

## Research Degrees Regulatory Framework

Yellow highlighted text identifies the most recent revisions to the regulations. If you require these revisions to be identified in an alternative format, please contact the Secretary to Academic Board.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 These Regulations apply to research degree awards offered by the University, unless, for reasons of professional or statutory body requirements or similar, a variation or exception has been agreed by Academic Board. Such variations will be identified in a Programme Specification.
- 1.2 These regulations apply to all students pursuing a research degree award unless otherwise stated.
- 1.3 The Masters by Research (MRes) is governed entirely by the [Taught Course Regulatory Framework](#) due to the significant taught component at level 7.
- 1.4 The regulations concerning all taught postgraduate awards are set out in the Taught Course Regulatory Framework. Where a research degree award includes taught modules, the reader is referred to this document.

### 2. Terminology

- 2.1 As a means of ensuring that the regulations are consistently interpreted and applied, the following definitions have been used:

**Assessment:** The process by which the University is able to confirm that a student has achieved the learning outcomes for a module or for the programme of research. Assessment is work, such as an oral examination, a thesis, a project proposal or a presentation; there may be one or more items of work which make up the components of assessment. The evaluation of the work (which may take the form of a mark or may take the form of 'pass', 'resubmit' or 'fail') contributes to the appraisal of the student's performance and the determination of their entitlement to proceed with the programme or eligibility for an award.

**Assessment Item:** a piece of assessed work, e.g. an essay, project, assignment or examination.

**Award:** A formal qualification awarded by the University to an individual student e.g. MPhil which may be either the qualification to which a student is registered or an intermediate award.

**Award Title:** the name of the programme which is appended to an Award e.g. PhD in 'Award Title' as it is to appear on an award certificate and transcript.

**Critical Overview:** a document that establishes the coherence of a portfolio and demonstrates that the outputs within a portfolio are equivalent to doctoral standard.

**Exit Award:** A formal qualification awarded by the University to an individual student who has decided to leave a programme before completing the award for which they were originally registered. A student registered for a Professional Doctorate, for example, who has successfully completed the taught element of their programme may opt not to progress to the thesis stage. In this case the student can exit with a certificate of credit or complete a further 30 credits at level D and exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma in Research Enquiry.

**Intermediate Award:** An award which can be obtained *en route* to the final award. Intermediate Awards are not awarded to a student who is continuing towards a higher award. The appropriate intermediate Award(s) will be identified in the Programme Specification. A student registered for a Professional Doctorate, for example, who has successfully completed the taught element of their programme may opt not to progress to the thesis stage. In this case, the student can exit with the intermediate award of Postgraduate Certificate Research Enquiry.

**Level:** a description of the research education module credit level i.e. 8 which is an indicator of the relative demand, complexity and depth of learning and of learner autonomy

A student may be described as studying at Level 8.

Level	Description	Framework for Research Education Qualification Levels (FHEQ)	National Qualification Framework (NQF)
Level 8	Doctoral Level	D	8

**Mark:** the percentage used to indicate the standard reached by a student in the item(s) of assessment and the overall module assessment.

**Maximum period of registration:** the maximum permitted period of time to complete a programme specified at the time of admission.

**Mitigation:** exceptional reasons outside of a student's control that either prevented a student from taking an item of assessment or affected **their** performance in an assessment.

**Mode of Study:** There are two modes of study, full-time and part-time. Full-time students are expected to engage in at least 37.5 hours per week of study. Part time students may work flexibly but should aim for an average of 22.5 hours per week across the year.

**Module:** a discrete unit of study with approved learning outcomes and assessment scheme. Modules are assigned to one or more subject areas. Each module will specify a level that indicates the intellectual standard required to successfully complete the module. Most modules are of a standard credit value although some modules (e.g. a Dissertation) may have a different credit value. A module will normally be taught and assessed over one semester. Modules may be designated 'open' or 'closed'.

**Portfolio:** A portfolio is a collection of outputs that are a product of an individual's research and/or professional practice which together form a coherent body of work.

**Programme of Research:** The structure and associated timetable for an individual student's research agreed with the supervisory team and kept under review by the University's Research Degrees Board. The programme will elaborate on the generic structure set out in the programme specification to identify key tasks, activities and milestones which when completed will enable the student to meet the requirements of the award.

**Programme Specification:** A document that specifies (amongst other matters) admission requirements for the programme, the structure of the programme, any particular conditions to be met (e.g. Professional and Statutory Regulatory Body requirements) for conferment of the relevant named award.

**Research Degrees Board:** The University body that oversees registration, progression and examination for research degree programmes under delegated power from Academic Board.

**Student:** Any person admitted or enrolled by the University of Worcester to follow a programme of research, or any sabbatical officer of the Students' Union. All students remain subject to the common and statute law, and any rights or constraints conferred or imposed by these regulations are in addition to, and do not alter in any way, their right and duties as citizens.

**Thesis:** A substantial independent piece of work following systematic and detailed investigation into a discrete area of research which will primarily be in written form although it may include material in other than written form.

**Transcript:** A formal and verifiable record issued by the University of what a student has studied and achieved.

**Viva Voce:** An oral examination.

### **3. The Admission of Students**

- 3.1 The admission of an individual applicant is at the discretion of the authorized admissions tutor(s), subject to:
- a) the University's policy on admissions;
  - b) a reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to achieve the learning outcomes of the course and achieve the standard required for the award;
  - c) fulfilling the entry requirements as stated within the programme specification of the approved course.
- 3.2 Applicants for a research degree may apply at any time of the year but will only be permitted to commence their studies at one of the entry points as advertised by the University.
- 3.3 All applicants for a research degree must apply to the University using the appropriate application form.

3.4 The normal requirements to enable an applicant to be considered for admission onto a University research degree programme of study are as follows:

- a) **MPhil**
  - i) First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree or an approved equivalent award;
  - or
  - ii) The applicant has appropriate research or professional experience which has resulted in appropriate evidence of achievement.
  
- b) **Doctorate (MPhil/PhD)**
  - i) A Postgraduate Masters Degree in a discipline which is appropriate to the proposed programme of study;
  - or
  - ii) First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree or equivalent award in an appropriate discipline;
  - or
  - iii) The applicant has appropriate research or professional experience at postgraduate level which has resulted in published work, written reports or other appropriate evidence of achievement.
  
- c) **Doctorate (PhD by Published or Creative Work)**
  - i) A Postgraduate Masters Degree in a discipline which is appropriate to the proposed programme of study;
  - or
  - ii) First or Upper Second Class Honours Degree or equivalent award in an appropriate discipline;
  - or
  - iii) Current employees of the University of Worcester;
  - or
  - iv) a current member of staff from a recognised Partner Institution who has held Registered Lecturer Status or Registered Administrator/HE Manager Status for a period of at least two years at the point of submission of the preliminary application;
  - or
  - v) researchers employed by an organisation with which the University of Worcester has a research agreement or memorandum of understanding.
  
