



# **Handbook for Research Students & Supervisors *and* Code of Practice**

*Procedures from research student registration to  
examination*

*Sixth edition – February 2014*

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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## Glossary of terms

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

RERP – Research Ethics Review Panel

RSPG – Research Student Progress Group

1. This Handbook and Code of Practice provides guidance for research students and supervisors on what is involved in the processes of carrying out a research degree at London Met and on the University's research degree regulations and procedures.

The procedures provide a system of support and an assurance of standards for research degrees.

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.

Unlike a taught degree programme, research degrees are planned and executed individually with guidance and support from supervisors.

2. This booklet contains two parts:

- ***Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors***
- ***Code of Practice***

3. You will also need to refer to:

- The University's Research Degree Regulations (section 5 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/>
- Research Ethics Policy and Procedures:  
<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/research-ethics/>
- The [Researcher Development Programme](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/researcher-development-programme/):  
<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/researcher-development-programme/>

4. Students and supervisors will need to complete research degree forms from time to time. All relevant forms can be obtained by contacting the Research and Postgraduate Office. Most of the forms are also downloadable from the website. This handbook explains when and why each form is completed.

5 This Handbook is complementary to the University's Student Handbook, which is available on the website <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/student-handbook/>

## Section One: Progress through a research degree

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

<b>The Research Student Lifecycle @ London Met</b>	
<b>What</b>	<b>Where</b>
Registration & Re-enrolment	Research & Postgraduate Office
Progress Reports	Submit form RD2 to Research & Postgraduate Office
Research Ethics Approval	Research ethics approval must be obtained before data is collected. Submit forms to the chair of the faculty Research Ethics Review Panel (RERP)
Transfer	Submit form RD2T to Research & Postgraduate Office
Submission of Thesis	Submit thesis to Research & Postgraduate Office. Decision to submit is responsibility of student
Examination	Examiners nominated by supervisors. Examination arranged by Research & Postgraduate Office
Re-submission	Re-submission (if required) to Research & Postgraduate Office. Re-examination arranged by Research & Postgraduate Office
Conferral of Award	Award recommended by examiners
Withdrawal	Withdrawal processed by Research & Postgraduate Office. Decision to withdraw may be taken by student, RSPG may take decision to withdraw student, or Finance may take decision to withdraw student. Students are normally allowed a maximum of two referrals. The two referrals allowed apply to the full degree programme.
Intermission	Requests for intermission processed by Research & Postgraduate Office. Student may request intermission supported by supervisor(s). Time limits apply
Extension	Requests for extension processed by Research & Postgraduate Office. Student may request extension supported by supervisor(s). Time limits apply
Change of	Requests for change in mode of attendance processed by

Mode of Attendance	Research & Postgraduate Office. Student may request change in mode of attendance supported by supervisor(s)
Change of Supervisor(s)	Requests for change of supervisor processed by Research & Postgraduate Office

6.2 Students are normally registered onto the MPhil with transfer to PhD route.

6.3 All research students should begin a self-assessment of their personal and professional development 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 entitled to participate in the [Researcher Development Programme](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/researcher-development-programme/) offered by the Research and Postgraduate Office: <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/current-students/researcher-development-programme/>

6.4 Subject-specific training is available from a range of postgraduate modules. Once students have identified appropriate taught modules, they should submit a module registration form to the Research and Postgraduate Office. 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.

6.5 Ethical implications of the research proposal must be considered by the student and supervisor 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 Faculty'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/>

6.6 Transfer from the MPhil to the PhD is expected to take place either in the second year (full-time students) or the third or fourth year (part-time students).

6.7 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. Research students must submit the progress review form (RD2) as well as a piece of written material for review in June every year. The submissions are formally reviewed by one of the Faculty-based RSPGs. Students may also be asked to submit their work to an interim RSPG in the autumn.

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

6.9 A student may request an extension to the period of registration, or an intermission in cases where illness or other difficulties prevent study for a period of time. Extensions and intermissions 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.

6.10 When the thesis is ready to be examined, three copies should be submitted to the Research and Postgraduate Office.

6.11 Examiners' are nominated by the supervisors. The viva is arranged by the Research and Postgraduate Office.

6.12 Full details about the viva process can be found in the Academic Regulations.

# Section Two: Supervisory arrangements and support

## 7.1 Supervisors and student

7.1.1 Each student will normally have two supervisors. 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.

7.1.2 The success of the research project also depends on a good working relationship between the student and the supervisors. *The Code of Practice for Research Students and their Supervisors*, which can be found at the back 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 telephone, e-mail or Skype. 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.

7.1.3 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.

