Postgraduate Research – Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Regulations

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) 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 the capacity of the candidate to pursue research and scholarship and make an original contribution and substantial addition to knowledge. 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.

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A. Admission to the Degree

1. Applicants for admission will normally hold a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent qualification, a Master's Degree or equivalent qualification, or both. The level of attainment for the Bachelor's Degree will normally be equivalent to that of a First Class or Upper Second Class Honours UK Bachelor's Degree. Some areas of study may require a Master's level qualification in a relevant discipline for admission to a PhD.

2. Professional qualifications other than a Bachelor's Degree and/or relevant and appropriate experience may be taken into account for admission to a PhD degree.

3. Applicants for admission to PhD who do not meet the above criteria, but who hold a Bachelor's Degree with Lower Second Class Honours or equivalent qualification, may (dependent on discipline) be admitted to the degree of MPhil in the first instance. Following completion of one year's registration, candidates will be required to demonstrate, through a formal progress report and meeting that they have achieved a satisfactory performance in terms of a standard consistent with the award of the degree of MPhil, in order to be allowed to progress to year two of PhD registration.

4. 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.

5. Applicants may be admitted as a part-time PGR for the degree of PhD 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 programme / research topic is suitable for part-time study.

6. A PGR may be admitted to a PhD 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.

B. Duration of the Degree

7. Candidates for the degree of PhD shall normally be registered for a continuous period of not less than 3 years and no more than 4 years full-time study (unless otherwise stipulated by a funding body) and is based on a notional 35 hour week, which includes time spent on the research project and time for personal and professional development. Actual hours and research patterns may vary differ for various reasons but it is recommended that they do not exceed 1800 hours annually. PGRs must be present on the University campus as required by their programme and/or any visa terms and conditions.

8. The duration of a part-time PhD degree will be no less than 50% of full-time study and normally be no more than 8 years.

9. Extensions to the duration of a PhD degree to permit further supervised research may be considered only in exceptional circumstances (see section H).

C. Financial Registration and Fees

10. All PGRs must complete financial registration at the beginning of their degree and shall re-register at the same time annually unless a change to this pattern results from an approved period of interruption (see section I) or they fail to progress academically (see section D).

11. Appropriate fees are payable annually for the duration of the degree and for any approved period of submission pending.

D. Academic Progression

12. All PGRs registered for the degree of PhD shall maintain a record of their progression and personal development throughout their degree.

13. In order to progress PGRs will be required to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress via the formal progression review process. PGRs will be required to submit a progress report that will be discussed at a formal progress review meeting with the supervisory team and an independent internal assessor.

14. Formal progression review meetings must take place at least annually towards the end of each academic year (pro-rata for part-time arrangements). Additional formal progression review meetings may be required at the discretion of individual Faculties.

15. Full time PGRs will not be permitted to re-register until they have successfully completed the annual formal progression review process except where the University is unable to deliver an outcome on time (in such cases the PGR will be permitted to re-register in advance of the review outcome).

16. Part-time PGRs whose formal progression review is pro-rated therefore falling outside of the annual registration process will be permitted to re-register annually but are still required to demonstrate satisfactory progress at their formal progression review in order to continue on the programme.

17. The progress report shall be of sufficient length to demonstrate the PGR's understanding of the subject, their ability to pursue doctoral level research, and that they will be able to make an original contribution / substantial addition to knowledge in their research area.

18. Successful completion of any agreed programme of skills development and training will be a condition of progression between each year of study.

19. Satisfactory performance in the report and progress meeting by those registered for MPhil in the first instance will normally result in transfer to registration for PhD.

20. PhD candidates who are not able to demonstrate satisfactory progress will not be permitted to continue on the degree, but may be offered the opportunity to submit a thesis for the degree of MPhil.

E. Skills Development

21. A programme of skills training and development is a mandatory component of the PhD degree.

22. All PGRs registered for the degree of PhD 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 PGR and the supervisory team. The supervisory team will be responsible for ensuring that the PGR has access to the required skills training and development opportunities.

F. Research Away From the University

23. Some collaborative PhD programmes will require a PGR to spend a period away from the University of Manchester at the partner institution. In such cases, a formal collaborative agreement will be in place.

