UNIVERSITY OF
INSPIRING
RESEARCH
WESTMINSTER

Academic Regulations for Research Degrees

Awards covered include:

- **Masters of Philosophy (MPhil)**
- **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**
- **Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work (PhD)**
- **Professional Doctorates (eg D.Prof, DBA)**
- **Higher Doctorates**

September 2018

Notes

1. **Effective Date**:

   These regulations are effective from **1 September 201**8

   All sections of this document are available online. The online version is the current definitive one and takes precedence in the event of any discrepancy. The regulations and associated documents are available on the website address below:

   westminster.ac.uk/doctoral-research-framework

   The University encourages applications to undertake research degrees from all disciplines/subjects including those sited in professional practice. These regulations should be read in conjunction with the "Research Degrees Handbook" which provides guidance on the application of these regulations for both research candidates and supervisory teams in all subject areas.

2. **Nomenclature**: Research students enrolled on a research degree programme are typically referred to as "candidate" or "doctoral researcher".

3. **Professional Doctorates**: Professional Doctorate programmes are governed by programme specific regulations in addition to these research degree regulations; details can be found in Section D. Candidates should ensure they also refer to the relevant programme handbook for information about the taught component and variations to the management of the Research component, eg progression stages and expectations at each Annual Progression Review. The management of the taught component will be aligned to the academic regulations for taught awards.

4. **Masters by Research (MRes):** Masters by research programmes are managed under the academic regulations for taught awards.

5. **Research Governance:**

   Research degree candidates and their supervisors are responsible for meeting required standards of research governance and should be familiar with the University Framework for Research Governance and associated policies and codes of practice, eg Code of Research Good Practice and the Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research, Research Data Management Policy, Intellectual Property Rights Policy, etc. – see https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-framework.

6. **Transfer from MPhil to PhD registration for a candidate who initiated the upgrade process before the implementation of the Annual Progression Review (APR) process implemented in the 2015/16 Regulations:**

   Candidates undertaking the transfer process under the auspices of the 2014/15 regulations for MPhil/PhD programmes and who subsequently require a period of remediation will be managed under the Annex F provisions in the 2014/15 regulations for MPhil/PhD programmes. Details are available on request from the Graduate School

Registry. Once a satisfactory upgrade to PhD registration has taken place, candidates will be expected to follow the APR requirements under these regulations (see Section B4B5)

Glossary:

APR	- Annual Progression Review
ATAS	- Academic Technology Approval Scheme
Credit	- One credit equates to a notional 10 hours of learning at the appropriate level
D.Prof	- Professional Doctorate, eg D.Prof Health Sciences
DBA	- Professional Doctorate in Business Administration
DoS	- Director of Studies (sometimes referred to as First Supervisor)
DRDP	- Doctoral Researcher Development Programme
EThOS	- e-Thesis Online Service of the British Library
FHEQ	- Framework of Higher Education Qualifications
CRD	- College Research Director
GSB	- Graduate School Board
IELTS	- International English Language Testing System
ISBN	- International Standard Book Number
Level 7 (L7)	- Master's level under the FHEQ
Level 8 (L8)	- Doctoral level under the FHEQ
MPhil	- Masters of Philosophy
MRes	- Masters by Research
PCDC	- Professional and Collaborative Doctorate Committee (sub-committee of GSB
PGDip	- Postgraduate Diploma
PhD	- Doctor of Philosophy
QAA	- UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
RDDL	- Research Degree by Distance Learning Scheme
RDPC	- Research Degrees Progression Committee (sub-committee of GSB)
RPEL	- Recognition Prior Experiential Learning
RPL	- Recognised Prior Learning
Viva Voce	- Oral examination, often referred to as *Viva*
VRE	- Virtual Research Environment

REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

CONTENTS

Section A: Introduction

A1 General Principles

A1.1 The University of Westminster (hereinafter referred to as 'the University') shall award research degrees to enrolled candidates who successfully complete an approved programme of supervised research.

A1.2 The regulations governing the award of research degrees are aligned with published guidance from the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the Quality Code for Higher Education.

A1.3 Programmes of research may be proposed in any field of study subject to the requirement that the proposed programme is capable of leading to:

- Scholarly research; and
- Its presentation in a thesis for assessment by appropriate examiners within the maximum period of enrolment allowed; and, if appropriate,
- An approved alternative form of output, eg a portfolio for a Practice based research degree (see Section B1.4).

A1.4 The University will admit only those candidates who are sufficiently capable, qualified and diligent to achieve a successful completion within the maximum period of enrolment. The scope of the project must be deemed achievable within this timeframe.

A1.5 Following admission, a research degree candidate shall maintain an adequate rate of progress in their work to ensure a timely completion. Where the rate of progress falls short of that required for a timely completion, progress will be deemed to be unsatisfactory.

A1.6 All proposed research programmes shall be considered on their academic merits and without reference to the concerns or interests of any associated sponsor or funding body.

A1.7 The MPhil shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

A1.8 A Doctorate (eg PhD or D.Prof) shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

A1.9 The degree of Master of Philosophy and approved Doctoral awards shall be available only to fully enrolled candidates of the University of Westminster. Continuing enrolment with the University, including the fulfilment of all enrolment requirements and payment of tuition fees where appropriate, are a condition for continuation on the candidate's research project. In enrolling at Westminster, research degree candidates shall confirm their willingness to abide by these regulations and all applicable policies and guidelines.

A1.10 All research degree candidates of the University of Westminster both new and continuing shall be subject to these regulations as well as to the provisions of the University Research Framework https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-framework.

a) **Research Degrees Handbook:**

b) **Framework for Research Governance at the University of Westminster:**

c) **Code of Research Good Practice**:

d) **Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research:**

e) **Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct:**

In addition to the above, candidates in research degree programmes and the supervisory team must comply with the University requirements relating to Health and Safety, Data Management/Information Security and Insurance as well as any external research governance requirements from sponsors or collaborators, eg: funders, NHS, etc.

A1.11 Supervisors in particular should be aware of the University's responsibilities to align its practice with the Quality Code for Higher Education. Of particular relevance are Part A (which includes the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications degree descriptors (reproduced in the Research Degrees Handbook) and Characteristics Statements for Doctoral and Masters Degrees); Chapter B10 (Managing Higher Education Provision with Others); and Chapter B11 (Research Degrees) http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/:

Section B: Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Research Degrees

B1. Admissions Criteria, Enrolment and Orientation

Selection Principles

B1.1 The University will admit candidates onto its programmes based on the following principles:

a) Reasonable expectation that the candidate will successfully complete the project within a pre-defined period of time.

b) The candidate meets the published programme entry requirements.

c) The necessary resources for a timely and successful completion exist and can reasonably be predicted to continue to exist for the duration of the enrolment.

d) Equal opportunities for all applicants.

Note: The University will abide by the requirements of relevant legislation within the United Kingdom and European Union. Particular attention is drawn to the University's Admission Policy and Code of Conduct, which include details on the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act.

B1.2 Research degree admissions are subject to recommendation by the relevant College Doctoral Co-ordinator/Director (or nominee) (acting on behalf of the Head of College) and where a non-standard admission, the Graduate School Board (GSB). Together, the College and Graduate School ensure that that the proposed admission is being made on a sound basis in terms of the academic ability, suitability and motivation of the applicant; the adequacy of the proposed supervisory arrangements; the availability of the necessary facilities and resources; and the validity of the research proposal. The decision will also be informed by objective indicators of the ability and track record of proposed supervisors, including the number of successful completions; completion rate; current teaching, supervisory and administrative load and attendance on supervisory training courses.

B1.3 Applicants for a research degree must apply to enrol as a candidate of the University through the agreed application process and before their application may be considered and processed.

B1.4 Subject to approval by the Graduate School Board (GSB) through the Application process, a candidate may undertake a programme of research as follows:

a) In which the candidate's own creative work forms, as a point of origin or reference, a significant part of the intellectual enquiry. The creative work may be in any field (for instance, fine art, design, engineering and technology, architecture, creative writing, musical composition, film, dance and performance), but shall have been undertaken as part of the approved research programme. The creative work shall be clearly presented in relation to the argument of a written thesis and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context. The thesis itself shall conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length (see Sections B8.34 to B8.37). The final submission shall be accompanied by a permanent record (for instance, video, photographic record, musical score, diagrammatic representation) of the creative work, where practicable, bound with the thesis.

b) In which the principal focus is the preparation of a scholarly edition of a text or texts, musical or choreographic work, or other original artefacts. The final submission shall include a copy of the edited text(s) or collection of artefact(s), appropriate textual and explanatory annotations, and a substantial introduction and critical commentary

which sets the text in the relevant historical, theoretical or critical context and shall conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length (see Research Degrees Handbook).

B1.5 In respect of both a) and b) above, the Application shall clearly set out the form of the candidate's submission prior to approval. Any proposed assessment which departs from an oral examination (*viva*), see Section (B8) will require the support of the College and the Research Degrees Progression Committee of Graduate School Board

General Entry Requirements

B1.6 An applicant for the degree of MPhil or PhD via upgrade from MPhil shall normally hold at least an Upper Second Class Bachelor's degree with Honours and, preferably, a Master's degree from a UK university (or a qualification which is regarded by the GSB as equivalent to such a degree, including overseas qualifications. In such cases the Admissions Office normally refer to the National Recognition Information Centre).

B1.7 An applicant from outside of the UK must demonstrate evidence of appropriate English language proficiency, defined as minimum IELTS score of 6.5 Overall Band Score and a minimum of 6.0 in all elements. The University may choose to accept alternative evidence of significant previous experience in the medium of English as confirmation of an equivalent standard of English. Any offer made by the University will incorporate UK Visas and Immigration Service requirements for a visa.

B1.8 Full time academic members of staff may not undertake research degree study at the University of Westminster except via the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Published Work programme (Section C) or where approved by validated programme specific regulations an appropriate Professional Doctorate programme (Section D).

B1.9 A candidate may apply to enrol for the degree of:

a) Master of Philosophy (MPhil); or

b) Doctor of Philosophy via upgrade from Master of Philosophy (MPhil/PhD); or

c) Doctor of Philosophy (PhD Direct)

B1.10 Research degree candidates shall be admitted to the University on the understanding that their **enrolment will be on the route MPhil with possible upgrade to PhD**. Only in the most exceptional circumstances and on the basis of a detailed case presented to the GSB by the College Doctoral Co-ordinator prior to admission will a candidate be permitted to enrol on the route PhD Direct. Exceptional circumstances shall be defined by the University but might include:

- The possession of a Master of Philosophy degree;
- Evidence of substantial research or professional experience which has resulted in publications, reports or other appropriate evidence of accomplishment; or equivalent;
- Where a candidate transferring from a different institution can demonstrate an upgrade has already taken place then GSB may exceptionally waive the need to complete APR-2 (See Section B5)

The decision as to which route a candidate should be enrolled upon shall be the decision of the Graduate School Board.

B1.11 A candidate may enrol on a full-time or a part-time basis, depending on the chosen subject area. A full-time candidate shall normally devote, on average, at least 35 hours per week to the research; a part-time candidate on average at least 15 hours per week in a year.

B1.12 Candidates in full-time employment will only be permitted to enrol on a part-time basis.

