

Research Degree Regulations

2015-16

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Preamble to the Regulations

These *Regulations* will apply to all research degree programmes and to all enrolled postgraduate research students from September 2015.

The *Research Degree Regulations* defined in this document apply to all those programmes of study by research leading to the research degree awards of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Bolton, including any named MPhil awards, PhD awards pursued by Published Work or Practice¹, and the research element of programmes leading to professional doctorate awards² of the University.

The University has the authority to approve, supervise and examine research programmes of study and to confer the higher degrees of Master of Philosophy, Doctor of Philosophy and Professional Doctorate (precise award titles for the latter being approved at the time of programme validation).³

The admission of students for doctoral studies (MPhil and PhD), approval of programmes of study, supervisory arrangements, annual progression, transfer from Master of Philosophy to Doctor of Philosophy and all registration and examination arrangements is supervised by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees of the University of Bolton Senate (whose role and responsibilities are defined in Annex 1) and in subsidiary bodies acting under the authority of the Board of Studies. The Board of Studies is also empowered, on the basis of the reports it receives from examiners, to recommend the conferment of research degree and professional doctorate awards to Senate.

A wide range of supporting documents and forms relevant to research degree matters is available to staff, students and examiners. These documents and forms encompass all of the regulatory, policy, practice, quality assurance, guidance and procedural matters relevant to research degrees. Specific documents and forms may be accessed by searching from the University's home page at: www.bolton.ac.uk.

¹ See also the document *Regulations and Procedures Governing the Award of the Degrees of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work and Doctor of Philosophy by Practice*.

² See also the document *Professional Doctorates: Principles and Regulations*.

³ The University's higher degree awards may be added to by decision of Senate and incorporated into University Regulations.

RESEARCH DEGREE REGULATIONS

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1. Principles⁴

- 1.1 The University of Bolton (hereinafter referred to as the University) shall award the degrees of Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and the Professional Doctorate to registered candidates who successfully complete approved programmes of supervised research, including PhD programmes based upon the candidate's prior and/or prospective published work or professional practice and professional doctorate programmes based partly on taught input.
- 1.2 Programmes of research may be proposed in any field of study subject to the requirement that the proposed programme is capable of leading to scholarly research and to its presentation for assessment by appropriate examiners. The written thesis or equivalent may be supplemented by material in other than written form. All proposed research programmes shall be considered for research degree registration on their academic merits and without reference to the concerns or interests of any associated funding body.
- 1.3⁵ **The MPhil shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.**

Masters degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- (i) a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- (ii) a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- (iii) originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- (iv) conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

⁴ Where applicable, these *Regulations* take account of the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education, particularly Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B11: Research Degrees*, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2012.

⁵ Principles 1.3 and 1.4 are mainly drawn from the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part A: Setting and maintaining threshold academic standards, Chapter A1: The national level*, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2011.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- (a) deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgments in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- (b) demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- (c) continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

- (d) the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

- 1.4 **The PhD and Professional Doctorate shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis or equivalent by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.**

Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- (i) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- (ii) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- (iii) the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- (iv) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- (a) make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;

- (b) continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches;

and will have:

- (c) the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

1.5 The University shall encourage co-operation with industrial, commercial, professional or research establishments for the purposes of research leading to research degree awards. Such co-operation shall be intended to:

- (i) encourage outward-looking and relevant research;
- (ii) extend the candidate's own experience and perspective on the work;
- (iii) provide a wider range of experience and expertise to assist in the development of the project;
- (iv) be mutually beneficial and, where appropriate, to enable the candidate to become a member of a research community.

1.6 Co-operation may be formalised with one or more bodies external to the University. For the purpose of the *Research Degree Regulations* these shall be referred to as Collaborating Establishments.

1.7 Formal collaboration shall normally involve the candidate's use of facilities and other resources, including supervision, which are provided jointly by the University and the Collaborating Establishment. In such cases a formal letter from the Collaborating Establishment confirming the agreed arrangements must be submitted with the application to register for a research degree, except where collaboration is an integral part of the project (as for instance with Knowledge Transfer Partnerships or CASE awards).

2. The Admission of Research Students

2.1 The normal entry requirement for admission to a programme of research leading to the degree of MPhil or PhD via MPhil is at least an upper second class honours Bachelor's degree of an institution of higher education or a comparable qualification granted by a professional or other body. Applicants whose first language is not English must demonstrate a sufficient level of competence in English, for example via an IELTS score of at least 6.5, or equivalent evidence deemed acceptable by the admitting authorities.

2.2 Applications from students holding qualifications other than those in 2.1 above will be considered on their merits and in relation to the nature and scope of the programme of work proposed. A student wishing to be considered under this regulation must include in the application the names of two suitable persons who may be consulted concerning the student's fitness to carry out a

programme of research.

- 2.3 Admission to a programme of research leading directly to the degree of PhD may be permitted to students who hold a Master's degree from a higher education institution, provided that the degree is in a discipline which is appropriate to the proposed research and that the Master's degree included training in research and the execution of a research project. The Board of Studies for Research Degrees will decide on a student's registration at the time it considers the application to register for a research degree.
- 2.4 Students wishing to follow a programme of study leading to a research degree may be admitted as full-time or part-time students of the University. In either case, applicants may signal their intention to undertake the programme of research significantly or wholly at a distance from the University.
- All applicants will be required to demonstrate, both on application and on subsequent registration, that:
- (i) the periods for which (s)he will be free from other obligations will be sufficient for the purposes of carrying out the proposed research, **and**
 - (ii) the subject matter is suitable for the intended mode and means of study, **and**
 - (iii) the required period of attendance in the University and/or, in the case of applicants who wish to pursue their research remotely from the University (whether or not through a collaborative partner), the means of maintaining communication and contact, is sufficient for consultation with the supervisors, contact with fellow researchers and the completion of any necessary programmes of related studies or research training. A full-time student shall normally devote on average at least 35 hours per week to the research; a part-time student on average at least 12 hours per week.
- 2.5 Applicants for admission to a programme of study leading to a higher degree must complete the designated University application form and return it as directed. The University's central Admissions office will request copies of relevant certificates at this time.
- 2.6 The admitting authorities in the academic department⁶ must check by means of the application form and interview (and references if appropriate) that the applicant fulfils the admission requirements defined in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4, that they have the potential to undertake and successfully complete the chosen research degree within the appropriate timescale, that the proposed research programme is viable, that adequate supervisory expertise is provisionally available and that a suitable research environment can be offered to the applicant. A supervisor who it is intended shall act as the applicant's Director of Studies shall be proposed at this stage.
- 2.7 The acceptance form, completed in the academic department and authorised

⁶ Depending upon the prevailing organisational structure of the University, the 'academic department' might be an Academic Group, Faculty, Institute, School, Centre, Subject Department, Group, Field, Area or Division, or any other unit which is constitutionally empowered to undertake the relevant activities.

by the Research Co-ordinator⁷ and/or the Head in the academic department (or their nominee), must be submitted to the Research Degrees Administrator. The Research Degrees Administrator will make available the application form, acceptance form and supplementary offer information, including web links to key regulations and codes, for formal approval by the University's designated research management post-holder. The Research Degrees Administrator will in turn arrange for a formal offer letter (including the supplementary offer information), to be sent to the applicant from the University's central Admissions Office.

