quality and quantity to provide evidence of appropriate PhD-level progress and agreed milestones for confirmation had been met, PhD status will be confirmed at the end of the first year, before entering into the second year of study (or equivalent for part-timers).

For **all MPhil/PhD students**, if the first supervisory board considering confirmation of status does not make a decision to confirm PhD status, then the RSPC will report to the Registry Research Team that the decision has been deferred to the next board. If, following the second supervisory board, the RSPC is minded to make a recommendation to change the student's status to MPhil or to discontinue; the student must be offered an opportunity to discuss this with the RSPC before the final recommendation is forwarded to the Dean and, if appropriate, to present evidence about any extenuating circumstances. The student should be invited to meet with the RSPC (or the Chair of the RSPC) in advance of the formal recommendation being made to the Dean. If a change to MPhil status

or discontinuation is confirmed by the RSPC, the student may then request a review of the recommendation (see Appeals against a Progress Decision). The Committee should in all cases inform the student in writing of the Committee's recommendation and of the opportunity to appeal.

Students registered prior to October 2014 must have their confirmation decision made in line with regulation 4.30 in the [Principal Regulations for Research Degrees](#) (pdf).

7.7. Mid-year recommendations and special meetings

The RSPC can recommend discontinuation, downgrading or upgrading at any point in the academic year and special meetings can be convened at any time.

7.8. Requests for further information from the Dean

The Dean may request further information on any student and discuss his/her progress with the student, supervisor, DRS or HoD as necessary. The Dean may require the departmental RSPC to reconsider the situation of any student, and its progress decisions, where this seems necessary. In cases where the student(s) concerned is supervised by the Dean, or he/she serves on the supervisory board, the Dean shall arrange for another Dean to act in any circumstances that depart from normal expectations.

8. Assessment

8.1. Nomination and appointment of examiners

When a student submits their Approval of Title Form, the department will be asked to nominate two examiners: one internal and one external, whose names have to be approved by the Deputy Dean (Education).

8.2. Staff candidates

In the case of staff candidates the department must nominate three external examiners, two of whom will be appointed by the Dean.

8.3. Eligibility to be an internal examiner

The internal examiner for a research degree should be:

- (a) a member of the academic staff of the University or partner institution;
- (b) research active with appropriate expertise;
- (c) normally have a degree, or equivalent¹, at the level at which they are being appointed to examine (if not a case as to their suitability needs to be made).

The internal examiner should not:

- (a) have been the student's supervisor (main, joint or secondary) other than acting as a temporary supervisor for a period of up to a year but not in the final 12 months before submission of the thesis;
- (b) have been a member of the supervisory board during the final six months before submission of the thesis;
- (c) have a professional or personal relationship with the student or the external examiner that might give rise to a conflict of interest;
- (d) be the partner or a close relative of the supervisor (main, joint or secondary).

8.4. Eligibility to be an external examiner

The external examiner for a research degree should be:

- (a) research active with appropriate expertise;
- (b) normally employed in an HE institution (if not, including Emeritus Professors, a case as to their suitability needs to be made);
- (c) a senior member of staff and/or an experienced examiner (if not, a senior and experienced internal examiner must be appointed);

¹A Professor with appropriate publications would be considered to be 'equivalent' and a case would not need to be made.

- (d) qualified to the level at which they are being appointed to examine (if not, a case as to their suitability needs to be made).

The external examiner should not:

- (a) have been a former member of the academic staff or a student of the University or partner institution in the past five years;
- (b) have been involved in the supervision of the student;
- (c) have a professional or personal relationship with the student, the student's supervisor or the internal examiner that might give rise to a conflict of interest.

8.5. Role of the external examiner

The external examiner's duties are as follows:

- (a) to read the thesis;
- (b) to reach an independent judgment on the thesis, against the appropriate criteria for the award, without consulting the internal examiner about the assessment, and to record this on a preliminary Report Form prior to the viva;
- (c) to attend the viva and viva pre-meeting;
- (d) to come to an agreement (see section 8.11 below) with the internal examiner as to the outcome of the examination;
- (e) with the internal examiner, to complete the Joint Report Form;
- (f) in the case of a referral, normally to re-examine the referred thesis.

