



RESEARCH DEGREE HANDBOOK 2022/23

Every effort is made to ensure that the information given in this handbook is correct at the time of publication and that the information given accurately describes the programme offered by the University.

The online version of this handbook is the current definitive one and takes precedence in the event of any discrepancy. It is located on the Graduate School website, please visit

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic-programme>

Contents

Welcome to the Graduate School	5
1. INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.1 Sources of advice and help for your research degree programme.....	6
Graduate School Registry	6
Graduate School, College and School Academic Contacts	7
Doctoral Tutors.....	9
1.2 Committee Structure	10
1.3 Quality Assurance and opportunity for feedback	11
2. YOUR RESEARCH DEGREE: ENROLMENT TO GRADUATION.....	13
2.1 Enrolment.....	13
2.2 How we contact you	13
2.3 Self-generated student letters	13
2.4 Your academic supervisors and supervisory meetings	14
2.5 Engagement and attendance monitoring	15
2.6 Student Visa Information	16
2.7 Standard Visitor Visa.....	16
2.8 Studentships	16
2.9 Researcher Development.....	16
Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP)	16
Teaching Opportunities and Training.....	17
2.10 Best Practice in Research: Guidance and Policies	17
Academic Regulations.....	17
Plagiarism Detection	18
Research Integrity	18
Research Ethics	18
Information Compliance, Records Management, and Information Security.....	18
Open Access and E-thesis	18
Intellectual Property and Copyright.....	19
Third Party Copyright	20
Thesis Embargo and Confidentiality	21
Academic Research Misconduct	21
Rights and Responsibilities & Student Guidance.....	22
Research Degree Student Charter	22
2.11 Student Wellbeing	23
General Wellbeing.....	23
Wellbeing Workshops for Doctoral Researchers	24
2.12 Disability.....	24
2.13 Complaints and Appeals	24
Informal Complaints	24
Formal Complaints Procedure.....	24

	Academic Appeals against a decision of the Graduate School Board.....	24
3.	PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT & ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE.....	25
3.1	The Virtual Research Environment (VRE)	25
3.2	Annual Progress Review (APR).....	26
	APR Structure	28
	Requirements for each APR.....	29
3.3	Remediation (Regulation B6)	32
3.4	Changes to your enrolment or personal circumstances	32
	Applying for a shorter minimum period of enrolment (Regulation B2.6)	32
	Change to thesis title, project, or programme	33
	Change in personal circumstances.....	33
	Mitigating Circumstances (Regulation B7.2)	35
	Suspension of Studies (Regulation B7.11)	36
	Returning from Suspension	37
	Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental & Shared Parental Leave (Regulation B7.32)....	38
	Requesting an Extension (Regulation B7.19)	38
	Requesting to defer an examination (Regulation B7.26).....	39
	Change of Mode of Attendance (Regulation B2.8)	40
	Annual Leave	40
	Change of Supervisory Team.....	40
	Withdrawing from your degree (Regulation B7.35)	40
3.5	Writing Up Status	41
	Full-Time Students	41
	Part-Time Students	41
3.6	Re-enrolling in a timely fashion.....	42
3.7	Submission and Examination (Regulation B8).....	42
	Arranging the examination and date.....	42
	Thesis Format and Submission for Examination.....	43
	Preparing for your oral examination.....	45
	What happens after your examination	45
	Amended thesis submission following the examination	45
	What happens after you have submitted your amended thesis.....	46
	Final thesis submission for conferment of award (Regulation B8.47).....	46
	Conferment and Graduation	47
4.	UNIVERSITY SUPPORT SERVICES.....	48
4.1	Details of University Support Services.....	48
4.2	University of Westminster Students' Union	48
4.3	University of Westminster PhD Society.....	48
4.4	Fieldwork and Offsite Working	49
	APPENDIX A - Specimen Thesis Title Page.....	50
	APPENDIX B – Masters and Doctoral Award Descriptors	52

APPENDIX C – Tuition Fees, Fee Liability and Debt Management	56
APPENDIX D – INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS STUDYING ON STUDENT VISAS (2022/23)	58

Welcome to the Graduate School

A warm welcome from the Graduate School and well done on achieving a place to carry out your research here at Westminster.

We pride ourselves on pursuing leading, innovative research across a wide range of disciplines, in Britain and across the world. In REF 2021 – the recent government exercise used to assess university research – over 70% of the research produced by the University of Westminster was judged internationally excellent or world leading.

We are proud too of the experience of research we make possible for our doctoral students. In the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2021, 82% of our students rated the overall experience of their research degree positively (the 18th highest satisfaction rate nationally), and 90% were happy with their supervision (the 19th highest score nationally). Both of these satisfaction rates were well above the sector average, and Westminster was also ranked in the top 25% of institutions nationally for research degree progression (where we ranked 3rd) and responsibilities (where we ranked 10th).

We aim to continue to provide a distinctive, high-quality, and vibrant experience for doctoral researchers, with opportunities to work within an exciting interdisciplinary research environment, attend tailor-made workshops and benefit from personal development planning guidance designed for you to gain experience and skills which will enhance your research.

For more detail on these development opportunities, please see the dedicated website for the [Doctoral Researcher Development Programme \(DRDP\)](#).

Westminster is a large institution and this handbook will help guide you through the academic and administrative arrangements for your research degree study. It tells you about the services available to you, the regulations that apply to your enrolment and gives advice about what to do at key points.

The Graduate School is here to support and encourage you through your life as a doctoral researcher and we hope you take the opportunity to engage actively with our research community.

We want to hear from you – about your successes and about what might not be working so well at times. You will find in this handbook information on all the ways you can keep in touch – we look forward to hearing from you!



Professor Leigh Wilson
Director, Graduate School
E: l.wilson@westminster.ac.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Sources of advice and help for your research degree programme

Graduate School Registry

Address: Ground Floor, 32-38 Wells Street, London, W1T 3UW

Email: graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk

Web: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/graduate-school-registry>

The work of the Graduate School is supported by the Graduate School Registry, which acts as the administrative hub for all doctoral researcher activity, supports all Graduate School committees and works closely with academic colleagues and other Professional Services departments. The Graduate School Registry ensures the professional and effective management of the research degree academic programme, the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP), and the Graduate School calendar of events.

The [Graduate School website](#) contains the latest information regarding news and events taking place across the institution. We also circulate a regular *Graduate School Newsletter* via email and regular news and updates are also posted via Twitter. Please follow us [@uw_gs](#)

A 'Research Students at the University of Westminster' Facebook group is also available to help students create better opportunities for networking and social activities. The Facebook group is now widely used by students to share ideas, answer questions about doing research at the University, find out the latest news, meet up and organise events. The group is for all research students and has become very lively in sharing important information that students need to know, and helping students connect with others who have similar interests. Please request to join the group at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/162658573826334/>

In [Section 4](#) of this handbook you will find details of the [University of Westminster PhD Society](#) and we encourage you to join the Society and participate in their events and activities.

The *PhD Pathways* group exists to support doctoral students from groups underrepresented in academia and runs events for those from those groups interested in doctoral study. If you would like to be involved in the group's work, do email them at phdpathways@westminster.ac.uk

We would also encourage you to regularly review [Engage](#) on the University Website Student Hub. This contains a wealth of information on employability, volunteering, and job/career opportunities.

Name and Contact details

Richard McCormack

Graduate School Manager

Email: r.mccormack@westminster.ac.uk



Lesley McDonagh
Graduate School Officer
Email: l.mcdonagh@westminster.ac.uk



Michael Trahair
Graduate School Coordinator
Email: m.trahair@westminster.ac.uk



Elle Larsson
Graduate School Administrator
Email: e.larsson1@westminster.ac.uk



The Graduate School Registry offers 'in-person' appointments alternate Tuesdays (dates will be published each term), and online appointments (via MS Teams) on request (subject to staff availability). To make an appointment, please [complete the appointment request form](#) or for general enquiries, please email graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk

Graduate School, College and School Academic Contacts

The work of the Graduate School is supported by a number of academic colleagues across the Colleges and Schools of the University. Please select the appropriate college from the links below:

- [College of Design & Creative Industries](#)
- [College of Liberal Arts & Sciences](#)
- [Westminster Business School](#)

Graduate School	Contact details
Director of the Graduate School	<p>Professor Leigh Wilson Email: l.wilson@westminster.ac.uk</p> <p>(For Semester 2 of 22/23, Dr Margherita Sprio will be Acting Director of the Graduate School whilst Professor Leigh Wilson is on sabbatical leave)</p>
Deputy Director of the Graduate School	<p>Dr Margherita Sprio Email: m.sprio@westminster.ac.uk</p> <p>(For 22/23 Dr Emanuela Volpi will be Acting Deputy Director of the Graduate School – e.volpi@westminster.ac.uk)</p>

College of Design & Creative Industries	
School of Architecture & Cities	Contact details
School PhD Coordinator	Dr Kate Jordan Email: k.jordan@westminster.ac.uk
School DRDP Coordinator	Dr Kate Jordan Email: k.jordan@westminster.ac.uk
School of Computer Science & Engineering	Contact details
School PhD Coordinator	Dr Alexandra Psarrou Email: a.psarrou1@westminster.ac.uk
School DRDP Coordinator	Dr Alexander Bolotov Email: a.bolotov@westminster.ac.uk
Westminster School of Arts	Contact details
School PhD Coordinator	Dr Lucy Reynolds Email: l.reynolds02@westminster.ac.uk
School DRDP Coordinator	Dr Julie Marsh Email: j.marsh@westminster.ac.uk
Westminster School of Media & Communications	Contact details
School PhD Coordinator	Dr Anthony McNicholas (September Only) Email: mcnichc@westminster.ac.uk
School DRDP Coordinator	Dr Alessandro D'Arma Email: a.darma@westminster.ac.uk

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences	
School of Humanities	Contact details
School PhD Coordinator	Dr Sylvia Shaw Email: s.shaw@westminster.ac.uk
School DRDP Coordinator	Dr Marco Longobardo E: m.longobardo1@westminster.ac.uk
School of Life Sciences	Contact details
School PhD Coordinator	To be confirmed
School DRDP Coordinator	Dr Nina Porakishvili Email: n.porakishvili@westminster.ac.uk TBC
School of Social Sciences	Contact details
School PhD Coordinator	Dr Anna Doering Email: a.doering@westminster.ac.uk
School DRDP Coordinator	Dr Marco Longobardo E: m.longobardo1@westminster.ac.uk
Westminster School of Law	Contact details
School PhD Coordinator	Dr Aurora Voiculescu Email: a.voiculescu@westminster.ac.uk TBC
School DRDP Coordinator	Dr Marco Longobardo E: m.longobardo1@westminster.ac.uk

Westminster Business School	Contact details
School PhD Coordinator	Dr Kristina Vasileva Email: k.vasileva@westminster.ac.uk
School DRDP Coordinator	Dr Kristina Vasileva Email: k.vasileva@westminsrtter.ac.uk

Dr Kristina Vasileva performs the role of School PhD Coordinator and School DRDP Coordinator for all Schools in the Westminster Business School:

- Applied Management

- Finance and Accounting
- Management and Marketing
- Organisations, Economy and Society

Research Leads	Names
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research)	Professor Andrew Linn
College Director – Research & Knowledge Exchange (Design and Creative Industries)	Professor Gregory Sporton
College Director – Research & Knowledge Exchange (Liberal Arts and Sciences)	Professor Miriam Dwek
College Director – Research & Knowledge Exchange (Westminster Business School)	Professor Franz Buscha

Doctoral Tutors

This supporting role is in addition to your supervisory team and the Doctoral Tutor will be another link person for you should you experience any problems that you feel might be better approached by somebody outside of your supervisory team. You can still contact your School Doctoral Coordinator in the first instance should you want to, but the Doctoral Tutor is somebody who is completely independent although they may act as a mediator with your supervisory team if this is what is required.

The Doctoral Tutor is there to support you in any way that you want them to if you are experiencing any difficulties that you feel you want to be resolved for you and with you. Their role is to treat any information that you provide in a confidential manner and it is key that you feel able to trust them. Additionally, they will be able to direct you to the appropriate Student Services should this be necessary.

The smooth running of your PhD experience at Westminster is at the heart of the Doctoral Tutor's role and they are there to help, act as a supportive friend, talk through a particular problem with you or anything else that you feel is more appropriately independently explored.

