

Postgraduate Research – Degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc) Degree Regulations

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REGULATIONS:

A. Admission to the Degree

1. Applicants for admission to the Master of Science by Research (MSc) will normally have:
 - i. a first degree (equivalent to at least a UK Second Class Honours Bachelors degree) or equivalent qualification from a recognised institution; or
 - ii. evidence of previous advanced study, research or professional experience, which the University accepts as qualifying the applicant for entry.
2. All applicants must meet the minimum English language requirements of their chosen degree, as described by the University's Postgraduate [Admissions Policy](#).

B. Duration of the Degree

3. A full-time Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree will normally extend over a continuous period of 12 months.
4. A part-time Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree will normally extend over a continuous period not exceeding 24 months.

C. Financial Registration and Fees

5. A PGR shall register with the University for the degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc) at the beginning of their degree and, if part-time, shall re-register at the same time annually unless a change to this conventional pattern results from an approved period of interruption.
6. Appropriate fees are payable annually during the duration of the degree and for any period of submission pending registration.

D. Credits

7. The Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree will normally consist of 180 credits. A 135 credit research project, in addition to 45 credits of taught content.
8. At least 150 of the 180 credits will be at level 4 (M Level).
9. The taught content will serve to provide the PGR with research skills and a depth of specialist knowledge that is directly applicable to the field of research. The taught content is normally comprised of three 15-credit course units.

E. Progression and Assessment

10. Regulations for work and attendance are outlined in the [University's General Regulations, XX](#).
11. Candidates for the degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc) will present themselves for assessment of their progress as required in the degree handbook.
12. A PGR who fails to satisfy the Examiners in any assessment of taught units may be permitted to resubmit the assessment or retake the examination on one further occasion. The PGR will take this opportunity during the next available University examination period or within a period as published in the degree handbook.
13. The maximum mark to be awarded for resubmitted coursework or retaken examination will normally be 50%; the new mark will be entered on transcripts and marked with an R.
14. In exceptional mitigating circumstances, and with prior permission of the Faculty, PGRs may be allowed to retake the entire degree subject to all outstanding fees being paid.

F. Extension to Degree Programme

15. PGRs for the degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc) are expected to submit their dissertation within the standard period of the degree programme. However, in exceptional circumstances and with mitigating circumstances a PGR can apply for an extension to the prescribed programme (for the purposes of conducting further research only). PGRs should refer to the [Change of Circumstances](#) Policy and Procedures.
16. Where permission for an extension to programme has not been granted and a candidate submits their dissertation late, the dissertation will be rejected.

G. Interruption to Degree Programme

17. A PGR may be granted a temporary interruption of their MSc degree for approved reasons at the discretion of the University where the continuation of research or dissertation preparation is not possible. An application should be made before the beginning of the proposed period of interruption. Retrospective applications will not normally be considered.
18. Where appropriate, PGRs and the supervisory team should seek the advice of relevant sponsors before applying for an interruption and should in all cases seek permission as soon as the requirement for the interruption becomes apparent.

H. Changes to the Focus of the Research

19. Permission for significant changes to the focus of the research being undertaken must be sought by the supervisory team with the agreement of the PGR. Where appropriate, PGRs and supervisors should seek the advice of the relevant sponsoring body before making such changes.

I. Submission Pending

20. At the discretion of their School, a PGR may be permitted to register for a period of submission pending up to six months for the sole purpose of completing the write-up of the dissertation. A submission pending fee is payable by the PGR for any such submission pending period that is granted by their School.
21. PGRs who register for a period of submission pending will no longer be eligible for an award of merit or distinction at (see section K).
22. Where permission for submission pending has not been granted and a candidate submits their dissertation late, the dissertation will be rejected.
23. Extensions to the submission pending period may be sought only in exceptional circumstances.

J. Content and Length of Dissertation

24. The dissertation must only embody the results of research and data analysis undertaken whilst registered on the degree.
25. The dissertation may embody reprints of published material, must be free from restrictions on publication, and must be presented in a satisfactory manner.
26. Matter which has been included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted in support of a successful application for a degree or qualification of any university or professional or learned body must not be embodied in the dissertation, except that such matter:
 - i. If unpublished, may be reported in sufficient detail to enable the work done during and for the purpose of the degree to be fairly evaluated;
 - ii. If published, may be mentioned for purposes of reference in the same way as publications by other workers. In either case the fact of the previous submission of such matter must be made clear at all relevant points in the dissertation.
27. Work to be embodied in the dissertation should be reported concisely. The normal maximum length is 50,000 words (60,000 if journal format) of main text (including footnotes or endnotes).
28. All dissertations must be written in English; quotations, however, may be given in the language in which they were written. In exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be granted permission to submit a dissertation written in a language other than English where the nature of the research makes this appropriate.
29. All dissertations must be presented in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Presentation of PGR Dissertations Policy.