B1.13 Where it is discovered that false information has been presented in support of an Application, the Application shall be declared null and void by the Academic Registrar or nominee.

B1.14 Except where formal collaboration is an integral part of an approved documented award for the project (for example, OST Research Council awards and Knowledge Transfer Partnerships), a candidate wishing to engage in a formal collaboration must submit a letter from the Collaborating Establishment confirming the agreed arrangements with the Application to the research degree programme.

Orientation

B1.15 Following a successful application and subsequent enrolment onto a programme, candidates will be expected to attend an orientation programme and sessions of the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme during which the following policies and processes will be explained:

a) University facilities, support and guidance

b) Degree programme structure

c) Development opportunities including the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP)

d) The Virtual Research Environment (VRE);

e) Research governance covering ethics and research integrity;

f) Annual Progression Review (APR) requirements.

B2 Requirements and Conditions of Enrolment on a Research Degree

B2.1 Within the framework of the University's research degree programmes and the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP), candidates enrolled on a research degree will be required to undertake appropriate research development activity which shall be specified and monitored by the Director of Studies (DoS). An outline of the training and development activities will be set out in the orientation programme and recorded through the Annual Progression Review (APR).

B2.2 All members of the University, both staff and research degree candidates, are required to comply with the University's Framework for Research Governance and its supporting codes, eg Code of Research Good Practice and Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research. In accordance with the Ethics Code, it is the responsibility of the supervisors and the research degree candidate to identify and to declare any ethical dimensions of the research which may be prevalent at the application stage or which may arise later in the research project.

B2.3 Research Candidates are responsible for:

a) Their own personal and professional development, which can include up to a maximum of six hours of other scholarly or teaching related activities per week for a

candidate enrolled on a full-time basis – Candidates who do not have appropriate teaching qualification/training will be required to participate in University teacher training before undertaking any unsupervised teaching activities

b) Maintaining regular contact with their Supervisors and preparing appropriately for meetings with their Supervisors

c) Initiating and keeping records of supervisory meetings, including those held via video-conference, Skype, email or telephone

d) Complying with the requirements of the Annual Progression Review (APR) at all stages of their enrolment.

e) Planning and submitting work as and when required and maintaining satisfactory progress with the programme of research

f) Engaging with the Doctoral Researcher Development Programme (DRDP)

g) Maintaining research records in such a way that they can be accessed and understood by anyone with a legitimate need to see them

h) Raising awareness of any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect their work in a timely manner

i) Being familiar and complying with regulations, policies and procedures which affect them, including those relating to their award, health and safety, intellectual property, electronic repositories and ethical research

B2.4 Candidates for research degrees who fail to meet their responsibilities may be subject to University procedures for managing unsatisfactory performance in research degree candidates, which may ultimately lead to their exclusion from the degree programme.

B2.5 There is a minimum and maximum period of enrolment prescribed for research degrees. A candidate shall not be permitted to submit their thesis for examination either before the expiry of the minimum period, or after the expiry of the maximum period of enrolment, except with the specific permission of the Research Degrees Progression Committee of Graduate School Board (GSB) as provided for in Section B2.6.

B2.6 The minimum and maximum periods of full-time and part-time enrolment shall normally be as set out below:

FULL-TIME STUDY		
Degree Enrolment	**Minimum Period of Enrolment Permitted**	**Maximum Period of Enrolment Permitted**
MPhil	18 months	36 months
PhD Direct	24 months	48 months
PhD via MPhil	33 months	48 months

PART-TIME STUDY		
Degree Enrolment	**Minimum Period of Enrolment Permitted**	**Maximum Period of Enrolment Permitted**
MPhil	30 months	60 months
PhD Direct	36 months	96 months
PhD via MPhil	45 months	96 months

B2.7 Where there is evidence that the research is proceeding exceptionally well, the GSB may approve a shorter minimum period of enrolment. An application for such a time reduction should be submitted as soon as possible and no later than the submission of the Application for Approval of Examination Arrangements (see Section B8.22). Application for such a change shall be made by the process set out in the Research Degrees Handbook.

B2.8 Where a candidate changes from full-time to part-time study or *vice versa*, or when changing research degree programme, the minimum and maximum periods of enrolment given in B2.6 above will apply on a pro rata basis as calculated by the Academic Registrar or their nominee. Application for such a change shall be made through the current appropriate process set out in the Research Degrees Handbook.

B2.9 A candidate seeking a change to an approved research project, including requests for suspension or extension of enrolment, change from full-time to part-time enrolment or *vice versa*, and change of supervisors requires the formal approval of the Graduate School Board. Changes to projects which impact or compromise previously granted ethics approval require the approval of an appropriate Research Ethics Committee, as determined by the University's ethics codes and policies currently in force.

B2.10 A candidate whose work forms part of a larger group project may enrol for a research degree. In such cases each individually enrolled candidate shall have a project that in itself can be distinguishable for the purposes of assessment and be appropriate for the award being sought. The research proposal as part of the application process shall indicate clearly each individual contribution and its relationship to the group project.

B2.11 Where a research degree project is part of a piece of funded research, the GSB shall establish to its satisfaction that the terms on which the research is funded do not detract from the fulfilment of the objectives and requirements of the candidate's research degree.

B2.12 The College, and where appropriate the GSB, may approve an application from a candidate proposing to work away from a University campus, however, the candidate and supervisory team will need to confirm that they can abide by the requirements detailed in the Research Degree by Distance Learning (RDDL) scheme (Section E) and also meet University requirements for safety, health and wellbeing and ethical conduct of the research.

B2.13 Where the programme of related studies includes an approved programme of studies leading to another award and a candidate is enrolled for that programme and fulfils all its requirements, they may be recommended for that award in addition to their research degree award, eg MPhil or PhD.

B2.14 Subject to approval by the GSB, a candidate may enrol for another course of study concurrently with the research degree enrolment, provided that either the research degree

enrolment or the other course of study is by part-time study and that, in the opinion of the GSB, the dual enrolment will not detract from the research.

B2.15 Other than where exceptional permission is requested for the thesis and the oral examination (viva) to be in another language, the GSB shall satisfy itself that the candidate has sufficient command of the English language to complete satisfactorily the programme of work and to prepare and defend a thesis in English (see also Section B8.12). Permission to present a thesis in another language shall normally be sought at the time of application or during APR-1 – details in the Research Degrees Handbook, and shall normally only be permitted where the subject matter of the thesis involves extensive study in or of another language.

B2.16 In addition to meeting the requirements of the Examinations, see Section B8, a condition of the award of the degree, requires that an electronic copy of the thesis be stored in WestminsterResearch (the University's online repository), and EThOS (the British Library's online thesis repository) unless an exemption is granted under Section B2.17 below.

B2.17 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, the approval of the GSB must be obtained, normally during the APR process, Section B5 and no later than the application of approval for the Board of Examiners, Section B8. Details of the rules relating to embargos, which 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, can be found in the Research Degrees Handbook.

B3. Supervision

B3.1 By enrolling on a research degree programme the candidate shall confirm their acceptance of the supervisory role, recognising that supervision by subject experts is a fundamental and indispensable element in the research degree process. In addition, the candidate, under the guidance of the Director of Studies, is responsible for managing learning, for determining what is required and for carrying it out to the required timescales, including engagement with research training and development.

B3.2 A research degree candidate shall have at least two and normally not more than three supervisors.

B3.3 The supervisory team must hold two successful completions of a UK research degree (or equivalent) at the academic level of the programme to be supervised, eg in the case of a Doctoral award, the completions must be at the doctoral level. Where appropriate approved supervisor training at the University of Westminster has been undertaken one completion may be deemed sufficient.

B3.4 One supervisor shall be the Director of Studies (first supervisor) who shall be an employee of the University and who shall be responsible for:

a) The regular and frequent supervision of the candidate;

b) ensuring that a formal record of supervision contact is maintained by the candidate;

c) Ensuring that the candidate is supported and guided in the preparation of Annual Progress Reviews, progress in research training and development and preparation for the thesis submission and oral examinations (viva).

B3.5 In addition to the supervisors, an advisor or advisors may be proposed to contribute some specialised knowledge or to provide a link with an external organisation.

B3.6 A candidate for a research degree enrolled in this or another university shall be ineligible to act as Director of Studies for another research degree candidate but may act as a second supervisor or advisor.

B3.7 Any proposal to alter existing approved supervision arrangements shall be made with the support of the College and the Graduate School Board (GSB) (see Research Degrees Handbook).

B3.8 In the event of a supervisor(s) leaving the University's employment, the University will make every effort to establish alternative arrangements for the continuation of the candidate's programme at the University. Should such arrangements prove impossible to make, the University:

- Reserves the right to withdraw an offer where this occurs before enrolment; or
- Will use its best endeavours to facilitate the transfer of the candidate elsewhere.

B3.9 Each full-time research candidate is entitled to a minimum of 36 hours per annum of input from their supervisory team, though in practice, levels and nature of supervisory input may be greater to reflect both the changing needs of the candidate and the demands of the project at different stages during enrolment. For part-time candidates, the entitlement is 24 hours per annum. It is the responsibility of the Head of College or nominee to ensure that staff timetables allow for this level of input.

B3.10 A candidate can expect to receive a minimum of six recorded supervisory sessions per academic year if on a full-time pathway, and a minimum of three supervisory sessions per academic year if on a part time pathway. In addition, the candidate can expect at least one meeting per annum with the whole supervisor team.

B4 Individual Examination and Assessment Arrangements

B4.1 The University is mindful of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and its need to make reasonable adjustments to appropriately accommodate the learning support requirements of disabled candidates. It is also aware of its responsibilities under the Disability Equality Duty to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. Please contact Disability Learning Support for further information and advice.

B4.2 Individual arrangements for examinations or assessments may be made for disabled candidates or candidates with long-term medical conditions which would affect their ability to undertake the proposed examination or assessment. The procedure for requesting such an arrangement is detailed in the Research Degrees Handbook.

B4.3 Individual arrangements may include additional time for APR, remediation and thesis amendments following an oral examination or additional support with assessment and examinations. (see B5, B6 and B8).

B4.4 The purpose of an individual arrangement shall be to compensate for the restrictions imposed by the disability or medical condition, without impairing the validity of the assessment/examination and without giving unfair advantage relative to other candidates.

B4.5 All requests for individual examination/assessment arrangements must be submitted as soon as possible and normally at least six weeks prior to the date of the first examination/assessment for which the arrangements are requested. Where the

arrangements involve the cooperation of external agencies or the provision of external support (e.g. Braille translation) requests must be submitted at the earliest opportunity in order to meet potentially conflicting bookings and requirements of external agencies.

B4.6 It is a candidate's responsibility to notify the University of their requirements for support in assessment at the earliest possible opportunity. The University cannot accept responsibility for problems in assessment in cases where a candidate has chosen not to, or failed to, notify it of their requirements. Retrospective requests for alternative assessment arrangements, or for additional opportunities to sit for assessments, cannot be considered.

B4.7 The assessors will be informed of any Individual Examination and Assessment Arrangements confirmed by the University's Disability Learning Support Advisers in advance of any assessment so that the needs of the individual candidate may be considered when undertaking the assessment.