- 2.8 In the case of international applicants intending to study in the UK, the relevant procedures will be followed to ensure compliance with the prevailing requirements of Government agencies in respect of immigration regulations including, where necessary, supplying of a statement of the intended research.
- 2.9 Following the offer letter, applicants will be sent an invitation and instructions to enrol with the University as postgraduate students by research. Once enrolment is confirmed, the Research Degrees Administrator sends further instructions, including web-links to further materials, and a request that the student contact their Director of Studies.
- 2.10 At the time of enrolment, fee-paying students will be required to undertake to pay an annual supervision fee. (Students are reminded that in some areas an additional bench fee may be charged for specialist facilities; this will be notified in the offer letter). The University reserves the right to terminate or suspend a student's registration in the event of non-payment of fees or failure to re-enrol.
- 2.11 Once enrolled, all students must complete each of the following documents within the given timescales:
- (i) **Project Planning** - *records the aims of the research and specific techniques to be used (complete within one month, or two months if part-time).*
 - (ii) **Postgraduate Induction** - *an overview of awareness of the facilities (refer to the Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors for the requirements with regard to facilities) and services necessary for the research (complete within one month, or two months if part-time).*
 - (iii) **Research Student-Supervisor Agreement** - *sets out the rights and responsibilities of the student and the University (complete within one month, or two months if part-time).*
 - (iv) **Research Progress Report and Action Plan** - *a section to help judge overall research progress and skills development (complete within two months, or four months if part-time and annually thereafter).*
 - (v) **Application to Register for a Research Degree** - *a research proposal*

⁷ The role of the Research Co-ordinator is defined in the *Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors*. Different role titles with equivalent responsibilities should be taken as being comparable to the Research Co-ordinator.

conforming to the prevailing requirements, for consideration by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees and acceptance for registration (complete within the timescales published separately).

- 2.12 Once registered, a research student may be permitted to interrupt his/her programme of study for approved purposes and subject to approval being obtained from the Board of Studies for Research Degrees.
- 2.13 An applicant whose work forms part of a larger group project may register for a research degree. In such cases each individually registered project shall in itself be distinguishable for the purposes of assessment and be appropriate for the award being sought. The application shall indicate clearly each individual contribution and its relationship to the group project.
- 2.14 Where a research degree project is part of a piece of funded research, the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall establish to its satisfaction that the terms on which the research is funded do not detract from the fulfilment of the objectives and requirements of the student's research degree.
- 2.15 The University may approve an application from a person proposing to work outside the UK, provided that:
- (i) there is satisfactory evidence as to the facilities available for the research both in the University and abroad, **and**
 - (ii) the arrangements proposed for supervision enable adequate contact between the student and the supervisor(s) based in the UK.

The arrangements for access to facilities and equipment, the research literature, and supervisory support will be further scrutinised by the local Standing Panel of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees when it consider a candidate's application to register for the research degree.

3. University Registration of the Research Degree Programme of Study

- 3.1 Following admission and enrolment the student, with the assistance of their supervisors, shall prepare a research degree proposal⁸ which, once approved by their supervisors and the designated authorities at local level, shall be submitted by the student's Director of Studies to the Research Degrees Administrator who will record its receipt and initiate the procedures for consideration of the application by a local Standing Panel of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees.

The proposal shall set out each of the following:

⁸ In preparing a research degree proposal students and supervisors should consult Annex 2 of these *Regulations (Notes on Programmes of Study leading to the Award of Research Degrees)* and the separate document, *Guidance and Procedures for the Preparation, Submission and Consideration of Research Proposals using Forms R1*.

- (i) the title and form of the student's intended programme of work, including a plan of work and details of the research facilities/resources available to the student;
 - (ii) the programme of related studies and research methods training to be incorporated within the research;
 - (iii) details of any collaborative arrangements with external bodies;
 - (iv) the award to which the programme of study will lead;
 - (v) the full details and extent of **ANY** confidentiality request, made explicitly clear.
- 3.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees to consider and require any necessary amendments to proposed programmes of study, supervisory arrangements and programmes of related studies/research training. In doing so it shall draw upon the advice and expertise of the membership of the Board and other staff and external referees as appropriate to individual cases.
- 3.3 It shall be the responsibility of the student and his/her supervisors to make any amendments to a proposed programme of study and/or supervisory arrangements in the light of the comments of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees and to resubmit the proposal to the Board for further consideration.
- 3.4 All programmes of study must be approved by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees before the student can be registered for the award of a particular research degree.

4. The Registration Period and Student Progress

- 4.1 The normal **completion** periods and the normal **registration** periods (i.e. the official course lengths, beyond which a student must seek to extend their registration) for programmes of study leading to the award of research degrees are as follows:

		Normal Periods (months)	
		Completion	Registration
MPhil	Full-time	18	24
	Part-time	36	48
PhD by thesis (via MPhil and including the the period of MPhil registration)	Full-time	36	48
	Part-time	60	84
PhD by published work or by practice (Route A – Retrospective)	Part-time	12	24
PhD by thesis (direct) and PhD by published work or by practice (Route B – Prospective)	Full-time	36	48
	Part-time	60	84

4.2 Where there is evidence that the research is proceeding exceptionally well, the Board of Studies for Research Degrees may approve a shorter completion period than normal. **Applications for such a variation should be made to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees prior to application for approval of examination arrangements.** The Board will expect to see a written progress report and written confirmation of support from all supervisors and the designated authority at local level before making a decision. Variation in the minimum registration period should **not** normally allow submission before the following:

- 9 months from initial registration in the case of MPhil by full-time study or PhD by published work or practice (Route A – Retrospective);
- 18 months from initial registration in the case of MPhil by part-time study;
- 24 months from initial registration in the case of PhD by full-time study;
- 48 months from initial registration in the case of PhD by part-time study.

The Board will use this power only in exceptional and well-supported cases.

4.3 The Board of Studies for Research Degrees may extend a student's period of registration beyond the normal periods given in 4.1 above, normally for not more than twelve months at a time. A student seeking such an extension shall apply on the appropriate form. The **maximum registration periods**, beyond which the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall only exceptionally countenance any further extensions to the period of registration, shall normally be approximately **twice the normal completion periods** given in 4.1 above. Periods during which registration has been suspended shall not be included in any calculation of whether a student has reached their maximum period of registration.

4.4 Where a student changes from full-time to part-time study or vice versa, the registration periods shall normally be calculated as if (s)he were a part-time student. Notification of such a change shall be made on the appropriate form.

4.5 Registration may be backdated by **up to** four months (in the case of full-time students and part-time students of the PhD by Published Work or Practice) and six months (in the case of all other part-time students) from the date of submission of the research degree proposal to the Research Degrees Administrator for consideration by a local Standing Panel of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees. Longer periods of backdating may be permitted exceptionally at the discretion of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees.

4.6 Where a student has previously undertaken research as a registered student for a research degree, or other postgraduate qualification (including a significant research project and training in research methods) or has substantial research experience evident from published work or similar public output, the Board of Studies for Research Degrees **may** approve a shorter period of registration than usual, which takes account of all or part of the time already spent by the student on such research. In such cases the minimum periods of registration noted in Regulation 4.3 will normally be applied.

4.7 A student seeking a change to a registered research degree programme shall apply in writing to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees for approval.

- 4.8 At least once a year the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall establish whether the student is still actively engaged on the research programme and is maintaining regular and frequent contact with the supervisors and shall consider a Progress Report and Action Plan from the student and the supervisors, drawn from the Postgraduate Skills Record. As a result of obtaining this report, the Board shall take appropriate action which may include the termination of the student's registration.
- 4.9 Where the student is prevented by ill-health or other cause from making progress with the research, the registration may be **suspended** by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees, normally for not more than one year at a time.
- 4.10 A student shall submit the thesis or equivalent to the Research Degrees Administrator before the expiry of the maximum period of registration.
- 4.11 Where a student has discontinued the research, the withdrawal of registration shall be notified to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees on the appropriate form. In cases where the termination, suspension or extension of a student's registration is proposed, the procedures outlined in the following paragraphs shall apply.

