



Queen Margaret University  
EDINBURGH

## QMU PhD Regulations

**These regulations apply in their entirety for the majority of QMU PhD candidates<sup>1</sup>**

**A very small number of candidates continue to follow the pre-2015 Regulations and have been notified separately of this.**

For further information on the Regulations, please contact staff in the Graduate School:  
[GraduateSchool@gmu.ac.uk](mailto:GraduateSchool@gmu.ac.uk)

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<sup>1</sup> QMU uses the term candidate to mean student throughout these regulations

## PhD REGULATIONS

Please note that regulations are subject to change. Always refer to the most recent version of the regulations. This can be found on the University's Graduate School website at: <https://www.gmu.ac.uk/study-here/postgraduate-research-study/graduate-school-and-doctoral-research/current-students/>

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## **INTRODUCTION**

These regulations govern all PhDs undertaken at Queen Margaret University. Professional Doctorate regulations are published separately<sup>2</sup>.

PhD candidates and their supervisors are required to read these regulations, and also the PhD Candidate Handbook and Code of Practice<sup>3</sup>, the most recent versions of which are available on the [QMU Graduate School website](#).

Where questions of procedure arise, and especially in the case of any appeal, candidates and supervisors will be deemed to have read the regulations and all relevant institutional Codes of Practice and Handbooks. All candidates and supervisors are also expected to be aware of the Essential Information for Students publication. This is available on the [current student A-Z](#) (under the letter E).

## **GENERAL REGULATIONS AND POLICIES**

Under these regulations, where a University officer is named by their title, they may act through their properly appointed nominee.

### **Committee structure and remits**

The Research Strategy Committee is the standing committee of Senate with overall responsibility for the academic quality of research degrees at Queen Margaret University. The Research Strategy Committee makes recommendations to Senate on the regulatory framework for doctoral programmes and related matters. It also promotes best practice in admission, supervision and examination of doctoral candidates.

The Research Strategy Committee delegates some matters concerning individual candidates to the Graduate School Academic Board. The remit of the Graduate School Academic Board is attached as Appendix one.

### **Equal opportunities**

Queen Margaret University is committed to equality of opportunity and believes in a culture of diversity and inclusion. Each application received by the University is considered carefully on its own merits. The University seeks to open access to a wide range of candidates, subject to the essential principle that there is a reasonable expectation of completion within the normal duration of registration.

Candidates who wish to offer feedback or report a concern or issue can do this by contacting a member of their Supervisory Team, the Head of the Graduate School, their Doctoral Research Co-ordinator or the Graduate School Officer.

### **Candidates with disabilities**

Information for candidates with disabilities, including contact details for the Student Disability Advisors, is available from the [Student Services website](#).

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<sup>2</sup> Available from the [QMU Quality website](#)

<sup>3</sup> Note: The Code of Practice is currently being updated (January 2020)

It is recommended to make contact with the Academic Disabled Student Coordinator for the relevant area at the earliest opportunity.

### **School-based facilities**

Every doctoral candidate is a member of the Queen Margaret University Graduate School, and is also affiliated to one of the University's two multi-disciplinary Schools and through this to a Research Centre or Institute, which hosts the candidate during their programme of studies. The University will provide the facilities listed below as the minimum standard arrangements for each doctoral candidate:

- dedicated study-space (where possible situated in the affiliated Division or equivalent)
- desk
- shelf space
- lockable storage (one lockable cupboard per student)
- access to computer network
- electronic mail address
- facilities for receiving paper mail
- stationery supplies
- access to printer/photocopier
- access to telephone

Full-time candidates will normally have their own dedicated desk; part-time candidates may need to 'hot desk'.

### **Fees**

Full details regarding the payment and amount of fees applicable for a particular session can be found on the [QMU fees website](#).

The following fees apply depending on fee status: tuition fees; bench fees; continuation fee; examination fee. Candidates, or their sponsors, are also required to cover the cost of printing theses and the graduation fee.

- Bench fees pay for the cost of consumable materials and other expenses associated with the candidate's research. Divisions or Research Centres may charge bench fees – please contact the relevant supervisor who can liaise with the Graduate School to set this up for you.
- All PhD candidates exceeding their normal prescribed period of study, without submitting their thesis, are registered as continuing candidates, and pay the appropriate continuation fee.
- All PhD candidates must pay the examination fee, which is charged following submission of the thesis for examination. A second fee is charged for any re-examination.

It should be noted that QMU fee levels are reviewed on an annual basis, and may be subject to increase during the period of study. It is therefore possible that, by the time a PhD candidate reaches the continuation or examination stage, the continuation or examination fee will have increased from the fee in place on initial matriculation.

Fees will be adjusted in accordance with any change to a candidate's registration status, e.g. suspension of studies or change in mode of study from full-time to part-time. Changes which affect

fees will be notified to the relevant department only once approved by the Graduate School Academic Board.

There are four categories of PhD candidate in relation to fees: fee-paying; fee-paying with support from an independent sponsor; QMU bursary; and staff.

### **Fee-paying and fee-paying with support**

Fee-paying PhD candidates pay tuition fees and bench fees, where applicable, annually for the prescribed period of study, plus any continuation fee, and the examination fee. If an independent sponsor has agreed to support study (e.g. an employer, embassy, or other funding body), arrangements can be made to invoice the sponsor directly. It is a condition of registration that candidates accept liability for their fees. Even if the fees are to be paid by a sponsor, such as an employer or embassy, it is the candidate's personal responsibility to ensure that they are paid and to provide evidence of funding at matriculation.

Where a candidate has failed to provide written confirmation of funding within 28 days of the start of their programme of study, they will be deemed to be personally liable for the payment of the fees, and an invoice will be issued to the candidate accordingly.

### **QMU bursary**

PhD candidates on a Queen Margaret University bursary have their tuition and bench fees waived, but are liable for any continuation fee and for the examination fee.

### **Staff**

Fees may be waived for current members of staff registered for a part-time PhD. This requires to be agreed by the Dean of School. Members of staff are required to cover the costs of examination, printing theses and graduation themselves.

### **Collaborating Establishments**

The University encourages co-operation with relevant establishments and organisations (Collaborating Establishments) for the purposes of research.

Less formal collaboration normally involves access by the candidate to the facilities and other resources of the Collaborating Establishment. Supervision and other facilities will be provided by Queen Margaret University, but the Collaborating Establishment may provide a nominated Advisor, or even a second supervisor, as part of the Supervisory Team. Examples would be where a candidate was conducting fieldwork outside the UK, or was registered on a non-resident basis. In such cases, a letter from the Collaborating Establishment should be provided, outlining the facilities that will be made available to the candidate.

More formal collaborations may involve joint supervision, intellectual property considerations or joint funding. Examples might include situations where a studentship is attached to a joint funding application, or collaboration with an NHS or European research programme. In such cases, a Collaborative Agreement must be drawn up in which the performance obligations and responsibilities of each party are explicitly stated. The Agreement shall set out the terms and conditions of collaboration, covering areas such as financial provisions, reporting, intellectual

property, publication of results, and liability/indemnity. Guidance regarding agreements of this kind is available from the Research Grants and Contracts Unit.

The contribution of the Collaborating Establishment must be duly acknowledged in the candidate's thesis.

Academic staff considering setting up a joint or shared collaboration are advised to contact the Graduate School in advance, as part of the discussion, application or tendering process.

## **Ethics**

The University's regulations include a section on ethics relating to research. For the most recent version of the regulations, procedures, guidelines and the forms required for an ethics submission, please see the [QMU Ethics website](#). Advice and guidance is also available from the Secretary to the Research Ethics Panel at [researchethics@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:researchethics@qmu.ac.uk),

**No research may proceed without formal ethical approval.** Applications for ethical approval are reviewed initially by the Head of Division or nominee with four possible outcomes: (a) referral back to applicant for amendments b) approval by the Head of Division or nominee (in some cases Director of a Research Centre or Institute); c) referral to the QMU Research Ethics Panel; d) referral to an external ethics committee. All NHS research must go straight to the relevant NHS research ethics panel.

## **Data Protection and Research Data Management**

QMU is committed to protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals with respect to the processing of their personal data. Such processing is undertaken in compliance with:

- The EU-General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (the Act), which together are referred to as the "Data Protection Legislation" within this section
- associated legislation
- the University's notification with the UK Information Commissioner, which sets out the purposes for which the University holds and processes personal data about employees, students, graduates and others.

It is essential that all candidates are familiar with the University's *Data Protection Policy and Guidelines*. These are to be read and followed by all candidates and are available on the [QMU website](#).

In addition, the University's Research Data Management Policy requires that researchers take steps to ensure strict confidentiality of data relating to study participants and that research data is managed to the highest standards as part of the University's commitment to research excellence. Further information is available on [QMU's Research Data Management intranet site](#).

## **Intellectual Property Rights**

All Candidate IP generated during the course of doctoral studies at the University and/or using University resources ("Student IP") will be owned by the inventor (the candidate who created the IP), except:

- Where as a condition of support an external funder providing funding or other support requires that Student IP is assigned to them (for example projects involving 3rd parties and work requiring use of pre-existing University-owned IP); or
- Where the Student IP has been developed in the production of an MSc or PhD thesis or in the production of course or teaching materials, in which cases the Student IP will be owned by the University.

In the event where any of the exceptions above are considered by the University to apply, the student shall execute and deliver such documents and perform such acts as may reasonably be required in order to ensure that ownership of Student IP is vested in the correct party, as set out above, and the University may require the student to do so at any time.

Candidates may wish to publish the results of their research during or after their PhD. There is no restriction on publication, unless commercial interests are involved. Candidates should always consult their Supervisory Team first, to agree attribution of authorship.

Further details are available in the University's [Intellectual Property Policy and Regulations](#).

### **Academic dishonesty, plagiarism and fraud**

The University's regulations on Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism are available in full from the [Assessment Regulations for taught programmes](#).

Plagiarism, collusion, falsification of data and other forms of academic dishonesty are considered fraudulent and an offence against University discipline. Whilst the principles described in the general Assessment Regulations apply to all students, the procedures for reporting and evaluation for a suspected offence differ slightly in the case of PhD candidates.

A consistently high standard of referencing is expected from all PhD candidates, and Supervisory Teams should seek to offer feedback and feedforward from a very early stage to correct any examples of poor academic practice found in candidates' written work.

PhD degrees differ from taught degrees in that much of the candidate's work is not assessed formally. It is possible that where a member of the Supervisory Team may have concerns about possible plagiarism in early versions or drafts of written work; they will need to respond to this in a constructive way to enable the candidate to eliminate potential or actual plagiarism. Once work is submitted for any form of assessment and plagiarism is a concern, formal processes will be used to respond to the concern.

Where academic misconduct is suspected in formal assessed work, the assessors should first discuss the concerns with the Supervisory Team. Staff in the Graduate School should be contacted for advice. All cases will be referred to the Dean of School, in accordance with the QMU Code of Discipline.

The Supervisory Team shall decide whether there is a prima facie case established for plagiarism or research malpractice and, on that basis, the appropriate route for handling the case. If it is judged that there is academic misbehaviour or academic misconduct, then the case will be referred to the Dean of School under the QMU Disciplinary Regulations. The Supervisory Team will be responsible for the submission of evidential material to the Dean of School and for informing the candidate(s) involved and any referring staff member of the decision to move to the Disciplinary process. Please refer to [The Regulations on Student Discipline](#).