B4.8 The University operates a Fit to Sit policy which applies to postgraduate research candidates.

B5. Annual Progression Review

B5.1 All research degree candidates are required to comply with the requirements for an Annual Progression Review (APR).

B5.2 Full-time candidates must submit a formal Annual Progression Review each year. Part-time candidates must submit a formal APR biennially with intermediate Supervisor Review meetings in the intervening years.

Year of Enrolment	Full Time Mode	Part Time Mode	PhD by Published Work (see Section C)
Year 1	APR 1	NA	NA
Year 2	APR 2	APR 1	NA
Year 3	APR 3	NA	NA
Year 4	APR 4	APR 2	NA
Year 5	N/A	NA	NA
Year 6	N/A	APR 3	NA
Year 7	N/A	NA	NA
Year 8	N/A	APR 4	NA

Full details of the expectations for each review are included in the Research Degrees Handbook. APRs are normally submitted on 1 May for September entrants and 1 October for January entrants (some Faculties may require earlier submission), however, where a research candidate is unable to remain with their current cohort of researchers, eg following

a suspension of enrolment (see section B7) they may be required to submit at an alternative APR point.

B5.3 Candidates may undertake an APR process ahead of schedule subject to meeting the enrolment period requirements set out in Section B2.6 and with approval by their Director of Studies. See Research Degrees Handbook for further details

B5.4 The APR requirements detailed above are for MPhil/PhD programmes. Candidates enrolled on a Professional Doctorate programme (Section D) will be required to complete Annual Progression Reviews, however, the details of the timescales and the requirements are programme specific and detailed in the Programme Specific Regulations and Handbook (Section D2.13(b)).

B5.5 All research degree programmes will include a formal progression review that includes the presentation of research outputs and participation in an oral assessment (viva). The purpose of this assessment, normally held as part of the APR 2, is to reassure the candidate and the University that the candidate is on course to achieve the intended programme outcome/award. In the case of an MPhil/PhD candidate this will also form part of the upgrade process from MPhil to PhD enrolment. Where satisfactory performance is not demonstrated (see Section B5.8) a period of remediation will be initiated (see Section B6). In the event that an MPhil/PhD research candidate is not permitted to upgrade from MPhil to PhD enrolment at the conclusion of the APR 2 review a candidate may in exceptional circumstances, where demonstrably improved performance has occurred, and with the support of the Director of Studies and the Graduate School Board, be considered for upgrade to PhD enrolment one further time by repeating the APR 2 assessment process at the next APR review point. The enrolment period for the candidate will not be extended.

B5.6 The assessors for the Annual Progression Review as outlined in principle in Section B5 will normally include the Director of Studies and the Independent Assessor who is external to the Supervisory team and is normally a member of University staff. The assessors will, provide feedback from the oral assessment and assessment of the written material submitted for the candidate to note. The recommendations made by the assessors will be reported to and require approval by the College / School Doctoral Co-ordinator and the Research Degrees Progression Committee of Graduate School Board. Where an Annual Progression Review is not successful the candidate will enter Remediation (Section B6).

B5.7 APR 4 is a pre-thesis submission checklist rather than a formal progression review. As such APR 4 does not include the option for a formal period of remediation. Should a Supervisory team feel a thesis is not ready for submission they can recommend improvements in advance of submission.

B5.8 All judgments and assessments as to the adequacy of progress will be made in relation to the rate of progress and quality of performance required for a successful completion within the maximum period of enrolment for the award in question. Such judgments shall be evidence-based, and where it is part of the APR process it shall normally involve input from independent parties, for example College Research Directors, independent subject experts, and members or agents of the GSB.

B6. Remediation – Procedure to Address Unsatisfactory Performance in Research Degree Candidates

B6.1 The purpose of this regulation is to establish:

a) Clear guidance for addressing unsatisfactory performance and progress in the work of research degree candidates; and

b) Specific procedures to be followed both in the case of poor performance by enrolled research degree candidates both within and outside of the formal Annual Progression Review process.

B6.2 The aim of the remediation process is to support research degree candidates. As such, priority should be given to preventing the development of such situations, and on acting to address them immediately as they arise, for example, by assisting supervisors towards early recognition of issues in academic progress or supervision difficulties, and by encouraging candidates to identify emerging problems and take appropriate and timely steps to address them.

Annual Progression Review Remediation

B6.3 Where a candidate has been referred for remediation as a result of Annual Progression Review, they will normally be given a three-month timetable in which to make modifications. The content of the remediation must be set to address the deficiencies with the APR and to support the candidate in achieving a successful progression outcome (see Research Degrees Handbook).

B6.4 At the APR 2 stage, there is the option for major modifications to be requested within a six-month timescale (see Research Degrees Handbook).

B6.5 Candidates will be provided with a written assessment as part of the Annual Progression Review. The outcome can follow two possible routes:

a) The candidate has successfully completed the APR remediation and can continue with their programme of study. Written confirmation will be sent to the candidate; or

b) The candidate has failed their period of APR remediation and a formal recommendation to exclude the candidate will be made (see Sections B7.35 to B7.39); or

c) The candidate has failed their period of APR remediation; however, the assessors may make a formal recommendation that a candidate be permitted to continue their studies on an MPhil enrolment with the maximum enrolment period being amended to recognise the revised intended exit award.

Remediation outside of the Annual Progression Review

B6.6 Where a candidate is deemed to not be making adequate academic progress outside of the Annual Progression Review (see Section B8), a period of remediation should be initiated by the supervisory team. This should normally be for either a three or six-month period.

B6.7 The requirements of the remediation process will be discussed with the candidate at a formal supervisory meeting. A development plan with clear targets for completion normally over a three or six-month period will be produced as an outcome of the meeting and recorded in a Remediation Log on the VRE. The development plan will outline requirements for APR.

B6.8 A Supervisory meeting will be held at the end of the agreed remediation timetable and the candidate's progress against the development plan will be discussed. The content of the meeting must be recorded in a remediation log. The candidate will be verbally informed of the outcome at the end of the meeting. The outcome can follow two possible routes:

a) The candidate has successfully completed the remediation and can continue with their programme of study. Written notification of the outcome will be sent to the candidate.

b) The candidate has failed their period of remediation and a formal recommendation to exclude the candidate will be made (see Sections B7.35 to B7.39).

c) The candidate has failed their period of APR remediation; however, the assessors may make a formal recommendation that a candidate be permitted to continue their studies on an MPhil enrolment with the maximum enrolment period being amended to recognise the revised intended exit award.

B6.9 If the decision to exclude the candidate has been taken in line with Sections B6.5 b) or B6.8 b), or that the candidate be offered the opportunity to continue with the intention of seeking an MPhil exit award as set out in B6.5 c) or B6.8 c), the recommendation will be forwarded to the Research Degrees Progression Committee of GSB for formal consideration and if appropriate confirmation, after which the candidate will be notified of the decision of the University (see Sections B7.35 to B7.39).

Note: The candidate should be advised in the notification letter of their right to request a review of any decision to exclude the candidate and end their enrolment (see Section B9)

B7. Mitigating Circumstances, Suspensions, Extensions, Request to defer an examination, Withdrawals and Exclusions

B7.1 The following section outlines the requests that a research candidate, and where appropriate and permitted, the Director of Studies can make to change the status of a research candidate. Further guidance is available in the Research Degrees Handbook.

Mitigating Circumstances

B7.2 Mitigating circumstances are defined as serious, unforeseen or unpreventable circumstances that significantly disrupt a candidate's ability to undertake assessment, eg APR.

B7.3 A mitigating circumstances claim should be submitted if a valid short-term detrimental circumstances result in:

a) The late or non-submission of Annual Progress Review assessment or non-attendance at any associated APR oral assessment (viva) or

b) Non-submission of the candidate's thesis for examination by the required deadline; or

c) Non-submission of the candidate's amended thesis following examination.

B7.4 The University does not normally consider claims of performance affected and so operates a 'fit to sit' policy. This means that in submitting an Annual Progress Review assessment attending an assessment, or submitting a thesis, a candidate deems themselves fit to do so. A mitigating circumstances claim cannot normally then be considered for poor performance within the assessment(s). It is the responsibility of the candidate to determine if they are fit to participate in an assessment or if a mitigating circumstances claim should be submitted for non-participation.

Note: Where a candidate is unfit to make reasonable judgement on their ability to undertake assessment, due to mental illness or other exceptional circumstances, or is taken

ill during an assessment, a "mitigating circumstances claim" may be submitted, on the candidate's behalf by the Director of Studies if necessary, where this can be supported by original medical evidence. Where such a claim is accepted, the candidate will be offered the opportunity to re-attempt the assessment(s) in question. The original attempt during which the mitigating circumstances occurred will be discounted.

B7.5 All applications for mitigating circumstances must be submitted for approval by the Research Degree Progression Committee (RDPC) of Graduate School Board (GSB). Claims must include a statement from the supervisory team and College (see Research Degrees Handbook).

B7.6 All applications must be submitted with original documentary evidence, e.g. a medical certificate. Applications submitted without evidence will be rejected outright (see Research Degrees Handbook for further information on the application process).

B7.7 The University reserves the right to check the veracity of any evidence submitted with a mitigating circumstances claim.

B7.8 Candidates will be informed of the outcome of a claim.

B7.9 If a claim is rejected the candidate has the right to submit additional evidence to support one further claim. This must be submitted within one month of receiving the initial outcome notification. Where a mitigating circumstances claim is unsuccessful and an APR has not been successfully completed the candidate may be considered for remediation (see section B6)

B7.10 Candidates are only permitted to defer an APR assessment or each required thesis submission once. Should a candidate be unable to attend or complete a deferred assessment, they must instead apply for a suspension. If a candidate, in such circumstances, does not claim mitigating circumstances or apply for suspension, they can be deemed to be inactive and their case will be considered by the Research Degrees Progression Committee.

Suspensions (the research degree candidate is not active and wishes to suspend their period of enrolment or the period permitted to complete amendments/revisions to a thesis)

B7.11 A suspension of studies is defined as a formal pause in a candidate's studies during which they should not engage with their studies and will not be eligible to receive supervisory support. Candidates and Supervisors should note that during a period of suspension a candidate's enrolment will no longer operate and they will no longer be fully covered by the University's insurance policies and should not use University facilities such as laboratories or undertake research activities associated with their programme of study. Suspensions may only be applied for:

a) If an APR assessment cannot be submitted; or

b) up to the date of submission of a thesis for examination; or

c) the expiry of the maximum period of enrolment, whichever is the earlier; or

d) during the period permitted by the Graduate School Board to amend/revise a thesis following an examination or undertake a re-examination.

In addition, candidates in the UK on a student visa may be required to return to their home country during any period of suspension to comply with the requirements of the UK Visa and Immigration Service.

B7.12 Candidates do not have the automatic right to suspend their studies. The University expects candidates to normally complete their study in a single continuous period. A formal

application, including a statement from the supervisory team and College must be submitted to the Research Degree Progression Committee (RDPC) for approval. (See Research Degrees Handbook for further information on the application process).

B7.13 All applications for suspension must be supported by original documentary evidence, e.g. a medical certificate. Applications submitted without evidence will be rejected.

B7.14 The University reserves the right to check the veracity of any evidence submitted with a suspension application.