7.1.4 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 attached to a research community.

## 7.2 Planning a research programme

7.2.1 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.

### *First stage*

- Clarify topic and confirm originality
- Consider ethical issues: start research ethics approval process
- Undertake appropriate training, including any personal/professional development
- Survey and analyse 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

### *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

### Third stage

- Evaluate and analyse results and draw conclusions
- Write up final version of thesis

7.2.2 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. The first stage is nearly always slower than expected, and students generally take time to adjust to the different demands of a research degree programme and to learn to focus on the specific objectives of the project. Equally, the final stage of 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.

## 7.3 RSPG and RDSC

7.3.1 The faculty-based Research Student Progress Groups (RSPGs) consider student progress and transfer. The RSPG meets at least twice a year.

7.3.2 The University's Research Degrees Sub-Committee (RDSC) is ultimately responsible for overseeing progress of all research students and transfers from MPhil to PhD and any changes such as the appointment of a new supervisor, or an extension of the registration period. It also oversees the appointment of the examiners. The RDSC meets three times in the academic year.

## 7.4 Research and Postgraduate Office

The Research and Postgraduate Office provides students with support and guidance from the application stage through to conferral. The office is based in AB1-26, Tower Building, North Campus. The Research and Postgraduate Office organises induction sessions, as well as helping to support postgraduate research student events. Further information, including contact details, can be found at:  
<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/>

## 7.5 Dealing with problems

7.5.1 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 are the Associate Dean for Research, the Chair of the Faculty-based Research Student Progress Group, or the Dean of the Faculty. Problems regarding administrative matters should be discussed with the Research and Postgraduate Office.

7.5.2 If a student wishes to make a complaint, 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, which can be found in the Research Degree regulations 5.2, pages 135 & 136. The student may also wish to consult the Head of the Research & Postgraduate Office.



## Section Three: Stages in the research degree process

8.1 Students normally register either for an MPhil, or for an MPhil with the possibility of transfer to PhD.

### 8.2 Re-enrolment

8.2.1 All students need to re-enrol each academic year, including those who are members of staff or studentship holders who may have a fee waiver. Studentship holders whose studentship has expired will need to pay fees to cover any remaining time until they are ready to submit their thesis.

8.2.2 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.

8.2.3 For fee information see:  
<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research/prospective-students/mphilphd-fee-list/>

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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>Research and Postgraduate Office</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 not entitled to supervision and may not access the University's facilities</i>

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### 8.3 Progress review

8.3.1 The monitoring of the progress of research students is an essential part of the University's oversight of the quality of supervisory provision

8.3.2 The faculty-based RSPGs review progress. Students receive 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 all members of supervisory teams</i>
When	<i>Annually in June</i>
Where	<i>Research and Postgraduate Office, RSPG</i>
How	<i>RD2 forms sent by e-mail to be completed and returned</i>
Why	<i>regular check on progress, flags up problems</i>

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## 8.4 Transfer

8.4.1 This section applies to students who are on the MPhil/PhD route, and not to students who are registered as an MPhil only student. Students who are registered for an MPhil/PhD or PhD direct should apply for transfer at the point at which they have:

- 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.

8.4.2 The transfer report and accompanying documents must be read and agreed by a reader who is independent of the supervisory team. The reader's report is then presented to the RSPG.

8.4.3 Transfer is expected to occur during the second year of a full-time student's study, and in the third year of a part-time student's study

8.4.4 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.

8.4.5 The student completes the relevant sections of form RD2T and sends it to their supervisor to complete.

8.4.6 The student should also prepare a transfer report. This should be approximately 3,000 - 6,000 words, as appropriate to the discipline, and include an overview of the future direction of the research related to the work achieved to date, and how this constitutes an original contribution to knowledge. The report should demonstrate the quality of the student's work to date; it might include a completed chapter and/or a specially prepared summary of work and findings to date. Where appropriate, the report may be accompanied by a record of any practice-based work (e.g. photograph, CD-Rom, musical score).

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

8.4.8 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.

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### Summary

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Who	<i>all MPhil/PhD students (and MPhil only students who decide to upgrade)</i>
When	<i>normally a year after registration (full-time); three years after registration (part-time)</i>
Where	<i>Research and Postgraduate Office, RSPG</i>
How	<i>student completes transfer form RD2(T), writes transfer report and submits written work supervisors complete transfer report Independent reader reviews submission.</i>
Why	<i>ensures that sufficient progress has been made to upgrade to PhD including the programme of related studies</i>

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## 8.5 Intermission of registration

8.5.1 Students may, with their supervisor's agreement, ask that their studies be intermitted for a period of up to six months. Applications should demonstrate good cause for intermission, which may involve illness, personal circumstances or career circumstances. A second application for an additional six months' intermission may be considered in exceptional circumstances. During intermission, the student is no longer entitled to supervisory support, or to use the facilities of the University.