- d) **Professional Doctorate**
  - i) A Postgraduate Masters Degree in a discipline which is appropriate to the proposed programme of study;
  - or
  - ii) A minimum of 3 years senior management and/or business experience (DBA), a minimum of three years' experience of professional practice in an education context (EdD), a minimum of 3 years minimum experience in a health context (DHSc) and three years minimum experience in a health

context and Chartered Occupational Psychologist status (DOcc Psych).

- 3.5 Any applicants whose first language is not English or who have not been educated wholly or mainly in the medium of English must reach a minimum IELTS score of 7.0 with a score of 7 in writing (or equivalent in an approved test in English) or otherwise demonstrate that they have an adequate command of both written and spoken English before starting a programme. If an applicant does not meet this standard they may be required to attend a pre-sessional English course or any other requirement laid down by the University.
- 3.6 An applicant holding qualifications other than those specified above shall be considered on **their** merits. Evidence of ability and background knowledge must be provided in relation to the proposed topic and research degree.
- 3.7 All applicants must produce at or before initial Registration evidence of their identity and relevant qualification(s) and or transcript(s) showing that they have satisfied the relevant entry requirements.
- 3.8 All applicants are required to declare 'unspent' convictions within the application process. Applicants for certain courses must comply with additional entry requirements that may be imposed by law or accrediting/professional bodies. Some courses require additional declarations by the applicant relating to their health, criminal convictions (spent and unspent) and cautions. There may be a requirement for a check of criminal convictions (via the Disclosure and Barring Service) and/or medical examinations. Failure to comply with any such special requirements may result in an applicant not being permitted to start the course or being required to leave the course and/or the university
- 3.9 The university reserves the right to refuse admission (or cancel Registration) to any applicant (or student) who has misrepresented information in their application.
- 3.10 There is no appeal against admissions decisions. Applicants who are dissatisfied with any aspect of the admissions process may use the Admissions Complaints Procedure detailed in the prospectus.
- 3.11 All successful applicants are provided with an individual letter of acceptance and a contract which sets out the terms of the offer. Students with special needs are referred to the University's student support services. The terms of the contract are binding on the institution and, upon acceptance, on the student.
- 3.12 A research degree applicant may propose to work outside the United Kingdom, for whatever period. In order to do so, the following conditions must be satisfied:
- a) the student will establish and maintain close links with the University throughout the period;
  - b) there will be evidence to show the student will have access to relevant facilities and resources and "local" supervisory support during this period;
  - c) the arrangements proposed for supervision will specify that frequent and substantial contact will be made between the student and the supervisor(s) based in the United Kingdom, including adequate face-to-face contact;

- d) the student will be expected to spend a period of time each year undertaking the programme of research at the University. This must be agreed between the student and their supervisory team and will depend on the particular programme, the supervision and the facilities available, and on the University. This *must* take into account the requirement to attend taught elements of the programme.

#### 4. The Registration of Students

- 4.1 Each student, other than sabbatical officers of the Students' Union, must register at the start of **their** programme and will undertake to comply with the regulations of the University. Students must re-register at the start of each academic year irrespective of when they started the programme. Students who do not register or re-register by the published deadline will be withdrawn from the University.
- 4.2 Students are required to pay fees in accordance with the prevailing fees policy and financial regulations approved by the Board of Governors. No student will be entitled to register or re-register unless the prescribed fees have been paid or satisfactory arrangements made to ensure that they will be paid. Students unable to register, because of outstanding debts, will be obliged to temporarily withdraw from their course or withdraw from the University
- 4.3 The University reserves the right to decline acceptance of, or make a charge for, late or incorrect registration of awards, programmes and modules.
- 4.4 Where a student has not completed the formal process of registration but, by their actions, are deemed to be undertaking activities compatible with the status of a registered student, the Academic Registrar may formally enrol a student and arrange for the relevant tuition fee to be charged. Such activities would include attendance at classes, submission of work and regular use of their ID card to gain access to the University etc.
- 4.5 Students requiring a visa to study in the UK must ensure that they meet, both at the beginning and for the duration of the course, requirements stipulated by the Home Office and conditions of their visa.
- 4.6 Students may not simultaneously register for more than one full time award either at the University of Worcester or at another Higher Education Institution.
- 4.7 The maximum periods of registration are as follows:

Award	Mode of Study	Maximum
MPhil	Full-time	2 years
	Part-time	4 years
MPhil/PhD	Full-time	4 years
	Part-time	8 years
PhD by thesis	Full-time	4years
	Part-time	8 years
PhD by Published or Creative Work	Part-time	8 years
Professional Doctorate	Part-time	8 years

- 4.8 Any extension of duration of registration from the maximum may only be granted when the maximum registration period is about to be exceeded (up to 12 months and no less than 4 months before the maximum registration date). A request will normally only be approved if the student has made satisfactory progress to date, can demonstrate the ability to submit within the requested time period and can provide evidence of having grounds to support their claim (as laid out in the Course Handbook). The final decision will be made by the Research Degrees Board. All requests must be agreed by the supervisory team.
- 4.9 The Research Degrees Board will normally only approve one extension request for a maximum period of 12 consecutive months. The Research Degrees Board will not approve an extension if a temporary withdrawal has already been previously agreed based on the same supporting evidence.
- 4.10 Where a student has previously undertaken research as a student registered for a research degree of a university or other institution of research education, or of an appropriate organisation, it may be appropriate to approve a duration of registration which is less than the specified minimum to take account of all or part of the time already spent by the individual on such research. In no circumstances shall the overall duration of registration be less than 6 months full-time or 12 months part-time including any retrospective registration approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- 4.11 Any change in the duration of registration must be approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- 4.12 In the case of international students, the duration of registration agreed at the time when a visa was sought must be adhered to and, in those exceptional circumstances where an extension to the duration of study is required, a written request for this must be submitted to the Academic Registrar for consideration prior to the period of extension being agreed with the student.
- 4.13 Research degree students may register on a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time students are required to devote at least 37.5 hours per week on average to the programme of study over a normal 45-week academic year. Part-time students are required to study flexibly and efficiently in a pattern agreed with the supervisory team. Any change in the mode of attendance from part-time to full-time or vice versa must be notified by the student to the Research School. All changes in mode of attendance must be approved by the relevant College Research Sub-committee.
- 4.14 Once registration is completed, a student will continue to be registered with the University until the end of the programme or until re-registration is required, whichever is the earlier, unless a student shall cease to be a registered student due to:
- a) exclusion from the programme on academic grounds;
  - b) exclusion from the programme for non-compliance with the prevailing fees policy;
  - c) exclusion from the programme on medical grounds;
  - d) exclusion from the programme due to persistent non-attendance;
  - e) expulsion from the University following a recognised disciplinary procedure;

f) the voluntary withdrawal from the programme

4.15 Students must notify the Research School of any changes occurring during the academic year in the information supplied at registration.