B7.15 For a suspension application to be accepted the circumstances must be serious, unforeseen, or unpreventable and will have a longer-term impact on the candidate's ability to continue with their research.

Note: Candidates are expected to plan their work, so they can meet assessment deadlines at the same time as other obligations which they may have both inside and outside the University. Lack of academic progress or additional scholarly activity are not considered legitimate grounds for a suspension.

B7.16 Candidates must submit an application for suspension as close as possible to, and normally within one month of, the time when the circumstances occurred. Longer retrospective suspensions will not normally be accepted. Where an application for suspension has not been successful the candidate has the right to submit additional evidence to support one further application. This must be submitted within one month of receiving the initial outcome.

B7.17 Candidates are normally permitted a maximum period of 12 months' suspension over their whole period of enrolment, and similarly during the period permitted by the GSB to complete amendments/revisions following an examination or undertake a re-examination. This can be made up of different periods of suspension but must not exceed a total of 12 months. Requests for additional time will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. The candidates permitted enrolment period or period to complete amendments/revisions following an examination or undertake a re-examination will be adjusted to take account of any approved period(s) of suspension.

B7.18 Candidates will be informed of the outcome of an application.

Extensions (the research degree candidate is active but wishes to request an extension to their maximum period of enrolment or period permitted to complete amendments or revisions following an oral examination)

B7.19 An Extension is defined as a formal extension to the duration of a candidate's maximum period of enrolment or the period permitted by the Graduate School Board to complete amendments/revisions/re-examination following an oral examination (viva) and is appropriate when a research candidate remains actively engaged in their programme of study.

B7.20 Candidates do not have the automatic right to extend their maximum enrolment period or the period permitted by Graduate School Board to complete amendments/revisions/ re-examination following an oral examination (viva). The University expects candidates to normally complete their study within the regulatory period of enrolment as set out in Section B2.6. A formal application, including a statement from the supervisory team and College must be submitted to the RDPC for approval. (See Research Degrees Handbook for further information on the application process).

B7.21 Grounds for applying for an extension along with the conditions of the application are the same as those for a suspension set out in Sections B7.11 to B7.18.

B7.22 Candidates must apply for an extension prior to the end of their enrolment period or during the period permitted by GSB for amendments/revisions to a thesis to be completed following an examination or undertake a re-examination. Late applications will not be accepted unless under exceptional circumstances which must be explained by the candidate in their application.

B7.23 Candidates are normally only permitted a maximum period of 12 months' extension to their period of enrolment and similarly to the period permitted by GSB for amendments/revisions to a thesis following an examination or undertake a re-examination. Longer extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

B7.24 Candidates may only exceptionally apply for more than one period of extension (see Research Degrees Handbook for guidance). Where an application for extension has not been successful the candidate has the right to submit additional evidence to support one further application. This must be submitted within one month of receiving the initial outcome.

B7.25 Where an application for extension has not been successful the candidate has the right to submit additional evidence to support one further application. This must be submitted within one month of receiving the initial outcome.

Request to Defer an Examination

B7.26 Following the submission of the final thesis for examination a candidate no longer has the option of suspending their studies before the examination. In addition, the University operates a "fit to sit" policy in relation to examinations. If a candidate is unable to attend an examination due to a serious, unforeseen or unpreventable circumstance, eg illness then the candidate should immediately inform the Chair of Examiners and Graduate School Registry and submit an application to defer their examination.

B7.27 All applications to defer an examination must be supported by original documentary evidence, e.g. a medical certificate. Applications submitted without evidence may be rejected. It is recognised that there could be occasions where the candidate is unable to make this application themselves, eg hospitalisation, in which case the University may make the initial application on the candidate's behalf.

B7.28 Grounds for applying for a Defer along with the conditions of the application are the same as those for a suspension set out in Sections B7.11 to B7.18.

B7.29 If a candidate makes such an application on more than one occasion there will be a review by the Graduate School Board, in consultation with the College, to assess whether the candidate will be capable of attending an oral examination. In exceptional circumstances the Graduate School Board will consider if an alternative form of examination would be more appropriate.

B7.30 Candidates will be informed of the outcome of an application.

Sickness Absence

B7.31 Candidates who are absent due to sickness should notify their Director of Studies immediately. Where a candidate's ability to carry out their research safely may be affected by an illness or other impairment the, the University reserves the right to seek advice from Safety Health and Wellbeing and if appropriate independent medical advice. If necessary, the University can require a candidate to suspend their research pending receipt of guidance. Where a candidate is scheduled to attend an assessment/examination the candidate should be aware of the "Fit to sit" provisions and if necessary submit an application for Mitigating Circumstances, Suspension or Request to Suspend an Examination as appropriate.

Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Leave

B7.32 Candidates are entitled to maternity leave of up to 12 months per pregnancy via a Suspension request application. The application must be supported by appropriate medical evidence.

B7.33 Candidates may request paternity leave in line with the entitlement for employees of the University (currently two weeks). Leave of absence for a longer period may be requested via an application for Suspension request or a Request to Defer an Examination. The request must be supported by appropriate evidence, eg a birth certificate.

B7.34 Candidates may request adoption leave of up to 12 months per adoption via a Suspension request application. The application must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

Withdrawals

B7.35 If a candidate chooses to end their programme of study with the University they must inform the Graduate School of the decision (see Research Degrees Handbook for further information on the process). Failure to officially withdraw may result in exclusion for lack of academic progress.

B7.36 Candidates who withdraw must re-apply via the current application process should they choose to return to the University.

Exclusions

B7.37 Exclusion is defined as the termination of a candidate's enrolment on a University doctoral programme.

B7.38 Grounds for exclusion are as follows:

a) A candidate fails to successfully complete a period of remediation following an Annual Progression Review assessment (See Section B6).

b) A candidate fails to successfully complete a period of remediation initiated following lack of academic progress (See Section B6).

c) A candidate's enrolment period or the approved period within which a candidate is permitted to complete amendments/revisions/ re-examination following an oral examination (viva) (see section B8.43 and B8.45) ends without a thesis being submitted for examination and no formal Extension has been approved.

d) A candidate is deemed to have become inactive without obtaining an approved period of Suspension (See B7.11 to B7.18).

e) A candidate is found guilty of a serious breach of University regulations following an assessment offence or disciplinary hearing.

B7.39 A candidate is deemed to have become inactive if:

a) A candidate fails to re-enrol for a new enrolment year. Failure to re-enrol will result in a formal written warning from the Graduate School. If the candidate fails to respond to this warning by the set deadline they will be formally excluded from the programme by the RDPC.

b) A candidate fails to engage with their programme of study or is not in contact with the University for sixty days for a full-time candidate or ninety days for a part-time candidate. Where a candidate is no longer in contact with the College, the College Doctoral Co-ordinator/Director (or nominee) should write formally to the candidate at their last known address (and email address, if available) requesting that they make contact with the University by a set deadline, failing which the Faculty will recommend to the RDPC that the candidate be excluded. A copy of this letter should be filed with the Graduate School Registry.

c) A candidate fails to submit an annual progress review or an approved mitigating circumstances application in support of a non-submitted Annual Progress Review (see B7.2 to B7.10).

B7.40 All formal notifications of exclusion will be provided to the candidate in writing to the last known postal and email address.

B7.41 Following exclusion a candidate will only be permitted to re-apply to a doctoral programme under exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Graduate School Board.

B8. Examinations for a Research Degree Award

The Board of Examiners

B8.1 A candidate shall be examined by at least two and normally not more than three examiners of whom at least one shall be an external examiner (also see Sections B8.5).

B8.2 The Board of Examiners shall be nominated by the College and approved by the Graduate School Board (GSB). The Board of Examiners will include an independent Chair of Examiners, who will normally be a senior member of staff. The Chair of Examiners is not an examiner and will be responsible for ensuring and attesting to the proper and fair conduct of the examination and for facilitating any essential communications between the candidate and the examiners that may be necessary after the oral examination, e.g. clarification on a required correction.

B8.3 An internal examiner shall be defined as an examiner who is:

a) A member of staff of the University, who can be from the same College as the candidate, but may not be drawn from the candidate's team of supervisors or advisor(s);

b) A member of staff of the candidate's Collaborating Establishment.

B8.4 Where the candidate and the internal examiner are both on the academic staff of the same establishment, a second external examiner shall be appointed in place of the internal examiner. The six hours of scholarly/teaching activity (Section B2.3a) that can be required of candidates is excluded from this requirement.

B8.5 An external examiner shall be independent both of the University and of any Collaborating Establishment(s) and shall not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or advisor. An external examiner shall normally not be a supervisor of another candidate in the same department at the University. Former members of staff or students of the University

shall normally not be approved as external examiners until three years after the termination of their employment or studies with the University.

B8.6 Examiners shall be demonstrably experienced and active in research in the area of the candidate's thesis.

B8.7 For all research degree programmes the examination team must have experience of at least three previous examinations at the relevant academic level between them. An external examiner will normally have a minimum of two previous examinations at the relevant academic level, ie PhD or D.Prof examinations for a doctoral award.

B8.8 The College is responsible for checking the eligibility of proposed examiners including ensuring that the same external examiner is not approved so frequently that their familiarity with the department might prejudice objective judgment.

B8.9 A candidate enrolled for a research degree of the University of Westminster shall not normally act as an examiner.

B8.10 The University shall determine and pay the fees and expenses of the external examiners.

General Principles

B8.11 The examination of a research degree shall have two stages: firstly the submission and preliminary assessment of the thesis (and other form(s) of scholarly output approved by the Director of Studies, College and Graduate School Board) and secondly its defence by oral examination (*viva voce*) or approved alternative examination (see Sections B8.14 and B8.38).

B8.12 Except with the specific permission of the Graduate School Board (GSB) the thesis shall be presented in English (see Section B2.15).

B8.13 A candidate whose programme of work includes as a requirement formally assessed course work leading to research degree, eg a Professional Doctorate (Section D) shall not be permitted to proceed to a further stage of the examination, for the degree, until the course work examiners are satisfied with the candidate's performance. The result of the assessment shall be communicated to the examiners of the thesis.

B8.14 A candidate shall normally be examined orally on the thesis submitted (*viva voce or viva*). Where, for reasons of sickness, disability or comparable valid cause, the Graduate School Board (GSB) is satisfied that a candidate would be seriously disadvantaged if required to undergo an oral examination, an alternative form of examination may be approved (referred to hereinafter as 'the approved alternative examination'). Such approval shall not be given on the grounds that the candidate's knowledge of the language in which the thesis is presented is inadequate.

B8.15 An oral examination (*viva*) shall normally be held in the UK. In special cases, the GSB may give approval for the examination to take place abroad or exceptionally via video-conferencing or similar online facilities.

B8.16 The candidate's Director of Studies or other Supervisor should not attend, unless the candidate has given their permission. The proposed attendance of a Supervisor should be advised in advance through the Chair of the Examiners. If present, the Director of Studies or Supervisor should enter and leave the room at the same time as the candidate and should participate in the discussion only if asked to provide clarification on a specific matter by the Examiners.

B8.17 The GSB shall make a decision on the reports and recommendation(s) of the examiners in respect of the candidate. The power to confer the degree shall rest with the Academic Council, whose authority in this respect is delegated to the GSB.

