

PhD by Thesis – Distance Learning Route

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PhD by Thesis – Standard Route

Introduction

The following University regulations apply to all higher degrees classified by the Research Degrees Committee as PhD by Thesis, in cases where the PhD is undertaken on a distance learning basis.

These regulations include applications for admission to the above degrees both by candidates who are members of staff of the University and those who are not members of staff of the University.

The University Research Degrees Committee is the final arbiter of matters regarding the application and/or interpretation of the Regulations.

University regulations, codes of practice and other key documents referred to in this document are available on the University of [Hull Quality and Standards](#) webpage.

ADMISSION AND ENROLMENT

1. Academic year

- 1.1 For the purposes of these regulations the academic year is 12 months in length and is considered to consist of three periods, the first two coinciding broadly with the undergraduate trimesters.

2. Admission to a programme

- 2.1 To be admitted to undertake the degree of Doctor of Philosophy a candidate shall:
- have been awarded the degree of Bachelor with First or Upper Second Class Honours or the degree of Masters of this University or the corresponding degree in another university approved by the Research Degrees Committee for this purpose or have achieved a comparable qualification as approved by the Research Degrees Committee.
 - have satisfied such additional entry requirements as may be approved by the Research Degrees Committee from time to time.

Students who are nearing completion of their Bachelor's or Master's programme or the equivalent at another university, but have not yet been awarded the degree may be conditionally accepted on to the PhD programme.

PhD scholarship entry requirements may differ to the standard PhD entry requirements.

3. Duration of prescribed period of study

- 3.1 The prescribed period of study, training, supervision and thesis finalisation/writing-up shall extend over a period of either:
- 48 months (comprising 36 months of research and up to 12 months of thesis finalisation/writing-up) as a full-time student in this University, or
 - 80 months (comprising 60 months of research and up to 20 months of thesis finalisation/writing-up) as a part-time student,



- c) The prescribed period of study can be set at a greater length, on application to the Research Degrees Committee, in special circumstances (such as in response to the requirements of the Research Councils). This will require the payment of tuition fees at the rate set for that year. Such programmes may be covered by the PhD by Thesis Regulations, Non-Standard Route

4. Maximum period of registration

- 4.1 The maximum period of registration for a full-time PhD candidate is seven years from initial registration, including any periods of suspension and changes to mode of study.
- 4.2 The maximum period of registration for a part-time PhD candidate is ten years from initial registration, including any periods of suspension and changes to mode of study.
- 4.3 The University, through RDC, reserves the right to terminate a candidate's registration if they exceed this maximum period.
- 4.4 Any period of suspension of study granted in accordance with regulations 10 or 11 shall not count towards the prescribed period of study under 3.1 above.
- 4.5 A research student who teaches in the University for not more than twelve hours per week shall be considered as a full-time student for the purposes of this regulation.

- *This regulation governs the 'prescribed period' of study, that is the period during which the candidate is entitled to supervision; where the candidate is granted an extension or suspension of study as defined below, there is an absolute upper limit on completing the thesis and training credits of seven years full-time and ten years part-time.*
- *3.1c: For example, for full-time students this empowers RDC to extend the actual study period, which would be expected to be between three years to four years but must not exceed four years.*
- *Periods of study may be reduced – see reg.5.*

5. Reduction in period of study

- 5.1 A candidate may be permitted to count towards the period of study and research required by regulation 3 up to one year spent in full-time research at another institution approved by the Research Degrees Committee for this purpose.
- 5.2 Candidates on a split-site PhD will be required to spend up to 12 months of their prescribed period of study at another institution, however this will not affect their registration at the University of Hull which will remain the principal and the awarding institution.
- 5.3 A candidate may apply to submit a completed thesis at any time in their final year of the research period and receive a reduction in final year tuition fees calculated on the date of submission, in accordance with the following:
- a) 9 to 12 months before the end of the prescribed period of study - full fee rebate.
 - b) 5 to 8 months before the end of the prescribed period of study - two-thirds fee rebate.
 - c) 1 to 4 months before the end of the prescribed period of study - one third fee rebate.
- 5.4 Applications under 5.1 or 5.3 shall be subject to the approval of the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, or their delegate, on the recommendation of the candidate's supervisor, Head of Academic Unit and the relevant Graduate Research Director, who is an

ex-officio member of Research Degrees Committee.