Procedures to be followed in cases of unsatisfactory performance by a research student

- 4.12 In cases where a student fails to make satisfactory progress with a programme of research the procedures described in the Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors shall be followed.

Suspension

- 4.13 Where a student is prevented by ill-health or other good cause, from making progress with a research programme, the registration may be suspended upon application to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees, normally for not more than one year at a time. Applications for suspension should be made on the appropriate form and be supported by a recommendation from the Director of Studies.

Extension

- 4.14 The normal completion periods and normal and maximum registration periods are stated in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.3 above. Great importance is attached to completion of research degree programmes within the stated times and extensions to registration periods will only be agreed to by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees where there are valid reasons. Applications for extension of registration periods should be submitted on the appropriate form as soon as possible prior to the end of the registration period and be accompanied by supporting medical or other evidence. The Board of Studies for Research Degrees will consider each case on its merits and may extend a student's registration by **up to one year at a time**. Any extensions beyond this period will require a separate application to the Board.

Writing Up

- 4.15 Students are considered to be writing-up where they have completed their substantive research work and will not undertake any significant additional research. Such students will normally still receive some supervision and have access to facilities but they may be treated as writing-up if their Director of Studies confirms this in writing to the Research Degrees Administrator, in which case the student will be eligible to pay the prevailing writing-up fee rather than the tuition fee.
- 4.16 Writing-up status will not however normally apply to students who remain within the normal completion period appropriate to their award and mode of study. Even if they are writing up their research, such students will continue to be liable for the normal tuition fees associated with their programme and mode of study until the normal completion period has expired and it is confirmed that they are writing-up.

5. Supervision

- 5.1 A research degree student shall have at least two and normally not more than three supervisors, at least one of whom shall have had experience of supervising students to the successful completion of a research degree, normally from a UK institution. **A supervision team shall have normally had a combined experience of supervising not fewer than two students to successful completion. In the case of a PhD, at least one of the supervisors shall have successfully supervised at PhD level.** Except in the case of collaborative PhD partnership arrangements with other organisations, it shall be normal practice to appoint an external member to the supervisory team only in those cases where there is not substantial supervisory experience amongst the internal members.
- 5.2 Supervisors without completed supervisions, or academic staff new to the University, will attend the research supervisors' workshop sessions and be mentored within an existing supervisory team. Supervisors may gain the equivalent of one research degree completion through attendance at and obtaining a pass mark in the assessment of the Research Degree Supervision Module (EDM7037). Supervisory teams should not comprise solely of supervisors who have only gained completions through completion of this module.
- 5.3 Supervisors are required to attend the research supervisors' workshop sessions every three years in order to ensure currency of knowledge in relation to University regulations, policies and procedures relating to research students.
- 5.4 One supervisor shall be the Director of Studies (first supervisor) with responsibility to supervise the student on a regular and frequent basis and monitor progress on behalf of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees in accordance with Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors. The Director of Studies must hold a higher degree at the level of the student's award registration (as a minimum) and normally be a member of staff of the University. A Director of Studies who has no completed supervisions may be appointed to the role but s/he must attend the research supervisors' workshop

sessions and be mentored by a nominated member of the supervisory team who has previous successful experience of research degree completion as a Director of Studies.

- 5.5 As a general principle supervisors are not expected to supervise more research students than his/ her experience and commitments justify. Due regard should be given to the experience of that supervisor when determining an overall allocation of research students. Normally for a Director of Studies no more than 8fte (baseline figure) research students should be allocated (where a full-time student is 1fte and a part-time student is 0.5fte). However recognizing that research students will be writing up or completing their research it is reasonable for a supervisor to be allocated 1fte student per year over this baseline figure subject to the caveat at the start of this paragraph. This will be monitored by the Board of Study for Research Degrees (BoSRD) during its scrutiny of R1 proposals. It is acknowledged that the nature of research varies by subject area and as a consequence the baseline allocation may be exceeded. In such cases the academic School concerned must give assurances to the BoSRD that this will cause no detriment to the quality of supervision received by the student. This will be done through a written note to the BoSRD briefly stating why the situation has occurred and giving the necessary assurances. A copy of the projected workload for the supervisor should also be attached.
- 5.6 In addition to the supervisors, an adviser or advisers may be proposed to contribute some specialised knowledge or a link with an external organisation.
- 5.7 A person studying for a research degree shall normally be ineligible to act as Director of Studies for another research degree student but may in exceptional circumstances and with the explicit approval of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees act as a second supervisor or adviser.
- 5.8 Notwithstanding 5.7 above, the Board shall not approve arrangements in which a student and any of their second supervisors act in a reciprocal capacity for each other.
- 5.9 A proposal for a change in supervision arrangements shall be made to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees on the appropriate form.
- 6. Transfer of Registration from Master to Doctor of Philosophy and Mid-programme Assessment of Progression for PhD Direct Students⁹**
- 6.1 **A student registered initially for MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD**, who wishes to transfer to PhD, shall apply on the appropriate form (R2) to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees when sufficient progress has been made on the work to provide evidence of the development to PhD (normally after 12-18 months of full-time study or the part-time equivalent).
- 6.2 In support of the application, the student shall either (a) prepare for the Board of Studies for Research Degrees a progress report on the work undertaken, or (b) shall write up and submit the MPhil thesis for examination under the

⁹ This procedure does not apply to candidates taking the retrospective route (Route A) to the PhD by Published Work or Practice.

arrangements described in these *Regulations*, in which case a successful outcome will validate the transfer to PhD but without conferment of the award of MPhil.

- 6.3 The format of the required progress report is described in detail in the relevant guidance notes¹⁰.

Candidates must clarify with their Director of Studies the precise requirements in their individual case.

- 6.4 The report must include:
- (i) a brief review and discussion of the work already undertaken **and**
 - (ii) a statement of the intended further work, including what the precise nature of the PhD stage will be and details of the original contribution to knowledge which is likely to emerge.
- 6.5 Before approving transfer from MPhil to PhD the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall be satisfied that the student has made sufficient progress and that the proposed programme provides a suitable basis for work at PhD standard which the student is capable of pursuing to completion. A *viva voce* assessment by a Standing Panel of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees established at local level will normally be used by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees as part of its consideration of the case for transfer. In addition the Board will take into account the views of the supervisors.
- 6.6 **A student registered for the degree of MPhil only** may apply to transfer the registration to PhD. In such cases the student's full progress report shall be submitted to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees along with the application for transfer.

