

# Academic Regulations 2020/2021

**Volume 2 – Postgraduate Research Degrees**

**September 2020**

# Postgraduate Research Degrees Regulations

## **Introduction to the Regulations**

The Academic Regulations is the framework of rules in which all the University's learning and assessment activities take place. Regulations are mandatory; they set out what must happen and what the impact will be.

These Postgraduate Research Degree (PGR) regulations are applicable to all postgraduate researchers and are about the research project element of their research degree award. They are also for all those who are involved in supporting postgraduate research degree study at UWE.

Where postgraduate researchers undertake taught modules either as part of their research development and training programme, or as part of a Professional Doctorate award, the University's Academic Regulations and Procedures for taught awards apply to those elements. This includes personal circumstances for assessments and coursework in taught modules.

Processes for making an academic appeal against the decision of an Award Board, or for making a complaint are the same for both research and taught aspects of research degree awards and may be accessed at:

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/academicadvice/academicappeals.aspx>

As students of the University, all postgraduate researchers are also subject to and supported by the University's published non-academic policies, such as the student conduct policy and the tuition fees policy. These can be found here:

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/about/corporateinformation/policies.aspx>

Any postgraduate researcher who is uncertain about which regulations apply to them should contact the Graduate School: [graduateschool@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:graduateschool@uwe.ac.uk) in Room 3E37, Frenchay Campus.

The complete current PGR academic regulations and procedures, together with further information, guidance and good practice can be found in the [Graduate School Handbook](#) which is available online and is updated annually.

# **UWE Bristol Academic Regulations 2020/2021**

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# **Part 1: Postgraduate research degree awards of the University**

## **PGR 1. Postgraduate research degree awards granted by the University**

**PGR1.1R** The following awards may be granted to persons who successfully complete approved supervised research (including, where required, taught units of study) and satisfy the conditions in the Academic Regulations and Procedures:

Masters degree by Research;<sup>1</sup>  
Master of Philosophy (MPhil);  
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD);  
Master of Philosophy by publication (MPhil);  
Doctor of Philosophy by publication (DPhil);  
Professional Doctorate (award titles as approved by the Academic Board from time to time).

### **PGR1.2 PhD and MPhil awards**

**PGR1.2.1R** MPhil and Doctoral level research-based awards (including MPhil, PhD, Professional Doctorate degrees) are assessed by submission of a written thesis and an oral defence (normally a viva voce examination). For MPhil and PhD the written thesis may incorporate research outputs.

### **PGR 1.3. Research degrees by published research**

**PGR1.3.1R** The awards of Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) may be granted to persons who successfully submit evidence of scholarship through a collection of published work and satisfy the conditions in the Academic Regulations and Procedures.

### **PGR 1.4. Professional Doctorate**

**PGR1.4.1R** The University may award a professional doctorate to persons who successfully complete an approved programme requiring completion of taught elements and supervised research of relevance and application to a defined area of professional practice and appropriate to the level and nature of the award. The following award titles have been approved by Academic Board and others may be approved from time to time:

<sup>1</sup>In the context of the FARSCOPE Doctoral Training Programme joint award developed with the University of Bristol, UWE may award a Masters degree by Research as this is required by the University of Bristol regulations which govern the programme.

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Doctor of Biomedical Sciences (DBMS);  
Doctor of the Built Environment (DBEnv);  
Doctor of Business Administration (DBA);  
Doctor of Counselling Psychology (DCounsPsych);  
Doctor of Education (EdD);  
Doctor of Health Psychology (DHealthPsych);  
Doctor of Health and Social Care (DHSC);  
Doctor of Spatial Planning (DPlan);  
Doctor of Engineering (DEng).

### **PGR 1.5 Creative Practice**

**PGR1.5.1R** A postgraduate researcher (PGR) may undertake research in which their own creative work forms a significant part of the intellectual enquiry, and where the creative work is undertaken as part of the registered research programme approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The project registration proposal (RD1) should set out the intended form of submission as described at a. below.

**PGR1.5.2R** A postgraduate researcher may also undertake research in which the principal focus is preparation of a scholarly edition of the works of others e.g. one or more texts, musical or choreographic works, works of fiction or other original artefacts.

**PGR1.5.3R** In both such cases:

- a. part of the final submission for assessment may comprise examples of original works in addition to the thesis, for example: works of fiction, musical or choreographic works, designs, devices and products, short film, exhibition of works, installation or other original artefacts, or examples of creative work. Where practical this should be bound into the thesis;
- b. any submitted creative work must be clearly presented in relation to the argument of a thesis written by the candidate and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context;
- c. the final deposition of the thesis to the University research repository must be accompanied by some permanent record (for example, electronic recording, photographic record, musical score, or diagrammatic representation) of the creative work.

### **PGR1.6 Collaboration with other bodies**

**PGR1.6.1R** The University encourages co-operation with industrial, governmental, commercial, professional or research establishments for the purpose of research leading to research degree awards. All such collaborative working will be governed by contractual arrangement agreed by the University and the external party.

### **PGR 1.7 Establishing a relationship with external institutions for delivery of programmes of supervised postgraduate research**

Definition: relationships between the University and a) institutions of higher education with degree-awarding powers for taught programmes only, or b) affiliated institutions of the University where the institution wishes its postgraduate researchers to be registered for awards of the University.

**PGR1.7.1R** An initial inquiry concerning a possible academic relationship of this kind shall be referred to the Director of Student and Academic Services who will manage the application process, working in close collaboration with the Director and the Manager of the UWE Graduate School from the outset.

### **PGR 1.8 Higher doctorates**

**PGR 1.8.1R** The following awards may be granted to persons who provide evidence of work of high distinction in accordance with the Academic Regulations:

- Doctor of Letters (DLitt);
- Doctor of Science (DSc).

Enquiries about higher doctorate awards should be directed to the UWE Graduate School in the first instance.

The process for application, assessment and award of higher doctorates is described at PGR Appendix 1: Higher doctorates.

## **Part 2: Postgraduate qualification descriptors**

### **PGR 2.1 Expectations**

**PGR2.1.1** In higher education, levels of learning and achievement are described in the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of degree awarding bodies published by the QAA.

[www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf)

**PGR2.1.2** Qualification descriptors are used to describe the relative intellectual demands, complexity, depth and independent learning associated with a particular level of learning. To gain an award students are expected to be able to demonstrate that they meet the outcomes and have developed the wider skills, abilities and attributes set out in the descriptor for that qualification level.

**PGR2.1.3** Postgraduate research degrees at UWE align with the QAA qualification descriptors for Doctoral Level 8, and Masters Level 7.

**PGR2.1.4** For the purposes of these regulations the written thesis is a document that must allow the appointed examination panel to assess the work against the criteria for the award.

### **PGR2.2 Doctoral descriptor**

**PGR2.2.1R** The award of a doctorate of the University requires the postgraduate researcher to demonstrate that they:

- a. have conducted enquiry leading to the creation and interpretation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship, shown by satisfying scholarly review by accomplished and recognised scholars in the field;
- b. can demonstrate a critical understanding of the current state of knowledge in that field of research and / or practice;
- c. show the ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge at the forefront of the field of research and/or practice including the capacity to adjust the project design in the light of emergent issues and understandings;
- d. can demonstrate a critical understanding of the methodology of enquiry;
- e. have developed independent judgement of issues and ideas in the field of research and / or practice and are able to communicate and justify that judgement to appropriate audiences;
- f. can critically reflect on their work and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses including understanding validation procedures.

**PGR2.3 MPhil descriptor**

**PGR2.3.1R** The award of a Master of Philosophy requires the postgraduate researcher to demonstrate that they:

- a. have engaged in enquiry which makes a contribution to knowledge within their field of study;
- b. can demonstrate a systematic understanding of the current state of knowledge within their field of research and / or practice;
- c. show the ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project capable of contributing new knowledge close to the forefront of the field of research and / or practice;
- d. can demonstrate a sound understanding of the methodology and techniques of enquiry relevant to the discipline or field of practice;
- e. have developed a capacity to form judgements of issues and ideas in the field of research and / or practice and communicate and justify these to relevant audiences;
- f. can critically reflect on their work and evaluate its strengths and weaknesses.

**PGR2.3.2** The overall difference between a doctorate and an MPhil is not one of time or length but rather an issue of depth and sophistication.



## **Part 3: Applications and admissions**

### **PGR3.1 Consideration of applications**

**PGR3.1.1R** Applicants must submit a complete application, according to the University's published process.

**PGR3.1.2R** Proposed research can be in any field of study in which the University has the expertise and resource to offer supervision. The proposal must be capable of leading to scholarly work, and the production of a written thesis or other agreed outputs.

**PGR3.1.3R** Applications will be reviewed in the appropriate faculty. Research proposals are considered according to academic merit.

**PGR3.1.4** The following factors will be considered: suitability for research degree study, alignment to the faculty's research priorities; availability of supervision and other resources; mode and place of study; availability of funding; any related accredited studies and research training; research governance including ethical approval requirements and confidentiality; intellectual property rights; arrangements with any collaborators.

### **PGR 3.2 Entry requirements**

**PGR3.2.1R** Applicants for the MPhil, PhD, DPhil or Professional Doctorate are normally expected to have a UK 2:1 honours degree or above, or a UK Masters qualification (or from a University of comparable standard, if outside the UK).

**PGR3.2.2R** Applicants must meet minimum English language proficiency requirements. For international applicants wishing to pursue research at UWE these are IELTS 6.5 – 7.5 overall or accepted equivalents. Faculties may vary their requirements within this range. Any such variation will be published on the Graduate School website.

