



**THE CODE OF PRACTICE  
RELATING TO  
THE SUPERVISION EXAMINATION AND  
ADMINISTRATION  
OF  
RESEARCH STUDENTS**

**CANDIDATES FOR AWARDS OF  
MA, MSc, LLM (by Research), MPhil,  
MCh (Res), MD (Res), PhD, and  
PhD (by Published Work)**

Revised September 2015

The term "*research student*" refers to all those enrolling for MA, MSc, LLM (by Research), MPhil, MCh (Res), MD (Res,) PhD, or PhD (by Published Work).

**FOREWORD**

This Code of Practice for postgraduate research degree programmes is a statement of good academic practice which has been developed for the benefit of postgraduate research students, supervisors and other academic staff at the University of Central Lancashire. It incorporates the procedures relating to the various stages of the research degree programme ie Admission, Research Programme Approval, Transfer, Thesis Submission, and Examination.

The Code of Practice should be read in conjunction with University's Academic Regulations and the Code of Conduct for Research. Staff should also consult the University's Academic Quality Assurance Manual as well as other relevant information. This Code of Practice draws on the QAA's UK Quality Code, for assuring the academic quality of research degree programmes.

Research students and staff should utilise the Code of Practice throughout every stage of the research degree programme.



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## **1 THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE**

The University awards the degrees of MA (by Research), MSc (by Research), LL.M (by Research), MPhil, MCh (Res), MD (Res), PhD, and PhD (by Published Work) to candidates who successfully complete approved programmes of supervised research, submitted a thesis and successfully complete the examination.

## **2 RESEARCH DEGREE ADMISSIONS**

The University of Central Lancashire has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that research degrees granted and conferred are both consistent and comparable in standard with similar awards granted and conferred in its name. In fulfilling this responsibility, and before offering a place to an applicant, the University must satisfy itself through the School as to:

- a) the suitability of the candidate to undertake the research;
- b) the adequacy of supervision arrangements, funding and research facilities and of a suitable research programme.

### **2.1 The Application Process and Procedures**

The procedures are outlined on the How to Apply web pages and the Staff Guide for Research Degree Admissions in the Research Document Library on the staff intranet.

#### **General Principles**

- a) All applicants must complete a research degree application form, which should be submitted to the Research Student Registry either by post or email using [researchadmissions@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:researchadmissions@uclan.ac.uk). All applicants must provide two academic references from referees from their most recent and highest academic level qualification. Referees should have taught them on their Bachelor's degree or Master's programme. Applications will then be forwarded to the School for consideration.
- b) Subsequent to preliminary discussions, where conditions outlined in 2a) and b) above are satisfied, a prospective research degree candidate will be formally interviewed by a panel consisting of at least two academic staff which must include the prospective Director of Studies and the Research Degrees Tutor. For applicants' resident overseas, the interview may be conducted by video/telephone conference link/Skype.
- c) Following interview, the Research Student Registry will be formally advised by the School of the outcome of the application.
- d) If the application is successful, an offer letter will be issued and will confirm the start date and terms and conditions of the programme of study.
- e) Successful applicants will be required to confirm their acceptance of the offer in writing.

- f) Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of the application within 15 days of the interview.

## 2.2 Entry Qualifications

The entry qualifications are set out in the University's Academic Regulations. Applicants must have had their previous award conferred by the time of entry. For research degree programmes applicants must have a level of English Language proficiency equivalent to IELTS 6.5 (with no less than 6.0 in a sub-score), although some disciplines specify a higher entry requirement. Applicants who do not meet the minimum language entry requirements but hold at least IELTS 5.5 may apply for a research degree place but any offer will be conditional on successful completion of an appropriate pre-sessional English Language course and attainment of the required English Language grades. Assessment and the confirmation of the results must occur before enrolment onto the research degree programme can be permitted. Original certificates must be provided for verification on enrolment, failure to prove prior qualifications will result in withdrawal of the offer.

## 2.3 Applications for PhD (by Published Work)

Prospective students apply for admission and registration for candidacy for examination for the award. The requirements for the application are set out in the Guidance Notes for PhD (by Published Work). These are available on the following link:

[https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/life/rules\\_regs.php](https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/life/rules_regs.php)

## 2.4 Applications for Study at UCLan Cyprus Campus

Applications to study at UCLan Cyprus will be considered where there is supervisory support for the research topic at UCLan Cyprus. Candidates wishing to undertake research degree programmes at the Cyprus campus should submit an application to the Research Student Registry in the normal way.

## 2.5 Applications for Off-Campus Research Degree Programmes

Applications from candidates who wish to undertake a research degree programme independently (i.e. not through a formal agreement between a collaborating institution and the University) and who wish to reside abroad may be considered, subject to fulfilling the following criteria relating to access to appropriate research facilities, support and skills training:

- 2.5.1 There should be clear evidence that the research programme can be appropriately supervised in an environment with adequate research resources.
- 2.5.2 Appropriate training facilities must also be available and accessible to students, this includes research skills and other skills including English Language as deemed necessary to the achievement of their award otherwise attendance on campus will be required.
- 2.5.3 A local supervisor must be available to support the student;
- 2.5.4 Where attendance is required on campus



There will be an additional mandatory tuition fee for students studying on this basis. Candidates wishing to undertake research degree programmes on this basis should submit an application to the Research Student Registry in the normal way.

## **2.6 Applications for Overseas Collaborative Research Degree Programmes**

Candidates wishing to undertake research degree programmes at one of the University's Overseas Partner Institutions should submit an application to the Research Student Registry in the normal way, clearly indicating which Partner Institution they wish to study at. Terms and conditions will vary according to the Partner Institution selected.

## **2.7 Applications from Candidates with Non-Standard Qualifications - MA/MSc/LLM (by Research), MPhil, and PhD only**

### **2.7.1 Admission by Portfolio of Evidence**

Where the applicant does not hold the normal minimum academic entry requirement (or equivalent) for admission to these research degree programmes, the University stipulates that applications must be considered on their merits and in relation to the nature and scope of the programme of work proposed. Evidence of a candidate's ability and background knowledge in relation to the proposed research must be evaluated. Professional experience, publications, written reports, other academic work and/or other accomplishments must be taken into consideration and the applicant asked to submit appropriate supporting evidence. This will be considered by the interview panel, whose academic judgement shall be final.

### **2.7.2 Admission via a Pre-session Course**

Alternatively, rather than ask the applicant to submit appropriate supporting evidence to assess equivalence to the minimum entry criteria, the School may recommend the applicant undertake and successfully complete a course in order to achieve equivalence to the minimum entry criteria such as English Language course or a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma.