SUPERVISION AND PROGRESS MONITORING

6. Supervision

- 6.1 A principal supervisor and at least one other (second) supervisor shall be appointed for each candidate.
- 6.2 Supervision of the candidate's thesis shall be conducted in accordance with any code of practice approved by the Research Degrees Committee for the purpose.
- 6.3 Supervision should take place online where possible.
- 6.4 Annual Monitoring and Progression meetings (AMPs) must be held in person, unless in exceptional circumstances which must be approved by the Chair of RDC or their delegate.
- 6.5 Supervision entitlement for both part-time and full-time PhD candidates is defined in the Code of Practice Postgraduate Research Students. Entitlement includes the Mid-Year Monitoring (MYM) meeting but excludes the Annual Monitoring and Progression meeting (AMP) which must take place on an annual basis regardless of mode of study.
- 6.6 In the thesis finalisation period, all PGRs whether full-time or part-time are entitled to one supervisory meeting every other month.

7. Evidence of satisfactory academic progress

- 7.1 A system for monitoring the progress of a candidate shall be in place in accordance with criteria prescribed by the Research Degrees Committee (see Code of Practice Standards and Criteria for Research Degrees).
- 7.2 A candidate's prescribed period of study may be terminated on the grounds of unsatisfactory progress as measured against criteria established under 8.1 provided that this is carried out in accordance with the University Code of Practice Research Degrees: Termination of Candidature. The decision to terminate the prescribed period of study shall be made by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, or their delegate, on the recommendation of the Head of Academic Unit and relevant Graduate Research Director.
- 7.3 Where the Academic Unit is satisfied that the candidate is not making satisfactory progress towards achieving a PhD, but may be able to achieve a Masters by Thesis, a recommendation may be made to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee that the candidate be transferred to the appropriate Masters degree, with an agreed deadline for submission.

RESEARCH TRAINING

8. Postgraduate Training Scheme

- 8.1 Subject to the Regulations for the Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma in Research Training all candidates shall enroll for and achieve a minimum of 60 credits from modules designated as part of the Postgraduate Training Scheme (PGTS), administered by the Doctoral College, and detailed in the PGTS Handbook.

- 8.2 The requirement in 8.1 may be in part be satisfied by the accreditation of a maximum of 40 credits achieved by prior learning. Any application for such accreditation shall be subject to the approval of the relevant Graduate Research Director and Research Degrees Committee on the recommendation of the candidate’s supervisor.

SUSPENSION OF STUDY AND REPEAT PERIODS

9 Permitted duration for the accumulation of credits

- 9.1 A qualification shall not be awarded to a candidate who has not completed training credits and the thesis for examination within seven years of initial enrolment for the full-time PhD, or within ten years for a part-time PhD.

- *This sets an absolute upper limit for completion of the requirements for the degree, including any periods of extension/suspension of study; this is different to the duration of the ‘prescribed period of study’ defined in regulation 3.*
- *There is no provision for ‘interim awards’ under these regulations; where a candidate withdraws without completing the degree, they are entitled to a Research Training award (certificate or diploma) based on the number of research training credits gained at that point; entitlement is governed by the regulations for the Certificate and Diploma in Research Training.*

10. Suspension of study

- 10.1 During the prescribed period of study as defined in regulation 3, and subject to regulation 9, a candidate may suspend their studies by making a written application using the approved application form to the Research Degrees Committee for periods not exceeding 12 months.
- 10.2 A suspension of study may be permitted for personal/medical reasons and for other circumstances, for example a candidate wishing to spend a period abroad or in industry, which is not part of the programme of study they are following.

10.3 A suspension of study may be required for students who need a period of suspension to complete outstanding assessments.

11. Suspension of study on grounds of risk

For suspension of study on grounds of risk please see the Support for Study policy.

12. Exceptional circumstances

- 12.1 Transfer between full-time and part-time mode

Candidates are permitted one transfer from full-time to part-time mode, or part-time to fulltime mode of study, within the research period. This is not permitted within the last six months of the research period unless in exceptional circumstances and for reasons such as maternity, paternity, caring responsibilities and ill health. Transfer between modes of study is not permitted in the thesis finalisation / writing-up period, nor is it permitted retrospectively, unless in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Chair of RDC or their delegate. The remaining duration of the research period is calculated on the basis of full months remaining, at a conversion rate of 1 month full-time= 2 months part-time.

- 12.2 Repeating a period

A candidate shall not be permitted to enroll for the degree as new other than with the approval of the Research Degrees Committee. Approval shall only be granted where the



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candidate has demonstrated significant medical or exceptional personal circumstances affecting the period which is sought to be repeated.

In determining whether to grant approval regard shall be had to regulations 11 and 12 above.

ASSESSMENT

13. Method of examination

13.1 A candidate shall be examined by means of:

- a) a thesis,
- b) an oral examination, which must be conducted in person,
- c) an assessment of any additional studies prescribed by the candidate's Academic Unit and notified in writing at the commencement of the prescribed period of study.