**PGR3.2.3R** Applicants for professional doctorate programmes are also expected to have experience of relevant professional practice, and may need to demonstrate that they have access to a suitable professional context in which to conduct their research.

**PGR3.2.4R** To be eligible to apply for the MPhil (by publication) or DPhil, applicants must:

- a) Be employed by the University or an affiliated academic institution for a minimum of one year, with at least six months remaining on their contract;

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Or

- b) Have a close association with the University as agreed by the Executive Dean of the relevant Faculty, or the Vice-Chancellor.

In either category applicants must also comply with the relevant published criteria at PGR3.7

Registration for DPhil or MPhil by publication is on a part-time basis.

### **PGR 3.3 Offer of a place**

**PGR3.3.1R** Successful applicants will only receive a formal offer with terms and conditions, after a successful formal interview. Interviews may take place by video conference, using software approved by the University, where it is not possible to hold a face-to-face event.

**PGR3.3.2R** The appropriate Faculty Research Degrees Committee will approve any offer of a place on a research degree programme.

**PGR3.3.4R** The formal offer will name an appropriate Director of Studies.

## Part 4: Postgraduate researcher registration

### Initial registration, changes to registration and withdrawal of registration.

#### PGR 4.1 Initial registration

**PGR4.1.1R** Normal minimum and maximum periods of registration are as follows:

	Minimum	Maximum
Master of Philosophy (FT)	18 mths	36 mths
Master of Philosophy (PT)	30 mths	48 mths
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (FT)	24 mths	48 mths
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) (PT)	36 mths	84 mths
Professional Doctorate (FT)	36 mths	48 mths
Professional Doctorate (PT)	48 mths	72 mths
Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) (PT)	12 mths	72 mths
Master of Philosophy by publication (MPhil) (PT)	12 mths	48 mths

**PGR4.1.2R** Initial registration will take place at the postgraduate researcher's (PGR's) start date, and PGRs are required to re-register each year until their completion of, or withdrawal from, the award. Annual fees are due at the start of each registration year.

**PGR 4.1.3R** PGRs must demonstrate satisfactory progress at each stage of their award for registration to continue.

#### PGR 4.2 Changes to registration, including suspension and extension

**PGR4.2.1R** Faculty Research Degrees Committees (FRDCs) are responsible for considering applications to make changes to a PGR's registration, where supported by appropriate evidence, including:

- Research project
- Supervisory team
- Mode of attendance
- Registration status (suspension, extension or withdrawal)
- Extension to individual progress milestone deadlines that do not otherwise affect registration
- Change of doctoral registration to MPhil (before submission of thesis)
- Applications from MPhil candidates to withdraw from their MPhil registration and re-apply for registration at doctoral level.

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**PGR4.2.2R** A PGR can apply for suspension from their registration if they are unable to work on their research degree due to health or other acceptable reasons. The FRDC will not normally approve a suspension of more than one year at a time. Until otherwise advised there will be no requirement to supply supporting evidence for covid-19 related circumstances, whether personal or professional.

**PGR4.2.3R** Where recommended by the FRDC, the Research Degrees Award Board may extend the PGR's registration where there are acceptable reasons, presented together with appropriate supporting evidence and a realistic timescale for completion. Until otherwise advised there will be no requirement to supply supporting evidence for covid-19 related circumstances, whether personal or professional.

(See also information about personal circumstances at Part 7 of these PGR Regulations.)

### **PGR 4.3 Withdrawal of registration**

**PGR4.3.1R** Withdrawal of registration may be initiated by the PGR or the University at any time on application to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC). Where withdrawal is initiated by the University the application must be supported by appropriate evidence and comply with the published [PGR withdrawal policy](#).

**PGR4.3.2R** The decision to withdraw a PGR's registration is the responsibility of the Research Degrees Award Board on recommendation from the FRDC.

### **PGR4.4 Additional circumstances in which postgraduate researchers may be required to leave the award or may be expelled by the University**

**PGR4.4.1R** PGRs may also be required to leave the award by the University for reasons other than those described in the PGR withdrawal policy. These reasons may include admission on the basis of an application subsequently found to be incorrect or fraudulent and/or that the PGR has acquired a status which renders continuation on the award inappropriate. For PGRs registered on Professional Doctorate awards where there are concerns regarding their professional suitability or fitness to practice the professional suitability policy and procedure will be used.

Processes governing the expulsion of students of the University, including postgraduate researchers, are described in the [UWE policy for suspension for academic reasons](#).

## **Part 5: Postgraduate researcher personal conduct and expectations**

### **PGR5.1 Responsibilities of Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs)**

**PGR5.1.1R** The rights of PGRs to supervision, tuition, resources, assessment, certification and conferment of an award are subject to remaining in good standing with the University.

**PGR5.1.2R** PGRs are individually responsible for providing the University with such information as it requires for admission, registration and the collection of fees, for the certification of credit and awards, and for any other purpose connected with the University's functions.

**PGR5.1.3R** PGRs are required to comply with the written terms and conditions of their registration on the award, supplied with their formal offer at admission. Non-compliance with these terms and conditions may result in withdrawal of registration.

### **PGR 5.2 Compliance with University policies – personal academic integrity**

**PGR5.2.1R** PGRs are individually responsible for their own conduct and are required to act with integrity in relation to the production and representation of academic research and outputs, and in acknowledging the contributions of others in their work. They are subject to the requirements of the University's [Code of Good Research Conduct](#) and its [Assessment Offences policy](#), as well as the University's policy about Intellectual Property Rights and must comply with any research integrity training requirements published by the University.

See also [Part 10 of this handbook: Research Governance](#).

## **Part 6: Postgraduate researcher professional development and research training requirements; accredited learning; PGR involvement in teaching.**

### **PGR 6.1 Professional development and research skills training requirements**

**PGR6.1.1R** All postgraduate researchers are required to undertake an assessed professional development and research skills training programme of a minimum Masters (M) level credit value to enable them to meet the requirements of the UWE MPhil or Doctoral descriptor and become effective researchers. This programme should align with the aims and objectives of the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework](#)

**PGR6.1.2R** The credit requirements for the assessed programme are:

Master of Philosophy  
60 of which at least 60 are at level M

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)  
60-120 of which at least 60 are at level M

Professional Doctorate  
120 – 270 at level M

Master of Philosophy by publication  
60 of which at least 60 are at level M

Doctor of Philosophy by publication (DPhil)  
60-120 of which at least 60 are at level M.

It is recognised that some PGRs will benefit from undertaking research training beyond the minimum required to fulfil the credit requirement.

**PGR6.1.3R** Where the programme of related studies includes approved studies leading to a taught award and a PGR is registered for that award and fulfils all its requirements, they may be recommended for that award in addition to the degree of MPhil or PhD.

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### **PGR 6.2 Recognition of prior certificated learning (accredited learning, AL) in MPhil, PhD, MPhil and DPhil by publication awards**

Prior certificated learning is learning that has been accredited or otherwise certificated by an institution of higher education, including the University of the West of England or other recognised external body acceptable to the University. It is usually referred to as accredited learning or AL.

**PGR 6.2.1R** Postgraduate researchers on MPhil, PhD, MPhil and DPhil by publication awards may apply to use accredited learning to contribute towards some, or occasionally all, of the accredited training requirement of the award for which they are registered, where the Faculty Research Degrees Committee has agreed that this is appropriate for that individual.

**PGR 6.2.2R** The Graduate School has established procedures for the scrutiny and verification of applications for recognition of accredited learning from PGRs in this respect.

### **PGR6.3 Recognition of prior experiential learning (AEL)**

Experiential learning is defined as learning achieved through experience gained by an individual outside formalised learning arrangements and where the learning is assessable by the University.

**PGR6.3.1R** Assessment of experiential learning requires the matching of the learning achieved by the PGR to the learning outcomes of a specified UWE module.

### **PGR 6.4 Recognition of prior learning (AL or AEL) in Professional Doctorates**

**PGR6.4.1R** Where prior learning (accredited and / or experiential learning) contributes to the credit requirements of a professional doctorate, the combination shall not exceed two-thirds of the total credit requirements for the award. The two-thirds ceiling shall not apply where a PGR has obtained all credit by study and assessment under the UWE Academic Regulations.

**PGR6.4.2R** Where a professional doctorate researcher fails to meet the requirements of the award on which they are registered but is eligible to receive a lower award, the two-thirds limit for credit gained by external accredited learning and / or accredited experiential learning shall be reduced accordingly for the lower award.

### **PGR 6.5 Reporting AL and AEL to exam boards**

**PGR6.5.1R** All decisions to recognise credit awarded or certificated by an external institution or body (AL) will be reported to the Research Degrees Award board and identified against the

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relevant modules. This will be identified as recognised certificated learning (accredited learning) on the certificate of credit.

**PGR6.5.2R** Credit awarded for accredited learning will not:

- carry marks or grades awarded by another institution
- carry marks achieved under study and assessment under the University's assessment regulations.

**PGR6.5.3R** The outcome of the assessment of experiential learning (AEL) applications must be reported as recommendations for the award of credit to the relevant Field Board for decision, referencing the module/s against which the assessed learning outcomes are being matched. Where credit is awarded, this will be identified as recognised experiential learning on the certificate of credit. Outcomes of modules will be reported to the Research Degrees Award Board in the normal way.

**PGR6.5.4** The module outcomes in both instances will be pass or fail.

### **PGR 6.6 Postgraduate researchers who teach**

The University's 2020 strategy identifies research activity, output and knowledge exploration as key to informing and enriching its taught curricula. Postgraduate researchers have the potential to play a significant role in supporting learning and teaching in this respect and the Graduate School has developed a [policy for PGRs who teach](#) which underpins this aim.