## **3 ENROLMENT, INDUCTION, AND THE INITIAL PHASE**

### **3.1 Enrolment**

All candidates admitted to undertake a research degree at the University are required to enrol and pay fees for tuition. The offer pack will include the start date of the research degree programme and the terms and conditions. The student is required to enrol and pay fees from the start date. New research students will start and enrol on one of the following dates: 1 October, 1 January, 1 April or 1 July. Returning students enrol at the beginning of each academic year. The appropriate Key Contact in the Research Student Registry will contact new students with the arrangements for enrolment.

### **3.2 Tuition Fees**

Research students are liable for tuition fees from the commencement of their research programme until submission of the thesis. Tuition fees are payable for the academic year at

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the time of enrolment. For new research students commencing part way through an academic year, fees for that year will be charged on a pro-rata basis. The fees for full-time and part-time research students are fixed by the University and vary from year to year. Details of fees and any available discounts will be available on the website and will be confirmed in the offer letter.

Full-time students who have reached their expected submission point in their programme will pay fees at the appropriate final year rate until submission of the thesis.

Part-time students pay the part-time rate for the entire duration of their programme.

### **3.3 Bench Fees**

Some students may be required to pay a bench fee as part of their total tuition fee.

Bench Fees are for:

- a. Laboratory or specialist consumables;
- b. Specialist technical support which is not available within the University;
- c. Specialist off-site testing of samples or processing of data which cannot be done at the University;
- d. Travel to other laboratories or field sites, which is essential to complete the project

This fee may vary between disciplines and will be discussed with applicants before an offer of a place is made. The offer letter will confirm the bench fee band rate and this will form part of the terms and conditions of the offer of a place.

### **3.4 Pre-session Course Fees**

These will be charged at published rates for the course pertaining at the time.

### **3.5 Induction**

Every research student is required to attend the University induction event, which will be held shortly after the start date, together with any specific induction or training courses organised at School level. Details of the induction event will be provided within the offer letter, please also see paragraph 8 below.

### **3.6 Initial Phase**

Students and supervisors should arrange to meet in the first week of study. In the initial period following enrolment, the student and supervisory team should establish the timetable for the research project, the meetings schedule with the supervisory team, refine the programme of work in preparation for the completion of the Research Programme Approval application, and agree progression criteria for the first year of study. Students should be aware that candidature for all research degrees, except a PhD (by Published Work), is only confirmed by the University when the Research Programme Approval application is fully approved.

## **4 RESEARCH PROGRAMME APPROVAL**

In terms of the project management of the research programme, the period leading up to Research Programme Approval allows for refinement of the project design and is the formal approval of the project. Successful completion of the Research Programme Approval process constitutes the first progression criterion for all research degree students.

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The application form and guidance notes are available in the Research Document Library on the Student Portal.

The aim of this process is to approve the title of the research project and to ensure that:

- a) the candidate is demonstrating the appropriate research skills to undertake the research programme;
- b) the candidate is embarking on a viable research programme for the target award to a timescale that acknowledges the agreed standard completion time;
- c) the supervision is adequate and likely to be sustained;
- d) the research environment is suitable; and
- e) the ethical and governance issues have been addressed.

In confirming the target award proposed at the admission stage, the type, range, and depth of the project will be evaluated.

### 4.1 Requirements for Practice-based Programmes

For practice-based programmes, where the examination is expected to be based on a thesis and other material, the balance of these elements must be specified in the Research Programme Approval application. The practice-based element of the programme should not exceed 50%. For PhD Direct students the timing of the appointment of the examiners for practice-based programmes should be discussed during preparation of the application.

### 4.2 Timescales for Research Programme Approval

Although there may be a period of time between enrolment and submission of the formal Research Programme Approval application, the start date entered on this application is the start date stipulated in the Offer Letter.

Following enrolment, the Academic Regulations stipulate that applications for Research Programme Approval should be submitted within the following timescales.

#### Full-time

Award	Period from start date allowed for Research Programme Approval	Expected point for submission of final thesis
MA/MSc/LLM (by Research)	3 months	12 months
MPhil	3 months	24 months
PhD (via transfer from MPhil)	3 months	36 months
PhD Direct	3 months	24 months

#### Part-time

Award	Period from start date allowed for Research Programme Approval	Expected point for submission of final thesis
MA/MSc/LLM (by Research)	6 months	24 months

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MPhil	6 months	48 months
PhD (via transfer from MPhil)	6 months	72 months
PhD Direct	6 months	48 months
MD (Res) and MCh (Res)	6 months	36 months

It is important that these timescales are adhered to in order to maintain adequate progress within the expected duration of the research degree programme and to ensure timely completion. The student's progress will be monitored and where the student does not complete after time is permitted for remedy then a student's programme may be suspended or terminated. (See Section 7.)

The application is reviewed by a referee before formal submission to the Research Student Registry for RDT approval.

### 4.3 Ethical Clearance

The School has a particular responsibility at this stage to confirm that the proposed research does not contravene any agreed ethical principles. Ethical clearance must be sought immediately after Research Programme Approval from the appropriate UCLan Ethics Committee and where necessary from any external bodies where fieldwork is taking place or where there is a collaborative agreement. NOTE: Field work is not permitted until ethical approval has been received in writing from all relevant bodies.

### 4.4 Health & Safety

All research students must undertake the initial Health & Safety training and complete the Risk Assessment. This is part of the initial Induction day programme. No laboratory work or fieldwork is permitted until the training and assessment are completed.

### 4.5 Resources

In supporting the Research Programme Approval application, the School will confirm that the resources necessary for the work will be available and will ensure that the nature of research supervision is such that none of the proposed supervisors undertakes the supervision of an excessive number of students at any one time.

### 4.6 PhD (by Published Work) Candidates

Once the Research Degree Board has approved the admission and registration of the candidate for the PhD (by Published Work) the candidate is expected to prepare the synoptic commentary and submit it together with the Published Works and other documentation required within 12 months of the start date. The candidate may apply for a further, final period of 12 months.

## 5 SUPERVISION

Except for PhD (by Published Work) candidates, all Research Degree students are required to have at least two supervisors. The supervisory team will have the relevant research expertise and have successfully supervised two students to completion at or above the level of the target award.

Supervisory meetings should be regular and frequent and uninterrupted.

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Full-time research students will normally meet their supervisor(s) every fortnight and no less than once a month.

Part-time students will normally meet their supervisor(s) once a month and no less than once every two months.

Where a supervisor is absent from the University other than for a research sabbatical for a period longer than two months or where they leave their employment with the University the School is required to nominate and approved a replacement supervisor without delay but within two months of the start of the absence.

In short periods of absence other than for a research sabbatical the other supervisor(s) on the team should cover the role of the absent member of staff unless that supervisor is not a member of the University's staff, in which case a temporary, additional supervisor must be nominated and approved within a month of the start of the absence.

