

Ordinances and Regulations: Degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD)

June 2022

Research Degrees and Researcher Development Team

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A. ORDINANCES

1. The Degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) is awarded by the University in recognition of the successful completion of a period of supervised research and training, the results of which show convincing evidence of scholarship, the competence of the candidate to pursue research and a significant contribution to new knowledge and understanding in the theory and/or practice of any area of medicine. The results of this research shall then be embodied in a thesis or other appropriate form and must contain material of a standard appropriate for peer-reviewed publication.
2. The mode of admission to the course and other conditions relating to the degree shall be prescribed in Regulations.
3. Applicants for admission to the degree must hold an M.B., Ch.B degree or an equivalent qualification prescribed by the Regulations and must satisfy the University that they are fit by reason of their ability and training to undertake the degree.
4. Except in so far as relaxation is granted in accordance with the Regulations:
 - a. for full-time study the degree shall be a continuous one, extending over such period as may be prescribed by the Regulations; students will however be permitted to perform limited clinical duties if the prior approval of their supervisor(s) is obtained. Such limited duties might equate to one session per week and 'out of hours' on call duties. Students will be required to devote the whole of the remaining time to the degree and to attend in the University at all appropriate times;
 - b. for part-time study the degree shall be continuous and include study time equivalent to a full-time degree but should not exceed twice the full-time study. The students shall be required to attend the University at all appropriate times.

B. REGULATIONS

1. Admission to the Degree

- a. Applicants for admission must hold an M.B., Ch.B degree or an equivalent qualification. Applicants who do not hold a primary medical degree from a university in the U.K. or Ireland, should enquire as to whether their medical qualification would be acceptable to the University. Where required, arrangements for work permits, permissions for residence and for registration with the General Medical Council (which is obligatory for any work directly involving patients) are the responsibility of the applicant.
- b. Applicants will only be admitted onto the degree following their registration with the General Medical Council or, if an overseas candidate, demonstration that an equivalent period of clinical training has occurred after the award of their medical qualification.
- c. Prior to admission onto the MD degree, applicants must provide an abstract of the work that they propose to conduct. This must be of sufficient detail to enable a team of assessors to determine whether the study is of sufficient academic weight and is capable of completion within the available time.
- d. Applicants must demonstrate that they have reached the minimum acceptable level of proficiency in use of the English language according to the published requirements of the degree.
- e. Applicants may also be admitted as a part-time student for the degree of MD if:
 - i. the periods for which they will be free from employment or other commitments will be sufficient for the purposes of the degree;
 - and*
 - ii. the subject is suitable for part-time study.
- f. A student may be admitted to a MD degree only if an appropriate research environment is available for the duration of the degree. This should include the availability of appropriate academic staff to provide supervision and training, other research-support staff, research facilities and learning resources.

2. Duration-of the Degree

- a. Candidates for the degree of MD shall normally be registered for a continuous period of not less than 2 years.
- b. The duration of a part-time MD degree will be dependent upon the time to be committed by the candidate for study but shall be no more than 4 years.
- c. Candidates shall be expected to submit one electronic copy of their thesis upon completion of the PhD degree unless they have received prior approval from the University to register for the submission pending period (see section 3).
- d. Extensions to the duration of a MD degree to permit further supervised research may be considered only in exceptional circumstances.

3. Submission Pending Period

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- a. Candidates registered on an MD degree may request permission to register for the submission pending period at the discretion of the University to allow additional time for preparation of the thesis for up to one year beyond the completion date of the MD degree, as detailed in the [Policy on Circumstances Leading to Changes to Postgraduate Research Study](#). Candidates are advised to check any conditions imposed by the relevant faculty and of any restrictions applied by funding bodies.
- b. A fee will be payable for any such submission pending registration that is granted by the University.
- c. Extensions to the submission pending period may be sought only in exceptional circumstances.