**PGR6.6.1R** Contribution to teaching by postgraduate researchers can only occur with the permission of the Director of Studies and must not impede progress on the research degree.

**PGR6.6.2R** For full time postgraduate researchers, teaching commitments may not amount in total to more than 120 hours per academic year.

**PGR6.6.3R** Postgraduate researchers who teach more than 120 hours per year must be registered on their research degree award part-time.

**PGR6.6.4R** Postgraduate researchers who teach must undertake the training available that is appropriate to the number of hours they teach per year.



## **Part 7: Wellbeing and sources of support for postgraduate researchers, including personal circumstances**

### **PGR7.1 Expectations and accessing support and help**

**PGR7.1.1R** All PGRs are entitled to expect access to proper levels of support during their studies, provided by the University via the Graduate School and other professional and special services, from within faculties, and by the supervisory team.

Information about sources of support and help will be made available to postgraduate researchers via the Graduate School Handbook and the Graduate School web pages.

## **Part 7a Personal Circumstances for postgraduate researchers**

### **Introduction**

Personal circumstances in this context are significant personal difficulties or significantly disruptive matters outside a PGR's control which impact upon their ability to make progress with research, or to meet the deadline for completing/submitting work for a specific progress milestone, or to attend a progression viva voce/progress review meeting.

They can also apply when completing or submitting a thesis/work for final assessment or undertaking a final assessment viva voce examination, but there is special advice that must followed for the final assessment period.

The University Graduate School has a personal circumstances process in place to help PGRs facing these situations.

All personal circumstances requests must be made using the relevant form provided on the [Graduate School webpage](#) and must be supported by relevant evidence.

### **Who is this process for?**

This process is for PGRs registered on post graduate research degrees where personal circumstances are affecting progress with their research study. It is not applicable for circumstances affecting any Masters level modules that PGRs may be taking as part of their training development credit requirement or modules being undertaken by PGRs registered on Professional Doctorate programmes.

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For circumstances affecting a specific assessment for a module the University's personal circumstances process for taught modules must be used which can be found at <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/academicadvice/assessments/personalcircumstances.aspx>

For circumstances affecting both research study *and* a specific taught module assessment both the PGR and the taught module processes may need to be used. This is because the range of appropriate options is different for each process. Any PGR unsure about what which process to use should contact the [Graduate School](#) for more advice.

### **PGR 7.2 Regulations about personal circumstances for PGRs**

**PGR7.2.1R** Postgraduate researchers are expected to engage with all progress review milestones including the RD1 and assessment events (i.e. progression examination and final assessment viva voce examination) that are required of them.

**PGR7.2.2R** If a PGR does not submit the required work/thesis by the specified deadline for a progress review milestone including the RD1, progression examination, or at final submission, this will be recorded as a non-submission. If this is due to significant personal reasons outside the PGR's control, then they may submit a personal circumstances application.

**PGR7.2.3R** If the PGR has chosen to submit the required work/thesis and attend the progress review meeting or viva voce examination it will not normally be possible to submit a personal circumstances application subsequently. (See also late personal circumstances at PGR7.4.7).

**PGR7.2.4R** If personal circumstances prevent a PGR from actively engaging with their research project, meeting a submission deadline including the RD1, or attending a progress review or viva voce examination they may apply for one of the following:

- Up to 5 working days (Monday – Friday) for the late submission of a progress examination report or progress review work. Evidenced or self-certified where no evidence collectible (once only per stage, not available for final submission or within final assessment period).
- An extension to a progress milestone submission deadline i.e. progress examination report or progress review work (for up to 28 days, once only per stage. Not available for final submission or within final assessment period);
- The postponement and rearrangement of a progression examination or progress review meeting;
- A suspension of registration (for up to 12 months, not within the final assessment period);

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- An extension to the registration end date (available post stage 3 progress review only – extra time to complete and make final submission).
  - Postponement and re-arrangement of the final assessment viva voce;
  - Suspension during the final assessment period, or extension of the final assessment period.
- (NB. The final assessment period commences at the point of submission of the thesis or critical commentary for final assessment.)

Until otherwise advised, all cases that are related to Covid-19 circumstances will **not** require supporting evidence and PGRs may self-certify.

In **all other** cases (except 5-day self-certification) appropriate supporting evidence will be required to ensure the PGR receives the most appropriate support.

The process for making an application is described on the [Graduate School PGR personal circumstances guidance notes](#), available on the Graduate School website.

**PGR7.2.5R** Faculty Research Degrees Committees will have mechanisms to consider applications for personal circumstances confidentially up to the commencement of the final assessment period. Exceptionally FRDCs may approve arrangements to support personal circumstances other than those listed at PGR7.2.4R, where there is specific individual need and evidence to support this.

**PGR7.2.6R** The Research Degrees Award Board will have mechanisms to consider applications for personal circumstances confidentially within the final assessment period. Exceptionally RDAB may approve arrangements to support personal circumstances other than those listed at PGR7.2.4R, where there is specific individual need and evidence to support this.

**PGR7.2.7R** The Research Degrees Award Board is responsible for considering personal circumstances relating to the withdrawal of a postgraduate researcher's registration.

## Part 7b Reasonable Adjustments

### PGR7.5 Regulations about reasonable adjustments

**PGR7.5.1R** The Graduate School in collaboration with other professional and specialist services will ensure that there are confidential opportunities for PGRs to disclose disabilities, health or other ongoing conditions, or specific learning difficulties (including dyslexia) for which additional support and/or reasonable adjustment may be required.

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**PGR7.5.2R** The Graduate School in collaboration with other professional and specialist services will ensure that mechanisms are in place for PGRs with a documented disability, health or other ongoing condition, or specific learning difficulty to access additional support and/or reasonable adjustments.

### **PGR 7.6 Reasonable adjustments in viva voce examinations, and progress review**

**PGR7.6.1R** Where appropriate, PGRs may receive extra time or other assessment adjustments. In the case of viva voce examinations and progress review these adjustments can be varied and wide ranging and must be discussed and agreed individually with the Graduate School in advance.

## **Part 8: Supervisory teams and the supervision process**

UWE requirements for the appointment of supervisors and their responsibilities align to [principle 3 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education \(Research Degrees\)](#).

### **PGR8.1 The supervisory team**

**PGR8.1.1R** Faculty Research Degree Committees (FRDCs) will appoint at least two supervisors, including one Director of Studies, based upon their collective experience and knowledge of the research area.

**PGR8.1.2R** Prior to formal appointment (RD1), the supervisory team must already have between them experience of UWE supervisor training and experience of PGR supervision at all stages to successful completion at the appropriate level:

- i. The Director of Studies will be a permanent member of UWE staff and is responsible for the conduct and governance of the project (see also Part 10 of these regulations Research Governance).
- ii. At least one member of the supervisory team will have completed the UWE supervisor training prior to the formal appointment of the supervisory team (RD1 approval).
- iii. At least one UWE member of the supervisory team will have previous experience of successful supervision at all stages through to completion at the appropriate level, either at UWE or at another UK University.
- iv. Where the completion experience is with another UK University, this person will also have completed the UWE supervisor training prior to the formal appointment of the supervisory team (RD1 approval). This person will advise the Director of Studies should the DoS not have the required completion experience.

**PGR8.1.3R** All UWE staff who are supervisors including Directors of Studies and those who have supervisory experience at another HEI but are new to UWE, must undertake in full the supervisory training specified by the Graduate School within 12 months of their appointment as a UWE supervisor for the first time. Failure to comply with this requirement without good

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reason will prevent the member of staff being allocated any further supervisory appointments of any kind until the training is completed.

**PGR8.1.4R** All external supervisors who are located in HEI academic settings (i.e. not UWE Staff) must confirm that they have completed equivalent supervisory training at their own institution or must complete the UWE supervisory training. All other external supervisors (i.e. those in industrial, professional practice or other settings) must complete UWE supervisor training made available to them via the Graduate School. All UWE training must be completed within 12 months of appointment wherever possible.

**PGR8.1.5R** Any changes to the supervisory team are subject to the consideration and approval of the FRDC.

### **PGR8.2 The supervision process**

**PGR8.2.1R** The supervisory team is responsible for meeting with the candidate regularly, discussing progress made and agreeing any actions and objectives. With the agreement of all parties involved supervisions may take place online using video conferencing software as long as confidentiality and authenticity can be maintained.

**PGR8.2.2R** The supervisory team may raise concerns at any time with the Faculty Research Degrees Committee about progress being made by the candidate, which may result in further action being taken.

**PGR8.2.3R** The FRDC will monitor supervisory arrangements through data about progress and completion rates, progression and review reports, supervision training attendance, and feedback from PGRs.

NB. A detailed list of Director of Studies/supervisory team's required responsibilities may be found at [PGR 8.3 – 8.4 in Part 8 of the online Graduate School Handbook](#)

## **Part 9: Registration of the research project (RD1)**

### **PGR 9.1 Purpose and objectives for project registration (RD1)**

- To demonstrate that the project proposed by the Postgraduate Researcher (PGR), including the methodology that will be used, together with the research governance and supervision arrangements that are in place, are appropriate and viable for study at Doctoral/MPhil level;
- To demonstrate that the PGR has a clear understanding of the scope of their responsibilities for the design and distinctive nature of their own research and its execution, and for their ongoing personal development as a researcher;
- PGRs must gain RD1 approval from the Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC) to be able to continue with their research degree registration.

NB. Professional Doctorate awards may be subject to specific requirements as detailed in the Programme Specification.

### **PGR 9.2 Confirmation of project registration (RD1)**

**PGR9.2.1R** Within 3 months for full-time and 6 months for part-time of their initial registration, all postgraduate researchers (PGRs) must submit their project registration proposal (RD1) for review and approval by the Faculty Research Degree Committees (FRDCs).