13.2 The thesis shall be on a subject selected by the candidate and approved by the candidate's supervisors and Research Degrees Committee

13.3 The thesis may not exceed 100,000 words, excluding the Bibliography, but including footnotes and appendices, except with the express permission of the Research Degrees Committee. Applications to exceed the word limit must be made in writing on the correct form and shall be subject to the recommendation of the candidate's supervisor, the relevant external examiner and the relevant Graduate Research Director. Application shall be made no later than the giving of notice set out in 15.1 below.

14. Standards and criteria for PhDs by thesis

14.1 The thesis **must** be the result of original research, show an awareness of the relationship of the research to a wider field of knowledge and reflect such further Standards and Criteria as approved by the Research Degrees Criteria from time to time.

14.2 A candidate may not submit as a thesis, the work for which credits or a qualification of this University or any other institution have been conferred, but shall not be precluded from incorporating such work in a submission which covers a wider, or substantially different field from that of earlier work, provided that the same is indicated clearly in the current submission.

15. Submission of the thesis

15.1 A candidate shall give not less than three months' notice of the expected date of submission of the thesis, and shall, at the same time, confirm the precise title of the thesis.

15.2 The candidate shall be responsible for ensuring that an electronic copy of the thesis is received by the Doctoral College within 48 months of commencing the degree if full-time and within 80 months if undertaken part-time.

15.3 Submission shall be in such format as prescribed, from time to time, by Research Degrees Committee. Following award of the degree the candidate shall submit an electronic copy of the thesis which shall be retained by, and be the property of, the University.



- 15.4 A candidate shall be barred from submitting the thesis unless the conditions of regulation 9 above have been satisfied.
- 15.5 In addition to the thesis, the candidate shall submit an electronic copy of a summary of the thesis, which shall not exceed 300 words, and shall be in such format as prescribed, which is subject to change from time to time, by Research Degrees Committee.

16. Thesis extensions

- 16.1 In exceptional circumstances only, those candidates who are unable to submit the thesis within 48 months of commencing the degree if full-time, or within 80 months of commencing the degree if part-time may apply, using the approved application form, to the Research Degrees Committee for an extension either to the research period (granted in exceptional circumstances only) or the thesis finalisation / writing-up period. The period of extension to the thesis finalisation period is limited to one year for full-time and 24 months for part-time students. Applications must be submitted before the expiry of the period of study for which an extension is sought.
- 16.2 Any grant of extension under shall be made subject to regulation 11 and 12 and any additional criteria published by the Research Degrees Committee.
- 16.3 Students **must** enroll formally for the 'extension' period and pay the continuation fee mentioned in regulation 19.

17. Non submission of the thesis

- 17.1 *Where a candidate fails to submit the thesis by the deadline stated in regulation 15.1, or any extended deadline arising from a writing-up period or an extension granted in accordance with regulation 17 above, the Chair of RDC shall determine whether to allow the candidate to submit, or make a resubmission, in the case of an examined thesis that has been referred, or requires corrections, or amendments. Where submission or resubmission is not allowed the programme of study shall be deemed terminated without the requirement for examination*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Note that a candidate whose programme is terminated under this regulation would be barred from subsequently enrolling for the same programme under reg. 12.2.</i>• <i>A candidate would be entitled to receive any training credits gained at the point of termination and might be eligible for Certificate or Diploma in Research Training based on the number of credits gained; eligibility would be determined in accordance with the Cert/Dip regulations.</i> |
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18. Continuation fees for the thesis finalisation period

- 18.1 Subject to 18.2 a candidate commencing the thesis finalisation/writing-up period or extension period (regulation 16) shall be liable to pay a continuation fee as prescribed by Senate and Council and in force at the time of submission.
- 18.2 A candidate shall be barred from submitting the thesis unless all fees for the programme of study and any other liabilities have been paid.

19. Appointment of examiners

- 19.1 The examination shall be conducted by one external examiner and one internal examiner, both appointed by the Research Degrees Committee on the recommendation of the Head of the relevant Academic Unit and a Graduate Research Director from the same area.

Examination of the thesis shall normally take place within three months of the date of submission.

