

# Handbook for Research Students & Supervisors & Code of Practice

*Procedures from research student registration to examination*

*October 2021*

This edition replaces previous editions and is applicable to all MPhil & PhD students & Professional Doctorate students in stage two (research) of their programme. The Handbook provides information on procedures and is complementary to the Research Degree Regulations. In all cases, the Academic Regulations are to be considered as definitive and supersede any advice in this Handbook.

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## Introduction

Congratulations on joining our research community. Your postgraduate research will enrich you, our research community and your chosen field and, if it is doctoral research, will offer an original contribution to the knowledge base of your field. Doing postgraduate research is one of the most energising and challenging things you will ever do! Unlike a solely taught degree programme, research degrees are planned and executed individually and independently with guidance and support from supervisors. We are here to help guide you through the requirements and this Handbook is an important place to start.

The Handbook's guidance is for both research students and their supervisors on the processes involved in undertaking a research degree at London Met, with signposts to the University's research degree regulations and policies. The Research Degree Regulations, Handbook and Code of Practice assure standards and quality, protect students' interests, and provide milestones for reviewing the progress of a research project. Taken together, they are intended to provide a system of support and assurance of standards for research degrees.

This Handbook contains two parts

- ***Part One Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors***
- ***Part Two Code of Practice***

## Covid 19 arrangements

The University works strictly to government guidelines. This is in the interest of your health as well as the health of your supervisors and support staff. Currently, [access to campus](#) requires proof of a negative Covid test from within the last three days. You can collect [free lateral flow tests](#) from pharmacies or order them from the NHS. You must report the result of your test to [gov.uk](#) and will receive an official email. If the test is negative, the email will gain you access to campus (have it ready on your phone). Alternatively, you can get tested in one of our [campus test centres](#).

Supervisory meetings may be held remotely or in situ. [The Research and Postgraduate Office](#) (RPO) is open in principle but we prefer you to email us ([research@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:research@londonmet.ac.uk)) as reducing person to person contact is advisable.

Our [PGR training programmes](#), Research Showcase and Research Centre events are held online for the time being. Please [check](#) for exceptions. The [Libraries](#) are open; they have rooms for postgraduate research students: LC1-32 in the Holloway Road Library and CM2-N10 in Aldgate.

## Research and Postgraduate Office

The Research and Postgraduate Office (RPO) provides students with support and guidance from the application stage through to graduation. It is located at our Holloway Road site in room AB1-28 (from main Tower Building entrance, turn right, go up to the Junction, there is a corridor to your right, walk past the Graduate Centre, you will see AB1-28 on your right (also known as the 'piano room'). The RPO organises induction, researcher training sessions and the student/staff research conference. It also provides information on grants and funding opportunities.

## Key contacts and support

Aside from your supervisors there are 3 other main sources of support

- i. Our Research Student Coordinator is located in the RPO. As a research student you are advised always to use this email address to contact staff: [research@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:research@londonmet.ac.uk)
- ii. You will be enrolled on to the WebLearn site called **Doctoral Studies** which you can access remotely at any time. This site is for all PGR students and contains a host of information

and resources that you will need to support your development and progress and also will enable you to participate in a research community. Importantly this is where you access key forms that you will need to submit from time to time and also where you will upload your progress reports.

iii. **Student Services at London Met**

London Met has a range of student support services available, which may provide advice, guidance and support throughout your student journey. Appointments can be booked online for all services via the Student Zone website.

- **Student Money and Accommodation Advice**

This service provides advice relating to fees, funding and income maximisation, as well as advice relating to accommodation.

- **Disabilities and Dyslexia Service (DDS)**

Our DDS advisers provide support to students with disabilities, learning difficulties and long term health and mental health conditions.

- **Counselling Service**

The University's team of counsellors provide an opportunity for you to think and talk about any personal or emotional difficulties that may be concerning you.

- **International Student Support**

London Met has a dedicated team of advisers supporting all international students on Tier 4 student visas.

### **Research Degree Forms**

There are research degree (RD) forms *that must* be completed by students and usually supervisors for approval at key stages – this is an essential part of our quality monitoring and to ensure that we are aware of where you are in your journey. All relevant forms are located on the Forms section of the Doctoral Studies WebLearn site or can be downloaded from the [Research Form Centre](#). If you have any problems or questions, please contact the RPO ([research@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:research@londonmet.ac.uk)). This handbook indicates when and why each form is completed.

### **You will also need to refer to:**

- The University's Research Degree Regulations (section 22 for MPhil and PhD, section 23 for DProf of the Academic Regulations): <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/academic-regulations/>  
The advice in this handbook is designed to amplify and guide you through the Regulations. The Regulations are the formal definition of the procedures and rules.
- The Code of Good Research Practice: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/research-ethics/> (please click on Guidance and Training)
- Research Ethics Policy and Procedures: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/research-ethics/> (please click on Guidance and Training)
- The Research Student Training Programme: <https://student.londonmet.ac.uk/your-studies/mphil--phd-professional-doctorates/postgraduate-research-training-sessions/>

**Glossary of terms**

RDSC – Research Degrees Sub-Committee (of the University's Award Board)

RERP – Research Ethics Review Panel

RPO – Research and Postgraduate Office

RSPG – Research Student Progress Group

## Part One *Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors*

### Section One: Progress through a research degree

This section briefly outlines the various stages throughout a research degree at London Metropolitan University. More detailed guidance on each stage is given in Section Three.