### **Supervision Records**

A written record of the meetings should be provided by the student detailing in particular the agreed actions required and the deadlines. Both the supervisor(s) and student should confirm each record is accurate and retain a copy. These records will form an integral part of the annual progression monitoring exercise.

A clear understanding between the supervisory team and the student needs to be established at an early stage about individuals' responsibilities, the research project, skills development and the student's written submissions. This should be recorded in writing and confirmed in writing by all parties.

Clear objectives must be set for each year of study and will form the criteria against which the student's progression will be measured at Annual Progression Monitoring. The objectives should include skills training. These objectives should be recorded in writing and approved in writing by all parties.

Training should be timely and should ensure that that the student has the skills to take the project forward and to meet the sector's expectations as set out in the Researcher Development Framework.

Clarification of responsibilities is particularly important with regard to the final submission, where it is expected that the supervisory team will help the student to decide on an appropriate structure and will give detailed comments and guidance based on a complete reading of at least one draft of the final thesis. However, the supervisory team must make it clear to the student that as a general principle the thesis must be the student's own work. These responsibilities should be recorded in writing and approved in writing by all parties.

### **5.1 The Supervisory Team's Responsibilities**

The supervisory team should encourage the student to submit his/her work for publication and will give the student clear written guidance on formal reports and manuscripts. Even if not submitted for publication, the student should write up full reports of each phase of the research as it is completed. Candidates initially approved to study for MPhil with the

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possibility of transfer to PhD must prepare and submit a Transfer Report as part of the transfer assessment process.

The supervisory team has the following responsibilities and appropriate written records will be maintained by the supervisory team:

- a) agreeing the annual objectives for satisfactory progression and obligatory skills training;
- b) providing guidance and advice on the research project and academic skills required;
- c) monitoring the progress of the student's research programme;
- d) establishing and maintaining regular contact with the student and ensuring reasonable availability when the student needs advice by whatever means is most suitable given the student's location and mode of study;
- e) identifying a student's development needs;
- f) providing timely, constructive and effective feedback on the student's work, including their overall progress;
- g) ensuring that the student is aware of the need to exercise probity and conduct research according to ethical principles, and to comply with the University Code of Conduct for Research;
- h) ensuring that the student is aware of institutional-level sources of advice and support, including skills training, careers guidance, health and safety legislation,
- i) providing effective pastoral support, dealing sensitively with the diverse needs of individual students and/or referring the student to other sources of such support as may be required by the circumstances, including staff in the Student Support and Wellbeing service, relevant Research Student Registry staff and others within the student's academic community;
- j) helping the student to interact with others working in the field of research, for example encouraging the student to attend relevant conferences and providing support in seeking funding for such events, and where appropriate to submit conference papers and articles to refereed journals;

### 5.2 The Student's Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the student include:

- a) discussing with the supervisors the amount and type of supervision, guidance, and comment that they find most helpful, and agreeing in writing a schedule of meetings;
- b) raising any concerns regarding any aspect of the work or the supervision to the attention of, in the first instance, the Director of Studies;

- c) adhering to the Code of Conduct for Research;
- d) maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the written schedule agreed with the supervisors, including, in particular, the presentation of written material, as required, in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage;
- e) completing the necessary research degree forms and the research student progress file, and submitting them to the Director of Studies;
- f) preparing jointly with the supervisors, as appropriate, research publications;
- g) completing the research skills training programme and undertaking any other such training that is agreed with the Director of Studies or is part of the agreed programme of work;
- h) utilising the facilities for learning and training provided by the sponsoring School and the University;
- i) giving presentations on aspects of the research work as agreed with the Director of Studies, but at least once in each year;
- j) submitting an appropriately typed and bound thesis taking account of the advice of the supervisory team;
- k) bringing to the immediate attention of the Director of Studies any circumstances that may require the mode of study to be altered or authorised interruption to study, or withdrawal.

### **5.3 Director of Studies' Responsibilities**

One supervisor will be the Director of Studies with the main responsibility for supervising the student on a regular and frequent basis. The Director of Studies manages the supervisory team, monitors the student's progress with the research project, the academic level of the research in relation to the target award, as well as all aspects of research governance relating to the project. The Director of Studies will be based in the sponsoring School and will take the initiative in developing and maintaining a working relationship with the student throughout. Students and supervisors differ in the degree of independence they expect or allow and this can reflect the conventions associated with a particular academic discipline.

The specific responsibilities of the Director of Studies include:

- a) agreeing in writing, a schedule of supervisory meetings with the student and the second supervisors and being accessible to the student at appropriate times when advice is needed;
- b) recording absences, arranging authorised interruptions to study eg for prolonged periods of illness;, reporting unauthorised absences

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- c) setting and recording in writing the criteria for progression for each year of the research programme;
- d) arranging the Annual Progression Monitoring meeting with the student and second supervisors in liaison with the Research Degrees Tutor, (see Section 6.2);
- e) co-ordinating and submitting the documentation required at various stages of the programme, liaising with the Research Student Registry and relevant Research Degrees Tutor, attending meetings of these committees as required, and liaising with those involved in procedures relating to research degrees, including the referees nominated to consider Research Programme Approval and Transfer applications;
- f) ensuring that the student's progression is appropriate and maintained, and providing advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work, particularly with regard to transfer from MPhil to PhD, so that the thesis may be submitted within the required timeframe;
- g) requesting written work regularly, as appropriate, including the final draft of the thesis, and providing feedback within a reasonable and agreed time;
- h) encouraging the student to engage widely in discussion with the appropriate academic community both within and outside the University;
- i) ensuring the student gives at least one presentation of some aspect of the research in each year of the research programme, attending these presentations, and providing constructive feedback;
- j) being aware of any changes in the student's requirements that might warrant his/her programme or award being changed, his/her mode of study being changed and making arrangements to submit the appropriate application to the Research Student Registry;
- i) co-ordinating the contributions from other supervisors, advisors, and collaborating establishments;
- k) ensuring continuous and adequate supervision when they will be unavailable for a period to act as Director of Studies;
- l) overseeing the student's ethical approval(s)/clearance(s) and ensuring awareness and adherence to the Code of Conduct for Research.



**5.4 Second Supervisor(s)' Responsibilities**

Each second supervisor's responsibilities will be agreed in writing prior to the application for Research Programme Approval being processed. In general, these responsibilities include:

- a) providing additional guidance and constructive feedback to the student and Director of Studies on the planning, timetable, and conduct of the research, expected standards, and progress;
- b) providing specialist expertise, as required, for the research project;
- c) maintaining a knowledge of the current status of the student's research and progress;
- d) being accessible to the student, at appropriate times, for consultation;
- e) meeting with the student and Director of Studies according to an agreed schedule and at least once a term;
- f) being prepared to take over on a temporary basis, as Director of Studies should the need arise;
- g) attending seminars and workshops organised for supervisors of research students.