B8.18 The relevant research degree may be awarded posthumously on the basis of a thesis completed by a candidate, which is ready for submission for examination. In such cases, the GSB shall seek evidence that the candidate would have been likely to have been successful had the oral examination taken place.

B8.19 Research Degree candidates are required to meet the standards outlined under the University Framework for Research Governance and its supporting codes of practice (see Section A1.10). Where cheating or plagiarism in the preparation of the thesis is established either before or during the examination the examination process will be halted pending the outcome of investigations and decisions under the University's Research and Academic Misconduct procedures. If misconduct is confirmed, the degree shall not be awarded. Where misconduct is established after the examination, the GSB shall consider the matter, if necessary in consultation with the examiners, and take appropriate action, which may include making a recommendation to Academic Council for the withdrawal of the award.

B8.20 The GSB shall ensure that all examinations are conducted and the recommendations of the examiners are presented wholly in accordance with the University's regulations. In any instance where the GSB is made aware of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

B8.21 Examiners may make comments to the University in a separate report on operational, procedural or quality issues which they wish to bring to its attention.

Examination procedures

B8.22 At least three months prior to the proposed date of submission of the thesis for examination, the Director of Studies shall propose the arrangements for the candidate's examination for the approval by the Graduate School Board (GSB). Where the submission for approval of examination arrangements is received later than three months prior to the proposed date for oral examination, the GSB may require that the proposed oral examination date be postponed.

B8.23 The examination may not take place until the examination arrangements have been approved by the GSB. In special circumstances, the GSB may act directly to appoint examiners and arrange the examination of a candidate.

B8.24 The Graduate School Registry shall make known to the candidate the procedure to be followed for the submission of the thesis (including the number of copies to be submitted for examination) and any conditions to be satisfied before the candidate may be considered eligible for examination. The Chair of Examiners (see Section B8.2) shall notify the candidate, all supervisors and the examiners of the date of the oral examination.

B8.25 The Graduate School Registry shall send a copy of the thesis to each member of the Board of Examiners (Section B8.2), together with the examiner's report forms and the University's Regulations, and shall ensure that the examiners are briefed on their responsibilities and role in the examination process.

B8.26 The Chair of Examiners shall ensure that all the examiners have completed and returned the preliminary reports to the University before the oral examination.

B8.27 The Chair of Examiners shall ensure that the oral examination (*viva*) is conducted in a fair and proper manner and provide a report on the conduct of the examination to the GSB using the form provided.

The candidate's responsibilities in the examination process

B8.28 Submission of a thesis shall be defined as the submission of the thesis to the Graduate School Registry. The candidate shall ensure that the thesis is submitted before the expiry of the enrolment period. Failure to submit by such time without the specific permission of the Graduate School Board (GSB) will result in the exclusion of the candidate from their programme of study.

B8.29 The submission of the thesis for examination shall be at the sole discretion of the candidate and should take into account the University's Fit to Sit policy.

B8.30 The candidate shall satisfy any conditions of eligibility for examination required by the GSB.

B8.31 The candidate shall take no part in the arrangement of the examination and shall have no formal contact with the examiners between the appointment of the examiners and the award of a degree. If the candidate requires clarification on any corrections required by an examiner these should be made via the Chair of the examination panel. Any prior contact between the candidate and an examiner should be disclosed by the candidate to the Chair of the Examination Panel in case this is considered sufficient to compromise the independence of an examiner.

B8.32 Candidates are required to recognise that an adequate period of time is required for the scrutiny of and initial reports on the thesis by the examiners (normally a minimum of four weeks), and should therefore submit the thesis to the Graduate School Registry at least six weeks prior to the proposed date of the oral examination.

B8.33 On submission of the thesis to the Graduate School Registry, the candidate shall confirm, through the submission of a declaration via the VRE that the thesis has not previously been submitted for an academic award in this or any other university (except cases where the programme is part of an agreed collaboration with an additional awarding body). In addition, the candidate will declare that the thesis is the candidate's own work. The candidate shall not be precluded from incorporating in the thesis, covering a wider field, work which has already been submitted for a degree or comparable award, provided that it is indicated on the declaration form and also in the thesis, which work has been so incorporated.

B8.34 The thesis shall include a statement declaring the work to be the candidate's own and acknowledging any assistance received. Where a candidate's research programme is part of a collaborative group, the thesis shall indicate clearly the candidate's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.

B8.35 The candidate shall ensure that the thesis format is in accordance with the requirements of the University's Research Degrees Handbook. The thesis may be submitted for examination in a permanently bound form or a temporarily bound form which is sufficiently secure to ensure that pages cannot be added or removed. The candidate must also provide an electronic copy of the thesis to the Graduate School Registry. Where a thesis is submitted for examination in a temporarily bound form the candidate shall confirm that the contents of the final permanently bound thesis are identical with the version submitted for examination, except where amendments have been made to meet the requirements of the examiners.

B8.36 In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate for the 'thesis' to be submitted either wholly or in part in a form other than a traditional bound printed form. Such alternative

forms of submission may be permitted subject to the approval of the GSB. Where a candidate and/or supervisor deems an alternative form of submission to be appropriate, the GSB must be notified at the earliest opportunity and may, following appropriate consultation, decide either to approve or not to approve the proposed submission arrangements. Unless specific agreements have been made to the contrary (for example, in the case of exploitation of intellectual property rights) the candidate shall be free to publish material in advance of the thesis but reference shall be made in the thesis to any such work.

B8.37 The text of the thesis should normally not exceed approximately 80,000 words for PhD and 40,000 for MPhil, though in practice variation is expected depending on the subject area (see Research Degrees Handbook for details). For thesis details for a Professional Doctorate please see Section D2.13(b).

Examination(s)

B8.38 If the candidate is unable to attend an examination they must notify the Graduate School Registry and the Chair of the Board of Examiners immediately. The University operates a 'fit to sit' policy. This means that in sitting an examination a candidate deems themselves fit to do so. If the candidate attends the examination rather than submitting an application to defer the examination, they cannot normally then be considered for poor performance within the examination. It is the responsibility of the candidate to determine if they are fit to participate in an examination. If the candidate intends to make an application to defer the examination they should see Section B7.26-7.29 and follow the procedure detailed in the Research Degrees Handbook.

B8.39 Before any oral or alternative form of examination is held, each examiner shall read and examine the thesis (and any other approved scholarly outputs – see Section B8.11) and submit, on the appropriate form, an independent preliminary report on it to the Chair of Examiners. In completing the preliminary report, each examiner shall consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the qualification descriptors of the degree (as set out in the Research Degrees Handbook) and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination (*viva*).

B8.40 The examiners may determine that the candidate has not satisfied them in the examination. The examiners shall not, however, save in exceptional circumstances, make such a decision without submitting the candidate to oral examination (*viva*). Where a decision is made by the examiners not to proceed to the oral examination (*viva*) the Chair of the Examination Board must inform the Graduate School Registry immediately so that the candidate can be advised.

B8.41 Following the oral examination (*viva*) the examiners, where they are in agreement, shall submit to the Graduate School Registry via the Chair and using the appropriate form, a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree. The examiners must also submit a report of any amendments required by the candidate. The Chair shall formally confirm that the examination has been conducted in a fair and proper manner and in accordance with the regulations. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners shall together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work and shall be sufficiently consistent with each other to enable the Graduate School Board (GSB) to satisfy itself that the recommendation chosen in Section B8.43 below is correct.

B8.42 Where examiners are unable to agree on a recommendation, they may submit separate final reports. When considering individual reports, except in exceptional circumstances, the report of the external examiner will be given a greater weighting. The recommendations

shall be made on the appropriate form. Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, the GSB may:

a) Accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner);

b) Accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or

c) Require the appointment of an additional external examiner and request a new oral examination (*viva*).

B8.43 Following the completion of the **first** examination, the examiners may recommend that:

a) The candidate be awarded the degree;

b) The candidate be awarded the degree, subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis, to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome - The examiners should agree if the amendments can be approved by the internal and/or the external examiner. The revised thesis, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the Graduate School Registry (GSR). If the submitted amendments are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; normally no further extension will be permitted;

c) The candidate be awarded the degree subject to revision of the thesis, to be completed within a period of six months from the official notification of the outcome - The examiners should agree if the amendments can be approved by the internal and/or the external examiner, however, where revisions involve substantive changes to the thesis, eg additional research, an external examiner must oversee the process. The revised thesis, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the Graduate School Registry (GSR). If the submitted amendments are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; normally no further extension will be permitted;

d) The candidate not be awarded the degree but may be permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, with or without an oral examination (Section B8.45) – Where the thesis requires revision the revised thesis should be submitted for re-examination within twelve months of the official notification of the outcome from the first examination, or where no amendments are required to the thesis the re-examination should take place within two months of the official notification of the first examination; normally no further extension will be permitted;

e) The candidate not be awarded the degree and not be permitted to be re-examined; or,

f) In the case of a PhD examination, the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to the satisfactory completion of minor amendments to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome - The examiners should agree if the amendments can be approved by the internal and/or the external examiner. The revised thesis, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the Graduate School Registry (GSR). If the submitted amendments

are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; normally no further extension will be permitted;

g) In the case of a PhD examination, and where the thesis potentially meets the criteria for the award of MPhil, the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to revision of the thesis to be completed within a period of six months from the official notification of the outcome - The examiners should agree if the amendments can be approved by the internal and/or the external examiner, however, where revisions involve substantive changes to the thesis, eg additional research, an external examiner must oversee the process. The revised thesis, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the Graduate School Registry (GSR). If the submitted amendments are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; normally no further extension will be permitted.

B8.44 Examiners may indicate informally their recommendation on the result of the examination to the candidate but they shall make it clear that the decision to accept their recommendation rests with the Graduate School Board (GSB). In the event that a candidate fails to meet the required standard under B8.43 b), c) or d) the examiners may indicate to the Graduate School Board if the alternative exit award of MPhil would be appropriate or whether the candidate should not be awarded a degree.

B8.45 A maximum of **one re-examination** will be permitted. The revised thesis should be submitted to the Graduate School Registry (GSR) for re-examination following the same procedure as for the first examination. Following the completion of a re-examination, the examiners may recommend that the candidate:

a) The candidate be awarded the degree;

b) The candidate be awarded the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome - The examiners should agree if the amendments can be approved by the internal and/or the external examiner. The revised thesis, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the Graduate School Registry (GSR). If the submitted amendments are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; normally no further extension will be permitted;

c) The candidate be awarded the degree subject to revision of the thesis, to be completed within a period of six months from the official notification of the outcome - The examiners should agree if the amendments can be approved by the internal and/or the external examiner, however, where revisions involve substantive changes to the thesis, eg additional research, an external examiner must oversee the process. The revised thesis, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the Graduate School Registry (GSR). If the submitted amendments are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; normally no further extension will be permitted;

d) In the case of a PhD examination, the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to minor amendments of the thesis to be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome - The examiners should agree if the amendments can be approved by the internal and/or the external examiner. The revised thesis, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the Graduate School Registry (GSR). If the submitted amendments are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; normally no further extension will be permitted;

e) In the case of a PhD examination, the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to revision of the thesis to be completed within a period of six months from the official notification of the outcome - The examiners should agree if the amendments can be approved by the internal and/or the external examiner, however, where revisions involve substantive changes to the thesis, eg additional research, an external examiner must oversee the process. The revised thesis, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the Graduate School Registry (GSR). If the submitted amendments are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; normally no further extension will be permitted;

f) The candidate not be awarded the degree.