Such offences on the part of academic staff would be dealt with by disciplinary procedures described in staff guidance available from Human Resources.

## **Complaints**

The University has established [procedures for the making and hearing of complaints and grievances](#). Candidates are encouraged to seek resolution of such matters informally first, if at all possible. Staff in the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement can offer advice.

## **UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Regulations**

The University is bound by the regulations of UKVI, including visa requirements for international candidates. The University will comply in all cases with UKVI requirements, such as may be amended from time to time.

Relevant advice will be provided to international applicants and candidates as appropriate and within the remit of University officers. Advice on visas and immigration should be sought from the University's International Office.

Candidates studying on a Tier 4 Visa may only study on a full-time basis, and must be resident within reasonable commuting distance of the University. Please refer to the information on the [responsibilities of candidates studying on a Tier 4 Visa](#).

## **Health and safety**

[Health and Safety information](#), including fire regulations, is available from the QMU website. It is extremely important that candidates observe the University's Health and Safety Policy and any health and safety precautions which may be prescribed. This includes the [University Smoking Policy](#). It is also important that candidates are sensitive to issues of risk in the Health and Safety context.

## **DCA (Doctoral Candidates' Association) and Students' Union**

All PhD candidates are members of the Doctoral Candidates' Association and Students' Union. For further information, refer to the PhD Candidate Handbook.

## **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

### **1. PhD criteria**

- 1.1 To be eligible for a PhD, a candidate must undertake a research programme leading to the submission and successful defence of a significant piece of work that embodies the results of their research and shows evidence that the candidate has met the criteria below. Either of two possible forms of submission is acceptable. The form of submission is decided at application stage by the candidate and their supervisors and approved as part of the probationary assessment. Exceptionally, any subsequent proposed changes to that agreed form of submission must be submitted to the Graduate School Academic Board for approval. The two acceptable forms of submission are:

## Thesis

This form of submission will consist of a substantial written thesis (of between 70,000 and 100,000 words) representing or embodying within the text new knowledge deriving from original research. The thesis must be presented in accordance with the University's requirements.

### **(PhD by Creative Practice): Creative Work and accompanying Thesis**

This form of submission will consist of a combination of original creative work and an associated written thesis (of between 30,000 and 40,000 words), which taken together form a coherent whole and represent or embody new knowledge and derive from original research. The original creative work may take a form appropriate to the field of study (for example, artefacts, film, performance, or photography) and must be documented fully in a form suitable for public dissemination (for example, photographs, DVD, or other audio visual material). In all cases, the creative practice must have been undertaken as part of the registered research programme.

- 1.2 The respective criteria for the awards of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) are set out below. The MPhil is offered as an exit award in lieu of PhD only, as set out further under paragraph 9.7.9, and applications to undertake an MPhil only will not be accepted. While it is recognised that candidates will require guidance and supervision during the course of their studies, by the end of the degree candidates must demonstrate:

<b>MPhil</b>	<b>PhD</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge that integrates most, if not all, of the main areas of the subject of study, including a critical awareness of current issues and developments.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A critical and detailed knowledge at the forefront of the specialist area of study, with the ability to provide an overview of the field.</li><li>• Knowledge and understanding that is generated through personal research or equivalent work that makes a significant contribution to the development of the subject/discipline.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The ability to identify and conceptualise new and abstract theoretical or practice-based problems and issues.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The ability to develop creative and original responses to theoretical or practice-based problems and issues.</li></ul>
<p>The ability to operate as an independent researcher (under guidance) and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a range of specialised skills and techniques which are at or informed by forefront developments within the subject.</li><li>• Plan and execute a significant project of research or development.</li></ul>	<p>The ability to operate as a fully independent researcher and to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use and enhance a range of complex skills and techniques at the forefront of developments within the subject.</li><li>• Design and execute research or development projects to deal with new problems and issues.</li><li>• Practice in the context of new problems and circumstances.</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice in a wide variety of professional contexts.</li> <li>• Exercise substantial autonomy and initiative.</li> <li>• Make a contribution to change and development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise a high level of autonomy and initiative.</li> <li>• Challenge established ideas and show initiative in shaping change and development.</li> <li>• Create and progress a research impact plan</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to communicate effectively with peers, more senior colleagues and specialists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to communicate at the standard of peer reviewed, published academic work.</li> </ul>

In all cases, the submission must have a coherent structure understandable by a scholar in the same general field with regard to aims, background, methodology, methods and conclusions; must be satisfactory in its literary presentation and must conform to the regulations in respect of format (see Section 10 of these regulations). In the case of a PhD by Creative Practice, the written and practical elements together should address the research question, the conceptual/theoretical framework and methodology adopted, the critical and theoretical framework for the research, and demonstrate original research analytical skill and rigour.

## 2. Application and Acceptance

### 2.1 Topics of research

Programmes of research may be proposed in fields of study which are within the strategic areas of research specified by the University via The Research Centres and Institutes. Acceptance of any proposed programme is subject to the requirement that it is capable of leading to scholarly research impact and to its presentation for assessment by appropriate Examiners. All proposed research programmes shall be considered for PhD registration on their academic merits. The concerns and interests of any associated funding body may be taken into account as secondary factors.

### 2.2 Entry requirements

All applications will be considered by The Graduate School on an individual basis and in collaboration with supervisors and Research Centre Directors as required. No offer will be issued to an applicant who fails to meet the minimum QMU entrance requirements.

An applicant for registration for a PhD shall usually hold, or anticipate gaining, a good Honours degree (2:1 or better) from a United Kingdom Higher Education Institution, or a degree from an overseas institution accepted as equivalent by Head of the Graduate School, taking advice from the School Doctoral Research Coordinator and Head of Recruitment and Admissions.

Applicants without an Honours degree may be considered if they can demonstrate equivalent professional experience in a relevant field to their proposed research topic. In considering such applications, additional evidence may be requested, (such as a portfolio or essay) demonstrating that the professional experience is at the requisite level.

See also the general [University regulations on Recognition of Prior Learning](#).

## 2.3 English language requirements

All overseas applicants must provide evidence of their English language ability. A minimum score of IELTS 6.5 or equivalent, with no element of performance lower than IELTS 6.0, is the current QMU entrance requirement<sup>4</sup>. Completion of a previous degree delivered in English may count as evidence of English language ability.

## 2.4 Making an application

Applications are processed through the University's online application form. A short overview of the proposed research idea justifying why the research is needed is required as part of the application. Two academic references are also required. Applicants are encouraged to have made contact with potential supervisors in advance of submitting their application. Potential supervisors may work with the applicant to develop the proposal overview for application.

## 2.5 Decision making on applications

2.5.1 The Admissions Team forwards applications and supporting documents to the relevant School Doctoral Research Coordinator. The Doctoral Research Coordinator considers applications and liaises directly with supervisors where they are named or where no supervisors are named, with Research Centre/Institute Directors and potential supervisors. Occasionally, it may be necessary to involve Heads of Division or Deans.

2.5.2 Wherever possible, each suitable applicant is invited for interview as determined by the Doctoral Research Coordinator, including at least one member with relevant subject expertise and one Research Centre/Institute representative. In some situations, a potential supervisor may know the applicant through related research or other QMU activity and an interview may not be necessary. Where it is not possible to interview the applicant in person, an alternative interview format (e.g. telephone or video link) should be arranged. It is the responsibility of the Doctoral Research Coordinator to ensure that the applicant has appropriate entry requirements and is suited to pursuing a research degree, and that an appropriate Supervisory Team is available.

2.5.3 A recommendation by the Doctoral Research Coordinator for acceptance of the applicant and for appointment of the Supervisory Team is then submitted to the Admissions Team, and a letter offering a place is sent to the applicant.

2.5.4 No applicant may be accepted without confirmation that a suitably qualified Supervisory Team can be put in place (see Section 7). Equally, the Dean of School must confirm to the Doctoral Research Coordinator that appropriate facilities and resources are available to support the proposed research.

2.5.5 No applicant may be accepted on a non-resident basis without confirmation from the Head of the Graduate School, acting on advice from the Doctoral Research Coordinator (see Section 3).

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<sup>4</sup>English language requirements may be subject to change. Current requirements are published in the [Admissions Regulations](#)

- 2.5.6 Within the offer letter, applicants will be informed of all relevant information, including fees for which they may be liable the expected time commitment involved in the degree programme. Part-time candidates should plan to devote half the amount of time a full-time candidate would need to complete their studies. Prior to starting the programme, information on joining the University will be e-mailed to successful applicants, including notification of the date on which they will report to the University to begin their programme of study.

It is the responsibility of the Admissions Team to ensure that all references have been supplied, to obtain copies of degree certificates and evidence of English language scores, and to notify applicants of any requirement for criminal record checks.

- 2.5.7 The Admissions Team is also responsible for advice to international candidates on visa requirements and for checking that candidates are in possession of an appropriate visa at the point of admission.

## 2.6 **Start dates**

New PhD candidates normally begin their programme of study at the beginning of the academic year in September, when Doctoral Candidate Induction week takes place. An alternative start date is the second week of semester two in January, but PhD candidates wishing to begin their programme of study at that time of the year must secure the permission of the Head of the Graduate School. Candidates may start at a time other than the beginning of the academic year, in exceptional circumstances only, if suitable arrangements for induction can be put in place.

## 2.7 **Staff**

Members of staff of the University wishing to register for a part-time PhD must first discuss this with their line manager through Performance Enhancement Review. If it is agreed that appropriate study time can be set aside within the staff member's workload, they may submit a formal application through the usual channels. It is expected that members of staff who are accepted for a part-time PhD will have some study time protected, although much of the study will need to be done outwith normal working hours.

All applicants must be interviewed in line with the usual admissions process. The decision-making process above must also be followed. Members of staff are encouraged to begin their studies as set out above in 2.6. and must complete induction.

## 2.8 **Bursaries**

Applications for QMU bursaries will be managed by the Admissions Team and the Graduate School and approved by The Research Strategy Committee.

## 2.9 **General precepts**

Where not otherwise stated, the general precepts of the [QMU Admission Regulations](#) apply.

## 2.10 Disability

All applications will be assessed on the basis of academic suitability. Discussions about the support requirements of applicants will be separate from that consideration. Applicants are encouraged to indicate any disabilities on the application form. Where an applicant with a disability meets the academic entry requirements, the relevant Academic Disabled Student Coordinator must be consulted. The standard process for determining special support needs must be followed before making an offer.

## 3. Residence, leave of absence and holidays

### 3.1 Residence

3.1.1 Full-time candidates should normally be resident within reach of Edinburgh, except during holiday time. This is to allow adequate contact with the Supervisory Team and participation in the wider research environment of the School and Research Centres/Institute.