There are four Doctoral Tutors and you can contact any one of them. Their contact details and online availability are detailed below and on the DRDP website:

Dr Sylvie Bacquet	Email: s.bacquet01@westminster.ac.uk
Hours:	11am – 1pm Fridays
Googlemeet Link:	
Dr Issam Malki	Email: i.malki@westminster.ac.uk
Hours:	Midday – 2pm, Tuesdays (Sem 1), 10am – Midday, Tuesdays (Sem 2)
Googlemeet Link:	https://meet.google.com/kmy-ddsm-scp
Dr Margherita Sprio	Email: m.sprio@westminster.ac.uk
Hours:	10am - Midday, Mondays
Googlemeet Link:	http://meet.google.com/xoh-zoyy-fdv
Dr Pinar Uysal Onganer	Email: p.onganer@westminster.ac.uk
Hours:	10am – Midday, Wednesdays
Googlemeet Link:	

Each of the Doctoral Tutors will be leading on at least one workshop throughout the next academic year and the content of these workshops will be determined by you. Your experience whilst doing the PhD will be the main focus of these workshops, so any number of different issues may be covered from the personal and pastoral to the professional and related external matters – and anything in between.

Taking both an academic and practical approach, these workshops will be open to every student on the PhD programme and you will be able to sign up for them via the [DRDP website](#)

1.2 Committee Structure

The following University Committees are of particular relevance to you as a doctoral researcher:

Committee	Area of work
Graduate School Board (GSB)	<p>The Graduate School Board is responsible for oversight of all doctoral programmes and the support of doctoral researcher development. The Board meets 6 times per year, and reports to the University's Research & Knowledge Exchange Steering Group. The Board includes two PGR student representatives (one from the PhD Society and one from the wider PGR population). It is supported by two subcommittees, the Research Degree Progression Committee (RDPC), and the DRDP Committee (see below).</p> <p>Chair (Semester 1) – Professor Leigh Wilson (l.wilson@westminster.ac.uk) Chair (Semester 2) – Dr Margherita Sprio (m.sprio@westminster.ac.uk) Deputy Chair – Dr Emanuela Volpi (e.volpi@westminster.ac.uk)</p> <p>Secretary – Richard McCormack (r.mccormack@westminster.ac.uk) PGR Student Representative – Ayushi Chamoli (a.chamoli@westminster.ac.uk) PhD Society Representative – Kiu Sum (k.sum@my.westminster.ac.uk)</p>
Research Degree Progression Committee (RDPC)	<p>The Research Degree Progression Committee, acting on behalf of the Graduate School Board, considers the annual progress of doctoral students, submission of thesis and approval of examination arrangements. The Committee meets once a month to consider applications for mitigating circumstances, extension, suspension, exclusion, and withdrawal.</p> <p>Chair – Dr Kristina Vasileva (k.vasileva@westminster.ac.uk) Secretary – Michael Trahair (m.trahair@westminster.ac.uk)</p>
Research Ethics Committee	<p>The University Research Ethics Committee and local College Research Ethics Committees receive applications for approval for research projects, including research degrees, in accordance with</p>

Committee	Area of work
	the University's Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research .
DRDP Committee	<p>The Committee is responsible for the development, implementation, monitoring, and review of the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP), taking into consideration external best practice guidance. It oversees the promotion of the programme internally and externally and contributes to wider policy debate on researcher development. It supports staff involved in the delivery of the programme and actively shares best practice and opportunities for development. The Committee includes within its membership one PGR student representative.</p> <p>Chair (Semester 1) – Dr Margherita Sprio (m.sprio@westminster.ac.uk) Chair (Semester 2) – Dr Kate Jordan (k.jordan@westminster.ac.uk) Secretary – Lesley McDonagh (l.mcdonagh@westminster.ac.uk) PGR Student Representative – Zoe Wintersol (z.wintersol@westminster.ac.uk)</p>
Graduate School External Advisory Group	<p>The Graduate School External Advisory Group is made up of external members with sector wide experience and knowledge who discuss and review the Graduate School provision.</p> <p>Chair – Professor Leigh Wilson (l.wilson@westminster.ac.uk) Secretary – Richard McCormack (r.mccormack@westminster.ac.uk)</p>
Graduate School Assembly	The Graduate School Assembly is an open forum to discuss any aspects of the Graduate School and all staff and doctoral researchers are welcome to attend. The Assembly takes place twice a year.

1.3 Quality Assurance and opportunity for feedback

The University is committed to providing opportunities for students to put forward their views and contribute to the enhancement of their degrees. The Graduate School values the contribution made by doctoral researcher representatives (including those from the Students' Union's PhD Society) who play an active role in the Graduate School Board. Contact details of the current representatives are detailed at 1.2 above.

Your comments and views are also sought through surveys specifically for doctoral researchers for example the bi-annual Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), which is designed by AdvanceHE to help identify areas where improvements could be made to further enhance the experience of doctoral researchers.

For further information on the PRES please visit the [AdvanceHE website](#).

The Graduate School undertakes bi-annual review of its research degree programme (measured against each of the Expectations and Practices outlined in the [Quality Assurance Agency's UK](#)

[Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees](#)). A report of this review is presented to the Graduate School Board and the University's Research & Knowledge Exchange Steering Group. Actions from each bi-annual and PRES reviews are monitored and implemented in the next academic year.

2. YOUR RESEARCH DEGREE: ENROLMENT TO GRADUATION

2.1 Enrolment

When you have fully completed your formal enrolment, you can use the Virtual Research Environment (VRE) see [section 3.1](#), Library, Computing, and other University facilities. You will also receive a University ID card which includes membership of the Students' Union.

In order to remain a doctoral researcher, you are required to renew your enrolment each academic year (including during the period of your examination following submission of your final thesis) by using the online enrolment system. You will be sent an email with a re-enrolment link and guidance each academic year.

2.2 How we contact you

The University will contact you by email in the first instance, using your University of Westminster email address. Please be aware, if you do not regularly check your University email account, or do not set up an automatic forward from your student account to another account you do use regularly (through the settings function on email), there is a risk you will miss important communications which may affect your enrolment status.

On enrolment, you will be assigned a University outlook email address in the format of initial.surname@westminster.ac.uk.

Should you need to be contacted by letter, correspondence will be sent to your term-time address, so please be sure to keep your personal information up-to-date on the Student Record System.

2.3 Self-generated student letters

If you need an official letter from the University of Westminster, please follow the steps below:

- Make sure you are fully enrolled on your programme
- Visit [My Student Record](#) via the Student Hub and locate the Registry Services menu



- Click “Students Letters self-service”

Student Self-Service Letters Home Page

1. Confirmation of Enrolment Status Letter
This letter contains your enrolment status, course, date started and date of expected completion. All information is taken from your student record.

In order to generate a new 'Confirmation of Enrolment Status' letter, complete the fields below to populate the 'To' address details on the letter, then click the 'Generate new Confirmation letter' button below. A link to download the newly generated pdf letter will then be shown next to this button.

Addressee Name

Address line 1

Address line 2

Address line 3

Address line 4

Generate new Confirmation letter

2. Council Tax Exemption Letter
Council Tax Exemption letter confirms your course, date of birth, term time and home address, mode of attendance, required attendance, date started and date of expected completion. All information is taken from your student record.

Your current Term time and Home addresses (shown below) will be used within the Council Tax Letter, so make sure they are correct before clicking the 'Generate new Council Tax Letter' button below. A link to download the newly generated pdf letter will be shown next to this button.

- Provide the required addressee information for the letter you require
- Click 'Generate new letter'
- Once generated, click the link to download in a pdf format. You can now print your letter
- If you require an official University stamp, please bring the printed letter to the Graduate School Registry (you will need to make an appointment to do this – see [Section 1.1](#))
- If you require additional information to be provided in your letter, follow the instructions under the 'Other Letter' option to contact the Graduate School Registry.

2.4 Your academic supervisors and supervisory meetings

Supervision by subject experts is a fundamental and indispensable element in the research degree process. As a doctoral researcher, you will have a Director of Studies who will take the lead in the administration of your research progress, plus at least one secondary supervisor.

You should have your first meeting with your Director of Studies and/or full supervisory team within your first two weeks after enrolment and this meeting should establish the schedule of supervisory meetings in at least the first six months of study.

All meetings with your Director of Studies and/or supervisory team must be written up in the VRE (*My Project – Supervision Meetings*) and signed off by yourself and the Director of Studies.

This first meeting with your Director of Studies / supervisory team should also provide the opportunity for you to complete a [skills assessment](#) form, enabling your skills, training, and development needs for the coming year to be discussed, agreed, and planned for. This assessment will refer to the [Doctoral Researcher Development Programme \(DRDP\) website](#), detailing the development sessions being offered during the course of the year. The skills assessment will then be reviewed alongside your Annual Progress Review each year (or every other year for part-time students).

An early meeting should also address the need for any appropriate risk assessments to be undertaken – further guidance can be obtained from the University's Safety, Health and Wellbeing team (Email: shw@westminster.ac.uk)

Formal supervisory meetings are an opportunity for you to discuss your progress, describe your findings, and alert your Director of Studies and other supervisors to any problems. These meetings are an important part of your working relationship with your supervisory team and it is important that you spend some time thinking about what you can do to make them as constructive as possible.

You are responsible for taking the initiative in planning and organising meetings with your supervisor. Go into the meetings with a clear idea of what you want to discuss and, where relevant, take work to show your progress so your Director of Studies can provide feedback.

Before the meeting

- Take the initiative in agreeing a mutually convenient schedule of meetings with your Director of Studies.
- Prepare a short agenda (or email) of items that you would like to discuss and forward this to your Director of Studies a few days in advance of the meeting.
- Prepare some work for you to discuss at each meeting - as with the agenda, your Director of Studies may find it helpful to receive before the meeting a copy of any work you intend to discuss.
- Think about how your skills, training and development needs are being progressed and supported, and any specific requests you would like to make to your Director of Studies.

During the meeting

- Be prepared and feel comfortable in directing the discussion and making sure it follows the agenda as much as possible - do not expect your Director of Studies to do all the talking, they will want to hear from you.
- Ask questions - formal supervisory meetings are the best place for more detailed questions as they provide a private and quiet space in which you and your Director of Studies can think about the question and come up with a possible answer.

After the meeting

- Submit, via the VRE, a record of each meeting with your Director of Studies / supervisor(s), containing a mutually agreed summary of the key items discussed and agreed deadlines. These records will provide an invaluable reference that you can draw on as you prepare your thesis for submission and use to check that you have addressed all the suggestions made by your supervisors.

Please remember that if you are unable to work on your research due to sickness, you should notify your Director of Studies immediately – see Regulation B7.31 for further details.

2.5 Engagement and attendance monitoring

The Graduate School monitors the attendance and engagement of doctoral researchers to ensure that you are receiving sufficient supervisory support and are on course to meet key academic stages in a timely fashion. A key part of this monitoring is for regular meetings to take place between you and your Director of Studies and other members of your supervisor team, as appropriate – see [Regulation B3](#). It is your responsibility to ensure these meetings are scheduled and documented in the VRE.

2.6 Student Visa Information

Please see the guidance and information at Appendix D

Detailed information on visas can also be found on the [Visas and Advice web page](#).

2.7 Standard Visitor Visa

Please see the guidance and information at Appendix D

Detailed information on visas can also be found on the [Visas and Advice web page](#)

2.8 Studentships

If you are in receipt of a University of Westminster studentship, a Research Council (UKRI) studentship, or any other kind of studentship, which includes an annual stipend, you will receive your first monthly payment shortly after enrolment (normally 2 – 3 weeks after enrolment).

Subsequent monthly payments are then made directly to your bank account. **The payment request will be sent to the bank for them to process on the 1st of each month.** Therefore, payment will be in your bank account on the 1st of each month, unless the 1st of the month falls on a weekend or Bank Holiday, when the payment will be in your bank account on the next working day after the 1st (so for example if the 1st falls on a Saturday, the payment will be in your bank account on Monday 3rd).

Please note that unlike salary payments, stipend payments are made at the beginning of the month to which the stipend relates.

If you change your bank account at any time, please notify the Graduate School Registry so that they can amend your payment details.

If you suspend during your studentship (including for maternity, paternity, adoption, parental or shared parental leave), your studentship will also be suspended for the duration of your suspension. Please note that it is not always possible to suspend the stipend in correlation with the agreed period of suspension. In these cases the Graduate School Registry will be in touch with you to confirm the stipend payment pattern.

Once your studentship expires you are responsible for paying your tuition fees – please refer to the terms and conditions of your studentship in your offer letter.

Please Note: If you are funded by one of the UKRI research councils, submission of your final thesis for examination will normally be expected by the end of the agreed funding period.

2.9 Researcher Development

Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP)

The DRDP is a suite of tailor-made workshops, specialist skills sessions and personal development planning activities, designed for you to gain experience and skills which are highly relevant to your academic study and future research career.

Based on the national [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#) (RDF), you will explore topics and issues identified nationally by practising researchers, approaching them from a discipline-specific perspective and also considering research activity in a wider context. The programme provides a wide range of workshops and sessions from which you can flexibly create your own development journey, undertaking the training you need at the time you need it.

A dedicated DRDP website provides comprehensive information on each of the workshops, and links to the VRE where you can book on to the sessions you need. Together with your Director of Studies, you will plan the workshop sessions that you will be attending each year, based on your own specific project and development needs (this is known as the skills assessment process or audit).

For further information on the programme content please refer to the [DRDP website](#).