4. Skills Development

- a. A programme of skills training and development is a mandatory component of the MD degree.
- b. All candidates for the degree of MD must undertake a skills audit at the beginning of their degree, and annually thereafter throughout their degree to determine their research, transferable and generic skills requirements. The audit will provide the basis for a planned programme of skills training and development. The outcomes of the audit and programme of skills development must be agreed by the student and the supervisory team. The supervisory team will be responsible for ensuring that the student has access to the required skills training and development opportunities.

5. Progression

- a. All candidates for the degree of MD shall maintain a record of their progression and personal development throughout their degree.
- b. Students admitted to the degree of MD shall demonstrate satisfactory progress before the end of the first year of their research degree by submission of a substantial continuation report which will be discussed at a formal progress meeting with the supervisory team and an independent assessor. The continuation report shall be of sufficient length to demonstrate to the supervisory team and independent assessor, the student's understanding of the subject, and ability to pursue MD level research.
- c. Successful completion of the agreed programme of skills development and training will be a condition of progression between each year of the prescribed period of study.
- d. Students who are able to demonstrate satisfactory progress before the end of their first year of registration will be permitted to register for the subsequent year of study. At this stage it would be permissible for a student to transfer to the equivalent point of the PhD degree. For this purpose, the student shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the supervisory team and an independent assessor, their understanding of the subject and that their ability plus the subject were suitable for PhD level research by submission of a substantial transfer report.
- e. Students who are not able to demonstrate satisfactory progress before the end of their first year of registration, will not be permitted to register for the second year of the degree. They may, at the discretion of the supervisory team and independent assessor, be offered the opportunity to submit a thesis for the degree of MPhil.
- f. Before the end of the second year of research a student may be permitted to transfer to the equivalent point of the PhD degree. For this purpose, the student shall produce a transfer report that demonstrates to the supervisory team and an independent assessor, that their

research competence, research progress and research plan was on track for the award of PhD with one year of further research.

- g. Part-time students shall submit a progress report on an annual basis, with a major report (as described above) occurring after the equivalent of one year's full-time registration. Part-time students will have the possibility to transfer to an equivalent point of a part-time PhD degree if the conditions as outlined above are met.

6. Study Away From the University

- a. A student may be permitted to devote part of the MD degree to study and research outside the University (in addition to fieldwork or short laboratory visits) if:
 - i. it is in the interests of the student's research and training;
 - ii. the institution or location of proposed study is suitable;
 - iii. a suitable work-plan for the period of study outside the University is agreed with the supervisory team;
 - iv. satisfactory supervision arrangements are in place.

7. Change of Institution During the MD Degree

- a. Students who start a MD degree at the University of Manchester may complete their degree at another academic institution, subject to agreement of the student, supervisory team and the two institutions involved. A University of Manchester qualification may only be awarded where at least 50% of the degree has been conducted according to the University of Manchester regulations.
- b. Students who start a MD degree at another institution may complete their degree at the University of Manchester, subject to agreement of the student, supervisory team and between the two institutions. A University of Manchester qualification may only be awarded where at least 50% of the degree has been conducted according to the University of Manchester regulations.
- c. In each of the above cases the final decision for a transfer of registration lies with the Universities.

8. Interruption of the Degree

- a. A student may be granted a temporary interruption of their MD degree for approved reasons at the discretion of the University where the continuation of research or thesis preparation is not possible. An application should be made before the beginning of the proposed period of interruption with the support of the supervisory team. Retrospective applications will not normally be considered.
- b. Where appropriate, students 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.

9. Changes to the Nature of the Degree

- a. Permission for significant changes to the nature of the research to be undertaken must be sought by the supervisory team with the agreement of the student. Where appropriate,

students and supervisors should seek the advice of relevant sponsoring body before making such changes.

