

Ordinances and Regulations: Degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc)

September 2018

Research Degrees and Researcher Development Team

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A. ORDINANCES

1. The University may award the degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc) in accordance with the regulations in recognition of the successful completion of an approved programme of training and research.
2. Students will satisfactorily pursue an approved programme of training and research which combines advanced study, research methodology and a substantial research project, or series of research projects, as either a full or part-time student.
3. These ordinances and regulations provide a general framework for the degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc), and should be read in conjunction with detailed notes for guidance and degree specific regulations.
4. Regulations for student complaints and appeals are provided in the University's General Regulations, XVII and XIX respectively.

B. REGULATIONS

1. Admission to the degree

- a. 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.
- b. All applicants must meet the minimum English language requirements of their chosen degree, as described by the University's Postgraduate Admissions Policy.

2. Duration of the Degree

- a. A full-time Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree will normally extend over a period of twelve months. The date for the end of the degree and submission of the dissertation will be published in the degree handbook.
- b. A part-time Master of Science by Research (MSc) student will complete the degree over a more extended period of time which will be published in the degree handbook, but will not exceed five academic years.

3. Credits

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

4. Progression and Assessment

- a. Regulations for work and attendance are outlined in the University's General Regulations, XX.
- b. Students for the degree of Master of Science by Research (MSc) will present themselves for assessment of their progress as required in the degree handbook.
- c. A student 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 student will take this opportunity during the next available University examination period or within a period as published in the degree handbook.
- d. 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.
- e. Students may, in exceptional mitigating circumstances, and with prior permission of the Faculty, be allowed to re-take the entire degree subject to all outstanding fees being paid.

5. Dissertation

- a. Dissertations should be submitted in accordance with the information set out in the University's Guidance Notes for the Presentation of Dissertations.
- b. Dissertation or project submission dates will normally be 51 weeks after the start of the degree and will be published in degree handbooks. Submission dates for part-time students will reflect the length of the degree (pro-rata compared to a full-time degree).
- c. The dissertation must be submitted before the end of the degree in order for a student to be eligible for the award of merit or distinction.
- d. At the recommendation of the Examiners, students 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.
- e. The maximum mark to be awarded for resubmitted dissertations or projects will normally be a pass.
- f. A student may exceptionally be required to attend an examination, orally or otherwise, in the subject of their dissertation or project report, or a related matter.

6. Extension of the Dissertation Submission Deadline

- a. Students 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 at the discretion of their School, a student 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 student for any such submission pending period that is granted by their School.
- b. Where permission for extension has not been granted and a candidate submits their dissertation late, the dissertation will be rejected.

7. Examination Board and External Examiners

- a. 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. 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 policy document on the Nomination of Examiners & Independent Chairs for Postgraduate Research Degree Examinations.

8. Recommendation for Award

- a. *Pass Marks*
 - i. To obtain a pass for a Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree will require the student to pass each taught course unit and the project/dissertation.

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- 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 students who have completed all requirements of the regulations and satisfied the Examiners. The awarding certificate will include the title of the degree.

b. Distinction

- i. A distinction may be awarded to a student who has consistently achieved excellence in the assessments of a Master of Science by Research (MSc) degree.
- ii. The student will have satisfied the following criteria in order to be awarded a distinction:
 - A. An average at first assessment of 70% or more in the taught component of the degree;
 - B. The dissertation is recommended by the examiners to be at the level of distinction;
 - C. Submission of the dissertation by the end of the period of degree.

c. Merit

- i. A merit may be awarded to a student who satisfies the following criteria:
 - A. An average at first assessment of 60% or more in the taught component of the degree;
 - B. The dissertation is recommended by the examiners to be at the level of merit;
 - C. Submission of the dissertation by the end of the period of degree.

9. Classification Thresholds and Boundaries

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 0 to 100)	Boundary zone taught average
Distinction	70.0	68.0 to 69.9
Merit	60.0	58.0 to 59.9

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Pass	59.9 or less	NA
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A student whose average taught mark at first assessment is within the Distinction boundary zone specified above can be awarded Distinction if a Distinction mark is achieved for the dissertation, no taught mark is below 50% in any course at first assessment, a Pass at first assessment 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 period of programme.

A student whose average taught mark is within the Merit boundary zone specified above 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 at first assessment 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 period of programme.

10. Transfer to Registration for PhD Study

- a. In some circumstances, a student 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.
- b. Students 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 within the submission pending period. A submission pending fee is payable.

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