8.6. Role of the internal examiner

The internal examiner's duties are as follows:

- (a) to read the thesis;
- (b) to reach an independent judgment on the thesis, against the appropriate criteria for the award, without consulting the external examiner about the assessment, and to record this on a preliminary Report Form prior to the viva;
- (c) to oversee the arrangements for the assessment process including liaising with the external examiner to set a date for the viva;
- (d) to ensure that the department notifies the student of the date for the viva;
- (e) to oversee the proceedings at the viva;
- (f) to come to an agreement (see section 8.11 below) with the external examiner as to the outcome of the examination;
- (g) with the external examiner, to complete the Joint Report Form;
- (h) in the case of a referral, normally to re-examine the referred thesis.

8.7. Timescale

The viva should normally be held no later than three months after the receipt of the thesis by the examiners.

8.8. Conduct of the viva

Both examiners should be present at the viva and are expected to follow the Guidelines on the Viva. The examiners should hold a pre-viva meeting to discuss their preliminary views on the thesis and to plan the viva. The candidate should be given the opportunity to defend the thesis. It will usually be necessary for the candidate to leave the room while the examiners confer as to the outcome of the examination and the candidate should then be told the result. Where it is not possible to conduct the viva face-to-face, permission must be requested from the Deputy Dean (Education) for the viva to be conducted via a video link/Skype.

8.9. Independent Chair

In certain circumstances, such as where the candidate is examined only by external examiners or in an examination following an appeal, the Dean may appoint an independent chair to attend a viva. Where there is no internal examiner the independent chair will perform the co-ordinating function in relation to the examination process. The independent chair is not an examiner of the thesis.

8.10. Reports and recommendations

Before the viva, the internal and external examiners must each complete, independently, a preliminary Report Form giving their initial assessment of the thesis. These reports should be submitted to the Registry Research Team.

Following the viva, the examiners must complete a Joint Report Form, which records the outcome of the examination, including the formal recommendation. The examiners may make the following recommendations:

For all research degrees

Examiners may recommend **one** of the following examination outcomes on academic grounds:

- (a) pass – no corrections required;
- (b) pass with minor typographical/presentational corrections – the student makes the corrections prior to binding the thesis;
- (c) pass with minor editorial revisions to be made within two months – the examiners must provide a list of revisions that they wish to see made and the internal examiner must confirm in writing that these have been made satisfactorily. Revisions must be made and the thesis submitted within two months;
- (d) pass with editorial revisions to be made within four months – the examiners must provide a list of revisions that they wish to see made and the internal examiner must confirm in writing that these have been made satisfactorily. Revisions must be made and the thesis submitted within four months;
- (e) referral for re-examination in up to 12 months – the student may resubmit, on one occasion only, a revised thesis for re-examination within 12 months. The examiners must provide a statement describing the shortcomings of the thesis and the changes required. These may include, amongst other things, editorial corrections and revisions, rewriting a part, parts or the

whole of the thesis, the carrying out of further research and/or experimental work. They must also specify the referral period required, which should not normally be less than four months or exceed 12 months;

(f) fail – the examiners must provide a clear statement describing the shortcomings of the thesis.

For PhDs

In addition, the examiners may recommend one of the following:

- (a) award of an MPhil – the candidate has not met the requirements for a PhD but has met the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy. No corrections are required but the candidate must amend the title page of the thesis;
- (b) award of an MPhil with *minor typographical/presentational corrections* – the student makes the corrections prior to binding the thesis and the candidate must amend the title page of the thesis;
- (c) award of an MPhil with *minor editorial revisions* to be made within two months – the candidate has not met the requirements for a PhD but has met the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy. The examiners must provide a list of the revisions that they wish to see made and the internal examiner must confirm in writing these have been made satisfactorily. Revisions must be made and the thesis submitted within two months;
- (d) award of an MPhil with *editorial revisions* to be made within four months – the examiners must provide a list of the revisions that they wish to see made and the internal examiner must confirm in writing these have been made satisfactorily. Revisions must be made and the thesis submitted within four months.
- (e) referral for an MPhil – the candidate has not met the requirements for a PhD but may resubmit a revised thesis for re-examination for the degree of Master of Philosophy.
- (f) The examiners must provide a statement describing the shortcomings of the thesis and the changes required. These may include, amongst other things, editorial corrections and revisions, rewriting a part, parts or the whole of the thesis, the carrying out of further research and/or experimental work. They must also specify the referral period required, which should not normally be less than four months or exceed 12 months.