<b>The Research Student Lifecycle @ London Met</b>	
<b>What you need to do</b>	<b>How and Who else</b>
Research Proposal Guidance	A <a href="#">Research Proposal</a> will have to be submitted with the application form – You
Registration & Re-enrolment	Online RPO
Research Learning Agreement	Learning Agreement form and joining the Research community  Signed by you and your supervisors
Supervision meetings	Supervision team  Research proposal development and plan of work including writing - You  Arrange supervision meetings and provide notes of supervision meetings to your supervisors – You  Agree training and professional development needs - Both
Research Ethics Approval	<a href="#">Research ethics approval</a> must be obtained <b>before</b> data is collected.  Discuss draft Research ethics form with supervisors and submit finalised form to the chair of the School Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP) - You
Submission dates for RSPGs	Winter: 11 November 2021  Summer: 26 May 2022  Please note that you will normally only submit to one RSPG per year (the Summer RSPG).

Confirmation Viva (non-laboratory and non-practice based subjects)	During the first academic year (full-time and part-time) before the Summer RSPG (for October starters) and Winter RSPG (for February starters): submit outline of your research of 4,000 words (3,000 in the case of MPhil) to <b>Turnitin</b> and prepare for the viva. See details on the research student progress form <a href="#">RD1</a> . - You
Confirmation Viva (laboratory and practice based subjects)	During the first academic year (full-time) before the Summer RSPG (for October starters) and Winter RSPG (for February starters); for part-time the confirmation viva may be within the first calendar year, i.e., one RSPG later: submit outline of your research of 4,000 words (3,000 in the case of a practice-based/led degree) to <b>Turnitin</b> and prepare for the viva. See details on the research student progress form <a href="#">RD1</a> . - You
Regular Progress Reports	Submit a progress report form ( <a href="#">RD2</a> ) to <b>Turnitin</b> on the <b>Doctoral Studies</b> WebLearn site incorporating draft research (e.g. a chapter; 4,000 words (min) [use the Test site first to check for a similarity report to avoid plagiarism])  Feedback on progress from the RSPG - discuss with supervisor - You
Transfer from MPhil ( <b>only students who have started pre-2020/21</b> )	Discuss transfer from MPhil to PhD stage with supervisors and submit form <a href="#">RD2T</a> on WebLearn for formal approval to transfer – You
Transfer from taught part of a professional doctorate to research part	This depends on your course regulations. Discuss transfer from taught part of DProf to research part with tutors and course leader – You
Data collection	As agreed in supervision and in accordance with ethical approval - You
Writing up	Plan in time to write and reflect systematically from the start. Arrange sending draft chapters to your supervisors. You may be eligible for writing-up status ( <a href="#">RD7 form</a> ). - You
Submission of Thesis	Discuss readiness for submission with supervisors. Submit a pdf of the thesis to the RPO by sending it to <a href="mailto:research@londonmet.ac.uk">research@londonmet.ac.uk</a> . Three soft bound copies of your thesis are submitted to your School Office, but this

	<p>requirement is suspended as long as we are holding vivas online.</p> <p>Decision to submit is the responsibility of student - You</p>
Examination – viva voce	<p>Examiners nominated by supervisors. Examination arranged by the RPO. Because of Covid-19, viva voce examinations are currently held remotely. If you are not comfortable with a remote examination, you may request an in situ examination, which we will arrange at the earliest time possible.</p> <p>Informal outcome given. As required, a report is made by one or both of the examiners about any amendments and sent to the candidate. Any queries are to be directed at the RPO.</p> <p>Correction of typographical errors – You  Minor amendments within 6 months – You  Major amendments within 12 months – You</p> <p>The corrected or amended thesis is sent to the RPO – You</p> <p>When it’s all done and dusted: a pdf of the final version of your thesis needs to be sent to the RPO but the hard copy of the final version is submitted to the Library – You</p>
Re-submission	<p>Re-submission (if major amendments required) to the RPO. Re-examination arranged by the RPO – this may include another viva</p> <p>Make revisions - You</p> <p>Discuss revisions with your supervisors before submitting the revised thesis - You</p>
Conferral of Award	<p>Award recommended by examiners</p> <p>Hard bound copy for library submitted to the Library. Let us know ORCID number  – You</p>
Dissemination	<p>Publicity and publication strategy, i.e., conference presentations, with supervisors - Both</p>
Next steps	<p>Careers and supervisors - You</p> <p>Consider becoming an alumna or alumnus - You</p>



## Registration

Students are normally registered onto the MPhil, MPhil/PhD route or the Professional Doctorate route. Subsequently, students need to re-enrol each year.

## Developing your research skills

All research students should undertake a self-assessment of their personal and professional development training needs as soon as they have enrolled. From an early stage in the planning process, students, in collaboration with their supervisors, should seek to identify training sessions that will give them the necessary research and transferable skills. All enrolled research students are expected to participate in the [Research Student Training Programme](#) and Researcher Development offered via the **Doctoral Studies** WebLearn site.

Subject-specific training is available via a range of postgraduate modules and [Open Language Programme](#) modules. Participation in postgraduate taught and Open Language Programme modules is subject to approval by the module convenor and is uncredited. Once students have identified appropriate taught modules, they should submit a **module registration form** to the RPO. Research students do not normally sit the assessment for these modules but they do have access to the learning material on WebLearn once registered. Supervisors must also sign the module request forms.