## 5. Supervisory arrangements

5.1 All research degree students will have a supervisory team consisting of at least two but no more than three supervisors.

5.2 All supervisors, including associate supervisors, must be on the University's Register of Research Degree Supervisors and must meet the specified conditions to remain on the Register, with the exception of an "external supervisor". An external supervisor is not employed by the University.

5.3 One of the team must be designated as the Director of Studies (DoS). The DoS will normally be the primary supervisor, responsible for overseeing student progress, managing supervisory relations and ensuring the student complies with regulatory requirements and relevant processes. Neither an associate supervisor nor an external supervisor can act as DoS.

5.4 Unless an individual has been given a designated research role, they will not be permitted to supervise more than six research degree student Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) concurrently, and to be Director of Studies for no more than three student FTEs at any one time. For the purposes of supervision, a part time research degree student should be regarded as 0.5 FTE. The supervisory capacity for all colleagues on the Register of Approved Supervisors shall ultimately be decided by the Academic School in which they are based, taking into account factors such as current workload, prior experience of supervision, etc.

5.5 Anyone who is registered for a research degree, either by the University or by another institution, shall be ineligible to act as the Director of Studies, but, in certain circumstances and subject to the prior approval of the University, may be appointed to act as a second supervisor or as an adviser.

5.6 An Emeritus Professor, Honorary Professor, Visiting Professor or Honorary Research Fellow may act as a supervisor but must be on the Register of Approved Supervisors.

5.7 All supervisory teams are subject to final approval by Research Degrees Board.

5.8 In addition to the supervisors, if appropriate, an adviser or advisers may be identified to contribute specialist knowledge and to provide a link with an external organisation.

## 6. Programme of Research

6.1 A programme of research may be undertaken in any field of study within which the University has supervisory expertise, provided that it is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment in the form of a thesis or, in the case of the PhD by Published or Creative Work, as a collection of outputs and a critical overview.



- 6.2 A general programme of research is set out in a programme specification, approved under the University's quality assurance procedures.
- 6.3 Each student must propose their own specific programme of research to be approved by the appropriate board of examiners, usually the University's Research Degrees Board before he or she may proceed. If the research is likely to include a practice element, the nature of the practice and resources required to support this must be identified in the research proposal.
- 6.4 Each proposed programme must be considered on its academic merits and without any reference to the concerns or interests of any funding body which might be associated with the project. In particular, satisfying the terms on which a project is funded must not detract from the fulfilment of the objectives and requirements of the student's work leading to the submission for a research degree.
- 6.5 Each student will normally be required to defend their thesis or portfolio and critical overview at a *viva voce*.
- 6.6 The general arrangements for a student registered on a programme of research must ensure the student adheres to the relevant codes of practice and be such as to enable the student to conduct and complete the programme in a safe and efficient manner.

## **7. Approval of the Research Proposal**

### **MPhil and PhD by thesis**

- 7.1 To progress an MPhil/PhD student must have their research proposal approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- 7.2 Prior to submission to the Research Degrees Board, the research proposal must have been considered by two experts in the field. As considerable time will have elapsed between approval of the research proposal and examination of the final thesis, an expert reviewer used at this stage CAN be used as an examiner.
- 7.3 It is expected that the research proposal will be submitted to the Research School 6 months after initial registration on the programme for a FT student and 12 months for a PT student. It is expected that the proposal will have been approved by the Research Degrees Board 12 months after initial registration on the programme for a FT student and after 18 months for a PT student. Research Degrees Board will receive regular progress reports of all research degree students and failure to meet these deadlines will normally result in a recommendation of withdrawal from their programme of research.
- 7.4 The review by RDB will normally result in one of the following recommendations:
  - a) No amendments, Board approves the proposal.
  - b) Minor amendments need to be made to the proposal, such as changes to dates, the supervisory team. A time frame for completion will be given to the student along with a list of the required changes and on receipt, these changes will be signed off by Chair's Action.

- c) More significant changes, as already identified by the expert reviewers are still required to the proposal. The RS will write to the student and DoS with feedback from the Board and will give a timescale in which they expect to receive the amended paperwork. If the student fails to submit the revised paperwork by the given deadline they will be contacted by the RS. The revised paperwork must be re-submitted to the RS for re-submission to the Board.
- 7.5 As the proposal will already have been through rigorous expert scrutiny, in the case of (c) above, a proposal can only be re-submitted to the Board once. Following re-submission, the review by RDB will normally result in one of the following recommendations:
- a) No further amendments, Board approves the proposal.
- b) No further opportunities for re-submission of the proposal. The student is withdrawn from their programme of study.
- 7.6 When a self-funded research degree applicant proposes to work outside the United Kingdom, for whatever period, the following conditions must be satisfied:
- a) the student will establish and maintain close links with the University;
- b) there will be satisfactory evidence about the environment in terms of both the supervisory arrangements and the available facilities in which the research is to be undertaken abroad;
- c) the arrangements proposed for supervision will specify that frequent and substantial contact will be made between the student and the supervisor(s) based in the United Kingdom, including adequate face-to-face contact;
- d) the student will be expected to spend a period of time each year undertaking the programme of research in the University. This must be agreed between the student and their supervisory team and will depend on the particular programme, the supervision and the facilities available abroad, and on the University. This *must* take into account the requirement to attend compulsory research training at the University.

The full arrangements for Distance Learning MPhil and PhD programmes can be found in the appropriate Handbook.

- 7.7 If the proposed programme of research is to be part of a joint or group project or activity, the programme of research to be undertaken by the applicant for registration must, in itself, be distinguishable for the purposes of assessment and be appropriate for the category of registration and level of award being sought.

#### **PhD by Prior Published or Creative Work**

- 7.8 The proposal (called the preliminary application) for the PhD by Published or Creative Work will be reviewed by the Research Degrees Board.
- 7.9 The review by RDB will normally result in one of the following recommendations:
- Proceed to full application on timescales set out in the preliminary application.
  - Make amendments to the preliminary application and re-submit to the Board or to the Chair for consideration.

- Rejection of the proposal. Normally, this is the case where the basis of the claim is not compatible with the standards for a PhD, such as where existing publications do not meet established definitions of original research.
- 7.10 The full application for a PhD by Prior Published or Creative Work will be reviewed by a selected sub-group of RDB (and an external expert, where appropriate). The aim of this phase of the process is to establish if the work meets the appropriate quality and standards threshold expected of a traditional PhD.
- 7.11 The review by the sub-group of RDB will normally result in one of the following recommendations:
- Proceed to develop a full submission.
  - Review or enhance your case as laid out in the RDB form before proceeding to full submission.
  - Significant additional work required (in terms of outputs) before re-submitting a Full Application.
  - Rejection of the proposal. Re-application with a new proposal can only be submitted 18 months after this decision of the RDB.

