



University of
Chester

Handbook

G

Quality and Standards Manual

**TO ACCOMPANY THE
PRINCIPLES AND REGULATIONS:
RESEARCH SUPERVISION and
ASSESSMENT of STUDENTS
UNDERTAKING RESEARCH
DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

2015 – 2016

Date of Approval: June 2015
Authored By: The Graduate School
Version: 1.0

CONTENTS

GI: General requirements pertaining to research supervision and assessment of students (undertaking research degree programmes at Levels 7 and 8)

GII: Research Supervision and Assessment of Students Undertaking Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Programmes at Levels 7 and 8

GIII: Research Supervision and Assessment of Students Undertaking Professional Doctorate (DProf, DBA, DMin, Ed D) Programmes at Levels 7 and 8

GIV: Research Supervision and Assessment of Students Undertaking Master by Research (MRes) Programmes at Level 7

Appendices

- A Selection and Admissions Policy for PGR Students
- B Notes of Guidance to Candidates, Mentors and Examiners for Research Degree by Publication
- C Procedure for Terminating Postgraduate Research Students' Studies on the Grounds of Unsatisfactory Progress
- D Research Training Programme
- E PGR Student Personal Development Record
- F Policy and Guidance on Postgraduate Research Students Undertaking Teaching Duties
- G Criteria and Procedure for the Appointment of Supervisors of Research Degree Students
- H Duties and Responsibilities of Supervisors
- I Supervisor Development Programme

- J Regulations for Research Degree Appeals and Notes of Guidance to Candidates Submitting an Appeal
- K Regulations Governing the Occurrence of Research Misconduct by Students on Research Degree Programmes
- L Applications and Admissions to Visiting Scholars Course
- M Partnership Approval Process for Research Degrees
- N Application for Approved Supervisor Status
- O Progress Reviews and Transfer of Registration Procedure
- P Presentation of Theses
- Q Guidance on the Use of Publications in a PhD thesis
- R Policy on the Use of Plagiarism Detection Software for PGR Theses
- S Information for Research Degree Examiners
- T Electronic Submission of Theses
- U Guidelines for the Selection of Proposed Examiners
- V Terms of Reference and Membership of Postgraduate Research Degree Awards Assessment and Progression Boards
- W Guidelines on the Timescales of Processes Relating to Submission, Examination and Award of the Degree

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS PERTAINING TO
RESEARCH SUPERVISION AND
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS
(UNDERTAKING RESEARCH DEGREE**

Gi

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**Handbook Gi: General Requirements Pertaining To Research Supervision
And Assessment Of Students (Undertaking Research Degree
Programmes At Levels 7 And 8)**

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	2
2.	DEFINITION OF RESEARCH DEGREES.....	2
3.	DESIGN OF ACADEMIC PROVISION.....	3
4.	APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS	3
5.	PERIOD, MODE AND STATUS OF REGISTRATION	4
5.1.	<i>Time Limits</i>	4
5.2.	<i>Suspension and Extension of Registration</i>	4
5.3.	<i>Changes to Mode of Study</i>	5
5.4.	<i>Termination of Registration</i>	5
6.	EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS OF STUDENTS	6
7.	SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS	7
7.1.	<i>Change of Supervisor</i>	7
7.2.	<i>Training of Supervisors</i>	7
7.3.	<i>Appointment of External Advisors and External Supervisors</i>	7
8.	INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, COPYRIGHT AND DEPOSIT OF THE THESIS IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY	7
9.	EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW.....	8
10.	QUALITY MANAGEMENT	9
11.	ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH: RESEARCH GOVERNANCE HANDBOOK	9
12.	COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS.....	9
13.	RESEARCH MISCONDUCT.....	10
14.	VISITING SCHOLARS	11
15.	RESEARCH DEGREES INVOLVING PARTNER INSTITUTIONS AND EXTERNAL SUPERVISORS 11	
15.1.	<i>Principles governing the research degree provision</i>	11
15.2.	<i>Partner approval process</i>	12

1. Introduction

This handbook is intended to accompany Section G of the Principles and Regulations that deals with postgraduate research degree programmes and awards. These programmes lead to the degrees of Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Master of Professional Studies (MProf), Doctor of Professional Studies (DProf), Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Ministry (DMin), Doctor of Education (EdD) and Master by Research (MRes), and shall be conducted in accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, section B11 (QAA, June 2012).

The handbook contains the requirements governing academic provision falling under the Principles and Regulations of the University of Chester, derives its force from those Principles and Regulations, and shall be read in association with them. The University of Chester insists on the observance of these requirements by all those staff of the University who may be involved in the delivery of these programmes.

Students of the University of Chester shall be required to adhere to the requirements set out below. They shall be given access to these requirements at the point of commencement of the academic sessions to which the rules shall apply.

The procedures and requirements for information shall be reviewed periodically, in the light of the University's own experience, sector-wide developments and the advice of external sources.

2. Definition of Research Degrees

A research degree programme is defined as one leading to a doctoral award and/or one in which the research component (leading to products deemed by expert opinion to make an original contribution to knowledge) is larger and of greater significance than the taught component.

The University of Chester offers three types of research degree: the traditional thesis approach leading to the degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy which are not credit rated and whose operation is covered entirely within this handbook, professional doctorates leading to the degrees of Doctor of Professional Studies (DProf), Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Ministry (DMin), and Doctor of Education (EdD) and the exit award of Master of Professional Studies (MProf) which are credit rated and for whom modules are specified as taught or research, and the Master by Research (MRes) fall within the remit of this Handbook – all others fall within the general University regulations for taught postgraduate modules.

The University of Chester offers the research degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy to candidates who have submitted and been assessed on:

- a thesis embodying the results of original research; or
- a collection of published papers together with a critical review relating to the work described in the papers; or

- a published book or book together with a critical review relating to that research; or
- a body of artistic work, evidencing research methodology affording new insights, together with a thesis which places that work within an academic context

A Professional Doctorate shall be awarded to a candidate with appropriate professional standing and experience who has:

critically examined and evaluated an approved area of investigation, resulting in an original, independent and significant contribution to practice and the understanding thereof, to a standard which would satisfy peer review and merit publication or other dissemination; and

demonstrated an advanced understanding of the research methods appropriate to the field; and

shown an ability to relate the findings of the study to a broader professional and/or academic context.

The degree of Master by Research may be conferred upon a candidate who has submitted and been assessed thereon, 180 credits of study at level 7 comprising:

- (a) 40 - 80 credits for taught modules, falling under the normal regulations for taught modules; and
- (b) 100-140 credits for a dissertation or submission of approved length and structure embodying the results of her/his individual research which shall fall under research degree regulations;

In respect of (a) above, the taught component should include an element of focus upon research methodologies. In respect of (b) above, the student may be required by the examiners to defend the submitted work by oral examination.

For full details of the criteria and eligibility refer to section G of the Principles and Regulations.

3. Design of Academic Provision

The requirement of design and validation of academic provision are set out in the Design of Academic Provision and Structures Handbook A.

4. Applications and Admissions

The application and admission procedures for research degree programmes are laid out in the Admissions Handbook E to accompany part E of the Principles and Regulations. The selection and admissions policy for research degree programmes is set out in Appendix A.

Candidates seeking admission to the degrees of MPhil or PhD by publication should refer to the additional guidance in Appendix B.

The policy and procedure for L8 Accreditation for Prior Learning (APL) is set out in part G12 of the Principles and Regulations. Minimum and maximum periods of registration may be adjusted (see Handbook A, Appendix K).