3.1.2 Where part-time candidates are not resident within reach of Edinburgh, and do not intend to re-locate, the Head of the Graduate School, taking advice from the School Doctoral Research Coordinator, must consider the following factors before making an offer:

- a) Whether suitable arrangements can be made for frequent supervisory contact by email, video conferencing, telephone or a combination of these
- b) The ability to participate in Doctoral Study Weeks and ideally the Annual DCA Conference
- c) The availability of any necessary facilities for the support of research locally
- d) The availability of appropriate academic support locally
- e) The availability of distance learning support from QMU

Part-time non-resident applications must be considered on a case-by-case basis. All applications for admission as a non-resident candidate must be approved by the Head of the Graduate School, on taking advice from the School Doctoral Research Coordinator. Changes from campus based to non-resident status that arise once a candidate has been admitted will be referred to the Graduate School Academic Board for decision. As far as possible, non-resident candidates should visit QMU for three weeks each year to allow face-to-face supervisory meetings and participation in various research study and development opportunities and to be part of the wider culture of the School and the University. They must also be available to participate in the Doctoral Study Weeks, unless an exemption has been agreed (see Section 8).

### 3.2 Leave of absence

3.2.1 In the case of members of staff registered for a PhD who are planning to be absent for a sabbatical period, research supervision will be reviewed. If the sabbatical is for the research then supervision will continue, if it is for another reason then research supervision will be paused until the staff member returns.

3.2.2 Applications for leave of absence for purposes such as fieldwork and extended visits to archives must be approved by a PhD candidate's Supervisory Team.

- 3.2.1 Candidates and their Supervisory Team are required to notify the Graduate School of any such absence in advance of the absence occurring. International candidates on Tier 4 visas are additionally bound by the University's regulations for sponsorship, which are communicated separately.

### 3.3 Candidate holidays

Bursary candidates are entitled to a maximum of six weeks' holiday per year, in addition to the public holidays. Dates for holidays should be agreed with the Supervisory Team. Other candidates may take holidays at their own discretion, subject to meeting the usual requirements of study and any visa restrictions.

## 4. Admission, matriculation and payment of fees

- 4.1 All PhD candidates, whether full-time or part-time, must be matriculated students of the University. It is the candidate's responsibility to matriculate each year, usually in September, following the University's standard matriculation procedures.

- 4.2 At initial matriculation a candidate will register on the PhD Programme. Continued registration is conditional on the candidate meeting the progression requirements outlined in Section 6.

PhD candidates may not be concurrently registered for any other research degree at QMU or at another Higher Education Institution.

PhD candidates who have previously been registered on a postgraduate or undergraduate programme at QMU, must exit that programme before registering on a PhD at QMU.

- 4.3 Following matriculation, PhD candidates will be invoiced for fees due, where applicable. Fee liability is determined by the Student Records Office, and invoices will be raised and sent by the Finance Office.
- 4.4 PhD candidates must pay tuition fees and other charges as required in order to continue study. Full details can be found on our [fees and funding website](#). Candidates will be liable for tuition fees for each year of study within the prescribed period (see Section 5). If a candidate does not submit by the end of the prescribed period, they will be classed as a continuing candidate. Continuing candidates are liable only for the continuation fee: Usual tuition fees do not apply during this period. The University reserves the right to review fees on an annual basis. Continuing candidates in certain subject areas may be liable for bench fees.
- 4.5 Candidates will be charged the examination fee following receipt of their thesis submission for examination. A second examination fee will be charged should the candidate require a second oral examination.
- 4.6 PhD candidates must be matriculated and must not be in debt to the University in order to be eligible to graduate.

## 5. Registration

- 5.1 A PhD candidate may register on a full-time or a part-time basis. Full-time status reflects a commitment to study for approximately 35 hours per week. Part-time status is considered to be the equivalent of half full-time and therefore reflects a commitment to study for approximately 18 hours per week. Such an amount of work is considered to be a pre-requisite for reaching the standard of the degree. Candidates who devote less time to their study may find that progress is inadequate, which can lead to de-registration.

A full-time candidate should normally reach the standard for PhD within a prescribed period of study of three years and a part-time candidate within a prescribed period of six years. Full-time candidates should normally make their final submission at the end of the third year for examination, or at the latest after one continuation year. A continuation fee must be paid for this fourth year of study. Part-time candidates will normally make their final submission at the end of the sixth year for examination, or at the latest after two continuation years. Part-time candidates pay a single continuation fee, irrespective of duration of the continuation period.

- 5.2 Candidates are usually expected to complete within the prescribed period. Progress will be subject to regular review at supervisory meetings and through annual reports and periodic assessments, allowing candidates to identify barriers to completion and Supervisory Teams to put in place appropriate support mechanisms.

### 5.3 Credit for study at other institutions or relevant research experience

- 5.3.1 Credit for previous study may be given by the Graduate School Academic Board for candidates wishing to transfer their PhD registration from another Higher Education Institution. Similar credit may also be given to prospective candidates with relevant research experience in industrial laboratories or other organisations, including those supporting creative practice. Maximum credit in both cases will normally be as follows: full-time PhD 12 months; part-time PhD 24 months (see regulations 5.4 and 5.5 below). However, the Graduate School Academic Board will consider each case on its own merits.
- 5.3.2 The Graduate School Academic Board may give extended credit for previous research to applicants who wish to transfer their PhD registration to Queen Margaret University in cases where a member of their Supervisory Team is joining the University as a member of academic staff.
- 5.3.3 To apply for credit, candidates must submit an outline PhD proposal, indicating the full plan of work and how much has been achieved already. Where the previous research was undertaken in collaboration with others, candidates must demonstrate that there are no objections or concerns in relation to ownership of intellectual property.
- 5.3.4 At the point of submitting the proposal, the candidate must clearly indicate the amount of credit that is sought (length in months) and this must be supported with a statement from the prospective QMU Supervisory Team prior to consideration by the Graduate School Academic Board.
- 5.3.5 Credit will not be given for research for which the candidate has already been granted an award (e.g. research undertaken as part of a Master of Philosophy or Master of Research).

#### 5.4 Abbreviation of the prescribed period of study

Where there is evidence that the research is proceeding exceptionally well, the Graduate School Academic Board may approve an abbreviation of the prescribed period of study. Early submission of the PhD thesis may be permitted up to the following maxima: full-time 6 months; part-time 12 months.

#### 5.5 Periods of study

The table below summarises the standard periods of study for the PhD degree. The length of time an individual candidate is registered for may be amended following applications for suspension or extension (see Section 6).

	<b>Minimum</b> <i>if awarded credit for previous study</i>	<b>Minimum</b> <i>if abbreviated on grounds of good progress</i>	<b>Prescribed (usual) period</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
	<i>(reg 5.4)</i>	<i>(reg 5.5)</i>	<i>(reg 5.2)</i>	<i>(reg 5.2)</i>
<b>PhD</b>				
FT	24 months	30 months	<b>36 months</b>	48 months
PT	48 months	60 months	<b>72 months</b>	96 months

### 6. Progression

- 6.1 Candidates register initially for a PhD. Continued registration is conditional upon satisfactory completion of the progress requirements below. A candidate whose progress is unsatisfactory may be de-registered.
- 6.2 When a candidate commences study, an Assessment Panel will be established through the collaboration of the Supervisory Team and the Graduate School. The Panel will be responsible for assessing the probationary assessment and subsequent assessed seminars. The Panel will normally be composed of two members of QMU academic staff (not members of the Supervisory Team). Where appropriate, (such as with a joint or shared PhD programme or where there is a lack of subject or methodological expertise) one external academic, professional or creative practitioner with expertise in the field may also be on the panel. Where the candidate is proposing to pursue a PhD by Creative Practice, an appropriate staff member who can comment on such practice should normally be part of this Assessment Panel.

### **6.3 Outline Proposal**

- 6.3.1 Approximately one month after matriculation and no later than two months after matriculation (for full-time candidates), an outline proposal and learning contract must be submitted to the Graduate School Academic Board for approval. Part-time candidates must submit the outline proposal and learning contract within approximately two months after matriculation and no later than four months after matriculation. Candidates may apply to the Graduate School Academic Board for permission to delay the proposal only where exceptional circumstances apply. The role of the Doctoral Research Coordinator, acting on advice from the Dean and Head of Graduate School, is to confirm that the necessary facilities and resources can be put in place to support the project and to ensure the full Supervisory Team is in place. Supervisory Teams must meet the criteria laid down in Section 7. Supervisory Teams must be confirmed by the Graduate School Academic Board.
- 6.3.2 Failure to submit an outline proposal within the maximum timescale will result in de-registration on grounds of failure to progress, except where extenuating circumstances apply.

### **6.4 Probationary Assessment**

- 6.4.1 The probationary assessment proposal should be submitted no later than five months after initial matriculation for full-time candidates, or ten months for part-time candidates. The probationary assessment should normally take place no later than four to six weeks after submission of the proposal. Candidates may apply to the Graduate School Academic Board for permission to delay the assessment beyond this time, but may not delay beyond 12 months full-time or 24 months part-time. Where a candidate is unable to meet this deadline due to extenuating circumstances, the candidate should apply in advance of the deadline, to the Graduate School Academic Board for an extension to the submission deadline. It is usual that evidence to support the request is submitted.
- 6.4.2 The probationary assessment takes the form of a face-to-face academic discussion with the Assessment Panel lasting up to one hour. The discussion is based on their research project plan for their studies, READ Programme plans and the research proposal, describing and justifying the research project, submitted in advance of the panel discussion. This proposal must include background to the topic, the main research question, the specific aims, a review of relevant literature or sources of evidence, and an outline of the research paradigm including potential and relevant methodology. Material on methods (including analysis) may be included, depending on the study undertaken by the candidate to date and their priorities. The assessment must focus more on where the candidate has got to than on possible or prospective ideas about what might take place. The only exception is to raise potential ethical challenges. In the case of a PhD by Creative Practice the proposal should also normally be accompanied by indicative or draft examples of the proposed creative outputs. The proposal will be reviewed by the Assessment Panel in advance of the candidate meeting with the panel.
- 6.4.3 Where the proposal is for a PhD by thesis only, the word limit for the probationary assessment is 6000. The 6000-word limit may be exceeded by up to 10% without penalty. The word limit excludes appendices, tables and references. Submissions over the word limit will not be accepted.

Where the proposal is for a PhD by Creative Practice, the probationary assignment should include indicative or draft examples of the proposed creative outputs and an associated 2500 word text. The 2500-word limit may be exceeded by up to 10% without penalty. The word limit excludes appendices, tables and references. Submissions over the word limit will not be accepted.

In both cases, research proposals and the resources required to undertake the proposed study shall be subject to careful review by the Assessment Panel.

6.4.4 Failure to undertake a probationary assessment within the maximum timescale will result in de-registration on grounds of serious failure to progress, except where extenuating circumstances apply.

6.4.5 The Assessment Panel will write a joint report and submit it to the Graduate School within seven working days of the date of the candidate's probationary assessment. Should one panel member be absent after the assessment (such as for holiday), the report should be completed and submitted by the second panel member. The Joint Report will be submitted to the Graduate School Academic Board for consideration and approval. This report should comment on whether:

- the candidate is suitable to undertake research leading to the successful award of the relevant degree
- READ programme plans are in place
- the candidate is making satisfactory progress
- additional research training is appropriate
- the necessary research facilities are available

This report will also be provided in such a way that it enables the candidate to plan their development and the Supervisory Team to guide the candidate. At the end of the report a clear and numbered list of requirements must be set out. Any optional advisory statements are not to be included in this list and can be offered separately – and must be relevant to the candidate's priorities and direction of study. Reports found to be offering poor quality feedback or feedforward and lacking in a clear list of requirements (where needed) will be returned to the panel for revision.