B8.46 A further examination, in addition to the oral examination (*viva*), may be requested by the examiners. In such cases, the approval of the GSB shall be sought without delay, ie to the next scheduled meeting of GSB, or where this is not practicable due to the timeframe below, the approval of the Chair of GSB. Where such an examination is arranged following an oral examination (*viva*), it shall normally be held within two calendar months of the oral examination (*viva*). Any such examination shall be deemed to be part of the candidate's current examination, whether first examination or re-examination.

B8.47 Where the recommendation of the examiners is either:

- Recommendation that the degree not be awarded and that no re-examination be permitted; or
- Recommendation that in the case of a PhD examination, the candidate may be awarded the degree of MPhil.

The examiners shall ensure that the deficiencies in the candidate's performance, whether in the thesis or in the oral examination (*viva*), and any other reasons for reaching this recommendation are sufficiently and clearly set out in the Final Report and sufficiently consistent with the content of the Preliminary Reports as to satisfy the GSB as to the appropriateness of the recommendation. In the event that a candidate fails to meet the required standard under B8.45 b) and c) the examiners may indicate to the Graduate School Board if the alternative exit award of MPhil would be appropriate or whether the candidate should not be awarded a degree.

Conferment of an Award

B8.48 Conferment of the appropriate award, where applicable, shall be approved by the Graduate School Board, on behalf of Academic Council, following the fulfilment of the legitimate requirements of the University. In addition, candidates must comply with the requirements to submit an electronic copy of their final approved thesis to WestminsterResearch and EThOS (see Sections B2.16 and B2.17). Candidates should note where an embargo has been approved (Section 2.17) the Graduate School Registry will manage and restrict dissemination of the thesis in line with the embargo agreement. If a candidate fails to submit their thesis the University reserves the right to withdraw any award made.

B9 Academic appeals against a decision of the Graduate School Board

B9.1 An academic appeal can only be submitted on the grounds there has been demonstrable material irregularity in the conduct of the Graduate School Board (or its Sub Committees) in relation to a candidate's assessments/examinations and/or a decision to exclude a candidate due to a lack of academic progress.

Note: Material irregularity means the University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or an error has occurred in processing the decision.

B9.2 Academic appeals must be made in writing and submitted to the Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards), University of Westminster, Cavendish House, 101 New Cavendish Street, London, W1W 6XH by the deadline published and in accordance with the procedure detailed in the Research Degrees Handbook. The appellant will normally be notified of the outcome of their academic appeal in accordance with the Appeals Procedure published in the Research Degrees Handbook, however, due to the complexity of some cases additional time may be necessary to complete a thorough review of the circumstances, in which case the appellant will be informed of the reasons for the delay.

B9.3 Academic appeals against decisions of the Graduate School Board are initially considered on behalf of the Deputy Registrar (Quality and Standards) by the Academic Standards Manager or nominee and a senior researcher (eg College Research Director, Research Centre Director) with no prior contact with the case to establish if there is a prima facie case for an appeal to be considered. All academic appeals are dealt with on a confidential basis. On receipt, the Academic Standards Manager or nominee shall acknowledge receipt and remind the applicant of the advice and assistance which may be offered by the University of Westminster Students' Union. The Academic Standards Manager or nominee shall also obtain information from the Graduate School Registry, establishing the facts of the Graduate School's decision and the evidence on which it was made. Consideration of the appeal will proceed in accordance with the Academic Appeals Procedure for Research Degrees as detailed in the Research Degrees Handbook.

B9.4 In order to safeguard the integrity of the Academic appeals system, academic appeals may only be considered by Academic Standards Manager or nominee and senior research staff who have had no direct involvement in the decision-making process, which is the subject of the academic appeal on the grounds of material irregularity.

Section C: Masters of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Published Work

C1. Regulations for the Award of MPhil and PhD by Published Work

C1.1 These regulations for the Award of Research Degrees by Published Work should be read in conjunction with Section B of these Regulations.

Award of PhD by Published Work

C1.2 Candidates may apply for the award of PhD on the basis of published work subject to the conditions which follow.

C1.3 All candidates under these regulations will be subject to requirements of Section B except as otherwise stipulated in these regulations.

Eligibility

C1.4 Candidates must meet the normal entry requirements for enrolment for PhD (see Sections B1.4 to B1.5).

C1.5 Candidates must be able to supply at their own expense evidence of published work both at the time of admission and for examination.

C1.6 Appropriate expertise in the field concerned must exist within the University.

Application and Enrolment

C1.7 To apply for enrolment for a Research Degree by Published Work, candidates shall submit to the Admissions Office a portfolio of publications, where the publications and any associated material must not be more than ten years old at the time of application, accompanied by a proposal as to the overarching narrative. This proposal shall not exceed 2000 words and will contextualise the selected publications, demonstrate their coherence and outline the intended contribution to knowledge. A work in press can be included in the portfolio if it has already been unconditionally accepted for publication and will fulfil the requirements stipulated below in Sections C1.13 to C.1.17 at time of the submission of the work for examination. When a candidate submits work published jointly with others, they shall submit such evidence as may be required by the College or Graduate School Board (GSB) as to the extent of their contribution to that work. The College or GSB reserves the right to verify the claims made by a candidate in case of all multi-authored works with the other cited authors.

C1.8 Applications for enrolment for a Research Degree by Published Work shall be considered by a College panel consisting of the College Research Director or nominee, eg College Admissions Tutor or Doctoral Coordinator/Director, and the potential supervisory team (including any external member it may be appropriate to co-opt from a related discipline). Where members of the College panel are also a member of the potential supervisory team, the Panel must include an additional nominee who will not be involved in the supervision process. Where the application is from a member of University of Westminster academic staff the Panel should include an independent member drawn from another department. The panel will assess the quality and the coherence of the publications and the proposal submitted by the candidate, with a view to recommending enrolment or not. The Panel will pay due regard to establishing the candidate's authorship role in relation to the proposed work(s). The Panel will inform the candidate if any of the portfolio of published work is considered to be not eligible for inclusion in the assessed output.

C1.09 The Graduate School Board (GSB) shall choose to endorse the enrolment of candidates for a Research Degree by Published Work on the recommendation of the appropriate College . In making such recommendations the College is confirming its satisfaction as to the suitability of the candidate and the availability of appropriate supervisory and other support.

C1.10 Upon admission, the candidate shall enrol as a part-time candidate of the University of Westminster for a minimum of twelve months and a maximum of twenty-four months. The candidate shall pay the appropriate tuition fee (not applicable in the case of University of Westminster staff).

C1.11 The appointment of supervisor(s) shall be subject to the requirements of Section B3 of the Research Degree Regulations except insofar as, for a candidate enrolled on the Published Work route, only one supervisor need be appointed. This does not preclude the appointment of a supervisory team by the College. The role of the supervisor shall include assisting the candidate in preparing the work for submission and proposing examination arrangements to the GSB.

Annual Progression Review

C1.12 Candidate must complete Annual Progression Reviews as detailed in the Research Degrees Handbook.

Submission of Work

C1.13 Work must always reach the standard defined in Section C1.14 below, and should normally consist of one or more of the following:

a) **Books and Book Chapters** – the defining characteristic being that every book should have an International Standard Book Number (ISBN), whether a monograph or chapters published in similarly accredited books or edited collections.

b) **Refereed Journal Papers** – research papers aimed primarily at the academic and research community (including electronic publications).

c) **Other Media/Other Public Output** – which represent a contribution to research in the academic subject concerned. Examples might include designs (e.g. architectural or engineering designs), artwork, maps, patents granted, publicly available software, works created or performed if publicly recognised as original research contributions to the subjects.

C1.14 The submission shall be a coherent body of work which, constitutes an original contribution to knowledge and is of the same quality, rigour and volume required of a normal PhD in that field. It shall be accompanied by an abstract and a commentary which describes the aims of the research, incorporates an analytical discussion of the main results and conclusions, and puts the total work submitted in context. The commentary should not normally exceed 5,000 words for science and technology (STEMM) subjects and 10,000 for arts, social sciences and humanities (non-STEMM).

C1.16 Candidates proposing to submit a single book or work or artefact (as opposed to a series of papers or other outputs) shall be required to submit a commentary as outlined above.

C1.17 The submitted work must show evidence of appropriate research skills; continuous professional development and training.

Examination

C1.18 Approximately three months prior to the proposed date of submission of the material for examination, the Supervisor shall propose the arrangements for the candidate's examination

for the approval by the Graduate School Board (GSB). Where the submission for approval of examination arrangements is received later than three months prior to the proposed date for oral examination, the GSB may require that the proposed oral examination date be postponed.

C1.19 The appointment of examiners shall be in accordance with the Regulations set out in Section B8, but where the candidate is an academic employee of the University both examiners shall be external to the University. Where the candidate is not an academic employee of the University, the examiners shall consist of one internal and one external examiner, providing that the external is not from an institution at which the candidate is employed.

C1.21 A candidate shall submit for examination via the Graduate School Registry, one copy of the material, portfolio of publications, abstract and commentary, for each examiner appointed and the Chair of Examiners. In addition, an electronic copy of the material, where possible, should be provided to the Graduate School Registry.

C1.22 The material, other than published books, must be bound in the manner prescribed by the Research Degrees Handbook.

C1.23 The GSB may, as appropriate, accept for examination a wholly published version or require that the work be submitted in the form of a thesis as prescribed in the regulations.

C1.24 A candidate shall be required to declare that:

a) The submission as a whole or in part is not substantially the same as any that they have previously made or is currently making, whether in published or unpublished form, for a degree, diploma or similar qualification at any university or similar institution.

b) Until the outcome of the current application to the University is known, the work or works submitted will not be submitted for any such qualification at another university or similar institution.

C1.25 The submitted work will be assessed by the examiners who may recommend:

a) The candidate be awarded the degree;

b) The candidate be awarded the degree, subject to Minor amendments being made to the material, which must be completed within a period of three months from the official notification of the outcome. The examiners should agree if the amendments can be approved by the internal and/or the external examiner. The revised material, plus a list of or commentary on the amendments made, should be submitted by the candidate to the appropriate examiner(s) via the Graduate School Registry (GSR). If the submitted amendments are not of an acceptable standard the examiners may, at their discretion, recommend a further period of one month for the amendments to be brought up to the required standard; no further extension will be permitted;

c) The candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil; or

d) The candidate not be awarded the degree.

C1.26 Where the examiners recommend that the degree be not awarded, the candidate may not re-submit for a PhD by Published Work within a period of three years from the date of the original examination. Any further submission must include evidence of additional work via publications.

C1.27 Following the oral examination (*viva*), successful candidates shall be required to submit copies of the material as detailed in the Research Degrees Handbook.