K. Dissertation Submission / Resubmission

30. Dissertation or project submission dates will be published in degree handbooks. Submission dates for parttime PGRs will reflect the length of the degree (pro-rata compared to a full-time degree).
31. Dissertations should be submitted in accordance with the information set out in the University's [Examination of Master of Science \(MSc by Research\) Degrees Policy](#).
32. Notice to submit an MSc Dissertation shall be made on the prescribed form not less than six weeks and not more than six months before submission.
33. PGRs wishing to submit a dissertation in journal format must first discuss their intention with their supervisor. PGRs should consider the journal format principles and conditions described within the Presentation of Dissertations Policy: Master of Science (MSc). The PGR should then declare their intention on dissertation format on the Notice of Submission form.
34. A MSc dissertation submission (both the examination and final version) shall consist of one electronic copy in Portable Document Format (PDF) with a plain-text metadata record. The University shall have the right to retain the electronic copy.
35. If a dissertation is not submitted before the end of the programme or any submission pending period, the PGR's candidacy automatically lapses and the PGR cannot subsequently submit, unless further approval is granted by the University.
36. The dissertation must be submitted before the end of the programme i.e. without using submission pending in order for a PGR to be eligible for the award of merit or distinction.
37. At the recommendation of the Examiners, PGRs will normally be allowed one resubmission of a failed dissertation or project and this will normally be within four months of the date of the publication of the result. The Examiners may exceptionally decide not to allow resubmission. The Faculty will agree that the grounds for allowing / not allowing a resubmission are justified.
38. The maximum mark to be awarded for resubmitted dissertations or projects will normally be a pass.
39. A PGR may exceptionally be required to attend an examination, orally or otherwise, in the subject of their dissertation or project report, or a related matter.

L. Examination Board and Examiners

40. The School Board of Examiners will be responsible for confirming the marks of the taught element of the degree. Normally, all staff who have been involved in the assessment of the taught units shall be present at the School Board of Examiner meetings.
41. Each candidate's dissertation shall be examined by two or more examiners of whom at least one shall normally be an external examiner. A joint recommendation by the examiners should be made to the Faculty Postgraduate Research Degrees Panel or equivalent. The appointment of examiners shall proceed in accordance with the University's [Nomination of Examiners and Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations Procedure](#).

M. Recommendation for Award

42. Pass Marks

- i. To obtain a pass for a Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree will require the PGR to pass each taught course unit and the project/dissertation.
- ii. The Faculty shall, on report from the Examiners, recommend to Senate the award of the degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc) for those PGRs who have completed all requirements of the regulations and satisfied the Examiners. The awarding certificate will include the title of the degree.

43. Merit

- i. A merit may be awarded to a PGR who satisfies the following criteria:
 - An average of 60% or more in the taught component of the degree;
 - The dissertation is recommended by the examiners to be at the level of merit;
 - Submission of the dissertation by the end of the standard period of the programme i.e. without using a submission pending period.

44. Distinction

- i. A distinction may be awarded to a PGR who has consistently achieved excellence in the assessments of a Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree.
- ii. The PGR will have satisfied the following criteria in order to be awarded a distinction:
 - An average of 70% or more in the taught component of the degree;
 - The dissertation is recommended by the examiners to be at the level of distinction;
 - Submission of the dissertation by the end of the standard period of the programme i.e. without using a submission pending period.

45. Full grade descriptors for Pass, Merit and Distinction can be found in the Examination of Master of Science (MSc by Research) Degrees Policy.

N. Classification Thresholds and Boundaries

46. The following boundaries inform classification when the average in the taught component of the degree falls below a classification threshold.

Table 1 MSc by Research degree classification and boundary zone:

MSc by Research classification-based on 180 credits	Classification thresholds: average taught mark (mark range)	Boundary zone taught average
Distinction	70.0	68.0 to 69.9
Merit	60.0	58.0 to 59.9
Pass	59.9 or less	N/A

47. A PGR whose average taught mark is within the Distinction boundary zone can be awarded Distinction if a Distinction mark is achieved for the dissertation, no taught mark is below 50% in any course, a Pass is achieved in components of the programme where only a Pass/Fail is recorded, and submission of the dissertation is made by the end of the standard period of the programme i.e. without using a submission pending period.
48. A PGR whose average taught mark is within the Merit boundary zone can be awarded Merit if a Merit or Distinction mark is achieved for the dissertation, no mark is below 50% in any course, a Pass is achieved in components of the programme where only a Pass/Fail is recorded and submission of the dissertation is made by the end of the standard period of programme i.e. without using a submission pending period.

O. Transfer to Registration for PhD Study

49. In some circumstances, a PGR may apply to transfer to a PhD study instead of submitting the dissertation for a Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree. The application for the transfer must be made to the relevant School with the support of the supervisory team. A transfer report must be submitted to the School for formal assessment following the end of first year assessment procedure for the degree of PhD.
50. PGRs who apply to transfer to PhD study but subsequently fail the transfer assessment will be permitted to register for a submission pending period of up to six months and submit the dissertation for a Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree. A submission pending fee is payable.