- 19.2 Examiners must be nominated following notice of the expected date of submission being received by the Doctoral College (as under 16.1 above). Nominations should be received before submission of the thesis. The Doctoral College will only accept nomination of examiners after the submission of the thesis in exceptional circumstances.
- 19.3 Each examiner shall make an independent report on the published works before the oral examination, shall be present at the oral examination, and shall sign a joint Recommendation of Examiners to record the result of the oral examination.
- 19.4 Examiners should hold a qualification higher than or equal to that being examined
- 19.5 The internal examiner shall not be one of the candidate's supervisors.
- 19.6 The examination shall be chaired by a member of academic staff appointed by Research Degrees Committee in accordance with the University code of practice governing the chairing of research degree by thesis viva voce examinations.
- 19.7 Examiners should have appropriate levels of expertise and experience in relation to the roles to be performed as part of the assessment.
- 19.8 If a nominee for examiner is no longer employed in an academic role in a research institution, for example is retired or is an Emeritus Professor, the nomination must be able to evidence recent research work relevant to the subject area.
- 19.9 The external examiner should not be a former student of the University, member of staff, or person with Recognised Teacher Status, unless a period of no fewer than five years have elapsed.
- 19.10 Examiners must not have collaborated with the candidate in any previous research endeavours.
- 19.11 Examiners must not be collaborating significantly with the supervision team in any current scholarly activity. Any previous or current collaborations should be declared on the Nomination of Examiners Form.
- 19.12 The supervisors shall be entitled to attend the oral examination with the agreement of the examiners and the candidate, but not participate in the examination.

- 20.1: 'Normally take place' – this is dependent on the candidate having given the requisite three months' notice of submission under regulation 16.1.
- 19.4: University Code of Practice Chairing Research Degree by Thesis Viva Voce Examinations requires that all vivas be independently chaired.

20. Examiners' recommendations

- 20.1 The examiners **must** make one of the following recommendations:
- a) that the candidate be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
 - b) that the candidate be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to corrections being made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within three months of the date of being informed of the decision of the examiners. The term corrections refers to typographical errors, occasional stylistic or grammatical flaws, corrections to references etc.



- c) that the candidate be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to amendments. The term amendments refers to certain changes of substance in a specific element or elements of the thesis specified by the examiners. These shall not involve a revision of the whole thesis or of a major proportion of it. The changes **must** be made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within six months of the date of being informed of the decision of the examiners.
- d) that the thesis be referred subject to such of the following conditions as the examiners may think appropriate:
 - i. that the candidate be required to attend for a second oral examination
 - ii. that the candidate be permitted to submit, on one occasion only, a revised thesis for a second examination, without further research
 - iii. that the candidate be permitted to submit, on one occasion only, a revised thesis for a second examination, after further research
- e) that the thesis is not of the required standard, but the candidate be awarded if the candidate so wishes, the appropriate Masters degree as determined by the examiners.
- f) that the thesis is not of the required standard and no award be made to the candidate.

20.2 A candidate whose thesis is not of the required standard at either at first or second attempt shall be entitled to receive a written statement from the examiners of the way in which the work falls short of the requirements to pass.

21. Resubmission of the thesis

21.1 Where a candidate is permitted to submit on one further occasion in accordance with 21.1 d) the candidate shall be responsible for ensuring that an electronic copy of the thesis is received by the Doctoral College office no later than twelve months from the date on which the candidate was notified of the result.

21.2 The manner of resubmission shall be as required for first submission except that resubmission shall be subject to the payment of the resubmission fee as prescribed by Senate and Council and in force at the time.

21.3 Where a candidate fails to submit the thesis by the deadline specified in 22.1 the programme of study shall be deemed terminated without the requirement for examination of the thesis.

22. Resubmission following award of a Masters

22.1 A candidate who has been awarded a Masters degree under regulations 20.1 e) shall not again submit a thesis for the PhD unless it is on a subject that is significantly different from that of the previous thesis.

22.2 The Research Degrees Committee shall be the final arbiter of whether a thesis is significantly different as required in 23.1 informed by the opinions of the relevant Head of Academic Unit, Graduate Research Director and external examiner(s).



ACADEMIC/PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINE

23. Academic Misconduct

- 23.1 Allegations of academic misconduct shall be subject to the Regulations governing Academic Misconduct, and no penalty shall be imposed other than in accordance with the said Regulations.
- 23.2 Candidates shall also abide by the principles of good research practice as defined in the Code of Practice on Research Misconduct. Allegations of research misconduct shall be investigated in accordance with this Code.

24. Professional standards of conduct (Fitness to Practise)

- 24.1 For information regarding professional standards of conduct (fitness to practise), please refer to the University Regulations Governing the Investigation and Determination of Concerns about Fitness to Practise.

RESULTS AND AWARDS

25. Notifications of results and transcripts

- 25.1 All candidates shall be entitled to an official transcript on completion provided they are not in debt to the University for the payment of tuition fees.

Version Control

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1	Kirstie Skelton-Clarke	Nov 2023	New Document