## Ethical considerations

Ethical implications of the research proposal must be considered by the student and supervisors from the earliest stages of planning. Research degree students are expected to comply with the University's Research Ethics Policy and Procedures, and Code for Good Research Practice. All research students are expected to submit a research ethics approval form to their School's Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP). If the proposed research involves work with human participants, the use of personal data or the use of animal or human tissue, it may be necessary to make an enhanced application for ethics approval. **Ethics approval must be obtained prior to collection of any data.** For more information: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/research-ethics/>

## Monitoring progress

The University has a system of progress reviews to help MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate students plan and progress their research, and to produce regular written material on an ongoing basis. The review process starts early with the **Confirmation Viva (RD1)**, which applies only to students having started in 2020/21 or later. You will document your progress during the first months and attend a **viva voce examination** conducted by your School's **Research Student Progress Group (RSPG)**. The Confirmation Viva takes place during your first year before the Summer RSPG (October starters) or the Winter RSPG (February starters). For part-time students of practice-based or laboratory subjects the Confirmation Viva may be later but within the first calendar year. The precise time of your Confirmation Viva will be set by the examination panel (usually your supervisors, an RSPG member who gives an independent view ('reader') and a chair). You will write an outline of 4,000 words (3,000 in the case of MPhil or a practice-based/led degree). You should demonstrate that you have made clear research progress since you have submitted your research proposal. Your submission must include the title and content outline of the proposed thesis. You must also address: 1) the importance and originality of the study; 2) the context (within theories and the literature) of the study, explaining how it fits the wider discussion of the topic; 3) the plan for primary/original research, experimentation, etc., dependent on the field; 4) a GANTT chart showing the timeline for activities and writing; and significant bibliography which is demonstrably larger than the one presented on application. The

work is submitted via the Doctoral Studies WebLearn site via Turnitin (please see Appendix 1 for detailed guidance).

Research students must make a yearly submission to the **RSPG**. They submit the **Progress Review form** (RD2) with a piece of new written material, e.g. a new draft chapter (minimum of 4,000 words) inserted in to section 5, for review in June every year. It cannot be sufficiently emphasised that the RSPG submission is not an assignment and is not something separate from your research. If you have steadily progressed your project, it should not be a problem or time-consuming to prepare the submission. The work is submitted via the Doctoral Studies WebLearn site via Turnitin (please see Appendix 1 for detailed guidance).

Students are advised of deadlines to submit their work. It is extremely important to submit your form on time. An independent Reader and your supervisor comment on your progress and make their decisions about whether you have made satisfactory progress. The submissions and decisions are formally reviewed in one of the School-based RSPGs. Students will receive feedback and the progression outcome. Students may also be asked to submit their work to an interim RSPG in the autumn. Where insufficient progress has been made ('referral'), students need to understand the implications of the decisions for their continuing registration (see Academic regulations). After two referrals, the RSPG will normally withdraw you from the programme.

**Transfer from the MPhil to the PhD** only applies to existing students (entry prior to 2020/21). It is expected to take place within eighteen months of registration for full-time students and within two years of registration for part-time students.

#### **Transfer from the taught part of DProf to the doctoral part**

For DProf students it takes place after completion of the taught modules and fulfilment of all course-specific requirements. You will discuss your suitability for independent research with your tutors and course leader and prepare a research proposal, the assessment of which is done course-internally.

#### **Examination of the thesis**

When the thesis is ready to be examined, three soft bound copies should be submitted. Please contact your School Office to make an appointment to deliver the copies of your thesis. (Due to Covid-19, vivas are currently held remotely. Consequently, this requirement is suspended and sending your thesis as a pdf to [research@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:research@londonmet.ac.uk) file suffices.) Examiners are nominated by the supervisors. The viva is arranged by the RPO – you should advise it of important dates to avoid clashes when it is setting up the viva. If you prefer an in situ viva, we will arrange this at the earliest opportunity, taking into consideration UK government advice on social distancing and working from home as well as the requirements of the examination team.

Students should not have contact with the examiners prior to the examination. Should amendments to the thesis be required, all communication should be conducted via the RPO. Full details about the viva process can be found in the Academic Regulations.

#### **Dissemination strategy**

As a member of the research community, you have a duty to make your study and findings known to the right audiences, both professional and lay. All PGR graduates will have investigated a research question in detail and gained a critical overview of their field. One of the requirements to gain a doctorate is that your thesis needs to make a significant contribution to knowledge. However, this unique contribution to knowledge is not made if the work is never published.

Students are advised to plan a dissemination strategy with their supervisors. This may include conference presentations of work *in progress* such as submitting an abstract or poster and writing articles for peer reviewed publications. These approaches are also very helpful for your development as a researcher to build your confidence and ultimately defend your thesis in your viva. It may be the case that your dissemination strategy is to publish after completion. Your supervisors will advise about how best to disseminate the study's findings.

Given that doctoral students are expected to publish their work, it is important to note that conducting a doctoral level research is a co-owned process between the student and their supervisors. The published work should always be agreed and include the supervisors' names (and University logo where relevant). It is also incumbent on supervisors to ensure findings are made known in a reasonable period of time.

### **EthOS**

The EThOS service is managed by the British library and is a repository of PhD theses, providing in many instances open access to all theses. Making your PhD thesis openly available will increase your research profile and allows future researchers to explore and build on your result. Your final validated thesis will be automatically added to EThOS after your degree award unless it is embargoed. Please see <https://ethos.bl.uk/Faq.do>.

**ORCID** identifiers <http://orcid.org> are used by researchers, publishers and institutions to uniquely identify a researcher and link all of their research articles, books, papers, theses and other outputs under a single profile. Where ORCID IDs are provided to EThOS by institutions, they are added to the relevant record with a link to the author's ORCID profile. More often than not, we do not have access to an author's ORCID and privacy laws do not allow us to add them in bulk direct from the ORCID website. We encourage students to get an ORCID ID, provide it to us with their thesis and give us permission to interact with the student's ORCID record. Speak to your subject librarian.