**PGR9.2.2R** The RD1 submitted must be written by the PGR should include:

- a. a definition of the research project title;
- b. supervision arrangements;
- c. a detailed schedule of work;
- d. an outline of proposed research skills development, training plan and module selection.

In addition, and where applicable to the project:

- e. an indication of ethical approval application;
- f. documentary evidence of a collaborative agreement with an external funder, identifying ownership of research data and/or Intellectual Property contract (IP);
- g. An application for the restriction of access to the final published thesis or critical commentary where this is deemed necessary (see also Part 10 Research Governance).

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**PGR9.2.3R** Consideration of the RD1 proposal has two possible outcomes which are:

- Satisfactory – continue registration, **or**
- Unsatisfactory – refer for resubmission

PGRs will have one opportunity to rework and resubmit their RD1 proposal.

**PGR9.2.4R** The resubmission deadline is normally 4 weeks for full-time PGRs and 6 weeks for part-time PGRs from the date of notification. At resubmission stage, the only outcomes available are:

- Satisfactory – continue registration, **or**
- Fail – registration withdrawn.

There will be no further opportunity for resubmission.

**PGR9.2.5R** The RD1 must be satisfactory in order to continue on the award and advance to the progression exam. Failure at this stage will result in the PGR's withdrawal from the award by the Research Degrees Award Board (RDAB).

### **PGR 9.3 Major changes to the research project**

**PGR9.3.1R** Any fundamental or major change to the overall aims, scope or methodology of the research project requires the approval of the Faculty Research Degrees Committee using the appropriate RD form. (See also PGR8.3 and PGR8.7.1)

Explanatory note: examples of acceptable reasons for change include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A change in the PGR's employment;
- Lack of successful development of the project in its original form;
- A change to a collaborative agreement or contract, including funding;
- A change in access to resources or data previously agreed that cannot be resolved;
- A change in methodology or data collection, or other change due to Covid-19 restrictions.

NB in such circumstances a change in the composition of the supervisory team may also be necessary to ensure ongoing subject expertise (RD5).



## **Part 10: Research governance including: research project conduct and expectations; ethics and research data management; intellectual property**

Research governance is the framework by which the University manages research to ensure research integrity is maintained. This framework includes principles, legal and regulatory provisions, standards of good practice, policies, guidance, systems, management and supervision. Further information about UWE's framework for research governance is set out in the [University's Code of Good Research Conduct](#)

### **PGR 10.1.1R Expectations about PGR research project conduct**

All UWE Bristol research must have a designated project manager who is responsible for the conduct of the research including compliance with The University's Code of Good Research Conduct and University policies on:

- Health & safety and risk management
- Research ethics
- Research governance and data management
- Intellectual property
- IT acceptable use
- Staff welfare and dignity at work

**PGR10.1.2R** For postgraduate research projects at UWE the designated project manager is the Director of Studies who is responsible for ensuring that the project is carried out in line with the University's [Code of Good Research Conduct](#), and meets the University's requirements for research governance, [data management](#) and [ethical approval](#) where appropriate. It is the responsibility of the Director of Studies, and where appropriate other named supervisors, to ensure that the postgraduate researcher is given effective induction, training, support and monitoring to assure good research practice (see also Code of Good Research Conduct, annex 1, research role definitions).

**PGR10.1.3R** The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring that the PGR submits any necessary application for [ethical approval](#) for the project where appropriate. Non-compliance with the University's ethics requirements may lead to investigation under research misconduct procedures.

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**PGR10.1.4R** A PGR who, having received appropriate advice and guidance from their Director of Studies/supervisory team, deliberately and wilfully chooses to ignore it resulting in a breach of the requirements of the Code may be personally liable and lead to investigation under research misconduct procedures. (See Code Chapter 5, 5.3.1 pg. 1).

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/research/researchgovernance/codeofgoodresearchconduct.aspx>

### **PGR10.2 Intellectual Property**

**PGR10.2.1R** The Director of Studies is responsible for providing guidance to the PGR on the application of the University's policy on Intellectual Property (IP) both with regard to the PGR's own research study and outputs, and to the use of any third party intellectual property within their thesis.

<http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/about/corporateinformation/policies.aspx>

**PGR10.2.2R** Having received this advice PGRs are responsible for compliance with the University's policy on Intellectual Property within their research work and outputs. (See also Part 5 of this handbook PGR personal conduct and expectations).

### **PGR 10.3 Restricting access to a thesis**

**PGR10.3.1R** Any application to restrict access to a thesis should normally be made at RD1 stage, with appropriate supporting evidence, and will be considered by the Research Degrees Award Board on the recommendation of the Faculty Research Degrees Committee.

**PGR10.3.2R** Where the need to restrict access to a thesis emerges at a subsequent stage of registration, exceptional application must be made to the Research Degrees Award Board.

**PGR10.3.3R** The agreed period of restriction will not normally be longer than two years from the date of the confirmation of the award; however, the Research Degrees Award Board may approve a shorter or longer period where it considers this to be appropriate.

## **Part 11: The progression examination**

### **PGR 11.1 Purpose of this progress milestone**

**PGR11.1.1** To demonstrate that the postgraduate researcher (PGR) is making satisfactory progress with their project so far.

### **How progress is measured**

**PGR11.1.2** The University uses the Doctoral/MPhil award criteria ([set out at PGR regulations part 2](#)) as the benchmark for measuring progress. Two independent reviewers internal to the University consider the progression report submitted by the PGR against these criteria and discuss this with the PGR at viva voce (oral examination).

**PGR11.1.3** PGRs must pass the progression examination to be able to continue with their research degree.

### **Milestone objectives**

**PGR11.1.4** In particular the reviewers must be confident that the PGR, supported by their supervisory team, has done the following:

- Defined the detailed objectives and scope of the research project;
- Been actively engaged in working on the research project and has made progress in line with initial objectives agreed at the registration of the project (RD1 stage) and with the time spent;
- Made a suitable survey of the relevant research literature and shown an ability to make a critical evaluation of published work;
- Developed an appropriate knowledge of research methods relevant to the area of research, and can explain and justify their choice of research methods;
- Taken action to deal with any conditions of ethical approval and / or identified any changes to ethical requirements;
- Been actively engaged in any professional development or training activities identified at RD1 stage;
- Developed an adequately detailed plan of future work so that the research degree can be completed within the registration period allowed.

## **Regulations about the progression examination**

These regulations describe what must happen at the Progression Examination and are applicable to all PGRs including those registered on Professional Doctorate programmes.

**PGR11.2.1R** By the end of stage 1 of their research registration, all PGR candidates must have undertaken and passed the progression examination in order to continue on their award and move to Stage 2.

### **PGR 11.3 Format of the progression examination**

**PGR11.3.1R** The progression examination has two components:

#### **Component 1**

Evidence of progress submitted in the form of a progression report (part 1), together with other work or outputs submitted by the PGR on an optional basis (part 2);

#### **Component 2**

A viva voce examination conducted by two independent internal reviewers unconnected with the project, the PGR or the supervisory team.

(Note: Programme specific requirements for component 1 (part 2) may apply to Professional Doctorate Awards).

**PGR11.3.2R** All PGRs are normally required to attend the viva voce examination in person at the location and on the date specified by the University. This will normally be at one of the University's campus sites, unless otherwise specified for PGRs within an approved academic agreement or schedule thereto between the University and the affiliated academic institution. Exceptionally, and only when it is not possible to hold a face-to-face viva, the Progression Exam Viva may be conducted on-line using video conferencing software. All parties must consent to this format, and the Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring that confidentiality and academic integrity is maintained.

NB. Exceptional circumstances may include Covid-19 restrictions while these apply. The Graduate School will provide guidance on what other exceptional circumstances might comprise.

### **PGR 11.4 Outcomes of the progression examination**

**PGR11.4.1R** Possible outcomes from the progression examination are:

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- Pass – continue registration
- Fail – withdrawal of registration
- Discretionary resubmission with or without a further viva voce examination

The outcome is of the examination as a whole; it is not possible to pass one component and be referred in the other.

**PGR11.4.2R** There is no automatic right to resubmission at progression examination stage and resubmission is not available at all to PGRs registered for PhD, MPhil or DPhil whose initial registration date is prior to 1 October 2013, or to PGRs registered on Professional Doctorate programmes whose initial registration date is prior to 1 September 2013.

**PGR11.4.3R** At resubmission the only outcomes available are pass or fail. There will be no further resubmission opportunity.

**PGR11.4.4R** Failure to demonstrate appropriate progress and pass the progression examination will result in withdrawal of registration on the award by the Research Degrees Award Board (RDAB). Non submission of the progression report by the deadline advised without good reason and supporting evidence will result in loss of opportunity, and may result in withdrawal of registration. Non submission at resubmission without good reason and supporting evidence will result in withdrawal of registration.

### **PGR 11.5 Deciding the outcome of the progression examination**

**PGR11.5.1R** Faculty Research Degrees Committees (FRDCs) will consider the recommendation of the reviewers and decide the outcome of the progression examination.

**PGR11.5.2R** Where the FRDC agree a fail recommendation this will be forwarded to the Research Degrees Award Board (RDAB) which will consider withdrawal of the PGR's registration from the award.

**PGR11.5.3R** Where the reviewers' recommendations are not unanimous they shall each submit a separate report to the FRDC which will consider both reports and agree an outcome decision. There will be no further viva voce examination of the PGR within that assessment attempt.