For MPhils

In addition, the examiners may recommend one of the following:

- (a) award of a Masters by Dissertation – the candidate has not met the requirements for an MPhil but has met the requirements for the degree of Masters by Dissertation. No corrections are required but the candidate must amend the title page of the thesis;
- (b) award of Masters by Dissertation *with minor editorial revisions* to be made within two months – the candidate has not met the requirements for an MPhil but has met the requirements for the degree of Masters by Dissertation subject to the approval of minor editorial revisions. The examiners must provide a list of the revisions that they wish to see made and the internal examiner must confirm in writing these have been made satisfactorily. Revisions must be made and the thesis submitted within two months;
- (c) award of Masters by Dissertation *with editorial revisions* to be made within four months – the examiners must provide a list of the revisions that they wish to see made and the internal

examiner must confirm in writing these have been made satisfactorily. Revisions must be made and the thesis submitted within four months;

- (d) referral for a Masters by Dissertation – the candidate has not met the requirements for an MPhil but may resubmit a revised thesis for re-examination for the degree of Masters by Dissertation. The examiners must provide a statement describing the shortcomings of the thesis and the changes required. These may include, amongst other things, editorial corrections and revisions, rewriting a part, parts or the whole of the thesis, the carrying out of further research and/or experimental work. They must also specify the referral period required, which should not normally be less than four months or exceed 12 months.

Candidates are entitled to receive copies of the examiners' pre and post viva reports on their thesis on request, when examining is complete.

8.11. Waiving the viva

FIRST SUBMISSION

Permission to waive a viva will only be granted by the Dean in exceptional circumstances. The Registry Research Team would then notify the student of the examiners' wish not to hold a viva and the reasons for it, but they would be told that they have the right to have a viva if they wish.

REFERRED THESIS

Where the recommended outcome of the examination of a referred thesis is a pass, then a request by the examiners to waive the viva will normally be granted. Where the recommendation is not a pass then a request by the examiners to waive the viva will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The Registry Research Team would then notify the student of the examiners' request and the reasons for it, but they would be told that they have a right to have a viva if they wish.

8.12. Disagreement between examiners

When the examiners are unable to reach agreement on the outcome of the examination they shall record this on the Joint Report Form. A new internal and external examiner shall be appointed. The new examiners will be informed that the first examiners failed to reach a decision but will not be shown the preliminary reports. The new examiners will examine the thesis in the normal manner.

8.13. Suspected academic offences

If either of the examiners suspects an academic offence at any stage during the examination process they should notify the Registry Research Team which will arrange for the matter to be investigated in accordance with the University's [Academic Offences Policy](#). The viva shall be suspended.

