



University of  
Central Lancashire  
UCLan

# Research Student Assessment Handbook

Effective September 2020 to present

Student Regulations and Policies

[uclan.ac.uk/studentcontract](http://uclan.ac.uk/studentcontract)

# **UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE**

## **RESEARCH STUDENT ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK**

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees and Professional Doctorates and the Assessment Handbook for Taught Programmes

## **Preface**

This Handbook contains assessment policy and procedures for postgraduate research degree programmes that underpin and carry the same authority as the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees and applies to provision delivered in the UK or overseas. It should be read in conjunction with the Assessment Handbook for Taught Programmes.

Any reference in this Handbook to an office holder of the University (e.g. Dean/Head of School) includes a nominee acting on behalf of that office holder.



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## **1. Assessments**

### **1.1. Research Programme Approval**

Research Programme Approval (RPA) is an assessment of progress and successful completion of the RPA process constitutes the first progression criterion for all research degree students.

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.

#### **1.1.1. Timescales**

The completed documentation must be submitted to the referee within 3 months of the programme start date for full time students and 6 months for part time students. Two attempts at RPA will be allowed. If RPA is not successfully completed after two attempts then the student will be withdrawn from their research degree programme.

#### **1.1.2. Approval**

Once the referee has approved the RPA final approval by the allocated Research Degrees Tutor is required.

### **1.2. Annual Assessment of Progress**

Every research student will undergo an annual assessment of their progress. The process is designed to ensure every student has made sufficient progress with their research to submit by the expected date, has undertaken the necessary skills training, is receiving regular supervision and has access to appropriate facilities to enable them to complete their degree successfully.

The Annual Assessment of Progress Process

There are 4 parts to the process:

1. Student self-assessment
2. Assessment by the supervisory team
3. Assessment by the Research Degrees |Tutor
4. Consideration and confirmation of the recommendation

| The Annual Assessment of Progress Process                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STUDENT</b> completes <b>REPORT A</b> (end of year self-assessment report).</li> <li>• <b>STUDENT</b> emails the entire document to each member of the supervisory team</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STUDENT</b> meets Supervisory team</li> <li>• <b>SUPERVISORY TEAM</b> reviews the AAP document.</li> <li>• <b>SUPERVISORY TEAM</b> contribute to completion of REPORT B.</li> <li>• <b>DIRECTOR OF STUDIES</b> emails the entire document to the RDT.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STUDENT</b> meets with the RDT</li> <li>• <b>RDT</b> reviews the file.</li> <li>• <b>RDT</b> completes <b>REPORT C</b>.</li> <li>• <b>RDT</b> emails the entire document to help4researchstudent@uclan.ac.uk (copied to the Head of School by exception only).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                               |
| Progression Board takes place                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <p>If remedial work is required, this is carried out over the specified referral period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>STUDENT</b> sends the remedial work to the supervisory team by the given deadline.</li> <li>• <b>DIRECTOR OF STUDIES</b> updates <b>REPORT B (Reassessment section)</b>.</li> <li>• <b>DIRECTOR OF STUDIES</b> emails the entire document to help4researchstudent@uclan.ac.uk (copied to the Head of School by exception only).</li> </ul> |
| Reassessment Board takes place                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

#### *The RDT meeting*

- If the School RDT is a member of a student's Supervisory Team, an alternative RDT must be sought either from within or outside of the School. RDTs can make their own informal arrangements to share RDT meeting responsibility where there are differences in workload.
- This meeting provides students with access to someone outside of their supervisory team to discuss issues of concern. It also allows the RDT to assess whether there are any general issues relating to the research environment which should be raised with the Head/Dean of School.

#### *Students on an authorised interruption of study*

- Students who have formally interrupted their studies at the time of the Progression Board will be given an "Interruption" recommendation. The Board in conjunction with the RDT will make the decision, on a case-by-case basis, as to whether the student will need to complete the whole AAP exercise on their return to study or complete the 'Return to Study' report.

#### *Students who are approaching their expected submission deadline*

- Students approaching their expected submission date who need to enter their final year must indicate this on REPORT A. The Director of Studies confirms in REPORT B whether this request is supported and viable.

#### *Students who have submitted their theses*

- Students who have submitted are exempt from the Annual Assessment of Progress Process.

### **1.3. Progression criteria**

In order to progress from one year to the next, students have to be satisfactorily enrolled and have paid the correct fees and complete the Annual Assessment of Progress Process. Individual progression criteria must be agreed and will include the following:

- Attendance at Induction events (Year 1 only).
- Working in accordance with standard safety protocols and UCLan's Code of Conduct for Research.
- Attendance at any training sessions identified with the Director of Studies and successful completion of any agreed research training programme.
- Attendance at regular meetings with the Director of Studies and supervisory team, including agreeing a schedule of research work and timescales, and presentation of written material within agreed deadlines.
- Completing Research Programme Approval on time.
- Transfer to PhD on time (PhD via MPhil students only).
- Maintenance of adequate laboratory notebooks (laboratory-based projects).
- Giving at least one presentation per year (both full-time and part-time students).
- Demonstrating an understanding of the contemporary context of the research.
- Attendance at conferences as required, subject to available resources.