**PGR11.5.4R** The FRDC may seek independent advice to inform this decision-making process from an academic colleague who is unconnected with the project, supervisory team or the PGR, but has subject or other appropriate expertise.

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**PGR11.5.5R** PGRs have the right of appeal against an RDAB decision only within specified limited grounds. These grounds and the process for submitting an appeal are set out in the [UWE Academic Appeals policy](#)

## **Part 12: Progress review in stages 2 and 3**

**PGR12.1R** Postgraduate researchers (PGRs) must demonstrate continuing satisfactory progress in order to progress to the next stage of their award and continue their registration.

### **PGR12.2 Progress Review**

**PGR12.2.1R** A review of academic progress must be completed by the end of each stage of the PGR's award subsequent to the progression examination.

**PGR12.2.2R** The possible outcomes of the progress review are:

- Satisfactory progress – progress to the next stage;
- Unsatisfactory progress – refer for further work and resubmission

In the case of unsatisfactory progress the reviewers report must also indicate the nature of the additional work or evidence needed in the resubmission to demonstrate that the project is back on a satisfactory footing. Additional work or evidence tasks must be reasonable and achievable within the time permitted for the resubmission.

### **PGR12.3 Deciding the outcome of the progress review**

**PGR12.3.1R** Faculty Research Degree Committees will consider the recommended outcome report of the progress review for each PGR and agree an outcome decision.

**PGR12.3.2R** Failure to submit both review form and evidence of progress by the deadline specified without good reason accepted by the FRDC will be deemed unsatisfactory and will result in loss of submission opportunity.

**PGR12.3.3R** At resubmission no PGR may be withdrawn without the opportunity to submit this additional work and have a further meeting with the reviewers.

**PGR 12.3.4R** Continued unsatisfactory progress at resubmission, or failure to resubmit by the deadline specified without good reason, will result in withdrawal of registration on the award by RDAB, no further resubmission will be permitted.

## **Part 13: Preparing for the final assessment**

### **Expectations**

The final submission must enable the PGR candidate to demonstrate that they meet the full range of award criteria at **PGR2.2.1R/PGR2.3.1R** based on their individual contribution to the creation of new knowledge through original research or other advanced scholarship. The final assessment period begins once the thesis or critical commentary has been submitted for final assessment.

NB. In chapters concerning the final assessment process the PGR may be referred to as the PGR candidate, or simply the candidate.

By the time the final submission is made by the candidate the following requirements must also have been complied with:

- The supervisory team must have received a full draft of the thesis/critical commentary for comment and supplied comments about the draft to the PGR;
- The thesis/critical commentary must comply with requirements regarding formatting and submission;
- The required number of copies of thesis/critical commentary and published work must have been submitted to the Graduate School for distribution to the examining team;
- The thesis/critical commentary and published work must have been uploaded to the UWE Research Repository;
- An appropriate examination team must have been identified and appointed (the EX1 process).

### **Regulations about preparing for the final assessment**

#### **PGR 13.1 Responsibility for submitting the thesis for final assessment**

**PGR13.1.1R** The PGR candidate is ultimately responsible for deciding on the content of the thesis and when to submit the thesis for assessment. Submission can only take place between the minimum and maximum registration periods.

**PGR13.1.2R** The candidate will submit a full first draft of their thesis to their Director of Studies (DoS) for comment and receive comments from the DoS and/or other members of the supervisory team prior to submitting the thesis for assessment.



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### **PGR 13.2 Preparing the thesis for final assessment**

**PGR13.2.1R** The language of the thesis will be English unless an application for an alternative has been approved by the Research Degrees Award Board.

**PGR13.2.2R [PGR14.2.2R]** Where candidates are assessed for MPhil and PhD awards with an approved creative practice focus, the assessment will be by submitted thesis and viva voce, but may also include submission of original creative work in any medium undertaken as part of the registered research project. This creative work may include but is not limited to: one or more scholarly texts, works of fiction, musical or choreographic works, designs, devices and products, short film, exhibition of work, installation or other original artefacts.

### **PGR 13.3 Preparing the collection of published works for MPhil or DPhil by publication for final assessment**

**PGR13.3.1R** A candidate for an MPhil or DPhil by publication will submit a critical commentary and their collection of published works. Published work may include books, original and exhibited creative work in any medium, peer reviewed publications in the public domain, published patents or designs, or other forms of published scholarly output embodying original research.

**PGR13.3.2R** The language of the critical commentary will be English.

### **PGR13.4 Deposition of the e-thesis or critical commentary on the University research repository**

**PGR13.4.1R** The candidate must deposit an identical electronic version of the work submitted for final assessment to the University Research Repository. This will be held by the University on a closed access basis until the completion of the award when it will be replaced by the final version of the thesis or critical commentary.

### **PGR13.5 The Examining Panel**

#### **Appointment of the panel**

**PGR13.5.1R** Examining panels for postgraduate research degrees are appointed by the Research Degrees Award Board (RDAB) on behalf of the Academic Board, in accordance with published procedures for the nomination and appointment of PGR Examiners and are aligned to the requirements of the QAA Quality Code for Research Degrees (Principle 6).

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### **Composition of the panel**

**PGR13.5.2R** Candidates for MPhil, PhD and professional doctorates are examined by at least two and not normally more than three examiners. At least one examiner will be external to the University.

**PGR13.5.3R** Candidates for MPhil or DPhil by publication are examined by two examiners both of whom are external to the University.

**PGR13.5.4R** If the candidate and internal examiner are both permanent members of staff at the same work place, a second external examiner must be added to the examining panel. This is not needed if the candidate is on a fixed term contract of employment of less than 12 months.

**PGR13.5.5R** All examinations will be overseen by an Independent Chair appointed by RDAB. The role of the Independent Chair is to make sure the assessment is fair and held in line with the regulations.

### **Criteria for examiner appointment**

#### **External examiners**

**PGR13.5.6R** External examiners for postgraduate research degrees will be:

- a. independent of the University and affiliated institutions registering candidates with the University for research degrees, and any collaborating establishment linked to the research project;
- b. must not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser, and
- c. their own work must not be the focus of the research being examined.

#### **Internal examiners**

**PGR13.5.7R** Internal examiners for postgraduate research degrees will be:

- a. a member of staff of the University;  
or
- b. a member of staff of the candidate's collaborating establishment;  
or
- c. a member of staff of an affiliated institution where the candidate is registered.
- d. Will not have been the candidate's Director of Studies, supervisor or adviser;

In addition:

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- e. an internal examiner who is also a candidate for a research degree at UWE may only be used if the Board is confident there is no potential for conflict of interest;
- f. members of staff who have previously acted as an independent reviewer for the candidate may be appointed as internal examiners, but must also meet examiner appointment criteria.

\*Directors of studies who are unsure about the eligibility of a member of staff for appointment as an internal examiner should seek advice from the Officer to the Research Degrees Award Board before submitting the EX1 examination arrangements form.

## **Part 14: Final assessment**

NB. In all chapters concerning the final assessment process the PGR may be referred to as the 'PGR candidate', or simply 'the candidate'.

### **PGR14.1 Principles of assessment for MPhil and Doctoral level research based awards**

**PGR14.1.1R** To be awarded an MPhil or Doctoral level research degree by the University, PGR candidates must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the examiners that they meet the requirements of the University's published qualification descriptor for that degree (see PGR Part 2 postgraduate qualification descriptors).

**PGR14.1.2R** In addition, candidates must successfully complete assessment of any required taught credit, and fulfil any other academic or professional assessment requirements for the award as detailed in published award specifications and elsewhere in these regulations.

### **PGR14.2 Forms of assessment for MPhil and Doctoral level research based awards**

#### **MPhil and Doctoral level research based awards**

**PGR14.2.1R** MPhil and Doctoral level research based awards (MPhil, PhD, Professional Doctorate degrees) are assessed by submission of a written thesis and a viva voce (oral) examination.

**PGR14.2.2R** Where PGR candidates are assessed for MPhil and PhD awards with an approved creative practice focus, the assessment will be by submitted thesis and viva voce, but may also include submission of original creative work in any medium undertaken as part of the registered research project. This creative work may include but is not limited to: one or more scholarly texts, works of fiction, musical or choreographic works, designs, devices and products, short film, exhibition of works, installation or other original artefacts, or examples of creative work.

#### **Research awards by publication**

**PGR14.2.3R** Research awards by publication (including MPhil and DPhil degrees by publication) are assessed by submission of a collection of published work together with a critical commentary setting out the nature and significance of the collection as a whole in terms of its contribution to new knowledge within the subject field, and a viva voce (oral) examination.

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**PGR14.2.4R** Published work may include books, original and exhibited creative work in any medium, peer reviewed publications in the public domain, published patents or designs, or other forms of published scholarly output embodying original research.

### **Variations to the prescribed submission formats**

**PGR14.2.5R** Very exceptionally parts of the thesis, or all of it, may be presented other than in written, printable form where it can be demonstrated that the contents can be better expressed in that form and are capable of being assessed. In all such cases the permission of the Research Degrees Award Board (RDAB) must be obtained as early in the PGR's registration as possible and before the final examination arrangements have been approved.

### **Variations to examination by viva voce**

**PGR14.2.6R** Exceptionally RDAB may approve an alternative to the viva voce where it is satisfied that a candidate would be seriously disadvantaged on health, disability, or other grounds by being required to undergo an oral examination. Normally RDAB's permission must be sought and obtained before the final examination arrangements have been approved.

### **Viva location**

**PGR14.2.7R** All candidates are required to attend the viva voce examination, normally in person at the location and on the date specified by the University. This will normally be at one of the University's campus sites, unless otherwise specified for PGRs within an approved academic agreement or schedule thereto between the University and an affiliated academic institution.

