

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

ACADEMIC BOARD

SECTION 4: REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

	<p>viva is needed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">x 4.1.27.2 if RDC uphold the recommendation of lower award the student's registration will be amended accordingly.x 4.1.10.1 Revised to reflect current practice where RDC receive supervisory team details of new students after induction and approve subsequent changes but are not directly involved in the admissions procedure.x 4.1.11.1 Addition of "Student" to clearly identify who has responsibility for ensuring research integrity.x 4.1.14.7 RDC confirms outcomes of progression instead of ratify them.x 4.1.22.1 Removal of "under the guidance of the supervisors appointed for that purpose".x 4.1.24.4 Replace use of "substantive contract" with full or part time.x 4.1.24.8 Clarified the level of experience needed from examiners is based on that of the examination panel as a whole, not just that of the external examiner.x 4.1.25.7 Changed the date from which corrections are due from the viva date to the actual date RGS confirm the outcome in writing.x 4.1.26.7 and 4.1.26.3 Rewording to make it clear that Masters by Reach is defined as all research qualifications at NQF level 7. <p>Approved by Academic Board 22 August 2018</p>
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Research Masters Degrees: Characteristics of Graduates		

Abbreviations

APP	Academic Progress Panel
DS	Director of Studies
FTE	Full-time equivalent
PEP	Pre-approved Extension Period
QAA	The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
RGS	Research Graduate School
UKVI	UK Visas and Immigration

4.1 General regulations for research degrees

4.1.1 Award Framework

4.1.1.1 The table overleaf summarises the University's research degree awards, the minimum, normal and maximum periods of registration, and the length of the written thesis.

4.1.1.2 Exceptionally, where there is evidence that a student is progressing ahead of schedule, the RDC may approve a shorter registration period.

4.1.1.3 Where a student is permitted to change their mode of study from full-time to part-time or vice versa, their minimum and maximum registration periods will be calculated pro rata taking into account the time already spent on study in a different mode. Change (pent) shorterisraent (i)2.6 (m)]TJ T* [(m)-6 (es)-pec6 (ods)-22t-0.002 Tc 0.9 (eady

	Abbreviation	Minimum period of registration	Normal period of registration	Maximum period of registration	Maximum word length of thesis
Higher doctorates: Doctor of Laws Doctor of Letters Doctor of Science	LLD DLitt DSc	N/A	N/A	12 months part-time	5,000 words plus published work

Doctor of Philosophy
 (via transfer from
 Master of Philosophy,
 including the period of
 MPhil registration)

4.1.2 Credit

4.1.2.1 Research degrees are not credit-rated and no staged or incremental credit will be awarded.

4.1.3 General entry requirements

4.1.3.1 Applicants must be able to demonstrate the motivation to undertake research at the appropriate level within the proposed field of study, and the potential to fulfil all of the learning outcomes as described by in the FHEQ descriptors appropriate to the intended award (see Annex 1). This will be tested by the development of a research proposal and at interview.

4.1.3.2 A Masters by Research requires a minimum of a lower second class honours, while the minimum entry requirement for all other research degrees is a first or upper second class honours undergraduate degree, or a master's degree, awarded by a university or other institution with degree-awarding powers in the United Kingdom, or equivalent.

4.1.3.3 An applicant holding qualifications other than those described in 4.1.3.2, will be considered on his or her merits and in relation to the nature and scope of the programme of work proposed. Professional experience, publications, written reports or other appropriate evidence of accomplishment shall be taken into consideration. An applicant wishing to be considered under this regulation must provide the names of suitable persons from whom the University may seek an opinion about his/her academic attainment and fitness for research. In such cases the application must be considered by the RDC.

4.1.3.4 Applicants must demonstrate sufficient proficiency in English Language to successfully support study for the research degree to which the application is

research project in industry, commerce or another workplace, the application must be accompanied by formal, written approval by the line manager.