For further information on the RDF please visit the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#).

Teaching Opportunities and Training

Doctoral researchers may be contracted by their School to undertake teaching duties. All doctoral research students teaching on modules that require them to mark assessments are required to attend a University or College Assessment and Feedback workshop and/or to complete the 'University Certificate of Special Study: Supporting Learning in HE'. This must be done prior to the first assessment that requires marking and feedback.

If you are asked to undertake teaching, or are interested in taking on teaching duties, in the first instance please liaise with your Director of Studies.

'The University Certificate of Special Study: Supporting Learning in HE' is a 20 credit module managed by the University's [Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation](#) (CETI). To gain the 20 credits, you will need to have the required level of teaching hours/experience. The Certificate will be run 3 times a year (Semester 1, Semester 2, and over the summer period).

Further details of the teacher training support offered by CETI will be available upon enrolment.

Additionally, as part of the DRDP, a series of sessions will be offered for those doctoral researchers wishing to gain teaching experience/knowledge but who do not have the required level of teaching experience/hours to undertake the above Certificate.

Further information on teaching opportunities and training can be found on the [DRDP webpages](#)

2.10 Best Practice in Research: Guidance and Policies

Academic Regulations

All doctoral awards operate in accordance with the University's Research Degree Academic Regulations and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in 2008.

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the current [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#).

Please also see [Appendix B](#) for Award Descriptors for Masters and Doctoral degrees.

Plagiarism Detection

Plagiarism is presenting the work of another as one's own without proper acknowledgement. It is a serious academic offence.

This definition applies to written material, for example, encompassing direct quotations and summaries/paraphrases, and other forms of original work, for example, music, art and design works, images, drawings, diagrams, data, computer programmes, ideas, and inventions. It includes:

- published and unpublished sources, including the work of other students.
- the need to cite contributions of others to composite pieces of group work.
- reuse of one's own work.
- unacknowledged use of a wide range of ideas and materials, not just the written word.

Please refer to the [University's guidance on plagiarism](#).

As part of your final thesis submission, the submitted version of your thesis must be put through text-matching software such as Turnitin or Safe Assign. You and your Director of Studies will be asked to confirm that this has been done when submitting the thesis via the VRE. Please liaise with your Director of Studies in the first instance.

Research Integrity

The University takes its responsibilities for research integrity seriously and expects all those engaged in research, including its doctoral researchers, to comply with the requirements of the University Framework for Research Governance, irrespective of the sources of their funding, or their area of research.

As a doctoral researcher you will be required to not only follow the Research Degree Academic Regulations, but also adhere to the University Code of Research Good Practice and the University Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research.

All documents relating to Research Integrity can be found in the [University Research Framework](#).

Research Ethics

Research Ethics is a critical component of Research Integrity and is an on-going process that needs to be considered, understood, and applied by the researcher through the entire research life-cycle. This includes from project inception, proposal, data collection, analysis, writing-up, publication and dissemination of results, through to any post project archiving of research data. A project's ethical assessment and approval should be revisited as needed.

For this reason you will be asked to assess the ethical implications of your research at each APR as a minimum (a review should also take place if there are any substantive changes to the research protocol at other times of the year). For any questions on research ethics please email: research-ethics@westminster.ac.uk

Information Compliance, Records Management, and Information Security

A variety of regulations now govern what types of information the University can collect. These regulations also prescribe how the University should keep it and who the University should share it with. Further information and the associated policies can be found on the [Information Compliance, Records Management and Information Security web page](#).

Open Access and E-thesis

Open access is about making the products of research freely accessible to all. The University of Westminster is committed to open-access research as a good principle.

An e-thesis is a digital copy of the completed, accepted thesis. It should reflect any changes made in the final stages of completion and should be your final thesis. These electronic versions are much more easily distributed and remove the problem of research being hidden from most users and available only on library shelves. Your thesis will be made available for immediate download, free of charge, to researchers worldwide.

[WestminsterResearch](#) is an online digital repository that aims to capture the intellectual output of the University and be a resource containing details of all research and scholarly output. This enables the research output of the University to be available to a wider audience.

WestminsterResearch has been available since 2006 and already lists over 15000 research outputs produced by members of the University's academic community, including items such as journal articles, conference papers, artefacts, exhibitions and many more types of 'publication'. It is openly available to anyone, anywhere, through the internet, acting as a window to Westminster's research. Adding theses to the archive allows all of the products of research to be made available in one location, accredited by the University.

WestminsterResearch is included in national and global registries including the Registry of Open Access Repositories (ROAR) and the Directory of Open Access Repositories (OpenDOAR). Due to the software we use, WestminsterResearch results are highly ranked by popular search engines such as Google.

EThOS (Electronic Theses Online Service) is run by the British Library and aims to make all UK PhD and MPhil theses available to download from one central hub.

By adding your thesis to WestminsterResearch and EThOS, you will make your research available to a much wider audience and increase your visibility as a researcher.

Further information on [WestminsterResearch](#) and the University's [Open Access publishing web page](#).

More guidance and Frequently Asked Questions can be found on the [British Library EThOS database](#).

Intellectual Property and Copyright

As the author of the thesis, ownership of the intellectual property (IP) of your thesis remains with you, unless you re-assign ownership.

For all doctoral researchers who have not assigned their IP to the University, copyright protection is automatically given once an idea is fixed, for example, when you submit your final thesis. This means that you do not have to apply for copyright although you may wish to assert your copyright ownership with an obvious statement prominently displayed toward the beginning of your thesis, e.g. © John Smith, 2010.

By submitting your thesis to WestminsterResearch and EThOS (see above) you are giving permission for your work to be reproduced - this does not alter the ownership of the copyright.

Every thesis in WestminsterResearch will also include a top sheet with the following statement:

The WestminsterResearch online digital archive at the University of Westminster aims to make the research output of the University available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the authors and/or copyright owners. Whilst further distribution of

specific materials from within this archive is forbidden, you may freely distribute the URL of WestminsterResearch: <http://westminsterresearch.wmin.ac.uk/>.

The University [Code of Good Research Practice](#) includes further information on the [University's Intellectual Property policy](#).

Third Party Copyright

Your thesis is likely to contain material where the copyright is owned by a person or body other than yourself. This may include extracts from publications such as books or journals, or illustrations such as images, maps, photographs, tables etc.

Traditionally it has been accepted that copyright material can be included in the print version of a thesis without the permission of the rights holder. However, the subsequent digitisation and online availability of the thesis means this is no longer the case.

To enable you to re-publish these works, you will need to gain permission from the copyright owner to include the material within your thesis, and this permission should include the right to publish your thesis electronically in both WestminsterResearch and EThOS.

It is likely to be much easier to gain the permissions you require as you write your thesis, rather than leaving this until you are about to submit as some publishers can take a long time to grant permission. To prevent delays in awarding degrees, doctoral researchers and their supervisors are encouraged to consider potential copyright permissions at an early stage, for example, as part of the Annual Progress Review (APR) process - [section 3.2](#).

In all cases, sufficient acknowledgment should be given, and you should reflect carefully upon the contents of your thesis and whether any additional permissions be needed, or confidentiality protected before presenting it for deposit in WestminsterResearch.

When you write to gain permission, you should ensure you have the correct contact details of either the copyright holder themselves, if it is an individual, or the rights/permissions department of the publisher in question. Including a copy of the text extract or image will ensure there is no confusion over what it is that your request refers to.

For your final submission after the examination, if you are unable to gain permission for any third-party content included in your thesis, then you should submit a redacted electronic version with a separate Word/PDF document for University staff detailing what has been removed. You may wish to include a blank space in place of any missing illustration etc. stating, "this material is unavailable due to copyright restrictions".

In the unlikely event that a copyright holder contacts us reporting potential abuse or material appearing without permission, the thesis will be removed from public view whilst the complaint is investigated.

PhD by Published Work – by its very nature this type of PhD may include a great deal of content where the copyright is now owned by the publishers of the material. In this case we are able to use the accompanying commentary and contents list in WestminsterResearch. Readers would then be able to access the published materials from their original, published source.

More information on matters relating to copyright is provided by [The Intellectual Property Office](#).

Thesis Embargo and Confidentiality

As a public institution, the University is committed to the principle of open access publishing of research (theses, books, articles etc). This is in line with UK government policy aimed at ensuring open access to scholarly literature. Hence, the Graduate School expects that all doctoral theses upon completion are published online (through WestminsterResearch, and Ethos).

However, the University recognises the need, in exceptional circumstances, to consider individual applications for thesis embargo. Sometimes it may be necessary to request that a thesis is not made openly available through WestminsterResearch and EThoS.

Where a candidate, the University or a sponsor wishes the thesis or part of the thesis to remain confidential for a period of time after completion of the work, an application should be made to the Graduate School by no later than the application of approval for exam arrangements. However, to prevent delays in awarding degrees, doctoral researchers and their supervisors are advised to consider possible embargo at an early stage.

An application may be considered for the purposes of a) exploitation of Intellectual Property b) to permit the publication of a research output, e.g. monograph or c) to protect the wellbeing of a person involved in politically or security sensitive research. Evidence will be required to support an application for any of these purposes. The period of embargo is normally two-years, however doctoral researchers who are awarded a University of Westminster Studentship or are externally-funded may only be permitted an embargo for one year.

The following are possible types of embargo:

Electronic – both WestminsterResearch and EThoS

- Thesis is unchanged but is not published

Redaction

- Information has been deleted or blacked out

Pseudonym

- Thesis is unchanged but is published under a different name (a name must be provided by the doctoral researcher)

Pseudonym and redaction

- Thesis is unchanged but is published under a different name and information has been deleted or blacked out

Metadata only published

- A record giving details of the thesis is made available within WestminsterResearch and EThoS but the full-text of the thesis is not attached. A hard copy of the thesis will be required and made available for readers to consult within the Library.

If you wish to apply for an embargo, applications must be submitted via the VRE. To start the application process log on to the system and select: **My Project > Request Changes>Thesis Embargo**

Academic Research Misconduct

The University Code of Research Good Practice and Framework for Research Governance sets out its expectations as to the proper conduct of research and applies to all members of the University who undertake research, including doctoral researchers.

Indicative examples of unacceptable conduct which may result in disciplinary action for misconduct include:

- Unethical behaviour in the conduct of research
- Plagiarism, or dishonest use of unacknowledged sources
- Fabrication, falsification, or corruption of research data
- Unauthorised use of information which was acquired confidentially

For more information, please refer to 'Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct' on the [Research Governance web page](#).

Rights and Responsibilities & Student Guidance

The University's Welcome to Westminster student guide is available on the [University webpages](#) and includes information on your rights and responsibilities as a student of the University. It is important that you make yourself aware of these rights and responsibilities.

Research Degree Student Charter

The [Student Charter](#) sets out the University's responsibility to you and highlights what we expect from you in return. The University sets out its expectations in relation to behaviour in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). It is important that you make yourself aware of these rights and responsibilities.

The Graduate School's Research Degree Student Charter sets out these expectations within the doctoral research environment. The Graduate School's aim is to provide a distinctive, high quality, vibrant and inspiring experience for doctoral researchers, and within this spirit:

- There is an expectation that all members of the Graduate School community, including academic staff, professional services staff, and doctoral researchers, treat each other with mutual respect and courtesy in order to foster a supportive and inclusive environment.
- Communication from the Graduate School and other members of staff to research degree students is vital in ensuring that important information is effectively communicated. It is the responsibility of research degree students to make sure that they read email communications, whether from the Graduate School, individual members of staff, or other students promptly and carefully. In turn, research degree students can expect a response from academic staff and professional services staff within 5 working days. Academic staff and professional services staff should be aware of the [Effective use of email](#) guidance.
- There is an expectation that research degree students are independent researchers, and as such need to make themselves aware of policies and good practice within the University's research environment and as detailed within the [University's research framework](#). Furthermore, it is the responsibility of all research degree students and supervisory teams to be familiar with the Research Degree Academic Regulations and Research Degree Handbook which can be found in the [Academic Programme section on the Graduate School web page](#).
- Research degree students can expect to be supported by an experienced and appropriately qualified supervisory team which will provide advice and guidance in respect of the research project itself, the development of research skills and training, and pastoral support and signposting.
- There is an expectation that where a meeting (including supervision meetings), training event (including DRDP workshops and sessions), or any other appointment has been scheduled and booked, that this will be attended. If due to unforeseen circumstances, it is

not possible to attend any meeting, event or appointment, apologies must be sent to the organiser in advance with as much notice as possible. Non-attendance at prior booked meetings or events, without notification to the organiser, is impolite, costly, and impacts adversely on organisers and other attendees.