### **Professional Doctorate**

- 7.12 To progress from Stage 2 (the taught programme) to stage three (the thesis) a Professional Doctorate student must pass all of the taught modules and have their research proposal approved by the Board of Examiners for their named award. All proposals will be presented to the Research Degrees Board. The Board will receive information about the taught modules, the proposed title of the thesis and the name of the supervisors. The primary role of RDB at this stage is to approve the supervisory team.
- 7.13 If the proposed programme of research is to be part of a group project or activity, the programme of research to be undertaken by the applicant for registration must, in itself, be distinguishable for the purposes of assessment and be appropriate for the category of registration and level of award being sought.

### **8. Transfer from MPhil/PhD to PhD by thesis**

- 8.1 All students registered for MPhil/PhD and who wish to transfer to PhD undertake an upgrade interview. That interview should only be contemplated when enough progress has been made to provide evidence of the development of the project and the student towards a PhD. This will be 18 months after initial registration for FT students and 36 months for PT students. Research Degrees Board will receive regular progress reports of all research degree students. If FT and PT students have not had their transfer interview 24 and 48 months after initial registration respectively, this will normally result in a recommendation of withdrawal from their programme of research.
- 8.2 At the interview the student will be asked to demonstrate that they have the potential to work at doctoral level, based on a presentation, submission of a sample of written work, for example a chapter of the thesis, and presentation succeeded by a question and answer session. Work presented in written form must not be duplicated in the presentation.

- 8.3 The interview panel will include all members of the supervisory team (normally including external supervisors), a researcher with experience in the field who is independent of the team and will be chaired by an experienced researcher and supervisor nominated from the Register of Approved Supervisors. The Independent chair will be from outside the student's subject discipline. The expert reviewer used at Transfer to PhD cannot act as an examiner of the final thesis. Guidelines for the format of the interview are outlined in the MPhil/PhD Student Handbook.
- 8.4 The transfer interview will normally result in one of the following recommendations:
- Recommend transfer to PhD.
  - Recommend transfer to PhD subject to a satisfactory response to the comments of the Panel
  - Recommend the student not be upgraded to PhD at this time but re-submit for transfer at a later date, taking account of the Panel's comments.
  - Recommend the student not be upgraded to PhD and submit for an MPhil taking into account the Panel's comments.
  - Recommend the student be withdrawn from their programme of study. Withdrawal might be recommended on academic grounds or because there is insufficient time within the student's 'maximum registration period' to complete the work required for either MPhil or PhD.
- 8.5 In the event that a recommendation to transfer to PhD is made, it is signalled that both the student and the research they are undertaking together possess the capability to achieve a PhD at some point in the future and within the time limits remaining. A successful outcome will be dependent upon the continuation of the work at a doctoral level (principally providing an original contribution to knowledge). Therefore a recommendation to transfer to PhD should, under no circumstances, be taken as a guarantee that a PhD will be awarded upon completion of the work.
- 8.6 A person who is registered for MPhil only may exceptionally be allowed to apply for a transfer of registration to PhD, subject to the same requirements for transfer as above and to there being clear arguments to support an exceptional transfer of registration.
- 8.7 A person who is registered for an MPhil/PhD and who is unable to complete the approved programme of research, may at any time prior to the submission of the thesis for examination apply for the registration to be changed to that for MPhil.
- 8.8 Transfers into or from a Masters degree by Research (MRes) shall be treated as new applications to the proposed new degree.

## **9. The Progress of Students**

- 9.1 Progress will be reviewed informally at regular intervals as deemed appropriate by the Director of Studies, and formally at twelve-monthly intervals when the student will submit and discuss a written progress report (RDB7).
- 9.2 If, in the opinion of the Director of Studies and/or Research Degrees Board (RDB), a student's progress in the defined research area is unsatisfactory at any review point (including the review of RDB1 by the RDB), having discussed the matter with the

student, they will issue a formal written warning including a statement of what is unsatisfactory, and the actions which are required to rectify the situation together with a reasonable time scale. This document will be copied to the whole supervisory team, the Chair of the Research Degrees Board for the Board's formal record, and to the Research School Manager.

- 9.3 Where progress continues to be unsatisfactory the supervisory team and Director of Studies, in consultation with the Research School Manager, will give one month's notice of termination of contract.

**10. Submission of the Assessment Item(s) (thesis or portfolio and critical overview)**

- 10.1 The assessment items must be submitted primarily in English and it shall be the responsibility of each student to ensure that the items are submitted for examination, in the form prescribed by the University before the expiry of the period of registration, taking account of any extension(s) or suspensions of registration that have been approved.
- 10.2 Although the University would not recommend that a student submit for examination against the advice of the supervisors, the submission for examination is at the sole discretion of the student. When a student submits for examination against the advice of the supervisory team, then the examination team and independent chair will be informed of this.
- 10.3 A student must not assume that the supervisory team's agreement to submit, or any decision relating to progression made by an Assessment Board, guarantees a successful outcome of the examination or the recommendation for the award of the degree being sought.
- 10.4 A student registered for PhD by Thesis, MPhil or Professional Doctorate is required to submit a soft bound copy of the thesis for each examiner plus an identical electronic copy of the thesis.
- 10.5 A student registered for PhD by Prior Published or Creative Work is required to submit a soft bound copy of the critical overview for each examiner plus copies for each examiner of each of the outputs that make up the submission. Where it is not practical to submit copies of all the outputs, for example because some might be past exhibitions or performances, artistic artefacts or other three-dimensional objects, a brief description and clearly documented evidence of their (current or prior) existence (e.g. catalogue, programme notes, review) may be sufficient.
- 10.6 Prior to submission, all research degree students are required to put their thesis/critical overview through the plagiarism detection software Turnitin. The thesis/critical overview submitted for examination must be accompanied by the 'Originality report' generated by this software. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the reprographic accuracy of each copy of the documentation and any artefacts submitted.
- 10.7 Following the conferment of an MPhil, PhD by Thesis or Professional Doctorate, an additional hard copy of the final thesis will be required for the University Library and an electronic copy for the University Research Repository which will then be

harvested from WraP by the British Library. These must be submitted with the relevant deposit agreements. If there are issues of confidentiality or intellectual property relating to another party. Students should contact the Research School if they have any queries.