4.1.8 Application to submit a portfolio of research studies

4.1.8.1 In some subject areas it may be appropriate for applicants for the Masters by Research to conduct a series of studies rather than a single study. Such a proposal, and the consequent intention to submit a portfolio of research projects for final examination, should be clearly delineated in the description of the approved research topic at the time of admission.

4.1.8.2 If a registered student wishes to change from preparing a portfolio of research studies to conducting a single study as the basis for their thesis, or vice versa, section 4.1.12 'change of research topic' shall apply.

4.1.9 Staff

4.1.9.1 Students, who are members of staff of the University of Bedfordshire, or a Partner Institution, are subject to additional regulations codified in the Policy on Staff Postgraduate Research Degree Registration at the University of Bedfordshire.

4.1.9.2 Students in receipt of a studentship through the University payroll are categorised as staff and must familiarise themselves with the expectations and limitations of their individual bursary or studentship agreement, and the Policy on Staff

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- 4.1.10.5 At least one supervisor will have experience of supervising students to the successful completion of a research degree at the level at which the student is studying.
- 4.1.10.6 Members of a supervisory team are expected to have attained a research degree at the same or a higher level than the level at which the student is being assessed.
- 4.1.10.7 The Director of Studies and/or another supervisor will have recorded meetings with the student on a regular and frequent basis, as defined by University policy determined by the RDC. In the absence of the Director of Studies, the 2

supervision arrangements request may be submitted with the application for

4.1.21 Termination of registration

4.1.21.1 The registration of a student can be terminated by the RDC where:

- i. academic progress is unsatisfactory
- ii. recommended on the basis of a student's breach of financial standing and/ or visa requirements.
- iii. recommended under the University's policies relating to research misconduct, student misconduct or academic offences.
- iv. a student fails to re-register at the beginning of each academic year.
- v. a student fails to submit his/her thesis/portfolio before the maximum period of registration

4.1.22 The thesis

4.1.22.1 A student's thesis must embody the results of the research conducted during the approved period of registration at the University.

4.1.22.2 The student should ensure that the thesis conforms to the format as outlined in the University 'Style Guide, Requirements and Procedure for Thesis Submission'. When submitted, all students must also submit their data on an encrypted USB. This will be retained until after the award is confirmed and will not form part of the archived submission.

4.1.22.3 The student may submit a thesis for examination only after the minimum registration period has passed and before their maximum registration (see section 4.1). The decision to submit a thesis rests with the student alone.

4.1.22.4 The research may include creative work forming, as a point of origin or reference, a significant part of the intellectual enquiry. The written thesis may be supplemented by material other than in written form. The supplementary material must be clearly presented in relation to the argument of a written thesis and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context. The final submission must be accompanied by some permanent record of the creative work, where practicable, bound with the thesis. It is the thesis which provides the basis for the examination.

4.1.22.5 If the main focus of the research is the preparation of a scholarly edition of a text

- 4.1.23 Stages of assessment of the thesis or portfolio and oral defence
- 4.1.23.1 Assessment will consist of two stages:
- a) assessment of the thesis and any supplementary material as described in 4.1.22, by the examiners; and
 - b) the defence of the thesis by the student in an oral examination.
- 4.1.23.2 Both stages of assessment must be completed to the satisfaction of the examiners.
- 4.1.23.3 The oral examination may be preceded by an oral presentation by the candidate to the Postgraduate Research Examination Board, lasting no more than twenty minutes, if:
- x the candidate requests the inclusion of such a presentation at the time the thesis is submitted; or
 - x at least one of the examiners requests such a presentation at least ten working days before the date of the oral examination.
- 4.1.24 The Postgraduate Research Examination Board
- 4.1.24.1 A candidate will be examined by at least two and normally not more than three examiners. At least one examiner must be external to the University of Bedfordshire and any Partner Institution. No more than one examiner can be internal to the University or, where applicable, a Partner Institution. Examiners are appointed by the RDC.
- 4.1.24.2 An internal examiner will be defined as an examiner who is at appointment:
- x a member of staff of the University on a full or part time contract; or
 - x a member of staff appointed by the University from a partner institution.
- 4.1.24.3 It is not permitted for a member of the candidate's current or previous supervisory team to act as an examiner.
- 4.1.24.4 It is not permitted for the same Examination Board to examine more than one student in any one academic year. No external examiner should examine more than two theses in any one academic year and each examination should be for a different Director of Studies.
- 4.1.24.5 Where the candidate is a member of substantive staff at the University or a Partner Institution, a minimum of two external examiners must be appointed and no internal examiner will be appointed.
- 4.1.24.6