- Research Degree students are expected to devote, on average, 35 hours per week (for full-time students) or 15 hours per week (for part-time students) to their research. Reasonable amounts of annual leave (up to 35 days for full-time students, pro-rata for part-time students) can be agreed between the research degree student and their Director of Studies. Research Degree students are also entitled to maternity, paternity, adoption, parental and shared parental leave (details of which can be found in the Research Degree Regulations and Research Degree Handbook).
- Research Degree students who undertake teaching duties which require them to mark assessments are required to complete a University or College Assessment and Feedback workshop or complete the 'University Certificate of Special Study: Supporting Learning in Higher Education (SLHE)'.
- The availability of teaching hours will be dependent upon resource and capacity issues within a specific College and School, and the University cannot guarantee that teaching hours will be available to all research degree students.
- Research Degree students and their supervisory teams should be particularly aware of current policies and procedures in respect of plagiarism, research integrity, research ethics, research data management, and open access (see the Research Degree Regulations, Research Degree Handbook, and Research Framework for further information).
- There is an expectation that all Annual Progress Reviews (APR) submissions and thesis submissions will be made on time. Equally, there is an expectation that feedback and decisions from APR and thesis submissions will be provided in a timely manner.
- It is the responsibility of those research degree students on Student Visas to ensure they comply with all requirements of their visa, and that they inform the University of any changes in circumstances that may have an impact on their visa status. Any questions relating to visa requirements or change in visa status should be emailed to studentadvice@westminster.ac.uk.
- If something goes wrong during the research degree programme, or circumstances change that impact on the project, this must be raised at the earliest possible time with an appropriate member of staff (usually the Director of Studies in the first instance, but this could also be the School Doctoral Coordinator, Doctoral Tutor, or the Graduate School Registry). It is much easier to resolve any problems or concerns if these are highlighted as they occur rather than in retrospect.

2.11 Student Wellbeing

General Wellbeing

Undertaking postgraduate research is a rewarding – and challenging – experience. You will be faced with many pressures and you may sometimes feel frustrated and anxious. It is important to realise that such feelings are common to many doctoral researchers and there is specialist support available, if you need it, through the University's Counselling Service - see Section 4 for contact information.

The Graduate School also run weekly yoga sessions which are open to all doctoral researchers, and regular 'Wellbeing When Writing' workshops.

During 2022/23 the Graduate School will be offering 2 residential wellbeing when writing retreats, as well as 1-day, campus based writing retreats. Further information can be found on the [DRDP website](#)

Wellbeing Workshops for Doctoral Researchers

As part of the DRDP, workshops are offered to support doctoral researchers on a range of key topics such as relationships, imposter syndrome, isolation and work/life balance. For more information see the [DRDP website](#)

2.12 Disability

If you have a disability or specific learning difficulty, registering with Disability Learning Support is one of the first things you should do when you join the University. They will assess your needs and make sure the appropriate support, through reasonable adjustments, is in place during your studies.

Details of the individual examination and assessment arrangements are outlined in [section B4 of the Research Degree Academic Regulations](#).

Further information on Disability Learning Support is available in [Section 4](#).

2.13 Complaints and Appeals

Informal Complaints

The University works hard to provide a high-quality service to you at all times and in all areas and activities. However, if you ever feel that the standard of academic or service delivery falls short of what may reasonably be expected, where possible you should first discuss the problem with your Director of Studies or another member of your supervisory team.

If your Director of Studies cannot resolve the issue, or if you are unable - or would prefer not - to raise the issue with one of your supervisors, you can speak with your School Doctoral Coordinator, a Doctoral Tutor, or the Graduate School Registry for further advice. See [Section 1.1](#) for contact information.

Formal Complaints Procedure

To find out how best to raise and resolve issues, please refer to the [Student Complaints Procedure](#).

As there are time limits for making complaints, we would encourage you to raise any concerns as early as possible. It is often easier to achieve a successful resolution if concerns are raised earlier rather than later. If you have any queries about this process, please email the Student Complaints team at studentcomplaints@westminster.ac.uk.

Academic Appeals against a decision of the Graduate School Board

An academic appeal can only be submitted on the grounds that there has been demonstrable material irregularity in the conduct of the Graduate School Board in relation to an assessment, examination and/or a decision to exclude a candidate due to a lack of academic progress.

The procedure provides a framework within which a candidate may seek to challenge a decision in order to protect against potential unfairness resulting from an omission or error on the part of the University - please see the [Research Degree Appeal Procedure 2022/23](#) for further information.

3. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT & ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

Some of the following sections contain references to the current [Research Degree Academic Regulations](#) and you are advised to refer to these when consulting this handbook.

Please Note: If you are in receipt of external funding from a UKRI Research Council, specific UKRI regulations and Terms and Conditions will take precedence over the University of Westminster's Academic Regulations for Research Degrees.

3.1 The Virtual Research Environment (VRE)

The VRE is the Graduate School's online system that operates on desktops, tablets and mobiles and allows your doctoral researcher record, to be managed from anywhere in the world.

Part of the VRE is used to manage the administrative processes associated with the doctoral researcher lifecycle which includes:

- Annual Progress Reviews (APR) – [Section 3.2](#)
- Research Supervision meetings
- Submission of thesis for examination (and post-viva revisions and amendments)
- Degree conferment
- Change Requests - [Section 3.4](#)
- Project Information
- Research Ethics applications

The other function of the VRE is to manage your personal development and engagement with our Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP). This includes:

- Workshop details and booking information
- Record of workshops you have attended
- Training Plan
- Research Diary to record your own activities and development

As part of your personal development you will also be able to create and update a researcher profile that will be hosted on our public website to show you are part of our wider research community. We strongly encourage you to set up your researcher profile and keep this up to date.

As a doctoral researcher you are automatically given a profile on the VRE.

To [login to the VRE](#) you must use your University of Westminster ID and password. Once logged in, click on the **My Record** button to access, and view your record.

User guides and manuals to all processes within the VRE are available via the Guides button on the left-hand menu.

For candidates with a Student Visa the VRE is also used to record and monitor your engagement with the University, which is part of our statutory obligations to the UK Home Office.

For any further questions or advice on how to use the VRE please email:
graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk

3.2 Annual Progress Review (APR)

Our research degree programme follows a structure designed to support you through your research, to enable you to submit your thesis within your enrolment period and allows you to reflect on your progress so far and plan for the following year.

The progress of all doctoral researchers is assessed annually (full-time) or bi-annually (part-time) until you submit your thesis for examination. This assessment is carried out through our APR process (which is detailed below). The process also gives doctoral researchers and supervisors the opportunity to raise and address any concerns so that appropriate support can be agreed and arranged. In addition to your School/College, the Graduate School may make its own assessment and overturn School/College decisions on the outcome of an APR submission.

At the beginning of the year you should meet with your Director of Studies to discuss the requirements of your forthcoming APR to ensure that you are prepared and on track to submit by the deadline. You can find which APR you are due to submit through the VRE: ***My Project > Annual Progress Review***

You should use the APR process to get into the habit of writing from the start of your research by building on each APR (chapter/s) every year so you are 'writing' your thesis as you go along.

Writing your thesis is part of the process of research and analysis rather than something to do once your research is finished.

It can be tempting to leave a substantial part of your writing until the end of the doctorate, but be wary of doing this as:

- writing is a skill that needs to be practised - the more you write the easier it will become;
- writing helps you to think through what you are doing and forces you to analyse and make connections;
- a doctoral thesis is a long document and better tackled in small blocks.

You will be required to complete the APR via the VRE.

- September starters submit an APR on 1 May each year.
- January starters submit an APR on 1 October each year.

If this date falls on a weekend, a bank holiday, or during a University holiday closure period, submission must be made by the next working day.

Please note that students on the PhD via Published Work route do not have to undertake Annual Progress Reviews as part of their programme structure. Those on this route are encouraged to meet with their Director of Studies to review progress as and when required.

If you are progressing well with your research, and are planning your next APR submission, your Director of Studies can apply for you to submit your APR at an earlier APR point of up to 1 year before your original APR deadline date (for example if your APR 3 is due on 1st May 2024, a request can be made to bring this APR forward to 1st May 2023, 1st August 2023, 1st October 2023, or 1st March 2024). Please be aware that you can start your APR at any time of the year, but your submission will only be assessed in line with your deadline.

MPhil/PhD doctoral researchers recommended to undertake early upgrade to PhD on the advice of their Director of Studies would follow the APR 2 process in year 1.

To ensure parity across all doctoral research assessment periods, your APR schedule will be altered if you take a suspension or change your mode of attendance. This may result in your APR deadline changing to either 1 October, 1 March, 1 May or 1 August and will be determined by the Graduate School. Your VRE record will be updated to reflect these changes for the remaining enrolment period.

If you have been granted an extension at the end of your enrolment period (see Requesting an Extension - [Regulation B7.22](#)), you will normally be required to repeat APR4. This will be determined by the Graduate School.

You can track the progress of your APR in the VRE and you will be informed of your APR outcome via the VRE, normally by 8 weeks of the submission deadline date.

If the APR (1-3) decision is for a period of remediation to be undertaken before progress is agreed, you should contact your supervisory team to discuss the outcome of your APR and the work you need to complete by the resubmission deadline. *Please be aware that the period of remediation does not affect future APR dates nor your registration end date – these remain unchanged.*

When resubmitting work associated with remediation, you should submit a commentary to identify how the required changes have been completed. Please see [Regulation B6.5](#) for details on possible remediation outcomes.

If the APR 4 decision is unsatisfactory a supportive plan should be put in place with your Director of Studies to ensure timely completion of your thesis. This should be recorded in the VRE as a supervisory meeting.

Once you have submitted your thesis for examination you are no longer required to submit any future APRs.

APR Structure

The table below shows which year the various APRs take place for each Research Degree Programme.

Programme	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
MPhil/PhD Full Time	APR1	APR2	APR3	APR4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
MPhil/PhD Part Time	n/a	APR1	n/a	APR2	n/a	APR3	n/a	APR4
PhD Direct Full Time	APR1	APR2	APR3	APR4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
PhD Direct Part Time	n/a	APR1	n/a	APR2	n/a	APR3	n/a	APR4
MPhil only Full Time	APR1	APR2	APR4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
MPhil only Part Time	n/a	APR1	n/a	APR2	APR4	n/a	n/a	n/a

PhD by Published Work

No APR for the PhD by Published Work

Requirements for each APR

The table below details the requirements of each specific APR.

APR	Aim of APR	APR requirements	APR assessed by	APR outcome	Remediation outcome
APR 1	Assess the progress of the doctoral project since enrolment	<p>1. An overview progress report (3000 words) which must comprise of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Research objectives Research question(s) Literature overview Methodology Time plan Research governance: ethics, ATAS, insurance, copyright Contribution to knowledge (Not MPhil only) <p>2. One draft chapter, report, paper, or equivalent depending on the discipline. This should be between 7,000-15,000 words in length depending on discipline and the nature of the project. The contents of this chapter should be agreed with the candidate's supervisory team.</p> <p>(The MPhil is only 3,000-7,000 words)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report from the Director of Studies Independent Assessor (normally University staff) School Doctoral Coordinator Graduate School Board 	<p>1. Successful progression and continuation on the intended route (MPhil, MPhil/PhD, PhD Direct)</p> <p>2. Unsuccessful progression. A three-month period of remediation will be instigated</p>	<p>1. Successful and continuation on the intended route (MPhil, MPhil/PhD, PhD Direct)</p> <p>2. Unsuccessful and exclusion</p>

APR	Aim of APR	APR requirements	APR assessed by	APR outcome	Remediation outcome
APR 2	To upgrade to PhD (MPhil/PhD) or assess progress and check on course to achieve intended award (MPhil only and PhD Direct)	<p>1. An overview progress report (3000 words) which must comprise of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Research accomplished to date Time/work plan for further research Methodological/other challenges Any significant change to project design Research governance: ethics, ATAS, insurance, copyright Contribution to knowledge (Not MPhil only) <p>2. 2-3 draft chapters, reports, papers or equivalent dependent on the discipline (20,000-40,000 words (or equivalent) whose contents have been agreed with supervisors.</p> <p>(The MPhil is 15,000-30,000 words.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report from the Director of Studies Independent Assessor (normally University staff) Viva School Doctoral Coordinator Graduate School Board 	<p>1. Successful progression and upgrade to PhD (MPhil/PhD) or Successful progression (MPhil only & PhD Direct)</p> <p>2. Unsuccessful progression. A three-month period of remediation will be instigated</p> <p>3. Unsuccessful progression. A six-month period of remediation will be instigated</p>	<p>1. Successful and continuation on the intended route (MPhil, MPhil/PhD, PhD Direct)</p> <p>2. Unsuccessful and exclusion</p> <p>3. Unsuccessful and continuation on MPhil only route (MPhil/PhD and PhD Direct route)</p>

APR	Aim of APR	APR requirements	APR assessed by	APR outcome	Remediation outcome
APR 3 (Not MPhil only – move straight to APR 4)	Review the draft thesis	<p>1. An overview progress report (500 words) which must comprise of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Draft chapters completed ii. Work plan for finalisation of thesis iii. Research governance: ethics, ATAS, insurance, copyright iv. Time schedule for submission <p>2. 3-4 draft chapters, reports, papers or similar (30-60,000 words or equivalent) depending on discipline and nature of project whose contents have been agreed with Supervisors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from the Director of Studies • Independent Assessor (normally University staff) • School Doctoral Coordinator • Graduate School Board 	<p>1. Successful progression. Continue towards final submission and examination</p> <p>2. Unsuccessful progression. A three-month period of remediation will be instigated</p>	<p>1. Successful and continuation on the intended route (MPhil, MPhil/PhD, PhD Direct)</p> <p>2. Unsuccessful and exclusion</p> <p>3. Unsuccessful and continuation on MPhil only route (MPhil/PhD and PhD Direct route)</p>
APR 4	Assess the ability of the candidate to submit their completed thesis before the end of their enrolment period	<p>1. A completed draft thesis</p> <p>2. Research governance: copyright, thesis embargo</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from the Director of Studies • School Doctoral Coordinator • Graduate School Board 	<p>1. Satisfactory. Continue towards final submission and examination</p> <p>2. Unsatisfactory. Continue towards final submission and examination with a supportive plan.</p>	Not applicable

3.3 Remediation (Regulation B6)

If your Director of Studies and supervisory team feel that you are not making satisfactory progress, they may make the decision to enter you into remediation, normally for a period of three or six months. You can also be entered into remediation as part of the Annual Progress Review. The aim of the remediation process is to support you to complete your research programme. The requirements of the period of remediation are recorded in the VRE. Full details are available in [Regulation B6](#).