### **1.4. Progression recommendations**

- Individual student recommendations for the current year are ratified at the Progression Board meeting and students are notified formally of the outcome.
- If the recommendation is 'Refer', a student will be required to complete remedial work and then meet with their Supervisory Team and RDT. The student will then be considered by the Reassessment Board.
- Students are notified by email immediately after the Board of the recommendations agreed at assessment and reassessment. Students who are recorded as 'referred' or 'interrupted' (because of an authorised interruption of study) will also receive copies by post.

The available recommendations are:

| <b>Recommendation</b>                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>PROGRESS TO NEXT ACADEMIC SESSION</b> | Student is progressing satisfactorily. If progress is slow or is giving cause for concern, but not to such an extent that the student should be prevented from progressing, these concerns should be documented by the supervisors or RDT on REPORT C with advice on the work required the following year. If necessary, specific action and deadlines should be provided to ensure that the student remains on schedule.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>CONTINUE TO MPhil ONLY</b>            | (PhD via MPhil students only). If a student has successfully transferred to PhD but is not making sufficient progress, progression to the next academic session can be allowed on the basis that the target award is changed to MPhil.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>REFER</b>                             | This recommendation is used if a student has not yet made enough progress to justify continuing into the next academic session or where remedial work is required to get the project back on course. This work will be carried out and will be reassessed. Students will be automatically referred if i) they have not completed 'Research Programme Approval' or Transfer to PhD by the published deadlines, or ii) not taken part or completed the Annual Assessment of Progress Exercise. Students will be required to complete these processes successfully before progression can be confirmed. |
| <b>INTERRUPTION OF STUDY</b>             | This recommendation is used for students who i) are on an authorised interruption of study at the time of the AAP exercise, ii) have returned from an authorised interruption of study since the AAP exercise and an assessment of progress has not yet taken place, iii) are due to return from an authorised interruption of study before the start of their next year of study.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>FAIL</b>                              | This recommendation cannot normally be agreed until a student has been given an opportunity to complete remedial work. If progress is still unsatisfactory at the Reassessment Board, a fail recommendation will be agreed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

### **1.5. The Research Student Progress File**

The Progress File is a record of individual activities and achievements throughout the research degree programme. It can be stored electronically (recommended) or on paper.

Every student should be updating their Progress File throughout their studies, including after completion of any activity, training event, presentation, seminar attended etc.

Supporting evidence should be stored with the Progress File. This may take the form of a certificate of attendance, a conference abstract booklet, the Research Programme Approval document, the transfer report, or personal notes of thoughts and reflections on learning and skills development etc.

The Progress File will be viewed by the Supervisory Team and Research Degrees Tutor (RDT) during the end-of-year Annual Assessment of Progression Process.

The Progress File and Annual Assessment of Progression forms can be found in the Research Document Library.

## 1.6. Transferring from MPhil to PhD

### 1.6.1. Aim of the Transfer Process

The aim of the transfer process is to establish whether the student has produced work of sufficient quantity and quality to suggest that PhD standard can be achieved. The main criterion for this is the ability to produce work that makes an original contribution to knowledge. There are three elements to transfer:

**A: Written Transfer Report from student** (approximately 3000 – 6000 words) containing an Abstract (approximately 400-500 words) and summarising the work so far, the intended further work, and detailing the original contribution to PhD level. At least 1500 words of the report should be devoted to contextualisation and the assessment of wider implications.

**B: Written report from supervisors on progress made** (around 500 words). Supervisors are asked to comment on the approved programme of research, on the student's individual training programme, and the evidence for work at PhD standard.

**C: Transfer Viva by a Panel**

### 1.6.2. The Transfer Viva

The Transfer Panel will usually consist of the Referee, the Director of Studies (or second supervisor) and the Research Degrees Tutor.

The Panel will be assessing whether the student has made sufficient progress in terms of quantity to complete the PhD within the registration period (full-time students are expected to submit after three years; part-time students after six years) but also whether the student understands and is able to articulate the expected element of originality in the work, including practice/performance elements.

### 1.6.3. Outcomes of the Transfer Viva

The Panel will decide whether the student has reached a quality threshold to be allowed to progress to PhD, or whether further work is required, and will make a recommendation to the Research Degrees Board. The student will receive written confirmation of the decision agreed by the Research Degrees Board.

If the Panel identifies **minor issues**, the Panel will decide whether or not these must be completed before Transfer can be recommended.

If the Panel identifies **major issues**, the student will be given an opportunity to reapply for Transfer and a new deadline will be set.

If the student is not successful then they will be required to progress to MPhil only.

## 2. Research Degree Examinations

### Introduction

Submission of a thesis for examination is at the sole discretion of a student. However, candidates should ensure that they follow the advice of supervisors when deciding whether or not to submit. The thesis must be submitted no later than the candidate's lapse date (last day of registration).

Submission for examination must be to the Academic Registry. Usually the candidate will do this in person but the thesis copies may be sent by post (recorded delivery is recommended). If the thesis is submitted by post the candidate must advise the Academic Registry in advance and scan a copy of proof of postage via email to [researchexams@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:researchexams@uclan.ac.uk).