### **Regulations regarding submission specific to MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate**

- 10.8 The student shall not be precluded from incorporating in a thesis submitted for examination, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is made clear in a formal declaration and in the thesis which work has been so incorporated. This may occur, if, for example, a student has completed an MRes Degree and chooses to progress the same project to PhD level. In these circumstances the student would not be permitted to replicate the work but would be expected to show how the earlier work has been progressed.
- 10.9 Where the research was undertaken as part of a joint project or collaborative group, the student must give a clear statement of their individual contribution and of the nature and extent of the collaboration.
- 10.10 Where the thesis to be examined includes practice-based research, there must be prior agreement with the examining team as to how the work will be examined. The practice-based research may either be examined 'live' or through documentation provided as part of the thesis. In either case, the submission must be accompanied by a permanent record of the practice-based research that should be stored in a way that makes it accessible and retrievable. Where practicable, these should be bound into the thesis. Practice-based research must be clearly presented in relation to the argument of the written dimension of the thesis and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design and, where appropriate, visual context. The final submission of the thesis, including both the written thesis and practice material, must have been completed during the student's period of registration with the university.
- 10.11 Where the principal focus of the programme of research includes the preparation of a scholarly edition of a text, texts or other artefacts (for example archaeological or historical artefacts), the completed submission must include a copy of the edited text(s) or collection of artefacts, appropriate textual and explanatory annotations, and a substantial introduction and critical commentary setting the text(s) or artefacts in the relevant historical, theoretical, critical context or design.
- 10.12 Below are the minimum and maximum word lengths for a thesis in science, including footnotes, but excluding the table of contents, abstract, tabulated data, diagrams, any appendices and the bibliography:
- |    |                               |  |
|----|-------------------------------|--|
| a) | MPhil - text based thesis:    | minimum 15,000 words<br>maximum 20,000 words |
| b) | Doctorate – text based thesis | minimum 30,000 words<br>maximum 40,000 words |

- 10.13 Below are the minimum and maximum word lengths for a thesis in the humanities, creative arts or social sciences (including business and management studies), including footnotes, but excluding the table of contents, abstract, tabulated data, diagrams, any appendices and the bibliography:
- |    |                                   |  |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|
| a) | MPhil - text based thesis:        | minimum 30,000 words<br>maximum 40,000 words |
| b) | MPhil – practice based thesis     | minimum 15,000 words<br>maximum 40,000 words |
| c) | Doctorate – text based thesis     | minimum 60,000 words<br>maximum 80,000 words |
| d) | Doctorate – practice based thesis | minimum 30,000 words<br>maximum 80,000 words |
- 10.14 Below are the minimum and maximum word lengths for a Professional Doctorate including footnotes, but excluding the table of contents, abstract, tabulated data, diagrams, any appendices and the bibliography:
- |    |                        |   |
|----|------------------------|---|
| a) | Professional Doctorate | minimum 40,000 words<br>maximum 60,000words |
|----|------------------------|---|
- 10.15 There will be a +10% margin for the maximum word count. There is no fixed penalty for exceeding this word count but, in line with the University's 'Policy on Word Count' the examiner will not normally consider any work after the +10% margin has been reached.
- 10.16 The length of a thesis for an MPhil or PhD that includes material other than in written form must be discussed between the student and supervisor at the beginning of the programme. This must be discussed again when the research proposal is received by the Research Degrees Board and reviewed during the Annual Review Meetings. The final word limit will be agreed during the Transfer to PhD.
- 10.17 Where a programme of research involves the student's own creative work and this forms, as a point of origin or reference, a significant part of the intellectual enquiry, then the 'thesis' is understood to mean the totality of the work submitted for the degree. For this reason, the 'practice' element must be accessible to the Examiners prior to the *viva voce* examination. Where it is not practical to replicate creative work, it must be displayed appropriately, catalogued and labelled for the examiners to view.
- 10.18 Small artefacts which cannot be bound should be presented in an appropriate manner with a label clearly indicating the reference number.
- 10.19 Large artefacts which cannot be moved should be photographed and the photograph should have a reference number and location of the original artefact firmly attached.
- 10.20 Performances or other dynamically creative works should be captured in a manner that renders the research imperative of the work and the role it plays in the submission. This may be by audio and video on CD, DVD, appropriate video tape format or other similar appropriate medium.
- 10.21 Artefacts which are created by a group should be accompanied by the following:

- i) a brief summary from the student of the work and the nature of his/her involvement;
- ii) a clear statement from the other members of the group about the student's contribution to the work presented on the letterhead of the group's host institution.

10.22 A summary sheet listing all artefacts in reference number order should be included in the thesis.

**Regulations regarding submission specific to the PhD by Prior Published or Creative Work**

10.23 The outputs should be submitted together with a critical overview.

10.24 For the purposes of this award the following are defined as publications (please note all publications must normally be available in English):

- a) Papers in peer reviewed journals
- b) Papers in published conference proceedings
- c) Books
- d) Chapters in books
- e) Research monographs
- f) Research project reports
- g) Other research outputs in the public domain

For the purposes of this award the following are defined as creative work (please note all related materials must normally be available in English):

- a) Software programmes ,multimedia packages or other research-based computing/digital outputs
- b) Photographs, paintings, sculptures, films, performances or other creative artefacts which demonstrate aspects of the creative, artistic, performance or design process
- c) Patents
- d) Other peer or critically reviewed publications or artefacts

10.25 The overview should provide the following:

- a) An autobiographical context for the outputs.
- b) A chronological description tracing the development of the outputs.
- c) An evaluative description of the originality of each output.
- d) An evaluative review of the contribution made by outputs to the subject or discipline area and any subsequent developments since the work was completed, including published reviews of any of the submitted works and/or evidence of citation frequency of any of the submitted works (where practicable and available).
- e) A description, synthesis and evaluation of any links between the outputs.
- f) A critical reflection using an appropriate methodology, model or theory on the candidate's development as a research practitioner.
- g) For publications which are not single authored by the candidate, information must be provided on the distinct contribution made by the candidate. Note that the expectation is that the candidate must be the sole or senior author for a substantial proportion of all the publications submitted.
- h) Conclusions, including a synoptic evaluation of the overall contribution made to the discipline and suggested directions for future work.



- 10.26 The maximum word length and role of the critical overview must be discussed and agreed by RDB when it receives the Final Application. This will depend on the type and nature of outputs being submitted. However the final judgement is made, the critical overview must not exceed 80,000 words.
- 10.27 The contents of a submission must be in the English language unless specific permission to the contrary has been given by the University Research Degrees Board.

