

5.3 Regulatory framework for Professional Doctorate programmes

Introduction

- 1 The aim of the Professional Doctorate is to provide an alternative award of equivalent standard to a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) for the development of specialist professional and research skills and competencies within an appropriate intellectual framework.
- 2 A professional doctorate shall be awarded to a student who has:
 - passed all the elements of the preparatory stage of the programme equivalent to 180 credits at Masters and/or Doctoral level *and*
 - undertaken a significant piece of empirical research demonstrating critical investigation and evaluation and demonstrating independent thought and research creativity, making an original contribution to knowledge or practice, and generating new applications or understanding that extend the frontier of knowledge in an area of professional practice equivalent to 360 credits at Doctoral level such as would be completed in two years of full-time study, resulting in the production of a thesis *and*
 - demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the field of study *and*
 - presented and defended a thesis by oral or alternative examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.
- 3 The award shall be conferred by the University Awards Board under powers delegated to it by the Academic Board of the University.
- 4 This regulatory framework is designed to be consonant with the Research Degree Regulations (Section 5.2). Where these Regulations remain silent the Research Degree Regulations (Section 5.2) may be invoked.

Admission to a professional doctorate programme

- 5 Applications shall be considered in line with the University's generic principles for admissions (see Section 2.2) and the English language requirements for research degree students (see Section 5.2 Regulations 12-14). Students shall normally be required to hold a first or upper second class honours degree of a UK university or a qualification or other experience which is regarded by the University as equivalent to such an honours degree. Authorised admitting officers shall determine which applicants are to be admitted in accordance with the entrance requirements for each professional doctorate programme specified in the relevant course specific regulations. The authorised admitting officer shall satisfy him or herself that each student is proposing to conduct research in an appropriate field of study in which the University is able to provide appropriate facilities for the conduct of scholarly research, including adequate and sustainable supervision.
- 6 Students may normally study in full-time or part-time mode and may transfer between these modes of study. A student admitted for study leading to a Professional Doctorate shall be provided with a period of registration of 4 years (full-time) and 6 years (part-time).

Professional doctorate programme structure

Preparatory stage

- 7 Course specific regulations for each professional doctorate programme, approved at validation, shall specify the structure of each programme leading to a named award.

- 8 The preparatory stage of the programme shall normally include some taught elements, which shall be based on a teaching year comprising an autumn and a spring semester of 15 weeks each and a summer studies period, making 48 weeks in total.
- 9 Study in full-time mode towards the preparatory stage of the programme shall normally comprise 60 credits (normally 3 modules) denoting 600 learning hours in each of the three study periods (see Regulation 8 above).
- 10 Each taught module shall normally be worth 20 credits, denoting 200 learning hours, and shall be delivered in a single semester. Larger or smaller modules may be approved at validation where the nature of the programme justifies this.
- 11 The preparatory stage of the programme shall include one or more modules dealing with research methods and preparation for the thesis stage. The preparatory stage may also include a dissertation defined as a substantial piece of independent work, synthesising earlier learning, and which may be a written piece of work, a project incorporating a report, an artefact incorporating a commentary or equivalent piece of work original to the author and critically reflective. A dissertation shall normally be concerned with the same field of study as the student proposes to work on in his or her thesis.
- 12 Course specific regulations shall specify the core and optional modules which constitute the preparatory stage of the programme.
- 13 Students may only attend and be assessed in those modules included in their programme of study which have been approved by an authorised programme approver in accordance with course specific regulations. Programmes of study for individual students shall normally be finalised before the start of the semester.
- 14 A student wishing to withdraw from a module for which he or she is registered must submit a written request to the Academic Registrar no later than the end of the second week of the first semester of the academic year in which she/he is enrolled. Such requests must be agreed in writing by the Academic Registrar. Subject to the Academic Registrar's consent, the student shall be deemed not to have taken the module and their record will be updated accordingly. Where this results in the student no longer meeting the criteria for full time study, their mode of attendance will be formally amended to part-time by the University. A student who the University deems still to be studying on a full time basis will continue to pay the appropriate full time fee. A student who the University deems to be studying on a part time basis will receive a refund of the tuition fees paid for the module(s), as appropriate. Having withdrawn from a module, a student shall only be permitted to substitute it with an alternative module with the approval of the University. Such requests shall only be considered where there is no reduction in the total number of modules registered (See also Section 9.1, Regulations 32-34).