If a candidate wishes another party to submit their thesis on their behalf they must confirm the name of the individual in writing to the Academic Registry and the person submitting the thesis must bring photographic identification when they submit the thesis.

**For information regarding anonymisation, copyright, confidentiality, embargoes and intellectual property rights see Section 4.**

### 2.1 Stages of the Examination Process

Examinations of research degrees normally consist of two parts:

- Submission and a preliminary assessment of the thesis and, where applicable, any practice-based materials submitted;
- An oral examination: this includes a defence of the thesis, the programme of work and the field of study in which the programme lies.

#### 2.1.1 Examination Arrangements

- Examination arrangements should be in place at least 4 months before the intended submission date.
- It is the responsibility of the Dean/Head of School to propose the examiners. However, it is likely in determining the examining team the Dean/Head of School will seek support from the supervisory team on locating suitable examiners.
- Candidates should take no part in the examination arrangements or have any influence in the appointment of examiners.
- Members of staff at the University, or a partner college, must have two external examiners.
- Upon approval of examination arrangements, the internal examiner is requested to set a provisional oral examination date in accordance with the intended submission date. Once a candidate submits the thesis the oral examination date will be confirmed formally.
- Candidates should make a note of dates they are unavailable for an oral examination and inform the Academic Registry accordingly. If candidates later become aware of any dates they may not be available, the Academic Registry should be notified without delay.

#### 2.1.2 Submission

Upon approval of examination arrangements, candidates must submit the thesis to the Academic Registry. Each examiner will require a copy and it is recommended that a copy is produced for the candidate and the Director of Studies. The thesis should be formatted and bound within the guidelines in this Handbook.

Checklist:

- The title on the thesis is the same as the one approved by the Research Degrees Board.
- Title page is in the approved format.
- Student declaration is included and signed.
- Statement regarding the use of a proof reader is included (if applicable).
- Binding of thesis is tape or velo.
- A pdf version of the thesis must also be submitted simultaneously.

### **2.1.3 After Submission**

- The thesis is sent to the appointed examiners and the internal examiner will arrange the date of the oral examination or confirm the provisional oral examination date if one has already been arranged. An oral examination is normally expected to take place within approximately two months of submission. The Academic Registry will formally notify candidates at least two to three weeks in advance of the oral examination date.
- Please note: it is expected that candidates will make themselves available on any day in the working week. Any commitments which cannot be cancelled e.g. job interview, hospital appointment must be notified to the Academic Registry at the time of submission or as soon as known.

### **2.1.4 The Oral Examination**

Candidates may invite a supervisor to accompany them. The supervisor cannot participate in the defence and supervisor must withdraw prior to the examiners' deliberations on the outcome.

The University does not allow recording of any oral examinations by any party.

At the beginning of the oral examination the internal examiner or the independent Chair, where applicable, will:

- verify the candidate's identity;
- introduce the examiners and any other persons in the room;
- remind any technician or British Sign Language Interpreter present that the examination proceedings are confidential;
- check if the candidate wishes to have one supervisor attend the oral examination.
- possibly give the candidate an estimate of the expected length and format of the examination;
- check whether there are any extenuating circumstances (not previously notified to the Academic Registry) which may affect the candidate's performance and which the candidate wishes to be taken into account.

If a candidate presents the examiners with a previously undisclosed disability or extenuating circumstances the examiners may wish to seek advice from the Academic Registry in the first instance before proceeding with the oral examination.

At the end of the examination the examiners may give candidates the opportunity to add any material points to the answers that have already provided.

### **2.1.5 After the Oral Examination**

Prior to the examiners reaching a decision regarding the outcome of the oral examination, the candidate and supervisor (if present) or any other person such as technicians or British Sign

Language Interpreter, will be directed to withdraw. Upon reaching a recommendation, the candidate (and supervisor) will be informed provisionally. The official recommendation (and list of corrections/guidance notes if applicable) will be sent to the candidate by the Academic Registry, usually within two weeks.

### **2.1.6 Submission of revised theses**

Candidates are strongly advised to contact their supervisors for support and guidance in competing any revisions. They should not attempt to approach examiners directly regarding their revisions.

Checklist for submitting a revised thesis:

- Following the oral examination, if corrections are required, candidates should ensure they complete all the required amendments to the thesis as specified in the letter and any accompanying documentation sent by the Academic Registry
- The candidate should provide the required number of copies as specified in the letter from the Academic Registry
- Revised theses should be submitted in soft bound form, using tape or velo binding only, together with a pdf version.
- Submit any amendments/revisions as instructed no later than the due date as detailed in the letter from the Academic Registry.
- It is recommended that candidates provide a list of amendments/revisions made to the thesis in order to assist the examiner(s) when reviewing the revised thesis.

## **2.2 Candidates with Disabilities**

Notification of special requirements should have been given at the time examination arrangements were approved. Candidates should discuss any potential requirement for reasonable adjustments during the oral examination with an Inclusivity Advisor and the Academic Registry at their earliest possible convenience.