## **11. Assessment of a Research Degree Thesis or Portfolio and Critical Overview**

### **Examination Arrangements**

- 11.1 The student's Director of Studies must submit details of a proposed Examination Panel which will assess the thesis or portfolio and critical overview and examine the student through a *viva voce*. These details must be submitted a minimum of three months in advance of the proposed date of the *viva voce* and considerably earlier for a PhD involving practice.
- 11.2 The Research Degrees Board will be required to approve the Examination Panel before the Research School co-ordinates the examination according to the procedures notified at the time.
- 11.3 The Examination Panel must be made up of at least two independent examiners, of whom at least one must be an External Examiner.
- 11.4 Two External Examiners must be appointed if the student is employed on a substantive academic or research contract at the University of Worcester i.e. is employed as a Lecturer, University Tutor, Senior Lecturer, Principal Lecturer, Research Assistant/Associate/Fellow (or has been in the 12 months prior to the *viva voce* examination).
- 11.5 Two external examiners must *normally* be appointed if the student is employed as an Associate Lecturer or in a professional support role at the University, (or has been in the 12 months prior to the *viva voce* examination). However, an internal examiner may be appointed in this case where the independence of the internal examiner from the student can be clearly demonstrated. It is the responsibility of the student and DoS to provide a statement to this effect. For example, to show that there has been no line management, team teaching, co-supervision roles with the proposed examiner.
- 11.6 Where the student declares that they have not been working in any of the above named roles and a relationship (whether professional or personal) with the internal examiner is then discovered, the student may be disqualified from the award.
- 11.7 It is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to ensure that any External Examiner is independent of the student, the University, and any collaborating establishment. For this reason, no external member of the student's Transfer to PhD Panel can act as the student's External Examiner. The same person must not be appointed as an External Examiner so frequently that familiarity with the University might prejudice

the giving of independent judgement. In this respect, the same external examiner must not be appointed more than once within a two year period.

- 11.8 Each examiner must be experienced in research in the general subject area of a particular student's thesis or portfolio and critical overview and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined.
- 11.9 The collective experience of the examining team for MPhil students should include a minimum of three MPhil or Doctorate students examined, in the UK. For the assessment of a student for a Doctorate, the examination team should include three Doctorate students examined, in the UK. Non UK examinations will sometimes be counted. A case will need to be made to the Research Degrees Board.
- 11.10 The external examiner is normally expected to have examined at least one MPhil student (for examination of MPhil) and one doctorate student (for examination of PhD/Professional Doctorate). The external examiner is also normally expected to have a track record of research degree supervision which they will be asked to demonstrate in the CV supplied to the Research Degrees Board. Examination teams will be approved according to their examination and supervisory experience. An examiner for a Doctorate does therefore not necessarily have to have a doctoral level qualification, although this is desirable.
- 11.11 Each examiner must not have acted previously as the student's supervisor or adviser. The Research Degrees Board may in some circumstances approve as Internal or External Examiner a person who has acted as one of the external experts who reviewed the Approval of the Research Proposal documentation.
- 11.12 Any person appointed as External Examiner must not have been employed by the University during the previous three years.
- 11.13 No person who is registered for a research degree, whether of the University or of any other university or institution of research education, may be appointed to act as an examiner.
- 11.14 Any individual currently appointed as an Emeritus Professor, Honorary Professor, Visiting Professor or Honorary Research Fellow may undertake an internal examining and/or Independent Chairing role under these Regulations subject to approval from the Research Degrees Board.
- 11.15 A student must take no part in the arrangement of the examination and have no formal contact with the Examiner(s) between the time of their being appointed and the holding of the *viva voce* examination, or between that and any subsequent *viva voce* examination in the case of there being a reassessment of the thesis or portfolio and critical overview.
- 11.16 Each examiner is required to read and assess the thesis or portfolio and critical overview and to submit an independent preliminary report to the University before any *viva voce* or alternative form of examination is held. As part of that assessment, each examiner must consider whether the thesis or portfolio and critical overview provisionally satisfies the University's requirements for the degree concerned and,

where possible, make an appropriate provisional decision, subject to the outcome of the *viva voce* examination.

- 11.17 Examiners are not permitted to discuss the thesis or portfolio and critical overview with the supervisory team between receipt of the examiner's preliminary reports within the University and the commencement of the *viva voce* examination. The Examiners reports will however be shared with the whole examination team once all reports have been received.
- 11.18 Any failure to comply with any of the procedures established by the University for the examination process may lead to a particular assessment being declared null and void and to the appointment of new examiners by the University.

### **The Viva Voce**

- 11.19 The appointment of an Independent Chair must be made for all *viva voce* covered by these Regulations.
- 11.20 The Independent Chair must be wholly independent of the student and will be nominated from the Register of Approved Supervisors.
- 11.21 The Chair is not required to read the thesis or portfolio and critical overview or complete a preliminary report form and should be seen as totally independent throughout the process. The Chair does receive the Examiners' preliminary reports prior to the viva and the abstract for the thesis.
- 11.22 Prior to the *viva voce* the Chair is expected to brief the examiners on the University's procedures and facilitate the development of an agenda if requested by the examiners.
- 11.23 During the *viva voce* of the student, the Independent Chair ensures that the examination process takes place in a fair and transparent manner, guides the examiners and student through the *viva voce* and acts as an arbitrator throughout.
- 11.24 Following the *viva voce* of the student, the Independent Chair assists in the completion of documents confirming the outcome of the examination. This includes checking that the amendments highlighted in the Examiners' Report reflect the amendments agreed at the *viva voce*.
- 11.25 A supervisor is allowed, subject to the consent of the student, to attend the *viva voce* as an observer. Participation in the discussion, however, is not permitted. The supervisor is required to withdraw prior to the deliberation of the Examination Panel on the outcome of the *viva voce*. When the student is invited to return, to hear the outcome of the viva, the supervisor is also required to return. The supervisor can, at this point, seek clarification about the specific amendments required.

### Outcome of the Examination

- 11.26 The Examination Panel shall only be permitted to recommend to the University the following:
- a) that the student be awarded the degree for which registered;
  - b) that the student be awarded the degree for which registered, subject to amendments being made to the thesis or critical overview to the satisfaction of the examiners, the timeframe of which will be decided by the examiners but shall not exceed 6 months;
  - c) that the student be permitted to resubmit for the degree concerned and to be reassessed taking into account the amendments as identified by the examiners, with or without a *viva voce* within 12 months;
  - d) that the student be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be reassessed. In the case of a PhD by Prior Published or Creative Work a new submission would be considered providing that a minimum of two years had elapsed since the first application and that the new submission contains significant new material;
  - e) in the case of an assessment for a PhD or Professional Doctorate, that the student be awarded the Degree of MPhil with no further corrections;
  - f) in the case of an assessment for a PhD or Professional Doctorate, that the student be permitted to resubmit for the Degree of MPhil and to be reassessed taking into account the amendments as identified by the examiners, with or without a *viva voce* within 12 months.
- 11.27 The decision (e and f) will be considered when the examiners determine that a student has not reached the standard required for the award of the PhD degree nor for the re-presentation of the thesis in a revised form for that degree. When this is the case examiners should only recommend the award of MPhil when the thesis (or portfolio and critical overview) and oral examination meet or might be able to meet the criteria for Masters by Philosophy degree. If they so decide, they will submit a joint report that shows either how the criteria for the MPhil degree are met or what action the student needs to take to meet them. Examiners will have discretion to waive the thesis length for the MPhil degree if appropriate. The student will be told that they have been unsuccessful in the examination for the PhD degree, but has reached the standard required for the award of the MPhil, or with amendment to the thesis may be able to satisfy the criteria for the MPhil. A student offered an MPhil degree under these regulations must make any amendments the examiners require within a period not exceeding twelve months. The candidate must submit the amended thesis to the examiners who will decide whether they have completed the amendments to their satisfaction.
- 11.28 Following the *viva voce*, the Examination Panel must, when all examiners are in agreement, present a joint report and decision to the University relating to the award of the research degree being sought. The preliminary reports and joint decision of the examiners must together provide enough detailed observation on the scope and quality of the work undertaken to enable the University to be satisfied that the criteria for the award of the research degree have been met.
- 11.29 The reports must be accompanied, where appropriate, by a definitive list of amendments, all of which must have been raised during the viva. On receipt of the amended thesis no further amendments can be suggested by the examiners. On