Where the supervisor is a member of another university or institution, the supervisor will normally only fulfil the responsibilities outlined in 5.3a-5.3e.

**6 OTHER STAFF INVOLVED IN QUALITY ASSURANCE AND RESEARCH DEGREE SUPPORT**

**6.1 Dean/Head of School**

The responsibilities of the Dean/Head of School with regard to research degrees students include:

- a) ensuring and overseeing the quality assurance processes for research degrees within the school from student admission until submission of thesis;
- b) checking and approving admissions and satisfying themselves that all major requirements as stated in the regulations are fulfilled;
- c) appointing at least one appropriately qualified Research Degrees Tutor.
- d) ensuring satisfactory standards of supervision.
- e) ensuring appropriate standards of research governance are maintained.

## 6.2 School Research Degrees Tutor

The responsibilities of the Research Degrees Tutor include:

- a) co-ordinating the School's internal QA processes with supervisory teams and other Research Degree Tutors in the School
- b) co-ordinating and advising on admissions applications and acting as a focal point for the School in liaison with other services;
- c) advising the Dean/Head of School regarding the implications of admitting any applicant including supervision capacity, research governance and Intellectual Property Rights considerations, financial and resource implications;
- d) approving Research Programme Approval applications, and changes to approved programmes;
- e) monitoring the progress of the school's research students in line with the academic regulations;
- f) co-ordinating the Annual Progression Monitoring exercise, with the Dean/Head of School if appropriate, as part of the quality assurance process;
- g) preparing an Annual Report with the Dean/Head of School on the operation of research degree programmes within the school;
- h) monitoring and advertising a regular programme of meetings and seminar presentations to support the development of presentation and communication skills for postgraduate research students;
- i) assisting with induction activities and organising School induction programmes where required;
- j) attending training seminars and other events for Research Degree Tutors, for example updates on procedures, governance and regulations, and advising and disseminating information to supervisors and the Dean/Head of School.

In the case of the Research Degrees Tutor being the Director of Studies for a student, another person shall be nominated to take the Research Degree Tutor's role. This may be the Dean of School.

## 6.3 Academic Advisor

Each student will have an academic adviser (who will not be one of the supervisors or the Dean/Head of School). The aim of the role is to enhance the student's overall experience at UCLan.

## **6.4 Key Contacts in the Research Student Registry**

### **6.4.1 Key Contact**

Each student will have a Key Contact located in the Research Student Registry (the Key Contact is dependent on the School and subject area the student belongs to). The Key Contact is a Senior Administrative Officer who is responsible for the administration and co-ordination of the procedures relating to the various stages of a research degree programme (from the point of completion of the admission process until submission of the thesis).

Key Contacts are the first point of contact if a research student or member of staff has a general enquiry or requires guidance, advice, or information on a particular issue relating to research degrees.

The main responsibilities of the Key Contacts include:

- a) enrolling research students, including notification of tuition fees;
- b) maintaining individual student files (both manual and computer record systems) in relation to the various stages of the research degree programme;
- c) administering and supporting the Research Degrees Board, the Research Degree Tutors, and individual supervisors;
- d) contributing to and providing support for the induction and training of research staff and students as required;
- e) issuing Progress Files to new students;
- f) organising the annual progression monitoring exercise, progression boards, and related programme administration.

### **6.4.2 Examinations Officer**

The Examinations Officer in the Research Student Registry is a Senior Administrative Assistant who is responsible for the administration of the procedures relating to research degree examination up to conferral of the final award. The Examinations Officer is the first point of contact if a student or member of staff has a general enquiry about the examinations process or requires guidance, advice, or information on a particular issue relating to examination.

### **6.4.3 Admissions Team**

The Admissions Team in the Research Student Registry receive all research degree applications and are responsible for the administration and co-ordination of the admissions process, including issuing offers to students and confirming their admission. The Admissions Team is the first point of contact if an applicant or member of staff has a general enquiry about admission to a research degree programme, or requires guidance, advice, or information relating to admissions, including general entry requirements, studentships, and English language requirements.

#### 6.4.4 Training Team

The Training Team in the Research & Innovation Office organises and co-ordinates the University's central programme of skills training events for research students, including the regular induction sessions for new students.

#### 6.5 Referees

The Referee is appointed by the School to undertake an in-depth review of the academic probity of an application. Referees are appointed for applicants for candidature for a PhD (by Published Work), for Research Programme Approval or for an application to Transfer from MPhil to PhD and are required to provide or contribute to an evaluative report.

For PhD (by Published Work) applications referees are expected to comment on:

- whether the published work is (or is highly likely to be) sufficient to support a doctoral level award;
- the extent of the candidate's contribution is clear and sufficient in any joint publications and demonstrates a significant, original and independent contribution;
- the standard of the works is an appropriate academic level and show the required research skills for the award.

For Research Programme Approval applications referees may meet with the supervisory team and student in order to complete the review of an application for. Referees are expected to comment and report on:

- the overall structure of the programme;
- the aims and objectives of the research;
- the relationship of the research to previous work/brief literature review;
- the proposed methodology, experimental design, timescales, and underpinning activities;
- the suitability of the programme for the target award;
- any issues other than academic probity, that come to the attention of the referee and which are of concern, or may impact on the programme and have not otherwise been addressed e.g. research governance, financial resources, facilities;
- the element of originality (MPhil/PhD, PhD), or of the significant contribution (MD [Res], MCh [Res]);
- whether the point of transfer is clearly delineated and at an appropriate stage of the project (MPhil/PhD).

For the Transfer application, referees will attend the Transfer Viva. It is expected that the referee appointed will have subject expertise in the area of the application and knowledge and understanding of research degrees procedures. One or more referees will be appointed for each application. Referees are expected to comment and report on:

- the quality and quantity of work produced is sufficient to indicate that PhD standard can be achieved;
- the level of academic writing being suitable for doctoral work;
- there is a likelihood of an original, independent and significant contribution to knowledge;

- there is evidence that the student can deliver at PhD Level;
- the student has acquired the appropriate research and other skills to be able to deliver at PhD level;
- the PhD can be delivered within the timescales;
- any issues other than academic probity that come to the attention of the referee, which are of concern, may impact on the programme and which have not otherwise been addressed e.g. ethical issues or other aspects of research governance for the PhD stage, facilities.