circumstances and, where appropriate, be provided with the opportunity to respond.

- 4.1.24.8 The examining team must be experienced in research in the general area of the candidate's thesis and the external examiner(s) must have specialist experience in the topic(s) to be examined.
- 4.1.24.9 Examiners should have current knowledge of the requirements of a PhD award and at least one examiner should have experience of examining research degree candidates. Between them the examination panel should have experience of at least three examinations at that level or above preferably at a UK-based Insti1 (d)d

submission that require improvement to meet the learning outcomes. The candidate must submit for re-examination within the period of six months (for Masters by Research/MPhil) or one calendar year (for all other postgraduate research degrees) from the date of the oral examination.

- 4.1.26.2 Re-examination follows the same procedure as for the initial examination. The Postgraduate Research Examination Board will determine whether there is a requirement for a further viva examination either at the initial assessment or when considering the corrected thesis.
- 4.1.26.3 The Postgraduate Research Examination Board for a re-examination will agree on one of the following recommendations for consideration by RDC:
- a) that the candidate is awarded the degree for which he or she was registered possibly subject to the minor correction of typographical or other errors within a period of three months (one month for NQF level 7 Research degrees, and PhD by Publication).
 - b) in the case of a PhD or Professional Doctorate examination only, that the candidate is awarded the degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners within three months.
 - c) that the candidate is not awarded the degree and is not permitted to be re-examined (see section 4.1.27).
- 4.1.26.4 The Postgraduate Research Examination Board for a re-examination will normally have the same composition as the original Board. Where it is necessary to appoint new and/or additional examiners for the re-examination, this will follow the regulations for the appointment of examiners. Any newly appointed examiners will be provided with details of the outcome of the initial assessment.
- 4.1.27 Failure at examination
- 4.1.27.1 Where the Postgraduate Research Examination Board recommends that the degree not be awarded and no re-examination permitted, or where the candidate is recommended the degree of MPhil subject to the presentation of the thesis amended to the satisfaction of the examiners, then the Postgraduate Research Examination Board must prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their decision which will be forwarded to the student and to RDC.
- 4.1.27.2 RDC will consider the statement, together with a report by the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Examination Board and all of the relevant examination documentation. Where the recommendation is upheld, the student's registration for their original award is deemed to have been terminated. Where the recommendation for a lower award is upheld the student's registration will be amended accordingly.
- 4.1.28 Examiners not in agreement
- 4.1.28.1 Where the examiners cannot reach agreement following an oral examination or after amendments, the RDC will consider the report of the Chair of the Postgraduate Research Examination Board, and the examiners' separate (preliminary and post oral examination) reports and recommendations, and may:

- x accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation concurs with at least one external examiner)
- x accept the decision of the external examiner (where there is only one on the examination team)
- x appoint an additional external examiner who meets all relevant criteria for appointment.

4.1.28.2 Where an additional external examiner is appointed, they will prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis and may decide to conduct a further oral examination. This additional examination will be considered part of the initial examination and should be chaired by the same Chair where possible.

4.1.28.3 The newly appointed examiner may be informed that there has been a disagreement between the initial examiners but should not be informed of the specific recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner the RDC will reconsider the outcome as per 4.1.25.8.

4.1.29 Awards and outcomes

4.1.29.1 The date of award is the date of approval by the RDC.

4.1.29.2 In the case of proven cases of academic misconduct, the RDC may determine an appropriate penalty in accordance with the procedures for investigating Research Misconduct.