Section D: Professional Doctorate programmes

D1. Purpose and Structure of Professional Doctorate programmes

D1.1 Definition of a Professional Doctorate

The Professional Doctorate is a doctoral research programme of equivalent standing with the Doctor of Philosophy and can be awarded to a candidate who has made an independent and original research contribution to a specific professional area. At the University of Westminster, a Professional Doctorate entails the successful completion of an approved course of study incorporating a *taught component* and a *research component*, culminating in the submission of a research thesis, or portfolio, sometimes accompanied by other forms of assessable output according to the field of practice.

D1.2 Distinctive Characteristics of a Professional Doctorate Award

The Professional Doctorate award is distinct from the PhD award in the following respects:

- There is a considerable weighting given to a taught component (Section D2.3), which should form an integral and key part of the programme, the assessment of which contributes directly towards the final award.
- Candidates will be investigating – through a programme of research – issues, problems and practices within their professional fields.
- The thesis, portfolio, artefact or other form of assessable output produced by Professional Doctorate candidates will make an original contribution to knowledge within the relevant discipline or areas of professional practice.

D2 Validated Programme Specific Regulations

D2.1 Professional Doctorate programmes are research degrees. Responsibility for programme approval, monitoring and awards therefore lies with the Graduate School Board. Individual programmes will be validated by a panel approved by the Graduate School Board (or nominated sub-Committee) in conjunction with the Quality and Standards Office. The Validation Panel will encompass relevant expertise in doctoral, professional practice and taught provision, to consider all matters relating to the Professional Doctorate.

D2.2 The degree of Professional Doctorate is typically awarded in a professional practice area and can therefore include a range of disciplines. The title of the award will include the term Doctor and the relevant professional area and may be abbreviated. The award-holder will be entitled to use the pre-nominal title of 'Doctor' or 'Dr'[1].

D2.3 Academic study will be valued in terms of credits with each credit equating to ten notional hours of learning[2]. The Professional Doctorate is a research degree, and will be valued at a minimum of 540 academic credits. In distinction from a PhD programme, the Professional Doctorate will include a taught component, which will be a minimum of 120 credits and not exceed 180 credits[3].

D2.4 The Professional Doctorate is designated at Credit Level 8 within the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, however, the taught component may include modules at Credit Level 7 (Masters) up to a maximum of 180 credits. The remainder of the programme is made up of Level 8 study.

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1 Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code: Part A Characteristics Statement: Doctoral Degrees, 2015 p8-9
2 http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Credit-Leaflet-Nov-09.pdf
3 Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code: Part A Characteristics Statement: Doctoral Degrees, 2015 p17

D2.5 Mode of Study: The taught component of the Professional Doctorate awards will vary from programme to programme but will normally consist of a structured programme of taught modules, which may be delivered in blocks or through regular engagement either on campus, other locations, or online, as agreed during validation. It is expected that the principal mode of study will normally be part-time, due to the professional circumstances of the target constituencies and the applied nature of the programme. Each programme shall clearly state at validation the structure of the course, and its standard part-time and (where appropriate) full-time duration.

D2.6 Awards: A Professional Doctorate may be awarded to a candidate who has:

a) Successfully completed the taught component of the award for which they are enrolled (see Section B8.13);

b) Undertaken a programme of independent research that meets the requirements of the Degree Descriptors[4] and Characteristic Statement for Doctoral Degrees[5], under the guidance of academic supervisors (see Research Degrees Handbook);

c) Presented and defended by oral examination (viva) a research-thesis, portfolio, artefact or other form of assessable output to the satisfaction of the examiners; and

d) Met any other specific subject or programme requirements for the named award.

Programmes will make provision for intermediate exit awards where the structure of the programme makes this possible, specifying the awards that are available and their requirements, for example 120 credits can equate to a PGDip and 180 credits can equate to an appropriate Master's award. The available intermediate exit award is, subject to achievement by the candidate of the relevant award requirements as approved during the award's validation process. Where an academic credit cannot be attributed to a specific validated award a transcript will be provided detailing the successfully completed learning and the appropriate credit value, which may be suitable as evidence of acquired prior learning (APL) against another award. Non-research titles may be considered where the majority of study undertaken has not involved independent research, e.g. Masters in Research Methods. Protected research titles, e.g. Masters by Research will only be considered appropriate where the majority of the candidate's programme has involved independent research under the guidance of a supervisor[6].

D2.7 Minimum and Maximum enrolment

The periods of minimum and maximum enrolment shall be as follows: **Minimum Period of Enrolment** **(FULL TIME)**	**Maximum Period of Enrolment (FULL TIME)**
3 years (36 months)	4 years (48 months)
Minimum Period of Enrolment **(PART TIME)**	**Maximum Period of Enrolment (PART TIME)**

4 Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications, 2014 p30 para 4.18
5 Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code: Part A
6 Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code: Part B Chapter B11 p4; Quality Assurance Agency Quality Code: Part A Characteristics Statement: Master's Degree, 2015 p4 and p11 and FHEQ, 2014 p36

4 years (48 months)	8 years (96 months)

The Director of Studies can make an application, via the College, to the Research Degrees Progression Committee for a variation in exceptional circumstances.

D2.8 The University will only admit those candidates who are assessed as being sufficiently capable, qualified and diligent to achieve successful completion within the maximum period of enrolment. The scope of the thesis, portfolio, artefact or other form of assessable output shall be such that it is achievable in this time. The University's minimum entry requirements for Professional Doctorate programmes will be as follows:

a) A Second Class First division Bachelor's degree with Honours or, and preferably, a Master's degree from a UK university (or a qualification which is regarded as equivalent to such an Honours degree, including overseas qualifications);

b) A minimum of two years' verifiable practical experience of working in a field relevant to their proposed studies in a professional capacity, excluding any experience gained as part of first degree studies;

c) Applicants from outside of the UK must demonstrate evidence of appropriate English language proficiency, defined as minimum IELTS score of 6.5 Overall Band Score and a minimum of 6.5 in all elements. The University may choose to accept alternative evidence of significant previous experience in the medium of English as confirmation of an equivalent standard of English. Any offer made by the University will incorporate UK Visas and Immigration Service requirements for a visa; and

d) Where the candidate's programme of study will be predominantly undertaken away from the University for prolonged periods the Director of Studies and the candidate in the programme will need to comply with the requirements of the Research Degree by Distance Learning (RDDL) scheme outlined in Section E.

Programme specific regulations may set a higher entry requirement at the time of validation or review.

D2.9 Credit may be given towards the taught component on an Advanced Standing basis with a prior qualification (through RPL) and/or prior experience (RPEL), provided applicants can be shown to satisfy the programme's learning outcomes at the required level[7]. Where permitted APL and APEL requirements will incorporated in course documentation and awarded in accordance with the University's APL and APEL regulations, and will normally be allowed up to a maximum of 50% of any taught component. Credit towards, or exemption from, the research component is not permitted.

D2.10 Candidates on a Professional Doctorate programme will be admitted and enrolled through the Graduate School. However, with regard to the taught component, the management administration and assessment of a Professional Doctorate programme will be the responsibility of the College (or Colleges) in which the programme is based. It is the responsibility of the relevant College to ensure assessment information and outcomes for the taught component are communicated to the Graduate School Board. The quality assurance of any taught modules will be undertaken in accordance with the University's quality assurance and enhancement framework for taught courses. The quality assurance of

7 On Professional Doctorate programmes which make use of Level 7 modules from existing postgraduate courses/programmes, teams may wish to restrict the number of such modules that may be included in APL claims. However, there is no University requirement for such restriction

the research component and of the programme as a whole will be overseen by the Graduate School Board in accordance with the quality assurance framework for doctoral programmes.

D2.11 The University will provide an appropriate and qualified supervision team including a Director of Studies, with the relevant subject and professional expertise in accordance with the University's supervision team requirements as set out in the research degree regulations (Section B3) and associated Research Degrees Handbook. Supervisory teams are subject to the approval of the College and Graduate School Board, and should be agreed before admission to the programme.

D2.12 The importance of developing a sound research proposal with a clear path to achieving the required learning outputs of a doctoral degree from the earliest possible stage cannot be overemphasised. The research proposal will need the support of the candidate's Director of Studies/supervisors and be agreed both by the College, an Independent Assessor and the Graduate School Board within the timescale agreed during validation. Oversight of the approval process, progression reviews and assessments are overseen by the Graduate School Board (see Section D2.1). The research proposal shall satisfy the University's requirements with regard to Research Governance including the Code for Research Good Practice and the Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research.

D2.13 Candidates shall be subject to the University's requirements of doctoral candidates for satisfactory and timely progress in relation to the both the taught component (a) and the research component and the programme as a whole (b) The Graduate School Board is responsible for monitoring the progress of candidates on a Professional Doctorate programme and for the oversight of the procedures for managing unsatisfactory performance (Remediation), in which it will take into account information derived from the assessment of both the taught and the research components as applicable.

(a) Assessment of the Taught Component (Modules): The University assesses taught modules and assesses credit in which the module is completed, taking account of in-module coursework and examinations (where these are used). The pass mark for each element in the taught component will be 50% and will be assessed in accordance with the principles articulated in Section 18 of the University's Framework for Postgraduate Courses.

The Assessment Board will consider the outcomes of the taught component of the course only. Assessment board outcomes in relation to the taught components will be communicated to the Graduate School Board, which will determine whether the candidate should be permitted to continue with their enrolment. In some programmes, the taught and research components may be integrated and proceed in parallel, however, in other programmes the successful completion of the taught component may be a prerequisite for commencing the research component. The detailed structure of each programme will be agreed as part of the validation process.

(b) Assessment of the Overall Programme including the Research Component: A Professional Doctorate programme is a research degree under the auspices of the Graduate School Board. Research degrees are subject to formal Annual Progression Reviews for full-time candidates or Biennial Progression Review with an Interim Annual Progression Review taking place on the intervening years in the case of part-time candidates (see Section B5). Where a candidate requires an Individual Examination and Assessment Arrangement to recognise a disability or specific learning difficulty the candidate should follow the regulations in Section B4 and the supporting procedures in the Research Degrees Handbook.

Approval of the project proposal is the responsibility of the Graduate School Board and programmes will ensure that this is incorporated within programme design. It is recognised that the development of the project proposal may typically be undertaken by the candidate in the context of the taught component, however, due to variations in programme design this will need to be agreed as part of the Programme Validation process.

Programmes will incorporate an Annual Progression Review process that is consistent with the process used to monitor progression for other Research Degrees (Section B5). Exact milestones for each review will need to be agreed as part of the Validation process. The process must include at approximately half way through the research component a more formal assessment involving the Director of Studies and an independent assessor to the programme of research. This review, which will include an oral examination (viva), will enable a view to be taken on whether the research is on track to achieve a Level 8 doctoral outcome. The purpose of the Annual Progression Review process is to enable the College and the Graduate School Board to satisfy themselves in respect of each individual candidate that the project is valid and viable in terms of a timely and successful completion at doctoral level, the form of the research outputs to be permitted and that the method of examination being considered are appropriate.

Where there are concerns about a candidate's ability to successfully complete their research to the required standard, whether inside or outside of the Annual Progression Review process, a programme of Remediation will be initiated, as detailed in Section B6 of the Research Degree Regulations. The purpose of the Remediation process is to support a candidate to improve their performance so that they can achieve the intended programme outcome. Where a candidate's performance remains unsatisfactory the University reserves the right to discontinue a candidate's enrolment (exclude) in line with Sections B5 and B7.