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

- 15 Students who have been given credit for prior learning in accordance with the APL Procedures (see Section 10.1) shall be exempted from taking those module(s) against which credit has already been given. Credit may be awarded against named modules or as pathway or elective credit. The minimum amount of APL credit that may be given to an individual student shall be equivalent to one module at any level. The maximum amount of APL credit possible is equivalent to a maximum of the preparatory stage. Where a student is enrolled under the terms of a Tier 4 Student Visa, the award of AP(E)L credit will only be made if a student is able to continue to study the programme full-time and in accordance with current immigration guidance. A student may be awarded a mixture of APCL and APEL credit.

Assessment of the preparatory stage of the programme

- 16 Students shall be assessed in the modules constituting the preparatory stage of the professional doctorate programme in accordance with the Regulations on assessment and Assessment Boards (see Section 8.1).
- 17 Each student shall be offered an opportunity to be assessed in each module under an approved scheme of assessment during the period in which the module is studied.
- 18 There may be a number of items of assessed work for each module. The module specification shall include the assessment scheme for each module and the weighting of each item of assessed work, as approved in accordance with the University's systems and arrangements in place for managing the quality and standards of taught provision.
- 19 Students are required to attempt all items of assessed work for each module. If a student is unable, through disability, to be assessed by the normal methods, under Procedures established on behalf of Academic Board, assessment instruments may be modified (see Section 8.1 Regulation 8).
- 20 The results from each item of assessed work shall be aggregated according to the specified weightings to produce an overall mark for the module. Module specifications may additionally specify that particular items of assessed work must be passed in order for the module to be passed. Should an item of assessed work not be submitted, a mark of zero will be recorded for that item. Where an error in the computation of an assessment result or final award has been found, the corrected grade shall be entered on to the student's record, regardless of whether it is higher, **or lower**, than the original grade.
- 21 On the basis of performance in the approved assessment scheme each student shall be awarded marks for each module reported in percentages. The pass mark for all modules shall be 50%.
- 22 Feedback to students, before confirmation of marks by the Assessment Board, may be reported in percentage marks, with the proviso that such marks are provisional and subject to change.

Responsibilities of students (including coursework submission and attendance at examinations)

- 23 It shall be the responsibility of students to familiarise themselves with the assessment regulations and with the examination and coursework submission timetables to ascertain when opportunities for assessment arise.
- 24 It shall be the responsibility of students to submit work for assessment by the specified deadlines and to attend examinations, normally at the earliest opportunity offered in respect of both categories. Exceptionally, a student unable, for good reason, to submit a coursework first assessment may request an extension of up to five working days. Such requests shall normally be made in advance of the deadline. Where such an extension is approved and the work is submitted by the extended deadline provided, the work shall be marked as if it were submitted on time by the original due date.
- 25 It shall be the responsibility of students who believe they have valid reasons for absence from an examination to submit a claim for mitigating circumstances¹ in accordance with the criteria and procedures for such claims (see Section 10.3).

¹ A student may have a mitigating circumstances/academic performance claim accepted normally on one occasion only for a particular item of assessed work.

- 26 It shall be the responsibility of students who believe their academic performance in an examination, was significantly impaired by mitigating circumstances¹, to submit to submit a claim for mitigating circumstances in accordance with the criteria and procedures for such claims (see Section 10.3).
- 27 It shall be the responsibility of students who believe that a procedural irregularity has occurred or that they were prevented from submitting a claim for mitigating circumstances¹, to submit an appeal to the Student Casework Office in the Academic Registry within ten working days of results being published, in accordance with the Procedures for the submission of Appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards (see Section 10.4).
- 28 It shall be the responsibility of students to ensure that the work they submit for assessment is entirely their own, or in the case of groupwork the group's own, and that they observe all rules and instructions governing examinations. Any allegation of cheating or other impropriety which might give an advantage in assessment to students against whom allegations have been made shall be considered under the Procedures on Student Academic Misconduct (see Section 10.5). Any student found to be guilty of academic misconduct shall be subject to the provisions of those Procedures, which set down an explicit range of graduated penalties depending on the particular manifestation of academic misconduct. The penalties that can be applied if academic misconduct is substantiated range from a formal reprimand to expulsion from the University in very serious cases.

First Assessments in the preparatory stage of the programme

- 29 An overall module result shall be calculated from the results of each item of assessed work for the module (see Regulation 21 above). A student shall be awarded a pass in the module where they have achieved an overall pass mark, and have additionally passed any items of assessed work required by the Module Specification.