¹⁰ *Procedures and Notes for Guidance on Transfer from Master of Philosophy to Doctor of Philosophy and on Mid-Programme Assessment for PhD Direct Candidates.*

- 6.7 **A student who is registered for the degree of PhD by thesis¹¹** and who is unable to complete the approved programme of work may, at any time prior to the submission of the thesis for examination, apply to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees for the registration to revert to that for MPhil.
- 6.8 The Board of Studies for Research Degrees may impose the above requirement on a student where their progress is such that completion of the PhD is not effected within a reasonable period of time.
- 6.9 **A student registered for PhD direct (including candidates for PhD by published work or practice by Route B – Prospective, but excluding candidates for PhD by published work or practice by Route A – Retrospective)** shall, normally no later than approximately 18 months following initial registration (or the part-time equivalent), submit a progress report and be subject to assessment as described in 6.2 and 6.3 above to provide evidence that the research is progressing satisfactorily. The Board of Studies for Research Degrees may make such recommendations and impose such requirements as it deems appropriate in the light of its evaluation of a student's assessment, including those described in 6.5 and 6.6 above.
- 7. Examination Arrangements and Presentation of the Thesis or equivalent**
- 7.1 The examination for MPhil and PhD shall have two stages: firstly, the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis or equivalent and, secondly, its defence by oral examination.
- 7.2 Examination arrangements and notice of intention to submit the thesis shall be forwarded to the Research Degrees Administrator at least **six months** prior to the proposed date of final submission of the thesis or equivalent. The notice of intention to submit should be signed by the student and the Director of Studies and the latter should indicate their general comments on the progress of the thesis or equivalent. It shall be the responsibility of the Director of Studies and the Research Co-ordinator to propose examination arrangements on the appropriate form and to provide all necessary details of both internal and external examiners. The Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall approve or require any necessary amendments to proposed examination arrangements and authorise the final examination to take place.
- 7.3 A student whose programme of work includes formally assessed course work in a programme of work leading to the degree of PhD shall not be permitted to proceed to a further stage of examination for the degree until the course work examiners are satisfied with the student's performance. The result of the assessment shall be communicated to the examiners of the thesis or equivalent.
- 7.4 A student shall normally be examined orally on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies. Where for reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause, the Board of Studies for Research Degrees is satisfied that a candidate would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination, this may in exceptional circumstances be waived and/or an alternative form of examination may be

¹¹ Note that this option is not available in the case of the PhD by published work or practice, or the professional doctorate.

approved. Such approval shall not be given on the grounds that the candidate's knowledge of the language in which the thesis or equivalent is presented is inadequate.

- 7.5 Supervisors, advisers, other research students and staff, and the Chair of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees (or representative) may, **with the consent of the student**, attend the oral examination. They may participate in the discussion only if and when invited to do so by the chair of examiners. They shall normally withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination and, if granted permission to remain by the chair of examiners, shall make no contribution whatsoever to the examiners' deliberations.
- 7.6 **The student shall normally prepare a minimum of three printed copies of the thesis or equivalent for examination purposes and retention by the University**, having given notice of the intention to submit using the appropriate form. This figure assumes two examiners, plus one University copy (to be used by the independent chair of examiners and returned to the Research Degrees Administrator following the oral examination). Therefore, **additional copies will be required for the student and supervisor(s) AND if there are more than two examiners**. Copies should be presented to the Research Degrees Administrator. The format and length of the thesis or equivalent shall conform to the requirements defined in Section 12 of these *Regulations* and, in the case of the PhD by published work or by practice or of professional doctorates, to the requirements laid down in the document *Regulations and Procedures Governing the Award of the Degrees of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work and Doctor of Philosophy by Practice or Professional Doctorates: Principles and Regulations*.
- 7.7 The Research Degrees Administrator shall ensure that all the examiners have returned their completed preliminary report forms to the University before the oral examination takes place.
- 7.8 The Research Degrees Administrator shall notify the student, the examiners, the independent chair and all supervisors of the arrangements for the oral examination.
- 7.9 The Research Degrees Administrator shall ensure that each examiner and the independent chair have the appropriate documents and forms made available to them, as described in the *Guidance Notes for the Oral Examination of Research Degree Candidates*.
- 7.10 The Research Degrees Administrator shall also ensure that the relevant blank report and expenses forms are made available to the examiners and the independent chair as appropriate and shall respond to any queries to help ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.
- 8. The student's responsibilities in the examination process**
- 8.1 The student shall ensure that the thesis or equivalent is submitted before the expiry of their registration period.
- 8.2 The submission of the thesis or equivalent for examination may only take

place after the Director of Studies and normally all other supervisors have had the opportunity to give their comments on the final draft of the thesis or equivalent to the student¹². If, for valid reasons, the comments of other supervisors are not made available, those of the Director of Studies should be taken into account. The final decision to submit the thesis or equivalent shall be at the sole discretion of the student and this shall be confirmed on the form submitted with the thesis.

- 8.3 The student shall satisfy any conditions of eligibility for examination required by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees, including full payment of fees.
- 8.4 The student shall take no part in the arrangement of the examination and shall have no formal contact with the external examiner(s) between the appointment of the examiners and the oral examination.
- 8.5 The student shall confirm, through the submission of a declaration form, that the thesis or equivalent has not been submitted for a comparable academic award. The student shall not be precluded from incorporating in the thesis or equivalent, covering a wider field, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is indicated on the declaration form and also in the thesis or equivalent which work has been so incorporated.
- 8.6 The student shall ensure that the format of the thesis or equivalent is in accordance with the requirements of these *Regulations* (see section 12) and, in the case of the PhD by published work or by practice or of professional doctorates, to the requirements laid down in the document *Regulations and Procedures Governing the Award of the Degrees of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work and Doctor of Philosophy by Practice or Professional Doctorates: Principles and Regulations*.
- 8.7 Theses may be submitted for examination **either** in a permanently bound form **or** in a temporarily bound form which is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed¹³. The thesis or equivalent shall however be presented in a permanent binding of the approved type (see paragraph 12.11 for details), along with a digitised copy, before the award certificate may be issued. A thesis or equivalent submitted in a temporarily bound form shall be in its final form in all respects save the binding. In such cases the student shall confirm on the Candidate's Declaration Form when submitting permanently bound copies of the thesis or equivalent that its contents are identical with the version submitted for examination, except where amendments have been made to meet the requirements of the examiners.

9. Examiners

- 9.1 A student shall be examined by at least two and normally not more than three

¹² While a student would be unwise to submit the thesis or equivalent for examination against the advice of the supervisors, it is his/her right to do so. Equally, students should not assume that a supervisor's agreement to the submission of a thesis or equivalent guarantees the award of the degree.

¹³ For example, perfect-binding, a method of binding single pages by gluing them together on the spine of the document.

examiners, of whom at least one shall be an external examiner. Where there are two external examiners, only one internal examiner may be proposed.

- 9.2 An internal examiner shall be defined as an examiner who is **either**:
- (i) a member of staff of the University, **or**
 - (ii) a member of staff of the student's Collaborating Establishment.
- 9.3 A student's supervisors shall not be eligible to serve as examiners.
- 9.4 Where the student and the internal examiner are both on the permanent staff of the same establishment, or in such other circumstances as the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall determine, at least two external examiners shall be appointed. A candidate who is on a fixed, short-term employment contract (for instance, a research assistant) shall be exempt from the requirements of this regulation.
- 9.5 Examiners shall be experienced in research in the general area of the candidate's thesis or equivalent and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined. However an examiner shall not be appointed whose work forms the focus of the candidate's research.
- 9.6 At least one external examiner shall have substantial experience (that is, **normally three or more previous examinations**) of examining research degree candidates. In an examination for PhD, **at least one external examiner shall have substantial experience of PhD examining**.
- 9.7 An external examiner shall be independent both of the University and of the Collaborating Establishment and shall not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser. An external examiner shall normally not be either a supervisor of another student or an external examiner on a taught course in the same subject area at the University. Former members of staff of the University shall normally not be approved as external examiners until three years after the termination of their employment with the University. The Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall ensure that the same external examiner is not approved so frequently that his/her familiarity with the University might prejudice objective judgement.
- 9.8 No candidate for a research degree shall act as an examiner.
- 9.9 The University shall determine and pay the fees and expenses of the examiners.
- 9.10 A senior academic member of University staff with previous research degree examining experience (and no prior relationship with the candidate or their research project) will be selected by the Research Degrees Administrator from a list previously approved by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees, to fulfil the **non-examining** role of **independent chair**¹⁴. The role of the independent chair is to

¹⁴ To avoid potential conflicts of interest in the event of an appeal, the Assistant Vice Chancellor (QA), the Chair of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees and the Executive Dean – R&GS shall not normally fulfil this role.

ensure that the examination is conducted fairly and in accordance with these *Regulations* and the separate *Guidance Notes*¹⁵ and to ensure that all examiners are given the opportunity to question the candidate.