receipt of the amended thesis, the examiners will be asked whether the student has satisfactorily responded to their comments. It is on this basis that the examiner(s) will make the decision on whether or not to agree the award.

- 11.30 On receipt of the report, the student and Director of Studies will be given two weeks in which they can query or seek clarification about any of the amendments listed. A query must be made by the Director of Studies through the Research School, who will contact the examiner(s) on their behalf. No further contact between student/supervisor and examiner is permitted after this time.
- 11.31 When the examiners are not in agreement, they must submit separate reports and recommendations to the University.
- 11.32 When it is decided, on the recommendation of the Examination Panel, that the degree be not awarded and that no reassessment be permitted, the examiners are required to prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis or portfolio and critical overview and give the reasons for their decision, to be forwarded to the student by the University. This report will also be shared with the Chair of RDB and Vice Chancellor.
- 11.33 The Independent Chair will, where possible, facilitate a decision of the examiners on the day of the viva. Where a decision cannot be reached, a decision about the award will be passed to the Research Degrees Board, who will make a decision on how to proceed. This may be to accept a majority recommendation provided that majority recommendation has been supported by at least one External Examiner or require the appointment of an additional External Examiner in accordance with the procedures approved for the appointment of examiners.

#### **Minor amendments**

- 11.34 Minor amendments should be awarded when the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the candidate's thesis requires additional explanatory information or some minor amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the submission of a revised thesis. The candidate should be able to undertake minor amendments with minimal supervision. Minor amendments that are permissible include typographical errors, minor amendments and/or replacement of, or additions to the text, references or diagrams. Other more extensive corrections may be made, for example, re-writing 1-2 chapters, as long as they do not require significant (as defined by the examiners) re-working or re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis.

#### **12. Re-assessment**

- 12.1 Only one opportunity for reassessment of the thesis or portfolio and critical overview shall be allowed.
- 12.2 A student must not assume that the supervisors' agreement to the thesis or portfolio and critical overview being resubmitted guarantees a successful outcome of the examination or the recommendation for the award of the research degree being sought.

- 12.3 The following forms of reassessment of the thesis or portfolio and critical overview shall be permitted:
- a) the thesis or portfolio and critical overview shall be permitted to be reassessed after revision without the holding of a second *viva voce*;
  - b) the thesis or portfolio and critical overview shall be permitted to be reassessed after revision followed by the holding of a second *viva voce*;
  - c) a second *viva voce* without the need to revise or resubmit the thesis or portfolio and critical overview shall be permitted;
- 12.4 After re-assessment, the Examination Panel shall only be permitted to recommend to the University the following:
- a) that the student be awarded the degree for which s/he is registered;
  - b) in the case of an assessment for a PhD or Professional Doctorate, that the student be awarded the Degree of MPhil with no further corrections;
  - c) in the case of a re-assessment for a PhD or Professional Doctorate, that the student be awarded the Degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners the timeframe of which will be decided by the examiners but shall not exceed 12 months;
  - c) that the student be not awarded the degree and that no further assessment of the work is possible.
- 12.5 As at first attempt assessment, outcomes (b) and (c) above are not intended to represent a default position for work failing to meet the adjudged standard for PhD or Professional Doctorate. Examiners should only recommend the award of MPhil when the thesis and oral examination meet or might be able to meet the criteria for Masters by Philosophy degree. Please also refer to regulation 11.25.

### **13. Academic Misconduct**

- 13.1 Academic Misconduct is defined by the University as any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment or assisting another student to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment. See [Procedures for investigation of cases of alleged Academic Misconduct](#).

### **14. Mitigating circumstances**

- 14.1 If a student believes that their performance, absence or non-submission of work in an item of assessed work was due to illness or other valid reasons, the student may submit a claim under procedures approved by Academic Board. See [Procedure for Dealing with claims of Exceptional Mitigating Circumstances](#).

### **15. Awards**

- 15.1 An award of the University will be made when the following conditions are satisfied:
- a) the student was a registered student of the University or was registered as a student for the award of the University by a partner organisation at the time of their assessment for an award and has paid the appropriate fee to the University
  - b) details of the student's full name, date of birth, programme and the award for which he or she is a student have been recorded by the University;

- c) satisfactory confirmation has been received that the student has completed a programme of research approved as leading to the award being recommended;
- d) the award has been recommended by an Examination Panel including the requisite number of approved external examiners for the programme of research and/or the award;
- e) the recommendations of the external examiners has been received in writing.

15.2 The following awards will be available to students who meet the following minimum requirements at the levels shown or at a research level:

<b>Award</b>	<b>Requirement</b>
<b>MPhil</b>	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 7 and a thesis that meets the requirements at level 7.
<b>PhD</b>	Minimum of 40 credits at Level 7 and a thesis that meets the requirements at Level 8
<b>PhD by Prior Published or Creative Work</b>	Outputs and critical overview document that meets the requirements at Level 8
<b>Professional Doctorate</b>	Minimum of 180 credits at Level 7 and 360 credits at Level 8 including 270 credits from the thesis

- 15.3 The award recommended by a Board of Examiners will normally be that for which the student is registered, specified in the approved programme specification, for which the student has fulfilled the requirements. There may be occasions where the Board of Examiners recommends the student be awarded a research or lower award from that for which the student is registered.
- 15.4 A posthumous award may be awarded to a deceased research degree student who has submitted their thesis for examination or who has successfully completed their examination and was in the process of completing amendments.
- 15.5 If the student was close to completion but had not submitted work for examination, an application for consideration for a posthumous award must be made by the students Supervisory Team with the permission of the student's family or next of kin, in writing to the Academic Registrar for consideration by the Deputy Vice Chancellor.
- 15.6 Where there is sufficient evidence of the student's research to demonstrate that the candidate would have reached the standard required for the award in question the Pro Vice Chancellor Academic will approve that a posthumous award be made.
- 15.7 A posthumous award will normally be the named award, as appropriate.