Reassessment and retaking in the preparatory stage of the programme

- 30 A student who, for a first assessment, has failed a component of assessment (as set down in the Module Specification) for a module shall:
- 30.1 be expected to undertake reassessment in the component concerned, if the module has been failed overall; *or*
 - 30.2 be invited to undertake reassessment in the failed component (whether attempted or not attempted at the first assessment opportunity) concerned, where the module has achieved an overall pass mark. In such circumstances, the reassessment must be taken during the summer resit period following the academic session in which the module was taken (unless a valid claim for mitigating circumstances precludes this). A student eligible to graduate should notify the University of their intention to undertake reassessment in the failed component and, by doing so, defer the date of the conferral of their award. If a student does not undertake reassessment during the summer resit period following the academic session, the original mark shall stand, with no further opportunity to undertake reassessment in the failed component.
- 31 Reassessment for coursework, project or portfolio based assessments shall normally involve the reworking of the original task. For examinations, reassessment shall involve the completion of a new task.

- 32 A student shall not be entitled to be reassessed in any component of assessment for which a passing mark has been awarded.
- 33 The Subject Standards Board may, at its discretion, make such special arrangements as it deems appropriate in cases where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same elements and by the same methods as at the first attempt.
- 34 Reassessment shall normally take place during the summer resit period following the academic session in which the module was taken.
- 35 If a component is passed following reassessment, the component mark shall be capped at bare pass (i.e. 50% for postgraduate modules).
- 36 Where a student has a further (re)assessment opportunity following the summer resit period, it must be taken at the earliest assessment point when the module is next offered in the following academic year.
- 37 When a student has failed both the original assessment and the reassessment for a module, the student shall normally be entitled to retake the module on one occasion, unless the course specific regulations specify to the contrary. A student who retakes a module is required to re-enrol for the module, pay any tuition fee required for such enrolment, follow the course of tuition offered and attempt all the items of assessed work, including any which he or she may previously have passed. A student enrolled under the conditions of a Tier 4 Student Visa and who is required to undertake reassessment in a second registration of a module, may be required to take that final reassessment opportunity outside of the UK.

Progression to the thesis stage of the programme

- 38 Students shall normally be required to pass the preparatory stage of the programme before progressing to the thesis stage (see Regulation 43 below).
- 39 Before approving transfer from the preparatory stage to the thesis stage students shall be required to demonstrate that they have an approved research proposal and that the proposed programme provides a suitable basis for work at doctoral level which the student is capable of pursuing to timely completion.
- 40 A student who has passed modules within the preparatory stage of a programme equivalent to at least 180 credits at Masters (which may include the completion of a dissertation) and withdraws from the programme shall have a Masters level award, as approved at validation, conferred on him or her by the University Awards Board in accordance with the course specific regulations.

Thesis stage

- 41 At least once a year, the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall establish whether the student is actively engaged on the research programme and is maintaining regular and frequent contact with the supervisors and shall consider reports from the student, the supervisors and a reader on the student's progress. As a result of this process, the Committee shall take or progress appropriate action, which may include the termination or withdrawal of the student's registration. If no reports are obtained from the student and if no response is forthcoming from the student following enquiries from the University, the student may be withdrawn. Students who are considered not to be making satisfactory progress on their research programme will not be able to continue regardless of their progress and achievement in other aspects of the professional doctorate programme.
- 42 A Professional Doctorate shall require all students to prepare a thesis, which shall involve a substantial volume of independent work and generate new applications or understanding that extend the frontier of knowledge in an area of professional practice. Course specific

regulations shall determine the composition of the thesis. The project(s) which contribute to the thesis will be based on appropriate professional practice which may be obtained through work-based learning and experience, acquired before (where appropriate and not precluded by course specific regulations) or during the programme and through study at the University.