## **7 MONITORING STUDENTS' PROGRESS**

### **7.1 Regulations**

The University is committed to ensuring that its research students are encouraged and enabled to complete their research degrees within the required timescales and, where appropriate, within the period of grant support. Students' progression is monitored according to the University's Academic Regulations for Research Degrees, which can be found at the following link: [https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/life/rules\\_regs.php](https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/life/rules_regs.php)

These have been designed to ensure that supervisory teams provide support and guidance to research students to enable them to complete their research and theses successfully within the regulatory timescales and where there are any deficiencies provide the opportunity for students to take remedial action to restore their academic progress to a satisfactory level and enable completion within those required timescales.

### **7.2 Progress File**

Research students will be issued with a Progress File which will be used throughout each year of the programme and is a record of supervision meetings, training completed, and other research activities. It will form part of the Annual Progression Monitoring exercise. The File provides students with a mechanism for identifying their strengths and weaknesses, planning and recording their development and reflecting upon their achievements and/or difficulties. The student is required to maintain the Progress File throughout the year.

The Progress File will also be reviewed by the supervisory team as part of the mechanism for monitoring student's progression with the research project and skills development. The Research Degree Tutor will review the file at Annual Progression Monitoring or if needed when discussing the student's progression. Other staff or examiners may also request the file to be made available to them.

Types of evidence which should be included in the Progress File are:

- Supervision records
- Certificates of attendance at courses/seminars/workshops etc. (internal and external). As attendance at the Research Student Registry Induction is compulsory, evidence of this is essential
- Conference abstract booklets
- Confirmation of attendance at external conferences
- Poster/oral/written presentation materials which you may have prepared on your research

- Module description, work undertaken and transcript of module mark, where your supervisory team has indicated attendance at a University module
- Certificates/details of any research training workshops you have attended.
- Details of attendance/participation at research seminars (internal and external)
- Copy of your Research Programme Approval Form
- Copy of your Transfer Report
- Copies of any publications
- An evaluation of the learning experience for each year of study (eg a reflection on what you have achieved so far, what you are trying to achieve, what the next steps might be).

### 7.3 Progression Monitoring

In order to monitor progress, the University believes that it is essential that written plans of work and criteria to determine satisfactory progress are clearly established on a regular basis. Such plans and criteria should be the product of a discussion between the research student and the supervisory team. Normally, this discussion will lead to an agreed plan of work and criteria to determine satisfactory progress, although if no agreement can be reached, it may be necessary for the supervisory team to insist on the inclusion of particular items in the plan or criteria. In such cases, however, the student would have a right to ask the Dean/ Head of School (or nominee from outside the supervisory team) to review the situation to see if agreement can be reached.

Supervisory teams and students should include the following progression criteria in the year's programme of work:

- participating in the compulsory University induction programme (first year students);
- working in accordance with standard safety protocols;
- working in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Research;
- attending appropriate School/University training sessions, as required;
- attending regular meetings with the Director of Studies and supervisory team as agreed;
- agreeing with supervisors a schedule of research work; adhering to timescales for such work, e.g. literature review or contemporary context;
- Research Programme Approval within the appropriate regulatory timescale;
- transferring to the PhD phase within 12-18 months for full-time students (or 24-36 months part-time);
- participating in and successfully completing the agreed research training programme;
- participating in and successfully completing the University's Graduate Skills training course or equivalent (full-time first years);

- maintaining adequate laboratory notebooks where the programme is laboratory based;
- giving at least one presentation per year;
- demonstrating an understanding of the contemporary context of the research;
- presenting written material within deadlines agreed with the supervisory team;
- attending conferences as required, subject to available resources.

The University recognizes the creative and sometimes unpredictable nature of postgraduate research. It therefore intends for some of the above criteria to be applied flexibly to take account of any special factors in the research or the School in order to encourage the pursuit of innovative research and facilitate the successful completion of research degrees of the highest quality by the required submission point. Where supervisors consider it is appropriate to be flexible they will provide written support with the relevant documentation to the Research Student Registry for consideration by the Research Degree Tutor, Research Degrees Board or Progression Board of the Research Degrees Board.

For a research student to progress, it is mandatory to be satisfactorily enrolled, for acceptable arrangements for fee payment to have been agreed with the University, and for the annual progression monitoring exercise to have been satisfactorily completed.

#### **7.4 Annual Progression Monitoring Exercise**

Students' progress is continually assessed by their supervisors. The University also has an annual progression monitoring exercise to assess whether students are on track to complete their degree in a timely manner. Progress with the project will be monitored in accordance with the published timescales. Schools must indicate formally whether they support a research student's progression into the next academic session. Students who are not recommended to progress may have the opportunity to undertake remedial action notified to them in writing by the Research Degrees Progression Board. The University recognises, however, that in some cases it may be necessary to terminate the studies of a research student if written criteria for satisfactory progression have not been achieved and if reasonable attempts to redress the situation have failed.

Students who do not complete Research Programme Approval or Transfer from MPhil to PhD within the regulatory windows will be referred and required to complete the relevant process during the remedial period. If the Research Programme Approval or Transfer is not completed satisfactorily following this opportunity for remedy then the student's studies will be terminated at the Re-Assessment Board.

All students will have access to the progression appeals procedure for research students contained in the University's Assessment Handbook.

#### **7.5 Progress during the academic session**

If it becomes clear at any time during an academic session that a student is not making satisfactory progress, the student's programme may be terminated in accordance with the

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procedure for Withdrawal of a Student from a Research Degree during an Academic Session for Academic Reasons (contained in the Assessment Handbook).

All students will have access to the progression appeals procedure for research students contained in the University's Assessment Handbook.

### 7.6 Interruptions to study

The University permits students to apply for an authorised interruption to their studies for up to 12 months due to unforeseen or exceptional circumstances. The maximum cumulative time that can be approved at School level is 24 months). For further information see the Guidelines to Interruptions to Study in the University's Assessment Handbook.

## 8 RESEARCH TRAINING

### 8.1 Introduction

Skills training is an integral part of all research degree programmes. All students must engage with the training programme and understand that progression is assessed on both progress with the research project and with skills development.

Throughout their research degree programme research students are required to develop their research skills as set out in the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. They are essential for enabling completion of the research degree and work in a research environment as well as for future careers. Such skills should be developed through any of the available mechanisms at the University including self-direction, supervisory support and mentoring, School support, workshops, conferences, selected training courses, University induction and training, and formal and informal seminars. It is expected that additional subject-specific research skills will be identified under the guidance of the supervisory team on commencement. The supervisory team may specify other obligatory training during the course of the research programme. The supervisors will also ensure that students have developed their research and other skills to the required levels in an appropriate timescale to facilitate the successful completion of the research degree.

Where students cannot demonstrate they have satisfactorily developed the skills required to support the research project then the supervisory team may REFER the student at Annual Progression Monitoring or at other times during the academic session may invoke the Exclusion Procedure for Research Students.