9. Appeals Procedures

Appeals Procedure against a Progress Decision - Postgraduate Research Students

1. A research student who wishes to appeal against the recommendation of a Research Students' Progress Committee that they be downgraded or discontinued must do so in writing on the Form of Appeal, stating fully and precisely the grounds for appeal, within two weeks of receiving notification of the recommendation. Forms of Appeal are available online.
2. An MPhil/PhD registered student whose PhD status has not been confirmed and who wishes to appeal against the recommendation of a Research Students' Progress Committee that their registration be changed to MPhil or Masters by Dissertation, may appeal using this procedure only after the Research Students' Progress Committee has considered their case twice and has recommended a change of status. There is no right of appeal following a decision of a Research Students' Progress Committee not to confirm PhD status following the first supervisory board meeting.
3. A research student on the first year of an Integrated PhD (a 4-year programme) who wishes to appeal against a progress decision of the Research Students' Progress Committee (eg being downgraded or discontinued) should do so in accordance with the procedures for Appeals against the Decisions of Board of Examiners for all taught programmes.
4. The main legitimate grounds for appeal are the following:
 - a) Extenuating circumstances of which the Research Students' Progress Committee was unaware and of which the student could not reasonably have been expected to inform the Committee in advance, of such a nature to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result might have been different had they not occurred.
 - b) Procedural irregularities in the conduct of either the Supervisory Board and/or the Research Students' Progress Committee (including alleged administrative error) of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result might have been different had they not occurred.
 - c) That there is *prima facie* evidence of prejudice, bias, or inadequate assessment on part of one or more of the members of the Supervisory Board/Research Students' Progress Committee.
5. Other grounds will be considered on their merits.
6. The following are not considered legitimate grounds on which to appeal, and any appeals based exclusively on one or more of these grounds will be rejected automatically:
 - a) Prior informal assessments of the student's work by the supervisor.
 - b) The retrospective reporting of extenuating circumstances which a student might reasonably have been expected to disclose to the Research Students' Progress Committee before their meeting.
 - c) Appeals where the grounds of complaint concern the inadequacy of supervision or other arrangements during the period of study; such complaints must be raised, in writing, before the Research Students' Progress Committee meets.
7. Any other officer of the University who receives a formal complaint from a research student concerning his/her progress shall forward it to the Academic Registrar.

8. The Academic Registrar will acknowledge the appeal within five working days of receipt.
9. The Academic Registrar will refer to the relevant Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy) any appeal that meets the criteria stated above (4 and 5), who may consult such persons as he/she thinks fit, including the student who has lodged the appeal. The relevant Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy) will determine whether or not the appeal is well-founded.
10. In some cases, where the circumstances of the case merit it, the relevant Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy) may arrange a formal hearing to consider the appeal.
11. Such an Appeal Committee shall consist of the relevant Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy) (as Chair), and two members from outside the student's department who had no previous connection with the student. The Committee shall be serviced by a Secretary.
12. The Appeal Committee may consult such persons, including the student and his or her supervisor, and take such advice as it thinks fit.
13. The student will be invited to be present at the committee whenever oral evidence is being heard by the Committee, and will receive all the papers. He/she may bring a student or other member of the University or Students' Union to help him/her in presenting their appeal to the Committee.
14. All decisions of the relevant Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy)/Review Committee must be notified to the student, the supervisor and the Director of Research Students in writing, together with a statement of any conditions that are attached to the decision. A copy must also be sent to the Head of Department. If a student's status is altered, a copy of the relevant written statement of arrangements for supervision must be included and the supervisor requested to ensure that the student fully understands these.
15. An appeal following the formal conclusion of the appeals procedures set out above may be made on the following grounds only.
 - a) Procedural irregularity in the appeals process
 - b) Consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances
 - c) New material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process

A student who wishes to appeal against the outcome of these procedures should write to the Academic Registrar within four weeks setting out in detail the nature of the evidence to support their claim. If *prima facie* there is evidence to support the claim then the case will be reviewed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) or his/her nominee. If the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, or his/her nominee, determines that there are grounds for appeal, an Appeal Committee will be established, and paragraphs 11-14 above will apply. No member of the Committee will have had any previous involvement in the case.

16. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals. When the University's internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals have been exhausted, the University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. Students wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within twelve

months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. Full details of the scheme are available on request and will be enclosed with the Completion of Procedures.

Appeals Procedure against an Examination Decision - Postgraduate Research Students (Thesis)

1. A candidate for a research degree whose examination result is 'fail', or 'referred', or is the award of, or option to resubmit for a lower degree may submit an appeal against that decision on one or more of the following grounds:
 - a) that there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination (including alleged administrative error) of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result might have been different had they not occurred; or
 - b) that there is *prima facie* evidence of prejudice, bias, or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners.

2. In addition, a student may appeal against a decision not to allow resubmission for the degree for which he or she was being examined, on the following grounds:

that there existed circumstances materially affecting the student's performance of which the examiners were not aware when their decision was taken and of which the student could not reasonably have been expected to inform the examiners in advance.