- 43 Each student shall register his or her thesis title with the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees. The Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall approve the supervision arrangements. The Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall normally consider applications for the thesis to be treated confidentially (in line with Regulation 123 below) at this stage, but if necessary such applications may be made at a later point in time.
- 44 Where the student is prevented, by ill health or other cause, from making progress with the research, the student shall apply to the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees for a period of intermission of up to six months. The maximum permitted period of intermission shall normally be one year. A further exceptional request above one year must be approved by the Academic Registrar who may exceptionally approve an intermission for a further additional year. Criteria for agreement to a period of intermission will include continued academic viability of the research project. Students whose residence in the UK is only permitted by the terms of a student visa cannot remain resident in the UK if they are intermitting their studies. The University will notify the relevant authorities if an intermission is agreed.
- 45 A student shall submit the thesis to the Research and Postgraduate Office of the University before the expiry of the maximum period of registration. The Chair of the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees may extend a student's period of registration, normally for a period of six months at a time, to a maximum of 6 years (full-time) and 8 years (part-time), which includes any periods of intermission; subject to confirmation that the student continues to make satisfactory academic progress and, that the research project remains viable.
- 46 Where the student's own creative work forms a significant part of the intellectual enquiry within the programme of research, the creative work must be clearly presented in relation to the argument of a written thesis and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical, design or professional context. The written component(s) of the thesis shall conform to the usual scholarly requirements. The final submission must be accompanied by a permanent record of the creative work. Where practical such a record should be bound with the written components of the thesis.
- 47 The amount and extent of the output should normally be such as would be expected as a result of a minimum of two years full-time study or its equivalent in part-time work. Unless the course specific regulations specify to the contrary all the components of the written thesis taken together should normally be within the range:
25,000 – 30,000 words if in the field of Art/Design or Science/Technology
40,000 – 60,000 words if in the field of Arts, Design, Education, Business or Social Sciences
20,000 – 30,000 words if related to practice-based production of artefacts.
- 48 There shall normally be an abstract, in English, of approximately 300 words bound into the thesis which shall provide a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated.
- 49 The thesis shall acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and any assistance received.
- 50 Where a student's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the thesis shall indicate clearly the student's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.

- 51 Except with the specific permission of the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees the thesis shall be presented in English. Where appropriate, matters pertinent to the thesis may be presented in another language but must be accompanied by a full translation into English, if appropriate to the subject discipline.
- 52 In exceptional circumstances, a student may be allowed to submit in a language other than English, if approved by the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees when notified of the registration (see Regulation 43 above) and if appropriate supervisors and examiners are available.

Examination of the thesis - general

- 53 The examination of the thesis shall have two stages: firstly the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis and secondly its defence by oral examination or alternative examination as approved at validation and specified in course specific regulations.
- 54 The student shall be required to pass all elements of the preparatory stage of the programme before the thesis may be submitted for examination. The Lead Supervisor shall submit to the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees confirmation from the relevant Subject Standards Board that the student has passed the preparatory stage of the programme before the examiners are appointed.
- 55 A student shall normally be examined orally on the programme of work and on the field of study in which the programme lies. The oral examination should take place within three months of the thesis submission and normally no later than six months after submission.
- 56 A senior academic within the University shall be designated independent chair of the oral examination. The Chair is not an examiner and is independent of the candidate's supervisory team and research topic, but takes responsibility for ensuring the University's Regulations are followed (Refer also to Section 10.6, the Procedures for the Conduct of the Research Degree Oral Examination) and that the examiners are able to distinguish between 'minor amendments' (i.e. typographical, factual or analytical errors that require corrections that can feasibly be made within 3 months) and 'revision' (i.e. substantial flaws in design, conduct, analysis or presentation that require revision that can feasibly be made within 12 months) of the thesis as detailed in Regulations 76, 79.2, 79.3, and 80.
- 57 Normally only the candidate, the examiners, the independent chair and, where the candidate permits, the supervisor(s), may be present at the oral examination. Should the supervisor(s) attend they do so in the capacity of observer(s) and as such, may not participate in the discussion and shall withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.
- 58 The Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall consider the reports and recommendation(s) of the examiners in respect of the student and propose awards for conferral to the University Awards Board.
- 59 Where for reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees is satisfied that a student would be under serious disadvantage if required to undergo an oral examination, or where there is other comparable reason, an alternative form of examination may be approved. Such approval shall not be given on the grounds that the student's knowledge of English is inadequate.
- 60 The award of professional doctorate may be made posthumously to a student on the basis of passing the preparatory stage of the programme and completion of a thesis which is ready for submission for examination. In such cases the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall seek evidence that the student would have been likely to have been successful had the oral examination taken place.

- 61 Following submission, where there is evidence of cheating or plagiarism in the thesis, or irregularities in the conduct of the examination, it shall be progressed and considered under the University's Procedures on Student Academic Misconduct (See Section 10.5). Any student found to be guilty of academic misconduct shall be subject to the provisions of those Procedures and their associated penalties for Research Degree allegations (see Section 10.5, Appendix 10.5.2)
- 62 The Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall ensure that all examinations are conducted and the recommendations of the examiners are presented wholly in accordance with the University's regulations and course specific regulations. In any instance where the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees is made aware of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and require a new examination to take place with new examiners. In such cases, this shall be reported to the Chair of the University Awards Board.