Please be aware that the period of remediation does not affect future APR dates nor your registration end date – these remain unchanged.

3.4 Changes to your enrolment or personal circumstances

Requests to change aspects of your enrolment should be initiated by the doctoral researcher or supervisory team through the VRE for the following: **My Project > Change Requests**

- Application to defer Viva
- Change Project Mode of Study
- Change to MPhil
- Extension
- Mitigating Circumstances
- Other Change Request
- Suspension
- Thesis Embargo
- Withdraw from programme
- Writing Up status (part-time only)

Applying for a shorter minimum period of enrolment ([Regulation B2.6](#))

The minimum and maximum periods of enrolment are detailed below.

FULL-TIME STUDY

Degree	Minimum Period of Enrolment Permitted	Maximum Period of Enrolment Permitted
MPhil	18 months	36 months
PhD Direct	24 months	Determined upon application*
PhD via MPhil	33 months	48 months

PART-TIME STUDY

Degree	Minimum Period of Enrolment Permitted	Maximum Period of Enrolment Permitted
MPhil	30 months	60 months
PhD Direct	36 months	Determined upon application*
PhD via MPhil	45 months	96 months
PhD via Published Work	12 months	24 months

*see [Research Degree Academic Regulations, Section B, B1.10](#)

If you are enrolled on a D.Prof programme you should contact the Graduate School Registry to discuss your minimum and maximum periods of enrolment.

An application to submit a thesis before the minimum period of enrolment should be submitted by the doctoral researcher no later than the submission of the Application for Approval of Examination Arrangements – [Section 3.7](#) - through the VRE: **My Project > Change Requests > Other change request**

PhD via Published Work Students – you cannot submit your thesis before the minimum enrolment period of 12 months. The earliest possible submission date will be one day following the first anniversary of your initial enrolment (i.e. 12 months plus one day). Please also see [Appendix C](#) in respect of fee liability for thesis submissions during the second year of study.

Change to thesis title, project, or programme

You should ensure that your thesis title is entered into the VRE (on your project page) when you first enrol. Any agreed changes to your thesis title should be updated in the VRE promptly. If you are considering changing any aspect of your approved research programme, it is important that you discuss this with your Director of Studies prior to submitting any such request.

If you are considering changing your research programme at any stage of your enrolment, e.g. PhD to MPhil, your end date will be changed in accordance with the enrolment periods detailed in the above table.

If you are on a funded studentship you may be in breach of the terms and conditions of your studentship should you change any aspect of your agreed research programme, and this may result in your funding ending.

Doctoral researchers in the Schools of Computer Science & Engineering and Life Sciences who are in possession of a visa should be aware of potential visa and ATAS implications if changes are made to their research, e.g. changed thesis title, project or programme (PhD to MPhil). In the first instance, you should email: studentadvice@westminster.ac.uk

Change in personal circumstances

If your personal circumstances change you may need to consider applying for mitigating circumstances, a suspension, an extension or to defer your examination to ensure you can complete your programme. Whilst we expect all doctoral researchers to keep to deadlines, we do appreciate that occasionally, despite the best planning, unforeseen events may occur.

The University operates a fit-to-sit policy for assessment. This means that if you submit an APR assessment or thesis or attend any viva examination you are deemed to have declared yourself fit to attempt the assessment and must accept the result of the assessment or examination.

The table below outlines the options available to you. Full details of the types of application are detailed and should be read in conjunction with section B7 in the Research Degree Academic Regulations.

In addition, you may consider changing your mode of attendance. [See section 3.4.](#)

Summary of Changes to Personal Circumstances

<u>Before thesis submission for examination</u>	Mitigating circumstances	Suspension	Extension	Defer examination
Cannot submit APR by deadline	Yes	Yes	No	No
Cannot attend APR 2 viva	Yes	No	No	No
Cannot submit thesis by the end of the enrolment period	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

<u>After thesis submission for examination but before examination</u>	Mitigating circumstances	Suspension	Extension	Defer examination
Cannot attend examination	No	No	No	Yes

<u>After examination</u>	Mitigating circumstances	Suspension	Extension	Defer examination
Cannot submit amended thesis by deadline (includes minor amendments, revisions, re-examination, and further amendments)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Mitigating Circumstances ([Regulation B7.2](#))

Mitigating Circumstances (MCs) are defined as a short term circumstance which stops you from:

- submitting your APR (including submission of your APR following a period of remediation)
- attending your APR 2 viva
- submitting your thesis for examination
- submitting your amended thesis following examination

If you are prevented from meeting your deadlines (as outlined in the above box) due to short term circumstances outside of your control you must apply for MCs.

You should be aware that for an approved MC, the deadline is normally deferred for no longer than two weeks and **your enrolment period is not extended**. If you have missed a significant part of your studies due to ill health or other personal problems, you must speak to your Director of Studies to discuss whether a Suspension of Studies would be a more suitable option (see below). You will be asked to request a deferral date on your MC application. Any request to extend a period of enrolment must be made through an Extension request (see below).

Once a new deadline date has been agreed by RDPC, submission/attendance must take place by that date, as you are only permitted to defer your deadline once.

All MC applications must be submitted via the VRE. To start the application process log on to the system and select: ***My Project > Change Requests > Mitigating Circumstances***

All claims must be supported by original independent documentary evidence, such as a medical certificate or official documents relating to your circumstances. You are able to submit a request via the above VRE workflow for self-certification for reasons of illness covering the first 5 working days after the relevant submission deadline (and the self-certification request must be submitted within these first 5 working days, stating the nature of the illness). Applications for a period longer than the first 5 working days after the relevant submission deadline must be submitted with independent documentary evidence. Documents in a foreign language should include a translation which, in the first instance, can be translated by the student, but an official translated version may also be required.

You must upload a copy of this evidence to the VRE - any claim submitted without evidence will be rejected outright.

MC claims will be considered, when submitted, by the RDPC. A claim should be submitted as close as possible to the relevant assessment deadline, normally within 10 working days of the circumstances occurring.

For a claim to be accepted you must demonstrate that the circumstances were:

- Unforeseen
- Out of your control and could not be prevented
- Relate to the timing of your deadline

The outcome of your claim will be communicated to you via an email from the VRE, normally within 5 working days after the next RDPC meeting.

If your claim is unsuccessful you have the right to submit additional evidence to support one further claim and this must be submitted within one month of receiving the outcome notification.

If the further claim is not accepted, and your APR or thesis is not submitted by the stated deadline, you will be deemed to have become inactive and risk exclusion - see Regulation B7.37.

If your claim is successful you will not be charged any additional fees.

Suspension of Studies ([Regulation B7.11](#))

Suspension is defined as a period of time when you are inactive and cannot participate in your research. By suspending, your deadline will change for:

- submitting your APR
- submitting your thesis for examination
- submitting your amended thesis following examination

The University expects you to complete your studies in one continuous period of study. However, we do understand that serious, unforeseen, or unpreventable situations may arise that require you to take a formal break from your research. In these circumstances you may apply for a suspension of studies. All applications must include a statement from your Director of Studies and School PhD Co-ordinator before being submitted for approval by the RDPC.

If you are in the UK on a Student Visa, the University is required to notify the Home Office if you suspend. If you are no longer attending your programme, you will not be meeting the terms of your student visa and the Home Office will therefore normally shorten your visa and expect you to leave the UK. Before suspending, speak to your Director of Studies and the Student Advisers for guidance.

Doctoral Researchers on student visas are permitted to suspend studies but will have to return to their home country. You may be able to take a sixty day authorised absence; however you must remain enrolled on the programme. The number of permitted days will be added to your enrolment end date. We strongly recommend anyone on such a visa to discuss their situation with the Graduate School Registry before seeking further information from the student advisors.

All applications for suspension must be submitted via the VRE. To start the application process log on to the system and select: ***My Project > Change Requests > Suspension***

All claims must be supported by independent documentary evidence, such as a medical certificate or official documents relating to your circumstances. The period requested for suspension should be supported by the information contained within the independent evidence e.g. a GP certificate for one month being unfit for work would provide a suspension period of one month. Documents in a foreign language should include a translation which, in the first instance, can be translated by the student, but an official translated version may also be required. You must upload a copy of this evidence to the VRE; any claim submitted without evidence will be rejected outright

You should submit your application as soon as it becomes apparent that you are unable to carry out any work, normally within one month of any situation arising. Longer retrospective suspensions will not be accepted, so it is important that you raise any issues with your Director of Studies or Graduate School Registry staff as soon as possible so we can advise and support you.

Candidates are not normally permitted a period of suspension longer than 12 months over their whole period of enrolment, and similarly during the period permitted to complete thesis amendments after examination. You may apply for a one year suspension or different periods of time that do not exceed 12 months. Any request for additional time away will only be considered under very exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your thesis, it may be possible to find alternative ways to support your situation, such as a change to mode of study. Please contact the Graduate School Registry with any questions regarding suspensions.

Wherever possible, approved suspensions will be calculated from the 1st of each month and, where relevant, your fees will be adjusted on a pro-rata basis. See Appendix C for fee liability information.

You will receive notification of the outcome of your application via an email from the VRE normally within 5 working days of the RDPC meeting. If your application is successful, your status and enrolment end date will be amended, and you will not be expected to be undertaking any research during your approved break.

If your claim is unsuccessful you have the right to submit additional evidence to support one further claim and this must be submitted within one month of receiving the outcome notification. If the further claim is not accepted, your APR or thesis is not submitted by the stated deadline, you will be deemed to have become inactive and risk exclusion - see [Regulation B7.37](#).

We encourage all suspended doctoral researchers to remain in touch with their Director of Studies during any period of absence.

Returning from Suspension

When you re-commence from your time away, your APR schedule will have been updated to take account of your suspension. This may result in your APR deadline changing to either 1 October, 1 March, 1 May, or 1 August - this will be determined by the Graduate School. Your VRE record will be updated to reflect these changes for the remaining enrolment period. Please Note: a suspension starting on an APR submission date will mean that the APR is due for submission on the first day back following the suspension period. If you wish the APR to be remapped, then please consider starting the suspension before the date the APR is due.

A supervisory meeting should also take place within one month of your return to review the work plan and timetable in line with the new end date. You should also take this opportunity to review and plan your engagement with forthcoming DRDP sessions – the Graduate School can be contacted for further guidance.

If you re-enrol later than the return date, your end date will not be changed accordingly as that period of non-enrolment has to be considered as non-engagement and not continued suspension.

Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental & Shared Parental Leave ([Regulation B7.32](#))

Maternity and adoption leave of up to 12 months can be requested through the suspension process detailed above.

Paternity, parental and shared parental leave (in line with the entitlement for employees of the University) can be arranged through your Director of Studies. The Graduate School Registry must be informed of the arrangement so that your enrolment end date can be amended accordingly. You will need to provide evidence to support the application. If the Graduate School Registry are not informed, your end date will not be amended, and retrospective application of paternity leave is not permitted. Apply through the VRE: ***My Project > Change Requests > Suspension***

If you are pregnant, it is recommended that a risk assessment is undertaken for your own health, safety, and wellbeing. Therefore, you are advised to consider informing your School at the earliest opportunity.

Doctoral researchers funded by UKRI should refer to the Terms & Conditions of their studentship in respect of entitlement to maternity and paternity pay.