5. Period, Mode and Status of Registration

5.1. Time Limits

The following general time limits to the period of registration prior to submission shall apply, however adjustments may be made on an individual basis (such as when Advance Standing or APCL is granted or when there is a change to the mode of study):

		Maximum time prior to submission	Minimum period*	Maximum elapsed time from first registration	Transfer period from MPhil to PhD
MPhil	Full-time	4 years	1 year	8 years	min.1 year, max. 2 years
	Part-time	6 years	2 years		min. 2 years,
PhD	Full-time	4 years	2 years	10 years	
	Part-time	7 years	4 years		
Research degree by published works	Part-time	1 year	3 months		
Professional Doctorates	Full-time	4 years	2 years	8 years for MProf; 10 years for DProf, DBA,	
	Part-time	7 years	4 years		
MRes	Full-time	2 years	1 year	6 years	
	Part-time	4 years	2 years		

*note the minimum period of time to submission of the thesis - early submission before this time is not permitted.

5.2. Suspension and Extension of Registration

Exceptionally, on the grounds of mitigating circumstances, a designated senior officer of the Graduate School may approve a suspension of registration or may extend the period of registration. Requests should be made to the Graduate School, accompanied by appropriate evidence (e.g. doctor's certificate) and supported by the supervisory team. Requests for an extension to the period of registration must include a work plan through to completion and submission with significant milestones/targets marked. All approved suspensions or extensions of study will be confirmed in writing. Fees will be charged for any period of extension.

Suspensions may be granted if circumstances arise that prevent a student from pursuing their research. During this time, no fees are payable and therefore students are not entitled to use the University's facilities and resources. Suspensions and extensions will not be approved retrospectively.

Before granting a suspension to a student the Graduate School will consider evidence, provided by the student and confirmed by the supervisor, that it will not be possible for the student to make any progress on their research during the period of suspension. During that period, no data may be collected, no experimental work may be undertaken, and the University withdraws access to facilities and to supervision. The student must inform the Graduate School immediately should their circumstances change in such a way as to allow the resumption of any research activities related to their programme of study. Any misrepresentation by a student of a period when research is undertaken as a period of suspension, whether to reduce the fee payable to the University, to extend the period of study permitted or for any other reason, will be treated as serious misconduct and is likely to lead to termination of study.

After a suspension students must confirm in writing to the Graduate School that studies have been resumed and any requirements relating to annual progress reports must be completed within one month of the resumption of studies. If a student fails on either point then the University reserves the right (after due warning) to terminate studies with immediate effect two months after the end of the suspension of studies or the end of the academic year, whichever is sooner.

5.3. Changes to Mode of Study

Occasionally students may request to change their mode of registration between full-time and part-time study (and vice versa). The request must be made in writing to the Graduate School and supported in writing by the supervisor. A designated senior officer of the Graduate School will approve such requests and a calculation of the time remaining will be made. Each year of full-time study shall be equivalent to two years of part-time study and part years will be calculated pro-rata (on a monthly basis). The time limits of the new mode of registration will be applied. The Graduate School will then write to the student confirming the change of status and the new dates for minimum period of registration and the final submission of the thesis. Requests to change status during the final year for full-time students or last two years for part-time students will not normally be approved. The procedure is set out in Appendix O.

5.4. Termination of Registration

A research degree student is entitled to withdraw her/his registration at any time.

The University reserves the right to terminate registration on grounds of unsatisfactory progress, inappropriate conduct or non-payment of fees, after due warning has been given to the student concerned and on the recommendation of a designated senior officer of the Graduate School. The termination procedure and right of appeal are available in Appendix C.

A student is not entitled to reimbursement of fees paid for the year in which registration is terminated, but the University may exercise discretion in granting a refund.

6. Expectations and Requirements of Students

Students registered for postgraduate research degree programmes enjoy the entitlements and are subject to the expectations set out in section A6.9 of the Principles and Regulations.

Additionally, they are required to:

enrol at the beginning of their studies and again at the start of each subsequent academic year (by 1st September, annually);

pay the appropriate fees for the degree for which they are registered;

attend formal supervision meetings with the Principal Supervisor at least once per month, and with the supervisory team once per term (one of which will constitute the annual progress review), and in addition to ensure that at least one supervision meeting per year is held at the principal research location or data collection location;

successfully complete the probationary review at the specified time;

successfully complete an appropriate annual review of progress. This may be the probationary review, confirmation of target award review, a review at the end of the normal registration period or an appropriate interim review.

successfully complete the University's Research Training Programme, details of which are given in Appendix D, prior to submission of the thesis;

complete a personal development record which includes records of the formal supervision meetings. Details of the personal development record are available as Appendix E;

full-time students are expected to devote themselves to work related to their studies for a minimum of 35 hours per week over 46 weeks of the year. Part-time students are expected to spend an average of 16 hours per week over the course of a year to their studies. The University's policy on employing research degree students to undertake teaching duties is set out in Appendix F and is designed to ensure that their studies are not jeopardised by excessive teaching duties. Therefore, students are advised to limit any other work they undertake to 15 hours (or six hours of teaching contact time) per week and to consult their supervisor. Guidance on the nature of teaching duties is also given in Appendix F.

fulfil the requirement to attend one of the University of Chester campuses on 30 days per annum for full-time students or on 15 days per annum for part-time students.

7. Supervision Arrangements

At the time of registration, the University shall appoint a minimum of two supervisors with appropriate experience. The criteria and procedure for the appointment of supervisors is set in Appendix G. The duties and responsibilities required of the supervisors are set out in Appendix H.

7.1. Change of Supervisor

Students who experience problems are encouraged to discuss matters first with their supervisory team. If this is inappropriate then they should first discuss the matter with the appropriate person in their department (e.g. Head of Department or Research Coordinator) or a designated senior officer of the Graduate School. Students wishing to request a change to their supervisory team should bear in mind that changes will only be agreed if suitable alternative arrangements can be made that fulfil the requirements set out in Appendix G.

Should a member of the supervisory team leave the employment of the University, or should a student's request for a change of supervisor be supported by the Graduate School, a designated senior officer of the Graduate School will approve appropriate alternative supervisory arrangements so as to protect the interests of the research degree student.

In exceptional circumstances, the University reserves the right to change one or more of the supervisors assigned to a student's research degree programme.

7.2. Training of Supervisors

All supervisors must attend a Supervisor Good Practice Workshop. New supervisors are required to undertake this development before commencing supervision. Thereafter, all supervisors must attend a relevant staff development event at least once every three years, although it is expected that they will normally attend an event each year.

Information of the training available to supervisors is provided in Appendix I.

7.3. Appointment of External Advisors and External Supervisors

There will be occasions when it is considered necessary or advisable to appoint external advisors or supervisors for PGR students to complement internal expertise, and in the majority of cases, a simple honorary contract is the most appropriate appointment. The principles governing the supervision arrangements are set out in more detail in section 7 of this document. In order to ensure appropriate consistency between appointments, the policy and appointment procedure are set out in Appendix G. The duties of External Advisors and External Supervisors are set out in Appendix H.

8. Intellectual Property Rights, Copyright and Deposit of the Thesis in the University Library

Except in the case of students supported by outside bodies where specific provisions relating to intellectual property are embodied in the conditions of support, all postgraduate students are required to agree to assign to the University all their rights to intellectual property arising from their studies or research at the University, to be managed by the University in accordance with its normal custom and practice.

No candidate may be prevented, by the terms of a contract from an outside sponsor or any other means, from including in a thesis submitted for a higher degree all material relevant to the research project and from being examined upon it. If material of a confidential nature is included in a thesis, obligations of confidentiality may be imposed upon the Examiners and the author may restrict access to the thesis deposited in the library.

A copy of the thesis submitted by a candidate and approved as fulfilling the requirements for the award of a postgraduate research degree will be deposited for safe custody in the University library. Any copyright that may be vested in the candidate will not be affected thereby. Access to theses deposited in the library and copies thereof will normally be available to bona fide enquirers, but authors will be permitted to impose restrictions on access and copying annually for up to five years if the head of department, after consultation with the candidate's supervisor, endorses the author's statement that preparation for publication, or some other good reason, requires such a restriction. In the event of such restriction being imposed, the abstract of the thesis will be made available for copying to bona fide enquirers and to the publishers of abstracts of theses.