4.1.30 Appeals

4.1.30.1 A research student may appeal against the decision of the RDC in accordance with the University's policy regarding academic appeals.

4.2 Regulations specific to the award of Professional Doctorates

4.2.1 Definition of award

4.2.1.1 A professional doctorate is a research degree located in a field of professional practice and an academic discipline. It provides a route to a doctorate that is distinct from a PhD in the same field/discipline.

4.2.1.2 The title of a professional doctorate award will normally reflect the field of professional practice. The titles of awards from professional doctorate programmes are approved by RDC and Academic Board.

4.2.1.3 In addition to the general regulations the following regulations apply to Professional Doctorates.

4.2.2 Directed studies and research study

4.2.2.1 Directed studies provide preparation for the research study and/or complement the research study. Directed studies may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following: taught modules, a series of participative workshops or similar,

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publishable systematic literature review, a pilot study or similar preparatory work.
The programme of directed studies for each professional doctorate programme will
be detailed in the Programme Approval Document.

4.2.2.2

be successfully completed to allow progression to Part 3. The outcomes of the Progression Points must be confirmed by RDC.

4.2.6 Assessment of Directed Study

4.2.6.1

- 4.3.1.1 The University will normally only consider applications from current members of staff of the University, or of a formally recognised collaborative partner institution, for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy based on published work.
- 4.3.1.2 Students must remain members of staff of the University or of the partner institution throughout the period of registration.
- 4.3.2 Admission
- 4.3.2.1 A formal application for admission must be submitted to the RDC, via the Research Graduate School. This does not preclude preliminary discussions between a potential applicant and a potential Director of Studies to refine the candidature proposal.
- 4.3.2.2 The formal application will comprise:
- x Evidence of eligibility
 - x A list of works upon which the candidature is to be based.
 - x Details of where and when the research upon which the listed works were based was undertaken.
 - x An outline discussion (of not less than 3,000 words) of the contribution of the published works to the advancement of the field of study.
- 4.3.2.3 The Research Graduate School will screen the application for eligibility and circulate to the relevant Director(s) of Research Institute(s).
- 4.3.2.4 Eligible applications should be reviewed by at least two members of academic staff from the relevant research institute(s) or academic department(s), who will make a recommendation to the Director(s) of Research Institute(s). The applicant may be interviewed. The recommendation shall be 'admit' or 'reject' based upon both the quality of the application and the availability of a Director of Studies.
- 4.3.2.5 Recommended admissions and reasons for rejections will be presented by the Research Institute Director to the RDC.
- 4.3.3 Supervision
- 4.3.3.1 During the period of registration, a member of staff of the University of Bedfordshire will be appointed as Director of Studies to supervise the compilation of the final submission (portfolio) and to ensure that procedures relating to the appointment of examiners and examination arrangements are completed.
- 4.3.4 The portfolio
- 4.3.4.1 The portfolio shall comprise:
- a) The publications and any other artefacts upon which the candidature is based.
 - b) A declaration of the student's contribution to each of any jointly authored or jointly produced artefacts upon which the candidature is based.
 - c) A substantial introduction and critical commentary, typically between 5,000 and 10,000 words, which sets the publications and any non-te.9 (pl)10.6.calmt-he -hiicati2.6

- 4.3.6.2 In examining the student, the Postgraduate Research Examination Board must determine whether the
- a) work submitted demonstrates that the student has completed research at

4.4.2.1 The University may confer an award of Doctor of Laws (LLD), Doctor of Letters (DLitt) or Doctor of Science (DSc) upon a candidate who is adjudged to have distinguished him/herself through published contributions to a field of study. A student must demonstrate:

- a) Contributions of originality and merit in the field;
- b) Sustained and substantial contributions to the advancement of knowledge, over a number of years;
- c) Seminal publications which have led to extensions or the development of knowledge by others; and
- d) Authoritative standing in the field of study.