The student's responsibilities in the examination process

- 63 The submission of the thesis is the sole responsibility of the student. It shall be the responsibility of the student to ensure that the thesis they submit for assessment is entirely their own and that they observe all rules and instructions governing examinations. Any allegation of plagiarism or any other impropriety shall be progressed under the Procedures on Student Academic Misconduct (see Regulation 61 above).
- 64 The student shall ensure that a specified number of copies of the thesis, accompanied where appropriate by any original artefacts, are submitted to the Research and Postgraduate Office of the University by the due deadline. The paper-based (written) components of the thesis may be submitted for examination either in a permanently bound form or in a temporary bound form, which is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed.
- 65 The student shall take no part in the arrangement of the examination and shall have no formal contact with the examiner(s) following their appointment.
- 66 The student shall confirm that the thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award. The student shall not be precluded from incorporating in the thesis, covering a wider field, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is indicated, on the declaration form and also on the thesis, which work has been so incorporated. The student shall ensure that the thesis format and components are in accordance with the requirements set down in the course specific regulations.
- 67 Any mitigating circumstances pertaining to the oral examination should be disclosed at the outset of the oral examination process.

Examiners

- 68 Each student shall normally be examined by at least two examiners of whom at least one shall be an external examiner.
- 69 An internal examiner shall normally be defined as a member of staff of the University other than a supervisor or adviser of the student as appointed under procedures determined by Academic Board. The external examiner shall normally not be external examiner on a taught course in the same Faculty at the University. Former members of staff of the University shall normally not be approved as external examiners until five years after the termination of their employment with the University.

- 70 Where the student is on the staff of the University in any capacity, an additional external examiner shall be appointed and there shall be no internal examiner.
- 71 Examiners shall be appointed according to the following criteria:
- 71.1 experienced in research in the general area of the student's thesis; and
 - 71.2 have relevant professional experience in the topic(s) to be examined; and
 - 71.3 at least one external examiner shall have substantial experience (that is, normally having acted as an examiner at two or more previous research degree examinations); and
 - 71.4 an external examiner shall be independent both of the University and, if applicable, of any collaborating organisation and shall not have acted previously as the student's supervisor or adviser.
- 72 The University shall determine and pay the fees and expenses of the examiners.
- 73 The Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall approve these arrangements individually.
- 74 The Research and Postgraduate Office shall be responsible for the organisation of the oral or alternative examination and shall notify the student, all supervisors and the examiners of the arrangements for the examination.
- 75 The Research and Postgraduate Office shall send a copy of the thesis to each examiner, together with an examiner's preliminary report form and the University's regulations and shall ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.

The examiners' responsibilities

- 76 Each examiner shall read and examine all the components of the thesis and submit an independent preliminary report on it to Research and Postgraduate Office two weeks before the oral or alternative form of examination is held. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the research requirements of the degree and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination. The examiners shall not recommend that a student fail outright without holding an oral examination or other alternative examination.
- 77 Where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that it is likely that they will recommend that the student will not be awarded the degree or will be required to revise and resubmit the thesis for re-examination, the examiners shall not, except under exceptional circumstances, make such recommendations without submitting the candidate to oral examination or approved alternative examination.
- 78 Following the oral or alternative examination the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree to the Chair of the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in Regulation 79 is appropriate. Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted.
- 79 Following the completion of the oral examination the examiners may recommend that:
- 79.1 the student be awarded the degree
 - 79.2 the student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis; these should normally be submitted within 3 months and, to the satisfaction of internal and/or the external examiner(s). The examiners shall write a report

- detailing what amendments and corrections are required, which shall be sent to the student by the Research and Postgraduate Office;
- 79.3 the student be permitted to resubmit for the degree and be re-examined, with or without an oral or alternative examination; this should normally be done within the period of one calendar year from the date of the latest part of the first examination. In cases where the examiners recommend that only the thesis requires re-examination, they may determine that the re-examination of the thesis be undertaken by only the external examiner. The examiners shall write a report detailing what amendments and corrections are required, which shall be sent to the student by the Research and Postgraduate Office;
- 79.4 the student not be awarded the degree of Professional Doctorate, but be considered for an interim award as specified in the Course Specification;
- 79.5 the student be not awarded the degree and be not permitted to be re-examined.
- 80 In accordance with Regulation 58 above, the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall consider all recommendations and propose awards for conferral to the University Awards Board. Only one re-examination may be permitted by the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees.
- 81 Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees may:
- 81.1 accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner);
- 81.2 accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
- 81.3 require the appointment of an additional external examiner.
- 82 Where such an additional external examiner is appointed under Regulation 81.3 he or she shall prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral or alternative examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall determine the outcome as detailed in Regulation 79 above and progress in accordance with Regulation 80 above.
- 83 Where the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees decides that the degree shall not be awarded and that no re-examination be permitted, the examiners shall prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which shall be forwarded to the Chair of the University Awards Board for consideration. Where the decision not to re-examine the student is approved, the Chair of the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall inform the student of this decision and include a copy of the agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis from the examiners.