The report may make one of four recommendations:

- (a) That the candidate be confirmed as a PhD candidate
- (b) That the candidate be required to resubmit with amendments
- (c) That the candidate be required to resubmit with amendments and another viva
- (d) That the candidate be de-registered.

Concerns regarding supervision or facilities should be highlighted to the Graduate School through the Assessment Panel's report.

6.4.6 In the event of (d) above (de-registration), the report must be passed to the Head of Graduate School for further consideration in discussion with the Panel and others as required. In the event of the recommendation going ahead, The Graduate School Academic Board will consider and make a recommendation to the Research Strategy Committee. The Secretary to the Graduate School will inform the candidate in writing of the decision of the Committee. The candidate may appeal (see regulation 6.6.10 below).

- 6.4.7 In the event of (b) or (c) above, the candidate will normally be invited to meet with the Chair of the Assessment Panel to discuss their performance and how any concerns could be addressed.

In the event of (b) or (c) above, the form of resubmission will be indicated in the Assessment Panel's report. For a PhD by thesis only, this would normally consist of a revised full proposal. For PhD by Creative Practice this may require amendments or revisions to the proposal and/or draft practical element of the submission. In cases where the Panel requires amendments to the draft practical element of the submission, they should be fully satisfied that their concerns cannot be addressed solely through amendments to the proposal. Where this is not possible, the Panel should consider whether an additional practical arrangement could be used to address any concerns rather than revise the original practical component.

The deadline for resubmission will be detailed in the Assessment Panel's report. Typically, this will be between six to eight weeks from when the report is sent to the candidate. Where a candidate is unable to meet this deadline due to extenuating circumstances, an extension to the submission deadline should be applied for before the deadline. Failure to resubmit a proposal within the maximum timescale defined by the assessors may result in de-registration on grounds of failure to progress.

- 6.4.8 Only in rare circumstances and where there are significant amendments required, a second assessment may be requested by the Assessment Panel, in which case, this will be considered by The Graduate School Academic Board and, should it be approved, will be detailed in the Assessment Panel's report.

- 6.4.9 Following consideration of the resubmission and second discussion, if appropriate, the assessors will write a second report, making one of the following recommendations:

- (a) That the candidate be confirmed as a PhD candidate
- (b) That the candidate be required to resubmit for a second and final time
- (c) That the candidate be de-registered

- 6.4.10 In the event of (c) above (de-registration), the report must be passed to the Head of Graduate School for further consideration in discussion with the Panel and others as required. In the event of the recommendation going ahead, the Graduate School Academic Board will consider and make a recommendation to the Research Strategy Committee. The Graduate School will inform the candidate in writing of the decision of the Panel. The candidate may appeal.

- 6.4.11 In the event of (b) above, regulations 6.3.9, 6.3.10 and 6.3.11 will apply with assessors making one of the following recommendations:

- (a) That the candidate be confirmed as a PhD candidate
- (b) That the candidate be de-registered

In the case of (b) above (de-registration), regulation 6.3.12 applies.

- 6.4.12 A candidate who fails to pass the probationary assessment within two years of initial matriculation (full-time) or four years (part-time) will be de-registered.

6.4.13 Candidates have the right of appeal against any of the above decisions. For more information on appeals see regulation 6.6.10.

## 6.5 **Assessed Seminars**

6.5.1 After probationary assessment the candidate will have an assessed seminar presentation before the end of academic years two and three (years four and six for part-time candidates).

6.5.2 The Assessment Panel formed for the probationary assessment will normally assess the seminars. If the research topic or research paradigm has changed significantly, a new Panel may be constituted.

### **Assessed Seminar 1 - Year 2 (Year 4)**

6.5.3 Acceptable submissions for the year 2 (or year 4) assessed seminar include (minimum word count: 3000):

- A completed chapter of the candidate's thesis (e.g. research methodology or methods);
- An introduction or overview to the specific study that is contributing to the overall PhD;
- A conference/seminar paper;
- A completed draft of a paper planned for academic publication/journal article;
- Submission of PowerPoint presentation slides (or other similar alternative) with detailed explanatory notes.
- Exhibition, performance or other creative event (for PhD by Creative Practice)

Further, candidates must submit the following documents (in an Appendix if appropriate):

- An abstract of 300 words;
- Their thesis completion plan for their third (full-time) or fifth and sixth (part-time) year(s) of study. The plan must clearly indicate tasks and progress and should be no more than 1-2 pages long.
- An update on progress with READ modules and plans for submission of the remaining module(s). This update should be no more than 1-2 pages long.

Candidates are encouraged to present to an audience who will be invited to ask questions in the presentation. The Graduate School will typically organise the seminar. The candidate should present work that provides a clear indication to the Assessment Panel that they have made satisfactory progress with their research. It would normally be appropriate within the chosen format to present a complete research paradigm including methodology and methods, research ethics and field work may also be included. Some candidates may also have preliminary data and analysis to share. There is no requirement to use a standard PowerPoint format and other formats are encouraged. Where the research involves creative practice, candidates may include draft works, performances, events or other such outputs. All candidates should include in their submission (as an appendix if appropriate) READ progress and plans and a project /time plan that details how they will progress their study further and work towards their final submission.

Subject to approval from the Graduate School Academic Board, candidates may present a seminar paper accepted at an external conference or seminar session. In such cases, the candidate will be required to submit a portfolio of work that includes:

- The seminar paper submitted and accepted by the external conference/seminar provider;
  - A specific chapter of the thesis (e.g. research methodology) that has relevance to the context of the external presentation (no fewer than 3000 words length)
- An update on progress with READ modules and plans for submission of the remaining module(s) (as detailed above)

Where the research involves creative practice, presenting this work along with an associated critically reflective analysis is also appropriate.

6.5.4 The candidate will be required to meet with the Assessment Panel approximately six weeks after submission of material in order to present their seminar. The Assessment Panel will have the opportunity to ask the candidate questions about their submission. The presentation usually lasts 20 minutes with 20 minutes for questions and/or discussion.

6.5.5 The Assessment Panel will submit a joint report to the Graduate School within seven working days of the date of the candidate's assessed seminar. The joint report will be submitted to the Graduate School Academic Board for consideration and approval. This report should comment on whether the candidate is continuing to make satisfactory progress and feedback will be provided to the candidate to assist their development.

6.5.6 This report will be provided in a way that it enables the candidate to plan their development and the Supervisory Team to guide the candidate. At the end of the report a clear and numbered list of requirements must be set out. Any optional advisory statements are not to be included in this list and can be offered separately – and must be relevant to the candidate's priorities and direction of study. Reports found to be offering poor quality feedback or feedforward and lacking in a clear list of requirements (where needed) will be returned to the Panel for revision.

The report will make one of four recommendations:

- a) the candidate continues to progress with their studies
- b) the candidate continues to progress with their studies with minor issues to be resolved by the candidate and supervisory team
- c) the candidate continues to progress with their studies with major issues to be resolved by the candidate and supervisory team
- d) the candidate has not made satisfactory progress with their studies

6.5.7 In the event of (b) above, the candidate and Supervisory Team would be expected to develop a study action plan to help resolve the minor issues raised by the Panel. Where only minor issues have been identified, normally no further meeting with the Panel will be required.

- 6.5.8 In the event of (c) above, the candidate and a member of the supervision team will be invited to meet with the Chair of the Assessment Panel to discuss the candidate's performance and how any concerns could be addressed. The candidate and Supervisory Team will be required to develop a study action plan to address the major issues raised by the Panel.
- 6.5.9 In the event of (d) above, the candidate will be invited to meet with the Chair of the Assessment Panel and the Doctoral Research Coordinator for the relevant School to discuss their performance and how the concerns of the Panel can be addressed. The candidate and Supervisory Team would be required to develop a study action plan to address the issues raised by the Assessment Panel. The Graduate School, in consultation with the Supervisory Team, should agree a maximum timescale for the candidate to address the issues to their satisfaction. Failure to address the issues may result in de-registration on grounds of failure to progress, except where extenuating circumstances apply.

### **Assessed Seminar 2– Year 3 (Year 6)**

- 6.5.10 The assessed seminar should normally be completed before the end of the candidate's third (full time) or sixth (part time) academic year of study and before their final submission for formal examination.
- 6.5.11 For PhDs by thesis only, a written paper will normally be submitted and include a chapter from the candidate's thesis and a plan of how they intend to disseminate their research. The paper will be at least 5000 words and no more than 10 000 words.

Further, candidates must submit the following documents (in an Appendix if appropriate):

- An abstract of 300 words;
- Their thesis completion plan for their third (full-time) or fifth and sixth (part-time) year(s) of study. The plan must clearly indicate tasks and progress and should be no more than 1-2 pages long.
- An update on progress with READ modules and plans for submission of the remaining module(s). This update should be no more than 1-2 pages long.
- An outline impact plan.

For PhDs by Creative Practice, a presentation including completed works and an associated chapter of the thesis would normally be submitted, including a plan on how the candidate intends to disseminate their research. Where appropriate, the assessment panel should also be able to view any performance works or live events at this time.

In both cases, the candidate will meet with the Assessment Panel approximately six weeks after submission in order to present their work. The Assessment Panel will have the opportunity to ask the candidate questions about their submission.

- 6.5.12 The Assessment Panel will submit a Joint Report to the Graduate School within seven working days of the date of the candidate's assessed seminar for consideration and approval by the Graduate School Academic Board. This report should comment on whether the candidate is continuing to make satisfactory progress, and will be provided to the candidate to assist their development.
- 6.5.13 This report will be provided in a way that it enables the candidate to plan their development and the Supervisory Team to guide the candidate. At the end of the report a clear and numbered list of requirements must be set out. Any optional advisory statements are not to be included in this list and can be offered separately – and must be relevant to the candidate's priorities and direction of study. Reports found to be offering poor quality feedback or feedforward and lacking in a clear list of requirements (where needed) will be returned to the panel for revision.
- 6.5.14 The report may make one of four recommendations:
- (a) That the candidate continues to progress with their PhD studies
  - (b) That the candidate be required to resubmit with specified revisions
  - (c) That the candidate be required to resubmit with specified revisions and another presentation
  - (d) That the candidate be de-registered.
- 6.5.15 In the event of (d) above (de-registration), the report must be passed to the Graduate School Academic Board for initial consideration and recommendation to the Research Strategy Committee. The Graduate School will inform the candidate in writing of the decision of the Committee. The candidate may appeal (see regulation 6.6.10 below).
- 6.5.16 In the event of (b) or (c) above, the candidate will normally be invited to meet with the Chair of the Assessment Panel to discuss their performance and how any concerns could be addressed.
- 6.5.17 In the event of (b) or (c) above, the form of resubmission will be indicated in the Assessment Panel's report. For a PhD by thesis only, this would normally consist of a revised full paper or the equivalent. For PhD by Creative Practice, this may require amendments or revisions to the written and/or practical element of the submission. In cases where the Panel requires amendments to the practical element of the submission, they should be fully satisfied that their concerns cannot be addressed solely through amendments to the written element of the submission. Where this is not possible, the Panel should consider whether an additional practical arrangement could be used to address any concerns rather than revise the original practical component.