10. First examination

- 10.1 Each examiner shall read and examine the thesis or equivalent and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent preliminary report on it to the Research Degrees Administrator **before any oral or alternative form of examination is held**. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the thesis or equivalent provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as set out in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4) and, where possible, make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination. **Whilst these preliminary reports shall not be shown in any form to the candidate prior to the oral examination**, the contents of the reports may be interpreted for the candidate by their Director of Studies but **they must in no way be attributed to any individual examiner**. Preliminary reports may be disclosed to the candidate subsequent to completion of the examination process (including consideration of the examiners' joint recommendation referred to in paragraph 10.2) upon request by the candidate or by the candidate's Director of Studies to the Research Degrees Administrator.
- 10.2 Following the oral examination the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit on the appropriate form a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree to the Research Degrees Administrator. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Board of Studies for Research Degrees to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in paragraph 10.3 below is correct. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be on the appropriate form.
- 10.3 Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend¹⁶ one of the results from (i) – (v) below.
- (i) **The student be awarded the degree.**
 - (ii) **The student be awarded the degree subject to amendments being made to the thesis or equivalent, which may take the form of (a) minor editorial corrections or (b) non-major changes** (see paragraph 10.4).

(The decision to award the degree subject to amendments is normally interpreted as signifying that, although the thesis or equivalent is potentially of a standard to merit the award of the degree concerned, **certain sections and/or aspects of the thesis or equivalent are in need of alteration and improvement and the alterations are such that the candidate will be able to complete them within the prescribed time**).

¹⁵ *Guidance Notes for the Oral Examination of Research Degree Candidates*.

¹⁶ Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the student but they shall make it clear that the decision rests with the Board of Studies for Research Degrees.

- (iii) **The student be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, with or without an oral examination** (see Section 11).

(Re-examination) shall normally be required when, despite certain defects in the thesis or equivalent itself and/or the candidate's performance in the oral examination (and such other tests as may have been prescribed), there is evidence of the potential of a successful PhD submission from the originality, independence, scope and significance of the candidates research (for referral for MPhil careful consideration should be similarly be given to the criteria for the award of that degree). If the thesis or equivalent does not possess this potential, the examiners should send forward a recommendation that the degree not be awarded. Re-examination may also be recommended in circumstances where candidates do not completely satisfy the examiners through their performance at the oral examination (and in such other tests as the examiners may have prescribed) that the award of the degree is justified at this stage).

- (iv) **The student not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined** (see paragraphs 10.8 and 10.9).

(This decision should be reached solely on academic grounds as it implies that the thesis or equivalent is itself irredeemable or that the candidate does not possess the necessary academic abilities. It should accordingly not take any account of personal circumstances which may have a bearing on the candidate's opportunity to revise the submission).

- (v) **In the case of a PhD examination, the student be awarded the degree of MPhil¹⁷ subject to the presentation of the thesis or equivalent amended to the satisfaction of the examiners.**

10.4 Where the examiners are satisfied that the student has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the student's thesis or equivalent requires some amendments not so substantial as to call for resubmission and re-examination of the thesis or equivalent, and recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the student amending the thesis or equivalent to the satisfaction of the internal and/or external examiner(s) (see sub-paragraph 10.3ii above), they shall indicate to the student in writing what amendments are required according to the categories given in 10.4(i) and (ii) below. Once the student has completed the required amendments satisfactorily, the Director of Studies shall submit form E3 to the Research Degrees Administrator as confirmation that the degree may be recommended for conferment. The following is offered as guidance for the examiners only as to the classification of minor amendments:

- (i) **Award subject to minor editorial corrections** (*to be submitted within four weeks*)

If the thesis or equivalent is found to require minor editorial corrections (which must be specifically confined to: presentational matters (spelling, punctuation, syntax); minor errors of fact or interpretation; minor re-writing to clarify the context, focus or originality of the thesis or equivalent; insertion of headings or

¹⁷ Note that this option is not available in the case of the PhD by published work or practice.

other 'signpost' material for the sake of clarity, integration of graphical or statistical material into the text; bibliography and references; minor reorganisation of material within or between parts of the thesis or equivalent to facilitate comprehension; clarification of particular points or of terminology), the examiners may recommend the award of the degree on condition that the minor editorial corrections are made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner. **A candidate is normally required to submit the corrected thesis within four weeks of the date of the oral examination and this timescale should assist the examiners in judging whether what is required can be classified as minor editorial corrections.**

(ii) **Award subject to non-major changes** (*to be submitted within six months*)

If the thesis or equivalent is found to contain errors which, in the examiners' view, go beyond minor editorial corrections alone but which are nevertheless not sufficiently substantial in nature to require resubmission and re-examination of the thesis or equivalent, the examiners may recommend the award of the degree on the condition that the stated changes are made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, after consultation with the external examiner, if he/she wishes to be consulted. In addition to any minor editorial corrections (see 10.4 (i) above) of more extensive scale and/or scope, such non-major changes might encompass more significant presentational faults, problems with data analysis, absence of implications for practice, partial literature review, insufficient focus, incomplete reasoning. The examiners' report should explain clearly the nature of the deficiencies and the internal examiner is responsible for ensuring that the candidate is provided with the relevant extract from the report (see paragraph 10.13 below). **A candidate is normally required to submit the corrected thesis within six months of the date of the oral examination and this timescale should assist the examiners in judging whether what is required can be classified as non-major changes.**

Corrections required under paragraph 10.4 should not involve any of the following:

- (a) a major re-think of the methodology employed, **or**
- (b) a major recasting of entire parts of the thesis or equivalent or of original composition, **or**
- (c) new or repeated experiments, fieldwork or other data collection.

10.5 Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the Board of Studies for Research Degrees may:

- (i) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner), **or**
- (ii) accept the recommendation of the external examiner, **or**
- (iii) require the appointment of an additional external examiner.

10.6 Where an additional external examiner is appointed under sub-paragraph 10.5iii, (s)he shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of

the thesis or equivalent and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall complete the examination as set out in paragraph 10.12.

- 10.7 A further examination in addition to the oral examination may be requested by the examiners. In such cases the approval of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall be sought without delay. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination, it shall normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination unless the Board of Studies for Research Degrees permits otherwise. Any such examination shall be deemed to be part of the student's first examination.
- 10.8 Where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis or equivalent is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination, they may recommend that the Board of Studies for Research Degrees dispense with the oral examination and refer the thesis or equivalent for further work. In such cases the examiners shall provide the Research Degrees Administrator with written guidance for the student concerning the deficiencies of the thesis or equivalent. The examiners shall not recommend that a student fail outright (see sub-paragraph 10.3 iv) without holding an oral examination or other alternative examination (see paragraph 7.4).
- 10.9 Where the Board of Studies for Research Degrees decides that the degree be not awarded and that no re-examination be permitted, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis or equivalent and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be forwarded to the student by the Research Degrees Administrator.
- 10.10 Where cheating or plagiarism is suspected in the student's work or in the preparation or examination of the thesis or equivalent then the University's Code of Policy and Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Research shall be applied. Where these or any other irregularities in the conduct of the examination come to light subsequent to the recommendations of the examiners, the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall consider the matter, if necessary in consultation with the examiners, and take appropriate action.
- 10.11 The Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall ensure that all examinations are conducted and the recommendations of the examiners are presented wholly in accordance with these *Regulations*. In an instance where the Board of Studies for Research Degrees is made aware of a failure to comply with all of the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.
- 10.12 The Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall make a decision on the reports and recommendation(s) of the examiners in respect of a student. The power to confer the degree shall rest with the University Senate, having received the recommendation of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees.
- 10.13 Examiners' Guidance on Corrections, Errors, Referral and Failure