In addition to the depositing of a bound copy of the thesis in the University library, all candidates must also submit an electronic copy of the finalised thesis to the University of Chester digital repository (ChesterRep). Access to the electronic thesis may also be restricted (as above) and copyright is unaffected.

9. Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

All postgraduate research degree provision shall be subject to formal evaluation by:

- the University's research degree students via an anonymous survey such as the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES);
- the annual monitoring of students' Annual Progress Reviews;
- the annual scrutiny of external examiners' reports by a designated senior officer of the Graduate School (who shall produce a summary report);
- to periodic Faculty Reviews of PGR Environment and Experience;
- to periodic review as part of a Quality and Standards Review (see Handbook Dii).

The first four of these processes shall be overseen by the Graduate School, with outcomes reported to Research Committee. The Quality and Standards Review will be conducted by Academic Quality Support Services with outcomes reported to Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee.

10. Quality Management

The Graduate School shall produce a written report on behalf of the Research Committee on the operation of the regulations and requirements by 30th November each year which shall be for consideration by the Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee. On receipt of this report, Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee may require consideration of any issues by Research Committee, may direct that action be taken by the University's Graduate School or may draw matters of concern to the attention of Senate.

11. Ethical Principles for Research: Research Governance Handbook

The University of Chester has a Research Governance Handbook which covers the following broad topics: Introduction and Application; Guiding Principles; Ethics, Oversight and Authorisation of Research and Continuing Review; Continuing Review and Final Reporting; Participant Consent; Administrative and Financial Matters, Rights and Duties in Employment and Research Misconduct; Intellectual Property; Results, Publication and Confidentiality (including Freedom of Information and Data Protection); and Complaints and Incident Reporting.

Students and supervisors should be familiar with the principles set out in this document and ensure that all research involving human participants, animals and the environment have gone through the appropriate approval mechanisms and that the relevant permissions have been obtained. An appropriate assessment of risk should form part of the planning for all research projects.

This document is available on the Research, Postgraduate and Knowledge Services department pages of Sharepoint at:

http://ganymede.chester.ac.uk/index.php?page_id=1718656&group=15

12. Complaints and Appeals

Procedures for complaints by research degree students about the conduct of supervision or other aspects of their experience on a research degree programme shall be in accordance with those determined on behalf of the University by Student Support and Guidance and set out in the Student Experience Companion Guide to the Quality and Standards Manual.

The University's Principles and Regulations state that students should have right to "appeal against the outcome of an assessment in accordance with the requirements set out in the relevant Handbook" whilst complaints are "about the conduct of supervision or other aspects of their experience". The Regulations for Research Degree Appeals regulations can be found in Handbook G.

As the regulations only permit appeals on quite narrow grounds, the tables that follow set out which decisions may be appealed and other matters that should be raised through the complaints procedures if students are dissatisfied with their experience.

Assessment/Progression Points	Outcomes
Probationary Review	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm registration 	Complain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend probationary period 	Complain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminate registration 	Appeal
Progress reviews undertaken on an annual basis (i.e. confirmation of target award review, end of normal registration review, interim year review, one year to end of normal registration review, overrun review, final review) *	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue registration 	Complain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer registration from MPhil to PhD 	Complain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not transfer registration from MPhil to PhD 	Appeal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminate registration 	Appeal
Examination - Pass (outright, minor or major modifications)	Complain
Resubmit for same or lower award	Appeal
Fail with no reassessment	Appeal
Processes (not assessment/progression decisions)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of studies requests 	Complain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to supervisory arrangements 	Complain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of examiners 	Complain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change to mode of studies request (full-time/part-time and change to thesis pending) 	Complain

* The format of progress reviews varies depending upon the stage the student should have reached in the programme (based upon the period of registration). All progress reviews involve an assessment decision as to whether or not a student should be permitted to continue their registration or to initiate the termination procedures. The Confirmation of Target Award review also makes an assessment decision as to whether the student should be permitted to transfer their registration from MPhil to PhD – the nature of the assessment focusses on the evidence of progress towards the required scope and level of work necessary for PhD (it is not an assessment of the achievement of MPhil). Note that the End of normal registration review has two elements: the progression decision to allow the student to continue their registration (i.e. not to terminate studies) and the process of apply to change mode of studies to thesis pending. The request to change mode is not an assessment decision and therefore is not subject to appeal.

13. Research Misconduct

The University expects the highest standards of conduct and integrity from its research degree students in the conduct of their research. Appendix K sets out how the University will deal with allegations of research misconduct – which is a form of academic malpractice

– before and after submission of the thesis. The procedures are not limited only to work which is submitted for assessment and may be invoked after the degree has been awarded.

14. Visiting Scholars

From time to time the University receives enquiries from postgraduate research students registered at other institutions (and other researchers) who wish to visit the University of Chester as part of their research, usually with the aim of working with subject experts based here. Such students and researchers may be granted permission to undertake such research through admission to the Visiting Scholars Course. The course is not an award bearing programme, but provides a mechanism to formalise their status whilst visiting the University. Visiting Scholars will be subject to the University's normal student disciplinary and research misconduct procedures. See Appendix L.

15. Research Degrees involving Partner Institutions and External Supervisors

15.1. Principles governing the research degree provision

The following principles have been adopted by the University:

1. All students will be registered with the University of Chester and the advertised fee levels for the programmes will be those of the University of Chester¹.
2. All projects will fall within the University's general capability to supervise.
3. External supervisors will be expected to meet the University's usual criteria for recognition as a supervisor (except the condition of employment) – see Appendix G.
4. External supervisors will be offered an appropriate honorary contract that is renewable until at least one year beyond the normal registration period for the student(s) they supervise.
5. Every student will be actively supervised by (at least) one member of the academic staff who holds a substantive contract with the University of Chester and who will be designated the Director of Studies for the project².

¹ The intention is to avoid the impression of cheap/expensive versions of a programme being offered with implied differences in quality. Partner institutions would be allowed to offer bursaries/discounts to students, or to make additional charges for extra services/resources. The charge between the University and partner institution is a separate matter, governed by the partnership agreement, and may or may not be related to the advertised programme fee. and an appropriate research environment (including the opportunity to interact with active researchers). It may be possible for partner institutions to provide a set of standard answers, which would only vary if students do not fit into the usual arrangements.

² The tuition fee will be collected by the University of Chester or collected on our behalf and transferred to us. The practicalities of who actually collects the fee from students and how the partner institutions are paid will be agreed with the partner.

6. All University of Chester research degree students should expect to attend the University for the viva, however the Postgraduate Research Degree Awards Assessment Board is empowered to approve alternative arrangements when appropriate³.

Additional principles where a partnership arrangement exists:

7. There must be a partnership agreement in place including a schedule of fees and procedural arrangements.
8. The QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education requires that “Institutions will only accept research students into an environment that provides support for doing and learning about research and where high quality research is occurring”, therefore if the partner approval process includes consideration of the research environment and partners wish to have an attendance requirement then no further action will be necessary. Where the partnership approval process does not consider the research environment or if students are not required to attend then each candidate will need to provide satisfactory answers to the standard questions (section 2 of the Format of Research Degree Project Proposals for MPhil and PhD Candidates which can be found in Appendix A) posed of all students who are based off-site regarding their access to resources

Additional principles for candidates where a partnership arrangement does not exist:

9. When an external supervisor is employed by another HEI (which is not a partner institution) there may be a separate agreement between the University and external supervisors or their employer regarding the payment of a fee.

15.2. Partner approval process

The process for the approval of provision at partner institutions is set out in Handbook Cii (Appendix A). For research degrees where there is no programme validation (i.e. for MPhil and PhD degrees) the approval process proceeds via the Existing Programme route, with the Site Authorisation being conducted by the Graduate School. Further information on the Graduate School Site Authorisation is set out in this Handbook at Appendix M and the application form for approved supervisor status is at Appendix N.