The deadline for resubmission will be detailed in the Assessment Panel's report. Typically, this will be between six to eight weeks from the report being sent to the candidate. Where a candidate is unable to meet this deadline due to extenuating circumstances, an extension to the submission deadline should be applied for within six weeks and in all cases before the deadline. Failure to resubmit within the maximum timescale defined by the assessors may result in de-registration on grounds of failure to progress, except where extenuating circumstances apply.

6.5.18 On rare occasions, a second presentation may be requested by the Assessment Panel, in which case, this will be detailed in the Assessment Panel's report.

6.5.19 Following consideration of the resubmission (and second presentation if appropriate), the assessors will write a Joint Report, making one of the following recommendations:

- (a) That the candidate continues to progress with their PhD studies
- (b) That the candidate be required to resubmit for the final time
- (c) That the candidate be de-registered

In the event of (b) above, the process follows that of 6.4.13 and 6.4.14, except that a restricted set of final recommendations is as follows:

- (a) That the candidate continues to progress with their PhD studies
- (b) That the candidate be de-registered

In the event of a recommendation of de-registration, the process follows that of 6.4.12.

## 6.6 Annual Reports

6.6.1 Annual progress reports (APRs) on the progress of all PhD candidates must be submitted separately by the candidate and a member of the Supervisory Team, after discussion with the whole team, to the Graduate School. This is a requirement even for candidates and Supervisory Teams with no issues to report. Submission of an annual progress report is a requirement for all candidates.

6.6.2 The Graduate School Officer will provide a full set of reports to the Head of Graduate School and Doctoral Research Coordinators. It is the responsibility of the Graduate School to follow up any issues raised by the reports and ensure that candidates and Supervisory Teams are briefed on the outcome. A summary report will be presented to the Graduate School Academic Board each year. This report will detail key themes emerging. Issues raised by individual candidates or supervisors will come to the Board only where it is within the Board's remit to take decisions. This approach maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

## 6.7 De-registration and withdrawal

6.7.1 All PhD candidates are required to pursue their programme of study with due diligence. If a candidate wilfully and/or persistently neglects their academic work, or in the case of failure to progress being highlighted in the probationary period, through assessments or in the supervision logs and/or annual reports, the candidate's registration may be terminated.

6.7.2 De-registration may be pursued by the University under any of the following circumstances:

- (a) the candidate is not in reasonable contact with their Supervisory Team;
- (b) the candidate has not matriculated;
- (c) the candidate has not paid tuition fees as required;
- (d) the candidate is failing to progress, as determined by the Supervisory Team and/or the terms of the PhD Regulations;
- (e) the candidate fails to make their final submission within the maximum period of study;
- (f) the candidate fails to comply with any conditions set by the Research Strategy Committee, Graduate School Academic Board, Head of Graduate School, Dean of School or Supervisory Team.

6.7.3 **Lack of contact.** When a candidate has not been in contact<sup>5</sup> with the Supervisory Team for six weeks (full-time) or twelve weeks (part-time), or if a candidate does not contact their Supervisory Team when required to do so by that team and at the frequency required by that team as stated in the learning contract, the Chair of the Supervisory Team will write formally to the candidate requesting an explanation. If no adequate explanation or reply is made by the candidate within ten working days of the date of the written request, the Chair will refer the case to the Head of Graduate School. The Head of Graduate School will ask the Graduate School Officer to write to the candidate, giving them one month from the date of the written request to reply in writing. If, in the Head of Graduate School's opinion, no reasonable explanation is provided, the Head of Graduate School may recommend to the Graduate School Academic Board that the candidate's registration be terminated.

6.7.4 **Failure to matriculate.** Candidates must matriculate every year in accordance with Queen Margaret University regulations. When a candidate has not matriculated, and has not provided an explanation for not so doing, the Graduate School Officer will write to the candidate, copied to the Chair of the Supervisory Team, giving them one month from the date of the written request to reply in writing. Any response received will be referred to the Head of Graduate School for consideration. If, in the Head of Graduate School's opinion, no reasonable explanation is provided, the Head of Graduate School may recommend to the Graduate School Academic Board that the candidate's registration be terminated.

6.7.5 **Non-payment of tuition fees.** All candidates must pay tuition fees and other charges as required. Where a candidate has failed to engage with the University to find a solution to any outstanding tuition fee debt, or who has failed to honour an agreement to pay any tuition fee debt, the candidate's registration may be terminated.

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<sup>5</sup> Contact can refer to a face-to-face meeting or email communication that demonstrates progress and engagement with studies

- 6.7.6 **Failure to progress.** A candidate who does not submit the outline proposal or the necessary elements for the probationary assessment within the time period prescribed above (regulations 6.2.1 and 6.3.1) will have their registration terminated. A candidate who, in the opinion of their Supervisory Team, is not making adequate progress towards submission of a satisfactory proposal or the probationary assessment may have their registration terminated at any point during the probationary period. Similarly, a candidate who fails to pass the probationary assessment within the time period prescribed above (regulation 6.3.1) will have their registration terminated. Where a candidate has failed to submit the outline proposal or probationary assessment, the Chair of the Supervisory Team will write formally to the candidate requesting an explanation. If no reasonable explanation or reply is made by the candidate within 10 working days of the date of the written request, the Chair of the Supervisory Team will refer the case to the Head of Graduate School. Where the candidate is failing, in the opinion of the Supervisory Team, to make adequate progress during the probationary period, and the matter has been raised with the candidate without resolution, the Chair shall consult with the Supervisory Team and submit to the Head of Graduate School a report documenting the Supervisory Team's concerns. The Head of Graduate School will ask the Graduate School Officer to write to the candidate, giving him or her one month from the date of the written correspondence to reply in writing. If, in the Head of Graduate School's opinion, no reasonable explanation is provided, the Head of Graduate School may recommend to the Graduate School Academic Board that the candidate's registration be terminated.
- 6.7.7 Post probation, if a Chair of the Supervisory Team is concerned about a candidate's lack of progress, the issues should be discussed with the candidate first, explaining the consequences of failure to improve. If, in the Chair's opinion the situation does not improve, this should be reported to the Head of Graduate School. Following this report, the Head of Graduate School may recommend an immediate meeting. Normally, the Head of Graduate School will recommend action to address the points at issue. The two main Supervisors and the candidate should meet to agree an action plan and targets to allow the candidate to improve their performance.
- 6.7.8 If the concerns referred to under 6.7.7 are extremely serious and urgent, are of a health and safety nature, or if the candidate has failed to meet agreed targets for improvement (as set under 6.7.7 above), the Head of Graduate School will meet with the candidate to discuss whether the project can continue. Where candidates are based overseas, alternative arrangements for this meeting will be applied. This meeting may result in one of three outcomes:
- (a) the candidate continues in registration;
  - (b) the candidate continues in registration conditionally on the attainment of certain agreed targets which will be monitored by the Head of Graduate School; or
  - (c) a recommendation is made to the Graduate School Academic Board that the candidate's registration be terminated.

De-registration under this regulation may be recommended providing (a) the full Supervisory Team has been consulted and (b) the candidate has had an opportunity to respond to the concerns raised. Should de-registration be recommended, the procedure set out in regulation 6.7.6 shall be followed.

6.7.9 **Failure to submit the final submission.** If a final submission is not made within four years (full-time) or eight years (part-time), and no application for extension or suspension has been received and approved, the candidate's registration will be terminated automatically.

6.7.10 In all cases, candidates will have the right of appeal. Appeals must be lodged in writing to the University Secretary within 21 days of the de-registration decision being communicated to the candidate by written correspondence and should be on the basis of the following grounds i.e. that:

- Additional information is available that was not, and could not, reasonably have been made available to the Graduate School Academic Board at the time it made its original recommendation to the Research Strategy Committee and which had it been available could have led the Board to make a different decision.
- There was a material irregularity in the procedures of the Graduate School Academic Board.

Appeals will be heard by the Deputy Principal within 30 days of the receipt of the appeal in accordance with Section 11 of these Regulations. If a candidate is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the candidate may refer to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman, as set out in Section 11 of these Regulations.

6.7.11 Where a candidate wishes voluntarily to withdraw from their programme of study, this must be indicated on the appropriate withdrawal form and submitted to [GraduateSchool@gmu.ac.uk](mailto:GraduateSchool@gmu.ac.uk). The candidate must inform their supervisors of the decision to withdraw. Whenever possible, the candidate should meet with the Head of Graduate School before making any firm decision.

## 6.8 **Change of mode of study**

6.8.1 Applications for a change of mode of study from full-time to part-time status or vice versa may only be made for good cause and normally within the prescribed period of study. The application must be made by the candidate to the Graduate School Academic Board on the appropriate form, counter-signed by the Chair of Supervisory Team. It is not normally possible to change mode of study retrospectively.

6.8.2 Following a change of mode of study from full-time to part-time status or vice versa, the minimum and maximum periods of study will be re-calculated.

## 6.9 **Suspension**

6.9.1 Where a PhD candidate is prevented from making due progress by ill-health or other significant cause, the candidate may, with the support of the Chair of the Supervisory Team, ask the Graduate School Academic Board to suspend their registration for a period between one and twelve months in the first instance. If applicable, the payment of a PhD bursary is temporarily halted during any suspension. A request for suspension on medical grounds must be supported by a letter from the candidate's doctor that supports the length of the full suspension period. The maximum total period of suspension is normally two years. No fees are payable for the period of the suspension.

6.9.2 The Chair of the Supervisory Team will contact the candidate before the end of the period of suspension to confirm the candidate's return date. If the candidate does not return within one month of the agreed return date, without extenuating circumstances accepted by the Graduate School Academic Board, procedures for de-registration due to lack of contact will be followed as in 6.7.3 above.

#### 6.10 **Extension**

Only in exceptional circumstances will the Graduate School Academic Board agree to an application for extension of the period of study of a candidate beyond the maximum period. This application must be made, on the appropriate form, by the candidate with the support of the Chair of Supervisory Team. Candidates who have had extensions approved above the normal maximum period of study will be liable for further continuation fees as determined by the Student Records.

#### 6.11 **Exclusion from studies**

All candidates are required to observe the University's Regulations and Codes of Conduct and Practice. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any candidate on the grounds of a breach of rules and regulations or abuse of Codes of Conduct and Practice. Such cases are considered under the procedures described in the section on Discipline on the Quality website. Outcomes include the possibility of expulsion from the University.

### 7. **Supervision**

7.1 Each PhD candidate has a supervisory Team consisting of at least two supervisors, and potentially one or more advisers. At least one of the supervisors should be a current member of academic staff. The other(s) should normally be a current member of academic staff.

7.2 An initial Supervisory Team will be formed comprising the two main Supervisors, at the point at which an offer of study is made and included in the offer letter to the candidate. The initial team will be suggested by the Supervisors in consultation with the Doctoral Research Coordinator for the relevant School, and will be communicated to the Graduate School. The full Supervisory Team will be considered and approved by the Graduate School Academic Board.

#### **Composition of the Supervisory Team**

7.3 Both main Supervisors are formally responsible to the Head of Graduate School for a candidate's progress with their programme of study. Between them, the Supervisors should agree a Chair of the Supervisory Team. The Chair must always be a current member of academic staff at QMU. The Chair is the main point of contact for ensuring that all administrative aspects of the candidate's progress are conducted appropriately and in particular for ensuring adherence to these regulations.