Requesting an Extension ([Regulation B7.19](#))

Extension is defined as an event which occurs towards the end of your enrolment period or amended thesis deadline which means you require more time to write up your thesis or complete your practical work. By taking an extension it will extend your deadline for:

- your enrolment period and the deadline to submit your thesis for examination
- submitting your amended thesis following examination

The expectation is that all doctoral researchers will:

- submit their thesis for examination within the permitted period of enrolment; and
- submit their amended thesis following examination by the set deadline

However, we do understand that there are rare occasions where a serious or unforeseen event may impact on your progress towards the end of your enrolment or amended thesis deadline. In such situations you may be eligible to apply for an extension.

Please be aware – if an extension is approved, additional tuition fees will normally apply. See [Appendix C](#) for fee liability information.

All applications must include a statement by your supervisory team and School before being submitted for approval to the RDPC.

All applications for extension must be submitted via the VRE. To start the application process log on to the system and select: ***My Project > Change Requests > Extension***

All claims must be supported by independent documentary evidence, such as a medical certificate. The period requested for an extension should be supported by the information contained within the independent evidence e.g. a GP certificate for one month being unfit for work would provide an extension period of one month. Documents in a foreign language

should include a translation which, in the first instance, can be translated by the student, but an official translated version may also be required. Please note that reasonable adjustments made for any disability cannot be used as your evidence for an extension request (see 2.12). You must upload a copy of your evidence to the VRE. Any claim submitted without evidence will be rejected outright.

You must submit your application before the end of your enrolment period or your amended thesis submission deadline. You will normally only be permitted an extension of up to a maximum of 12 months to your period of enrolment or to your amended thesis deadline. Longer extensions are only granted in very exceptional circumstances that are supported by strong independent evidence.

Only in very exceptional circumstances can a further application for extension be submitted. Exceptional circumstances are defined as a new unexpected or unforeseen event, and not a continuation of the reason for the initial extension. If it is a continuation of the previous event you should instead suspend in line with suspension requirements.

In some situations where you need an extension to your enrolment period, a suspension of studies or change of mode of attendance from full-time to part-time may be a better option for you. Therefore, it is important that you discuss any problems with your supervisory team and the Graduate School Registry as soon as possible so we can advise and support you.

You will receive notification of the outcome of your application via an email from the VRE normally within 5 working days of the RDPC meeting. If your application is successful, your enrolment end date will be amended to represent the permitted additional time.

If your claim is unsuccessful you have the right to submit additional evidence to support one further claim and this must be submitted within one month of receiving the outcome notification. If the further claim is not accepted, your thesis is not submitted by the stated deadline, you will be deemed to have become inactive and risk exclusion - see [Regulation B7.37](#).

Requesting to defer an examination ([Regulation B7.26](#))

Once you have submitted your thesis for examination, if you encounter issues which mean that you cannot attend your examination, you will need to apply to defer your viva.

As soon as you are aware that you cannot attend your examination, you should inform your Chair of Examiners and the Graduate School Registry and apply to defer your viva.

All applications must include a statement by your Director of Studies and School PhD Coordinator before being submitted for approval by the RDPC.

All applications must be submitted via the VRE. To start the application process log on to the system and select: **My Project > Change Requests > Application to Defer Viva**

All claims must be supported by independent documentary evidence, such as a medical certificate or official documents relating to your circumstances. Documents in a foreign language should include a translation which, in the first instance, can be translated by the student, but an official translated version may also be required. You must upload a copy of this evidence to the VRE. Any claim submitted without evidence will be rejected outright.

If your claim is unsuccessful you have the right to submit additional evidence to support one further claim and this must be submitted within one month of receiving the outcome notification. If the further claim is not accepted, and you do not attend your examination, you will be deemed to have become inactive and risk exclusion - see [Regulation B7.37](#).

If you make an application to defer your examination more than once, the Graduate School Board will make an assessment about whether you are capable of attending an oral examination and take appropriate action.

Change of Mode of Attendance ([Regulation B2.8](#))

In some instances you may need, or want, to change your mode of attendance part-way through your enrolment period (e.g. full-time to part-time study).

If you are on a Student visa you are unable to change your mode of attendance.

If you are on a funded studentship you may be in breach of the terms and conditions of your funding should you change mode, which may result in your funding ending – see your offer letter and terms and conditions for details.

For these reasons it is important that you discuss the implications of changing mode of study with your Director of Studies or Graduate School Registry prior to submitting any request.

Applications must be submitted through the VRE. To do so, log on to the system and select: ***My Project > Change Requests > Change Mode of Attendance***

If approved, you will receive an email from the VRE; your study mode will be updated, and your enrolment end date and future APR requirements amended to reflect the new duration allowed to submit your thesis. Tuition fee liability and stipend levels will also be updated.

Annual Leave

The Graduate School Supports reasonable amounts of leave for all doctoral research students. The parameters of 'reasonable' are based on the leave allocations of staff – ie 35 days (pro-rata for part-time). Annual leave is negotiated at a local level between the doctoral research student and their Director of Studies.

Postgraduate Research Study continues throughout the year (with reasonable amounts of leave supported as highlighted above) and does not follow the University's standard undergraduate or postgraduate taught term dates.

Change of Supervisory Team

There may be instances where the arrangement of your supervisory team needs to change. You may require support from an additional supervisor with specific expertise or the direction of your research may change, and different supervisors need to be allocated.

Supervisory teams can request the change in the VRE via 'Request Changes' on 'Your Project'. ***Any changes to the supervisory team must be requested via the VRE by a member of the supervisory team, not by the research degree student themselves.***

Withdrawing from your degree ([Regulation B7.35](#))

Should you wish to end your enrolment and leave your programme of study at the University voluntarily you must complete a formal request to withdraw.

We recommend that you discuss any potential decision to withdraw with your Director of Studies, supervisory team or the Graduate School Registry before completing the process in case we can advise and support you in any way that will allow you to continue with your studies.

All requests to withdraw must be made via the VRE. To start the process log on to the system and select: ***My Project > Change Requests > Withdrawal from Programme***

Once processed you will receive written confirmation from the Graduate School Registry.

Should you wish to return to the University at a later date you can reapply through the normal application process.

If you are in the UK on a Student Visa, the University is required to notify the Home Office if you withdraw. If you are no longer attending a course, you will not be meeting the terms of your student visa and the Home Office will therefore normally shorten your visa and expect you to leave the UK. Before withdrawing, speak to the Student Advisers for guidance.

3.5 Writing Up Status

Full-Time Students

Full-time PhD students will automatically be entered into a 'writing-up' mode of attendance as you enrol for Year 4 of your research programme of study (if you have previously suspended or changed mode of study, this may be at a later point). Full-time students entering Year 4 are expected, by this point, to be solely engaged in writing-up their research project/completing their practice work rather than still actively undertaking research.

Entering writing-up mode will permit you to a six month period where no tuition fees are due. The writing-up mode will not alter your end date, and the normal expectation is that you will submit your thesis for examination by the end of your six month no-fee period.

Should you not have submitted your thesis for examination by the end of the six month no-fee period you will be charged a fee of £1,500 (regardless of the time then taken to submit within the next 12 months). You will be charged a further £1,500 should you not have submitted within the next 12 months, and for each additional 12 month period that is then required to submit (regardless of the time taken to submit within that 12 month period), unless the additional 12 month period results from an agreed suspension, extension, or mitigating circumstances request related to ill-health (when the fee will be deferred for the period of the agreed request).

Once you have submitted your thesis you are no longer charged fees.

Part-Time Students

As a part-time PhD student, you will automatically be entered into a 'writing-up' mode of attendance as you enrol for Year 7 of your research programme of study (if you have previously suspended or changed mode of study, this may be at a later point). Part-time students entering Year 7 are expected, by this point, to be solely engaged in writing-up their research project/completing their practice work rather than still actively undertaking research.

Entering writing-up mode will permit you a twelve month period where no tuition fees are due. The writing-up mode will not alter your end date, and the normal expectation is that you will submit your thesis by the end of your twelve month no-fee period.

Should you have not submitted your thesis for examination by the end of the twelve month no-fee period, you will be charged a fee of £1,500 (regardless of the time then taken to submit within the next 12 months). You will be charged a further £1,500 should you not have submitted within the next 12 months, and for each additional 12 month period that is then required to submit (regardless of the time taken to submit within that 12 month period), unless the additional 12 month period results from an agreed suspension, extension, or mitigating circumstances request related to ill-health (when the fee will be deferred for the period of the agreed request).

Once you have submitted your thesis you are no longer charged fees.

Additionally, as a part-time student, you may apply for writing-up status before Year 7 of your programme if you have completed the active research of your project and will solely be engaged in the writing up of your work/completion of your practice work for the remainder of your programme AND you have successfully completed APR 3 (or APR 2 for those students on the professional doctorate route). Under these circumstances, there will be two opportunities during the year to apply for writing-up status. If you are a September starter, you can apply for writing up either by the 1st October, or by the 1st April. If you are a January starter, you can apply for writing up either by the 1st February, or by the 1st August.

Applications for writing-up must be received before the above dates. Late applications will not be accepted, and you will have to wait for the next application date.

To apply to enter writing up you must submit an application online via the VRE. Once you've logged on to the system go to: ***My Project > Change Requests > Writing Up Status***

You will be notified by email via the VRE once accepted and your status altered accordingly. Your tuition fees will also be varied to reflect the no-fee period of enrolment (see above).

Please note: Writing Up mode is not applicable to students on the MPhil only study route.

If you have any questions regarding the writing up process, please email graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk

3.6 Re-enrolling in a timely fashion

You will be asked to re-enrol each year (including during the examination period following the final submission of your thesis); please be sure to re-enrol as soon as you are notified as ***if you do not re-enrol (for whatever reason) you may jeopardise your status as a doctoral researcher and risk exclusion***. Please be aware, late re-enrolment will not result in your programme end date being extended.

3.7 Submission and Examination ([Regulation B8](#))

Arranging the examination and date

Your Director of Studies is responsible for proposing examiners and applying for the Graduate School Board's approval through the VRE.

The examination panel and the examination arrangements should be in place at least 3 months before you submit your thesis.

As such, please ensure your Director of Studies is aware when you aim to submit your thesis for examination, so they can begin the examination arrangements process in a timely fashion. Every effort will be made to confirm the examiners and date at the earliest opportunity but will be dependent on the availability of the examiners.

In issues of thesis confidentiality, this is the latest stage you should apply for thesis embargo -Section 2.10.

When the examiners - including the Chair of Examiners, who is responsible for arranging the examination data and time - is approved, you will receive notification through the VRE. At this stage, if you have any further queries, please contact the Chair of Examiners.

You can view the status of your examination in the VRE: ***My Project > Examination***

Thesis Format and Submission for Examination

Your submission must be made before your enrolment end date. If this date falls on a weekend, a bank holiday, or during a University holiday closure period, submission must be made by the end of the next working day.

The final version of your thesis for examination – and a declaration of the originality of your work - must be uploaded online through the VRE. To do this log on and go to: ***My Project > Examination > Examination Record > Create New***

The format of your thesis must be as detailed below.

The Research Degree Academic Regulations specify that the text of the thesis should **not normally exceed approximately 80,000 words for PhD and 40,000 words for MPhil** – this includes footnotes, but does not include appendices, table of contents, tabulated and statistical data, diagrams and analogous illustrative material (maps, facsimile documents etc) and the bibliography.

These figures are intended only as an approximate guide and may vary according to either specific projects or discipline. You should not feel that your thesis must necessarily be as long as the indicated word limit.

Thesis for a **Professional Doctorate** would normally be a **minimum of 40,000 words for a STEM subject area and 60,000 words for a non-STEM subject area**. Please refer to [Regulation D2.13](#) and your Course Handbook for more detailed guidance.

Please refer to [Regulation C1.13](#) for guidance on submission of work for **PhD by Published Work**.

The thesis should be organised in the following format:

- Title page
- Abstract (approximately 300 words, on a separate page)
- List of contents

- List of tables, illustrations, etc
- List of accompanying material (if any)
- Preface (if appropriate)
- Acknowledgements
- Author's declaration (suggested wording: I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.)
- Definitions
- Text of the thesis, divided into chapters, sections, etc
- Appendices
- Glossary
- List of references
- Bibliography

In addition:

- Theses shall normally be in A4 format, saved as a PDF document.
- The thesis shall be saved in a legible form with the size of character used in the main text, including displayed matter and notes, normally in 12 point font size.
- The thesis copy shall be set so that if printing is required this will be on one side of the page only.
- The margin at the left-hand edge of the page shall not be less than 40mm; other margins shall not be less than 15mm.
- Double or one-and-a-half spacing shall be used in the typescript except for indented quotations or footnotes where single spacing may be used.
- Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages.

The thesis title page must contain the following information - see also [Appendix A](#):

- full title of the thesis
- full name of the author
- that the degree is awarded by the University of Westminster
- the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements
- the collaborating establishment (if any)
- month and year of submission (for examination copies only, final submission copies must contain the month and year of award).