³ Over a period of time it may be appropriate to develop with established partners alternative contractual arrangements which allow a greater degree of responsibility to be taken on by the staff of partner institutions.

**RESEARCH SUPERVISION AND
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS UNDERTAKING
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (MPHIL) AND
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD)**

Gii

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**Handbook Gii: Research Supervision And Assessment Of Students
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7 And 8**

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. DEFINITION OF RESEARCH DEGREE: MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY (MPHIL) AND DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) PROGRAMMES	2
3. STATUS OF REGISTRATION.....	3
3.1. <i>Confirmation of Target Award</i>	3
3.2. <i>Changing to Submission Pending</i>	3
4. STUDENT PROGRESS REVIEWS	3
4.1. <i>Probationary Reviews</i>	4
4.2. <i>Confirmation of Target Award Reviews</i>	4
4.3. <i>End of Normal Registration Review</i>	5
4.4. <i>Final Review</i>	5
4.5. <i>Interim Year Review</i>	5
4.6. <i>One Year to End of Normal Registration Review</i>	5
4.7. <i>Overrun Review</i>	5
4.8. <i>Failure to complete progress reviews and re-enrolment</i>	6
4.9. <i>Adjustments to the review schedule</i>	6
5. EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS	6
5.1. <i>Submission</i>	6
5.2. <i>Components of the Examination</i>	7
5.3. <i>Appointment of Examiners</i>	7
5.4. <i>Responsibilities of Examiners and Chairs of Examinations</i>	8
5.5. <i>Training of Examiners</i>	8
5.6. <i>The Examiners' Report</i>	9
5.7. <i>Approval of Modifications to a Thesis</i>	10
5.8. <i>Recommendations for Awards</i>	10

1. Introduction

This handbook is intended to accompany Section G of the *Principles and Regulations* that deals with postgraduate research degree programmes and awards. These programmes lead to the degrees of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), and shall be conducted in accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, section B11 (QAA, June 2012).

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A research degree programme is defined as one leading to a doctoral award and/or one in which the research component (leading to products deemed by expert opinion to make an original contribution to knowledge) is larger and of greater significance than the taught component.

The University of Chester offers the research degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy to candidates who have submitted and been assessed on:

a thesis embodying the results of original research; or

a collection of published papers together with a critical review relating to the work described in the papers; or

a published book or book together with a critical review relating to that research; or

a body of artistic work, evidencing research methodology affording new insights, together with a thesis which places that work within an academic context

For full details of the criteria and eligibility refer to section G of the *Principles and Regulations*.

3. Status of Registration

3.1. *Confirmation of Target Award*

Students are normally initially registered for the degree of MPhil with upgrade to PhD. During the second year of full-time registration, or the third year of part-time registration, eligible students will be expected to undertake a Confirmation of Target Award meeting. The outcome of this meeting Students are normally initially registered for the degree of MPhil but may seek to upgrade to PhD on the basis of a satisfactory review of progress within certain time limits (shown in Handbook Gi, Section 5.1). The transfer request must also be made before the notice of intention to submit. Refer to section 4 and Appendix O for further details.

Transfers of registration from Master of Philosophy to Doctor of Philosophy shall be approved on Chair's Action by a Faculty Tutor for Postgraduate Research and reported to the next meeting of The Postgraduate Research Degrees Progression Board.

Students who successfully transfer to registration for PhD will have their registration backdated to the start of registration for the MPhil. All approved transfers will be confirmed in writing.

3.2. *Changing to Submission Pending*

Students entering the final year of registration and who have completed their research and are solely engaged in finalising the thesis may apply to have their registration status transferred to 'submission pending'. The application will be considered at the End of Normal Registration review. The procedure is set out in Appendix O. All changes of status will be confirmed in writing.

Students should not assume that a lower fee rate will apply to this status, but may apply for a reduced fee if such a scheme is available at the time of changing to submission pending status. However, they should be aware that a lower fee status is consistent with a reduction in the provision of support and facilities. Students would retain full access rights to learning resources, open access computing facilities and supervision, but would lose the right to access departmental research resources and should no longer assume they are covered by the University's insurance for activities associated with conducting research.

4. Student Progress Reviews

The University of Chester undertakes a variety of monitoring exercises in order to ensure that students are active on a programme, that progress remains satisfactory and to trigger annual re-registration. The University reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student who fails to complete the reviews at the appropriate time.

The general approach to progress monitoring is to review progress annually, with attention focused on different aspects of progress depending upon the year of registration.

Probationary Reviews are normally conducted 3 times per year (during March, July and November). Other reviews are normally conducted in the Summer, however the Confirmation of Target Award Review may be conducted at any time of year.

Full-time students

Timing of review (from start of registration)	
6 months	Probationary Review
18 months	Confirmation of Target Award Review
30 months	End of Normal Registration Review
42 months	Final Review

Part-time students

Timing of review (from start of registration)	
6 months	Probationary Review
18 months	Interim Year Review
30 months	Confirmation of Target Award Review
42 months	One Year to End of Normal Registration Review
54 months	End of Normal Registration Review
66 months	Overrun Review
78 months	Final Review

4.1. Probationary Reviews

Students who register for MPhil or PhD are initially registered for a probationary period, and they must satisfactorily complete the probationary review in order to have their registration for MPhil/PhD confirmed. The probationary reviews are carried out after a period of six months (i.e. during March, July and November to correspond with start dates of September, January and May respectively). Students who register at other times of year will normally be assigned to the cohort with the closest starting date to their own and will be notified of their review date. The expectations of students' achievements during the probationary period will be moderated against their mode of study and period of registration. The review is conducted by a Progress Review Board consisting of a Graduate School PG Tutor with the full supervisory team. The procedure and guidance notes for the probationary review are set out in Appendix O.

4.2. Confirmation of Target Award Reviews

Students registered for MPhil or PhD are required to successfully complete a review which will confirm whether the target award is MPhil or PhD. The 'Confirmation of Target Award Review' is conducted after 18 months of registration (for full-time students) or 30 months for part-time students. If a student fails to upgrade their registration at

this point, a further review and final opportunity to upgrade will be considered 3 months later. The review is conducted by a Progress Review Board consisting of a Graduate School PG Tutor with the full supervisory team. The procedure and requirements are set out in Appendix O.

The confirmation of target award review was formerly known as the upgrade process.

4.3. End of Normal Registration Review

The end of normal registration review occurs after 30 months of registration for full-time students or 54 months for part-time students – i.e. approximately six months before the end of normal registration. The review process allows students who have not submitted for examination to plan the final six months of the normal registration period and to apply for an extra period of registration if necessary. It also provides an opportunity for students to consider their preparedness for examination and for those students who have completed ALL the research and are ONLY finalising the thesis to apply to change their status to 'submission pending'. The review is conducted by a Progress Review Board consisting of a Graduate School PG Tutor with the full supervisory team. The procedure and requirements are set out in Appendix O.

4.4. Final Review

The final review will focus upon a realistic plan to submission by the deadline (as extensions are very rarely permitted). The first part of the final review is paper based, but may be followed up by a meeting of the Progress Review Board. The procedure and requirements are set out in Appendix O.

4.5. Interim Year Review

The interim review is a paper-based activity where the student and supervisor provide independent reports on progress to the Graduate School. The procedure and requirements are set out in Appendix O.

4.6. One Year to End of Normal Registration Review

The one year to end of normal registration review is a paper-based activity where the student and supervisor provide independent reports on progress to the Graduate School. The procedure and requirements are set out in Appendix O.

4.7. Overrun Review

The overrun review is a paper-based activity where the student and supervisor provide independent reports on progress to the Graduate School. The procedure and requirements are set out in Appendix O.