## **2.3 Reporting Mitigating Circumstances**

If a candidate feels that they have mitigating circumstances, which the examiners should be made aware of, this must be reported to the Academic Registry at the earliest possible opportunity. Where justified, examiners will make every effort to make adjustments so that candidates are not disadvantaged during their oral examination.

## **2.4 Cancellation and failure to attend the Oral Examination**

### **Cancellation of an oral examination**

Occasionally, due to circumstances beyond the University's control, the oral examination will have to be cancelled. This may be due to illness of the student or examiners. Where the candidate is requesting the cancellation then evidence of extenuating circumstances must be provided to the Academic Registry.

### **Failure to attend an oral examination**

In the event a candidate fails to attend an oral examination, they will automatically be referred for second examination.

Where there are unforeseeable or unpreventable extenuating circumstances to be considered the candidate must provide evidence of these extenuating circumstances to the Academic Registry at the earliest possible opportunity.

## 2.5 Video Conferencing for Research Degree Examinations

Video conferencing for research degree examinations may be permitted under certain circumstances. This must be authorised following a declaration of extraordinary circumstances.

## 2.6 Outcomes of Oral Examinations

Candidates should familiarise themselves with the Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Research Degrees on the outcomes of first examination and re-examination. Candidates may be recommended for an award 'outright', i.e. with no amendments to be made to the thesis. If there are corrections/revisions to complete, candidates will be given timescales for completion of these in the letter confirming the outcome of their oral examination.

The definitions of research degree outcomes for corrections are as follows:

### **Minor amendments**

Minor amendments, including typographical, formatting or grammatical errors, should not include substantial changes or rewriting of the thesis. Taking into account the volume of minor corrections and revisions the Examiners should determine the length of time to be allowed for the minor amendments up to a maximum of three months.

The internal examiner is responsible for checking and approving any minor amendments.

### **Major Revisions** (for MPhil, PhD and MD and MCh only)

Major revisions are matters which are in excess of minor amendments, but not, in the opinion of the examiners, sufficient to require the student to revise and resubmit. Major revisions may involve limited additional work and rewriting of sections.

Major revisions must be completed within a period of three to a maximum of six months from the date of the latest part of the examination. The internal examiner and at least one external examiner (if two external examiners) will be responsible for checking and approving any major revisions. Following submission of major revisions, the examiners may then recommend award or further minor amendments, which should be completed within a maximum of four weeks.

### **Re-examination**

Re-examination indicates that the student has not yet satisfied the examiners that the level of the award for which the thesis was submitted has been reached. Substantial rewriting is required to make the thesis meet the required standard. It may involve substantial rewriting of sections, the introduction of new material, further research, further analysis of the material, or further developments of the arguments.

The examiners should ensure that the student is explicitly informed that he or she has not reached the standard for the award and, where the examination is for the award of PhD, an indication of whether the MPhil standard has been met.

The examiners should indicate the scope of the work required to the thesis. The minimum length of time allowed for a resubmission is six months and the maximum is 12 months in the case of MPhil, PhDs, MChs and MDs. The minimum time allowed is three months and the maximum is six months for MA, MSc or LLM (by Research) degrees.

Examiners will also confirm whether a further oral examination is required.

## 2.7 Appeals against Examination Decisions

If a candidate wishes to appeal against the examiners' decision they should refer to the Academic Appeals Procedure in the Assessment Handbook for Taught Programmes.

## 2.8 Completing the Degree

There are a number of requirements which need to be met before a research degree can be conferred:

**2.8.1** Once examiners have given notification of recommendation for the degree, students are required to supply two loose copies of their thesis for final hard-binding for the candidate and their Director of Studies. A third volume will be required where there is a collaborating institution for the project. The Academic Registry sends the copies for binding in red buckram.

**2.8.2** Candidates are also required to deposit an electronic copy of their thesis with the UCLan Research Repository – Central Lancashire Online Knowledge repository (CLoK). This should be submitted in the first instance to the Academic Registry with a Thesis Submission form and the proofreading statement where applicable. Details for submitting electronic theses and binding arrangements are available from the Academic Registry by emailing [researchexams@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:researchexams@uclan.ac.uk)

For further information about CLoK see <http://clock.uclan.ac.uk/> which includes information about the repository policies, Copyright and Open Access Archiving and information about the Deposit process, including a Frequently Asked Questions section.

## 2.9 Checklist following recommendation for award

Upon approval of amendments/revisions by the examiner(s) candidates must provide the Academic Registry with:

- requisite unbound copies of the thesis for final hard-binding
- electronic copy of the thesis (pdf format)
- Thesis Submission form
- A copy of the proof-reading statement (if applicable)
- Collect bound copy of thesis from the Academic Registry
- Notify the Academic Registry of any change of address

## 2.10 Award

The recommendation for award will then be submitted to the Research Degrees Board who will confer the award on behalf of the Academic Board, after which the candidate will receive a formal letter of conferment.

### **3. Policy and Procedures on Mitigating Circumstances for Research Degree Programmes and the Research Element of Professional Doctorates**

'Mitigating Circumstances' is a phrase which refers to **serious and exceptional factors** which may adversely affect the student's performance at the oral examination/ transfer viva. Examples are illness, accidents or serious family problems, which reflect a change in circumstances since the thesis/ transfer report was submitted. Everyday occurrences such as colds or known conditions such as hay fever will not qualify unless the effects are unusually severe.

