Postgraduate Research – Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degree Regulations

VERSION: November 2024

The Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) 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 represent original work that is appropriately located by the candidate within a wider field of knowledge and investigation. The results of this research shall then be embodied in a thesis or other appropriate form.

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A. Admission to the Degree

1. Applicants for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) will normally hold a Bachelor's degree or equivalent qualification, a Masters Degree or equivalent qualification, or both.

2. The level of attainment for the Bachelor's degree will normally be equivalent to that of a First or Second Class Honours UK Bachelor's degree.

3. Professional qualifications other than a Bachelor's Degree and/or relevant and appropriate experience may be taken into account for entry to an MPhil degree.

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

5. An applicant may be admitted to an MPhil 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

6. A full-time Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree will normally extend over a continuous period of 12 months 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.

7. An applicant may be permitted to study part-time 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.

8. The duration of a part-time Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree will be no less than 50% off full-time study and will not normally extend over a continuous period of more than 24 months.

C. Financial Registration and Fees

9. A PGR shall register with the University for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) 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 (see section H).

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

D. Skills Development

11. A programme of skills training and development is a mandatory component of the MPhil degree.

12. All PGRs registered on the degree of MPhil must undertake a skills audit at the beginning of their degree, and annually thereafter 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.

E. Research Away from the University

13. A PGR may be permitted to devote part of the MPhil degree to research outside the University (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.

F. Change of Institution during the Degree

14. PGRs who start a MPhil degree 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.

15. PGRs who start a MPhil 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. 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.

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

G. Extension to Programme

17. PGRs for the degree of MPhil 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.

18. Where permission for an extension to programme has not been granted and a candidate submits their thesis late, the thesis will be rejected.

H. Interruption to Programme

19. A PGR may be granted a temporary interruption of their MPhil 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. PGRs should refer to the Change of Circumstances Policy and Procedures.

20. 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.

I. Changes to the Aims of a Research Project

21. Permission for significant changes to the aims 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 relevant sponsoring body and the student immigration team before making such changes.

J. Submission Pending Period

22. PGRs registered on the MPhil 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 six months beyond the completion date of the MPhil degree as detailed in the Change of Circumstances Policy and Procedures. PGRs are advised to check any conditions imposed by the relevant faculty and of any restrictions applied by funding bodies.

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

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

K. Content and Length of Thesis

25. The thesis must only embody the results of research and data analysis undertaken whilst registered on the degree.

26. Candidates shall submit an 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.

27. 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.

28. Work to be embodied in the thesis should be reported concisely. The normal maximum length is 50,000 words of main text (including footnotes or endnotes).

29. 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.

31. MPhil 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.

L. Thesis Submission

30. Notice to submit an MPhil thesis shall be made on the prescribed form not less than six weeks and not more than six months before submission.

31. An MPhil thesis submission (examination and final versions) 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 the electronic thesis. Full details of thesis presentation requirements can be found in the Presentation of Theses Policy.

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

33. If a PGR wishes to submit a thesis more than 3 months before the end of their MPhil degree (or 6 months if part-time) they will require the permission of the supervisory team and the University.

34. All theses should be submitted in accordance with the information set out in the Examination of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) Degrees Policy.

M. Examination

35. At the examiners' discretion, 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.

36. An MPhil 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.

37. 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 MPhil Degree Policy

    i. 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:
    ii. That the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil with no corrections to the thesis being required;
    iii. That the candidate be awarded the degree of MPhil subject to minor corrections being made to the thesis;
    iv. 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 the thesis, normally by the original examiners, is required and may include further oral examination;
    v. That no award be made to the candidate and no resubmission be permitted.

N. Transfer to Registration for PhD Study

38. In some circumstances, a PGR may apply to transfer to a PhD study instead of submitting the thesis for a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree. The application for the transfer must be made to the relevant Faculty

Doctoral Academy with the support of the supervisory team. A transfer report must be submitted to the Doctoral Academy for formal assessment following the end of first year assessment procedure for the degree of PhD.

39. 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 thesis for a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degree. A submission pending fee is payable.

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