4.8. Failure to complete progress reviews and re-enrolment

The University reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student who fails to complete a progress review at the appropriate time and to re-enrol by 31st October in any year.

4.9. Adjustments to the review schedule

Students who have suspended studies will be informed of their review deadline on a case by case basis.

5. Examination Arrangements

5.1. Submission

Approximately 3 months prior to the expected submission date, students must complete the Intention to Submit form which can be obtained from the Graduate School, and send it to their Principal Supervisor. See section 5.3 regarding the nomination and appointment of examiners. Students will not normally be permitted to submit the thesis before the Intention to Submit form has been completed and returned to the Graduate School. Therefore, failure to complete this form in good time may delay thesis submission and examination.

Students will not be permitted to submit their thesis before the minimum period of registration has elapsed.

Students must observe all conventions over presentation of the thesis as determined by the Graduate School and as set out in Appendix P. Additional guidance on the use of publications within a thesis is set out in Appendix Q.

The thesis must be written by the student in his/her own words, except for quotations from published and unpublished sources which shall be clearly indicated and acknowledged as such. The incorporation of material from other works or a paraphrase of such material without acknowledgement will be treated as plagiarism, subject to the custom and usage of the subject. The source of any photograph, map or other illustration shall also be indicated as shall the source, published or unpublished, of any material not resulting from the candidate's own experimentation, observation or specimen-collecting. Suspected plagiarism detected before submission or during the examination of the thesis will be dealt with through the academic malpractice or disciplinary procedures as appropriate. The detection of plagiarism by the examiners is likely to result in an award recommendation of outright failure.

Four copies of the thesis and any supporting papers are normally required at submission. Three copies must be deposited with the Graduate School office (one for each of the examiners and Chair of examination) with the student retaining one copy. However, if additional Examiners are appointed, extras copies of the thesis will be required. Students must also complete the Thesis Submission form. In addition, students must also submit an electronic version of the thesis so that the University may perform routine checks of the thesis with plagiarism detection software. The electronic version of

the thesis should have the main body of text in a single file which must be compatible with the 20MB limit imposed by the Turnitin@UK software – therefore pdf format is preferred. See Appendix R for the policy on the use of such software.

The Graduate School will send out the thesis to the examiners with copies of relevant documents (see Appendix S).

After the examination, the University will require two copies in permanent hard bindings. One copy will be deposited in the University's library and the candidate's supervisor will retain the other copy. Students are also required to submit one electronic copy of the finalised thesis which the University of Chester may deposit in its digital repository (ChesterRep) and for inclusion in EThOS (the British Library's Electronic Theses Online Service) – see Appendix T for guidance.

5.2. *Components of the Examination*

An examination for the award of Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy shall have the following components:

- (a) scrutiny of the submitted work by internal and external examiners independently;
- (b) an oral examination conducted by the examining panel, composed of internal and external examiners and an independent Chair. In exceptional circumstances, the Postgraduate Research Degrees Awards Board may approve in advance of the oral examination specific arrangements whereby participation in the examination may be done remotely (e.g. via video conference), provided that the University can be assured of the identity of all those involved, and the integrity of the examination process. The oral examination should take place within three months of submission of the thesis. Students are expected to bring a copy of their thesis to the oral examination;
- (c) where the submission involves a body of artistic work, an assessment of any relevant performances or exhibitions and/or an archive of such performances or exhibitions.

5.3. *Appointment of Examiners*

The process of the appointment of the examiners begins with the student completing the Intention to Submit form approximately three months prior to submission. The Principal Supervisor will complete the nomination of examiners section and then the Head of Department will confirm by signing off the form. If the Principal Supervisor also happens to be the Head of Department, they can sign the form in both capacities without reference to anyone else. The Principal Supervisor will complete the nomination of examiners section and append a justification for the selection of the examiners, including a brief research CV of the external examiner(s) and copies of documents confirming the external examiner(s) eligibility to work in the UK. The completed form and justification must be returned to the Graduate School, who will pass the nominations to the Director of the Graduate School for approval of the appointment of examiners. The Graduate School will send letters of appointment to the examiners and Chair of examination.

Normally there will be one internal and one external examiner. An internal examiner is defined as a suitably qualified contracted member of staff of the University at the time that the thesis was submitted. The restrictions on the appointment of external examiners, on grounds such as prior association with the University, as set out in the Handbook on Assessment, shall apply. In the case of a candidate who is a current or former member of the academic staff employed by the University, an additional external examiner shall be appointed. A Chair of examiners may also be appointed from among internal University staff according to custom and practice established by Research Committee. Supervisors will not be appointed as examiners or as the Chair of examiners, neither will they be individuals who have been a research student at this University at the same time as the candidate.

Guidelines for the Selection of Proposed Examiners are available as Appendix U.

A supervisor shall not attend the oral examination or other assessment unless, with the agreement of the candidate, specifically invited to do so by the examining panel to assist with matters of clarification. In such a case, the supervisor shall take no part in the assessment of the candidate.

5.4. Responsibilities of Examiners and Chairs of Examinations

The responsibilities of the examiners and Chair of examination are set out in full in section

G of the regulations. Please bear in mind that:

- (a) The internal examiner will make the arrangements for the examination (date, location, catering etc.).
- (b) All examiners and the Chair are required to meet prior to the examination to discuss and agree how the examination will be conducted.
- (c) The examiners are required to produce independent preliminary reports and a final joint report. The Chair is required to provide a brief report on the conduct of the examination.
- (d) When the outcome of the examination is resubmission of the thesis, the internal examiner will assist the Principal Supervisor and student to construct a timetable detailing a programme of milestones/times for a successful re-submission and receive from the Principal supervisor an update on progress at three month intervals.

5.5. Training of Examiners

All internal examiners appointed by the University shall undergo induction and, thereafter, regular updating, incorporated within the University's approved training programme for supervisors (see Handbook Gi, section 5.2).

5.6. *The Examiners' Report*

The examiners' final report shall contain a recommendation on one of the following:

- (a) “the immediate award of a research degree for which the student is registered (if necessary after minimal corrections);”

Minimal corrections is taken to mean the correction of a relatively limited number of typographical errors or other minimal amendments which could reasonably be completed within a period of 1 week;

- (b) “award of the research degree after minor amendments to the submitted work or written submission (made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner unless the internal examiner deems it necessary to contact the external);”

Minor amendments is taken to cover work which involves anything from the correction of a large number of typographical corrections through to the reworking of one chapter, provided that the conclusions of the thesis are not

- (c) “award of the research degree after major amendments to the submitted work or written submission normally within six months of the examination date (the examiners should specify who will be responsible for the approval of such modifications which may be either one or both examiners;”

Major amendments would typically involve the reworking of more than one chapter, restructuring of thesis or additional analyses that are still unlikely to change the conclusions of the thesis. Such corrections should normally be completed within six months* of the viva and the examiners will specify who is to approve the amendments. This recommendation should not be selected if the examiners anticipate the need to reread the whole thesis in the light of the amendments – such a need implies resubmission and re-examination. This recommendation should be made if the requirements of the relevant degree have been met in full subject to relatively limited deficiencies which the examiners are confident can be corrected satisfactorily by the student.

- (d) “fail the submission in its current form but permit substantial revision and resubmission of the submitted work and/or archive of artistic work on one further occasion within twelve months of the oral examination and to the satisfaction of both examiners who shall determine whether or not a further oral examination is required;”

Substantial revision and resubmission is taken to mean that a significant amount of additional research is required, and/or the working of the majority of the thesis such that the conclusions of the thesis may be changed. Students should expect that a second viva will normally be held, but this will be confirmed by the examiners at the earliest opportunity.

- (e) “the immediate award of a lower research degree;”

Examiners should not require a candidate to revise the thesis solely to meet the lower word limit for the degree to be awarded.