The scheme for reporting mitigating circumstances to examiners is intended to provide a common mechanism for all research students for the transfer viva or oral examination. In the case of Professional Doctorate students studying the research element this applies to the oral examination. The onus for reporting and corroborating mitigating circumstances lies with the student whilst the examiners or assessors must properly consider all valid submissions. The scheme is not intended to supersede normal requests for Authorised Interruptions to Study during the programme.

Notification of mitigating circumstances following an oral examination should be referred to the Chair of the Research Degrees Board for consideration whether to disseminate the information to the examiners if it is considered that these would have made a difference to the outcome of the oral examination.

#### **3.1 Timescales**

Students should notify the Academic Registry of any mitigating circumstances at the earliest possible date and no later than three months from the onset of such mitigating circumstances.

#### **3.2 Responsibility of Examiners**

Mitigating circumstances will be taken into consideration as appropriate in the determination of the performance at the oral examination or transfer viva and the outcome. Where notification is submitted after an oral examination or transfer viva, examiners/ assessors may be asked to reconsider their recommendation if the Chair of the Research Degrees Board feels it necessary. Examiners/ assessors have the power to suspend an oral examination/ transfer viva on notification of mitigating circumstances on the day of the examination/ transfer viva if they feel it is necessary.

Where mitigating circumstances are submitted these will be reported to the examiners/assessors for consideration. If the circumstances are held to be valid, discretion may be operated in a number of ways. The following are examples of action that may be taken:

- To suspend the oral examination/ transfer viva and reschedule it for a later date.
- To allow a further oral examination/ transfer viva.
- To provide an alternative form of examination from the original where this is felt appropriate to individual circumstances.

Examiners/assessors may also take the view, having considered the mitigating circumstances that the student's academic performance was not affected and that discretion should not be operated. In such instances the student's performance will be assessed purely either on the thesis and the oral examination or on the transfer report and the transfer viva. This may result in a fail recommendation.

## **4. Presentation and Preparation of Research**

### **4.1 Introduction and Summary**

This is a guide to the preparation and presentation of a thesis required for the award of a research degree. The guide is intended to outline the standard for all thesis submitted for research degrees at UCLan. This guide outlines the practicalities of producing a research degree thesis in a format that is acceptable for examination and for deposit in the University's online institutional repository (CLoK). However, this guide does not deal with the academic standard required of a thesis. On these matters, research degree candidates must always consult with their supervisory team and refer to discipline-specific guidance.

#### **4.1.1 Anonymisation of material**

Where research includes information pertaining to individuals or organisations, which must remain confidential, or it has been agreed with those parties that it will remain confidential, care should be taken to anonymise the information so they cannot be identified.

#### **4.1.2 Confidentiality and embargoes**

Candidates may be bound by a confidentiality agreement which means the research cannot be discussed or published. Once the examination process has been completed successfully, the final thesis will be held in confidence for a designated period (embargo). The embargo period must to be agreed by the Research Degrees Board at the time examination arrangements are approved. The thesis will be held under an embargo on CLoK.

If the thesis contains confidential material, is bound by a non-disclosure or other confidentiality agreement, or an embargo preventing access to any version of the thesis is required, then a formal request for restricted access will be required at the point when the Application for Examination Arrangements is being submitted for approval by the Research Degrees Board. However, requests may be submitted later but must be prior to examination.

#### **4.1.3 Templates**

Candidates should use the templates provided on the UCLan website for:

- The title page
- The student declaration and proof-reading page

#### **4.1.4 Intellectual Property**

Advice should be sought from the Intellectual Property and Commercialisation Office. This should be done prior to submission of examination arrangements.

### **4.2 Paper Quality and Typographical Detail**

#### **4.2.1 Methods of Production**

Theses shall be presented in a permanent and legible printed form. Characters shall be not less than 10 pt. The university recommends either Calibri or Arial font but script should be of even quality, with clear black characters. Where copies are produced by any photocopying processes, these must be clear and of a permanent nature.

#### **4.2.2 Paper**

Thesis are required to be presented in A4 format and in English. The Research Degrees Board may give permission for a thesis to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis can be better expressed in that format. If the Research Degrees Board gives permission for another format, the thesis must adhere to that approved. The thesis should normally be printed on one side of the paper for the examiners. However, post-examination, for final hard binding, the thesis may be printed double-sided on good quality paper.

### **4.2.3 Layout**

Margins at the binding edge (left) shall be 40 mm and other margins 20 mm. Double or one-and-a-half spacing shall be used in typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.

## **4.3 Pagination Page**

### **4.3.1 Numbering**

Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams which are included as whole pages. Such photographs and/or diagrams shall be firmly fixed in place and, where appropriate, indexed separately.

### **4.3.2 Position of page numbers**

Page numbers shall be located centrally at the bottom of the page and no more than 20 mm above the edge of the page. The pagination of appendices shall be continuous within each appendix, but distinct from the main text.