<b>Changes in your circumstances</b>	
<b>What you need to do</b>	<b>How and Who else</b>
Change of Supervisor(s)	Requests for change of supervisor are processed by RPO.
Intermission	Requests for intermission processed by the RPO. Student may request intermission supported by supervisor(s). Time limits and conditions apply.
Change of Mode of Attendance	Requests for change in mode of attendance processed by the RPO. Students may request a change in mode of attendance supported by supervisor(s).
Extension	Requests for extension processed by the RPO. Student may request extension supported by supervisor(s). Time limits and conditions apply.
Withdrawal	Withdrawal processed by the RPO. Decision to withdraw may be taken by the student, RSPG may take decision to withdraw a student, or Finance may take decision to

	withdraw a student. Students are normally allowed a maximum of two referrals. The two referrals allowed apply to the full degree programme.
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### **Change of supervisor**

If a change has to be made to the supervision team, form **RD4** should be completed for approval.

### **Intermissions**

An intermission is a true time out from your research. A student may request an intermission in cases where illness or other difficulties prevent study for a period of time (**RD3i**). Intermissions are considered on a case by case basis and are not given for more than twelve months at a time and not more than one year in total. You do not pay fees while intermitting but also do not receive supervision. Intermissions extend the period of registration, i.e., the equivalent period of the intermission is added to the maximum period of study. If you cannot carry out your research because of Covid-19, e.g. you have unforeseen care duties, fall ill or cannot carry out your data collection, you may apply for a Covid-19 intermission.

### **Extensions**

A student may request an extension to the period of registration (**RD3e**). Extensions are considered on a case by case basis and are not normally given for more than six months at a time and not more than one year in total. You pay fees during an extension period and receive supervision. You should apply for an extension only when it becomes obvious that you will not be able to complete your degree within the registration period. You must explain why you were prevented from completing your degree on time.

### **Dealing with problems**

Early resolution is advisable, so please do not wait for an issue to escalate – let staff know as soon as possible. Most problems, whether with the research project, facilities or supervision, can be resolved by discussion with the lead supervisor. Other people who may be able to give advice and offer help are the School PGR Coordinator or the School Research Lead. (One of the two is normally the Chair of the School-based Research Student Progress Group.) If your problem remains unsolved, you may turn to the Head of the School. Problems regarding administrative matters should be discussed with the RPO.

If a student wishes to make a complaint or lodge an appeal, he or she should refer to the appropriate section of the University's Research Degree Regulations as well as the University's general student complaints procedure.

Full information on the process to lodge a formal complaint can be found here:

<http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/your-studies/student-administration/rules-and-regulations/complaints-procedure/>

Full information about lodging an appeal can be found here:

<http://student.londonmet.ac.uk/your-studies/student-administration/rules-and-regulations/appeals/>

The Students' Union can provide advice and representation. You are advised to use email as offices may not be staffed during the Covid-19 crisis:

City [020 7320 2233](tel:02073202233) North [020 7133 4171](tel:02071334171)

Email [advocacy.su@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:advocacy.su@londonmet.ac.uk)

Web [www.londonmetsu.org.uk](http://www.londonmetsu.org.uk)

## Section Two: Supervisory arrangements

### Supervisors and students

Each student will normally have two supervisors. The academic School, the RSPG and the RDSC are responsible for ensuring that the supervision team has the necessary subject expertise and experience. The lead supervisor has day-to-day responsibility for the student's progress.

The success of the research project depends on a good working relationship between the student and the supervisors. *The Code of Practice* in Part two of this handbook is intended to provide a framework which will help to establish such a relationship. Regular scheduled meetings are important. Contact may be face-to-face, by video conferencing, telephone or e-mail. The frequency of meetings will vary between different subject areas and at different stages of the research, but meetings and other contact should be agreed between the student and the supervisor from the beginning and reviewed. The student should make notes of key issues discussed and actions agreed and email them to their supervisors promptly following each supervisory session. This is good practice, avoids misunderstanding and aids progress.

Regular reviews of progress help to ensure that the research is on track and to identify any changes needed to the plan of work. They should also help to identify any problems so that these can be discussed and resolved at an early stage, whether problems with the project itself, with resources, with the student's progress or as a result of external circumstances.

As well as advice and encouragement, students will generally look to their supervisors for help in integrating into an academic community and finding opportunities for public presentation of their work. All students should be associated with a research community.

### Planning a research programme

There are three basic stages in many research programmes, which are summarised below. There will, of course, be variations in emphasis between different subject areas. In particular, practice-based research degrees in the creative arts may have rather different stages and emphases (see Section 3 for further details).

#### *First stage*

- Clarify topic and confirm originality
- Focused reading and refining/starting to implement the research proposal for the confirmation viva
- Consider ethical issues: start research ethics approval process
- Undertake appropriate training and researcher development
- Survey and analyse more relevant literature and other sources
- Define the objectives in clear and specific terms
- Formulate testable hypotheses (if required)
- Define basic concepts and/or variables
- State underlying assumptions
- Construct a robust research plan and timetable

#### *Second stage*

- Specify data collection procedures and data analysis methods (where appropriate)
- Execute research plan and gather data following appropriate ethical guidelines

- Continue research skills and personal development training
- Read widely

#### *Third stage*

- Evaluate and analyse results and draw conclusions
- Write up final version of thesis
- Keep reading to ensure up to date knowledge and authority status in the subject area

At each stage, the supervisors and the student should draw up a schedule of work, which should be kept under review as the project develops. A realistic timescale is essential. There is a danger of the first stage being slower than expected with students taking time to adjust to the different demands of an independent research degree programme and to learn to focus on the specific objectives of the project. The confirmation viva should provide focus and counteract the danger of losing vital time. This is all the more important as the final stage of drawing everything together and writing up the thesis invariably takes longer than expected. ***It is important to start writing as early as possible and to continue writing throughout the project.***

#### **The role of the RSPG and RDSC**

The School-based Research Student Progress Groups (RSPGs) consider confirmation of your pathway, annual progress and transfer (for pre-2020-21 students). The RSPG meets at least twice a year, normally June/July and November/December.