**PGR14.2.8R** Where the candidate and/or Director of Studies believe there are exceptional grounds for holding the viva at another location other than specified at PGR14.2.7R, the permission of the Research Degrees Award Board (RDAB), with the agreement of the UWE Director of Academic Services, must be obtained prior to the examiners being appointed.

**PGR14.2.9R** Exceptionally, and where all parties agree, RDAB may grant permission for one examiner to be available at the viva by video link using video conferencing software approved by the University.

**PGR14.2.10R** Exceptionally, and where all parties agree, RDAB may grant permission for the viva to be held remotely using video conferencing software approved by the University.

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In all instances at PGR14.2.8-10, the Director of Studies must make an application to RDAB prior to the examiners being appointed using form RD21, clearly evidencing why the viva cannot be held in the normal manner. Exceptional circumstances may include Covid-19 restrictions while these apply

### **PGR14.3 Regulations about the final assessment process for postgraduate research degrees**

**PGR14.3.1R** A candidate for PhD, MPhil or Professional Doctorate is assessed by a panel of at least two and normally not more than three examiners, of whom at least one must be an external examiner and one an internal examiner. Candidates for MPhil and DPhil by publication are assessed by two external examiners.

**PGR14.3.2R** The final assessment has two parts:

- i. The examiners' independent reports (one per examiner) containing a preliminary assessment of the work submitted by the candidate;
- ii. A viva voce (oral) defence by the candidate of the submitted work in the context of the field of study in which the research lies.

The viva voce will normally be conducted in English.

(\*NB. 'Submitted work' in this context means the thesis, or the published work and critical commentary, or other approved variant).

**PGR14.3.3R** Both the viva voce examination and examiners' reporting processes are overseen by an Independent Chair appointed by RDAB for this purpose.

**PGR14.3.4R** No candidate may be failed and the degree not awarded without having had the opportunity of a viva voce examination, either at first attempt or where a resubmission attempt has been granted. But there is no automatic right to resubmission.

NB. Part 15 Assessment Offences, PGR15.11.7R provides the exception to this regulation in the case of a proven assessment offence.

**PGR14.3.5R** At final assessment a candidate may be referred for resubmission and reassessment once only, and may undergo a maximum of two viva voce examinations in total, unless RDAB permits otherwise on the grounds of accepted personal circumstances or other exceptional grounds.

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### PGR 14.6. The range of outcomes of the final assessment following viva

**PGR14.6.1R** Following the viva voce examination the examiners may recommend to the Research Degrees Award Board one of the following outcomes:

#### A. The candidate fulfils the criteria for the award on which they are registered:

(These recommendations are collectively known as **Pass** outcomes)

The candidate fulfils the Doctoral / MPhil award criteria and the candidate is recommended for the degree:

- i. Without further correction or amendment;

or

- ii. Subject to **satisfactory correction** of presentational / typographical errors within the material<sup>†</sup> (maximum 4 weeks FT / 6 weeks PT). Corrections to be approved by one or all examiners;

or

- iii. Subject to **satisfactory minor amendment** of the material<sup>†</sup> as indicated by the examiners and which can reasonably be completed within a maximum 12 weeks FT / 18 weeks PT. Amendments to be approved by one or all examiners;

or

- iv. Subject to **satisfactory major amendments**. The material<sup>†</sup> submitted displays some deficiencies of content, analysis and / or presentation in areas specified by the examiners requiring additional work which can reasonably be expected to be completed within a maximum 6 months FT / 9 months PT. No further viva examination is required, amendments to be approved by all examiners.

#### B. The candidate does not currently fulfil the criteria for the award on which they are registered:

(This recommendation is a **referral** outcome, at this point the candidate has not yet passed their degree).

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The examiners recommend that the candidate is referred for resubmission and re-assessment.

The candidate does not currently fulfil the Doctoral / MPhil criteria and the material† as submitted displays significant deficiencies of content and / or presentation in areas specified by the examiners. The candidate may be permitted to revise and re-submit the material for the degree and be re-assessed on one further occasion with or without viva voce examination. Revisions indicated by examiners may reasonably be expected to be completed within a maximum 12 months FT / 18 months PT. The re-assessment shall be of the submitted material† as a whole and undertaken by all examiners.

### **C. Additional outcomes for PhD or DPhil assessment only:**

#### **MPhil with amendments**

The candidate does not fulfil the doctoral award descriptor criteria but does meet the award criteria for MPhil and may be recommended for this award subject to satisfactory amendment of the material† in a manner and to a timescale as recommended by the examiners (**up to** a maximum of 6 months FT / 9 months PT). No further viva voce examination is required. Amendments to be approved by one or all examiners;

**or**

#### **Resubmit and be assessed for MPhil**

The candidate does not fulfil the doctoral award criteria but has the potential to meet the award criteria for MPhil and may revise and resubmit the material† as indicated by the examiners for assessment for the award of MPhil (within a maximum of 12 months FT / 18 months PT). The assessment shall be of the submitted material †as a whole, conducted by all examiners and a viva voce examination will be required.

†NB. Material and/or amendment of material in the case of DPhil / MPhil by publication refers to the critical commentary element of the submission only, since the publications/outputs will already be in the public domain.

#### **D. Degree not awarded**

(This recommendation is a **Fail** outcome).

The candidate is not recommended for the award of any degree and is not permitted to resubmit for re-assessment. Unsuccessful candidates for DPhil / MPhil by publication may be permitted to re-apply after a period of three years.



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### **PGR 14.7 Regulations in the event of disagreement between examiners**

**PGR14.7.1R** Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous, this will be reported by the Independent Chair to the Research Degrees Award Board (RDAB) which may:

- a. uphold the recommendation of the external examiner (where there is one external examiner);  
**or**
- b. uphold a majority recommendation provided that the majority includes at least one external examiner (where there is more than one external examiner);  
**or**
- c. appoint an independent external assessor to review the thesis and make an independent report together with an outcome recommendation to RDAB. No further viva voce examination of the candidate will take place within that assessment attempt. RDAB will consider all reports and agree an outcome decision in accordance with regulations at PGR14.6.1R. Where this process takes place in the context of resubmission assessment however, outcome B (i.e. a further resubmission for that degree) cannot be granted.

### **PGR14.8 Regulations in the case of unsatisfactory amendments following category A outcomes**

**PGR14.8.1R** Should the amendments submitted, whether major or minor, not be considered satisfactory by the examiners the candidate will be given 12 additional weeks to make the necessary adjustments.

**PGR14.8.2R** If after this additional time the examiners confirm that they are not yet content with the amended material, RDAB may exceptionally permit the candidate up to a maximum of 12 further weeks to make final adjustments. There is no automatic right to this further time.

**PGR14.8.3R** If the amended material continues to be unsatisfactory the candidate will be considered not to have complied with the academic requirements of the award, will be withdrawn by RDAB and the degree will not be awarded.

## **UWE Bristol Academic Regulations 2020/2021**

### **PGR14.9 Regulations about the resubmission process following a category B outcome, and the range of possible outcomes at resubmission**

**PGR14.9.1R** Only one re-assessment may be permitted by RDAB, subject to the candidate submitting for re-assessment within 12 months FT / 18 months PT of the date of the formal notification of the outcome of the first assessment.

**PGR14.9.2R** RDAB may require that an additional external examiner is appointed for the re-assessment.

**PGR14.9.3R** RDAB may, where there is good reason, approve an extension of the resubmission period.

**PGR14.9.4R** In all other respects the re-assessment will be conducted in the same way as the first assessment, and the candidate will be required to submit a draft of the resubmission to their Director of Studies and receive comments as at regulation PGR13.1.2R.

**PGR14.9.5R** Following completion of the re-assessment the examiners may recommend an outcome from the list set out in PGR14.6.1R with the following exceptions:

- Outcome option B (resubmission for the same degree) **is not** available;
- A PhD or DPhil candidate may be recommended for the award of MPhil subject to satisfactory amendments (outcome option C.i), but **may not** be recommended for a further resubmission to be assessed for MPhil (outcome option C.ii).
- A PhD or DPhil candidate who, as an outcome of their first assessment, has resubmitted and been assessed for the award of MPhil (i.e. outcome C.ii) **may not** be given a further resubmission opportunity for MPhil.

### **PGR14.10 Regulations when the examiners recommend outcome D: Degree not awarded and no resubmission permitted.**

**PGR14.10.1R** Where the examiners recommend that the degree is not awarded i.e. that the candidate has 'failed' the award, the examiners will prepare an agreed joint statement of the deficiencies of the thesis or collection of published work and critical commentary including the rationale for their recommendation. This will be considered by the Research Degrees Award Board. Where RDAB agrees this outcome, the examiners' statement will be forwarded to the candidate by the Board together with the formal notification of the outcome. The candidate will be withdrawn from the award.

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### **PGR 14.11 Responsibility for deciding the assessment outcome and granting the research degree award: the Research Degrees Award Board**

**PGR14.11.1R** The Research Degrees Award Board is the examining board approved by the University to be responsible for granting postgraduate research degree awards, or amending a properly executed decision about postgraduate research degree awards, on behalf of the Academic Board. RDAB must include a Chief External Examiner appointed by the Academic Registrar on behalf of the Academic Board.

**PGR14.11.2R** RDAB will decide the assessment outcome and grant research degree awards on behalf of Academic Board on consideration of the reports and recommendation of the examiners following the viva voce examination, and on consideration of outcomes from taught components/modules from the appropriate Field Boards.

**PGR14.11.3R** The result of the candidate's assessment and the award granted will be produced by the Graduate School, signed by the Chair of RDAB and published in the format approved by the University.