10. Thesis Submission

- a. Notice to submit a MD thesis shall be made on the prescribed form not less than six weeks and not more than six months before submission.
- b. A PhD thesis submission (examination and final version) shall consist of an electronic copy in Portable Document Format (PDF) with a plain-text metadata record. The University shall have the right to retain a copy. Full details of thesis presentation requirements can be found in the [Presentation of Theses Policy](#).
- c. If a thesis is not submitted before the end of the MD degree or submission pending period, the student's candidacy automatically lapses and the student cannot subsequently submit, unless further approval is granted by the University.
- d. If a student wishes to submit a thesis more than 3 months before the end of their MD degree (or 6 months if part-time) they will require the permission of the supervisory team and the University. Permission will only be granted up to one year before the end of the MD degree for full time students, and 2 years before the end of the MD degree for part time students. Students who are granted permission to submit early, will still be required to pay full fees for the degree period for which they originally registered

11. Registration and Fees

- a. A student shall register with the University for the degree of MD at the beginning of their degree and shall re-register at the same time annually unless a change to this conventional pattern results from an approved period of interruption. Appropriate fees are payable annually for the duration of the degree and for any period of submission pending registration.

12. Content and Length of Thesis

- a. Candidates shall submit one electronic copy of the examination version of the thesis embodying the results of the research undertaken during the degree. The thesis may embody reprints of published material, must be free from restrictions on publication, and must be presented in a satisfactory manner. The University shall have the right to retain a copy.
- b. Matter which has been included in a thesis 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 thesis submitted for the degree, 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 course to be fairly evaluated;

or

 - 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 thesis.

- c. Work to be embodied in the thesis should be reported concisely. The normal maximum length is 80,000 words of main text (including footnotes and endnotes).
- d. All theses must be written in English; quotations, however, may be given in the language in which they were written.
- e. All theses should be submitted in accordance with the information set out in the University's Guidance for the Presentation of Theses.

13. Examination

- a. The candidate shall be required to attend an oral examination on the subject of the thesis and matters relevant thereto. The candidate may also be required by the examiners to undergo a written or other examination. The oral examination shall be attended by the candidate and the examiners and, if required, an independent chair.
- b. A PhD oral examination is open to members of University staff, including the candidate's supervisor, and other postgraduate research students of the University. The candidate, however, has the right to exclude particular individuals if they feel their presence will be detrimental to their performance in the examination. The examiners and/or the independent chair have the right to exclude from the examination anyone they believe may jeopardise the smooth running or integrity of the oral examination. All attendees other than the candidate, examiners and, where applicable, independent chair, shall be required to give a prior undertaking in writing to maintain confidentiality in respect of the subject matter of the thesis, and in relation to any matters relevant thereto which may arise during the course of the examination
- c. Each candidate shall be examined by two or more examiners of whom at least one shall be an external examiner. The appointment of examiners shall proceed in accordance with the policy set out in the University's Examination of Doctoral Degrees Policy (excluding MPhil).
- d. After examining the thesis presented by a candidate and considering the results of any oral or written examination which they have conducted, the examiners, at their discretion, shall make one of the following recommendations:
 - i. That the candidate be awarded the degree of MD with no corrections to the thesis being required.
 - ii. That the candidate be awarded the degree of MD subject to minor corrections being made to the thesis.
 - iii. That the candidate be invited to revise and resubmit the thesis for the degree of MD. A candidate will be permitted to resubmit on only one occasion. A fresh examination of the thesis, normally by the original examiners, is required and may include further oral examination.
 - iv. That the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil.
 - v. That the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to minor corrections being made to the thesis.
 - vi. That the candidate be invited to revise and resubmit the thesis for the degree of MPhil. A candidate will be permitted to resubmit on only one occasion. A fresh examination of thesis, normally by the original examiners, is required and may include further oral examination.
 - vii. That no award be made to the candidate and no resubmission be permitted.

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Related policies/procedures/guidance etc.	https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/rbe/rdrd/code/
Policy owner:	Alex Hinchliffe, Research Degrees and Researcher Development Officer
Lead contact:	Alex Hinchliffe, Research Degrees and Researcher Development Officer