24. PGRs on non-collaborative PhD programmes may also be permitted to devote part of the PhD degree to study and research outside the University of Manchester (in addition to fieldwork or short laboratory visits) if:

i. it is in the interests of the PGR'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;
v. it is in line with any visa terms and conditions.

G. Changing Institution during the PhD Degree

25. PGRs who start a degree leading to PhD at the University of Manchester may complete their degree at another academic institution, subject to agreement of the PGR, supervisory team and the two institutions involved. In such cases, a University of Manchester qualification may only be awarded where at least 50% of the degree has been completed while registered at the University of Manchester.

26. PGRs who start a degree leading to PhD at another institution may complete their degree at the University of Manchester, subject to agreement of the PGR, supervisory team and between the two institutions. In such cases, a University of Manchester qualification may only be awarded where at least 50% of the degree has been completed while registered at the University of Manchester.

27. In each of the above cases the final decision for a transfer of registration lies with the Universities.

H. Extension to Programme

28. PGRs registered on the degree PhD are expected to submit their thesis 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.

29. Where permission for an extension to programme has not been granted and a candidate submits their thesis

late, the thesis will be rejected.

I. Interruption to Programme

30. A PGR may be granted a temporary interruption of their PhD degree programme 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. PGRs should refer to the Change of Circumstances Policy and Procedures.

31. Where appropriate, PGRs and the supervisory team should seek the advice of relevant sponsors before applying for an interruption and should seek permission as soon as the requirement for the interruption becomes apparent.

J. Changes to the Aims of a Research Project

32. Permission for significant changes to the aims of the research to be 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 and the student immigration team before making such changes.

K. Submission Pending Period

33. PGRs registered on a PhD degree may request permission to register for the submission-pending period at the discretion of the University to allow additional time for preparation beyond the completion date of the PhD degree, as detailed in the Submission Pending Policy. PGRs are advised to check any conditions imposed by the relevant faculty and of any restrictions applied by funding bodies.

34. A fee will be payable for any such submission pending registration that is granted by the University.

35. Extensions to the submission-pending period may be sought only in exceptional circumstances.

L. Content and Length of Thesis

36. Candidates shall submit an electronic copy of the thesis for examination.

37. The submitted thesis must only embody the results of research and data analysis undertaken whilst registered on the degree and must contain material of a standard appropriate for peer-reviewed publication, demonstrating an original contribution and substantial addition to knowledge.

38. The thesis may embody reprints of published material, must be free from restrictions on publication, and must be presented and bound in a satisfactory manner. The University shall have the right to retain both copies.

39. 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 degree 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.

40. 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) but PGRs should refer to any programme specific requirements.

41. All theses 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 thesis written in a language other than English where the nature of the research makes this appropriate.

42. PhD theses should be submitted in accordance with the information set out in the University's Presentation of Theses Policy. Candidates submitting their PhD in journal format should also refer to the Guiding Principles for Journal Format Theses.

M. Thesis Submission

43. Notice to submit a PhD thesis shall be made on the prescribed form not less than six weeks and not more than six months before submission.

44. A PhD thesis submission (examination 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. The final PhD thesis submission shall consist of one electronic copy in Portable Document Format (PDF) with a plain-text metadata record. Full details of thesis presentation requirements can be found in the Presentation of Theses Policy.

45. If a thesis is not submitted before the end of the PhD degree or an approved submission-pending period, the PGR's candidacy automatically lapses and the PGR cannot submit, unless further approval is granted by the University.

46. If a PGR wishes to submit a thesis earlier than 3 months before the end of their PhD degree (pro-rata for part time) they will require the permission of the supervisory team and the University. Permission will only

by granted up to one year before the end of the PhD degree for full time PGRs, and up to 2 years before the end of the PhD degree for part time PGRs. PGRs who are granted permission to submit early, will still be required to pay full fees for the degree period for which they originally registered.

47. PGRs wishing to submit a thesis in journal format must first discuss their intention on thesis format with their supervisor. PGRs should consider the journal format principles and conditions described within the Presentation of Theses Policy. The PGR should then declare their intention on thesis format on the Notice of Submission form.

N. Examination

48. 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.

49. A PhD oral examination is open to members of University staff, including the candidate's supervisor, and other PGRs 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.

50. 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.

51. 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 PhD with no corrections to the thesis being required.
ii. That the candidate be awarded the degree of PhD 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 PhD. 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.

Document Control Box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
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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