- 7.4 Both supervisors will normally hold a Doctorate, and will normally be active researchers with membership to a Research Centre/Institute within QMU. Advisors may be external to the University, especially where they provide a link with a Collaborating Establishment or co funder. Advisors may also be internal to the University. For PhDs by Creative Practice, at least one supervisor would normally have completed a creative practice PhD or similar.
- 7.5 At least one of the two supervisors must have been a member of a previous Supervisory Team for at least one successful PhD or Professional Doctorate candidate.
- 7.6 A member of staff must not normally be involved with the supervision of more than eight PhD and Professional Doctorate candidates at any one time. Exceptions may be made where a member of staff holds a primarily research focused contract.
- 7.7 All research supervisors must participate in QMU supervisor learning and development and keep up to date with best practice in research supervision. Research supervisors who cannot evidence their development may have their candidates reduced or reallocated until they are able to update their knowledge and skills.

### **Supervisory meetings**

- 7.8 The frequency of supervisory meetings between the two main supervisors and a full-time candidate should normally be monthly throughout the prescribed period of study; and bi-monthly for part-time candidates. In the early months, the frequency of meetings should be greater. For continuing candidates (i.e. those who have not made their final submission within the prescribed period of study), it is expected that supervisory meetings will be required less frequently. Where candidates are based at a distance or conducting fieldwork abroad, equivalent discussions must be held by telephone, email, or equivalent.
- 7.9 Records must be kept of all meetings. The candidate is responsible for preparing these. All members of the Supervisory Team must agree to the content of these records and especially any action points.

### **Changes to the Supervisory Team**

- 7.10 Any proposal for a change in supervision arrangements shall be made, on the appropriate form, to the Graduate School Academic Board.

Alternative supervisory arrangements must be formalised in advance of any planned long-term leave (such as maternity or research leave) taken by either of the two main supervisors.

When a supervisor has been absent for longer than three months, an application for the appointment of a replacement must be made to the Graduate School Academic Board.

A supervisor who has been replaced due to their absence will not be automatically reinstated on their return. The case for return to the Supervisory Team has to be made to the Graduate School Academic Board.

If a candidate is experiencing difficulties with the supervisory relationship, they may contact their School's Doctoral Research Coordinator for discussion or advice. The aim, in most situations, is to find a resolution between the candidate and the supervisor or Supervisory Team.

In the case of problems which cannot be resolved jointly by the candidate and the supervisor or the Supervisory Team, and especially where the Doctoral Research Coordinator is a member of the Supervisory Team, either the candidate or the Supervisor involved may contact the Head of Graduate School to discuss and ask for a change of Supervisor.

Where the Head of the Graduate School is the Supervisor concerned, the Dean of School should be approached to recommend the change.

### **Candidate Research Skills Training**

- 7.11 The University, primarily through the Graduate School, offers Researcher Training and Development opportunities. These take different forms, such as the Doctoral Induction and Development Weeks, which are held several times each year, as well as a range of seminars and workshops provided by QMU staff, candidates and visiting academics or externally through a range of partners and networks. Further training and learning opportunities are provided by the QMU Research Centres and Clusters. In some cases, candidates also organise peer facilitated learning and training opportunities. Attendance at learning development and training must be recorded by the candidate.

All new doctoral candidates must attend the Doctoral Induction and Development Weeks. Candidates may apply for exemption from this training by submitting evidence of previous certificated or experiential learning to the Graduate School Academic Board. A full record of exemptions will be held by staff of the Graduate School.

The Supervisory Team must discuss each candidate's individual training needs using the Researcher Development (Vitae) Framework and agree how these can be met within the learning contract. Bursary candidates have some funds allocated for this purpose and all candidates can apply to the various training and development funding calls that are on offer each academic year. Supervisors are expected to discuss any resource considerations within their Research Centre and to ensure that these are shared with the Dean of School.

The Head of the Graduate School must ensure that candidates are studying topics and using research methods and tools which can primarily be supervised and supported within the existing expertise and resource base of QMU

The Graduate School may offer candidates opportunities to apply for training and development funds. All such opportunities will be openly and fairly advertised and applications considered by a panel including The Head of Graduate School. Applicants must abide by the conditions of the funding and provide evidence of appropriate usage and learning outcomes.

## **8. Examination Regulations**

- 8.1 The Graduate School Academic Board shall ensure that all examinations are conducted in accordance with the University's regulations as set out below. In the event of significant deviation from these regulations, the Graduate School Academic Board may declare the examination null and void and appoint new Examiners.

### **8.2 Structure of assessment**

The key function of the examination is to establish that both the candidate and their submission reach the standard required for the award of PhD, with respect to the criteria listed in Section 1. Another function of the examination is to demonstrate the candidate's authorship of the thesis (and creative work where applicable) and understanding of the field of study. The examination for a PhD normally has two principal stages: the preliminary assessment of the submission (in the case of PhDs by Creative Practice this would include both the creative work and the thesis) followed by its defence at an oral examination.

In the case of PhDs by Creative Practice, the creative work and accompanying thesis should be assessed as a whole and considered equal in their weighting to the contribution made by the research. Where the creative work takes the form of a live performance or similar activity, the Examiners should normally view the work at the time that this occurs, even if this is before the final submission of the accompanying thesis. Although all effort should be taken for live works to be seen by Examiners, in some circumstances it may be necessary for the Examiners to view a documentation of said activity. In such cases the mediating role of such documentation should be considered as part of the accompanying thesis.

- 8.3 All PhD candidates must pay an examination fee, which is charged following submission of the thesis. A second fee is charged for any second oral examination (see 9.7.9 (d)).

### **8.4 Preparation for submission**

- 8.4.1 The decision to submit their work for examination is the candidate's alone, but only exceptionally should a final submission be made without the agreement of the Supervisory Team.
- 8.4.2 No part of the final submission may have been included in a prior submission for any other degree or qualification without the permission of the Graduate School Academic Board.
- 8.4.3 It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that their final submission conforms to the regulations on format, binding and presentation in Section 10 below (see also Regulation 9.6.2.).

### **8.5 Appointment of Examiners and arrangements**

- 8.5.1 It is the responsibility of the Supervisory Team to nominate Examiners to the Graduate School Academic Board for approval on behalf of Senate, by completing the examination arrangements form. The completed form should be submitted to the Board well before the expected date of submission to allow time for scrutiny and approval.

- 8.5.2 In nominating Examiners, the Supervisory Team Chair will consult the relevant School's Doctoral Research Coordinator and the candidate, and take into consideration any views they may express. The Doctoral Research Coordinator will liaise with Research Centre/Institute Directors, Heads of Divisions, the Dean and others, as appropriate, to establish whether there may be any conflict of interest with appointment of Examiners.
- 8.5.3 Normally the Supervisory Team Chair will informally approach Examiners to establish their willingness to act in this capacity, although this task may be delegated to another Supervisory Team member. The Examiners should confirm their willingness in principle before the examination arrangements form is submitted to the Graduate School. The examination arrangements will be approved by the Graduate School Academic Board once satisfied with the arrangements.
- 8.5.4 The Supervisory Team Chair must avoid all known conflicts of interest in nominating Examiners, including cases where an External Examiner has acted frequently for the School in the past (the Doctoral Research Coordinator for the relevant School can provide guidance on this point). No member of the candidate's current or previous Supervisory Team (including any formal Advisors), research collaborators or anyone with a close association with the candidate's research, may act as an Examiner. Former QMU staff or candidates within the lifetime of a candidate's research are not eligible. The Graduate School Academic Board, before approving their appointment, requires nominated Examiners to declare any other potential conflict(s) of interest.
- 8.5.5 The candidate must have no contact with the External Examiner(s) between the nomination of Examiners and the oral examination. This rule is waived however, in the case of PhD by Creative Practice, should it be necessary for the Examiner(s) to view a live event as part of the assessment process. In this case, the Examiner(s) must attend the live event and independently write a detailed report afterwards. There must be no discussion or conversation with the candidate at that stage and the relationship between the candidate and Examiner(s) must remain formal.
- 8.5.6 There must be a minimum of two Examiners, including one External and one Internal, with normally not more than three Examiners.
- 8.5.7 Internal Examiners will normally be members of staff of the University, but may on occasion be previous members of staff who have left not more than three years before, or members of Collaborating Establishments.
- 8.5.8 Examiners must hold a PhD or equivalent qualification or experience. External Examiners must be independent, and must normally be experienced in examining at the relevant level. They must also be experienced in the specialist topic. Internal Examiners need not be specialists in the topic but must have experience of the general field of research. No candidate for a doctoral degree shall normally be appointed as an Examiner. In the case of PhD by Creative Practice at least one of the Examiners would normally be experienced in practice based research methodologies.

- 8.5.9 The Internal Examiner will normally act as Chair. However, where the Internal Examiner has no previous experience and/or an External examiner is relatively inexperienced, in examining at the relevant level (either within QMU or elsewhere), the Head of the Graduate School – or a delegated member of the Graduate School Academic Board – shall identify a suitably experienced Examiner to act as neutral non-voting Chair of the oral examination.
- 8.5.10 Candidates who undertake work on multidisciplinary topics may have two External Examiners, drawn from the contributing disciplines.
- 8.5.11 Candidates who are current members of staff of the University must have two External Examiners, and the internal examiner must not be the candidate's Research Centre/Institute Director, Head of Division or Dean of School.
- 8.5.12 Where it is not possible to identify a suitable Internal Examiner, two External Examiners may be appointed. The Head of the Graduate School, or a delegated member of the Graduate School Academic Board, shall identify a suitably experienced Examiner to act as neutral non-voting Chair of the oral examination.

## **8.6 Submission of doctoral research for examination**

- 8.6.1 One copy of the written thesis (see regulation 10.6.2) along with any additional material and/or documentation of creative practice (see regulation 10.2.3) must be provided for each Examiner, with an extra copy for a Chair (if required), before the expiry of the candidate's registration period. A further electronic copy should be submitted by email. These should be submitted, along with the candidate's signed declaration form, to the Graduate School for distribution to the Examiners. No copies should normally be submitted before the Graduate School Academic Board has approved the examination arrangements.
- 8.6.2 The declaration form signed by the candidate must accompany the submission of the examination copies of the doctoral research. This form certifies that the work is the candidate's own and that no part has been previously included in a degree submission. Full bibliographic details should also be given of any publication by the candidate, including joint publications, which has been derived from or included in the thesis. The form also contains a checklist to be completed, indicating word length, and compliance with the requirements for format and binding listed in Section 10 below. If the written thesis exceeds the upper word limit, it will not be accepted for examination and will be returned to the candidate by staff of the Graduate School.
- 8.6.3 All members of the Supervisory Team should sign the declaration form to confirm that the work is the candidate's own. On the form the Supervisors should indicate whether they:
- (a) Believe the submission is worthy for consideration for the award of Doctorate;
  - (b) Believe the submission is not worthy of consideration, or
  - (c) Hold reservations about its quality.
- 8.6.4 In the event of (b) or (c) the candidate will be given the option to delay submission and make further revisions (assuming there remains sufficient time in the candidate's period of study). Should the candidate prefer to submit without revision, they must sign the declaration form to confirm this.