3. An appeal may not be submitted where the grounds of complaint concern the inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements during the period of study; such complaints must be raised, in writing and preferably during the minimum period of study and research, with the relevant Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy).
4. Failed candidates shall be informed of their right of appeal. A candidate who wishes to appeal must submit the appeal in writing to the Academic Registrar not later than eight weeks after the notification to him/her of the result of the examination. The candidate's submission must state fully the grounds on which it is based. The Academic Registrar will dismiss any appeals which do not meet the criteria stated above (1 and 2). All other appeals will be referred to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) to determine whether *prima facie* there is evidence to support the claim.
5. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) shall consider the appeal and may decide that the case is not well-founded, in which case the appeal or complaint is dismissed and the candidate shall be informed of the reasons.
6. In those cases where the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) decides that there is a *prima facie* case, it will be considered by a Committee appointed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, consisting of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor as Chair, not fewer than two Deans (including Executive Deans, Deputy Deans (Education), Dean/Associate Dean of Academic Partnerships and Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education but excluding the Dean who had originally approved the result and a student member appointed by the President of the Students' Union.
7. The candidate shall be informed by the Secretary to the Appeal Committee of the date for consideration of the appeal not less than two weeks in advance. Candidates may present their case to the Committee in person, but, if they choose not to or are unable to, the Committee may proceed in their absence. Candidates may be accompanied by a member of the University of Essex, or of the permanent staff of the Students' Union of the University of Essex, or may nominate a member of the University to appear for them.

8. The onus shall be on the candidate to produce evidence before the Appeal Committee which substantiates the grounds of appeal set out in the original submission to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor.
9. The Appeal Committee, having considered the evidence, and taken such advice as may be necessary, may:
 - a) reject the appeal, in which case the result originally recommended by the examiners shall stand;
 - b) ask the examiners to reconsider their decision for reasons specified by the Appeal Committee; the examiners' report shall be submitted to the relevant Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy) together with the Appeal Committee's statement of the reasons for reconsideration;
 - c) determine that the unamended thesis shall be re-examined by new examiners.

Examiners reconsider their decision

10. Where the Appeal Committee determines that the examiners should be asked to reconsider their decision under paragraph 9(b), the relevant Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy) shall do the following on receipt of the examiners' report and the Appeal Committee's statement of the reasons for reconsideration:
 - a) Where the examiners agree to amend their decision, accept the amended decision as the revised result of the examination and issue a new results letter to the candidate;
 - b) Where the examiners decline to amend their decision, accept that the examiners' original recommendation stands and confirm the original result in a letter to the candidate.

Re-examination

11. Where the Appeal Committee determines on a re-examination under paragraph 9(c), the new examiners shall be appointed under the normal procedures. In number they should not be fewer than the original number of examiners nor fewer than two external examiners and one internal examiner. The new examiners shall be given no information about the previous examination except the single fact that they are conducting a re-examination on appeal. The new examiners shall write independent reports on the thesis and shall then examine the candidate orally.
12. The relevant Executive Dean (or his/her deputy) or Dean of Academic Partnerships (or his/her deputy) shall receive the report of the new examiners.
13. The candidate's supervisor shall not be appointed as an examiner.

All Appeals

14. An appeal following the formal conclusion of the procedures set out above may be made on the following grounds only.
 - a) Procedural irregularity in the appeals process
 - b) Consideration of whether the outcome was reasonable in all the circumstances
 - c) New material evidence which the student was unable, for valid reasons, to provide earlier in the process

A student who wishes to appeal against the outcome of these procedures should write to the Academic Registrar within four weeks setting out in detail the nature of the evidence to support their claim. If *prima facie* there is evidence to support the claim then the case will be reviewed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) or his/her nominee. If the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, or his/her nominee, determines that there are grounds for appeal, an Appeal Committee will be established, and paragraphs 6-13 above will apply. The Committee will be comprised of Executive Deans or his/her deputy and will be chaired by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor. No member of the Committee will have had any previous involvement in the case.

15. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals. When the University's internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals have been exhausted, the University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. Students wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within twelve months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. Full details of the scheme are available on request and will be enclosed with the Completion of Procedures.

10. Criteria for Award of Research Degrees

The work (thesis/dissertation) submitted by a candidate for a research degree is assessed against the following criteria as set out in the Higher Degree Regulations.