The thesis or other form of assessable output should be of the same quality and rigour required of a normal PhD in a relevant field, normally be a minimum of 40,000 words for a STEMM[8] subject area and 60,000 words for a non-STEMM subject area. Where an artefact, portfolio, other media or other form of public output constitutes a component part of the assessable submission, these shall be accompanied by a thesis which shall not normally exceed 50% of the volume of a normal PhD thesis in a relevant field (see Section B8.37).

Any change to an approved research project, including requests for suspension or extension of enrolment, change from full-time to part-time enrolment or *vice versa*, and change of supervisors requires the formal approval of the Graduate School Board. Changes to projects which impact or compromise previously granted ethics approval require the approval of an appropriate Research Ethics Committee, as determined by the University's ethics codes and policies currently in force.

D2.14 Except where an intermediate exit award is permitted that is not a research degree, the research component will normally be examined in accordance with the University's regulations and requirements for a Research degree (Section B8) and the validated programme specific regulations outlined in the programme handbook. The Board of Examiners will normally include an internal and external examiner and an Independent Chair. Where the validated programme permits a member of University staff to participate

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in the programme or they have a current or recent link to the University, e.g. they provide a service for the University or have left the University's employment in the last three years, two external examiners will normally be required. The examiners' reports and recommendations for the research component will be addressed to the Graduate School Board.

D2.15 The conferment process will be as set out for other research degrees in Section B8.

Section E: Research Degree by Distance Learning (RDDL) Scheme

E1. Purpose of the RDDL Scheme

E1.1 The University of Westminster has a responsibility to align its practice with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education[9] to ensure candidates have access to appropriate support, facilities and exposure to a high quality research environment for the duration of their studies. This is normally best facilitated by candidates regularly attending a University campus to interact with their Director of Studies and other researchers. The University recognises that whether a candidate is based elsewhere, particularly where domiciled outside of the UK the normal campus-based support and study pattern may not be practicable, for example:

a) Researchers in collaborating institutions; or

b) Candidates whose projects are most appropriately undertaken within their home country or region.

E1.2 The Research Degree by Distance Learning (RDDL) Scheme is intended to allow candidates to enrol for a University research degree award, eg an MPhil/PhD[10] or a Professional Doctorate, for which a majority of a programme of study takes place away from the University research environment found on-campus. MPhil/PhD candidates will need to read this section in conjunction with Section B. A Professional Doctorate candidate will need to read this section in conjunction with Sections D and B plus any Validated Programme Specific Regulations.

E1.3 Study via this scheme may not be appropriate for all research projects and will be subject to the agreement of the Director of Studies and College

E2 Protecting the Quality and Standards of Research Degrees Studied Off-Campus

E2.1 All candidates wishing to be considered for entry under this scheme will be required to demonstrate that they:

a) Meet the entry requirements of the programme they wish to apply to;

b) Are able to undertake a suitable research project in their home country or region;

c) Have appropriate local support, eg via a HEI and/or sponsor, for the whole duration of their study away from the University of Westminster to provide necessary resources (eg library, archives, computers, laboratories; virtual learning environments, etc.), and facilities (this will depend upon the area of research: support from the University of Westminster delivered remotely may be practicable in some cases, whereas, in other cases additional local support may be required);

d) Have the means of rapid communication with their supervisors, for example, by telephone, Skype, video-conference and e-mail; and

e) Will, throughout the course of their enrolment, be able to access the necessary supervisory support, facilities, resources and research training/development opportunities, either through periodic attendance at a University of Westminster campus or other agreed venue(s) or via alternative modes of delivery (e.g. on-line). Alternative arrangements will need to be confirmed and agreed by the Director of Studies and College;

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9 http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code

10 PhD Direct entry will not normally be permitted under this scheme.

f) Will be required to attend enrolment, orientation and the first DRDP workshops at the point of enrolment in the first year

E2.2 Wherever possible, a supervisor, normally the Director of Studies will undertake one visit each year to the candidate in their environment of study, of appropriate duration to permit detailed and extensive discussion of progress to date and work planned. Where this is not possible, for example due to political or social unrest, high risk of harm, etc. the meeting should take place at an alternative venue where possible.

E2.3 All formal intermediate and final assessments requiring the presentation of written work and a defence by viva voce will take place at the University of Westminster unless an alternative venue is agreed by the Graduate School Board. Candidates without a right to reside and study in the UK will need to comply with the University and UK Visas and Immigration Service requirements for obtaining an appropriate visa. Due to restrictions on the frequency of attendance in the UK the Director of Studies and the candidate will need to carefully plan proposed visits to the UK. Current advice should be obtained from the Tier 4/International advisers.

E2.4 RDDL scheme candidates will be charged the appropriate Programme fee. While it is recognised candidates may use University resources less than a non-RDDL study route the programmes are typically more complex to manage and involve a greater degree of staff engagement requiring a release from other duties, eg teaching, academic enterprise and other research activities. Any variation from the standard programme fee, eg to cover supervisor travel and other research support costs, will need to be approved by the appropriate College Executive Group (or equivalent) and the fees will be agreed before a candidate is permitted to study under this scheme.

E2.5 Where a candidate requests a move to distance learning study during the course of their research programme, eg due to an extended placement at another institution or partner, this will need the support of the Director of Studies and approval by the College and if appropriate the Graduate School Board.

Section F: Collaborative Provision

F1. Overview of Collaborative Provision in Research Degrees

F1.1 The involvement of collaborators and partners in the provision of academic awards, including research degrees, can be in many different forms ranging from financial sponsorship by organisations, such as the European Union, Research Councils, and various Private, Public and Non-Governmental Organisations, through to individuals contributing to the supervision of individual research projects and research degree candidates.

F1.2 The University has a responsibility to manage collaborative provision so that it is aligned with the Quality Code for Higher Education and to undertake proportionate due diligence assessments to protect the integrity of the University's awards.

F1.3 The University has laid down procedures for the approval of collaborators, in many cases carried out separately from the academic decision-making. These procedures aim to be proportionate to the size and complexity of a collaboration and may take place at College or University level and are overseen by the University Collaborations Committee and in the context of the Graduate School Board, the Professional and Collaborative Doctorate Committee.

F1.4 Faculties, academics and research degree candidates must comply with the requirements for the management of academic collaborations; for guidance see: https://myintranet.westminster.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-services/academic-registrar/quality-and-standards/collaborations-and-partnerships/getting-partnerships-approved.

F1.5 In general where a proposed collaboration involves the University of Westminster as the single awarding body, eg where external sponsorship and/or supervision will exist in support of a University of Westminster Award then the standard University Academic Regulations for Research Degrees as detailed in Sections A to C apply as appropriate, supplemented by the due diligence processes available via the webpage detailed at F1.4 above.

F1.6 Where the proposed collaboration will involve an award being made by more than one University, eg the University of Westminster and a collaborating Institution then additional processes will need to be followed and these can be found by following the link detailed in F1.4 above. In most cases these will fall into one of two categories:

i. Where the proposed collaboration involves a single research candidate a "cotutelle" or "co-tutoring" arrangement may be appropriate. In these cases, both institutions will make an award in line with their own academic regulations and award descriptors, however, the programme of research will be managed under the University of Westminster Academic Regulations for Research Degrees and the supporting Research Degrees Handbook, eg covering admissions, enrolment, progressions management, and examination. The collaborating institution will be responsible for satisfying themselves that the candidate has met the required standards for their award. Where a single thesis and single viva is proposed then the examination arrangements will be as detailed in Section B8, however, each institution will provide an Internal and an External examiner with the Chair of the Examination Board being provided by the University of Westminster. All examiners may participate in the oral examination but the examiners for each institution will consider the outcome

and make their recommendations to their host University separately in line with the institution's award descriptors and regulations. For details of the approval and due diligence process see the link at F1.4 above.

ii. Where the proposed collaboration will involve another Awarding Institution and there will be more than one research candidate enrolled this will need to follow the processes for a "Dual Award"[11] and will be treated as a separate programme. The management arrangements for the programme will be negotiated between the Institutions involved and a written agreement will be required covering issues such as Admissions and Research programme approval, Progression management (APRs), Doctoral Researcher Development, Research ethics and wider research governance arrangements, Complaints and Appeals handling, which institution employs the Director of Studies at the various stages of the programme, etc. The resulting agreement between the institutions may require programme specific regulations where it is proposed that the regulations of another institution will take precedence over University of Westminster regulations.

Where a single thesis and single viva is proposed then the examination arrangements will be as detailed in Section B8, however, each institution will provide an Internal and an External examiner with the Chair of the Examination Board normally being provided by the University of Westminster. All examiners may participate in the oral examination but the examiners for each institution will consider the outcome and make their recommendations to their host University separately in line with the institution's award descriptors and regulations.

Where an alternative form of examination is proposed either in place of or alongside an oral examination (viva voce) this would need to be approved by the Graduate School Board.

A proposed dual research degree programme will need to be assessed under the University of Westminster processes for the approval of a new programme including institutional level due diligence assessment (see the link at F1.4 for further details).

[11] At the time of writing the University of Westminster is not permitted to enter into "Joint Award" arrangements with another institution.

Section G: Higher Doctorates

G1 Awards

G1.1 The University will award the following Higher Doctorates:

- Doctor of Laws (LL.D)
- Doctor of Letters (D.Litt)
- Doctor of Science (D.Sc)
- Doctor of Technology (D.Tech)
- Doctor of Arts (D.Arts)

G2 Eligibility

G2.1 Applicants must fulfil eligibility requirements as follows:

- They must demonstrate link with the University of Westminster, through:
  - Alumnus status; or
  - As a current member of the academic staff; or
  - As a person who can clearly demonstrate their research is clearly and demonstrably focussed within the University, and/or
  - Through a collaborative partnership with the University.

- They must fulfil requirements regarding the minimum career interval (after highest current academic qualification):
  - Bachelor's Degree + 7 years
  - Master's + 6 years

G3 Presentation of Evidence and Assessment

G3.1 The Higher Doctorate award is considered on the basis of the submission to the University by an eligible, registered candidate of a portfolio of work previously published in a peer-refereed context (or of equivalent quality in the case of creative or practice-based work) and a brief statement of no more than 2,500 words outlining their claim in terms of its contribution to knowledge, development of the field/corpus and impact

G3.2 Submissions for Higher Doctorate awards will be examined by a panel, appointed by the Graduate School Board to act as the Higher Doctorates Committee in accordance with the University statutes.

G3.3 The Higher Doctorate award is conferred in recognition of the fulfilment of the following criteria:

- a substantial body of research, or of creative practice embodying research, of high distinction;
- an original, significant and sustained contribution to the advancement and/or the application of knowledge or creative practice undertaken over a significant period;
- evidence of standing as a leading authority in the field or fields of study concerned.

G3.4 The University will appoint a Higher Doctorates Committee to consider and make recommendations in respect of the award of higher doctorates.

G3.5 Recommendations for the award of higher doctorates require ratification by Academic Council and the Court of Governors.