8.6.5 The candidate must also complete a candidate declaration form before submitting creative work for examination and the process above should be followed.

8.6.6 Acceptance of the submission for examination does not guarantee a successful outcome.

## 8.7 Examination of the doctoral research

8.7.1 An oral examination is obligatory for all candidates, save in exceptional cases where the Graduate School Academic Board has previously agreed an alternative form of examination, for a valid cause such as disability. Inadequate knowledge of the language in which the thesis is presented shall not constitute a valid cause.

8.7.2 The Graduate School is responsible for arranging the date of the oral examination, which will normally be held between six and twelve weeks from receipt of the final submission by the Examiners. The oral examination will be held at Queen Margaret University. Exceptionally the Graduate School Academic Board may give permission for the oral examination to be held elsewhere.

8.7.3 After their final submission, candidates may request postponement of the oral examination for good reason likely to have an adverse effect on their performance. These reasons may include recent bereavement, personal or family illness, or serious domestic problems. Such requests require approval from the Graduate School Academic Board.

8.7.4 After considering the work which has been submitted, the Examiners are required to complete a preliminary report form, in which they are asked to comment on the intellectual, scholarly and literary quality of submission, and to identify areas on which they would wish to question the candidate in the oral examination.

8.7.5 The preliminary reports must be independent and confidential. The reports must be received by the Graduate School no later than three days in advance of the date agreed for the oral examination. A copy of each Examiner's report is made available to the other Examiner(s), to facilitate preliminary discussion, before the oral examination, but only after all reports have been received.

8.7.6 In the event that the Examiners judge the submission to be too poor academically to be worthy of examination, the oral examination will still be held, to allow the candidate the chance to discuss their submission with the Examiners.

8.7.7 One member of the Supervisory Team may attend the oral examination, with the prior agreement of the candidate and of the Examiners. In exceptional circumstances, Supervisory Teams may submit a request to the Graduate School Academic Board for two supervisors to attend the oral examination. The Supervisory Team member may only speak when addressed by the Examiners on matters of clarification, and must not intervene in the evaluative process. A further function of the attendance of the Supervisory Team member is to be present to hear any comments by the Examiners on necessary amendments.

8.7.8 Family members and friends may not attend the examination.

- 8.7.9 During the oral examination, the Examiners may explore the candidate's understanding of the general field of study and research methodology as well as of the specific topic of doctoral research. The examination follows a standard format, and no deviation from this is permitted without prior agreement from the Graduate School Academic Board. Typically the examination (discussion between the candidate and Examiners) will last between one and two hours.
- 8.7.10 The Examiners are required to complete and sign a joint final report at the end of the oral examination and submit it to the Graduate School within seven working days of the date of the candidate's oral examination. The report should indicate which of the options below they recommend to the Graduate School Academic Board:
- (a) the candidate to be awarded the degree.
  - (b) the candidate to be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments, to be completed within two months of the Examiners' report being sent to the candidate.
  - (c) the candidate to be awarded the degree subject to major amendments, to be completed within six months of the Examiners' report being sent to the candidate.
  - (d) the candidate to be permitted to resubmit a substantially amended version of the work for re-examination, within twelve months of the Examiners' report being sent to the candidate. A second oral examination is normally obligatory, except where the Examiners specify in their report that this will not be necessary.
  - (e) the candidate to be awarded the alternative degree of MPhil in lieu of PhD. The Examiners may require suitable amendments to be made, within a maximum of six months of the Examiners' report being sent to the candidate. This award may only be made if the Examiners are satisfied the candidate has met the criteria for the award of MPhil but is not able to meet the criteria for the award of PhD.
  - (f) the candidate to be neither awarded the degree, nor permitted to resubmit, nor awarded an alternative degree.

For PhD by Creative Practice the examiners may require amendments or revisions to the thesis and/or practical element of the submission. In cases where the Examiners require amendments to the practical element of the submission, they should be fully satisfied that their concerns cannot be addressed solely through amendments to the thesis. Where this is not possible, the Examiners should consider whether an additional practical arrangement could be used to address any concerns rather than revise the original practical component.

The comments in the final report by the Examiners should provide a sufficient basis to enable the Graduate School Academic Board to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen from Regulation 8.7.10 is appropriate. All parts of the form must be completed.

- 8.7.11 The final report by the Examiners is confidential to the Graduate School Academic Board, Research Strategy Committee, Senate, the candidate, and the Supervisory Team.

- 8.7.12 Where appropriate, Examiners may also provide separate typed feedback for the candidate, including a formal statement of any necessary amendments, as an attachment to the final report. The full report and feedback should be supplied to the Graduate School Officer within seven days of the examination. It is essential that the amendments listed are complete and clear. Requirements must be appropriately specific, preferably identifying where or how the amendments should be addressed. The candidate is required to make only the amendments specified in the final report and Examiners may not introduce new issues later – see regulation 8.8.1 below.
- 8.7.13 The final report will indicate which Examiner(s) will be responsible for verifying that all, and only, the prescribed amendments have been satisfactorily completed. Major amendments are normally verified by the External(s) as well as by the Internal Examiner.
- 8.7.14 Where the Examiners are not able to be unanimous in their final recommendations, separate final reports will be completed and signed. In this circumstance, the Graduate School Academic Board may:
- (a) accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority includes at least one External Examiner)
  - (b) accept the recommendation of the External Examiner
  - (c) require the appointment of new Examiners to conduct an independent examination, including an oral examination.
- 8.7.15 The Graduate School Academic Board may very exceptionally approve an extension to the time period for amendments. Applications must be made well in advance of the deadline, and must be supported by the Supervisory Team Chair and Head of the Graduate School.

## **8.8 Submitting revisions and amendments**

- 8.8.1 Where a candidate has been required to make an amended submission under 8.7.10 (b) or (c) above, the amendments will be checked by the Examiner(s), normally within four weeks of receipt. The Examiner(s) may only check against the amendments specified following the oral examination and may not introduce new points of issue. If the amendments have been satisfactorily completed, the candidate will be awarded the degree.
- 8.8.2 If the Examiner(s) are not satisfied the amendments have been satisfactorily completed the candidate will be so informed and given the opportunity to make the required amendments within a period of two weeks. If after this, the submission does not incorporate the required amendments, both Examiners must view the amended submission and discuss it. Where the amendments have been partially completed, the Examiners will consider whether the submission as it stands, is worthy of a PhD. Should the Examiners be unable to reach agreement, regulation 8.7.14 applies. A candidate knowingly fails to make a required amendment at their own risk. The Examiners may make one of the following recommendations:
- (a) the candidate to be awarded the degree.
  - (b) the candidate to be awarded the alternative degree of MPhil in lieu of PhD. The Examiners may require suitable amendments to be made, within a maximum of two months. This award may only be made if the Examiners are satisfied the candidate

has met the criteria for the award of MPhil but is not able to meet the criteria for the award of PhD.

(c) the candidate to be neither awarded the degree, nor awarded an alternative degree.

8.8.3 Normally, doctoral research can be resubmitted for formal examination (regulation 8.7.10d) only once, and no candidate may be examined more than twice for a given degree. The appointment of the original Examiners normally remains in force for any second examination. Should any of the original Examiners be unavailable, a revised examination team must be approved by the Graduate School Academic Board, as in regulation 8.5 above. The process of re-examination follows the pattern of a first examination, except that a restricted set of final recommendations is available, as follows:

(a) the candidate to be awarded the degree.

(b) The candidate to be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments, to be completed within two months.

(c) the candidate to be awarded the alternative degree of MPhil in lieu of PhD. The Examiners may require suitable amendments to be made, within a maximum of six months. This award may only be made if the Examiners are satisfied the candidate has met the criteria for the award of MPhil but is not able to meet the criteria for the award of PhD.

(d) the candidate to be neither awarded the degree, nor awarded an alternative degree.

## 8.9 **Award of the degree of PhD**

8.9.1 The authority to award the PhD rests solely with Senate.

8.9.2 The Research Strategy Committee shall make a recommendation to Senate, based on the recommendation(s) and report(s) of the Graduate School Academic Board and Examiners, and following confirmation from the Examiner(s) that any necessary corrections have been satisfactorily completed, that the degree of PhD be awarded.

8.9.3 When Senate has agreed that the degree should be awarded, the Secretary to the Graduate School Academic Board communicates the decision to the graduand.

8.9.4 Following Senate agreement that the degree should be awarded, the Secretary to the Graduate School Academic Board also notifies the Student Records Office that the candidate is entitled to graduate. Further correspondence about the process of graduation is then the responsibility of the Student Records Office.

8.9.5 In the event of a recommendation from the Research Strategy Committee that no degree should be awarded, again the final decision rests with Senate. The Secretary to the Graduate School Academic Board will communicate Senate's decision to the candidate.

8.9.6 Candidates may appeal against the outcome of their examination, on a limited number of grounds. These grounds and the process of appeal are described in Section 11 below.

## 8.10 **Lodging the final version of the thesis**

8.10.1 One electronic copy of the thesis, or, in the case of PhD by Creative Practice, the thesis and a permanent record of the creative work, complying with the regulations in Section 10, should be submitted to the Secretary to the Graduate School Academic Board.

8.10.2 A deposit agreement form (supplied by the Graduate School) must be completed and submitted at the same time as lodging the final version of the doctoral research. This will confirm the agreement of the candidate that the submission may be made available to readers through the open access electronic repository, and may be lent to the British Library.

8.10.3 The electronic copy of the doctoral research provided for lodging in the Library shall remain the property of the University, with the copyright of the thesis and any associated creative work being vested in the author.

#### **8.11 Restriction of access**

8.11.1 There is normally no restriction of access to the permanent record of the submission for which a higher degree has been awarded. The Graduate School Academic Board will only approve an application for confidentiality in order to enable a patent application to be lodged or to protect commercially or politically sensitive material, including creative works. A final submission shall not be restricted in this way in order to protect research leads. While the normal maximum period of confidentiality is two years, in exceptional circumstances the Graduate School Academic Board may approve a longer period.

8.11.2 Where the Graduate School Academic Board has agreed that the confidential nature of the candidate's work is such as to preclude the final submission being made freely available in relevant libraries, the final submission shall, during the period of restriction, only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project.

### **9. Format and Binding**

All theses for higher degrees awarded by Queen Margaret University must conform to the same format. Regulations in this Section are designed to promote legibility, to meet the conventions of scholarly presentation, and to facilitate standard library cataloguing.

9.1 Except with the specific permission of the Graduate School Academic Board, the thesis shall be presented in English.

#### **9.2 Length**

9.2.1 For PhDs by thesis only, the text of the thesis (excluding footnotes, references and appendices) normally falls within the following range: 70,000 to 100,000 words. For PhDs by Creative Practice the text of the thesis (excluding footnotes, references and appendices) would normally be within the range 30,000 to 40,000 words. The higher figures in both cases represent maximum limits that must not be exceeded. The lower figures are provided for guidance only. Thesis length will vary with the conventions of different subject areas. However, it is unlikely that a thesis significantly shorter than the figures indicated above will be of sufficient depth to achieve all the outcomes of the award.