The University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (RDSC) has overarching responsibility for oversight of the progress of all research students including confirmation of pathway and transfers from MPhil to PhD as well as any changes such as the appointment of a new supervisor, an intermission of study or an extension of the registration period. It also oversees the appointment of the examiners. The RDSC meets regularly (ca. six times in the academic year).

## Section Three: Stages in the research degree process

Students normally register for an MPhil or for an MPhil/PhD, with the pathway of MPhil or PhD being confirmed in the confirmation viva. (Pre-2020-21 students on the MPhil/PhD pathway have the possibility of transfer to PhD.) Professional Doctorate students have to meet all the requirements including passing the taught modules before seeking permission to transfer to the research stage.

### Re-enrolment

All students need to re-enrol each academic year, including studentship holders, members of staff and students with fee waivers. Please note students must provide proof of payment before re-enrolment can take place.

Studentship holders whose studentship has expired will need to pay fees to cover any remaining time until they are ready to submit their thesis.

Fees are due on initial registration, and then at the beginning of each academic year. It is possible to pay by instalments with the agreement of Finance. If you have queries regarding your payment of fees, or wish to discuss instalment options, please call Income Collection on 020 7133 2060, or email them on [incomecollection@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:incomecollection@londonmet.ac.uk)

For fees information see:

<https://student.londonmet.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/fees-information/>

If you have problems enrolling, please contact [research@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:research@londonmet.ac.uk)

### Progress review

The monitoring of the progress of research students is an essential part of the University's commitment to providing students with formative feedback and to ensuring the quality of supervisory provision.

The School-based RSPGs review student progress and provide written feedback. If progress is unsatisfactory, a referral may be given. Students are normally allowed a maximum of two referrals throughout their course of study.

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#### Summary

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Who	<i>all students</i>
When	<i>the start of each academic year (late September)</i>
Where	<i>RPO/On-line</i>
How	<i>complete re-enrolment form, pay tuition fees</i>
Why	<i>keeps your registration details up to date and your ID card valid. Students who don't re-enrol are <b>not</b> entitled to supervision, may not access the University's facilities and may be withdrawn</i>

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#### Summary

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Who	<i>all students all members of supervisory teams</i>
When	<i>Annually in June/July with an interim RSPG in November/December</i>
Where	<i>RPO/online, RSPG</i>
How	<i>RD2 and RD2T forms are available on the Doctoral Studies WebLearn and should be uploaded to Turnitin Submission area once completed.</i>

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Why	<i>regular check on progress, flags up problems, provides formative feedback</i>
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### Confirmation viva

The monitoring of the progress of research students is an essential part of the University's commitment to providing students with formative feedback and to ensuring the quality of supervisory provision. The Confirmation viva assesses your suitability and early work for your chosen degree. It is meant to help avoid wrong expectations and possible disappointment further into your study.

The School-based viva panel formed from the RSPG will review and discuss with you your early work and provide oral and written feedback. If progress is unsatisfactory, a referral may be given. Students are normally allowed a maximum of two referrals throughout their course of study.

### Summary

Who	<i>all MPhil and MPhil/PhD students starting from 2020/21</i>
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When	<i>FT/PT/practice-based or laboratory-based FT: before the Summer RSPG (October starters) or Winter RSPG (February starters) of the first academic year PT practice-based or laboratory-based: within the first calendar year</i>
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Where	<i>RPO, Panel from RSPG</i>
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How	<i>RD1 form is available on the Doctoral Studies WebLearn and should be uploaded to Turnitin Submission area once completed.</i>
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Why	<i>Check on early performance and suitability for pathway, confirmation of chosen degree pathway, provides formative feedback</i>
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### Transfer (pre 2020/21 students)

This section applies to pre-2020/21 students who are on the MPhil/PhD route. It does not apply to students who are registered on MPhil only (unless they wish to change degree) or to Professional Doctorate students. Transfer for the latter is dealt with course-internally.

Students who are registered for an MPhil/PhD should apply for transfer at the point at which they have:

### Summary

Who	<i>all MPhil/PhD students (and MPhil only students who decide to upgrade)</i>
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When	<i>Normally within 18 months of registration (full-time) or within 2 years of registration (part-time)</i>
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Where	<i>RSPG</i>
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- satisfactorily completed relevant aspects of their prescribed research training
- completed enough of their research for a judgement to be made on its likely quality and originality, and
- clearly demonstrated PhD-level research and outcomes.

The transfer report and accompanying documents must be read and a recommendation made by a reader who is independent of the supervisory team. The reader's report is then presented to the RSPG along with the supervisor's comments. A transfer viva may also take place.

Transfer is normally expected to occur within eighteen months of registration for a full-time student and within 2 years of registration for a part-time student.

How *student completes transfer form RD2T, writes transfer report and submits written work*  
*supervisors complete transfer report*  
*Independent reader reviews submission.*

Why *ensures that sufficient progress has been made to upgrade to PhD including the programme of related studies*

The supervisory team reports on the student's progress and indicates the successful completion of any agreed training. Students normally transfer with the support of their supervisory team. If, after discussion with the supervisory team, a student wishes to apply for transfer without the support of their supervisors, they may do so, but the supervisors are asked to set out their reasons for not supporting the transfer in a short document, which should also be made available to the student.