- (i) In addition to preparing the report of the examination, which will state clearly the reasons for the decisions made, the examiners must prepare guidance for the candidate which clearly specifies the sections or aspects of the thesis or equivalent and/or of the candidate's performance in any oral and/or alternative form of examination which are in need of improvement or considered to be irredeemable.
- (ii) The guidance must clearly indicate, where appropriate, the necessary and sufficient conditions which, if complied with by the candidate and provided the thesis or equivalent and performance in any oral and/or alternative form of examination is satisfactory, will lead to a recommendation by the examiners that the degree be awarded. It is essential that the guidance is sufficiently detailed to give the candidate, where appropriate, suitable guidance to achieve the required standards, but without stifling the candidate's initiative.
- (iii) The examiners' report and guidance must together be submitted to the Research Degrees Administrator for consideration by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees. If any advice is to be given to the candidate prior to the Board's approval of the report and guidance then it must be stressed to the candidate that the advice given is informal and subject to approval.
- (iv) The internal examiner **does not** take a supervisory or advisory role during the revision of the thesis or equivalent since this would compromise their role as examiner. They may however be required to provide initial clarification of the examiners' guidance.

11. Re-examination

11.1 One re-examination only may be permitted by the Board of Studies for Research Degrees, subject to the following requirements.

- (i) A student who fails to satisfy the examiners at the first examination, including where appropriate the oral or approved alternative examination (see paragraph 7.4) or any further examination required under paragraph 10.7 may, on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees, be permitted to revise the thesis or equivalent and be re-examined.
- (ii) The examiners shall provide the student, through the Research Degrees Administrator, with written guidance on the deficiencies of the first submission (see paragraph 10.13 above).
- (iii) The student shall submit for re-examination within the period of **one calendar year** from the date of the first examinations; where the Board of Studies for Research Degrees has dispensed with the oral examination the re-examination shall take place within **one calendar year** of the date of this dispensation (see paragraph 10.8). The Board of Studies for Research Degrees may, where there are good reasons, approve an extension of this period.

11.2 The Board of Studies for Research Degrees may require that an additional external examiner be appointed for the re-examination.

- 11.3 There are five possible forms of re-examination, as follows.
- (i) Where the student's performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination (see paragraph 7.4) or further examination (see paragraph 10.7) was satisfactory but the thesis or equivalent was unsatisfactory and the examiners on re-examination certify that the thesis or equivalent as revised is satisfactory, the Board of Studies for Research Degrees may exempt the candidate from further examination, oral or otherwise.
 - (ii) Where the student's performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination (see paragraph 7.4) or further examination (see paragraph 10.7) was unsatisfactory and the thesis or equivalent was also unsatisfactory, any re-examination shall include a re-examination of the thesis or equivalent and an oral or approved alternative examination (see paragraph 7.4).
 - (iii) Where on the first examination the student's thesis or equivalent was so unsatisfactory that the Board of Studies for Research Degrees dispensed with the oral examination (see paragraph 10.8), any re-examination shall include a re-examination of the thesis or equivalent and an oral or approved alternative examination (see paragraph 7.4).
 - (iv) Where on the first examination the student's thesis or equivalent was satisfactory but the performance in the oral and/or other examination(s) was not satisfactory the student shall be re-examined in the oral and/or other examination(s), subject to the time limits prescribed in sub-paragraph 11.1, iii, without being requested to revise and re-submit the thesis or equivalent.
 - (v) Where on the first examination the thesis or equivalent was satisfactory but the student's performance in relation to the other requirements for the award of the degree was not satisfactory, the examiners may propose instead a different form of re-examination to test the student's abilities; such examination may take place only with the approval of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees.
- 11.4 In the case of a re-examination under sub-paragraphs 11.3(i), (ii), or (iii), each examiner shall read and examine the thesis or equivalent and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent preliminary report on it to the Research Degrees Administrator before any oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the thesis or equivalent provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree (as set out in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4) and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.
- 11.5 Following the re-examination of the thesis or equivalent under sub-paragraph 11.3(i) or following an oral or other examination under 11.3 (iii), or (iv), the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit, on the appropriate form, a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree to the Research Degrees Administrator. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Board of Studies for Research Degrees to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in paragraph 11.6 is correct. Where the examiners are not in agreement,

separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted on the appropriate form.

- 11.6 Following the completion of the re-examination the examiners may recommend¹⁸ one of the results from (i) – (iv) below.
- (i) **The student be awarded the degree.**
 - (ii) **The student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis or equivalent** (see paragraph 11.7).
 - (iii) **The student not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined** (see paragraphs 11.11 and 11.12).
 - (iv) **In the case of a PhD examination, the student be awarded the degree of MPhil¹⁹ subject to the presentation of the thesis or equivalent amended to the satisfaction of the examiners.**
- 11.7 Where the examiners are satisfied that the student has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the student's thesis or equivalent requires some minor amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the submission of a revised thesis or equivalent, and recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the student amending the thesis or equivalent to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) (see sub-paragraph 11.6(ii)), they shall indicate to the student in writing what amendments and corrections are required, according to the procedures outlined in paragraphs 10.4 and 10.13 and the guidance given in paragraphs 10.4(i) and 10.4(ii) above.
- 11.8 Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the Board of Studies for Research Degrees may:
- (i) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner), **or**
 - (ii) accept the recommendation of the external examiner, **or**
 - (iii) require the appointment of an additional external examiner.
- 11.9 Where an additional external examiner is appointed under sub-paragraph 11.8(iii), s/he shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis or equivalent and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall complete the examination as set out in paragraph 10.12.
- 11.10 A further examination in addition to the oral examination may be requested by

¹⁸ Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the student but they shall make it clear that the decision rests with the Board of Studies for Research Degrees.

¹⁹ This option is not available in the case of the PhD by published work or practice.

the examiners. In such cases the approval of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall be sought without delay. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination, it shall normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination unless the Board of Studies for Research Degrees permits otherwise.

- 11.11 In the case of a re-examination under sub-paragraph 11.3ii, where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis or equivalent is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination, they may recommend that the Board of Studies for Research Degrees dispense with the oral examination and not award the degree (see also paragraph 11.12).
- 11.12 Where the Board of Studies for Research Degrees decides that the degree be not awarded, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis or equivalent and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be forwarded to the student by the Research Degrees Administrator (see paragraph 10.13 above).