**16. Award titles**

16.1 The titles of the award will be:

Award	Award Title
<b>MPhil</b>	Thesis Title
<b>PhD</b>	Thesis or Portfolio Title
<b>Professional Doctorate</b>	Course Title

**17. Publication of Results**

17.1 The Research School is responsible for the publication of official results to students following the meeting of the Boards of Examiners. Publication of taught module results will be made electronically via the secure student portal (SOLE) and will include access to individual module results, the progression decision and the award agreed by Boards of Examiners.

17.2 If students do not satisfy some or all of the assessment requirements, the Research School will communicate the decision of the Board of Examiners.

17.3 It is the student’s responsibility to ascertain their results.

17.4 Results will be withheld from students if they have outstanding obligations to the University, or are the subject of an allegation of a breach of discipline as follows:

- a) students who are at the end of the final year of their programme will neither receive their degree transcripts nor be supported by a University reference until the obligation is discharged;
- b) registration for the next stage of the programme will be denied to a student who has an outstanding obligation to the University at the start of the next stage;
- c) the award concerning a student who is subject of an allegation of breach of discipline will be withheld until the allegation has been determined and any consequent action discharged.

**18. Appeals against the decisions of Board of Examiners**

18.1 Students will be allowed to appeal against the decisions of Boards of Examiners on the following grounds:-

- a) a material administrative error in the conduct of the assessment process or in the recording, transcription or reporting of assessment results;
- b) an error by the Board of Examiners who did not act in accordance with the relevant regulations and procedures;
- c) some other material irregularity relevant to the assessment(s) concerned which has substantially prejudiced the results of the assessment;

18.2 Disagreement with the academic judgement of an Examination Board in assessing the merits of an individual piece of work, or in reaching any assessment decision



based on the marks, grades or other information relating to a student's performance cannot in itself constitute grounds for appeal.

- 18.3 Appeals must be submitted and considered according to the Procedures approved by Academic Board. See [Student Academic Appeals Procedures](#).

## **19. Certification and Transcripts**

- 19.1 A Certificate and transcript will be issued to all students who receive an award.
- 19.2 Transcripts are also issued on request to students who have completed part of a programme of study.
- 19.3 The award certificate issued by the University will record:
- a) the name of the University;
  - b) the student's name;
  - c) the date of the award;
  - d) the title of the course (if any) as approved by the Academic Board for the purposes of the certificate;
  - e) the certificate shall bear the signatures of the Vice Chancellor and of the Academic Registrar.
- 19.4 The transcript will be signed on behalf of Academic Board by the Registrar or by some other person authorised by the Registrar to do so.

## **20. Withdrawal and Temporary Withdrawal**

- 20.1 Once a student has registered on a programme of studies, the student is expected to complete that programme within the normal registration periods unless the student withdraws or temporarily withdraws from his/her studies.

### **Withdrawal**

- 20.2 A student who wishes to withdraw from the University should initially meet with the Course Leader and then complete the RDB5 withdrawal form.
- 20.3 The withdrawal comes into effect from the date the student submits the formal notification of withdrawal. In exceptional cases, the Chair of RDB may permit the effective withdrawal date to be backdated.
- 20.4 Acceptance of a Withdrawal Form will terminate the student's registration in both the programme of study and any modules associated with it. A student who has withdrawn will have no right or expectation of re-admission to the University.
- 20.5 The student's tuition fee will be based on liability periods and the annual fee charged for the period of registration until the date of withdrawal in accordance with the Tuition Fee Policy. In all cases, any unpaid balance of fees will become due immediately.

- 20.6 A student who is withdrawn/excluded from the University for poor attendance or non-engagement in studies will need to reapply to the University. The student may not normally be re-admitted until a period of at least twelve months has elapsed.

### Temporary withdrawal

- 20.7 A student may request to withdraw from the University temporarily, normally on health or personal grounds. Requests for a period of temporary withdrawal, supported by medical evidence if appropriate, should be discussed with the supervisory team and then submitted to the Chair of Research Degrees Board on the RDB4a form.
- 20.8 The temporary withdrawal comes into effect from the date the University is notified of the student's wish to withdraw temporarily on the form. In exceptional cases, the Chair of RDB may permit the effective temporary withdrawal date to be backdated.
- 20.9 The University may require a student to withdraw temporarily where the University is satisfied that a period of withdrawal is in the best academic interests of the student.
- 20.10 A student can only seek temporary withdrawal for a maximum of 12 consecutive months (full time) or 24 months (part time) in any single request and normally 12/18 months in total during their programme. The student may request shorter periods with a minimum of 1 month.
- 20.11 Students are not permitted to attend supervision meetings, Researcher Development Workshops, modules or submit reassessment items during a period of temporary withdrawal. Access to University IT facilities and the Library will not normally continue during a period of temporary withdrawal.
- 20.12 The student's tuition fee will be based on liability periods and the annual fee charged for the period of registration until the date of temporary withdrawal in accordance with the Tuition Fee Policy. In all cases, any unpaid balance of fees will become due immediately.
- 20.13 Return to the University following a period of temporary withdrawal may be subject to conditions. Any conditions will be set out when the request to withdraw temporarily is approved. If these conditions have not been met at the point of return to the University, the student will not be allowed to re-register without the written agreement of the Chair of RDB.
- 20.14 The Research Degrees Board would not normally expect a student to request (or their supervisory team to approve a request for):
- I. temporary withdrawal from their studies for a period that would take them beyond 12 *consecutive* months;
  - II. temporary withdrawal from their studies for a period that would take them beyond 12 months *in total* during their programme of study for a full-time student and beyond 18 months *in total* for a part-time student;
  - III. 3 or more periods of temporary withdrawal within any 24 month period even where the total period requested is no more than 12 months for a full-time student or no more than 18 months for a part-time student or the requests do not include a period of more than 12 consecutive months;
  - IV. temporary withdrawal 6 months or less before their maximum completion date.

20.15 A student returning from a period of temporary withdrawal of registration shall be subject to the regulations that apply at the time of re-registration.

## 21. Interpretation

21.1 These regulations should be interpreted using the terminology above. In cases of dispute these regulations will be interpreted by the Academic Board.

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Author of the document: Helen Tabinor/ Kevin Pickess

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### Revision History

For revisions prior to Academic Year 2016/17 please refer to Version 1.6 of the RRF

Committee	Date	Change
Academic Board (v1.11)	1 July 2020	Minor amendments [AB19-61]
Academic Board (v1.10)	29 January 2020	Minor amendments [AB19-25]
Academic Board (v1.9)	4 July 2018	Minor amendments [AB17-80]
Academic Board (v1.8)	28 June 17	Minor amendments [AB16-66]
Academic Board (v1.7)	12 October 2016	Minor amendments [AB16-11]