UCLan provides a wide range of training covering the Vitae Researcher Development Framework which is the key reference statement for the development of postgraduate researchers' skills and attributes. Further information on the Vitae Framework can be downloaded from the Vitae website:

<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/>

### 8.2 Mandatory Training

1. Induction



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Induction is mandatory for all research students, as this provides students with the essential information for undertaking research especially understanding how to conduct research ethically and health & safety. It also includes completion of the initial risk assessment. Students should complete induction within the first month of their studies and will be unable to continue with their programme unless and until they have done so, have received the relevant training and completed the initial risk assessment.

### 2 Graduate Skills Course for Full-time Students

To ensure full-time students acquire the skills needed in a timely way they are required to attend the 5 day Graduate Research Skills Course as early as possible in their programme. This course provides the core essential skills required by research students at the outset of their research degree. Where students can demonstrate they have already acquired the requisite skills delivered on the course then exemption may be granted. Exemption for the course or parts thereof may be sought if an alternative course is available. Where a student does not attend the complete course within the first year of study and the student cannot demonstrate they have satisfactorily developed the skills required then the supervisory team may REFER to undertake remedial work to make good the deficit at the student at Annual Progression Monitoring. (See also Section 7.)

### 3 Health & Safety Training for Laboratory based research

This training will be organised by Schools in conjunction with the University's Safety, Health & Environment Advisers. It is a disciplinary offence for a research student to work in a laboratory without having undergone the requisite training, such offences will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations in the Regulations for the Conduct of Students.

### 4 Other Mandatory training

Supervisors may prescribe training that is mandatory for a student this should be recorded in writing as part of the objectives for the year together with a deadline for successful completion. Where the training does not take place and progression is impeded then the supervisory team may seek to withdraw the student under the procedure for Withdrawal of a Student from a Research Degree during an Academic Session for Academic Reasons (contained in the Assessment Handbook) or the supervisory team may give a REFER recommendation at Annual Progression Monitoring whereby the student will be required to undertake remedial work to make good the deficit. (See also Section 7.)

## 9 TRANSFER FROM MPhil TO PHD

This is a formal progression point. The University requires students enrolled for the programme: 'MPhil with possibility of transfer to PhD' to apply to the Research Degrees Board for transfer within either 12-18 months (full-time students) or 24-36 months (part-time students). The aim is to establish whether the student has produced work of sufficient quantity and quality and demonstrated the requisite skills e.g. academic writing skills, to indicate whether he or she can achieve PhD standard within the published timescales. Where the transfer does not take place and progression is impeded then the supervisory team may seek to withdraw the student under the procedure for Withdrawal Of a Student from a Research Degree During an Academic Session for Academic Reasons (contained in the Assessment Handbook) or the supervisory team may give a REFER recommendation at Annual

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Progression Monitoring whereby the student will be required to undertake remedial work to make good the deficit. (See also Section 7.)

The quality criterion relates to the ability to produce work that makes an original contribution to knowledge of the subject. The potential of the project to do this will have been indicated at the time of Research Programme Approval, when the MPhil and PhD levels are required to be clearly delineated. Transfer from MPhil to PhD is accepted if the project not only promises a useful body of knowledge but also has the potential to make an original, independent, and significant contribution to knowledge of the subject.

The Transfer Report has two functions: firstly to show that the student can summarise work done so far and articulate its significance, and secondly to provide a detailed plan of the further research work that builds upon MPhil findings towards an independent significant contribution at PhD level. The report should include:

- a) an abstract;
- b) a brief review and discussion of the work already completed including a portfolio of research work accomplished and/or published;
- c) a detailed plan of the intended further work, including details of the original, significant and independent contribution to knowledge which is likely to emerge;
- d) an up-to-date list of references and/or bibliography.

The Director of Studies has a responsibility to encourage the student to prepare in good time for the application to transfer, and make clear to the student what is required and on what basis the application will be evaluated. Should any aspect of the transfer process remain unclear to the student, s/he should seek further clarification from whatever sources are available (e.g. the supervisors, Research Degrees Tutor, or the Key Contact).

### 9.1 Procedure

- The Supervisory Team decides that a student is ready to transfer (this should be within the published transfer 'window' of 12-18 months for full-time students and 24-36 months for part-time students. (See Section 7 on Progression if a student is not ready within this period to transfer.)
- The student produces the Transfer Report.
- The Supervisory Team writes a report of student's progress on the Transfer Form (RDSC3) and sends this to the other members of the Panel.
- The Director of Studies convenes a Panel for the Transfer Viva, which will include the Referee and Research Degrees Tutor, and arranges the date and for circulation of the student's Transfer Report to the Panel.
- For practice-based projects, the Referee may require evidence of the practice as well as written work and can therefore ask for a presentation if it is thought necessary.

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- At the end of the Transfer Viva the Panel will decide whether the student has reached a quality threshold to be allowed to progress to PhD, provide feedback to the student and records the outcomes on the RDSC3 form. If major issues are identified, the student will be asked to re-apply for transfer within the maximum 'window' deadline.
- The Research Degrees Board makes the final decision on transfer based on the Panel's recommendations.
- For practice-based projects where the examiners assess the practice as part of the final submission the team should confirm on the RDSC3 form the nature of the practice-based element and the timing of the assessment for the exam arrangements.

### 9.2 Assessment

The assessment of the transfer request from MPhil to PhD will be judged on the following criteria:

- whether the candidate has presented their research satisfactorily;
- whether the Abstract is satisfactory and reflects the content of the Transfer Report;
- whether the quality and quantity of work produced is sufficient to indicate that PhD can be achieved;
- whether the level of academic writing and standard of presentation is suitable for doctoral work;
- whether there is likely to be an original independent and significant contribution to knowledge and whether this has been clearly articulated in the report;
- whether there is evidence of satisfactory progress with the project to indicate that the PhD completion will be timely;
- whether there has been satisfactory progress with the programme of skills training and that the student has acquired the appropriate research and other skills to be able to deliver at PhD;
- whether there are any issues other than academic probity which are of concern and may impact on the programme and which have not been addressed during the review process e.g. ethical issues or other aspects of research governance for the PhD stage, or facilities.

## 10 PREPARATION OF THE THESIS FOR EXAMINATION

The Director of Studies has a responsibility to encourage the student to begin preparing the final draft of the thesis at a point in time that will ensure submission by the expected submission point.

The presentation of the thesis must adhere to The Exams and Thesis Guide. There is also a checklist appended to the Code of Practice for the evaluation of theses. It provides a framework for the preparation of the thesis.