The student completes the relevant sections of form RD2T and sends it to their supervisor to complete. The student should also prepare a transfer report. This should normally be 2,000 - 3,000 words in length and include:

- Research aims, objectives and questions or hypotheses
- A brief review and discussion of the work already undertaken
- A brief description of any changes to the research as originally proposed and approved
- Details of the original contribution to knowledge which is likely to emerge from the research
- A plan of future work, including expected completion/submission date

The Transfer Report should be accompanied by a draft copy of thesis chapters or sections which have been written to date (min. 3,000 words) and, where appropriate, a record of any practice-based work (e.g. photograph, CD, musical score).

The chair of the RSPG nominates a reader. The reader is not connected with the student, their research, or the supervisory team.

The reader is asked to prepare a short report on the standard of the work presented, and to offer a judgement on the student's suitability and readiness for transfer.

## Intermission of registration

Students may, with their supervisor's agreement, ask that their studies be intermitted for a period of up to twelve months. Applications should demonstrate good cause for intermission, which may involve illness, personal circumstances or career circumstances as well as Covid-19 related reasons. A second application for an additional twelve months' intermission may be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Knowledge Exchange or representative. During intermission, the student is no longer entitled to supervisory support, or to access the facilities of the University. For Covid-19 intermissions, access to online library resources is exceptionally preserved.

Intermission is given for specific dates and times and is normally not granted retrospectively.

Intermissions extend the period of registration.

The Home Office is notified of an intermission if the student is on a tier 4 visa.

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### Summary

Who	<i>any student who needs to intermit their research programme for good cause</i>
When	<i>when necessary</i>
Where	<i>RPO</i>
How	<i>complete form RD3i and get supervisors' agreement</i>
Why	<i>medical, professional or personal reasons may interrupt a student's studies</i>

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## Change to the mode of study

A student may decide that they wish to change their mode of study from either full-time to part-time, or vice versa. After consulting with their supervisor, the student should inform the RPO so that the change can be recorded on the student's record and the fee level adjusted if necessary.

A change of mode of study may have an impact on the student's period of registration. It is important that the student, the supervisors and the RPO are all aware of the revised timing for completion.

Please note: Tier 4 student visas are now granted for part-time study but restrictions apply (see Home Office regulations).

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### Summary

Who	<i>any student who wishes to dedicate more or less time to their research</i>
When	<i>at any time except in the final six months of the period of registration</i>
Where	<i>RPO</i>
How	<i>complete form RD6, get supervisors' agreement</i>
Why	<i>There may be a number of reasons why a student may wish to dedicate more or less time to their research</i>

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## Writing up

Full-time students may be eligible for a writing-up fee after they have paid full fees for three years of study. Part-time students may be eligible for a writing-up

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### Summary

Who	<i>Students in their final year (FT) or their final two years (PT), supervisors</i>
When	<i>the start of each academic year</i>

fee once they have paid full fees for six years of study.

Supervisors must sign form RD7 to confirm that the student is in the writing-up stage of their programme and is likely to submit within the year (full-time) or within two years (part-time).

A writing-up fee is a reduced amount, available for one year (part-time two years) only.

If a student has not submitted the thesis after the writing up period, they will revert to being charged full fees until the thesis has been submitted.

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Where *RPO*

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### Extension of period of registration

Registration is for a fixed maximum period of time, detailed in the Academic Regulations. Students, whose period of registration is about to expire, may exceptionally and with their supervisors' agreement, ask that their registration be extended for a period of up to six months, subject to the continued academic viability of the project. Applications should demonstrate that sufficient progress has been made that the thesis can be completed within the extra period of time requested.

A second application for a six month extension may be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

Applications for extension are considered on a case by case basis. Extensions are given for specific dates and times.

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#### Summary

Who *any student who has not presented their thesis and whose registration period is about to expire*

When *two months before the expiry of registration*

Where *RPO*

How *complete extension form RD3e, justifying delay and providing revised timetable and new completion date*

Why *allows a short extension of the registration period if the circumstances justify this and the project continues to be academically viable*

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### Examination (Viva Voce)

A few months before a student is expected to complete his/her thesis, the lead supervisor submits details of the proposed examiners to the RPO. The student should not contact the examiners prior to the examination. CVs of all examiners are required as is information on the research examining experience of all examiners. The examining team is approved by the Head of School and the RDSC.

When the thesis is ready to be examined, the student should submit three soft bound copies of the thesis to

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#### Summary

Who *all students, supervisory teams*

When *Viva normally takes place within three months of the thesis submission*

Where *RPO, School Office viva by arrangement; currently held remotely*

How *supervisory team nominates examining*

the School Office. (This requirement is currently suspended due to Covid-19 until further notice. Students send a pdf of the thesis to the RPO.) The thesis should not be submitted to the supervisors or the examiners. Students should not be in contact with the examiners. For the examination, the thesis can be presented in a temporary binding to allow for amendments required by the examiners. The binding must, however, be of a kind that does not allow pages to be removed or inserted, and in other respects the format should be the same as for the final hardbound version. For further details of the thesis format, please see below. For word ranges of different types of theses, please consult the Academic Research Degree Regulations, where you can also find further details on the examination process.

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*team for approval (Form RD5),  
student completes thesis in stipulated form for examination, and submits pdf to RPO and copies to School Office,  
student completes examination forms and declaration*

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Why *ensures independent and thorough academic scrutiny of the thesis*

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### **Thesis Format**

The following requirements shall be adhered to in the format of the submitted thesis. Theses shall normally be in A4 format; the Awards Board sub-committee for Research Degrees may give permission for a thesis to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis can be better expressed in that format.

Copies of the thesis shall be presented in a permanent and legible form either in typescript or print. Where copies are produced by photocopying processes, these shall be of a permanent nature; where word processor and printing devices are used, the printer shall be capable of producing text of a satisfactory quality.