### **4.3.3 Multi-volume theses**

If there is more than one volume, each volume shall carry its own pagination. Each volume must be numbered eg: Vol. 1 of 2; Vol. 2 of 2.

## **4.4 Preliminaries**

### **4.4.1 Published material**

Where there are no contractual agreements preventing publication, the student is free to publish material in advance of the thesis. Where referenced in the thesis, copies of published material may be either bound in the thesis as an appendix or placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the thesis.

### **4.4.2 Collaborative Project**

Where a student's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the thesis must indicate clearly the student's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration in the title page.

## **4.5 Structure of the Thesis**

The guidance provided here applies to the majority of discipline areas. However students should be guided by their supervisors regarding discipline specific practices.

The thesis should start with the items below 4.5.1 - 4.5.8 and be in the following order. The title page should be the first page of the thesis. If there is more than one volume, each volume must have a title page.

### **4.5.1 Title Page**

The template title page is available from the Academic Registry or can be found on the student webpages in the document library.

### **4.5.2 Title**

The title of the thesis is set when examination arrangements are applied for and approved by the Research Degrees Board. The title should describe the content of the thesis accurately and concisely. However, it should be noted that once examination arrangements have been approved by the Research Degrees Board, any changes to the title must be approved by the Chair of the Research Degrees Board.

### **4.5.3 Student Declaration**

A student declaration must be included in the thesis stating that the work is solely that of the candidate, if any of the material has been submitted for another award or if the student has had concurrent registration for two or more academic awards.

The template of the declaration is available from the Academic Registry and can be found on student webpages in the document library.

Any proof-readers used must also be named on this declaration form and a copy of the declaration of proofreading services must be submitted with the thesis copies.

### **4.5.4 Abstract**

The abstract (of approximately 300 words) shall immediately follow the declaration page and should provide a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and, for MPhil, MD (Res), Professional Doctorates and PhD students in particular, state the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated.

### **4.5.5 Table of contents**

The table of contents shall immediately follow the abstract. It shall list in sequence, with page numbers, all relevant subdivisions of the thesis including the title of chapters, sections and subsections, as appropriate; the list of references; the bibliography (if any); the list of abbreviations and other functional parts of the whole thesis; any appendices; the index (if provided).

If a thesis comprises more than one volume, the contents of the whole thesis shall be shown in the first volume and the contents of the subsequent volumes in a separate contents lists in the appropriate volume.

### **4.5.6 Acknowledgements**

Any acknowledgements shall be on the page following the table of contents.

### **4.5.7 List of tables and figures**

The lists of tables and figures shall follow the table of contents and shall list all illustrative material including: tables, photographs, diagrams, etc, in the order in which they occur in the text. All illustrative material other than tables should be numbered as figures. Tables and figures should be numbered consecutively and must correspond to the chapter within which they are embedded and the List of tables and figures (e.g., Table 2.3, Figure 3.1 or Fig. 3.1). All illustrative material must be fully referenced in a consistent manner, and appear directly after the numbering [e.g., Fig. 3.1: 63: *Soft Babylon*, Marcos Novak, Cyberspace 1998 (Novak, 1998b, p20).]

### **4.5.8 Glossary of Terms, Abbreviations, List of Symbols**

Any abbreviations should be those in normal use; where necessary a key to the abbreviations should be provided. For an abbreviation not in common use, the term shall be given in full in the first instance followed by the abbreviation in brackets.

### **4.5.9 Introduction**

The opening chapter of the thesis should comprise an introduction, so headed, defining the relation of the thesis to other work in the same field and referring appropriately to any findings, propositions, or new discoveries contained in the thesis and to any important points about sources or treatment.

#### **4.5.10 Chapters and sections**

These shall be divided as appropriate into chapters, sections and sub-sections. The system of headings shall be consistent and should provide a clear indication of change in content, emphasis, and other features which occur at each stage of the work.

#### **4.5.11 Headings**

The headings recommended are:

- i. Main headings, which should be used for chapters or sections and should be in full capitals.
- ii. Subsidiary headings, which should be used for sub-sections consisting of associated paragraphs, should be above the line of the text and should use initial capitals.

#### **4.5.12 Section numbering**

If section numbering is used it should not go beyond sub-sections. The alphabet or Arabic numerals may be used for lists. The system of notation of appendices shall be consistent with but independent of that used for chapters and sections of the main text.

#### **4.5.13 References**

All research students are expected to be aware of the need for appropriate referencing and familiar with the system used in their own discipline. Every reference in the list should enable the reader to identify the work cited and to locate the specific passage referenced. There are different ways of listing references but the candidate should be consistent once they have decided on the method. WISER supplies a number of helpful guides and resources online: [www.uclan.ac.uk/wiser](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/wiser)

#### **4.5.14 Footnotes and Endnotes**

References in-line within the main body of the thesis must be provided in round brackets, immediately following the relevant work or phrase. If footnotes or endnotes are used, these are required to be identified numerically in order throughout the thesis. If footnotes and endnotes are both used, a different notation is required for each, such as numbers for footnotes and letters for endnotes to retain clarity and avoid confusion. Care should be taken to avoid overuse of footnotes or endnotes, and should be limited to:

- i. making reference to another part of the thesis,
- ii. stating a source that may be inappropriate for in-line referencing (due to length or complexity of source),
- iii. expanding on a part of the main text without diverting from the context.