The Director of Studies will discuss with the student the criteria on which theses are assessed. It is the student's responsibility, however, to seek clarification on any issues about which uncertainty remains.

The student is encouraged to circulate for comment draft copies of sections of the thesis to the second supervisor(s), to representatives from the collaborating body, and to individuals outside the supervisory team but not to the examiners.

Students should submit copies of their thesis for the oral examination in soft binding. However, the final thesis must be presented in a permanent binding, of a type and design approved by the University, and an electronic copy provided for the University's Institutional repository, CLoK, before the degree can be awarded. Whilst submission of the thesis is at the discretion of the student the candidate should be confident that there is a likelihood of success and should bear in mind that it would be unwise to submit against the advice of their supervisors. Equally, advice from supervisors that a thesis is ready to submit is not a guarantee of success at examination.

## **11 THE EXAMINATION**

Research Degree examinations consist of two parts: the submission of a thesis or thesis and practice-based materials and its defence by oral examination. Candidates must complete both parts to the satisfaction of the examiners.

### **11.1 The Examination Arrangements**

Once the Director of Studies considers there is a likelihood that a satisfactory thesis for the award is in progress he/ she will take the initiative in discussing with the student when it would be appropriate for the examination arrangements to be made, bearing in mind that proposals for these arrangements should be submitted to the Research Degrees Board at least four months before the thesis is submitted. A thesis cannot be considered as submitted until approved examination arrangements are in place.

The Director of Studies and the student both have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the University's regulations pertaining to the examination of theses, including the facility and the grounds for appealing against an examination decision. The Director of Studies will take the initiative in discussing the regulations with the student, but it is the student's responsibility to seek further clarification if this is necessary. Briefings on the research degree examination process are available from the Research Student Registry. Students will be invited to attend the next available session following approval of the examination arrangements.

Once it is agreed that the examination arrangements should be made, the Director of Studies will inform the Dean/Head of School and the Research Degrees Tutor.

The Dean/Head of School has the responsibility to consult widely before making proposals for the examination arrangements to the Research Degrees Board and should avoid any unnecessary delay before submitting these proposals, using the appropriate form. The Dean/ Head of School must ensure that all proposed examiners meet the University Regulations. Where required an Independent Chair will be appointed by the Research Student Registry.

Supervisors cannot be involved in the examination of the thesis. Supervisors may, at the invitation of the candidate only, attend the oral examination but cannot participate and must withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.

Responsibility for the examination arrangements resides with the Research Student Registry, the internal examiner, and the Research Degrees Board, who have a responsibility to keep the student informed as to how the arrangements are progressing, including the date of the oral examination and names of the appointed examiners.

### **11.2 Preparation for the Examination**

Once the final draft of the thesis is nearing completion, the Director of Studies should encourage the student to have a practice oral examination and should make the agreed arrangements for this. At this stage it will be important to reiterate the criteria on which theses are assessed and to discuss the significance of the oral examination itself.

The Research Student Registry will advise the student of the dates for a pre-examination briefing session run by the Registry staff.

### **11.3 Revising the Thesis**

Most candidates will be required by the examiners to revise the thesis. There are three types of corrections for MPhil, PhD, including the PhD (by Published Work) award, MCh, MD, and professional doctorates. For MA/MSc/LLM (by Research) categories 11.3.1 and 11.3.3 apply only. Under no circumstances should any changes be made to the thesis after the oral examination, other than those required by the examining team.

#### **11.3.1 Minor Amendments**

Where the examiners require minor amendments to the thesis the corrections will not alter the results or the conclusions. Typically the amendments will be of a clerical nature or (e.g. amendment of typographical errors, grammar, punctuation, or phraseology) or minor local improvements in descriptions, explanations, or arguments. These should be done to the satisfaction of the internal examiner before the student submits final copies for binding to the Research Student Registry. Minor amendments to the thesis must be completed within the period allowed by the examiners. The maximum time permissible is three months from the date of the latest part of the examination. The examiner(s) will check the amendments list against both the original and revised versions of the thesis as part of the process of clearing the thesis.

#### **11.3.2 Major Revisions**

For the awards of MPhil, MCh (Res), MD (Res) or PhD awards, the examiners may stipulate that major revisions should be undertaken to the thesis. This will involve limited additional work and rewriting of certain sections. Major revisions must be completed within the time determined by the examiners which will be a period of three to a maximum of six months from the date of the latest part of the examination. If the examination was conducted by two external examiners and one internal examiner, only one of the external examiners plus the internal are required to approve any major revisions.

#### **11.3.3 Resubmission**

Resubmission indicates that the student has not yet met the required standards for the award and that substantial rewriting is required to make the thesis acceptable. It may involve substantial rewriting of sections; the introduction of new material; further research; further analysis of the material, or further development of the arguments. The examiners will determine the time allowed which will be within a period of three to six calendar months for MA/MSc/LLM (by Research) or for MPhil, MCh (Res), MD (Res) or PhD awards within a

period of six months to a maximum of one calendar year from the date advised in the letter sent by the Research Student Registry. The student should seek support and guidance from the supervisory team who should ensure ready access to required facilities at the University. All students shall receive written guidance from the examining team on the revisions that are necessary through the Research Student Registry.

## **12 OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT**

- Academic Advisor;
- Research Degrees Tutor;
- Key Contact about fees and research degree administrative matters;
- Advice or counselling is available from the Student Support & Wellbeing Service;
- Advice is available from the Student Union Advice Centre.

## **13 COMPLAINTS BY RESEARCH STUDENTS**

Complaints relating to the research degree programme, supervision, resources, or facilities for that programme should be taken forward under the University's Complaints Procedure which can be found here at the following page

[https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/life/rules\\_regs.php](https://www.uclan.ac.uk/students/life/rules_regs.php) .

Research students should have many local routes whereby concerns and issues can be raised and addressed. Students are encouraged to make full use of these routes, which include, for example, the Director of Studies, second supervisors, and the School Research Degrees Tutor. The University does, however, recognise that there may be occasions when a research student has cause for complaint or grievance about supervision or the related resources or service received. When this happens, the Complaints Procedure is intended to provide an accessible, fair, and straightforward system which ensures an effective, prompt and appropriate response.

Where research students feel that some aspect of supervision or resources required for the programme is proving unduly problematic, then they have a responsibility to bring these problems to the attention of the individual(s) concerned immediately. Where these difficulties cannot be resolved informally, then the approved complaints procedure should be used.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This Code of Practice has been prepared for internal use at the University of Central Lancashire.

In preparing it, reference has been made to the publications listed below and parts of the handbook are a compilation from them.

**University Academic Regulations**

**The University's AQA Manual**

**The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education** Quality Code for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education: Postgraduate research programmes.