4.4.3 Eligibility

4.4.3.1 Applicants should be either

authorship. Note: the University reserves the right to consult with any of the co-authors or collaborators in respect of this declaration;

- j) An outline description (approximately 2,000 words), with reference to specific publications and items on the curriculum vitae, indicating how the applicant's body of work and professional standing fulfils the requirements for the award (section).
- k) A sample of published works from the list the applicant plans to submit for the Higher Doctorate assessment (see point e above). The sample should include at least four and no more than ten key publications that are highlighted in the outline description. An electronic copy of each sample publication is preferred, but two paper copies may be provided instead.
- l) Declaration of any conflict of interest which may impinge upon the selection of reviewers for the application, or examiners for the final submission.

4.4.4.4 Eligible applications will be reviewed by two members of academic staff, at the level of professor or reader, from the relevant research institute(s) or academic department(s) and one from another research institute. Each reviewer must prepare a short report and make a recommendation to the RDC on whether the application should proceed.

4.4.4.5 The RDC will decide whether to accept the application, based upon the recommendations of the internal reviewers.

4.4.4.6 If an application is unsuccessful, no further application for a higher doctorate will be considered until at least two years has elapsed from the date of the original application.

4.4.5 Supervision

4.4.5.1 Given the evident standing of the applicant, the appointment of a Director of Studies

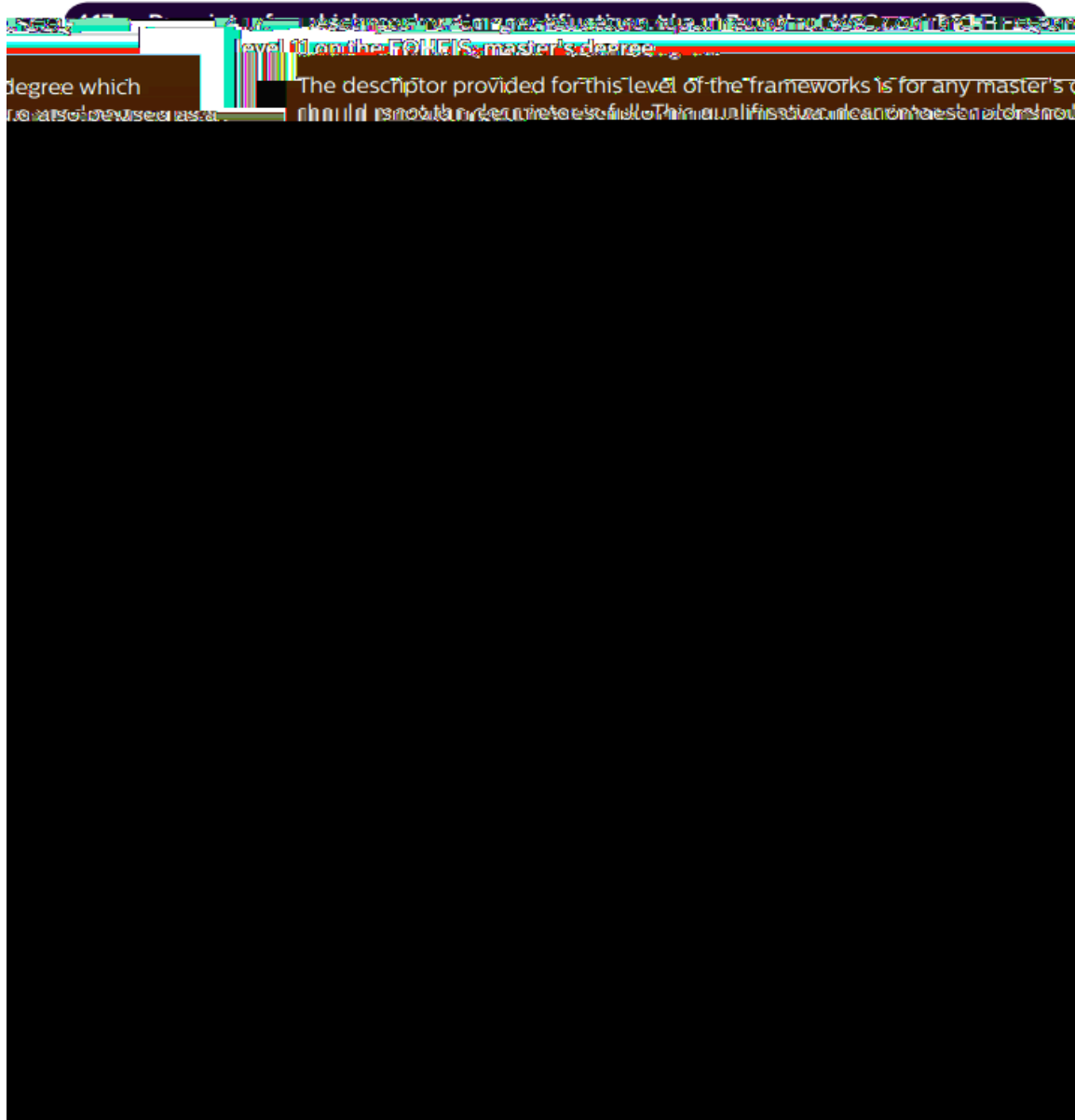
- h) A detailed critical appraisal (5000 words maximum) that through reference to selected publications and other achievements clearly demonstrates how the student meets the criteria for the award (section 4.4.4).
- i) The publications listed in c) above