**PGR14.11.4R** The candidate will be considered to have completed their award on the date that RDAB decides that the award is granted.

**PGR14.11.5R** The University may withhold an award from a candidate who:

- has outstanding obligations, financial or otherwise, to the University; or
- has not successfully completed the requirement for accredited learning (i.e. taught modules) for the programme;
- is the subject of an ongoing investigation concerning an allegation of a breach of discipline or an assessment offence allegation.

**PGR14.12.1** Candidates may appeal against the decision of RDAB only on the grounds that there has been material and significant administrative error or other material irregularity such that the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the approved regulations for the award.

**The processes governing the consideration of such appeals for all students of the University including postgraduate research degree candidates are described in the [UWE Academic Appeals Policy](#).**

## **UWE Bristol Academic Regulations 2020/2021**

### **PGR14.13 Deposition of the final version of the thesis or collection of published works and critical commentary, and intellectual property requirements.**

**PGR14.13.1R** All candidates for PhD, Professional Doctorate and MPhil awards must deposit the final version of their thesis, incorporating any amendments required by the examiners, on the UWE Bristol Research Repository before the award can be conferred. For the awards of DPhil/MPhil by publication only the critical commentary and bibliography listing the published works submitted for consideration for the award must be added to the UWE Research Repository.

**PGR14.13.2R** The candidate must ensure that use of any third party intellectual property complies with the requirements of the University's intellectual property policy. The thesis or critical commentary must include the following statement:

'Material in this thesis/commentary\* is the author's with the exception of third party material where appropriate permissions have been obtained and attributed. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that no use of material may be made without proper acknowledgement.'

\*For awards by publication

**PGR14.13.3R** Access to a thesis or critical commentary via the UWE Research Repository may only be restricted where a previous application to do so has been agreed by RDAB.

### **PGR14.14 Posthumous awards**

The processes governing the granting of a posthumous award to a deceased student of the University, including postgraduate researchers, are described at section M2 of the UWE Academic Regulations and Procedures.

## **Part 15: Assessment offences in postgraduate research**

### **Expectations**

The University considers that allegations of assessment offences relating to research study undertaken by postgraduate researchers for the purpose of an MPhil or Doctoral level award are serious, and must be investigated accordingly. All students of the University, including PGRs, are subject to the University's published policy about academic integrity and assessment offences.

### **PGR15.1 Investigation of assessment offence allegations**

**PGR15.1.1R** Assessment offence allegations made against PGRs registered on an MPhil or doctoral level award (including those who are also members of University Staff or affiliated Staff) will be investigated under the University's Academic Regulations and Procedures or where appropriate the UWE research misconduct procedures.

- i. Assessment offence allegations made against PGRs relating to the assessment of taught elements of the award for which UWE credit is awarded (e.g. taught modules) will be investigated in accordance with procedures at Part G of the University regulations and procedures.
- ii. Assessment offence allegations made against PGRs relating to the assessment of the research project, the thesis or the critical commentary (MPhil/DPhil by publication), or any other element of research undertaken directly relating to the award, will be investigated under PGR regulations and procedures at PGR Part 15. The investigation will align with the principles of the University [Code of Good Research Conduct](#) as appropriate.
- iii. Allegations of research misconduct relating to any other area of research with which the postgraduate researcher is connected will be investigated under procedures set out in the University [Code of Good Research Conduct](#) and [Research misconduct procedures](#).

**PGR15.1.2R** Investigation of assessment offence allegations will normally be led by the Chair of the Faculty Research Degrees Committee for the faculty in which the PGR is registered, who will act as the Executive Dean's nominee. If there is potential for conflict of interest, the allegation will be investigated by another member of the FRDC, or the Chair of the FRDC for another Faculty.

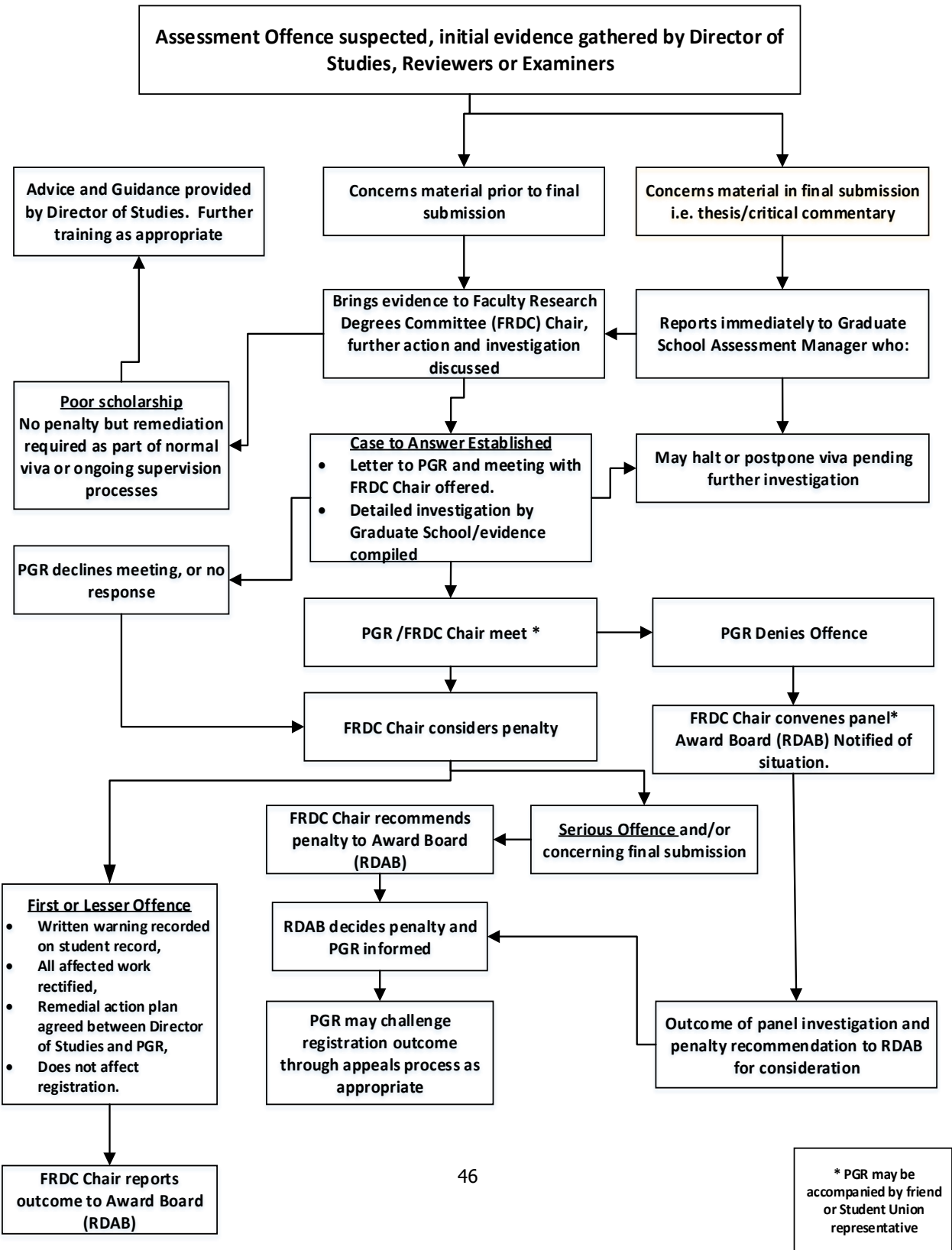
## **UWE Bristol Academic Regulations 2020/2021**

### **Procedures for investigating assessment offence allegations in PGR research**

These procedures are used for investigating assessment offence allegations within research relating postgraduate research degree awards as defined at PGR15.1.1R ii) only. The process is summarised in the diagram below.

UWE Graduate School

Diagrammatic Summary of investigative processes for allegations about Assessment Offences in Supervised Postgraduate Research



**PGR15.2.1R Summary of possible outcomes and applicable penalties**

<b>Offence Outcomes</b>	<b>Nature of the Offence committed</b>	<b>Normal penalty to be applied, or range of penalties where there is more than one available.</b>
<b>Poor scholarship</b>	Incomplete, inaccurate or missing citation in a small number of instances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Details of areas for concern are included in written feedback and sent to both the candidate and the Director of Studies (DoS), who must meet to agree a plan of action to improve the candidate’s understanding of good academic practice and any further training needed.</li> <li>• All examples must be rectified within the work concerned.</li> <li>• Poor scholarship within a thesis submitted for final examination will be raised as part of the viva process and will require correction and / or amendment as appropriate.</li> <li>• No offence will be recorded on the candidate’s student file/record.</li> </ul>
<p><b>First and lesser offence</b></p> <p>(<b>Not</b> applicable for offences found in a thesis submitted for final examination)</p>	Evidence shows plagiarism or other assessment offence of a minor nature in terms of volume with very little significance to the piece of work overall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRDC Chair/Panel issues a formal written warning to the candidate copied to the DoS, advising that further offences will be deemed ‘serious’ and may result in a severe penalty being applied from the range described.</li> <li>• The offence is recorded on the candidate’s student file/record until graduation.</li> <li>• Candidate and DoS must meet to agree an action plan as above which will be subject to FRDC scrutiny.</li> <li>• All examples must be rectified within the work concerned.</li> </ul>



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<p><b>All other offences</b> including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First and serious offence;</li> <li>• Second / subsequent offences;</li> <li>• <b>All</b> offences detected within the thesis after its submission for final examination, other than instances of poor scholarship.</li> </ul>	<p>Evidence shows plagiarism or other assessment offence that:</p> <p>Is not extensive and is of relatively minor significance to the piece of work or thesis;</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>Is extensive amounting to a considerable portion of the piece of work or thesis, or there are numerous occurrences throughout the work.</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>Is significant and compromises the academic integrity of piece of work or thesis as a whole;</p> <p><b>or</b></p> <p>The candidate has committed a second / subsequent offence, where previously found guilty of a first offence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affected material is redacted within the work and RDAB permits the assessment to go ahead.</li> </ul> <p><b>or</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate is required to resubmit the work or thesis for assessment in a manner and within a timescale approved by RDAB, no further resubmission outcome permitted;</li> </ul> <p><b>or</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate is required to withdraw by RDAB and their registration is terminated, no resubmission is permitted. The candidate will not qualify for the award on which they are registered;</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In all cases the offence will be recorded on the candidate's student file/record and included in future academic references.</li> </ul>
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**PGR is required to withdraw, registration is terminated and no award is made.**

**PGR 15.2.2R** Where the offence committed is sufficiently serious the Research Degrees Award Board may require the PGR to withdraw. Their registration will be terminated and no award will be made. In the case of an offence in work submitted for final assessment this decision will override regulation PGR14.3.4R and the PGR candidate may be withdrawn without a viva voce examination.