## APPENDICES





**CODE OF PRACTICE RELATING TO THE SUPERVISION EXAMINATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF RESEARCH STUDENTS**

**APPENDIX 1: TIMESCALES FOR RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

<b><u>ACTION</u></b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>							
	<b>FT MPhil/PhD DEADLINE</b>	<b>PT MPhil/PhD DEADLINE</b>	<b>FT PhD DIRECT DEADLINE</b>	<b>PT PhD DIRECT DEADLINE</b>	<b>FT LLM/MA/ MSc (by Research) DEADLINE</b>	<b>PT LLM/MA/ MSc (by Research) DEADLINE</b>	<b>PT MD (Res) DEADLINE</b>	<b>PT PhD (by Published Work) DEADLINE</b>
Attend compulsory Induction event	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks
Agree schedule of meetings with supervisors for the coming year	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks
Agree your individual training plan with your supervisors	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks	Within 2 weeks
Attend compulsory skills training course	Year 1	Year 1	Year 1	Year 1	Year 1	Year 1	Year 1	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING RESEARCH PROGRAMME APPROVAL DOCUMENT</b>	<b>Within 3 months</b>	<b>Within 6 months</b>	<b>Within 3 months</b>	<b>Within 6 months</b>	<b>Within 3 months</b>	<b>Within 6 months</b>	<b>Within 6 months</b>	<i>Not applicable</i>
<b>Annual presentation of research</b>	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year
Annual Progression Monitoring (Part 1) - end-of-year meeting with supervisory team	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year
Annual Progression Monitoring (Part 2) - end-of-year meeting with RDT	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year	End of May each year
<b>DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF TRANSFER TO PhD</b>	<b>Within 18 months</b>	<b>Within 36 months</b>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
Examination arrangements to be submitted by School	Within 30 months	Within 66 months	Within 18 months	Within 42 months	Within 9 months	Within 18 months	Within 30 months	Within 9 months
<b>EXPECTED DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF FINAL THESIS</b>	<b>Within 36 months</b>	<b>Within 72 months</b>	<b>Within 24 months</b>	<b>Within 48 months</b>	<b>Within 12 months</b>	<b>Within 24 months</b>	<b>Within 36 months</b>	<b>Within 12 months</b>



## APPENDIX 2: CHECKLIST FOR THE EVALUATION OF THESES

(from Howard & Sharp, 1983, pp.207-208)

Reading drafts requires much time, critical ability and patience of supervisors. With regard to the content, the questions below can be used as a checklist by the student to ensure that the work is worthwhile and by the supervisor in focusing his/her reading through the draft thesis or chapters.

Checklist for reading drafts.

1. Evidence of an original investigation or the testing of ideas:
  - a. Was the aim of the research clearly described?
  - b. Were the hypotheses to be tested, questions to be answered, or methods to be developed clearly stated?
  - c. Was the relationship between the current and previous research in related topics areas defined, with similarities and differences stressed?
  - d. Are the nature and extent of the original contribution clear?
2. Competence in independent work or experimentation:
  - a. Was the methodology employed appropriate? Was its use justified and was the way it was applied adequately described?
  - b. Were variables that might influence the study recognised and either controlled in the research design or properly measured?
  - c. Were valid and reliable instruments used to collect the data?
  - d. Was there evidence of care and accuracy in recording and summarising the data?
  - e. Is evidence displayed of knowledge of, and the ability to use, all relevant data sources?
  - f. Were limitations inherent in the study recognised and stated?
  - g. Were the conclusions reached justifiable in the light of the data and the way they were analysed?
3. An understanding of appropriate techniques:
  - a. Given the facilities available, did it seem that the best possible techniques were employed to gather and analyse data?
  - b. Was full justification given for the use of the techniques selected and were they adequately described? In particular were they properly related to the stated aims of the research?
4. Ability to make critical use of published work and source materials:
  - a. Was the literature referenced pertinent to the research?
  - b. To what extent could general reference to the literature be criticised on the grounds of insufficiency or excessiveness?
  - c. Was evidence presented of skills in searching the literature?
  - d. Was due credit given to previous workers for ideas and techniques used by the author?
  - e. Is evidence displayed of the ability to identify key items in the literature and to compare, contrast and critically review them?
5. Appreciation of the relationship of the special theme to the wider field of knowledge (for PhD theses only):

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- a. Was the relationship between the current and previous research in related topic areas defined, with similarities and differences stressed?
  - b. Was literature in related disciplines reviewed?
  - c. Was an attempt made to present previous work within an overall conceptual framework and in a systematic way?
6. Worthy, in part, of publication:
- a. Was the organisation of the report logical and was the style attractive?
  - b. With appropriate extraction and editing could the basis of articles or a book be identified?
7. Originality as shown by the topic researched or the methodology employed (for PhD theses only):
- a. To what extent was the topic selected novel?
  - b. Was there evidence of innovation in research methodology compared with previous practice in the field?
8. Distinct contribution to knowledge:
- a. What new material was reported?
  - b. To what extent would the new material be perceived as a valuable addition to a field of knowledge?
  - c. To what extent do the conclusions overturn or challenge previous beliefs?
  - d. Were the findings compared with the findings of any similar studies?
  - e. Was the new contribution clearly delimited and prospects for further work identified?
  - f. To what extent does the work open up whole new areas for future research?

**APPENDIX 3: LIST OF USEFUL PUBLICATIONS**

Bell, J: *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education & Social Science*: OU Press; 1993

Berry, R: *The Research Project: How to Write It* (3rd Edition); Routledge; 1994

Cresswell J W: *Research design; qualitative and quantitative approaches*: Sage Publications; 1994

Cryer, P (ed): *Developing Postgraduates' Key Skills* The Society for Research into Higher Education and the Times Higher Education Supplement 1998

Cryer, P *The Research Student's Guide to Success* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Buckingham: Open University Press 2000

Delamont S, Atkinson, D and Parry O: *Supervising the PhD - A Guide to Success*, Open University Press; 1997.

Finn, John A; *Getting a PhD*, Routledge 2005

Greenfield, Tony: *Research methods for postgraduates* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Arnold 2002

Murray, Rowena: *How to write a thesis* (1<sup>st</sup> edition) Open University Press 2002

Murray, Rowena: *How to survive your viva* (1st edition) Open University Press 2003

Phillips, E and Pugh, D *How to get a PhD* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) Buckingham: Open University Press (2000)

Salmon, P (1992) *Achieving a PhD – Ten Students' Experience*, Trentam Books 1992

Sharp, J A, and Howard, K: *The Management of a Student Research Project*: Aldershot: Gower (1996).

Tinkler, Penny and Jackson, Carolyn: *The Doctoral Examination Process*: Open University Press 2004