The size of character used in the main text, including displayed matter and notes, shall not be less than 2.0mm for capitals and 1.5mm for x height (that is the height of lower case x); as an example, this corresponds to a minimum font size 10 in Times Roman.

The thesis shall be printed on the recto side of the page only; the paper shall be white and within the range 70mg to 100mg.

The margin at the left-hand binding edge of the page shall not be less than 40mm; other margins shall not be less than 15 mm.

Double or one-and-a-half spacing shall be used in the typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.

Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages.

The title page shall give the following information: the full title of the thesis; the full name of the author; the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of London Metropolitan University; the collaborating organisation(s), if any; and the month and year of submission.

The binding of the final, examined and approved thesis shall be of a fixed type 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 colour shall be blue or black.

In at least 24pt type 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 of the hardbound thesis (not of submission of the original thesis); the same information (excluding the title of the work) shall be shown on the spine of the work, reading downwards.

### **Thesis embargo**

In rare circumstances, your thesis can be partially or fully embargoed if its public release prejudiced the commercial or intellectual property rights of an individual or body, put at risk the safety of an identifiable individual, included material that was obtained under a promise of confidentiality or included material which is due for publication or which you were actively seeking to publish. The thesis embargo period is normally not longer than three years. Please see form RD11.

## **Part Two Code of Practice**

### **A. Introduction**

This Code of Practice sets out the *minimum* required of research students (hereafter referred to as “students”), their supervisors and the locations where the research is carried out. It aims to establish good practice to enable students to satisfactorily complete their thesis within an appropriate timescale (three to four years for full-time research students and six to eight years for part-time research students).

The establishment of a harmonious relationship between a student and his or her supervisor is of the utmost importance. Such harmony can only be established and maintained if both participants understand each other’s concerns, treat each other with courtesy, and are agreed on what constitutes the code and conventions on which such courtesy should be based. When such a relationship functions as intended, it will provide the advice, training and support needed by the student who is embarking on original, independent research as well as a valuable broadening of understanding for the supervisor.

This Code of Practice sets out the framework within which such a productive relationship can be established and maintained, as well as indicating procedures to be followed in the unfortunate event of a breakdown.

### **B. Obligations and responsibilities of supervisors**

Each student will normally have two supervisors. The lead supervisor should have the direct subject expertise and exercise the day-to-day supervision of the student. He/she is responsible for the satisfactory academic progress of the project, and should have knowledge of a student’s subject area and/or the theoretical approach to be applied.

The lead supervisor supervises the student on a regular and frequent basis and is responsible for ensuring that the student has access to the supervisory, training and associated resources required to complete their studies, and for ensuring that the supervisory team follow the University’s Research Degree Regulations.

The lead supervisor must ensure that the student and the University (through the RSPGs and the RERPs) are aware of any ethical or legal problems associated with the research programme.

The lead supervisor ensures that the student completes any required programme of related studies or training.

Regular, formal meetings must be timetabled with the student on a frequency which is appropriate to the discipline and the stage of the research programme. These meetings should be cancelled or postponed only by agreement with the student. The frequency of meetings should be agreed between the lead supervisor and the student. There may also be contact by e-mail, telephone or conferencing tools. Every four weeks students must update their lead supervisor on their progress.

While the length of supervision sessions will vary, at least an hour should be available. It is desirable that meetings should be largely uninterrupted by telephone calls, personal callers or other business.

The lead supervisor should arrange meetings between her/himself and the student on a regular basis and may include any other supervisor/s as appropriate.

Brief written notes of all meetings should be kept by the student and the supervisors.

The lead supervisor should request written work as agreed in the project timetable, and should return such work with written or oral comments within a reasonable time, normally within less than one month. If for any reason a delay is unavoidable, the student should be informed and a date given when a response will be made.

The lead supervisor should ensure that the student's progress is regularly reviewed and any necessary adjustments made to the plan of work. The student must be made aware if either progress or the standard of work is unsatisfactory, and any necessary supportive action should be arranged.

Supervisors should take an active part in introducing the student to relevant research communities, meetings of learned societies, seminars and workshops and to other researchers working in the field. Advice should also be given on publication where appropriate.

The supervisors should provide feedback on drafts of the thesis prior to submission, and ensure that the final thesis is the student's own work.

The lead supervisor must ensure that students who are working within a group project, or who are employed as researchers on certain kinds of projects, are clearly informed in writing about the nature of the research that will contribute to the degree and which other research is unconnected with the degree for which the student is registered. Intellectual property should be clearly agreed.

The lead supervisor is responsible for proposing the arrangements for the student's examination to the RDSC for approval.

In the event that a student does not fully participate in the student/supervisor relationship, the supervisors should make a report to the relevant RSPG Chair. Students should be aware that if progress is judged to be inadequate, their registration may be terminated.

### **C. Obligations and responsibilities of research students**

The student should attend and fulfil all requirements of the programme of additional studies and training agreed with the supervisor(s).

The student should attend regular, timetabled, formal meetings with the lead supervisor at a frequency that is appropriate to the discipline and the stage of the research programme. These meetings should be cancelled or postponed only by agreement with the supervisors. The frequency of meetings should be agreed between the supervisors and the student.

Written work should be submitted regularly to the lead supervisor as agreed in the project timetable.

The student should take note of guidance and feedback from the supervisors, and keep a log of all meetings

The student should complete progress reports and submit written work as required under the Research Degree Regulations, and return these promptly to the supervisor and/or the RPO.

The student should alert the supervisors at an early stage to any difficulties or perceived lack of progress.