12. Form of the Thesis or equivalent

- 12.1 Except with the specific permission of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees the thesis or equivalent shall be presented in English.
- 12.2 There shall be an abstract of approximately 300 words bound into the thesis or equivalent which shall provide a synopsis of the thesis or equivalent stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated.
- 12.3 The thesis or equivalent shall include a statement of the student's objectives and shall acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and any assistance received.
- 12.4 Where a student's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the thesis or equivalent shall indicate clearly the student's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.
- 12.5 The student shall be free to publish material in advance of the thesis or equivalent but reference shall be made in the thesis or equivalent to any such work. Copies of published material should either be bound in with the thesis or equivalent or placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the thesis or equivalent.
- 12.6 The text of the document for a PhD by thesis should normally not exceed the following length (excluding ancillary data);
- | | |
|--|--------------|
| for a PhD in Science, Engineering, Art and Design | 40,000 words |
| for an MPhil in Science, Engineering, Art and Design | 20,000 words |
| for a PhD in Arts, Social Sciences and Education | 80,000 words |
| for an MPhil in Arts, Social Sciences and Education | 40,000 words |

Where such a thesis is accompanied by material in other than written form or the research involves creative writing or the preparation of a scholarly edition, the written thesis or equivalent should normally be within the range:

for a PhD	30,000 - 40,000 words
for an MPhil	15,000 - 20,000 words

In the case of the PhD by published work or practice, the critical commentary should normally be 10,000-15,000 words in length²⁰.

- 12.7 Following the award of the degree the Research Degrees Administrator shall require and lodge one hardbound copy of the thesis or equivalent in the University library, one in the library of any Collaborating Establishment, and one to be passed to the student's Director of Studies. A digitised version shall also be required for submission to the University's institutional repository and, subject to agreement from the student on the Candidate's Declaration Form, to the British Library.
- 12.8 The copies of the thesis or equivalent submitted for examination shall remain the property of the University but the copyright in the thesis or equivalent shall be vested in the student.
- 12.9 The requirements stated in (i) – (vii) below shall be adhered to in the format of the submitted thesis or equivalent.
- (i) The thesis or equivalent shall normally be in A4 format; the Board of Studies for Research Degrees may give permission for a thesis or equivalent to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis or equivalent can be better expressed in that format. A student using a format larger than A4 should note that the production of microfiche copies and full-size enlargements may not be feasible.
 - (ii) Copies of the thesis or equivalent shall be presented in a permanent and legible form either in typescript or print; where copies are produced by photocopying processes, these shall be of a permanent nature; where word processor and printing devices are used, the printer shall be capable of producing text of a satisfactory quality; the size of character used in the main text, including displayed matter and notes, shall not be less than the equivalent of Arial 10 point, which is the preferred font.
 - (iii) The thesis or equivalent may be printed on both sides of the page provided that the paper, which shall be white, is sufficiently opaque to prevent 'show-through'.
 - (iv) The margin at the left-hand binding edge of the page shall not be less than 40mm; other margins shall not be less than 15mm.
 - (v) Double or one-and-a-half spacing shall be used in the typescript except for

²⁰ For further details about the thesis presentation requirements for these awards, see the document *Regulations and Procedures Governing the Award of the Degrees of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work and Doctor of Philosophy by Practice*.

indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.

- (vi) Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages.
- (vii) The title page (see specimen) shall give all of the following information:
 - (a) the full title of the thesis or equivalent;
 - (b) the full name of the author;
 - (c) that the degree is awarded by the 'University of Bolton';
 - (d) the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements;
 - (e) the Collaborating Establishment(s), if any;
 - (f) the month and year of submission.

12.10 The final hardbound copies shall be produced as follows:

- (i) The binding shall be of a fixed type so that leaves cannot be removed or replaced; the front and rear boards shall have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upright.
- (ii) In at least 24pt type the outside front board shall bear the title of the work, the name and initials of the candidate, the qualification, and the year of submission, the same information (excluding the title of the work) shall be shown on the spine of the work, reading downwards.
- (iii) To permit submission to the University's institutional repository and to the British Library, the hardbound copies submitted to the Research Degrees Administrator shall be accompanied by a digitised copy, along with the Candidate's Declaration Form.

Request for the thesis to remain confidential

12.11 Where a student or the University wishes the thesis or equivalent to remain confidential for a period of time after completion of the work, application for approval shall normally be made to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees **at the time of registration**. In cases where the need for confidentiality emerges at a subsequent stage, a special application for the thesis or equivalent to remain confidential after submission shall be made immediately to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees.

12.12 The Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall normally only approve an application for confidentiality in order to enable a patent application to be lodged or to protect commercially or politically sensitive material. A thesis or equivalent shall not be restricted in this way in order to protect research leads.

12.13 While the normal maximum period of confidentiality is two years from the date of the oral examination, in exceptional circumstances the Board of Studies for Research Degrees may approve a longer period up to a maximum of 5 years.

Where a shorter period would be adequate the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall not automatically grant confidentiality for two years.

- 12.14 Where the Board of Studies for Research Degrees has agreed that the confidential nature of the student's work is such as to preclude the thesis or equivalent being made freely available, the thesis or equivalent shall, immediately on completion of the programme of work, be retained by the University on restricted access and, for a time not exceeding the approved period, shall only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project.

13. Appeals Procedure for Research Degrees

- 13.1 A student or other person may in the circumstances set out below request a review of a Board of Studies for Research Degrees decision, whether prior to or at the first examination or re-examination.
- 13.2 **A request for a review may only be made in relation to a decision of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees**, either on the recommendation of the examiners, or on the outcomes of the implementation of the Code of Policy and Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Research. Given the existence of procedures for grievances during the study period contained in paragraph 11.17 of the Code of Practice for Research Students and Supervisors, alleged inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements during the period of study shall not constitute grounds for requesting a review of the examination decision.
- 13.3 A request for a review may only be made on one or more of the following grounds:
- (i) that there were circumstances affecting the student's performance of which the examiners were not aware at the oral examination;
 - (ii) that there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the examination (including administrative error) of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result might have been different had there not been such irregularity;
 - (iii) that there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiner (a student may not otherwise challenge the academic judgement of the examiners);
 - (iv) that the consequential **academic** action arising from the Board's decision about a student's research misconduct is unreasonably severe within the context of the Code of Policy and Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Allegations of Misconduct in Research.
- 13.4 A student shall give notice, in a letter to the Research Degrees Administrator, within one month from the date of notification of the result, that (s)he wishes to request a review and shall submit the case for review within a further month from the date of giving notice.
- 13.5 The request for a review shall first be considered by the Research Degrees

Administrator who shall determine whether there is a prima facie case for a review. If it is considered that the request is clearly frivolous, vexatious or outside the permitted grounds, (s)he shall discuss the request with the Chairperson of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees. If it is agreed that there is no prima facie case, the recommendation shall be submitted to the Chairperson of Senate for decision. The Chairperson of Senate may support the recommendation or require further investigation or action on the review. There shall be no appeal from the decision of the Chairperson of Senate. The Research Degrees Administrator shall inform the student in writing within one month of the initial receipt of the request, whether there is a prima facie case for review or whether the request has been dismissed (the candidate shall normally be given the reasons for the decision).

- 13.6 If it is considered that there is a prima facie case for a review the Research Degrees Administrator shall gather such evidence as considered appropriate and likely to assist a panel in reviewing the case. This may include seeking written or oral testimony from the examiners, from other persons present at the oral examination, from supervisors or other members of the academic staff, or further evidence or statements by way of elucidation from the student. Examiners and supervisors should be informed that their comments could be made available to the appellant.
- 13.7 The request for a review shall be considered by a panel, approved by and reporting to the Chairperson of Senate, comprising persons having experience of supervising and examining research degrees and who have had no previous involvement in the case or with the student. No student or research degree student shall be a member of a research review panel. The appellant shall be sent a letter giving not less than four weeks notice of the date of consideration of the appeal and shall be informed that he or she shall have the right to present his or her case in person and to be accompanied or represented by another person.
- 13.8 A review panel shall not be constituted as an examination board and shall not have the authority to set aside the decision of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees and thereby to recommend the award of the degree.
- 13.9 There shall be no appeal from the decision of the review panel.
- 13.10 Having considered the evidence and taken such advice as may be appropriate, the Review Panel shall recommend to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees the action to be taken, which may include:
 - (i) rejecting the appeal (in which case the decision is final), the reasons being made known to the student in general terms;
 - (ii) requiring that the examiners be requested to reconsider their decisions for reasons stated;
 - (iii) declaring the examination to be null and void and requiring that the thesis or equivalent be re-examined;
 - (iv) that the student be expelled from the University for a number of years or permanently.