MASTERS BY DISSERTATION

A candidate submitting a dissertation for a Mastership is required to present the results of research carried out during the approved period of study and should demonstrate advanced understanding of the area of study. The dissertation should set out the relationship between the candidate's work and the wider field of knowledge, and should be expressed clearly and concisely.

In the case of a thesis involving original creative output, for the degree of Masters by Dissertation, the thesis must embody the results of research carried out/or output created during the approved period of study and should demonstrate advanced understanding of the area of study. The thesis must contain a commentary which addresses the originality and artistic relevance of the work.

The dissertation should set out the relationship between the candidate's work and the wider field of knowledge/the genre, and should be expressed clearly and concisely.

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

A thesis submitted by a candidate for the degree of Master of Philosophy must embody the results of research carried out during the approved period of study and should make a contribution to knowledge. In the thesis and the examinations the candidate is required to present the results of research that either forms original work or is an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge. The thesis should set out the relationship between the candidate's work and the wider field of knowledge, and should be expressed clearly and concisely.

In the case of a thesis involving original creative output, for the degree of Master of Philosophy, the thesis must embody the results of research carried out and/or output created during the approved period of study. The thesis must contain a commentary which addresses the originality and artistic relevance of the work. Within the thesis the candidate must show evidence of the originality of the work or an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge/the genre.

The thesis should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the candidate's work and the wider field of knowledge/the genre, and should be expressed clearly and concisely.

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE

The thesis must meet the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

A thesis submitted by a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy must embody the results of research carried out during the approved period of study. In the thesis and examinations the candidate is required to conduct and present original investigations that make a significant contribution to knowledge, to test ideas, whether the candidate's own or those of others, to understand the relationship of the theme of the investigations to a wider field of knowledge and to express him/herself clearly and concisely.

In the case of a thesis involving original creative output, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the thesis must embody the results of research carried out and/or output created during the approved period of study. The thesis must contain a commentary which addresses the originality and artistic relevance of the work.

Within the thesis and oral examination the candidate must show evidence of the originality of the work, demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of the theme of the thesis to a wider field of

knowledge, make a significant contribution to knowledge/the genre, and must express him/herself clearly and concisely.

PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE

A thesis submitted by a candidate for the doctorate must embody the results of research carried out during the approved period of study. In the thesis and the oral examination the candidate is required to conduct and present original investigations that make a significant contribution to the nature of practice within the profession or to the way theory is applied, to understand the relationship of the theme of the investigations to a wider field of knowledge and to express him/herself clearly and concisely.

Word length

Degree	Maximum word length²
Masters by Dissertation	30,000
MPhil	50,000
Doctor of Medicine	65,000
PhD	80,000
Professional Doctorate	40,000

These word lengths exclude any references and bibliography.

²Maximum word lengths for a thesis including creative output may vary depending on the format of the thesis submission. Nominal word lengths for each format are to be approved by the Registry Research Team and published to students.

11. Information and Regulations available elsewhere

Your registration as a research student is governed by the Higher Degree Regulations. These can be found on the University website at:

Higher Degree Regulations

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/regulations-higher.aspx

Academic Offences Procedure

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/academic-offences.aspx

Appeals Procedure for Research Degree Students

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/research-progress-appeals.aspx

Code of Practice on Teaching and Demonstrating by Graduate Students

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/documents/regulations/cop-graduate-students.pdf (pdf)

Code of Practice: Professional Doctorates

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/documents/policies/cop_professional_doctorates.pdf (pdf)

Code of Practice for the Supervision of Masters' Dissertations

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/documents/regulations/cop-masters-dissertations.pdf (pdf)

Conduct of Research Degree Vivas by Video Link

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/documents/regulations/cop-vivas-via-video.pdf (pdf)

Data Protection and Research Activity

www.essex.ac.uk/records_management/policies/data_protection_and_research.aspx

Higher Degree Regulations: Examination of Staff Candidates

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/documents/regulations/research-degrees.pdf (pdf)

Progress and Procedure for Research Degree Students

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/research-progress-appeals.aspx

University of Essex Student Handbook

www.essex.ac.uk/student_handbook

University Regulations, Policy and Procedure

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/default.aspx