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

8.5.3 Intermissions do NOT extend the registration expiry date. The Home Office is notified if the student is on a tier 4 visa.

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### Summary

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Who	<i>any student who needs to intermit their research programme for good cause</i>
When	<i>when necessary</i>
Where	<i>Research and Postgraduate Office</i>
How	<i>complete form RD3(Sus) and get supervisors' agreement</i>
Why	<i>medical, professional or personal reasons may interrupt a student's studies</i>

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## 8.6 Change to the mode of study

8.6.1 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 Research and Postgraduate Office so that the change can be recorded on the student's record and the fee level re-calculated.

8.6.2 A change of mode of study will have an impact on the student's overall registration period. It is important that the student, the supervisors and the Research and Postgraduate Office are all aware of the revised timing for completion.

8.6.3 Please note: tier 4 student visas do not allow for part-time study (see Home Office regulations)

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### Summary

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Who	<i>any student who wishes to dedicate more or less time to their research</i>
When	<i>at any time</i>
Where	<i>Research and Postgraduate Office</i>
How	<i>complete form RD6(M/S), get supervisors' agreement</i>
Why	<i>There may be a number of reasons why a student will wish to dedicate more or less time to their research for a prolonged period</i>

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## 8.7 Writing up

8.7.1 Full-time students may be eligible for a writing-up fee once they have paid full fees for

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### Summary

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Who	<i>final year students, supervisors</i>
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three years of study. Part-time students may be eligible for a writing-up fee once they have paid full fees for five years of study.

8.7.2 Supervisors must sign form RD7 to confirm that their student is in the writing-up stage of their programme and is likely to submit within the year.

8.7.3 A writing-up fee is a reduced amount, available for one year only.

8.7.4 If a student has not submitted the thesis after the writing up year, they will go back to being charged full fees until the thesis has been submitted.

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When *the start of each academic year*

Where *Research and Postgraduate Office*

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## 8.8 Extension of period of registration

8.8.1 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. Applications should demonstrate that sufficient progress has been made that the thesis can be completed within the extra period of time requested.

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

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

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### Summary

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

When *three months before the expiry of registration*

Where *Research and Postgraduate Office*

How *complete extension form RD3(Ext), justifying delay and providing revised timetable and proposed new completion date*

Why *allows a short extension of the registration period if the circumstances justify this*

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## 8.9 Examination

8.9.1 A few months before a student is expected to complete his/her thesis, the lead supervisor submits details of the proposed examiners to the Research and Postgraduate Office. CVs of all examiners are needed, and information on the research examining experience of all examiners. It is important to allow time for possible queries to be resolved before the examiners are appointed. The examining team is approved by the Dean and the RDSC.

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### Summary

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Who *all students, supervisory teams*

When *three months before the thesis is completed*

Where *Research and Postgraduate Office, viva by arrangement*

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8.9.2 When the thesis is ready to be examined, the student should submit three copies to the Research and Postgraduate Office. 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 in case amendments are 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.

8.9.3 Further details on the examination process can be found in the Research Degree Regulations.

*How*      *supervisory team nominates examining team for approval (Form RD5(E), student completes thesis in stipulated form for examination, and submits copies to Research and Postgraduate Office, student completes examination forms and statement*

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

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# 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 satisfactorily to complete their thesis within an appropriate timescale (three to four years for full-time PhD students and five to six for part-time PhD students, and depending on the Course Specification for Professional Doctorate students).

The establishment of a harmonious relationship between a student and his or her supervisor is of the utmost importance to both. 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 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.

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 Skype.

While the length of supervision sessions will inevitably 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 him/herself 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 comment on drafts of the thesis prior to submission, and must 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.

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 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 Research and Postgraduate Office.

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 Chair of the RSPG. If the Chair is unable to resolve the situation, or is personally involved, the student should contact the Head of the Research and Postgraduate Office. 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, he/she 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, that the final version has been read and commented upon by the supervisors before submission, and that it is submitted to the Research and Postgraduate Office before the expiry of the registration period.

The student should 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 Faculties**

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

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

The Dean of Faculty 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. The recommended contact time per year for a research student is 44 hours for full-time and 22 hours for part-time.

The Dean of Faculty should be alert to signs of potential problems, and should be available to assist in resolving them.

#### **Contact Details for the Research & Postgraduate Office**

London Metropolitan University  
Room AB1-26  
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 4095

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