(f) “fail the submission in its current form but permit formal resubmission for a lower research degree with amendments on one further occasion within twelve months of the oral examination and to the satisfaction of both examiners who shall determine whether or not a further oral examination is required;”

Resubmission for a lower degree is appropriate when a substantial amount of additional research is required, and/or the working of the majority of the thesis such that the conclusions of the thesis may be changed which will still only reach the standard of the lower degree. The revised thesis will be required to conform to the lower word limit appropriate to the degree awarded. A second viva will normally be held, but the decision will be confirmed by the examiners once they have had the opportunity to read the revised thesis.

(g) “rejection without the right of resubmission.”

* in the case of minor or major amendments the time limits stated should be considered only as indicative of the scale of work to be completed. Candidates requiring longer due to personal circumstances may be granted an extension to this period by application to the Graduate School, who will consult with the internal examiner.

Refer to the Principles and Regulations section G7.8 in the cases where there is a disagreement between examiners on which recommendation is appropriate.

5.7. Approval of Modifications to a Thesis

After making corrections to the thesis, students must send one copy of the unbound thesis (or corrections) to the examiner(s) for approval. Students must copy any communications with the examiner(s) to the Graduate School. If only the internal examiner is to approve the amendments then one copy is required and the internal examiner will check the amendments and complete the approval form and return it to the Graduate School. This should normally be completed within one week. If both the internal and external examiners are required to approve the amendments then two copies of the unbound revised thesis are required and both examiners will complete approval forms. Approval may then take up to two weeks. The Graduate School will inform the student that approval has been given and the student should then arrange for hard binding of the thesis.

5.8. Recommendations for Awards

On receipt of the examiners' report, the Graduate School shall make appropriate recommendations to the Postgraduate Research Degrees Awards Board, who shall act on behalf of the Senate for the conferment of awards. Research Committee is responsible for monitoring overall completion and success rates and for reporting any

significant trends to Senate. The terms of reference and membership of the Postgraduate Research Degrees Awards Board are set out in Appendix V.

Guidelines on the timescales of processes relating to submission, examination and award of the degree are set out in Appendix W.

Students will not be allowed to graduate if any debts to the University remain unpaid.



University of
Chester

**RESEARCH SUPERVISION AND
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS UNDERTAKING
PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE (DPROF, DBA,
DMIN, ED D) PROGRAMMES AT LEVELS**

Giii

Quality and Standards Manual

HANDBOOK G:

Research Supervision and Assessment of Students Undertaking Research Degree Programmes

2015 - 2016

Date of Approval: June 2015
Authored By: The Graduate School
Version: 1.0

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	2
2. DEFINITION OF RESEARCH DEGREE: PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE (DPROF, DBA, DMIN, ED D) PROGRAMMES.....	2
3. STUDENT PROGRESS REVIEWS.....	3
<i>Professional Doctorates – Taught Phase</i>	3
<i>Professional Doctorates – Research Phase</i>	3
<i>Failure to complete progress reviews and re-enrolment</i>	3
<i>Adjustments to the review schedule</i>	3
4. EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS	3
<i>Submission</i>	3
<i>Components of the Examination</i>	4
<i>Appointment of Examiners</i>	5
<i>Responsibilities of Examiners and Chairs of Examinations</i>	6
<i>Training of Examiners</i>	6
<i>The Examiners’ Report</i>	6
<i>Approval of Modifications to a Thesis</i>	8
<i>Recommendations for Awards</i>	8

1. Introduction

This handbook is intended to accompany Section G of the Principles and Regulations that deals with postgraduate research degree programmes and awards. These programmes lead to the degrees of Master of Professional Studies (MProf), Doctor of Professional Studies (DProf), Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Ministry (DMin), and Doctor of Education (EdD), and shall be conducted in accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, section B11 (QAA, June 2012).

The handbook contains the requirements governing academic provision falling under the Principles and Regulations of the University of Chester, derives its force from those Principles and Regulations, and shall be read in association with them. The University of Chester insists on the observance of these requirements by all those staff of the University who may be involved in the delivery of these programmes.

Students of the University of Chester shall be required to adhere to the requirements set out below. They shall be given access to these requirements at the point of commencement of the academic sessions to which the rules shall apply.

The procedures and requirements for information shall be reviewed periodically, in the light of the University's own experience, sector-wide developments and the advice of external sources.

2. Definition of Research Degree: Professional Doctorate (DProf, DBA, DMin, Ed D) Programmes

A research degree programme is defined as one leading to a doctoral award and/or one in which the research component (leading to products deemed by expert opinion to make an original contribution to knowledge) is larger and of greater significance than the taught component.

Professional doctorates leading to the degrees of Doctor of Professional Studies (DProf), Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Ministry (DMin), and Doctor of Education (EdD) and the exit award of Master of Professional Studies (MProf) are credit rated modules and are specified as taught or research. Only the modules specified as research fall within the remit of this Handbook – all others fall within the general University regulations for taught postgraduate modules (see Requirements Governing the Assessment of Students Handbook F).

A Professional Doctorate shall be awarded to a candidate with appropriate professional standing and experience who has:

- (i) critically examined and evaluated an approved area of investigation, resulting in an original, independent and significant contribution to practice and the

understanding thereof, to a standard which would satisfy peer review and merit publication or other dissemination; and

(ii) demonstrated an advanced understanding of the research methods appropriate to the field; and

(iii) shown an ability to relate the findings of the study to a broader professional and/or academic context.

For full details of the criteria and eligibility refer to section G of the Principles and Regulations.

3. Student Progress Reviews

The University of Chester undertakes a variety of monitoring exercises in order to ensure that students are active on a programme, that progress remains satisfactory and to trigger annual re-registration. The University reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student who fails to complete the reviews at the appropriate time.

Professional Doctorates – Taught Phase

Students registered on the taught phase of professional doctorate programmes have their progress monitored via a Postgraduate Programme Assessment Board within the faculty.

Professional Doctorates – Research Phase

Students on professional doctorate programmes will be required to complete a review of progress for every year of registration on the research phase

Failure to complete progress reviews and re-enrolment

The University reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student who fails to complete a progress review at the appropriate time and to re-enrol by 31st October in any year.

Adjustments to the review schedule

Students who have suspended studies will be informed of their review deadline on a case by case basis.

4. Examination Arrangements

Submission

Approximately 3 months prior to the expected submission date, students must complete the Intention to Submit form which can be obtained from the Graduate School, and send it to their Principal Supervisor. See section 4.3 regarding the nomination and appointment of

examiners. Students will not normally be permitted to submit the thesis before the Intention to Submit form has been completed and returned to the Graduate School. Therefore, failure to complete this form in good time may delay thesis submission and examination. Students will not be permitted to submit their thesis before the minimum period of registration has elapsed.

Students must observe all conventions over presentation of the thesis as determined by the Graduate School and as set out in Appendix P.

The thesis must be written by the student in his/her own words, except for quotations from published and unpublished sources which shall be clearly indicated and acknowledged as such. The incorporation of material from other works or a paraphrase of such material without acknowledgement will be treated as plagiarism, subject to the custom and usage of the subject. The source of any photograph, map or other illustration shall also be indicated as shall the source, published or unpublished, of any material not resulting from the candidate's own experimentation, observation or specimen-collecting. Suspected plagiarism detected before submission or during the examination of the thesis will be dealt with through the academic malpractice or disciplinary procedures as appropriate. The detection of plagiarism by the examiners is likely to result in an award recommendation of outright failure.

Four copies of the thesis and any supporting papers are normally required at submission. Three copies must be deposited with the Graduate School office (one for each of the examiners and Chair of examination) with the student retaining one copy. However, if additional Examiners are appointed, extras copies of the thesis will be required. Students must also complete the Thesis Submission form. In addition, students must also submit an electronic version of the thesis so that the University may perform routine checks of the thesis with plagiarism detection software. The electronic version of the thesis should have the main body of text in a single file which must be compatible with the 20MB limit imposed by the Turnitin@UK software – therefore pdf format is preferred. See Appendix R for the policy on the use of such software.