Re-examination

- 84 There are three forms of re-examination.
- 84.1 where the student's performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination was satisfactory but the thesis was unsatisfactory, the examiner(s) shall re-examine the thesis only;
- 84.2 where the student's performance in the first oral or approved alternative examination was unsatisfactory and the thesis was also unsatisfactory, any re-examination shall include a re-examination of the thesis and an oral or approved alternative examination;
- 84.3 where on the first examination the student's thesis was satisfactory but the performance in the oral and/or other examination(s) was not satisfactory the student shall be re-examined in the oral and/or other examination(s) subject to the time limits prescribed in Regulation 85, without being requested to revise and re-submit the thesis.

- 85 The student shall submit for re-examination within the period of one calendar year from the date of the latest part of the first examination. Any oral examination shall normally be undertaken within three months of resubmission. The Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees may, where there are significant extenuating circumstances that occur during the calendar year, approve an exceptional extension of this period.
- 86 The Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees may require that an additional external examiner be appointed for the re-examination.
- 87 In the case of a re-examination under Regulations 84.1 the examiner(s) (refer 79.3 above) shall read and examine the thesis and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent report to the Research and Postgraduate Office. In completing the form, the examiner(s) shall consider whether the thesis satisfies the requirements of the degree and make a recommendation alongside sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in Regulation 90 is appropriate.
- 88 Following the re-examination of the thesis under Regulation 84.2 or following an oral or other examination under Regulations 84.2 or 84.3, the examiners shall, where they are in agreement, submit, on the appropriate form, a joint recommendation relating to the award of the degree to the Chair of the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees. The reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in Regulation 84 is appropriate.
- 89 Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations shall be submitted. The recommendations shall be made on the appropriate form.
- 90 Following the completion of the re-examination the examiners may recommend that:
- 90.1 the student be awarded the degree;
 - 90.2 the student be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis; these should normally be submitted within 3 months. The examiners shall write a report detailing what amendments and corrections are required, which shall be sent to the student by the Research and Postgraduate Office;
 - 90.3 the student not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined; in such cases, consideration will be given to whether the student is eligible for a lower award of Masters as specified in the course specific regulations.
- 91 In accordance with Regulation 58 above, the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall consider all recommendations and propose awards for conferral to the University Awards Board. In respect of 90.2 above, this is contingent upon the student amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner(s) within 3 months. Minor amendments may normally only be proposed on two occasions.

Appeals against decisions of the University Awards Board

Introduction

- 92 These regulations are intended to protect research degree students against the possibility of unfair summative assessment resulting from omission or error on the part of the appropriate University authorities, or from unforeseen circumstances affecting a student. No student appealing under these Regulations, whether successfully or otherwise, shall be treated less favourably than would have been the case had an appeal not been made.
- 93 An appeal may be lodged only in relation to a decision of the University Awards Board and/or its sub-committee for Research Degrees. Given the existence of procedures for complaint

and grievance during the study period, alleged inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements during the period of study shall not constitute grounds for appeal. In cases where delay has occurred as a result of confusion over which is the correct procedure to follow, the date of the first enquiry shall be considered to be the date on which the appeal was lodged.

- 94 The Academic Registrar has overall responsibility for the Regulations on appeals against decisions of the University Awards Board.

Validity and Invalidity

- 95 An appeal in respect of an academic judgement of the examiners arrived at through due process shall be deemed invalid.
- 96 For an appeal to be valid it **must**:
- 96.1 Be made in writing, be dated and bear the full name, student number and signature of the student;
 - 96.2 Specify the grounds for appeal from among those set down in Regulation 98 below;
 - 96.3 Include all appropriate, relevant, available supporting independent evidence;
 - 96.4 Be submitted to the Student Casework Office in the Academic Registry. Appeals submitted by post must be sent to the Student Casework Office **only**: the University cannot accept any responsibility for the receipt or late delivery of any such appeal.
 - 96.5 Be **received** within **ten working days** of the date of notification of the decision concerned.