If a situation arises where difficulties cannot be resolved with the supervisors, the student should initially approach the School PGR Coordinator or the Chair of the RSPG (it may be the same person). If the PGR Coordinator and/or the Chair is unable to resolve the situation, or is personally involved, the student should contact the RPO. In a case of continuing serious



unresolved problems, the formal stage of the University's Student Complaints Procedure may be followed.

If the student is working within a group project, or is employed as a Research Assistant, she/he should ensure that a clear written statement has been provided about the nature of the research that will contribute to the degree and which other research is unconnected with the degree for which the student is registered.

The **student should ensure that the thesis is his/her own work**. It is recommended that the student submits their thesis to Turnitin for a check of identical text. Only quotations, items in the bibliography and set phrases such as in the Acknowledgement section should come up as identical text. Any other identical text should be paraphrased **and** the source given. There is no minimum percentage of plagiarised text, any occurrence may lead to failing the viva or to an award being withdrawn if it is discovered later.

The student should ensure that their final thesis has been read and commented upon by the supervisors before submission, and that it is submitted to the RPO before the expiry of the registration period.

The student should also ensure they are familiar with and operate within the University's Academic Regulations, Research Ethics Policy, and Code of Good Research Practice, which apply to all research degree students and staff.

#### **D. Obligations and responsibilities of Schools:**

The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the essential and appropriate resources, including adequate supervision, are available to enable a student to complete her/his project within the appropriate time.

Schools should ensure that all students have a place to work and the use of required facilities.

The Head of School should ensure that no supervisor is overloaded with supervisory responsibilities, and that their allocation of other duties allows sufficient time to supervise appropriately. The recommended maximum number of research students for a supervisor is six. Supervisory meetings should be regular (once a month). The exact arrangements depend on the project, the requirements of the student and the mode of study (FT or PT). Regular email contact may be suitable in some cases (feedbacking on draft chapters), while laboratory-based projects might demand very frequent short meetings.

The Head of School should be alerted to signs of potential problems, and should be available to assist in resolving them.

#### **Contact Details for the RPO:**

London Metropolitan University  
Room AB1-28  
Tower Building, North Campus  
166-220 Holloway Road  
London N7 8DB  
Email: [research@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:research@londonmet.ac.uk)  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7133 5160

## Guidance for Research students submitting Progress reports

1. You are required to submit your **Confirmation of Registration (Pathway) Progress Report** and your annual **Progress Report** via Turnitin on the **Doctoral Studies** WebLearn site. You must use the form **RD1 Confirmation of Registration** and for annual progress reviews the form **RD2 Research Student Progress Review**. If you are transferring from MPhil, please also use the RD2T form. The forms can be found in the Forms section of the Doctoral Studies WebLearn site and in the Research Form Centre in the Student Zone. Please do **not** send your reports to the RPO. If you are not registered on the Doctoral Studies site, please contact [research@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:research@londonmet.ac.uk).

2. You must **submit only a single document**: any additional document (i.e. your report, draft chapter or other sample of recent work in progress) **must be included in your RD2 form**. Please insert it at the end of the form.

**Students who are applying for Confirmation of Registration** must include their **Research outline** (see relevant section on RD1). Please insert it at the end of the form.

**Students who are applying for transfer** must include their **Transfer report** (see relevant section on RD2T). Please insert it at the end of the form as well as the **draft chapters**.

3. **For all submissions: if copying from a Word file creates formatting issues**, please insert research outline, report and/or chapters **as pdf**. Please keep to the indicated word ranges and minimum word counts. For inclusion of practice-based work other than text and images, please consult with your supervisors and the RPO.

These shortcuts can help you to insert your additional documents: CtrlA to highlight the whole document you wish to copy; CtrlC to copy all highlighted text; and CtrlV to paste into the end of the report where you place your cursor. If you have any difficulty, please consult your supervisors.

4. You will submit your Progress report to **your appropriate School folder** called **Confirmation of Registration 2021, Summer 2021 RSPG** or **Winter 2020 RSPG** by the published deadline (see below). Once you submit you will receive a receipt.

In the feedback section of Turnitin, your Supervisor and an Independent Reader will comment separately and make a recommendation about your progress to your School Research Students Progress Group (RSPG). There will be no separate comments on the report form or work contained within it. You will be notified when their comments and feedback is ready to access (in the feedback section of Turnitin). If you cannot see the feedback, access it from a university computer or, if this is not feasible, contact the RPO.

5. The **deadline for submission** of RD1, RD2 and RD2T forms for **all Schools** is **11 November 2021** for the Winter RSPG and **26 May 2022** for the Summer RSPG (these deadlines are aligned to the timing of the RSPGs).

6. Your submission will generate a Turnitin **similarity report** automatically, so there is no need to submit one. You can use the **Turnitin Test** site if you wish to check your draft work before uploading your **Research Student Progress Review** submission, but you can't submit a report from this area.

7. **If you have made a mistake**, e.g. submitted the wrong file, **simply submit again**. Your new submission overwrites your previous one. The last submission before the deadline counts.

8. **Getting feedback**: You will normally be informed of the outcome of the PSRG within 2 weeks

of the meeting (which is about four weeks after the submission date). Please note that there may be occasions where there is a delay in accessing feedback and again we will inform you about this. You will be able to access the comments, feedback and proposed recommendations following the RSPG.

**9. RSPG Recommendations:** You are advised to discuss the Supervisors' and Independent Reader's comments and feedback with your supervisors, no matter what the RSPG recommendation is. In the event that you are *referred* (i.e. that you have not been deemed to have made sufficient progress), feedback and advice about resubmitting your progress report will be provided. You will need to submit a new report via Turnitin to the next RSPG meeting, i.e. the Winter RSPG if you were referred at the Summer RSPG and vice versa.