The Graduate School will send out the thesis to the examiners with copies of relevant documents (see Appendix S).

After the examination, the University will require two copies in permanent hard bindings. One copy will be deposited in the University's library and the candidate's supervisor will retain the other copy. Students are also required to submit one electronic copy of the finalised thesis which the University of Chester may deposit in its digital repository (ChesterRep) and for inclusion in EThOS (the British Library's Electronic Theses Online Service) – see Appendix T for guidance.

Components of the Examination

An examination for the award of Professional Doctorate (or Master of Professional Studies) shall have the following components:

- (a) scrutiny of the submitted work by internal and external examiners independently;
- (b) an oral examination conducted by the examining panel, composed of internal and external examiners and an independent Chair. In exceptional circumstances, the Postgraduate Research Degrees Awards Board may approve in advance of the oral examination specific arrangements whereby participation in the examination may be done remotely (e.g. via video conference), provided that the University can be assured of the identity of all those involved, and the integrity of the examination process. The oral examination should take place within three months of submission of the thesis. Students are expected to bring a copy of their thesis to the oral examination;
- (c) where the submission involves a body of artistic work, an assessment of any relevant performances or exhibitions and/or an archive of such performances or exhibitions.

Appointment of Examiners

The process of the appointment of the examiners begins with the student completing the Intention to Submit form approximately three months prior to submission. The Principal Supervisor will complete the nomination of examiners section and then the Head of Department will confirm by signing off the form. If the Principal Supervisor also happens to be the Head of Department, they can sign the form in both capacities without reference to anyone else. The Principal Supervisor will complete the nomination of examiners section and append a justification for the selection of the examiners, including a brief research CV of the external examiner(s) and copies of documents confirming the external examiner(s) eligibility to work in the UK. The completed form and justification must be returned to the Graduate School, who will pass the nominations to the Director of the Graduate School for approval of the appointment of examiners. The Graduate School will send letters of appointment to the examiners and Chair of examination.

Normally there will be one internal and one external examiner. An internal examiner is defined as a suitably qualified contracted member of staff of the University at the time that the thesis was submitted. The restrictions on the appointment of external examiners, on grounds such as prior association with the University, as set out in the Requirements Governing the Assessment of Students Handbook F, shall apply. In the case of a candidate who is a current or former member of the academic staff employed by the University, an additional external examiner shall be appointed. A Chair of examiners may also be appointed from among internal University staff according to custom and practice established by Research Committee. Supervisors will not be appointed as examiners or as the Chair of examiners, neither will they be individuals who have been a research student at this University at the same time as the candidate.

Guidelines for the Selection of Proposed Examiners are available as Appendix U.

A supervisor shall not attend the oral examination or other assessment unless, with the agreement of the candidate, specifically invited to do so by the examining panel to assist with matters of clarification. In such a case, the supervisor shall take no part in the assessment of the candidate.

Responsibilities of Examiners and Chairs of Examinations

The responsibilities of the examiners and Chair of examination are set out in full in section G of the regulations. Please bear in mind that:

- (a) The internal examiner will make the arrangements for the examination (date, location, catering etc.).
- (b) All examiners and the Chair are required to meet prior to the examination to discuss and agree how the examination will be conducted.
- (c) The examiners are required to produce independent preliminary reports and a final joint report. The Chair is required to provide a brief report on the conduct of the examination.
- (d) When the outcome of the examination is resubmission of the thesis, the internal examiner will assist the Principal Supervisor and student to construct a timetable detailing a programme of milestones/times for a successful re-submission and receive from the Principal supervisor an update on progress at three month intervals.

Training of Examiners

All internal examiners appointed by the University shall undergo induction and, thereafter, regular updating, incorporated within the University's approved training programme for supervisors (see Handbook Gi, section 5.2).

The Examiners' Report

The examiners' final report shall contain a recommendation on one of the following:

- (a) "the immediate award of a research degree for which the student is registered (if necessary after minimal corrections);"

Minimal corrections is taken to mean the correction of a relatively limited number of typographical errors or other minimal amendments which could reasonably be completed within a period of 1 week;

- (b) "award of the research degree after minor amendments to the submitted work or written submission (made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner unless the internal examiner deems it necessary to contact the external);"

Minor amendments is taken to cover work which involves anything from the correction of a large number of typographical corrections through to the reworking of one chapter, provided that the conclusions of the thesis are not substantially changed. Such corrections

should normally be completed within three months* of the viva. The approval of minor amendments would normally be by the internal examiner only.

(c) “award of the research degree after major amendments to the submitted work or written submission normally within six months of the examination date (the examiners should specify who will be responsible for the approval of such modifications which may be either one or both examiners;”

Major amendments would typically involve the reworking of more than one chapter, restructuring of thesis or additional analyses that are still unlikely to change the conclusions of the thesis. Such corrections should normally be completed within six months* of the viva and the examiners will specify who is to approve the amendments. This recommendation should not be selected if the examiners anticipate the need to reread the whole thesis in the light of the amendments – such a need implies resubmission and re-examination. This recommendation should be made if the requirements of the relevant degree have been met in full subject to relatively limited deficiencies which the examiners are confident can be corrected satisfactorily by the student.

(d) “fail the submission in its current form but permit substantial revision and resubmission of the submitted work and/or archive of artistic work on one further occasion within twelve months of the oral examination and to the satisfaction of both examiners who shall determine whether or not a further oral examination is required;”

Substantial revision and resubmission is taken to mean that a significant amount of additional research is required, and/or the working of the majority of the thesis such that the conclusions of the thesis may be changed. Students should expect that a second viva will normally be held, but this will be confirmed by the examiners at the earliest opportunity.

(e) “the immediate award of a lower research degree;”

Examiners should not require a candidate to revise the thesis solely to meet the lower word limit for the degree to be awarded.

(f) “fail the submission in its current form but permit formal resubmission for a lower research degree with amendments on one further occasion within twelve months of the oral examination and to the satisfaction of both examiners who shall determine whether or not a further oral examination is required;”

Resubmission for a lower degree is appropriate when a substantial amount of additional research is required, and/or the working of the majority of the thesis such that the conclusions of the thesis may be changed which will still only reach the standard of the lower degree. The revised thesis will be required to conform to the lower word limit appropriate to the degree awarded. A second viva will normally be held, but the decision will be confirmed by the examiners once they have had the opportunity to read the revised thesis.

(g) “rejection without the right of resubmission.”

* in the case of minor or major amendments the time limits stated should be considered only as indicative of the scale of work to be completed. Candidates requiring longer due to personal circumstances may be granted an extension to this period by application to the Graduate School, who will consult with the internal examiner.

Refer to the Principles and Regulations section G7.8 in the cases where there is a disagreement between examiners on which recommendation is appropriate.

Approval of Modifications to a Thesis

After making corrections to the thesis, students must send one copy of the unbound thesis (or corrections) to the examiner(s) for approval. Students must copy any communications with the examiner(s) to the Graduate School. If only the internal examiner is to approve the amendments then one copy is required and the internal examiner will check the amendments and complete the approval form and return it to the Graduate School. This should normally be completed within one week. If both the internal and external examiners are required to approve the amendments then two copies of the unbound revised thesis are required and both examiners will complete approval forms. Approval may then take up to two weeks. The Graduate School will inform the student that approval has been given and the student should then arrange for hard binding of the thesis.

Recommendations for Awards

On receipt of the examiners' report, the Graduate School shall make appropriate recommendations to the Postgraduate Research Degrees Awards Board, who shall act on behalf of the Senate for the conferment of awards. Research Committee is responsible for monitoring overall completion and success rates and for reporting any significant trends to Senate. The terms of reference and membership of the Postgraduate Research Degrees Awards Board are set out in Appendix V.