#### **4.5.15 Appendices**

Appendices shall follow the main text and precede the index (if provided). Appendices may consist of supporting material of considerable length or of lists, documents, commentaries, tables or other evidence which, if included in the main text, would interrupt its flow. The style of appendices shall be consistent with the style of the main text. Long appendices may be divided into chapters, which shall be entered in the table of contents under the main heading of the appendix.

#### **4.5.16 Index**

An index is optional and should not be required if the table of contents is sufficiently detailed.

## **4.6 Presentation of Diagrams, Maps, Illustrations, Computer Printouts, Published Papers, Tables**

### **4.6.1 Binding**

Whenever practicable, diagrams, maps, illustrations, published papers and tables shall have a binding margin of at least 40 mm and should, if possible, be bound in the thesis near the appropriate text.

### **4.6.2 Images**

Black and white (greyscale) or colour images may be submitted as part of the thesis. Images should be scanned or printed into the text. Permission should be sought for reproduction of any images that have been published. A licence may be required for images taken from the internet. Images should be scanned with a minimum resolution of 300 dpi. Images should be cropped to maximise size and reduce the amount of blank space. Landscape images on an A4 portrait page should be rotated anti-clockwise with the top of the image to the left. Images should be placed as close as possible to their text reference in the main thesis, unless the text reference is to an appendix.

### **4.6.3 Other illustrative material**

Other material which cannot conveniently be bound in the text, such as maps, slides, audio or video tape, DVD or computer media, shall be packaged in such a way that it can be bound with the thesis. If the amount of such material is substantial, it should be gathered into a supplementary volume and packaged in a rigid container similar in format to the bound thesis.

### **4.6.4 Packaging of unbound material**

If material which cannot conveniently be submitted in bound form constitutes the whole of a thesis it shall be packaged, labelled and titled as required.

Unbound material and its packaging shall both be marked with the author's name, initials and qualification for which the work is submitted in such a way that it can readily be linked with the thesis; it shall contain appropriate instructions for use. Reference to any unbound material shall be made in the thesis, with appropriate instructions for use.

All data should be presented in a format which is easily accessible.

### **4.6.5 Numbering and captions for illustrations and tables**

A systematic numbering system must be used for all illustrations and tables. The numbers and captions shall be at the bottom of the illustrations.

Tables shall be numbered consecutively throughout the thesis. The method of numbering shall be distinct from that used for other material.

## **4.7 Practice-based Theses**

### **4.7.1 Practice-based material**

Students whose submissions include work of a practice-based nature must provide an accessible and permanent record of the practice-based work. This must be stored in a way that is manageable, accessible and retrievable. If for example the practice-based work takes the form of exhibition, performance, broadcast or other temporal event, the work is required to be recorded and documented in the form of photographs, digital recordings, scores, drawings, digital recordings using appropriate media.

The written documentation and the practical components for the research degree combined will make up 100% of the submission for examination. Individual supervision teams may

agree certain parameters for the ratio of practice to written work according to the nature of the field, discipline and/or research degree investigation.

#### **4.7.2 Critical editions**

Students who undertake a programme of research of which the principal focus is the preparation of a scholarly edition of a text or texts, musical or choreographic work of other original artefacts must 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 sets the text in the relevant historical, theoretical or critical context.

#### **4.7.3 Published Works**

Wherever possible the published works should be included as published and bound behind the synoptic commentary. Where this is not possible then each item must be clearly labelled with a numbering system as detailed in the Table of Contents.

### **4.8 Cover and Binding**

#### **4.8.1 Preparation of Thesis for Submission**

For submission to examiners, the thesis can be presented in a temporary bound form (soft bound) sufficiently secure to ensure that papers cannot be added or removed, preferably either by tape or velo binding (see below). A thesis submitted in this way must be in its final form in all respects save the binding. The student is liable for payment of copying for essential volumes of the thesis.

Only tape or velo binding will be accepted for submission of the thesis at any stage.

#### **4.8.2 University Printing Service – UCLan Print**

The University printing service offers a range of services to students including binding of theses. The service is located in the Library. If you have any queries please email [UCLanPrint@uclan.ac.uk](mailto:UCLanPrint@uclan.ac.uk).

#### **4.8.3 Final Requirements**

Following final recommendation from the examiners that the award can go forward for conferment, the student is responsible for, and is required to provide;

1. Two loose printed copies of the thesis (one for the student and one for the Director of Studies).
2. If the project has a collaborator, an additional loose copy of the thesis will be required for each collaborator.
3. PDF copy of the full thesis.

The University will pay for the cost of hard binding of two copies of the thesis plus copies for any collaborators as appropriate.

Students may pay for additional copies of the thesis for which they must provide the loose printed copies. Current prices are available on request from the Academic Registry.

### **4.9 Length of Thesis**

The text of the thesis should not normally exceed the following length (excluding ancillary data). These word counts are intended as a guide only. Students should seek further advice from their supervisory team.