It is important that, if you have not already done so, any issues surrounding thesis embargo and confidentiality are considered - [Section 2.10](#). If an embargo application is approved, you will still be required to submit an EThOS agreement (see Open access and E-thesis) at the time of final submission.

If you have any queries relating to your thesis content you should, in the first instance, contact your Director of Studies.

The University operates a policy of e-only submission of doctoral theses. This contributes to the University's sustainability goals and reduces costs for doctoral research students.

Should an examiner have a specific need for a hard copy of the final thesis, the Graduate School will arrange for the printing and dispatch of a hard copy thesis to the examiner and

will cover these costs. We will ask for your consent before we print and dispatch a hard copy of your thesis.

Should you wish to have a hard copy of your final thesis, you will be responsible for the printing and any associated costs (the Graduate School can provide details of Printing Companies on request).

If there are any additional non-documentary materials that are to be submitted with the thesis (for example filmed materials) these should be uploaded to the VRE alongside the thesis itself. If there are non-documentary materials that cannot be uploaded to the VRE, please make an appointment with the Graduate School Registry to arrange for their submission.

Preparing for your oral examination

To help you prepare for your final viva examination, a one hour workshop takes place twice each year, as part of the DRDP programme. You are strongly encouraged to attend one of these – please see the DRDP website for further information.

Your Director of Studies can only attend your viva if you and the examiners have agreed this in advance through the Chair of the Examiners. Please see [Research Degree Academic Regulation Section B8.16](#) of the Regulations for the Award of Research Degrees for further details. If in attendance, the Director of Studies cannot speak during the course of the viva unless given specific permission to do so by the Chair of Examiners.

Normally, the oral examination (viva) will take place ‘in-person’ on campus. However, with your agreement, it is possible for the viva to take place ‘online’. You should discuss the preferred format of your viva with your Director of Studies. Please see the [Research Degree Academic Regulations Section B, B8.14](#).

What happens after your examination

The examiners’ recommendations – and any required amendments - will be forwarded to the Graduate School to approve. In due course you will receive email notification from the VRE as to the examination outcome and what you are now required to do.

Please note, if following your examination, you have been advised that you have to undertake minor amendments, revisions or undertake a re-examination, the new submission deadline will start from the date of the official notification from the VRE.

Amended thesis submission following the examination

If amendments are required to your thesis, it is a requirement that you refer to the amendments report from the VRE and, as well as submitting your amended thesis you should provide a list or commentary to explain the amendments you have made. It is also good practice (although not a requirement) to provide a version of your corrected thesis which includes tracked changes.

If you are required to resubmit your thesis for re-examination you are not required to provide a list or commentary.

All documents relating to the amended thesis should be uploaded through the VRE.

Please be aware - it is not the intention for examiners to review multiple copies of the amended thesis and the University would not condone on-going dialogue and/or email communication between doctoral researchers and examiners in order to achieve an amended thesis submission. If there are any queries surrounding the amendments required following the viva, please liaise with the Chair of Examiners in the first instance.

What happens after you have submitted your amended thesis

If amendments were required to your thesis, once the revised thesis and commentary have been uploaded on the VRE, the Graduate School Registry will send the documents to the examiner/s and ask them to review and make a final decision on the award. Examiner/s are asked to respond in one month, although this is dependent on their availability.

In due course you will receive email notification from the VRE as to the outcome and what you are now required to do.

If you resubmitted your thesis and are required to be re-examined, the same procedure is followed as for the first examination.

Final thesis submission for conferment of award ([Regulation B8.47](#))

Candidates are required to submit an electronic copy via the VRE of their final approved thesis in order for their work to be published on WestminsterResearch and EThOS and for the degree to be conferred. You will also be required to complete a conferment task on the VRE at the time of final submission.

Should your thesis contain explicit content a warning needs to be included after the title page.

PhD by Published Work candidates should also upload the following alongside their final thesis (if not already included in the appendices of the thesis itself)

- PDF versions of the publications referred to in the thesis.
- Electronic files of any 'video' publications, or
- Links to online versions of these publications, including any video publications. These online versions must be openly available to the reader of the thesis.

If there are any publications or practice based works that cannot be either uploaded to the VRE, nor can be accessed via an open weblink, please make an appointment with the Graduate School Registry to arrange for their submission.

If you have an approved thesis embargo the above submission/s apply and will be securely held by the Library until the embargo period expires.

All final copies of thesis must be formatted in the same manner as the copies submitted for examination.

If you have redacted anything from your thesis for reasons of third party copyright (or as a result of an approved embargo) you must submit, electronically, both the un-redacted and redacted versions of your final thesis (however, only the redacted version will be made publicly available via the University's repository).

ALERT: Access to University systems (email, VRE – including your research diary) will cease 18 months after your award date. You are strongly advised to retrieve any

necessary information from these systems before you submit your final thesis, and to complete the conferment process as soon as possible following your award being confirmed (see Conferment and Graduation below)

Conferment and Graduation

The final degree conferment and certificate will only be arranged once all the requirements have been submitted and the award confirmed. The conferment certificate will contain the degree - e.g. Doctor of Philosophy - and the thesis title; it will not include the subject area or College/School name.

The conferment letter will normally be issued within one week of final thesis submission, however, at busy times of the year this may take longer. The conferment letter will be produced using your name and address as it is held within the student record system (therefore any changes to these details must be updated before final thesis submission).

Conferment reports are issued monthly by the Graduate School to the Student Life Cycle team (who are responsible for graduation ceremonies) whereupon certificates are produced.

Details of the Graduation Ceremony dates can be found on the [Graduation web page](#)

You will be invited to your graduation ceremony by email (this will be sent to your University email account). Once you receive this invitation you will be able to book your place, purchase guest tickets and, if required, apply for a visa support letter. Further details can be found on the [Graduation web page](#).

If you have any queries about graduation, please contact the Student Lifecycle team by email: studentcentre@westminster.ac.uk

4. UNIVERSITY SUPPORT SERVICES

4.1 Details of University Support Services

From the start of the 2022/23 academic year, a refreshed Library and Student Centre service will operate across our Harrow, Cavendish and Marylebone campuses. The new service model will transform students' user experience by enabling them to quickly access the support they need in one place, without the need to visit several different service points. The Library and Student Centre team will be able to support you with general enquiries, such as issues with ID cards, where to find information on the web, and general wayfinding. They will also triage queries and refer more complex enquiries to other services who will no longer have a front-line presence, e.g. Careers, Visa Compliance, Wellbeing, Student Finance, Student Lifecycle and Student Support.

Under the new working model, you will continue to raise questions related to your doctoral research programme via the Graduate School Registry team, for example by emailing to graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk or by booking online and in-person appointments. However, doctoral research students will also be able to use the more general services related to University life offered by the Library and Student Centres.

Further information and contact details (including an online chat facility) for all University support services are available on the [Support and Services](#) and [Student Hub](#) webpages

4.2 University of Westminster Students' Union

When you enrol at the University, you automatically become a member of the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU) – an independent organisation that is run by students, for students.

The Students' Union is there to represent your needs as a student, protect your rights and make sure your voice is heard when key decisions are made at the University.

The Union is also home to a range of sports clubs and societies, as well as Smoke Media (Smoke magazine, Smoke Radio and Smoke TV). It boasts a bar (the Undercroft) and nightclub (Area 51) in Harrow, and has two shops that stock various student essentials – one at our Harrow campus and one at our Cavendish campus.

Tel: 020 7911 5000 ext 65070

Email: su-info@westminster.ac.uk

Web: [University of Westminster Students' Union](#)

4.3 University of Westminster PhD Society

The PhD Society is a social society formed under the auspices of the Student's Union (see above). The PhD Society offers a social and supportive space for the doctoral researcher community. Being part of the PhD Society means that you can share the research you are passionate about, learn from the research of others, and practice presenting at the annual symposium. You can improve your skills and knowledge by attending student-led workshops on topics chosen by the Society, plus gain teaching experience by running and designing

workshops yourself. The PhD Society is also a space to communicate any worries you have to your colleagues or to the University, as well as providing the opportunity to get to know your colleagues in an informal environment.

For details of how to become a member of the Society, please visit the website address below.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UWSUPhDSociety/>

Twitter: @UoWPhDSociety

Web: [University of Westminster PhD Society](#)

4.4 Fieldwork and Offsite Working

Doctoral researchers who, as part of their research programme, plan to travel away from the University – either in the UK or internationally should ensure they have valid travel insurance and risk assessments in place. Please refer to the website below for further information.

Doctoral Researchers on Student Visas are able to request a letter confirming their enrolment details on the research degree programme should this be required for fieldwork or offsite working (this letter can be requested from graduateschool@westminster.ac.uk). However, Student Visa holders must check their visa eligibility with Student Advice (studentadvice@westminster.ac.uk) before arranging fieldwork or other offsite working if overseas travel is required (and follow the guidance at Appendix D).

Web: Fieldwork and Offsite Working <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/student-matters/fieldwork-and-offsite-working>

APPENDIX A - Specimen Thesis Title Page

(See next page for Specimen Spine and Cover)

THE ORIGINS OF THE FARMERS' CO-OPERATIVE IN WESSEX

JENNIFER ARCHER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Westminster
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

This research programme was carried out
in collaboration with the Borchester Farmers' Club

April 2023



This date is the month and year that you were awarded.

*If you are unsure of this date, you can find it on your VRE record:
<https://research.westminster.ac.uk/> - an example is outlined below:*

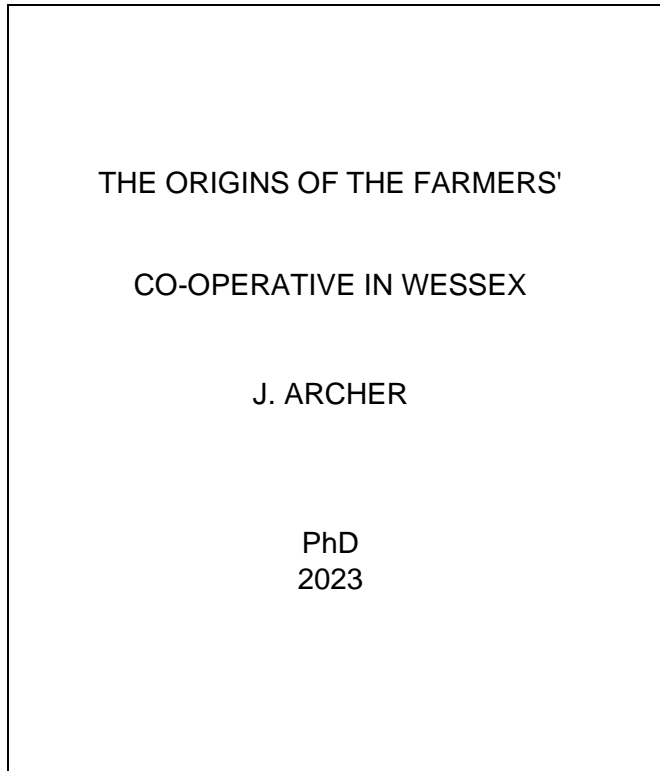
Thesis submitted for examination: 12 December 2022

Viva date: 1 February 2023

Award date: 12 April 2023

.

Specimen Thesis Cover



APPENDIX B – Masters and Doctoral Award Descriptors

The following are reproduced from the [Quality Assurance Agency Frameworks for HE Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#), 03 November 2014.

Level 7 Master's Degree

4.17 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 on the FHEQ: master's degree.

The descriptor provided for this level of the frameworks is for any master's degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at level 7, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations

- the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

- 4.17.1 Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees is at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Successful students show originality in the application of knowledge, and they understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They are able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they show originality in tackling and solving problems. They have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility, and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.
- 4.17.2 Master's degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses, programmes of research or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes may lead to the degree of MPhil. The learning outcomes of most master's degree courses are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year and are taken by graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours (or equivalent achievement).
- 4.17.3 Master's degrees are often distinguished from other qualifications at this framework level (for example, advanced short courses, which often form parts of continuing professional development programmes and lead to postgraduate certificates and/or postgraduate diplomas) by an increased intensity, complexity, and density of study. Master's degrees, in comparison to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas, typically include planned intellectual progression that often includes a synoptic/research or scholarly activity.
- 4.17.4 Some master's degrees, for example, in science, engineering and mathematics, comprise an integrated programme of study spanning several levels. Such programmes typically involve study equivalent to at least four full-time academic years in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland and five in Scotland. Of this, study equivalent to at least one full-time academic year is at level 7 of the FHEQ and the final outcomes of the qualifications themselves meet the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 in full. Study at bachelor's level is integrated with study at master's level and the programmes are designed to meet the qualification descriptors in full at level 6 of the FHEQ as well as those at level 7 of the FHEQ. Such qualifications are often termed 'integrated master's' as an acknowledgement of the prior period of study at lower levels (which typically meets the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 6).
- 4.17.5 First degrees in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science comprise an integrated programme of study and professional practice spanning several levels. While the final outcomes of the qualifications themselves typically meet the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7, these qualifications may often retain, for historical reasons, titles of Bachelor of Medicine, and Bachelor of Surgery, Bachelor of Dental Surgery, Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine or Bachelor of Veterinary Science, and are abbreviated to MBChB or BM BS, BDS, BVetMed and BVSc respectively. The use of the title 'Dr' by medical doctors is a historical abbreviation for the profession; it does not indicate a qualification at doctoral level (level 8 on the FHEQ).