4.4.6.2 The portfolio must conform to the format as outlined in the University 'Style Guide, Requirements and Procedure for Thesis Submission'.

4.4.6.3 The portfolio may include creative work forming, as a point of origin or reference, a

Annex 1: Doctoral and Research Master's Qualification Descriptors and Characteristics

Descriptor for a Higher education qualification at level 7: master's degree



Research Masters Degrees: Characteristics of Graduates

Characteristics Statement, UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards, Master's Degree, QAA September 2015 available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Masters-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf>

The Qualifications Frameworks level descriptor for the master's degree includes generic information about what all holders of the master's qualification are able to do, and the qualities and skills that they have (see the Qualifications Frameworks for details).

Beyond these core attributes, master's graduates are diverse, with wide-ranging strengths and abilities. This is a reflection of the diversity of master's programmes available as well as students' different aspirations, motivations, learning needs and personal circumstances.

Nonetheless, all master's degree graduates have in-depth and advanced knowledge and understanding of their subject and/or profession, informed by current practice, scholarship and research. This will include a critical awareness of current issues and developments in the subject and/or profession; critical skills; knowledge of professional responsibility, integrity and ethics; and the ability to reflect on their own progress as a learner.

Graduates of research masters are likely to be further characterised by their ability to study independently in the subject, and to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to advanced scholarship in the subject. Graduates of specialist or advanced study masters are likely to be characterised in particular by their ability to complete a research project in the subject, which in some subjects includes a critical review of existing literature or other scholarly outputs. Meanwhile, graduates of professional or practice masters are able to apply research and critical perspectives to professional situations, both practical and theoretical, and to use a range of techniques and research methods applicable to their professional activities.

Graduates of all types of master's degrees are equipped to enter a variety of types of employment (either subject-specific or generalist) or to continue academic study at a higher level, for example a doctorate (provided that they meet the necessary entry requirements). Graduates of professional/practice master's programmes in particular possess the skills and experience necessary for some professions or areas of practice.

The following characteristics are often associated with research master's programmes.

- x The student conducts a research project through independent study.
- x They include research methods training, which may be provided through 'taught' content modules.
- x Assessment is specific to the individual and usually requires a dissertation or thesis, or other output, such as an artefact, performance or musical composition. The thesis is commonly defended in an oral examination. Where students must successfully complete 'taught' modules are part of a research master's degree, the assessment of those components may be separate from the overall assessment.

Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8: Doctoral Degree