## **Part 16: Quality assurance matters, representation, consultation, complaints, monitoring and evaluation**

### **PGR 16.1 Representation**

**PGR 16.1.1R** All Academic Board Committees concerned with the provision of postgraduate research degrees will have opportunities for postgraduate researcher (PGR) representation within their membership. These include Faculty Research Degree Committees (FRDC), the Graduate School Committee (GSC) and the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKE).

### **PGR 16.2 Consultation and feedback**

**PGR 16.2.1R** The Academic Board requires faculties and Academic Partners to establish and promote arrangements for securing consultation with, and feedback from, all students including postgraduate researchers. The Graduate School will provide mechanisms to enable those concerned with postgraduate research programmes to provide regular feedback both collectively and individually.

### **PGR 16.3 Complaints about PGR academic provision**

**PGR 16.3.1R** An academic complaint is defined as a matter of concern to a student, including a PGR, about the delivery, management, assessment methods and procedures of an award that includes supervised research which has not been resolved through the normal consultation process.

**PGR 16.3.2** Procedures for dealing with complaints from students, including PGRs, about academic matters are available on the [University complaints webpage](#).

### **PGR 16.4 Annual Monitoring and evaluation**

**PGR16.4.1R** All provision contributing to MPhil and doctoral awards of the University is subject to annual monitoring to an approved format and in accordance with policies and procedures established by Academic Board.

## **Appendix 1 to the Postgraduate Research Degrees regulations: higher doctorates**

### **Definition**

A higher tier of research doctorates, awarded on the basis of a formally submitted and substantial body of published research outputs of high distinction indicating a sustained, consistent and significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge or scholarship through research, and a beneficial impact for communities, a sustainable economy and/or society more broadly.

See regulations at [PGR1.8.1R](#). The following awards may be granted to persons who provide evidence of work of high distinction in accordance with the Academic Regulations:

- Doctor of Letters (DLitt)
- Doctor of Science (DSc)

### **Regulations about Higher Doctorate Awards: applications, eligibility & submission**

#### **PGR APP 1.1 Application**

**PGR APP 1.1.1R** The Academic Board shall delegate its authority to consider applications for higher doctorates and to determine whether to grant such awards on behalf of the University to the Research Degrees Award Board, hereafter referred to as RDAB or the Board.

**PGR APP 1.1.2R** Applications, specifying the higher doctorate applied for, as listed in PGR 1.7.1R shall be made in writing to the Officer to the Research Degrees Award Board.

#### **PGR APP 1.2 Eligibility to Apply**

**PGR APP 1.2.1R** Applicants will be leading authorities in their field or fields of study, as evidenced by, inter alia, an established reputation in an academic community, evidence of citation of published work, or a significant and sustained contribution to the public domain.

They will also be:

- a) Current or previous members of UWE staff, or of an affiliated academic institution, having been employed by the University or the affiliated academic institution on permanent contract for a period of no less than four years, and being holders of at least

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four years standing of a doctoral level degree awarded by a UK University or recognised equivalent academic institution.

Or

- b) Alumni of the University of at least seven years standing being also the holders of a doctoral level award of at least four years standing awarded by UWE or another UK University or recognised equivalent academic institution;

Or

- c) Individuals with a close, long standing and significant research association with the University that has resulted in a sustained record of collaborative research of considerable impact upon the advancement of knowledge at the highest level and who are invited to apply by the Executive Dean of the faculty in which field the research lies, or by the Vice Chancellor. Such individuals are normally be expected to already hold a doctoral level degree and in all other respects would be subject to the same assessment process as applicants a) or b).

### **PGR APP 1.3 Submission Criteria**

**PGR APP 1.3.1R** The application shall comprise a completed and signed application form and the following:

- a) A specimen set of research outputs that the applicant wishes to submit in support of their application for the award;
- b) A statement of the extent of the applicant's individual contribution to each of the outputs submitted where joint authorship or other types of collaboration are involved;
- c) Where relevant, a statement confirming which part of the work, if any, has previously been submitted for another academic award;
- d) A curriculum vitae and full list of publications and other significant research outputs;
- e) A statement of no more than 6,000 words in support of the application which should set out the applicant's view of the nature and significance of the body work submitted in relation to:
  - Its contribution to knowledge at the time of publication;
  - Its impact and influence on subsequent research and the development of knowledge in the field or fields of study;
  - Its impact outside the academic field, to show how it has led to benefits to communities, a sustainable economy and/or society more broadly;
  - An indication of the relationship, if any, between the various topics covered by the work;

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- The ways in which the submitted work demonstrates a sustained and consistent contribution to advanced scholarship over a number of years.

**PGR APP 1.3.2R** Parts b, c d and e of the application shall be in English. Part a) of the application shall normally be in English unless the field of study is another language or unless the subject matter involves substantial language and related studies. Permission to submit in another language will need to be considered as part of the application taking account of expertise and examining arrangements.

**PGR APP 1.3.3R** Written research outputs submitted within the specimen set may include scholarly texts (journal articles, books, parts of books, conference articles, working papers), research reports, research-informed policy documents (usually of national significance or above), patents (published or in application), translations, and case studies of innovative work at the highest level.

**PGR APP 1.3.4R** Other research outputs submitted within the specimen set may include artefacts, devices, products, exhibitions, performances, compositions, portfolios, designs, software, digital/visual media or other material that provides evidence of original research of significance and impact at the highest level. These outputs should be represented by a written and/or visual record of the output or details of how they can be freely accessed.

### **PGR APP 1.4 Application and examination fees for higher doctorates**

**PGR APP 1.4.1R** The applicant shall pay such fees and at such time as are determined by the University, and published in its fees policy.

## **Regulations about examining Higher Doctorates**

### **PGR APP 1.7 Criteria for appointment of external examiners**

**PGR APP 1.7.1R** There shall be a minimum of two external examiners for higher doctorate awards who shall be:

- a) Pre-eminent in the field of study of the submission;
- b) Experienced examiners to at least doctoral level (examiner of at least ten doctoral level awards) and preferably at higher doctoral level;
- c) Wholly unconnected with the University, the candidate or their research.

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### **PGR APP 1.8 Consideration by the Examiners**

**PGR APP 1.8.1R** The time permitted for the consideration of submitted research outputs by the examiners and submission of examiner reports to the Graduate School will be five months from the date of circulation of the submission to the examiners.

**PGR APP 1.8.2R** The examiners will report independently in detail on the extent to which the application satisfies the criteria set out below and on the appropriateness of the specific award sought by the candidate. They will each make an independent recommendation to the Research Degrees Award Board regarding the granting the award (PGR APP1.9.1R refers):

- a) that the research work submitted is of high distinction;
- b) that it constitutes an original and significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge or to the application of knowledge or to both; and
- c) that the work and other supporting evidence (cv and full publications list) has established that the applicant is a leading authority in the field or fields of study concerned having made a sustained and significant contribution to advanced scholarship, as evidenced by, inter alia, an established reputation in an academic community, citation of published work, demonstration of contribution to the public domain and impact outside the academic field e.g. via benefits to communities, a sustainable economy and/or society more broadly.

**PGR APP 1.8.3R** The examination shall be undertaken by reference to the submitted material only, there will be no viva voce. If the examiners recommendations do not accord the Board may appoint a third external examiner to carry out a further independent assessment of the body of research work submitted.

**PGR APP 1.8.4R** The Board may, at its discretion, invite the applicant to discuss his or her submitted work with representatives of the Board (normally including those who served on the panel at preliminary consideration (PGR APP 1.6.1) and/or the appointed examiners.

### **PGR APP 1.9 Possible outcomes of the assessment of the submission**

**PGR APP 1.9.1R** Taking into account of the recommendations of the examiners, the Board may decide:

- to grant the award of the higher doctorate degree, specifying which award is being granted (DSc or DLitt); or
- not to grant the award of the higher doctorate degree.

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**PGR APP 1.9.2R** There shall be no resubmission opportunity, no option to award a lower level of degree and no opportunity for appeal against the decision of the Board. Unsuccessful candidates may reapply after a minimum period of three years as long as they remain eligible.

**PGR APP 1.9.3R** While there will be no detailed process for feedback to the candidate, in notifying a candidate of a decision not to grant the award the Board may decide to provide general feedback, or comments that examiners have indicated they particularly wish to be passed to the candidate.

**PGR APP 1.9.4R** The result of the candidate's assessment and the award granted will be produced by the Graduate School, signed by the Chair of the Research Degrees Award Board and published in the format approved by the University.