Grounds of appeal

- 97 An appeal can only be made on the following grounds:
- 97.1 that the student had been affected by mitigating circumstances which he/she had properly drawn attention to, but which the examiners had failed to take into account; or that the student had been affected by mitigating circumstances which he/she was unable, for **good reason** to draw proper attention; and/or,
 - 97.2 that in the conduct of the examination there was evidence of significant procedural irregularity which could include administrative error or unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners and that this, in turn, had a significant impact on the student.

Consideration of an appeal

- 98 The Student Casework Office shall check each appeal for validity against the criteria listed in Regulations 95 and 96 above. Any appeals, which do not meet these criteria, shall be deemed invalid, and the student shall be informed of this decision in writing at the earliest opportunity. The student shall be provided with a further ten working days in which to submit further evidence to validate the appeal in accordance with Regulations 95 and 96 above.
- 99 The Student Casework Office shall consider each valid appeal and determine if the ground(s) listed in Regulation 97 has/have been clearly demonstrated. In establishing whether a student has clearly demonstrated the ground(s) of appeal, the Student Casework Office may liaise with the Research and Postgraduate Office. The Student Casework Office may also seek written or oral testimony from the examiners, from other persons present at the oral examination, from supervisors or other members of the academic staff, or further evidence or statements from the student as appropriate.
- 100 For a valid appeal in which the ground(s) listed in Regulation 97 has/have been clearly demonstrated, an Appeals Panel shall normally be convened. The decision as to whether an Appeals Panel shall be convened shall rest with the Academic Registrar.

- 101 For a valid appeal in which the student has not clearly demonstrated that the ground(s) of appeal have been met; the appeal shall be rejected. The Student Casework Office shall inform the student of this decision in writing at the earliest opportunity. The student shall be granted a further ten working days in which to submit relevant additional evidence to clearly demonstrate the ground(s) on which the appeal has been made.
- 102 The Student Casework Office shall consider further relevant additional evidence submitted for the deadline set down in Regulation 101 above and determine whether the ground(s) has/have been clearly demonstrated. In cases where the additional evidence clearly demonstrates that the ground(s) has/have been met, an Appeals Panel shall be convened. In cases where the additional evidence does not clearly demonstrate that the ground(s) of appeal has/have been met, the appeal shall be rejected and the student shall be informed of this decision in writing at the earliest opportunity. The student shall also be informed that the University's internal procedures for appeal have been exhausted.

Appeals Panel

- 103 The Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall appoint up to three of its members from persons having experience of supervising and examining research degrees and who have had no previous involvement in the student's assessment, to act as an Appeals Panel and assign one member as Chair. In deciding the membership of such panels the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall have regard to potential conflicts of interest. No student shall be a member of an Appeals Panel. A senior member of the Student Casework Office shall act as Secretary. The Secretary shall supply all relevant documentation and evidence to the Panel.
- 104 The Appeals Panel shall meet within a reasonable period of time.
- 105 At least six working days before the intended date of the Appeals Panel meeting, the Secretary shall notify the student of the time and place at which the meeting shall take place. The student may, in person or by letter, address the Appeals Panel. The student shall have a right to be assisted by a friend at the Appeals Panel meeting.
- 106 If, on one occasion, the student provides the Secretary with a satisfactory reason for not being able to attend the meeting, the Secretary shall make such alternative arrangements as seem appropriate. The Secretary shall decide whether to make alternative arrangements on a second or subsequent occasion.
- 107 The Appeals Panel may summon to appear any person(s) whom it considers to be material witness(es), and call for any other evidence which it considers to be material.
- 108 The Chair of the Appeals Panel shall open the hearing by reviewing the documentation sent to members and shall seek from the student such clarification of the ground(s) for the appeal as may be thought necessary.
- 109 New evidence not notified in advance to the student or the Appeals Panel may only be introduced at the discretion of the Appeals Panel. Where the Panel is of the opinion that relevant evidence has not been presented but could be presented if the meeting was adjourned, it may adjourn the meeting for such evidence to be made available at a resumed meeting. The Appeals Panel should only adjourn the meeting if they are of the opinion that any further evidence which is likely to become available would have a significant impact on the outcome of the appeal.
- 110 The Appeals Panel shall go into closed session to consider its decision. No person other than the members of the Appeals Panel and the Secretary shall be present at the closed session of the Appeals Panel. At a closed session, the Appeals Panel shall only consider evidence presented earlier in the proceedings.