Guidelines on the timescales of processes relating to submission, examination and award of the degree are set out in Appendix W.

Students will not be allowed to graduate if any debts to the University remain unpaid.



University of
Chester

**RESEARCH SUPERVISION AND ASSESSMENT OF
STUDENTS UNDERTAKING MASTER BY
RESEARCH (MRES) PROGRAMMES AT LEVEL 7**

Giv

Quality and Standards Manual

HANDBOOK G:

Research Supervision and Assessment of Students Undertaking Research Degree Programmes

2015 – 2016

Date of Approval: June 2015
Authored By: The Graduate School
Version: 1.0

CONTENTS

GIV: RESEARCH SUPERVISION AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS UNDERTAKING MASTER BY RESEARCH (MRES) PROGRAMMES AT LEVEL 7	2
1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. DEFINITION OF RESEARCH DEGREE: MASTER BY RESEARCH (MRES) PROGRAMMES.....	2
3. STUDENT PROGRESS REVIEWS.....	3
<i>Failure to complete progress reviews and re-enrolment.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Adjustments to the review schedule</i>	<i>3</i>
4. EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS	3
<i>Appointment of Examiners.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Responsibilities of Examiners and Chairs of Examinations.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Training of Examiners</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Recommendations for Awards.....</i>	<i>5</i>

GIV: RESEARCH SUPERVISION AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS UNDERTAKING MASTER BY RESEARCH (MRES) PROGRAMMES AT LEVEL 7

1. Introduction

This handbook is intended to accompany Section G of the *Principles and Regulations* that deals with postgraduate research degree programmes and awards. These programmes lead to the degrees Master by Research (MRes) and shall be conducted in accordance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, section B11 (*QAA, June 2012*).

The handbook contains the requirements governing academic provision falling under the *Principles and Regulations* of the University of Chester, derives its force from those *Principles and Regulations*, and shall be read in association with them. The University of Chester insists on the observance of these requirements by all those staff of the University who may be involved in the delivery of these programmes.

Students of the University of Chester shall be required to adhere to the requirements set out below. They shall be given access to these requirements at the point of commencement of the academic sessions to which the rules shall apply.

The procedures and requirements for information shall be reviewed periodically, in the light of the University's own experience, sector-wide developments and the advice of external sources.

2. Definition of Research Degree: Master by Research (MRes) Programmes

A research degree programme is defined as one leading to a doctoral award and/or one in which the research component (leading to products deemed by expert opinion to make an original contribution to knowledge) is larger and of greater significance than the taught component.

The University of Chester offers the Master by Research (MRes) which is credit rated with taught and research modules. Only the modules specified as research fall within the remit of this Handbook – all others fall within the general University regulations for taught postgraduate modules.

The degree of Master by Research may be conferred upon a candidate who has submitted and been assessed thereon, 180 credits of study at level 7 comprising:

- (a) 40 - 80 credits for taught modules, falling under the normal regulations for taught modules; and

- (b) 100-140 credits for a dissertation or submission of approved length and structure embodying the results of her/his individual research which shall fall under research degree regulations;

In respect of (a) above, the taught component should include an element of focus upon research methodologies. In respect of (b) above, the student may be required by the examiners to defend the submitted work by oral examination.

For full details of the criteria and eligibility refer to section G of the Principles and Regulations.

3. Student Progress Reviews

Students registered on the Master by Research programmes have their progress monitored via a Postgraduate Programme Assessment Board within the faculty.

Failure to complete progress reviews and re-enrolment

The University reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student who fails to complete a progress review at the appropriate time and to re-enrol by 31st October in any year.

Adjustments to the review schedule

Students who have suspended studies will be informed of their review deadline on a case by case basis.

4. Examination Arrangements

The assessment of work for modules which are classified as taught modules are governed by Requirements governing the Assessment of Students Handbook F.

In respect of the dissertation, the work submitted must be adjudged by the examiners to demonstrate an understanding of relevant research methodology, to make a clearly identified distinctive contribution to learning, be coherent in structure and clearly presented, and show evidence of systematic study within the broad subject area embraced by the research and scholarly activity conducted by the University. Marks allocated to the dissertation will also follow the general postgraduate taught framework. The student may be required by the examiners to defend the submitted work by oral examination.

Approximately 3 months prior to the expected final submission date, students must complete the Nomination of Examiners form which can be obtained from the Graduate School, and send it to their Principal Supervisor. The Principal Supervisor will complete the relevant sections. See section 4.1 regarding the nomination and appointment of examiners.

Students will not be permitted to complete their programme before the minimum period of registration has elapsed.

Appointment of Examiners

The process of the appointment of the examiners begins with the student completing the Nomination of Examiners form approximately three months prior to submission. The Principal Supervisor will complete the nomination of examiners section and then the Head of Department will confirm by signing off the form. If the Principal Supervisor also happens to be the Head of Department, they can sign the form in both capacities without reference to anyone else. The Principal Supervisor will complete the relevant section and append a justification for the selection of the examiners, including a brief research CV of the external examiner(s) and copies of documents confirming the external examiner(s) eligibility to work in the UK. The completed form and justification must be returned to the Graduate School, who will pass the nominations to the Director of the Graduate School for approval of the appointment of examiners. The Graduate School will send letters of appointment to the examiners and Chair of examination.

Normally there will be one internal and one external examiner. An internal examiner is defined as a suitably qualified contracted member of staff of the University at the time that the thesis was submitted. The restrictions on the appointment of external examiners, on grounds such as prior association with the University, as set out in the Requirements Governing the Assessment of Students Handbook F, shall apply. In the case of a candidate who is a current or former member of the academic staff employed by the University, an additional external examiner shall be appointed. A Chair of examiners may also be appointed from among internal University staff according to custom and practice established by Research Committee. Supervisors will not be appointed as examiners or as the Chair of examiners, neither will they be individuals who have been a research student at this University at the same time as the candidate.

Guidelines for the Selection of Proposed Examiners are available as Appendix U.

A supervisor shall not attend the oral examination or other assessment unless, with the agreement of the candidate, specifically invited to do so by the examining panel to assist with matters of clarification. In such a case, the supervisor shall take no part in the assessment of the candidate.

Responsibilities of Examiners and Chairs of Examinations

The responsibilities of the examiners and Chair of examination are set out in full in section G of the regulations. Please bear in mind that:

- (a) The internal examiner will make the arrangements for the examination (date, location, catering etc.).
- (b) All examiners and the Chair are required to meet prior to the examination to discuss and agree how the examination will be conducted.
- (c) The examiners are required to produce independent preliminary reports and a final joint report. The Chair is required to provide a brief report on the conduct of the examination.
- (d) When the outcome of the examination is resubmission of the dissertation, the internal examiner will assist the Principal Supervisor and student to construct

a timetable detailing a programme of milestones/times for a successful re-submission and receive from the Principal supervisor an update on progress at three month intervals.

Training of Examiners

All internal examiners appointed by the University shall undergo induction and, thereafter, regular updating, incorporated within the University's approved training programme for supervisors (see Handbook Gi, section 7.2).

Recommendations for Awards

Each of the taught modules will be assessed according to the PGT regulations and framework. Reference should be made to sections F2.9 and F3.1 – F3.4 of the Principles and Regulations. Marks allocated to the dissertation will also follow the PGT framework. The Framework for PGT programmes is set out in Handbook A, Appendix I. Marks will be confirmed at a Module Awards Board (MAB). On receipt of the final marks, the Registry shall make appropriate recommendations to the Programme Awards Board (PAB), who shall act on behalf of the Senate for the conferment of awards. The Postgraduate Research Degrees Awards Board will subsequently be notified of the awards. Research Committee is responsible for monitoring overall completion and success rates and for reporting any significant trends to Senate.

Guidelines on the timescales of processes relating to submission, examination and award of the degree are set out in Appendix W.

Students will not be allowed to graduate if any debts to the University remain unpaid.