The following sections should be excluded from the word count:

- Title page
- Abstract

- Acknowledgements
- Contents and list of tables and figures
- References and bibliography
- Appendices
- Footnotes

Tables and figures within the text are included in the word count, as are quotations from interviews. It is recognised that certain types of qualitative research will therefore require a higher word count. Permission to exceed the word limit may be sought from the Graduate School Academic Board in advance of submission (see below).

- 9.2.2 Permission to exceed the maximum length of a thesis will only be granted by the Graduate School Academic Board for exceptional reasons. Permission must be sought at the time the examination arrangements are submitted for approval, well before submission of the thesis. A thesis that is over the word limit, without permission, will not be accepted for examination.
- 9.2.3 For PhDs by thesis only, examiners should be able to understand the thesis from the full argument presented in the main body of the text. Appendices should contain only supporting data and ancillary material. Overlong appendices should be avoided.

For PhDs by Creative Practice, the examiners should normally be able to understand the thesis from the full argument presented in the main body of the text, however, they may also be required to refer to a portfolio of additional evidence related to the associated original creative work, which should be submitted as an appendix. Additional appendices should contain only supporting data and ancillary material. Overlong appendices should be avoided.

### 9.3 **Presentation**

- 9.3.1 Theses must be in A4 format.
- 9.3.2 The thesis should normally be printed on white paper of not less than 80gsm. Double sided printing is acceptable.
- 9.3.3 Theses should be printed with laser quality printing. Copies may be produced through photocopying, but this reproduction must be of a satisfactory and consistent quality.
- 9.3.4 A font size of either 11 or 12 point must be used consistently throughout the thesis, except where otherwise specified below for footnotes and references. A slightly larger font size may be applied to headings. It is recommended that either Arial or Times New Roman font is used. Candidates are advised to avoid overuse of print enhancements such as bold, italic and underline.
- 9.3.5 Text must have at least 1.5 line-spacing, unless otherwise specified below.
- 9.3.6 The text should be justified, except for tables, diagrams, graphs etc.
- 9.3.7 The following page-margins should be set:  
4cm left-hand binding margin (1.5")

2cm head margin (0.75")  
2.5cm right-hand fore-edge margin (1")  
4cm tail margin (1.5")

9.3.8 Pages must be numbered consecutively (using Arabic numerals) throughout the text, references and appendices. Preliminary pages should be numbered in roman numerals.

9.3.9 Alternative formats to the above (larger print, coloured paper, etc.) may be requested by the Examiners. This should be discussed in advance of submission.

## 9.4 **Structure**

### 9.4.1 Title page

The title page must give the following information, all centred and in 20 point:

- the full title of the thesis (in capitals)
- the forename and surname of the author (in capitals)
- the degree for which the thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment (in Sentence case)
- QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY (in capitals)
- the year of submission (for examination copy) or of award (for final version)

A model of the standard title page to be followed is given in Appendix 2 of these regulations.

### 9.4.2 Abstract

A one-page, single-spaced abstract of no more 300 words must be bound into the thesis. The abstract should provide a synopsis of the thesis, describing the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the discipline.

Candidates must provide a list of keywords for cataloguing purposes.

### 9.4.3 Acknowledgements

Any assistance received shall be acknowledged in a single-spaced acknowledgement section. It is customary for the candidate's Supervisors and School to be mentioned. Also included here should be a statement of any internal or external collaboration or advisory links. Any Collaborating Establishment that has been involved in the research must be duly acknowledged.

Where the research was part of a collaborative group project, this must be recorded in the acknowledgements. The candidate's individual contribution to the collaboration should be explicitly identified in the body of the thesis.

### 9.4.4 Contents

A contents list, and lists of any tables, diagrams, graphs and illustrations, should be provided, with page numbers identified and aligned right. The contents page(s) should be printed with 1.5 line-spacing.

#### 9.4.5 Diagrams, tables, illustrations etc.

These should be numbered, labelled with a legend, and placed as near to the relevant text as feasible. Good quality colour photocopies of diagrams, illustrations and photographs may be used rather than the originals.

#### 9.4.6 Footnotes

Where footnotes are used, these should be single-spaced in 10 point, and preferably placed at the foot of the relevant page.

#### 9.4.7 Quotation and referencing in the text

Short quotations in the running text should be enclosed in inverted commas. Longer quotations should be separated from the running text, and indented, with single line-spacing. Any material consulted, especially including quotations, must be clearly and adequately referenced in the text.

#### 9.4.8 References section

The thesis must include a full and adequate references section immediately after the main body of text, and before any appendices. Referencing must be done consistently, with adherence to a recognised style such as APA or Harvard. References should be printed with single line-spacing.

#### 9.4.9 Appendices (see also Regulation 10.2.3)

The text of any appendices may be single-spaced.

### 9.5 **Copies of published material**

The candidate shall be permitted to publish material in advance of the thesis in discussion with the Supervisory Team. Reference shall be made in the thesis to any such work. Where material is jointly authored the candidate must clarify the extent of his or her role. Copies of published material should be provided and either bound in with the thesis or placed in an adequately secured pocket at the end of the thesis.

### 9.6 **Binding**

Candidates are responsible for the costs of production of all copies of the thesis, including the costs of binding.

#### 9.6.1 An individual volume should not be more than 6.5cm thick. A thicker thesis should be subdivided into two volumes.

#### 9.6.2 **For examination**

Copies of theses and any associated appendices submitted for examination should be in a "soft" temporary binding. All copies should be securely fixed by means of a glued spine, a spiral binding, or a comb binding, so that the pages remain secure when the volume is

fully opened and pages cannot be added or removed. The title page, printed on card, should serve as a front cover. A piece of card should also be placed at the end as a back cover. The covers may be laminated or protected with sheets of clear plastic.

In the case of creative work, the format in which it is presented will vary, but it must be done in such a way as to be easily referenced and accessed by the Examiners. Each item should be individually labelled, with relevant details including the candidate's name.

### **9.6.3 Version for record**

One electronic copy of the thesis must be submitted for lodging in the Library's open access electronic repository. This must be submitted as a single file and not split by chapter, section or similar. The electronic copy must be submitted before the candidate can graduate. Additional supporting material (such as maps or images) should be provided separately.

If any non-digital material accompanies the thesis this should be discussed with LRC staff, who will advise on the best format for submission. Likewise, in the case of PhD by Creative Practice, the LRC should be consulted on the best way to archive the documentation of the original creative practice.

9.6.4 Candidates may wish to order hardbound versions of the final thesis for their own records. Candidates order such copies at their own discretion and own expense.

9.6.5 The following guidance is offered as advice to bookbinders:

- The thesis should be sewn and bound in strong, black cloth covers. The front and rear boards shall have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upright.
- The title page (10.4.1 above) should be the first page inside the covers. The covers should contain only the detail set out below.
- The lettering should be in gold, in a non-serif font with a type size of 24 point and in upper case capitals. The only exception to this is the lettering for PhD and MPhil, which should be printed exactly as they appear in this sentence. There should be no full-stops in or after either PhD or MPhil.
- The front board must bear the title of the work and the name of the author (forename and surname) only. It is not usual for the author's other qualifications to be given.
- The spine should read vertically downwards, left to right in one line from the top to the foot of the spine: Forename and Surname (top), PhD or MPhil (middle), and Year of Award (foot). There should be a minimum of a 5cm space at the foot of the spine to allow catalogue-numbering by the Library. Where applicable, the volume number (in Arabic numerals) should be given after the Year of Award as in the following: Volume 1, Volume 2.

## 10. Appeals

- 10.1 The general precepts of the University Appeals Procedure apply to appeals against PhD decisions and these regulations should be read in conjunction with the Academic Appeals Procedure. Under these regulations, a University officer may act through his or her properly appointed nominee. The regulations herein relating to appeals shall have precedence over the Academic Appeals Procedure.
- 10.2 A candidate has the right to appeal against any decision that affects their progress. Appeals must be in writing (or in another permanent form) and should be submitted to the University Secretary within 21 days of receipt of the decision against which the candidate is appealing. An extension to this time limit will be permitted only in exceptional circumstances e.g. when, for reasons outside their control, a candidate did not receive timely notification of their result.
- 10.3 An unsatisfactory result does not in itself constitute a valid basis for an appeal. Those hearing the appeal will not attempt to re-assess the candidate, nor to appraise the professional judgement of those involved in making the decision.
- 10.4 The permissible grounds for appeal are as follows:
- (a) *additional information* is available that was not, and could not, reasonably have been made available at the time of the original decision and which had it been available could have led a different decision being made;
  - (b) there was a *material irregularity* in procedures.
- 10.5 If the basis of the candidate's appeal is information that could have been made known prior to the decision being made, the candidate must give a satisfactory reason for the information not being made available at that time.
- 10.6 A candidate's disagreement with the academic judgement of an assessor does not provide a valid ground for appeal.
- 10.7 Any candidate considering an appeal is encouraged to contact the Students' Union for advice and assistance.
- 10.8 Appeals must be in writing. The candidate's written statement should provide the following information in support of their appeal:
- name
  - up-to-date contact address for correspondence, including email address
  - decision or result being appealed
  - the grounds for appeal
  - supporting evidence
  - the remedy being sought

- 10.9 The University Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the Appeal within three working days of receipt, and pass the appeal to the Deputy Principal who will hear the appeal within 30 days of receipt of the appeal. This timescale may be extended where the Deputy Principal is absent from the University through leave or illness. The Deputy Principal will provide a copy of the response to the University Secretary.
- 10.10 Where a reconsideration of the candidate's case gives rise to a change in decision this must be ratified by the original decision making body (e.g. Graduate School Academic Board, or Research Strategy Committee).
- 10.11 The decision of the Deputy Principal is final and concludes the University's internal procedures.

### **Independent review**

- 10.12 The University's internal procedures having been exhausted, a candidate may seek review of their complaint by an independent person, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman [SPSO].
- 10.13 The Ombudsman is independent and their staff will advise whether or not the complaint is one that they can investigate. Normally the candidate will have to tell the Ombudsman about their complaint within 12 months of first knowing about the problem about which they are complaining, although the Ombudsman may look at complaints outside this limit if they think there is good reason to do so.
- 10.14 There are some restrictions on what the Ombudsman can investigate. For example, they cannot consider the subject matter of complaints about personnel matters or matters of academic judgement. However, they may be able to investigate the manner in which the complaint was handled. If the complaint is appropriate to their office and is investigated, the Ombudsman's staff will send details of how this will be done.
- 10.15 The complaint should be submitted in writing to the Ombudsman, and should include any relevant documents including correspondence with the University and the University's response to the complaint. This can be sent to the Ombudsman without cost at the freepost address given below. A candidate may discuss the complaint with an Investigator at the SPSO before deciding to submit.
- 10.16 The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has an online complaint form accessible through the website, although papers in support of the complaint would still have to be supplied to the Ombudsman by post or other means. The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman can also supply paper complaint forms direct to complainants.
- 10.17 Further information may be accessed through the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman website or by calling their office for advice. Contact details are:

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman	Freepost address
Bridgeside House	Freepost SPSO
99 McDonald Road	(no stamp required)
Edinburgh	Phone 0800 377 7330
EH7 4NS	website <a href="https://www.spsso.org.uk/">https://www.spsso.org.uk/</a>