Level 8 Doctoral Degree

14.8 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 8 on the FHEQ: doctoral degree.

The descriptor provided for this level of the frameworks is for any doctoral degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other level 8.

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments

4.18.1 Doctoral degrees are awarded for the creation and interpretation, construction and/or exposition of knowledge which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research.

4.18.2 Holders of doctoral degrees are able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctoral degrees have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields and an innovative approach to tackling and solving problems.

- 4.18.3 Doctoral programmes that may have a substantial taught element in addition to the research component (for example, professional doctorates), lead usually to awards which include the name of the discipline in their title (for example, EdD for Doctor of Education or DClinPsy for Doctor of Clinical Psychology). Professional doctorates aim to develop an individual's professional practice and to support them in producing a contribution to (professional) knowledge.
- 4.18.4 The titles PhD and DPhil are commonly used for doctoral degrees awarded on the basis of original research.
- 4.18.5 Achievement of outcomes consistent with the qualification descriptor for the doctoral degree normally requires study equivalent to three full-time calendar years.
- 4.18.6 Higher doctorates may be awarded in recognition of a substantial body of original research undertaken over the course of many years. Typically a portfolio of work that has been previously published in a peer-refereed context is submitted for assessment. Most degree awarding bodies restrict candidacy to graduates or their own academic staff of several years' standing.

APPENDIX C – Tuition Fees, Fee Liability and Debt Management

Research degree tuition fees 2022/23

All fees are expected to increase annually by 3%, in keeping with expected inflation.

Doctoral Researchers within the Schools of Computer Science & Engineering and Life Sciences may be required to pay bench fees in addition to the fees outlined below – these can vary from £1,000 to £10,000.

MODE OF ATTENDANCE	HOME	OVERSEAS
Full Time	£5,520	£14,110
Part Time	£2,760	£7,055
Distance Learning full time	£5,520	£14,110
Distance Learning part time	£2,760	£7,055
PhD by Published Work	£2,760	£7,055
Professional Doctorate	£3,300	£6,600
Writing Up	£1,500	£1,500
Extension to Submission Date	£1,500	£1,500
Re-examination	£1,500	£1,500

Research Degree Fee Liability 2022/23

Fee liability for Doctoral students is calculated on a pro-rata basis. This means that if you withdraw (or are excluded) 14 days after enrolment, your fee liability will be calculated on a monthly basis. For example, if you enrol in September but withdraw in December, you will be liable for 3 months of your total annual tuition fee.

If you suspend your studies, your fee for that academic year will be reduced on a pro-rata basis by the number of months for which the suspension has been agreed. University finance policy states that, at the time of starting a suspension, no fees are refunded but are instead credited against the tuition fee liability when studies are resumed.

If you change your mode of attendance, your fee will be adjusted according to the number of months studied under each mode of attendance.

The fee liability pro-rata basis is not applicable to Writing Up, Extension or Re-examination fees. You will be required to pay the full Writing Up, Extension or Re-examination fee raised for that academic year, no matter when you submit your thesis.

PhD via Published Work Students – if you submit your thesis in your second year of study, but before the final submission/registration end date, your fees for that second year will be reduced on a pro-rata basis according to the number of months enrolled before submission. You cannot submit your thesis before the minimum enrolment period of 12 months (the first year of enrolment) has been completed.

Research Degree Debt Management 2022/23

At the date of re-enrolment each year, if you have an outstanding tuition fee debt originating from the previous academic year your enrolment with the University will be excluded.

If you are an international student whose immigration permission is dependent on your enrolment at the University, you will be reported to the UKVI if you fail to enrol due to non-payment of fees, or if your enrolment is terminated.

If you have an outstanding debt at the point of submitting your doctoral research project, you will not be invited to attend the viva examination. The Graduate School Registry will not forward your thesis to the examiners until the debt is paid. You will not be permitted to graduate, attend a graduation ceremony, or receive any results certificate, diploma, or official transcript in relation to the programme of study to which the debt relates.

For full details of the University's debt management policy, please refer to the Debt Management Procedures.

APPENDIX D – INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOR DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS STUDYING ON STUDENT VISAS (2022/23)

This information should be read in conjunction with the full University guidance here - <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/international/visas-and-advice>

Section A - Requirements

The requirements outlined below must be adhered to throughout the doctoral researcher's programme of study. If any circumstances are likely to arise that mean one or more of these requirements cannot be met, the doctoral researcher must contact the Graduate School Registry immediately for further advice and signposting to the relevant student advice teams.

1. Postgraduate Research Students (referred to as PGRs, Doctoral Researchers or students throughout this guidance) with **Student Visas** sponsored by the University of Westminster are expected to be studying in the UK for the full duration of their research degree programme.
2. **Temporary short-term absences** from the UK are permitted for '**reasonable**' **circumstances**. Reasonable circumstances would include visits to the student's home country and holidays*. These short-term absences should not exceed 60 days for each occasion of absence. Temporary short-term absences must be approved following the process highlighted in 4. below.

**In respect of holidays or 'annual leave', the Graduate School supports reasonable amounts of annual leave for all doctoral researchers. The parameters of 'reasonable' are based on the leave allocations of staff – ie 35 days for full-time doctoral researchers (pro-rata for part-time). Annual leave is negotiated at a local level between the doctoral research student and their Director of Studies.*

3. Additionally, doctoral researchers are permitted to be **temporarily absent from the UK** for a period of up to 12 months during the duration of their research degree programme to undertake **approved fieldwork** related to their research project. Temporary absences from the UK to undertake approved fieldwork must be approved following the process highlighted in 4. below.
4. Temporary short-term absences (see 2. above) and temporary absences to undertake fieldwork (as at 3. above) **must be agreed between the doctoral researcher and their Director of Studies in advance of the period of temporary absence**. Agreement to the temporary absence should be recorded in the relevant supervisory meeting notes on the VRE, with the actual dates of the temporary absence detailed (and these supervisory meeting notes must be approved by the Director of Studies).
5. When undertaking a period of short-term temporary absence (as at 2. above) or a temporary absence to undertake fieldwork (as at 3. above), the **doctoral researcher must update the VRE with their location during the period of absence**. This must be done via the *My Project > Location* field in the VRE. On return from the

period of absence, this field must then be updated by the doctoral researcher to show they are back in the UK.

6. In order to apply for the **3 Year Graduate Route** visa (for those doctoral researchers wishing to remain in the UK after the completion of their research degree programme), doctoral researchers must be studying in the UK during the final year of their programme. Applications for the Graduate Route must be made from the UK and only once the award conferment process has been completed. If it is likely that the conferment process will not be completed before the expiry of the Student Visa, then an extension to the Student Visa must be applied for. *See also the information and guidance related to the Graduate Route on the University webpages here - <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/international/visas-and-advice/visas/graduate-route-for-university-of-westminster-students>*
7. Doctoral researchers who receive an **extension to their enrolment period**, or whose viva is scheduled to take place after their current visa expires, may be eligible to apply for an extension to their existing Student Visa. Doctoral researchers will need to request a further Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) to enable an application for an extension to be made. *Further information on the CAS process can be found here - <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/international/visas-and-advice/visas/student-visa/confirmation-of-acceptance-for-studies-cas>*
8. Extensions to existing Student Visas (as per 7. above) will be calculated on the following basis:

Stage	New Student Visa End Date
Prior to submission of final thesis	New enrolment end date plus 6 months
Final thesis submitted but viva date not yet confirmed	Submission date plus 6 months
Final thesis submitted and viva date known but not yet taken place	Viva date plus 5 months
Final thesis submitted, viva has taken place, but revisions required	Revisions due date plus 2 months

9. Doctoral researchers on Student Visas in the Schools of Computer Engineering and Life Sciences will require an **Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate**. This will have been obtained as part of the admissions process and the ATAS statement will appear against the student's project record in the VRE. However, if any changes occur to the student's project or visa status, a new ATAS certificate may be required. Additionally, a new ATAS certificate will be required in the event of an extension being applied for (as per 7. above) *(if the ATAS statement has not changed, the original statement can be resubmitted with Director of Studies' approval and confirmation that the statement still applies)*. *Further information on ATAS can be found here - <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/international/visas-and-advice/visas/student-visa/documents-required-for-a-student-visa>*
10. Doctoral researchers on Student Visas are also entitled to **suspend their studies** for a period of up to 60 days under certain circumstances. An approved suspension will extend the student's enrolment end date by up to 60 days (ie the number of days' suspension approved), in distinction to a temporary absence as detailed in Section A

2. which will not extend the enrolment end date. As the student is suspended during this period, they will not be able to access University resources, facilities or supervision during this period of suspension (again in distinction to the temporary absence as detailed in Section A 2. Where access to resources, facilities and supervision remains in place). The University is required to report all such periods of suspension to the UKVI. If a period of suspension exceeds 60 days this may result in the UKVI ending the Student Visa and requiring the student to leave the UK. *Further information related to suspension of study requests can be found in the Research Degree Handbook here - <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic-programme>*

11. Doctoral Researchers on Student Visas are permitted to **work in the UK**. However, the number of hours they are permitted to work is restricted, normally to 20 hours per week (the student's Biometric Residence Permit will confirm the number of hours that can be worked). Although the Student Visa permits doctoral researchers to work these restricted number of hours, doctoral researchers should be aware that the Student Visa has been issued for the purposes of study, and therefore work should not be undertaken that impacts adversely on the requirements of the research degree programme.

Section B – Monitoring and Reporting

The University of Westminster is required, by the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Department of the Home Office, to have robust processes in place to ensure that the requirements detailed in Section A of this document are met, monitored and reported. The University and Graduate School will meet this requirement as detailed below.

1. **Engagement with the research degree programme will be monitored**, and the University may be required to report to UKVI any doctoral researcher studying on a Student Visa if at least ten contact points are not recorded during any one 12 month rolling period. The following interactions will be considered as valid contact points (and these may take place in-person or online):
 - *Enrolment at the start of the research degree programme (for new starters only)*
 - *Re-enrolment at the beginning of each year of the research degree programme (for continuing students)*
 - *Annual Progress Review (APR) submission*
 - *Annual Progress Review (APR) re-submission (following a period of remediation)*
 - *Supervisory meetings (these must be logged in the VRE)*
 - *APR 2 mini/upgrade Viva*
 - *Submission of final thesis for examination*
 - *Final Viva*
 - *Submission of post-viva amendments/revisions*
 - *Attendance at Doctoral Researcher Development Programme Workshops (these must be logged in the VRE)*

2. The Graduate School will **audit VRE records** twice each academic year to ensure that the requirement for at least 10 contact points per enrolment year is being met by those doctoral researchers studying on a Student Visa (the first audit to show the student is on track to meet the required number of contact points, the second to show this requirement has been met)
3. Additionally, at the beginning of each academic year/enrolment period, the Graduate School will require School Doctoral Co-ordinators to provide a **report of the expected location** of each of the doctoral researchers on Student Visas in their School for that academic year/enrolment period.
4. As outlined in Section A (4. and 5.), any temporary short-term absences from the UK, or temporary absences to undertake approved fieldwork outside the UK, must be agreed by the PGR's Director of Studies, and then recorded in the relevant supervisory meeting notes on the VRE. The Doctoral Researcher must also update the Location field on the VRE during any periods of absence from the UK.
5. The University/Graduate School may be required by the UKVI to report on the engagement record of any doctoral researcher studying on a Student Visa at any point.
6. The University is required to report to the UKVI if a doctoral researcher on a student Visa **withdraws** from their programme of study, or **completes their programme of study earlier** than the enrolment end date (as the Student Visa will then be ended).

Section C – Other Visa Types

1. Overseas doctoral researchers studying by the **Distance Learning (DL)** Route or by the **Published Work** route may be required to come to the UK for the following activities during their research degree programme:
 - *Enrolment at the start of the research degree programme*
 - *Initial University and School DRDP workshops (DL only)*
 - *APR 2 mini/upgrade viva (DL only)*
 - *Final Viva*

In order to visit the UK for the above activities, doctoral researchers will be expected to obtain a **Standard Visitor Visa**. Further information about Standard Visitor Visas can be found here - <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/international/visas-and-advice/visas/standard-visitor-visa>
2. Doctoral researchers who are **EU nationals** should also refer to the information on the University website here - <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/international/visas-and-advice/information-for-eu-nationals>

Doctoral researchers who are EU nationals and who have not qualified for the EU Settlement Scheme will be required to hold a Student Visa, and the requirements, monitoring and reporting detailed in Sections A and B will apply.