- 13.11 In cases in which the recommendation of the Review Panel is that the thesis or equivalent should be re-examined the following procedures shall be followed:
- (i) the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall appoint new examiners not fewer in number than those appointed for the original examination and normally including not fewer than two external examiners;
 - (ii) the examiners shall be informed that they are to be or have been appointed to conduct a re-examination on appeal but shall not be given any information about the previous examination;
 - (iii) the examiners shall prepare independent reports on the thesis or equivalent before the candidate is examined orally and a joint report after the oral examination;
 - (iv) on completion of the re-examination the reports of the examiners appointed for the original examination and for the re-examination shall be submitted to the Board of Studies for Research Degrees;
 - (v) where the recommendations of the examiners appointed for the re-examination differ from those of the examiners who conducted the original examination, any agreed recommendation of the examiners who conducted the re-examination would be expected to prevail.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)

- 13.12 Where a student has exhausted the University's procedures for review, the University will issue a Completion of Procedures letter to the student. At this point a student is entitled to lodge a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). A complaint will not be considered by the OIA unless it is received within three months from the date of issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. The formal decision of and recommendations of the OIA Reviewer will be considered by the Vice Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor may accept the recommendations in full or in part or not accept the recommendations in full or in part. Where the Vice Chancellor does not accept the recommendations, the OIA Reviewer will be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable, giving the reasons for non-acceptance.

[Specimen thesis title page]

**INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION AND THE
RESTRUCTURING OF THE NORTH WEST
TEXTILES INDUSTRY**

ANNABEL EAGLE

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Bolton
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**This research programme was carried out
in collaboration with
(where applicable)**

September 2014

Annex 1: The role and responsibilities of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees

(The full Terms of Reference and membership of the Board may be obtained from: <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Everything/PDF/Senate-and-Sub-Committees---Terms-of-Reference-2014-15.pdf>)

1. Authority of the Committee

The Board is responsible to Senate for ensuring the maintenance of the academic standards of programmes of study leading to the award of degrees by research, including the control of all matters relating to the registration, supervision and examination of research students.

2. Duties of the Committee

- i. To establish and ensure the implementation of the University's regulations, policies and procedures for the admission, registration, supervision and examination of students who wish to follow programmes of study at the University leading to degrees by research.
- ii. To approve the initial qualifications of persons wishing to register as research students with the University and to be responsible for considering and requiring any necessary amendments to proposed programmes of study, supervisory arrangements, research training and related studies, prior to formal registration of the programme.
- iii. To consider and require any necessary amendments to proposals for the transfer of a student's registration from Master of Philosophy to Doctor of Philosophy.
- iv. To consider and require any necessary amendments to the proposed examination arrangements for research students, including the appointment of internal and external examiners and to receive final reports of the decisions of examiners for recommendation to Senate.
- v. To implement and monitor the operation of the University's Code of Practice for Research Supervisors and Students across the University and to consider regular reports on how supervisory responsibilities are being carried out.
- vi. To implement and monitor the University's Research Degree Quality Assurance Procedures, by considering annual research progress records from supervisors and students and taking any necessary actions to safeguard the standard of awards and the quality of the research student experience.
- vii. To report to Education Committee on all matters concerning the management, administration and quality assurance of research degree programmes of study and the operation of the University's research degree procedures.

Annex 2: Notes on Programmes of Study leading to Research Degrees

1. A research student shall follow a programme of related studies and research training where this is necessary for the attainment of competence in research methods and of knowledge related to the subject of the thesis or equivalent. This programme shall be intended:

- (i) to provide the student with the skills and knowledge necessary for the pursuit of the proposed research;
- (ii) to provide a body of knowledge normally associated with a degree in the field of study of the proposed research; and
- (iii) to provide breadth of knowledge in the related subjects.

Where the programme of related studies includes an approved programme of studies leading to another award and a student is registered for that programme and fulfils all its requirements, (s)he may be recommended for that award in addition to the degree of MPhil or PhD (see also Note 6).

2. A student may undertake a programme of research in which the student's own creative work forms, as a point of origin or reference, a significant part of the intellectual enquiry. Such creative work may be in any field (for instance, fine art, design, engineering and technology, architecture, creative writing, musical composition, film, dance and performance), but shall have been undertaken as part of the registered research programme. In such cases, the presentation and submission may be partly in other than written form.

The creative work shall be clearly presented in relation to the argument of a written thesis or equivalent and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context. The thesis or equivalent itself shall conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length (see Section 12 of the *Regulations*).

The final submission shall be accompanied by some permanent record (for instance, video, photographic record, musical score, and diagrammatic representation) of the creative work, where practical, bound with the thesis or equivalent.

The application for registration shall set out the form of the student's intended submission and of the proposed methods of assessment.

3. A student may undertake a programme of research in which the principal focus is the preparation of a scholarly edition of a text or texts, musical or choreographic work, or other original artefacts.

The final submission shall include a copy of the edited text(s) or collection of artefact(s), appropriate textual and explanatory annotations, and a substantial introduction and critical commentary which set the text in the relevant historical, theoretical or critical context. The thesis or equivalent itself shall conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length (see Section 12 of the *Regulations*).

4. A student for a PhD, whether registered for PhD direct or for MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD, may undertake an integrated programme of work

which, as well as the research element, shall include a programme of postgraduate study on which his/her performance shall be formally assessed. Such a course of study shall not occupy more than one third of the total period of registration and shall complement the research. This regulation shall not apply to the MPhil degree.

5. Except where permission has been given for the thesis or equivalent and the oral examination to be in another language, the Board of Studies for Research Degrees shall satisfy itself that the student has sufficient command of the English language to complete satisfactorily the programme of work and to prepare and defend a thesis or equivalent in English. Permission to present a thesis or equivalent in another language shall normally be sought at the time of application for registration. Permission to present a thesis or equivalent in a language other than English shall normally only be given if the subject matter of the thesis or equivalent involves language and related studies.
6. The Board of Studies for Research Degrees may permit a student to register for another course of study concurrently with the research degree registration, provided that either the research degree registration or the other course of study is by part-time study and that, in the opinion of the Board of Studies for Research Degrees, the dual registration will not detract from the research.

Annex 3: Workload allowances for supervisors

1. Workload allowances will normally only apply for the duration of the completion period as outlined in para. 4.1 of these regulations.
2. The workload hours allocations defined below effectively form a student entitlement to a period of engagement with their supervisory team during a year. It is effectively a minimum entitlement to support.
3. For **full-time** postgraduate research students a Director of Studies would normally be allocated a workload of 24 hours per year out of their normal contact time. A second supervisor would normally be allocated 6 hours per year out of their contact time.
4. For **part-time** postgraduate research students a Director of Studies would normally be allocated a workload of 12 hours per year out of their normal contact time. A second supervisor would normally be allocated 3 hours per year out of their contact time. This recognizes the fact that the completion period is longer and so support is being given over that extended period of time.
5. In all cases a supervisory meeting should normally be held monthly throughout the completion period although it is recognized that the nature of research is different across disciplines and so the timing/spacing of supervisory meetings may vary from the monthly format suggested.
6. External advisors would be allocated a workload of 3 hours per year regardless of mode of study, again for the minimum completion period.

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