## Medicine, Science and Engineering

|                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| PhD                    | 40,000 words |
| MPhil                  | 20,000 words |
| MA\MSc (by Research)   | 15,000 words |
| MD (Res) and MCh (Res) | 30,000 words |

## Art and Design, Humanities, Health, Social Sciences and Education

|                      |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| PhD                  | 80,000 words |
| MPhil                | 40,000 words |
| MA\MSc (by Research) | 25,000 words |
| LLM (by Research)    | 25,000 words |

Where the thesis is accompanied by substantive material in other than written form, is practice-based, or the research involves creative writing or the preparation of a scholarly edition, it is recommended that the written thesis should not normally exceed the following word counts:

|                          |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| PhD                      | 30,000 - 40,000 words |
| MD (Res)                 | 20,000 - 30,000 words |
| MPhil                    | 15,000 - 20,000 words |
| MA\MSc\LLM (by Research) | 10,000 - 15,000 words |

**PhD (by Published Work)** - The text of the Synoptic Commentary should not normally exceed 10,000 words (excluding ancillary data).

### 4.10 Professional Doctorates

Professional Doctorate Students undertaking the thesis module should refer to their module specification and their Module or Course Leader for guidance on specific requirements related to their programme.

## 5. Policy on Proof-reading for Research Degree Programmes and the Research Element of Professional Doctorate Programmes

This policy is to clarify the use of third parties for proof-reading for student's written work for Research Programme Approval, Transfer from MPhil to PhD, the thesis (or synoptic commentary) and any work which later forms part of the final thesis. This applies to all written work or the thesis, whether draft or a final version, submitted for these assessments whether the proof-reading is for the whole or part of the work.

### 5.1 Principles

- (i) Each student's work must be solely his/her own work.
- (ii) Students at postgraduate level are expected to have developed their own proof-reading skills to a suitably advanced level for the award and be aware of the difference between proof-reading and editing. Students may have their theses proof-read. However, editing is the sole responsibility of the student.
- (iii) Students should receive advice and guidance on the drafting of any work and the thesis for submission from their supervisors and any designated advisors. Supervisors will assist with proof-reading.
- (iv) Students who consider they need assistance on the use of English should contact WISER.
- (v) Students must not employ any person to write any parts or the complete work on his or her behalf, whether from professional companies, family, personal friends, other students or any other person except where an amanuensis has been appointed for the student as part of the student's disability support through UCLan's Inclusivity Service. Inadequate skills in written English will not be justification for use of an amanuensis or a writer.
- (vi) Students must make all alterations to their work or their thesis themselves.
- (vii) Students are responsible for interpreting the advice of any proof-reader employed.

### 5.2 Engagement of third party proof-reading services

If a student employs a third party then the student is responsible for acknowledging the assistance with proof-reading. Any assistance must be acknowledged in a statement in the work or the thesis.

The student is also responsible for clarifying the limits for the assistance. It is a requirement that:

- the student provides the third party with a copy of this policy and obtains a confirmatory statement of acceptance from that party;
- the student provides the third party with paper copies for annotation;
- students should retain the copy of the proof-reader's annotated work until the assessment process is complete.

Warnings: students are warned that any use of third party proof-reading services must not compromise their authorship of the work submitted, and, in particular, that the substance of work must remain the student's own. Students are also warned that they will be held responsible for work which they submit, and that the use of third party services will not be accepted in mitigation of any deficiencies in the work.

### 5.3 Academic misconduct

Where a student does not follow the policy and is considered to have used a third party for non-permitted forms of assistance then the matter will be dealt with under the Academic Misconduct Procedure.

Students must ensure they are aware of and abide by the regulations and policies.

## **6. Turnitin**

The submitted thesis will be processed through Turnitin for plagiarism checking prior to being sent to the examiners. The Turnitin report will be sent to the Director of Studies to confirm that no plagiarism is identified. Where plagiarism is potentially identified, this will be investigated in accordance with the University's Academic Misconduct Procedure.

### **6.1 Permitted assistance and advice**

In the main text, tables, diagrams, footnotes, endnotes and illustrations proof-readers may suggest corrections with regard to:

- ✓ Spelling and punctuation
- ✓ Formatting
- ✓ Compliance with English conventions on grammar and syntax
- ✓ Consistency of page numbers, headings and footnotes

### **6.2 Non-permissible assistance and advice**

Changing any text, table diagram, or illustration in the following ways by proof-readers (or as a result of their advice) is not permitted:

- ✗ to clarify arguments or ideas
- ✗ to develop arguments or ideas
- ✗ to change arguments or ideas
- ✗ to correct factual information
- ✗ to translate work in to English
- ✗ to reduce the length of the work
- ✗ to assist with referencing

### **6.3 Method for third party advice**

Access to the source document to be submitted for the assessment should remain solely with the student and not be passed to the third party.

The third party undertaking the proofreading should give any advice by a means which provides a record showing the changes recommended.

The student must consider the changes advised, interpret them accordingly and undertake the changes personally. Students are responsible for ensuring that the advice given does not alter the intended meaning or use subject specific terminology in the wrong context