- 111 The Appeals Panel shall in its absolute discretion either dismiss the appeal, or uphold the appeal.
- 112 Where the Appeals Panel decides to dismiss the appeal, the original decision of the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall stand. In such cases, the Secretary will write to the student outlining the reasons for the decision.
- 113 Where the Appeals Panel decides to uphold the appeal it shall, having particular regard to the impact of the circumstances and/or irregularity upon the student, recommend to the University Awards Board:
- 113.1 that no action be taken, as the circumstances and/or irregularity did not have a significant impact upon the student;
- 113.2 that the examiners be invited to reconsider their decision; and/or,
- 113.3 that new examiners should be appointed.
- The Appeals Panel shall **not** have the authority to set aside the decision of the University Awards Board and thereby to recommend the award of the degree.
- 114 The Secretary shall make a formal record of the salient points of the proceedings of the Appeals Panel, which shall be signed by the Chair of the Appeals Panel and kept as a correct record of the meeting.
- 115 The Secretary shall provide a written report to the Chair of the University Awards Board informing them of the Appeals Panel's recommendation(s). The Chair of the University Awards Board shall inform the Student Casework Office of his/her decision who in turn shall, as soon as is practicable, inform the student, in writing, of this decision.
- 116 Under the Higher Education Act 2004 the University subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student complaints. If a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of her/his appeal s/he may be able to apply for a review of their appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for students in Higher Education (OIA) providing that the complaint s/he takes to the OIA is eligible under its Rules. The University will confirm in writing to students, by way of a Completion of Procedures email/letter, when they have exhausted the University's internal procedures. At this point students may apply to the OIA if they wish.
- 117 The Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the University shall have power to re-open any appeal where it appears that it would be in the interests of fairness to do so. When deciding whether to exercise this discretion, the Vice-Chancellor shall not normally exercise this power more than six months after the conclusion of the relevant proceedings.

Note

Fraudulent claims will lead the University to take action under its disciplinary procedures.

Complaints procedure

- 118 Students who wish to present a complaint should refer to the University's general Student Complaints Procedure.
- 119 Where the complaint relates to difficulties with the supervisory relationship or the nature of the academic advice given, the following clarification is offered regarding the initial procedure to be followed. If possible the complaint should be raised directly and orally with the Lead Supervisor concerned. Where the complainant does not feel able to do this, or where such an approach has failed to produce a satisfactory resolution of the matter, the student should address the complaint to the Faculty-based Research Student Progress Group Chair. In cases where the complaint involves Faculty-based Research Student Progress Group Chair or where Faculty-based Research Student Progress Group Chair

has been unable to resolve the matter, the complainant should approach the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees. Where no resolution has been reached the complainant should progress the complaint formally via the University Secretary's Office.

Retention of the thesis

- 120 Before the degree can be conferred on the student, all the written components of the thesis must be presented in a permanent binding so that leaves cannot be removed or replaced; the front and rear boards shall have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upright; the outside front board shall bear the title of the work, the name and initials of the student, the qualification and the year of submission all in at least 24pt type; the same information (excluding the title of the work) shall be shown on the spine of the work, reading downwards. The written components of the thesis shall be accompanied, where appropriate, by a permanent record of any creative work. The student shall attest that the contents of the permanently bound thesis are identical with the version submitted for examination, except where amendments have been made to meet the requirements of the examiners.
- 121 Following the award of the degree the Research and Postgraduate Office shall lodge one hard copy of the thesis in the library of the University and also normally a digital copy with the British Library and the University's Institutional Repository. The Research and Postgraduate Office shall provide details of the requirements for the format of the digital copy.
- 122 Where the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees has agreed that the confidential nature of the student's work is such as to preclude the thesis being made freely available in the library of the University or electronically via the British Library, the thesis shall, immediately on completion of the programme of work, be retained by the University on restricted access and, for a time not exceeding the approved period (see Regulation 123 below), shall only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project.
- 123 The Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall normally only approve an application for confidentiality in order to enable a patent application to be lodged or to protect commercially or politically sensitive material or where ethical considerations require this. A thesis shall not be restricted in this way in order to protect research leads. Work judged to be confidential on ethical grounds shall remain on restricted access. While the normal maximum period of confidentiality for other work is two years, in exceptional circumstances the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees may approve a longer period. Where a shorter period would be adequate the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees shall not automatically grant confidentiality for two years.
- 124 The copies of the thesis submitted for examination shall remain the property of the University but the copyright in the thesis shall be vested in the student.